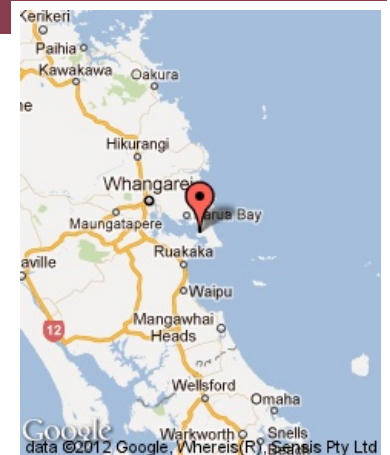


Northland Coastal Walk



Highlights

Explore Northland's beautiful coastline on this three-day walking holiday in New Zealand. On the first day you'll discover a glorious Pacific Ocean beach, while on days two and three you get to decide which route you fancy following. The walks are all self-guided so you get to go at your own pace, but all food and accommodation is sorted for you.

The real New Zealand may not be inhabited by hobbits, orcs and talking trees, but one thing's for sure, the landscape is just as magical – unless, perhaps you're an eight-year-old 'Lord of the Rings' fan. Instead, expect to discover footprint-free beaches, ancient forests, and a coastline sculpted with coves. The Whangarei Heads area is rich in wildlife, too. Little blue penguins, pods of dolphins and stingray-hunting orca whales have all been spotted in the waters here. On dry land, meanwhile, look out for the endangered dotterel and oystercatchers.

With three days of self-guided walking with a choice of routes to choose from on days two and three, you get to decide your own highlights. On day one, you'll take in a stunning stretch of pale golden sands as you walk along Ocean beach. Experienced hikers can unleash the walking poles and sturdy boots on day two with a trek along an ancient Maori trail from Ocean beach to Urquhart Bay. And if you've still got the stamina, choose to climb up Mount Manaia on the third day. Whatever walks you choose to do, there's always someone on hand to pick you up and take you back to camp should your legs decide they've had enough.

Is it for me?

Keen hikers and nature lovers will probably feel three days just isn't enough. But the three days you do get are packed full with opportunities to get out and explore the landscape and wildlife. It's nice, because although all the walks are planned for you, you get to go it alone, so you don't feel like you're being mollycoddled. You will be eating tasty food, made from fresh, local ingredients, so you'll get a taste for this part of the world as well. And lastly, you can forget youth hostel-style accommodation - this private lodge is modern and really well kitted out.

Accommodation

Accommodation is in a brand-new lodge that sleeps up to 12 people at any one time. You can either book the whole place for yourselves, or if you're in a smaller group, you'll be sharing with other fellow walkers. The lodge is kitted out with a comfy open-plan living space, three bedrooms, a bunkroom, a covered barbecue area, and two bathrooms inside and one outside.

As for food, you can expect tasty dishes made with fresh, local and seasonal food. Every night's dinner is prepared and left in the lodge but there is usually just a bit of finishing off in the way of heating or cooking on the barbecue, so that you can eat when you want. For example, you might be left marinated steaks with sides of delicious stuffed mushrooms with a sticky date pudding for dessert. All you would need to do is cook the steaks on the barbecue and cook the mushrooms in the oven for 10 minutes, everything else is ready to go. If you've got any special dietary requirements just make sure you let the team know so they can cater for you.

Itinerary

Day One: Takes you from the lodge, across farmland, a recreation reserve and sand dunes to a long, sandy and isolated Pacific Ocean beach.

Prices from

229 GBP (3 days) per person

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Day Two: Gives you the option of a dramatic and physically demanding walk along a high ridgeline through coastal native forest, or a choice of gentler options in the same spectacular landscape.

Day Three: Shifts the focus to the harbour side of this stunning peninsula, with options to climb the landmark Mount Manaia, its smaller cousin Mount Aubrey or stroll along well-formed paths at altitudes closer to sea level.

Details

Getting there

Whangarei Heads is about a 35-minute drive from Whangarei airport. There are regular flights from Auckland to Whangarei, or if you're flying into Auckland first you could make the final stretch by car – it'll take about three hours.

Price includes

Three nights' accommodation, daily transfers, food and recipes for you to prepare breakfast, lunch, pre-dinner snacks, dinner and dessert. The walking is self-guided, so a map and track guide are also provided.

Available

Oct–May

Typical Duration

3 days

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed

Travellers should bring

Day pack; empty lunch box; large water bottle or hydration system; sleeping bag; walking shoes or boots; polypropylene top and pants; good raincoat; warm clothing; sunscreen and sunhat; personal toiletries; personal first aid; bath towel; beach towel and swimming gear; mobile phone; camera; liquid refreshments.

Reviews (1)

Reviews of this experience

“ My memories of our Bream Head Coastal Walks adventure are of spectacular scenery, luxurious accommodation, fresh gourmet food and the feeling of satisfaction that comes from a bit of exertion and a lot of fun.

We'd had a tough couple of months so arrived very tense and stressed. The warm welcome and the excitement of exploring the unexpected luxury of our surroundings, coupled with a glass of wine and delicious nibbles, set the tone for the entire weekend. Enjoying the 180° views over farmland to the ocean beyond, we immediately forgot our worries and set about planning the walks we would do.

Day one dawned with warm spring sunshine for our walk over farmland and along the beach. We were only 3 hours from home but this was a different world. The locals were very friendly, both human and animals, as we wandered over their land and onward to the deserted beach. The sea was so blue and inviting that we abandoned our footwear to paddle our way along the shoreline. The backdrop for the entire day was the spectacular ridgeline that we would be exploring tomorrow.

We were up early on day two and keen to get started, only delayed by the decisions to be made on which of the yummy foods to include in our lunchboxes. It was another beautiful day in paradise, so the shade of the bush was welcome after the hot uphill trek from the beach. We spend a lot of time tramping in the New Zealand bush, but still found ourselves continually stopping to take photos of the truly spectacular rocky outcrops and views beyond. Cheeky fantails joined us on route and a variety of birdlife was heard as we made our way through the bush along the ridge. Our host Claire was there to pick us up at the end of the day with a cool ice cream as reward for our efforts.

A good days fishing for our hosts meant a quick change to the menu that night, with the added choice of ocean fresh fish or the prime Angus beef. Some of us also chose to experience the open air bath to soak those weary muscles, hoping to hear a native kiwi calling in the nearby bush.

For day three we finished off with a climb to the summit of Mount Manaia. A change in the weather made this even more special with the views appearing and disappearing as the mist passed over, and added to the mystic of the spiritual origins of this great landmark.

We couldn't help looking back in awe as we headed for home, feeling revived, refreshed and truly satisfied from a weekend well spent.

”

Marie reviewing Northland Coastal Walk

