



## New Zealand: Exploring the North Island's Gentler Side

Trip No. 2002, March 4-17, 2020

Leader: Janis Stahlhut

Co-Leader: Merri Fox



Join Janis and Merri on a comfortable romp through New Zealand's unspoiled North Island. Often overlooked in the rush to experience the South Island's rugged adventures, instead we will spend our days on easy-moderate trails and our nights in 3-4 star en-suite accommodations. From Wellington on the southern coast, to its very northern tip, this upper half of New Zealand's island-nation in the South Pacific is renowned, if less known, for its natural beauty, friendly people, fine dining and rich

culture. We will take in the country's quaint capitals - both new and old, walk among some of the tallest trees on earth and through alpine tussock wilderness on the slopes of active volcanoes, swim and explore vast beaches and coastlines, and relax in natural hot springs. The more adventurous hiker will have an opportunity to hike New Zealand's greatest day hike: the **TONGARIRO ALPINE CROSSING**.



This trip can be paired with our AMC-AT Walking About: Australia Comfort Style trip #2003, which begins in Sydney after you finish up in New Zealand. You can save a bundle on your international air package by combining these two amazing trips, while crossing two "must-see" countries off your bucket list in one GI-NORMOUS adventure vacation! Contact [Janis](#) or [Merri](#) for information!

## Daily Itinerary

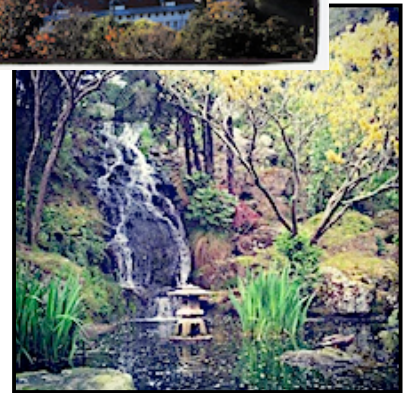
**Day 1 & 2, March 4 & 5:** Depart your home city on Wednesday, March 4 with a destination of Wellington, New Zealand. You will skip March 5 as you cross the international date line, arriving on March 6, Day 3.

### Day 3: Friday 6 March. Wellington (D)

We will meet at our hotel foyer for introductions and a trip briefing before heading out to Cuba Street in the heart of Wellington's uptown dining, art and culture precinct for a welcome dinner together.

### Day 4: Saturday 7 March. Wellington

Sleep in and sleep off the jet-lag or stretch your legs on a morning guided hike (3 hours; 5 miles) from inner-city Wellington through colorful neighborhoods and quiet streets. We'll ride the cable-car up to the hill-top Botanical Gardens then walk down through historic Thorndon, home to NZ's government buildings. In the afternoon, you can take a self-guided wander through *Te Papa*, NZ's national museum, the nearby Wellington City Art Gallery and other places of interest. The evening is free for you to enjoy the biennial New Zealand Festival, which will be in full swing – live music and theatre options are available. [www.festival.co.nz](http://www.festival.co.nz)



### Day 5: Sunday 8 March. Wellington-Tongariro National Park

All aboard the Northern Explorer scenic train, which will take us from Wellington to Tongariro National Park. From our comfortable carriage with large windows and an open-air viewing area, we will be able to watch the southern half of NZ's North Island countryside slide by. [www.greatjourneysofnz.co.nz/northern-explorer](http://www.greatjourneysofnz.co.nz/northern-explorer)

In the afternoon: a guided hike in Tongariro National Park - a high-country wilderness of volcanoes, alpine tussock, beech forests and fast-flowing streams. (3 hours; 6 miles). In the evening, a group-meal in the Ruapehu Room of the historic Chateau Tongariro Hotel.

### Day 6: Monday 9 March. Tongariro National Park-Taupo

For those up for an early start and a long day's hike, a short transfer will deliver you to the start of the **Tongariro Alpine Crossing**, often described as New Zealand's best day-hike (8 hours; 12.5 miles, 2300 ft elevation, some rugged/volcanic terrain). This is a guided hike.





Everyone else: after a visit to the National Park Visitor Centre we'll head out on another guided hike in the Tongariro alpine wilderness (5 hours). As with all our hikes, a shorter option will be available). In the late afternoon a scenic drive takes us down from the mountains and around the shores of Taupo-nui-a-Tia, NZ's largest lake. Our accommodation is a minute's walk from the natural mineral pools of the Taupo Hot-Springs. Large public pools and smaller private pools remain open until 9.30pm.

#### **Day 7: Tuesday 10 March. Taupo-Coromandel Peninsula**

From Taupo we'll drive a short way before stopping off to walk among the geysers and boiling mud-pools of Wai-o-Tapu park, one of the most extensive geothermal systems in New Zealand. [www.waiotapu.co.nz](http://www.waiotapu.co.nz)

The scenic drive continues north to the Bay of Plenty, then along the Pacific Ocean coast to reach Coromandel Peninsula. In the late afternoon: a hike to Cathedral Cove, widely regarded as one of NZ's most beautiful beaches. (Hike duration: 2 hours; 4 miles).



#### **Day 8: Wednesday 11 March. Coromandel Peninsula**

Short, scenic drives along quiet back-roads lead to short and long hikes along unspoiled, undeveloped coastal stretches and beautiful swimming beaches. On our way back to our accommodation we'll stop in for dinner at Purangi winery/brewery/pizzeria - world-famous on the peninsula.

[www.purangi.co.nz](http://www.purangi.co.nz)

#### **Day 9: Thursday 12 March. Coromandel Peninsula – Devonport, Auckland**



We begin our day with a hike through the some of last remaining groves of the magnificent sequoia-size kauri forests that once covered the Coromandel hills. (3 hours). After lunch in the small port-town of Coromandel we'll board the ferry to Auckland.

We'll cruise through the sheltered waters of the Hauraki Gulf, passing many islands en-route. At downtown Auckland's bustling transit center we'll transfer to another ferry for a short hop to our

seaside accommodation in the elegant, gentrified neighborhood of Devonport.

#### **Day 10: Friday 13 March. Devonport-Russell, Bay of Islands**

After a morning stroll around Devonport we'll drive north to the Bay of Islands, stopping off twice along the way to hike beautiful coastal and forest trails. We'll settle in for three nights in Russell, NZ's first capital, once known as 'the hell-hole of the South Pacific', now a well-preserved, historic township with lots of character and charm.

**Day 11: Saturday 14 March. Bay of Islands**

In the morning we'll hike a forest-trail from the Bay of Islands through to Whangamumu, a naturally-protected cove on the Pacific Ocean coast. (3 hours; 5 miles). In the afternoon: free-time to follow the well marked Russell Heritage Trail at your own pace between historic sites and places of cultural significance, or take advantage of other activities in the area – biking, sea kayaking, fishing, golf, scenic cruises, scenic flights, and more!

**Day 12: Monday 15 March. Russell – Mangonui, Bay of Islands**

We continue northward, mostly on less-traveled back-roads, to the village of Mangonui, a once-bustling trading post, now a tranquil little township. En-route we'll hike the Mahinepua Peninsula trail (2 hours), and swim and picnic at the adjacent beach. In the afternoon we'll learn more about the area's history at Butlers' Bay whaling museum and Rangikapiti historic reserve. After checking in to our accommodation, we'll take a stroll around picturesque, laid-back Mangonui.

**Day 13: Tuesday 16 March. Bay of Islands, Ninety Mile Beach (D)**

Today we'll drive north along the famed Ninety Mile Beach to reach Tapotupotu Bay. After a picnic lunch and the opportunity for a swim we'll hike (3 hours; 3 miles) to NZ's northernmost point, Cape Reinga, where the Tasman Sea meets the Pacific Ocean. Return to Mangonui. In the evening, we will enjoy a special end-of-trip group meal together at a restaurant near to our accommodation.

**Day 14: Wednesday 17 March. Trip finish at Bay of Islands or Auckland.**

Following breakfast we'll drive to Bay of Islands airport. Group members can choose to leave the trip here and organise their own onward travel by hire-car, bus or air. Flights connect Bay of Islands with Auckland International Airport several times a day. *This option may suit those joining the AMC Australia tour which starts in Sydney at 1:00pm tomorrow, Thursday 18 March.* You can also choose to travel 3 hours onward by vehicle to Auckland with the guides, with drop-offs available at Auckland's central transit center and international airport.

**Fitness Level, Equipment and Accommodations:**

**Activity ratings:** This trip slants toward a gentle feel and will incorporate a range of hiking activities and options, from easy/moderate (2-3) for daily hikes with long and short hike options for the more ambitious travelers. For those eager to complete the

**Tongariro Alpine Crossing (12.5 miles, elevation 2300 ft, 8 hours), you will find the day to be long and vigorous (4).**



**Accommodations will be in 3-4 star inns, hotels and apartments along the way. Meals will be in local restaurants or self-prepared from groceries purchased on days we are staying in apartments with kitchens. Though it is difficult to book a group this size into one restaurant, every attempt will be made to keep each other's company during mealtimes.**

*Each of our day hikes, activities and options are described on their respective days in the Daily Itinerary above. Hikes are on mostly well-trod, maintained and marked trails varying in distance from 4-8 miles, with mild to moderate elevation gains. Those wishing to make the Tongariro Alpine Crossing full day hike must show experience and fitness commensurate with the demands of the day, as assessed by the guides and leaders. A less strenuous activity will be available on that day for those who do not wish to do the Crossing.*

*Fitness and skill levels should be adequate for any outdoor activities of the types described herein. Some rocky or uneven terrain may be encountered, though in general, our paths will be through forested lands, along beaches and seacoasts, and in cityscapes and towns. You will need sturdy hiking boots or trail shoes, appropriate and supportive for day hiking on varied terrain, and a daypack suitable for carrying lunch, water, warm layers, and a small personal emergency kit. You may also wish to bring light sneakers or hiking sandals for the lighter days and city, beach/dune walking. Hiking poles are optional but recommended, especially for those choosing the longer hikes or the Tongariro Alpine Crossing.*

*Take note that this trip includes a train ride, two ferry rides (in protected waters) and van rides of up to 4 hours on some days. If you have problems with motion sickness please discuss this with the leaders before applying. There are several natural or prescriptive preventatives you may consider.*

*Clothing should be suited for "all-weather" as the climate in New Zealand is varied and changeable in all seasons. We will be visiting coastal forests and beaches, volcanic alpine regions, and rain forests. Participants should bring a light base layer, hiking pants with removable or roll-up legs, layering for the torso, including a warm layer of wool or fleece, hiking socks, gloves and hat, raingear, and a swimsuit. Each participant should carry with them at all times an appropriate water supply, snacks or lunch, a personal first aid kit, and an active cell phone.*

*When you participate in this trip, you should be in proper condition for the challenges outlined in this prospectus and equipped with the appropriate gear as noted above. You should always be aware of the risks involved and conduct yourself accordingly. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety. Prior to your acceptance as a participant on this trip, you will be asked to discuss your capabilities and experience with us. We may also request references to confirm your fitness level and suitability for participating in the trip.*

*This trip is designed so that everyone may experience our New Zealand Northlands adventure through shared participation in activities and tasks in an organized group environment. AMC travelers are known for their cooperative efforts and camaraderie. Expectations are that all participants will be considerate of others sharing this AMC Adventure Travel experience.*

*It may happen on any trip that a participant is or becomes unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities. AMC Trip Leaders in their sole judgment, have the right and obligation to refuse participation in any activity to any group member for reasons of safety, whether it is of the group or of the individual. Examples of some conditions that might result in a participant's being unable to perform one or more activities include illness, injury, lack of proper gear, or inappropriate fitness level. Leaders may try to find a substitute activity for the trip member, but this may not always be possible.*

### **TRIP PRICE: US\$5,285**

(Though every effort is made to estimate all costs of a trip conservatively – often as much as two years in advance, the price may fluctuate up or down due to exchange rates at time of invoice payments, unanticipated inflation, or other unforeseen expenses.)

#### **THE TRIP PRICE INCLUDES:**

- New Zealand guides traveling with the group throughout as logistics managers, driver and nature-guide.
- 11 nights accommodation in a combination of 3-4 star hotel/inn accommodations with en-suite facilities, apartments and cottages with addition of fully equipped kitchens and some with dining/lounge areas.
- 2 three-course group dinners and a meal allowance cash card valued at US\$300 (approximately NZ\$470)
- One-way train-travel from Wellington to Tongariro National Park on the scenic Northern Explorer.
- One-way ferry-travel from Coromandel Peninsula to Auckland and continuation to Devonport.
- All necessary vehicle transport from Wellington on 6 March through to the drop-offs at either Bay of Islands or Auckland on 17 March.

**Also included:** Experienced AMC-AT leaders certified for CPR and Wilderness First Aid, emergency medical services and medical evacuation travel insurance, 24x7 emergency worldwide assistance, and 24x7 AMC-AT emergency telephone support.

#### **PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:**

- International airfare, which will be purchased independently by participants with leader assistance
- Meals except group dinners specified on itinerary (There will be opportunities to purchase groceries on days when our accommodations include kitchens.)
- Any entrance fees to museums, gardens, or facilities not specified on the Daily Itinerary
- Optional excursions such as scenic flights, bike-riding, sea-kayaking, etc. available on days with free time



- Personal expenses such as laundry, snacks, special order beverages with included meals, phone and internet charges, etc.
- Additionally: tips for guides, cancellation charges, lost baggage, medical and evacuation insurance beyond that provided in AMC-AT trip price, and trip cancellation/interruption insurance.

The trip is designed for 14-16 participants and two AMC leaders. If the trip cannot attain its minimum of 14 people, it will be run as a small group with one AMC leader and one guide/driver.

**APPLICATION AND DEPOSITS:** *To apply, you must complete and submit a Participant Application Package, available from the trip leaders, and a **registration deposit of \$3,000**, \$100 of which is non-refundable should you decide for any reason to withdraw your deposit (except as stated below). Your application will be subject to a full screening, including contacting your references and conducting a brief phone interview. A spot on the roster is not assured until this process has been completed and you have been notified. Once your roster spot is confirmed, your check will be deposited. Until the trip is declared a go and you receive an official notification of acceptance, your deposit will be fully refunded should you need to cancel. **A final payment of \$2,285 is due November 1, 2019.** Please make payments by check payable to the "Appalachian Mountain Club" and mail to the address shown on the Participant Application.*



**CANCELLATION POLICY:** The AMC Adventure Travel cancellation policy is based on the intent that your cancellation may not raise the cost to the other participants or to the leaders. If expenses already incurred on your behalf, and any unavoidable future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration and cancellation, cannot be applied to another suitable participant, they will be assessed to you and subtracted from any refund. If the leaders are able to replace you, you may be charged a

reduced or zero penalties. In some cases, this may not be determined until *after* the trip. Please refer to medical evacuation insurance info in the section above, "This Trip Includes." This is the **only** insurance provided in your AMC trip price.

*Airline tickets may be non-refundable in accordance with the terms of the tickets you purchase for international travel.*



**Travel Insurance:** *No one expects to cancel or interrupt a planned trip, or to incur costs due to emergency medical expenses or lost luggage while traveling. However, such events do occur. If you are at all concerned about this possibility, or can't afford to lose any funds you have paid in, **we highly recommend you purchase travel insurance.** (Review Cancellation Policy regarding refunds!) Policy information will be supplied to all participants upon acceptance into the trip. You may use any travel insurance company of your choosing, but if you use AMC's agency you can receive special provisions like Waiver of Pre-Existing Conditions, Acts of Terrorism, etc. free or at a discount if purchased within a set timeframe.*

## Your AMC Leaders



**Janis Stahlhut**, a lifelong outdoor enthusiast, has been an AMC-AT leader since 2009 and is also a Connecticut Chapter hike and bike leader. She has led and co-led AT hiking and biking trips to Cape Cod, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Sicily, Spain, France, Italy, Finland, Norway, South America and New Zealand. Having spent 15 years as a marketing and public policy specialist for major telecommunications firms, followed by 15 years as an exercise programming specialist, Janis now enjoys being retired, teaching exercise classes part time, writing, and leading adventure travel trips.



**Merri Fox** is a software specialist at a major CT aircraft engine company. Because she loves sharing her favorite outdoor destinations, over the past 22 years she has led hiking, snorkeling and cultural excursions in Belize, Paris, Hawaii, Arizona, the Tetons, Switzerland, California, Utah, New Zealand, and the Virgin Islands. Merri leads local hikes in CT, participates in training programs for new leaders, and serves as secretary for the AMC's Adventure Travel Committee. Merri lives with husband Rance in NW Connecticut, where she enjoys gardening, cooking, and entertaining guests.

As leaders our goals for the group are to have fun, utilize and enhance your skills, and savor a unique environment at reasonable cost in the company of other adventurers with similar interests. *AMC Adventure Travel trips are run in a manner supportive of and consistent with the traditions, principles and mission of the Club. Trip leaders encourage participant conduct consistent with Leave No Trace environmental and conservation principles and local regulations. Though AMC membership is not a requirement to participate, we hope that through your experience, you will be inspired to join and support an organization devoted to wilderness stewardship.*

*Please be aware that, in accordance with AMC AT policy, you are subsidizing the leaders' costs. Beyond this, the leaders are not allowed to realize any profit from this excursion. The trip price also includes an AMC administrative overhead fee to help cover the club's expenses of offering Adventure Travel excursions.*

*The price for this excursion is based on quotes or estimates obtained at the time the trip was submitted to the Adventure Travel Committee for approval, up to two years in advance. Trip participants will share any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases we incur. Our cost estimates are conservative, and so a refund is considerably more likely than a price increase. All AMC Adventure Travel trips are run on a non-profit basis and refunds, if any, are issued after the trip's financial accounting is complete.*

For more information or an application package please contact: Janis Stahlhut [jstahlhut@me.com](mailto:jstahlhut@me.com), 203-820-9275 or Merri Fox, [rbfox1949@gmail.com](mailto:rbfox1949@gmail.com), 860-485-1697, between the hours of 9am and 9pm.