Welcome to Aotearoa, a.k.a. New Zealand, with a mix of landscapes – rolling green hills, sublime forests, mountains, lakes, beaches, rivers, and fjords - an ever-changing variety packed into a very small land mass. You will encounter many of the native plants and birds, which are endemic to Aotearoa. New Zealand presents a mix of cultures – the indigenous people of Aotearoa, the Māori, an increasing variety of Pacific Island cultures, and a growing number of Asian cultures, all complementing the larger Pākehā (non-Māori) culture stemming mostly from Britain, Ireland, and Europe.

Your tour includes meeting and talking with New Zealanders, as well as the highlights New Zealand is known for:

- Auckland's wonderful harbor ("City of Sails") and its cosmopolitan people
- Rotorua's hot pools, geysers and Māori music and dance
- host city, Hamilton, with its world famous Hamilton Gardens and its nearby Waitomo Glowworm Caves
- the lovely vibrant capital city, Wellington
- the new city of Christchurch emerging proudly from recent devastating earthquakes
- the TranzAlpine rail journey, one of the world’s top ten scenic railway journeys
- the fabulous scenery of South Island's West Coast
- adventure capital, Queenstown; and quirky, Scottish, Dunedin

In this tour, specially designed for you, our Alaskan visitors, you will also experience a home-hosted meal, a tour of Hobbiton (the fascinating setting for Peter Jackson’s movie trilogies "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit"), a hangi (food cooked in an earth oven), several lectures, a classical music performance just for the tour group, a guided walk up to a glacier, and a wine tasting.

**DAY 1 – Tuesday, May 7**

Those arriving into Auckland this morning will be met and transferred to the hotel for early check-in. People who arrived the previous day will be provided with maps, showing walks/and or visits they can undertake on their own today.

The tour formally begins at 4 pm with orientation followed by a welcome dinner. Overnight in Auckland.
DAY 2 – Wednesday, May 8
Full day tour by coach of New Zealand's largest city, Auckland, including downtown, waterfront, Parnell Village, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Auckland Domain and Wintergardens, Tamaki Drive (with a stop at Bastion Point for harbor views); the harbor bridge; Mt. Victoria, Devonport, Titirangi, Arataki Visitor information Centre, then a drive through the pretty Waitakere Ranges forested area.
Overnight in Auckland.

DAY 3 – Thursday, May 9
Today you’ll coach to Rotorua. En route, near Matamata and following lunch, enjoy a guided tour of Hobbiton, one of the key settings for Peter Jackson's movie trilogies, "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit". Travel on to Rotorua for hotel check-in and time to freshen up. This evening, enjoy a Māori cultural experience; including music, dance, poi, haka, and a traditional hangi (food cooked in an earth oven).
Overnight in Rotorua.

DAY 4 – Friday, May 10
After breakfast, enjoy a guided walk to St. Faith’s Church, Ohinemutu, for views of the beautiful stained-glass window of the Māori Christ walking on Lake Rotorua. Then enjoy a tour of Rotorua city by an amphibious "duck" vehicle, which will take you onto Lakes Tikitapu and Okareka. During the latter, you will be able to view the Lake Okareka Bird Sanctuary. After lunch, spend several hours at Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve for a guided tour of mud pools, geysers and other geothermal activity and a Māori carving and weaving complex.
Overnight in Rotorua.
DAY 5 – Saturday, May 11
After breakfast your coach will take you to New Zealand’s fourth largest city, Hamilton, set astride the mighty Waikato River. Your first stop will be at the world-famous Hamilton Gardens, where you will have a guided tour, followed by lunch.

Following check-in to your Hamilton hotel, enjoy two lectures, introducing you to aspects of New Zealand’s history and flora and fauna. This evening, enjoy a home hosted meal. You will be met and hosted by members of The University of Waikato 60+ Continuing Education Group.

Overnight in Hamilton.

DAY 6 – Sunday, May 12
Enjoy two more lectures this morning and then take your coach to Te Awamutu with a boxed lunch, then onwards to Waitomo Glowworm Caves to take a boat experience to see the glowworms and later, visit a kiwifruit orchard. This evening, a classical music concert has been arranged, just for the group, featuring performers of The University of Waikato Conservatorium of Music, followed by an evening meal on campus.

Overnight in Hamilton.

DAY 7 – Monday, May 13
After breakfast, transfer to the airport and fly to the capital city, Wellington. Transfer to Zealandia, for a guided tour of this predator free urban eco sanctuary set in the heart of Wellington city, which in addition to rare birds, also houses the tiny prehistoric reptile tuatara. After lunch transfer to Te Papa, the best of our New Zealand Museums for an introductory guided tour followed by free time for you to explore your choice of exhibitions. Exhibitions include Manu Whenua, which showcases stories celebrating Māori as tangata whenua, the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand and Tangata o le Moana: The story of Pacific people in New Zealand and Blood Earth Fire, which explores New Zealand’s dramatic transition from untouched paradise to cultivated land.

Overnight in Wellington.
DAY 8 – Tuesday, May 14
A half-day city tour, including the Botanic Gardens, the Kelburn Cable Car and its museum, and a guided stroll along the waterfront. This afternoon, enjoy a guided tour of Parliament, including (if Parliament is in session) an opportunity to observe "Question Time" from the Visitor's Gallery. It is expected that the group will also be able to meet and talk with one of New Zealand’s Members of Parliament.
Overnight in Wellington.

DAY 9 – Wednesday, May 15
After breakfast, transfer to the ferry terminal to board your ferry which will take you to the South Island port town of Picton. Sail across Cook Strait, then through beautiful Tory Channel and Queen Charlotte Sound and into Picton. The ferry connects with the Coastal Pacific train taking you this afternoon along the magnificent scenic east coast of the South Island to Christchurch.
Overnight in Christchurch.

DAY 10 – Thursday, May 16
Downtown Christchurch is gradually being rebuilt following two devastating earthquakes a few months apart in 2010 and 2011. Your tour of the city will initially be on board a historic restored electric tram on a recently reopened figure eight of the downtown area. The complete circuit will take nearly an hour and the excellent commentary will give you a good introduction to what the center of the city was like, is now, and will become. You will be able to visit the remains of the Cathedral, which is to be rebuilt, and the Transitional (Cardboard) Cathedral. Later, enjoy a gondola ride up the Port Hills for wonderful views of the city and the Canterbury Plains, together with lunch and a Time Tunnel. The afternoon is free for you to use all day tram passes to access your choice of city attractions, including
the Earthquake War Memorial, City Art Gallery, the museum, Botanic Gardens, Quake City (an exhibition charting the aftermath of the two earthquakes), punting on the Avon River, shopping, and more.

Overnight in Christchurch.

DAY 11 – Friday, May 17
After breakfast transfer to the railway station to join the TranzAlpine train on its five-hour journey to Greymouth on the other side of the Island. This is one of the top ten scenic train journeys in the world. You will be met by your coach which will take you south to Franz Josef. En-route enjoy a stop at historic Hokitika to view greenstone (jade), which is highly important to Māori, being turned into beautiful jewellery.

Overnight in Franz Josef.

DAY 12 – Saturday, May 18
This morning, enjoy a guided walk to, and on to Franz Josef Glacier. After lunch, tour the West Coast Wildlife Centre (known for its ability to breed the rarest of New Zealand’s Kiwis). In the late afternoon, an optional hot springs visit is within walking distance of your hotel.

Overnight in Franz Josef.
DAY 13 – Sunday, May 19
A coach journey today, through rainforests and alongside rivers and lakes to New Zealand's premier tourist city, Queenstown, via the Haast Pass. There will be an en route stop to stroll around the picturesque town of Wanaka situated on Lake Wanaka.

Overnight in Queenstown.

DAY 14 – Monday, May 20
Enjoy an excursion on the historic coal-fired steamship TSS Earnslaw on Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak Farm to view sheep shearing and sheep dogs at work. After lunch back in Queenstown, there will be time for a guided stroll around the lakeside waterfront and a visit to Underwater World's "reverse aquarium". Dinner tonight will be at Stratosfare Restaurant, accessed by gondola at Skyline Queenstown.

Overnight in Queenstown.

DAY 15 – Tuesday, May 21
Free day in Queenstown. Possible optional (extra cost) activities include bungee jumping, jet boat trip on the Shotover River, white water rafting, sky diving, parasailing, mountain bike riding, tramping, shopping, etc. We have arranged for a person from the local Council's visitor information center (i-Site) to be at the hotel late afternoon on Monday to give out brochures, provide advice about the many options, and to make bookings for you.

Overnight in Queenstown.

DAY 16 – Wednesday, May 22
Coach today to Pukerangi, including a mid-morning tour of the Gibbston Valley Winery, with tastings and a tour of the wine cave. At Pukerangi, join Dunedin Railways to travel through the spectacularly rugged Taieri Gorge to Dunedin. Your journey takes you through steep gullies, alongside the Taieri River and over iron viaducts. You will arrive at the beautifully restored historic Dunedin Railway Station, said to be the most photographed building in New Zealand.

Overnight in Dunedin.
DAY 17 – Thursday, May 23
This morning, enjoy a city tour, including the unusual central city Octagon; the world's steepest residential street; and Olveston Historic Home, providing you with a glimpse into Dunedin life 110 years ago. This afternoon travel by coach to the Otago Peninsula, where you will visit the Royal Albatross Centre at Fort Taiaroa. The colony is the world's only mainland Royal Albatross colony. You will marvel at their huge wingspans. This evening, enjoy a farewell dinner together at a Dunedin restaurant.

Overnight in Dunedin.

DAY 18 – Friday, May 24
The tour concludes after breakfast. Transfer to Dunedin airport for your onward flights.

OPTIONAL TOUR EXTENSION TO THE BAY OF ISLANDS
The North of the North Island offers a profusion of white sandy beaches, the remains of the vast Kauri forests that once covered the region, and is a place of enormous historical importance to both Māori and Pākehā (non-Māori).

DAY 1 – Friday, May 24
Fly from Dunedin to Auckland, connecting with a flight from Auckland to Kerikeri. Your coach will take you the short distance to Paihia, with a stop en route to visit the Mission House, the first wooden European house in New Zealand (1822) and the Stone Store, the first stone building in New Zealand (1836).

Overnight in Paihia for three nights.

DAY 2 – Saturday, May 25
Take a coach trip to the very top of the North Island, Cape Reinga, important in Māori legend and stunningly beautiful. Your one kilometer walk to the lighthouse will take you past a series of panels describing Māori stories and history. Your return journey to Paihia will, uniquely, include travel literally along Ninety Mile Beach (the coach travels along the sand of this long west coast beach for many kilometers).
DAY 3 – Sunday, May 26
This morning, enjoy a four-hour cruise around the turquoise waters of the Bay of Islands, including a visit to the Hole in the Rock (and if the sea is settled, travelling through it). This afternoon, visit the Treaty House at Waitangi, set in beautiful grounds, to learn about the treaty between Māori and the British Crown that established New Zealand. In the late afternoon, travel by ferry across the short distance from Paihia to the first capital of New Zealand, now called Russell, for a guided stroll around the village and then a farewell dinner. Take the mid-evening ferry back to Paihia.

DAY 4 – Monday, May 27
Travel by coach to Auckland, via the village of Opononi on the Hokianga Harbour, Waipoua Kauri Forest (there will be a stop to view Tane Mahuta, the largest surviving Kauri tree in New Zealand), and The Kauri Museum at Matakohe. Your coach will travel directly to Auckland International Airport in good time for evening departures to the USA. Arrangements will be made for people wanting to stay on in Auckland to be dropped off in the city.

Program Fee:
For Naturally Beautiful New Zealand Tour Only:
$6,900.00 per person based on double occupancy; single occupancy supplement $600.

For Naturally Beautiful New Zealand Tour PLUS Bay of Islands Add-On:
$8,775.00 per person based on double occupancy; single occupancy supplement $775.

All in-country costs are covered including, hotels, lectures, entrance fees, three meals a day, tipping, and ground transportation. Your transportation costs to and from New Zealand are not included.

Important note: Travel insurance is always recommended for any travel out of the United States. It protects the passenger’s financial investment, as well as any unexpected medical needs during travel. University of Alaska Fairbanks does not sell travel insurance policies, but there are several ways to purchase coverage. Some credit card companies insure trips that are purchased with their card. Another option is to check with a local travel agency. Travel insurance is also available via CampDoc, our travel program registration system. We advise that you look into coverage within 15 days of making the deposit, as some vendors require the coverage to be purchased within that time period to receive the most benefit.