



First Light Marathon Optional Extension

LAKES AND LEGENDS - ITINERARY



25 JAN TO 30 JAN 2027

6 DAYS

DOUBLE/TWIN

\$ 4359 AUD

SINGLE

\$ 5643 AUD

Get a taste of the many different sides of Aotearoa New Zealand on this exciting extension.

Explore beautiful natural landscapes, trek one of the most famous day hikes in the world and see the geological remnants of seismic activities with your own eyes.



Day 1 - 25 January: Tairāwhiti Gisborne to Rotorua

On the first day of the extension tour, you'll travel north through the scenic Waioeka Gorge before reaching Opotiki, and the lovely beach town of Ohope. From Whakatane, you'll travel along the Matata Straights before turning inland to arrive at Rotorua.

Due to its unique thermal and volcanic landscape and rich Māori culture, Rotorua is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most popular destinations. The town forms part of the geologically active "Pacific Ring of Fire," and the bubbling thermal activity just below Earth's crust is evident throughout the city, from natural hot springs to bubbling mud pools.

You will visit Lake Tikitapu. Famous for its striking colour, the lake is known as "Blue Lake" by the locals. There is an easy 1.5 hour walk the lake that offers good views of both Lake Tikitapu and the nearby Green Lake, Rotokakahi. The whole group will meet in the afternoon for a special Polynesian Spa experience. You will be driven coach out to Lake Spa, a deluxe hot mineral bathing and relaxation area that overlooks Lake Rotorua. Enjoy tranquil bathing and lake views in the four alkaline rock pools, each with different temperatures (from 36 °C to 42 °C). Sink into the serene environment as the sounds of waterfalls and reflections of the glistening water in the grotto relax you completely.

In the evening, guests will experience the warmth of the Māori people with a night of ceremonial rituals and storytelling. You will enter a replica pre-European Māori village, where you'll see the hangi pit opened and then enter the ancestral Meeting House to enjoy a powerful cultural performance featuring tribal songs, myths, legends, and dance, including the vigorous haka. You will also enjoy a hangi buffet dinner, cooked in the traditional way in an earth oven.

After dinner, you will be taken to your accommodation for the next two nights – Novotel Rotorua Lakeside.

Meals: Dinner.

To book or for more information contact Travelling Fit... Your Running Tours Specialists
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Please Note: All prices are quoted in Australian dollars and are based on a per person basis.
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Day 2 - 26 January: Rotorua

This morning, after breakfast, guests are free to choose what they would like to do. Two optional excursions will be on offer: zip-lining and river rafting.

Zip-lining: On this exciting adventure, you'll explore native forest on a 1,2km network of Rotorua ziplines, swing bridges, and treetop platforms. In total, there are 6 ziplines that total more than 650 meters. The highlight is the jaw-dropping, 220-meter Tui Son zipline that departs from 22 meters up a 1000 year-old tree. There are also two treetop swing bridges - the longest suspended a full 50 meters!

The treetop platforms are located at varying platforms to allow participants to pause and absorb the magic of the environment. Since 2012, the zip-lining operators have been working to restore the native forest in which they operate. With the help of every customer, the forest is flourishing in a mutually beneficial relationship. Come and forget about the real world for a few hours!

River rafting: Participants can experience the thrills and spills of the mighty Kaituna River and take on the world-famous Tutea Falls. Standing at 7 meters tall, the falls are the highest commercially rafted waterfall. Together with your expert guide, your team will enjoy an action-packed 50-minute ride through 14 rapids as the river winds its way through a jungle canyon. No prior experience is necessary, as participants will receive full and comprehensive training beforehand. All you need is a reasonable level of fitness, a sense of fun and adventure, swimwear and a towel.

Later in the evening, the tour goes out to Redwoods Nightlights, a 700-meter-long eco-tourism walking experience in the heart of Rotorua's Redwood Forest. The tour consists of a series of 28 suspension bridges and 27 majestic Redwood trees that are more than 118 years old. The walk also features 30 exquisite lanterns floating between 9-20 meters above the forest floor, designed by world-renowned designer and sustainability champion David Trubridge. Upon completion of the tour, you will be transferred back to the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner.

Day 3 – 27 January: Rotorua to Taupo

This morning, after breakfast, the day begins with a guided walk through Waimangu Volcanic Valley. The walk will take around 2 hours as you embark on an ecology-focused exploration of the craters in this beautiful valley. Heading downhill, you'll pass through some of the youngest eco-systems in the world as you view a wide variety of geothermal activity, native plants, and bird-life. See Echo Crater and Frying Pan Lake, the world's largest hot water spring, as well as the mysterious and dramatic Inferno Crater and its beautiful blue hot lake. When reaching Lake Rotomahana, you'll join a 45-minute boat trip to see the Steaming Cliffs, fumaroles, lake edge geysers, unusual thermal plants, and the site of the Pink and White Terraces that were destroyed in the Mt. Tarawera eruption.

After the boat ride, everyone will be shuttled back to the car park, where you'll reboard the coach and travel south through Kaingaroa Forest plantation and the Wairakei Steam fields. Enjoy a stop at the Huka Falls, where the clear waters of the Waikato River gush through a narrow canyon. The tour will continue around the shores of Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake, to your accommodation for the next two nights, Suncourt Hotel, Taupo, where you'll settle in and try to get a good sleep, in preparation for the coming day's challenge: the Tongariro Crossing.

Meals: Breakfast.

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Day 4 – 28 January: The Tongariro Crossing

This morning, you will be taken on a short drive to begin the trek. The Tongariro Alpine Crossing is 19.4km of pure, rugged Aotearoa New Zealand beauty. The trek is considered the best one-day walk in the country and is consistently ranked in the Top 10 one-day walks in the world. The Tongariro National Park is a dual World Heritage site - rich in both cultural identity as well as breathtaking natural scenery.

The trail leads up to the saddle between Mount Ngauruhoe and Mount Tongariro, and then diverts over Mount Tongariro. Fans of Lord of the Rings might recognize Mount Ngauruhoe as Mount Doom itself! At the top of the pass, in the presence of two active volcanoes, you'll experience some of the National Park's special gifts. A cold mountain spring, an active crater, emerald lakes, and hot springs combine to make this a challenging and deeply rewarding experience.

Total walking time is around 7 hours, including stops. No alpine experience is required, and a guide will accompany the group.

Meals: Breakfast and packed lunch.

Day 5 – 29 January: Taupo to Auckland

This morning, you'll take it easy as you travel north to Waitomo where you join a guided tour into the Ruakuri Cave. The spiral entranceway is a remarkable feat of modern engineering and design as well as being a major feature of the recent redevelopment, providing a dramatic introduction to the cave. The guided tour leads down the large spiral walkway, gently deeper and deeper into the ground until the bottom is reached.

Pass through the specially constructed tunnel called The Drum Entrance and into the cave. Journey down marvelling at the softly folding shawl-like limestone formations and crystal tapestries. Hear the distant thunder of the subterranean waterfalls and get up close to the glow-worms. Winding passageways, vast echoing caverns and deep crevices bring a different energy and character to Ruakuri Cave.

After the tour, a lunch stop is included at a local café before travelling north yet again, through rolling countryside into Hamilton City, Aotearoa New Zealand's largest inland city. Then continue north, following the Waikato River, over Bombay Hills and into Auckland City. Auckland is built atop 50 extinct volcanoes - while most of them appear either as small, green hilltop or are completely removed, the three largest - Mount Albert, Mount Eden, and One Tree Hill - stand proudly over the landscape.

You will spend the night at Grand Millennium Hotel Auckland City.

Meals: Breakfast and lunch.

Day 6 – 30 January: Farewell Aotearoa New Zealand

Sadly, it is time to say haere rā to Aotearoa New Zealand. Taxis to the airport are available from the hotel (departure transfer not provided).

Meals: Breakfast.

Tongariro Crossing Terms & Conditions

The weather in New Zealand is extremely changeable and thus difficult to forecast accurately. The operator has the right to cancel an adventure should they consider the weather to cause too high a risk.

On the morning of the trip, the operator will assess the route; tours won't proceed if 10 mm+ of rain and 70km/h+ wind gusts, forecasted for the 6 hours of the trek.

If the original route is unsafe, an alternative with similar scenery may be offered.

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