

# EXTENSION: ROTORUA & TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK



*This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.*



*Emerald Lakes, Tongariro - photo Steve Lee*

- A 'PYO' tour of North Island's honeypots: Rotorua & Tongariro NP
- Volcanoes, bubbling mud and steaming lakes
- Comfortable accommodation with historic hotel option in Whakapapa
- Two full days guided walking on Tongariro and Ruapehu
- Ideal finale to 'South Island Contrasts' or 'South Island Wild' OR mix 'n match with other extensions to create your own trip

## **Details**

This 5 day extension visits the geothermal and volcanic central North Island with walks amongst geothermal pools, bubbling mud and volcanoes still steaming from past eruptions. It provides a great contrast to the South Island and Far North landscapes and offers some tremendous walking within a short time frame.

## **Cost variations**

After our scheduled South Island trips, several people usually visit the North Island allowing the guide's costs to be shared. Some walks can also be self guided, subject to experience – see FAQ.

## North Island Contrasts

By combining our Great Barrier Island, Bay of Islands and Tongariro extensions, we can put together a PYO (Plan your own) North Island Contrasts trip to suit your own arrangements. Contact us for more details.

## DAY TO DAY ITINERARY

*Walks in Tongariro NP are subject to weather conditions, and the order of walks may have to be re-arranged. Guided walks will always operate as bad weather alternatives are available.*

**DAY 1** Starting in **Rotorua**, the heart of New Zealand's geothermal area, the air billows in clouds of steaming sulphur. There are many things to do and see here and our favourites around town include:

- The Bath House Museum, situated in the historic part of town is well worth a visit if you are interested in the geothermal history of the area and its impact on the local community.
- Walk along the lakefront, where hot steam issues surreally from pools and craters with walkways linking the geothermal areas.
- Relax in the Polynesian spa overlooking the lake or swim in the historic Blue Baths.
- Visit St. Faiths church in the Maori village of Ohinemutu.

New Zealand's indigenous Maori population will be evident here and in the evening we recommend a Maori cultural evening and feast ('Hangi'). Allow approx NZ\$100. There is no better place for a visitor to get a brief insight into the nature of Maori culture and energy. B&B.

**DAY 2** **VOLCANOES:** Head off down the Thermal Highway, stopping at some of the geothermal areas en route - this volcanic country is quite different to any other landscape in New Zealand. 'Wai-O-Tapu' is one of the more colourful sites, and the 'Craters of the Moon' and 'Huka Falls', both close to Taupo, are well worth a visit. Passing Lake Taupo, the route to Tongariro crosses the volcanic plateau to reach National Park (lodge accommodation) or the small village of Whakapapa (The Chateau Hotel). A 3-4 hour drive from Rotorua with easy access to several 1 hour + walks en route. Lodge or Hotel. (B)

**DAY 3** With its reputation as 'the best day walk in New Zealand' the Tongariro Alpine Crossing has become very popular. Avoid the crowds by completing an interesting circuit with your guide, which takes in Tongariro summit (1961m) and has tremendous views of Ngauruhoe's perfect cone throughout (6-7 hours). Lodge or Hotel (B,L)

**DAY 4** Ruapehu (2797m) is the highest mountain in the North Island, still steaming after violent eruptions in 1995 and 1996. A guided ascent of an easy rocky ridge provides a magnificent day out as well as a living geology lesson – just be prepared to run! We climb to the 'trekkers's summit - Dome Shelter (2672m), from which one can look down on its sulphurous crater lake. The use of the uplift ski chair to the base of Knoll ridge (cost not included) helps the ascent (6 hours). Lodge or Hotel. (B,L)

**DAY 5** Depart National Park or Whakapapa – heading north to Auckland (approx 5 hour drive), south to Wellington (5-6 hour drive depending on route), or continue with your own arrangements. (B)

## **Cost NZ\$1150pp (£450pp\*\*)**

Based on 2 people in twin share or double (ensuite), including:

- Group C hire car 5 days
- 1 night B&B, Rotorua
- 3 nights Lodge Tongariro National Park (incl breakfast and 2 packed lunches)\*
- Mountain Guide 2 days

\* Add NZ\$185pp (£72 pp\*\*) for upgrade to 'The Chateau', Whakapapa.

\*\* Exchange rate used £1 = NZ\$2.55 (costs subject to exchange rate changes)

Prices are valid till June 2010.

## **Excludes:**

Entrance fees eg Rotorua Museum, Polynesian Spa, Hangi, Wai O Tapu etc. Airport/train station transfers, meals other than breakfast & 2 packed lunches, chairlift on Ruapehu.

## **FAQ**

Q1. I don't want to drive – can I do this using public transport?

A1. Yes - you can catch a bus from Rotorua to Whakapapa on DAY 2 and a train to either Auckland or Wellington on DAY 5 and follow the same itinerary apart from the optional walks on DAY 2.

Q2. I'm travelling on my own – what do you recommend?

A2. Car, accommodation and guide costs all work out more expensive if you are travelling solo, but you can keep the cost down by using public transport and backpacker accommodation. See also 'Cost variations' and Q3.

Q3. I want to stay longer in Rotorua – what should I do there?

A3. We recommend a ½ day adventure drive/walk tour to the crater of Mt. Tarawera, which last erupted in 1886 (ex- Rotorua, allow \$133pp).

Q4. I'm an experienced hillwalker - do I really need a guide?

A4. The weather can be extremely variable in the Central Plateau and a local guide on both days will help you to make the best of the weather as well as sharing his/her local knowledge. We do recommend using a guide, but it's your choice. An alternative option is to do the 'Tongariro Alpine Crossing' solo (track transport available) and to use a guide on Ruapehu.

There is a scheduled daily guided walk up to the Dome Shelter run by the ski lift company, but this is usually a large group and a private guide offers much more flexibility.

Q5. Can I climb to the summit of Ruapehu?

A5. This usually requires ice axe and crampons and is for mountaineers – if you do have appropriate experience and gear, we recommend doing this guided. The 'trekkers summit' is the Dome Shelter.

Q6. How far away is Waitomo?

A6. Waitomo is just off the rural road to Auckland through the Waikato, approx 2.5 hour drive, ie half way to Auckland. Waitomo is one of the major caving areas in New Zealand and there are several levels of activity here from a dry glow worm tour to 'blackwater rafting' to a 200m abseil if you want to experience 'underground' New Zealand.

Q7. Can you make our accommodation arrangements in Auckland or Wellington?

A7. Yes we can book this for you.

ML/MW 8/09