



*Rotorua is known for bubbling mud pools, shooting geysers and natural hot springs as well as showcasing fascinating Maori culture.*

**Day 1: Auckland – Matamata - Rotorua (141 miles)**

Travel south of Auckland and perhaps stop for lunch or a snack at Kaimai Cheese and watch the cheese making process and sample some of its fine cheeses. Continue to Matamata and then visit the Hobbiton Movie Set – where Peter Jackson brought his “Lord of the Rings” Trilogy alive. Continue to Rotorua where you will spend the three nights.

**Day 2: Rotorua**

Whether you want to relax and unwind at one of the natural geothermal spas or find your inner adrenaline junkie at one of the pinging adventure experiences, Rotorua has something for everyone. Be sure to visit one of thermal reserves, Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland or Whakarewarewa to see the bubbling mud pools and geysers (admissions apply). Be sure to enjoy a traditional Maori hangi and cultural evening held at Tamaki or Te Puia this evening and learn about the history of the city and the importance the geothermal landscapes had on Maori people.

**Day 3: Rotorua to Buried Village (44 miles round-trip)**

With an active volcanic past, the Buried Village is a result of the violent and unexpected eruption of Mt Tarawera on 10 June 1886. Established in 1999, the world-class museum houses a large collection of objects excavated over the past 80 years from the Mt Tarawera eruption and exhibits the early settlers of Te Wairoa. After your visit, stop and see Lake Rotokakahi (Green Lake) sitting adjacent Lake Tikitapu (Blue Lake).

This afternoon, visit Rainbow Springs Kiwi Wildlife Park, a kiwi hatchery and nursery surrounded by spring water ponds filled with a variety of trout. Head out to the Rotorua Agrodome for a local farm show with sheep shearing demonstrations and farm tours. For the adventurous, try zorbing – the act of rolling down a hill in a huge plastic ball!

**Day 4: Rotorua – Waitomo - Auckland (210 miles)**

En route to Auckland, make your way west to Waitomo and the famous Waitomo Glowworm Caves (admission fee). The caves were carved by underground streams pushing through soft limestone over thousands of years. Many have amazing stalactites growing down from the ceiling and stalagmites growing up from the cave floor, pointy cones of layered rock formed over centuries by dripping water. The cave walls are also decorated with galaxies of native glow worms. Continue north to Auckland where you will return your rental vehicle in the evening prior to your return flight to the US.

Suggested itinerary and can be reversed to suit.  
Allow ample time to return the rental vehicle to Auckland Airport and board

**DOWN UNDER  
ANSWERS**