



# First Light Marathon Optional Extension

HOBBITON & BAY OF PLENTY  
FULL ITINERARY



15 TO 18 JANUARY 2024

4 DAYS

DOUBLE/TWIN

\$ 1559 AUD

SINGLE

\$ 2076 AUD

Explore the magical Hobbiton from Lord of the Rings, get lost in Hamilton Gardens, relax at Bay of Plenty and enjoy a unique farm stay.



## Day 1 - 15 January 2024: Welcome to Auckland. City Tour

Welcome to Auckland! All participants will arrive in Auckland and find their own way to their hotel for the night at Grand Millennium, Auckland. With its approximately 1.3 million inhabitants, Auckland is home to almost a third of New Zealand's population. The city is located on a narrow landmark with water on both sides - the Pacific Ocean to the East and the Tasman Sea to the west - and is thus a true mecca for sailors.

The city is affectionately known as the 'City of Sails' due to Aucklanders' love of sailing and other water sports. Auckland is built on 50 extinct volcanoes; and while most of them are miniature in size, as green hilltops or even completely invisible, the three largest - Mount Albert, Mount Eden, and One Tree Hill - reign over the landscape.

You will explore the exciting city of Auckland through a bus tour, starting from the hotel at 2pm. The route will take you through the cozy suburbs of Parnell, with old, well-restored houses as well as small restaurants and galleries. You will visit the renowned Bastion Point for panoramic views of the city and the sparkling Hauraki Gulf.

After returning to the hotel, the rest of the evening is at leisure for you to explore the wonders of Auckland further on your own.

*Meals: No meals included this day.*

To book or for more information contact Travelling Fit... Your Marathon Travel Specialists  
Phone +61 2 4385 2455 | [www.travellingfit.com](http://www.travellingfit.com) | Email: [sales@travellingfit.com](mailto:sales@travellingfit.com)

Please Note: All prices are quoted in Australian dollars and are based on a per person basis.  
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### Day 2 - 16 January 2024: Hamilton Gardens, The Hobbiton and overnight Farm Stay

After breakfast it's time to leave Auckland and travel over the Bombay Hills, where market gardens supply locals as well as export markets. Subsequently, the tour will continue along the east bank of the Waikato River, New Zealand's longest river, which runs through the cities of Hamilton, Cambridge and Ngāruawāhia.

In Hamilton you will visit the internationally recognised award-winning Hamilton Gardens for a self-guided tour through these stunning gardens. The unique theme of Hamilton Gardens is 'The story of gardens' which is explored through a series of five garden collections.

The Paradise Garden Collection is a highlight of the gardens and features a Chinese Scholars Garden, English Flower Garden, Japanese Garden of Contemplation, American Modernist Garden, Italian Renaissance Garden, and an Indian Char Bagh Garden. Alternatively, you might be intrigued by one of the Fantasy Gardens – the Tudor Garden; Tropical Garden; Concept Garden or the Mansfield Garden. Try not get lost in the many gardens because you don't want to miss out the next highlight of the tour - Hobbiton.

Now it's time to visit Middle-earth and the many adventures that await us therein. The exploration tour leads to the Hobbiton Movie Set, the bucolic setting for *The Shire* that featured in the Peter Jackson directed films, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*.

The journey begins with a guided tour as you traverse the picturesque 1,250 acre sheep farm with spectacular views across to the Kaimai Ranges. We will exit the car allowing the guide to escort you through the ten acre site recounting fascinating details of how the Hobbiton set was created. The Hobbit holes, Green Dragon Inn, Mill and other structures created for *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* films can be easily observed and it's possible to see how this beautiful piece of Waikato farmland was transformed into *The Shire* from Middle-earth. Upon completion of your tour, we will enjoy a complimentary beverage at the Green Dragon Inn.

This evening, meet your hosts for a unique overnight farm stay.

*Meals: Breakfast*

### Day 3 – 17 January 2024: Bay of Plenty - Scenic Cruise & enjoy the Mount

After breakfast you will regroup with your hosts before departing over the Kaimai ranges into the picturesque Bay of Plenty. Upon arrival, you will visit the town of Mt Maunganui, often referred to as The Mount by locals. The Mount is a laid-back suburb set on a peninsula surrounded by spectacular white sand beaches suitable for both swimming and surfing.

Perhaps most iconic is the mountain Mount Maunganui, or Mauao, which rises 232 meters from the sea. The walking tracks to the top of this extinct volcano provide 360 degree views which span the entire length of the Bay of Plenty. The tour starts with a scenic cruise around the area where you will enjoy its diverse topography; its untouched white sandy beaches, lush green forests, islands and small village settlements, contrasted with the highly developed port infrastructure. Occasionally, you may see some seasonal wildlife on your cruise such as blue penguins, sea birds or New Zealandic fur seals.

The afternoon is at leisure to spend at The Mount where you can relax on its glittering beaches, hike to the top of Mount Maunganui or go shopping in the many boutiques dotted along The Mount's main street.

Overnight at Trinity Wharf in Tauranga.

*Meals: Breakfast*

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### Day 4 – 18 January 2024: Gisborne

Following breakfast, you will depart to Gisborne. The route takes you along the east coast of the North Island where you will pass through the small towns of Matata and Thornton before reaching Whakatane. Whakatane is the heart of the eastern Bay of Plenty, as it aligns with its spectacular coastal shore and contains a rich cultural history. Here you will have time to purchase lunch before departing through the Waioeka Gorge.

As you arrive into the sunny township of Gisborne you will check into our chosen accommodation.

*Meals: Breakfast*

### *Inclusions:*

- 3 nights' accommodation
- Breakfast daily
- Transportation as per the itinerary
- City tour in Auckland
- Visit to Hamilton Gardens
- Hobbiton Tour
- Scenic Cruise Mt. Maunganui
- Tour Leader

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