NEW ZEALAND
BY RAIL, ROAD AND SEA

With Robert Kingsford Smith

18th March - 6th April 2018

- AUCKLAND - ROTORUA - WELLINGTON - BLENHEIM - CHRISTCHURCH -
- FRANZ JOSEF - QUEENSTOWN - WANAKA - DUNEDIN -
OVERVIEW

Unrivalled natural beauty, surreal sceneries, living century-old traditions, astounding food—these are just some of New Zealand’s unique and fascinating traits. Add to this an extensive rail network with an abundance of spectacular journeys, and you have all the ingredients for an unsurpassed adventure.

The North Island will welcome you with its vibrant cities, rich Maori culture and geothermal wonders. As you cross to the South, you'll find yourself in a world of towering mountains, blissful lakes, majestic glaciers and pristine forests, untouched by time.

This tour makes the most of the offerings on both islands, with train journeys and luxury coach connections linking the major wine regions, heritage sites, cities and natural landscapes in one compact adventure.

WHY TRAVEL WITH US

The joy of travelling is no longer confined to the destination—the mode of travel is a large part of the experience. Railway Adventures offers a truly unique perspective on some of the world’s most spectacular holiday destinations, with the assurance that the journey is just as magical and unforgettable as what is discovered at the end of the line.

With us, you can confidently expect:

• Small group sizes — a maximum of 20 passengers per trip guarantees an intimate experience with less time spent queuing, more time with your guide, and better access to sightseeing destinations.

• Unique itineraries — each itinerary has been meticulously developed by a team with great cultural awareness and many years’ knowledge of each destination. You are guaranteed to experience the best that each destination has to offer.

• Authentic local experiences — whether it’s a little-known yet impressive steam railway, a small boutique hotel or an authentic restaurant, know that you will experience something special on our tours.

• Expert local guides and local operators — we employ local guides to share their passion and knowledge of the places they call home, while our partners on the ground offer us support and backup all the way.

• Customer satisfaction — our testimonials speak for themselves. Thousands have travelled with us over the years and many come back year after year, often bringing friends along! On our customer satisfaction ratings, over 97% would recommend us to others and/or travel with us again.

• Fully escorted — our team of tour leaders is experienced and capable, entertaining and considerate, and together with our local guides, has your needs well covered. They will help with everything along the way, giving you the peace of mind to soak up your surroundings. And you’ll find them jolly good company to boot!

TRAIN TRAVEL IN NEW ZEALAND

• The Northern Explorer will take you on a journey across the North Island, through green farmland and bush, past quaint country towns and volcanic landscapes, showcasing great examples of iconic engineering along the way.

• The TranzAlpine traverses the Staircase Gorge, Waimakariri River, Arthur’s Pass and the depths of the Otira Tunnel, (New Zealand’s longest tunnel), on one of the great railway journeys in the World.

• The Taieri Gorge travels through a dramatic landscape. Natural wonders are blended with spectacular engineering on this journey; a wonderful example of the sheer determination of early railway pioneers.

• Heritage Railways with an eclectic mix of experiences and exhibits, including the narrow-gauge Driving Creek Railway, Glenbrook Vintage Railway and Pleasant Point Railway

MEET YOUR TOUR LEADER

Robert Kingsford-Smith - Since the 1960s, Robert has expanded a childhood passion for railways, and so began a quest to record on film the world’s disappearing steam locomotives. His often adventurous travels have taken him to over forty countries. The resulting photographs and articles have appeared in numerous Australian and overseas publications. Robert has led groups of like-minded enthusiasts on tours to places as diverse as South America, Pakistan and South Africa and more recently has been the celebrated tour leader on many Railway Adventure tours through Outback Queensland and also India. A passion for history and wildlife is well served on his travels and he combines his many interests with regular and extensive train travel.
HIGHLIGHTS

- Astounding train travel on the TranzAlpine, the Northern Explorer, the Taieri Gorge Railway and many exclusively chartered heritage railways
- Visit the fascinating museums of Te Papa, the Otago Settlers, MOTAT and the Rotorua Museum
- Traverse lakes and sea's on the renowned ‘Earnslaw’ steamship, the ‘Interislander Ferry’ and the scenic ‘360 Discovery’ to the Coromandel
- Discover New Zealand’s quirky side at the futuristic Steampunk HQ exhibition in Oamaru, Peter Jackson’s own WW1 aircraft exhibition, the Living Maori Village and the grand Larnach Castle and Gardens in Dunedin
- Enjoy delicious meals at local restaurants and wineries, including a welcome dinner at the revolving SKYCITY in Auckland and lunch at Wairau River Wines in Blenheim
- Embark on optional excursions, including an exhilarating glacier helicopter ride
- Enjoy a full day at the 30th anniversary of the renowned Warbirds over Wanaka Airshow
- Navigate the North and South islands in our comfortable, exclusively chartered coach for the entirety of the journey

HOW YOU WILL TRAVEL

The best train trips possible, private luxury coach for off-train travel and many other appealing ways to travel. Here’s a selection:

TranzAlpine  Interislander Ferry  Driving Creek Railway
DAY 1: Sunday 18th March 2018 – AUCKLAND
Arrive in Auckland and join Robert and your fellow travellers for a welcome reception, followed by dinner at the Orbit 360° Restaurant in the revolving SKYCITY tower. Experience a delicious dinner, whilst taking in 360-degree views of the city.
Overnight: Rydges Auckland, (D)

DAY 2: Monday 19th Mar – AUCKLAND
After breakfast at the hotel, embark on a morning sightseeing tour of Auckland, exploring the harbour, history and character, leading to a visit to MOTAT (Museum Of Transport And Technology). After time for a lunch, we’ll take a train from the suburb of Papakura to Pukekohe, before transferring in our coach to Glenbrook for a special steam train charter on the Glenbrook Vintage Railway to the historic harbour town of Waiuku. The one-hour round trip includes a private visit to the workshop and complementary afternoon tea.
As the sun sets, return to our hotel for an evening at leisure.
Overnight: Rydges Auckland, (B)

DAY 3: Tuesday 20th Mar – AUCKLAND – Rotorua
We farewell Auckland and continue our adventure on a relaxing two-hour ferry ride to the Coromandel peninsula, through the scenic Hauraki Gulf. Take some time to explore this charming little town with its unique character, laid-back lifestyle and beautiful nature. Enjoy lunch at the Driving Creek Café. Just north of the café is the Driving Creek Railway (New Zealand’s only narrow gauge mountain railway). Our one-hour return trip around the mountains takes us through native Kauri forest where intriguing pottery sculptures line the track. Spiraling up the hill, the journey peaks with panoramic views of the island spotted Hauraki Gulf. Following this trip, we’ll travel on by coach to Rotorua where we’ll settle into our hotel and enjoy a local dinner.
Overnight: Novotel Lakeside Hotel Rotorua, (B, L, D)

DAY 4: Wednesday 21st Mar – Rotorua
Enjoy a day exploring the unique culture and natural wonders of this town with your Rotorua Trilogy pass. First up we visit the Rotorua Museum and learn about the history of the area and the fascinating Maori culture. Our next stop is the living Maori village, Whakarewarewa, where you’ll experience the way the village lives on a daily basis; how they cook their food, bathe and heat their homes. Witness the Haka, as well as a traditional Maori cultural performance. A Hangi lunch will also be included during our visit. Later on, we’ll visit Waimangu Volcanic Valley, the World’s youngest geothermal system created by an eruption in 1886. A protected scenic reserve and wildlife refuge, this geothermal park is set in pristine New Zealand bush and showcases natural volcanic wonders. Take a guided tour of the valley or explore this spectacular area on your own. This afternoon you’ll have the option to pamper yourself at the Polynesian Spa, set in pristine New Zealand bush and showcases natural volcanic wonders. Take a guided tour of the valley or explore this spectacular area on your own.
Overnight: Novotel Lakeside Hotel Rotorua, (B, L)

DAY 5: Thursday 22nd Mar – Rotorua – Wellington
We’ll have an early start this morning boarding our coach for a scenic drive through the surreal landscapes of the central island. Here, ancient lava flows and dense beech forests can be seen alongside each other. Enjoy breathtaking views of the spectacular Mount Tongariro, Mount Ngauruhoe (Mount Doom in The Lord of the Rings) and the still active Mount Ruapehu as you travel onward to the National Park Village. After some time to wander and have lunch on your own, board the Northern Explorer Train at 1pm and continue to discover the breathtaking mountain landscapes from the vantage point of your panoramic carriages. This train trip takes you through green farmland and bush, past little country towns and along rocky coasts, and showcases examples of iconic engineering.
We finish our journey in Wellington at around 6:30pm, and will enjoy dinner at our hotel’s quirky, signature French restaurant, Hippopotamus.
Overnight: Museum Art Hotel Wellington, (B, D)

DAY 6: Friday 23rd Mar – Wellington
Today we embark on a full-day excursion of this wonderful capital city, including a chance to ride the historic Wellington Cable Car, which is actually a funicular railway, from the heart of the city centre, up through the hillside terraced houses of Kelburn to the lookout perched high above the city. Here, take some time to explore the 25-hectare Wellington Botanic Gardens and possibly enjoy lunch at the café. You might also like to visit the nifty Cable Car Museum. An early afternoon visit to the wonderful Te Papa Museum reveals the history and culture of this magnificent country. The museum showcases Maori and Pacific cultural treasures, New Zealand’s extraordinary natural life and its most important works of art. Dinner is at your leisure tonight. As you enjoy your evening, you may want to make a stop at the Carter Observatory and its Space Place.
Overnight: Museum Art Hotel Wellington, (B)

DAY 7: Saturday 24th Mar – Wellington
Enjoy a free day today to explore Wellington on your own. You may want to do some shopping in the city centre or visit more of the city’s museums, memorials and galleries. You may wish to join Robert on a half-day rail tour to the town of Featherston on the local Wairarapa line, which passes the 8.8km long Rimutaka Tunnel (New Zealand’s 2nd longest tunnel). Here we’ll pay a visit to the Fell Locomotive Museum and discover an abundance of rail history and technology, including the H199, the only locomotive of its type in the world. Following this, travel a short way to Upper Hut, where we’ll visit the eclectic collection of the Silver Stream Railway. Enjoy an exclusively chartered ride on the RM30 diesel railcar. On your return to Wellington, you may wish to join Robert for a visit to the Great War Exhibition; a project that takes a wide and chronological look at the Great War. Enjoy this evening and dinner at your leisure.
Overnight: Museum Art Hotel Wellington, (B)
DAY 8: Sunday 25th Mar – WELLINGTON – BLENHEIM
Today we board the Interislander for a journey described as, “one of the most spectacular ferry rides in the world”. Departing at 9am, we’ll journey across the Cook Straight to Picton, where we’ll board our coach for a short drive to Blenheim. Here enjoy lunch at one of the area’s beautiful local winery restaurants. Delicious lunch had and beautiful wine drunk, we’ll then take a trip on the cute little narrow-gauge Riverside Railway from Brashshaw to Omaka. Here we’ll visit the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre and the outstanding Knights of the Sky exhibition, including Sir Peter Jackson’s own WW1 aircraft and artifact collection. Check into our hotel in Blenheim later in the evening, and enjoy dinner at Raupo Café in our private dining area.
Overnight: Blenheim Palms Motel (B, L, D)

DAY 9: Monday 26th Mar – BLENHEIM – CHRISTCHURCH
Board our coach this morning for a superbly scenic drive to Christchurch, making stops along the way including Weka Pass Railway. We’ll arrive in this city in the afternoon and check in to our hotel, with time to relax and freshen up before enjoying a sumptuous dinner later in the evening.
Overnight: Rydges Latimer Christchurch, (B, D)

DAY 10: Tuesday 27th Mar – CHRISTCHURCH
Hit by devastating earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, Christchurch lost many of its heritage buildings and churches. However, it’s being rebuilt and the city is as vibrant as ever, with its open air markets, retail precinct and innovative Cardboard Cathedral. We start the day with a half-day city tour. Our first stop is the Ferrymead Heritage Park, an early 1900s (Edwardian) township complete with its own school, church, jail, railway station and more. We’ll continue on to the International Antarctic Centre where we’ll learn about life in modern day Antarctica and the Scott Base, hang out with Little Blue Penguins and even experience (and survive!) an Antarctic storm. After lunch, embark on a punting tour on the Avon River. Watch the Christchurch Botanic Gardens and the changing face of the city centre glide past as you are expertly and gently guided on an authentic Edwardian punting boat.
The rest of the evening is free to spend at your leisure.
Overnight: Rydges Latimer Christchurch, (B, L)

DAY 11: Wednesday 28th Mar – CHRISTCHURCH
Enjoy a free day exploring more of this charming city.
Overnight: Rydges Latimer Christchurch, (B)

DAY 12: Thursday 29th Mar – CHRISTCHURCH – FRANZ JOSEF
Check out early today and board the TranzAlpine train to Greymouth on the West Coast. This is described as one of the great railway journeys of the world, traversing the Staircase Gorge, Waimakariri River, Arthur’s Pass and the depths of the Otira Tunnel, (New Zealand’s longest tunnel running under the Southern Alps for over 8.5 kilometres.)
Arrive in Greymouth at around 1pm and take a short drive to the popular heritage park, Shantytown. Here, you’ll have time to enjoy lunch and explore the living museum. Take a ride on the vintage steam train and experience gold panning in the alluvial streams that flow through the area. Franz Josef will be our next stop. We’ll travel by coach along the scenic West Coast to arrive in the late afternoon.
Overnight: Aspen Court Franz Josef, (B, D)

DAY 13: Friday 30th Mar – FRANZ JOSEF – QUEENSTOWN
Enjoy your morning at leisure today with an option of going on a 20-minute glacier helicopter ride. This ride showcases the incredible glaciers, snow and ice from above; exhilarating, scenic and thrilling, it is an unforgettable experience. We depart Franz Josef for Queenstown mid morning, heading down the picturesque West Coast, and stopping for a lunch of fresh salmon at the Salmon Farm Café. We’ll also make a stop at the Haast River to enjoy an exclusive one-hour jet boat ride, described as one of the top things to do in New Zealand. Continue through stunning mountain landscapes to Queenstown, where we’ll check into our hotel, relax and enjoy dinner.
Overnight: Novotel Lakeside Queenstown (B, L, D)

DAY 14: Saturday 31st Mar – QUEENSTOWN
After a leisurely breakfast at the hotel, set out to explore the Queenstown area. Visit Arrowtown, a historic gold mining village that has retained around 70 authentic buildings, monuments and features from the gold rush era. Lunch today is at a popular local winery. Back in Queenstown in the early afternoon, enjoy some downtime for shopping, exploring and relaxing. We re-group for an unforgettable steamship cruise on Lake Wakatipu. The TSS Earnslaw, built in 1912, has recently been restored to its original condition. Today, it’s the only coal-fired steamship in operation in the southern hemisphere, and has even been featured in several movies! This cruise is described as ‘undoubtedly one of the best ways to experience Queenstown’s famed scenic beauty.’ Have a drink at the bar, enjoy a snack at the café, and visit the engine room and mini-museum. The evening is yours to spend at leisure. You may want to enjoy dinner on the atmospheric steamer wharf or explore more of the city centre.
Overnight: Novotel Lakeside Queenstown (B, L)
DAY 15: Sunday 1st Apr - QUEENSTOWN- WANAKA- QUEENSTOWN

Today, choose to continue exploring Queenstown at leisure, or embark on an optional day trip to the iconic Warbirds Over Wanaka Airshow. Browse the static aircraft displays and aviation trade stands, enjoy the market stalls and music, and witness the astounding airshow. This air display spans the whole day, showcasing aerobatics, skydiving, sport aircraft and much more. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the airshow, and stretching over Easter, it’s looking to be a momentous event. Later in the evening, return to the hotel and enjoy dinner and time to relax at your leisure.

Overnight: Novotel Lakeside Queenstown (B)

DAY 16: Monday 2nd Apr - QUEENSTOWN

Enjoy the option to either spend some time at leisure in Queenstown today, exploring or relaxing, or return once again to the Warbirds over Wanaka Airshow, where there will be more air displays and entertainment to enjoy.

Overnight: Novotel Lakeside Queenstown (B)

DAY 17: Tuesday 3rd Apr – QUEENSTOWN – DUNEDIN

After breakfast, farewell Queenstown and travel by coach to Hayes Engineering Works and Homestead, the legacy of English immigrants Ernest and Hannah Hayes, who settled in Central Otago after their arrival in 1882. Explore their historic homestead and workshop, and enjoy lunch at your leisure in the little café before moving on. Pukerangi is the departure point for our unforgettable experience on the Taieri Gorge Railway as we head into Dunedin. The train negotiates the gorge with ease as it travels through ten tunnels and over countless bridges and viaducts. Natural wonders are blended with spectacular engineering on this journey; a wonderful example of the sheer determination of early railway pioneers. We arrive in the Scottish-influenced city of Dunedin in the evening to enjoy a local dinner.

Overnight: The Distinction Dunedin, (B, D)

DAY 18: Wednesday 4th Apr – DUNEDIN

Dunedin is New Zealand’s largest city by area and perhaps the most spectacular in terms of divergent landscapes. Spend a half-day touring this unique city beginning with a visit to the historic Larnach Castle and Gardens, stunningly situated overlooking Otago Harbour. Continue on to the Royal Albatross Centre, the only mainland breeding colony of Royal Albatross in the world. Take a guided tour of this inspiring conservation project, as well as the historic Taiaroa Fort. Next, we’ll explore the fascinating Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, which highlights the culture, history, character, technology and art of the Otago province. Wander the exhibits and enjoy lunch in the museum’s café in your own time. The evening is free for you to enjoy. Perhaps stroll around to Speight’s Brewery (producing ale since 1876) or, if chocolate is more to your taste, pay a visit to Cadbury World.

Overnight: The Distinction Dunedin, (B)

DAY 19: Thursday 5th Apr – DUNEDIN – CHRISTCHURCH

On the last day of our tour we’ll depart Dunedin early and head back to Christchurch by coach. On the way, we stop at Oamaru, a gorgeous harbour town famous for some of New Zealand’s best 19th century architecture. Here, enjoy lunch in your own time and pay a visit to the artistic Steampunk HQ in the Victorian precinct of Oamaru. This gallery houses retro-futuristic sci-fi art, movies, sculpture, immersive light and sound experiences. Our next stop is the Pleasant Point Railway, where we’ll enjoy an exclusively chartered ride on their impressive little steam train. We’ll celebrate the success of our tour with a farewell dinner on the Christchurch tramway restaurant, a colonial-style dining tram, incorporating fine food with city sightseeing on the reconstructed, historic tram network.

Overnight: Rydges Latimer Christchurch, (B, D)

DAY 20: Friday 6th Apr – DEPART CHRISTCHURCH

After breakfast, we say goodbye to New Zealand’s South Island and our friends. Transfers to the airport are provided for onward connections to Australia or beyond.

PRICE

Per person twin share.................................$10,945
Single supplement.................................$2,795
Deposit (per person) ..................$1000 at time of booking
Final payment due by ..............18 January 2018

INCLUSIONS

• 19 nights accommodation in comfortable, centrally located 3-4 star hotels
• Many meals as specified in the program
• Drinks included with welcome and farewell dinners
• Exclusive charter of the Glenbrook Vintage Railway and Pleasant Point Railway
• Luxury chartered coach, with luggage transport throughout the tour
• Comprehensive sightseeing with expert local guides
• All excursions and entrance fees to attractions, as listed in the itinerary

EXCLUSIONS

• International flights
• Airport transfers on arrival and departure
• Meals and services not mentioned in itinerary
• All other personal expenses such as drinks, phone calls, laundry services, camera fees where applicable
• Excursions listed as optional and extra in the brochure

Warbirds Over Wanaka Airshow

Queenstown Lookout
SUGGESTED FLIGHTS
We have suggested flights for this itinerary depending on your departure point from Australia, any preferred stopovers en-route and/or your planned pre- and post-tour activities. We can also investigate your preferred airline and offer you a solution based on connection times and prices. Contact 1300 733 323 to discuss your options.

HOW TO BOOK
Download a booking form from our website and follow the easy steps to getting on board. Alternatively, contact Platinum Travel & Tours on 1300 733 323 or enquiries@platinumtravel.com if you’d prefer a form be sent to you.

Complete the form and submit it, along with your $1000 pp deposit to secure your place on the tour.

DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE
We endeavour to have all the details of our tours correct at the time of printing. However, sometimes factors beyond our control may affect the final inclusions and prices. These factors may include, but not be limited to: significant fluctuations in currency exchange rates, individual hotel/restaurant decisions that may affect bookings; weather events forcing a change of itinerary; unexpected trackwork on rail lines, unexpected closure of site attractions and so forth. Therefore, items mentioned in the brochure such as quoted prices, hotels and inclusions are subject to change. If a change is imposed on us, we will endeavour to ensure the substitute is of the same quality that you’ve paid for.

TOUR PACE / LEVEL OF FITNESS:
Our itineraries are designed to make the most of each destination, so a reasonable amount of activity is built into most days, which is why we call them adventures. Our philosophy is to offer you the best experience possible, while leaving you, our guest, the flexibility to pace yourself and choose how much or how little you want to do. Each Railway Adventures tour incorporates periods of free time for your own exploration and relaxation. While you don’t need to be a ‘gym junky’, a reasonable level of fitness is required for most of our tours.

The ability to manage your own luggage, get on and off all manner of trains and coaches, walk for extended periods, stand comfortably, and climb steps and stairs will ensure you get the maximum enjoyment from your adventure.

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS
In addition to assisting with flight suggestions and bookings, we can also give you some ideas of what you could do before and after your Railway Adventure. We can also organise your all-important Travel Insurance for you. Call our office on 1300 733 323 if you would like to discuss options.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS
For more information on factors such as travel insurance requirements, fitness levels, fees and charges, tour cancellations, payment schedules and so on, please refer to our Terms and Conditions, which accompany the booking form. They can also be found on our website.

WHERE YOU WILL STAY
Hand-picked hotels and resorts based on location, customer feedback, value and atmosphere. Here’s a selection;
A passion for train travel can manifest itself in many ways. Founder and director of Railway Adventures, Scott McGregor, has made much of his obsession over the years. “Travelling to boarding school on the Mudgee Mail gave me a sense of how an active social life and long-distance trains can be a good combination.”

Building a rural retreat out of a collection of vintage railway carriages in the early 1980s gave Scott a new perspective on rail heritage. During this time, he also operated his first tour—The Antipodean Renaissance Express—an experience he has never forgotten. Trading in vintage memorabilia and furniture sourced largely from the railways was also a source of great inspiration. Scott travelled far and wide trading and collecting for his Sydney shop, Off The Rails.

Hosting a couple of TV documentary series about great train journeys paved the way for leading his own train journeys. Once just an enjoyable part-time hobby, “getting paid to do what I love” has, naturally enough, led to a more substantial commitment and ultimately the launch of Scott’s own dedicated train travel and touring company.

“Thoroughly rewarding trip. Well constructed itinerary including both railway interest and a diverse variety of heritage sites...a most enjoyable journey.”

- Murray, AUCKLAND, NZ