

The 12 Day Bucket List Walk



The very best of the
North Island

12 Days, 11 Nights

Graded Challenging



Tour Cost (NZD)

2026 / 2027

Tour Cost: \$6,300

Single Supplement: \$900

Tour Highlights

- Ancient forests and volcanic landscapes
- Iconic Tongariro National Park
- Stunning Coromandel Coastline
- Cosy Lodges and delicious meals
- Expert local guide



Tuatara Tours NZ Ltd, PO Box 13544, Christchurch 8141, New Zealand



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The 12 Day Bucket List Walk

The very best of the North Island
12 days 11 nights Challenging Grade

The Tour at a Glance

The ultimate North Island hiking adventure, this one belongs on your bucket list!

Over 12 unforgettable days, discover the North Island's most stunning regions: hike the wild Coromandel coast, wander through the sparkling lakes of the Bay of Plenty, and conquer the volcanic trails of Tongariro National Park.

Walk 4–7 hours a day, covering 100–120 km of jaw dropping landscapes. No heavy packs just a light daypack while we handle the rest.

Travel with a small group and an expert local guide. After each day's hike, kick back with delicious food, great local wine, and comfortable accommodation.

Trip Grading: Challenging

Ideal for anyone comfortable walking over 20km on partially formed tracks and roads with some steep inclines. The Tongariro Crossing in particular is a strenuous hike through an alpine environment. Preparation and good fitness are required to fully enjoy this walk.

About your guide

Our guides are very experienced, friendly walkers and bikers who love to share their knowledge of New Zealand's flora and fauna and local history.

They all hold current first aid certificates, passenger driving licences and are the very best people to ensure your experience will be one to remember.



Tuatara Conservation

We're proud supporters of tuatara conservation. We've adopted ""BP"—a juvenile tuatara at Orana Park in Christchurch, helping ensure the future of this amazing native species.



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Pre-tour

We'll collect you from your central Rotorua accommodation between 8.00am and 8:30am or from your central Matamata accommodation around 9:30am. To avoid a rushed start after a flight, we recommend you arrive a day early and enjoy exploring the city at leisure.

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day 1	Rotorua / Matamata to Coromandel	5km
Day 2	The Legendary Coromandel Coastal Walkway	12km
Day 3	The Pinnacles	16km
Day 4	Epic East Coast	5km
Day 5	Whirinaki Forest	8-10km
Day 6	Tawarewa Falls	7-8km
Day 7	Pureora Forest Park and Rainbow Mountain	10km
Day 8	The Heart of Rotorua	14km
Day 9	Rotorua to Tongariro	6km
Day 10	Tongariro Alpine Crossing	20km
Day 11	The Old Coach Road	15km
Day 12	Rainforest and Waterfalls	5km



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Day 1 Rotorua to Coromandel, via Matamata (5km, 3-4hrs)

We'll collect you from central Rotorua (8:00–8:30am) or Matamata (around 9:30am) and start our adventure with a 4km hike to the top of Wairere Falls—an old Māori trail leading to the North Island's tallest waterfall, with sweeping views over the Waikato Basin.

Then it's north along the stunning Coromandel coast, past mussel farms and sea views, to the lively charm of Coromandel Town. Time permitting, we'll stroll among ancient kauri trees at Long Bay Scenic Reserve.

Settle into our peaceful accommodation—perfect for a sunset platter and something chilled in hand.

MEALS INCLUDED: L D

Day 2 The Legendary Coromandel Coastal Walkway (12km, 6hrs)

Today's adventure is the unforgettable Coromandel Coastal Walkway, a trail that truly has it all.

A scenic drive north from Coromandel Town, we'll begin our hike at Fletcher Bay, a remote beach framed by green hills and white sand. This historic track follows an old gold miners' bridle path, winding along the northeastern tip of the peninsula.

We'll hike through open farmland, native bush, and along dramatic clifftops with sweeping views of Great Barrier Island, Cuvier Island, and the Mercury Islands.

We'll stop for a picnic lunch at Poley Bay, a stunning spot for a swim if you're up for it, before retracing our steps back to Fletcher Bay.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L D

Day 3 The Pinnacles (16km, 5-7hrs)

After a fresh breakfast, we head south to hike the Kauaeranga Kauri Trail (The Pinnacles), climbing through native forest to a summit with incredible 360° views of bush, mountains, and both coastlines—well worth the effort!

Keep an eye out for native birds like tui, bellbirds, tomtits, and kākā along the trail.

Prefer a relaxed day? Stay in Coromandel Town and enjoy the Driving Creek Railway, artisan shops, short walks, and local cafés.

We finish the day with a celebratory dinner at one of Coromandel's top restaurants.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L D

Day 4 Epic East Coast (5km, 2-4hrs)

We farewell Coromandel Town and cross to the east coast for a short walk to New Chums Beach—a golden-sand paradise ranked among the world's top 20 beaches. Relax and take in the beauty of this pristine, bird-rich coastal haven (tide-dependent access).

We'll stop at a local café before heading to Whitianga for a relaxed lunch overlooking sunny Buffalo Beach.

In the afternoon, enjoy a short walk to a grove of majestic kauri on the 309 Kauri Track, then travel on to Rotorua, where you'll check into your 4.5-star hotel.

Dinner tonight is self-catered. Perfect for exploring Rotorua's vibrant dining scene at your own pace.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L



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Day 5 Whirinaki Forest (8-10km, 3-4hrs)

We'll pick you up from your Rotorua accommodation between 8:30-9:00 am, then head east along ancient Māori trails into the untamed Whirinaki Forest, one of the last remaining giant podocarp forests on the planet.

Step into a lost world of towering tōtara, kahikatea, and mataī, where prehistoric beauty meets powerful conservation history. As we hike, keep your eyes peeled for the rare kākā and elusive whio (blue duck), thriving in this pristine ecosystem. We'll pass by the jaw-dropping, moss-covered Te Whaiti-Nui-a-Toi canyon—a secret natural wonder few get to witness.

After a day immersed in raw, untouched wilderness, we return to Rotorua and celebrate with a well-earned two-course dinner at a local favourite.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L D

Day 6 Tawarewa Falls (7-8km, 2-3hrs)

This morning, we venture into lush native forest for an epic hike to Tarawera Falls, a true hidden gem.

We'll follow the Tarawera River, where clear waters disappear underground, only to explode dramatically from a cliff face downstream. The trail winds through towering rimu, kahikatea, tawa and alive with birdsong.

Then, the finale: Tarawera Falls, thundering 35 metres down fractured volcanic rock, a jaw dropping sight of water bursting straight from stone.

After this unforgettable experience, we return to our Rotorua hotel to relax and recharge.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L D

Day 7 Pureora Forest Park and Rainbow Mountain (10km, 4hrs)

Today we journey into the North Island's King Country for two unforgettable hikes.

First, we climb Rainbow Mountain, where steaming vents, colourful cliffs, and regenerating forest lead to panoramic views of Mt Tarawera, the Rotorua Lakes, and Tongariro National Park.

Next, we head into the ancient Pureora Forest, one of New Zealand's most untouched ecosystems. Walking part of the Timber Trail, we'll pass towering tōtara, and may spot rare wildlife like kākāriki and kākā.

The forest is also home to rare native bats and the equally rare and beautiful kōkako. Imagine life here before human settlement!!

MEALS INCLUDED: B L D

Day 8 The Heart of Rotorua (14km, 5hrs)

We start at the tranquil Blue Lake, enjoying a scenic loop through lush forest. Then, we stroll along the shores of Lake Okareka, a peaceful haven and breeding ground for rare dabchicks.

Next, feel the power of Tutea Falls as water thunders over rocky cliffs, one of the regions most iconic sights. Finally, we explore the towering giants of the Redwoods, a magical ancient forest.

After a day of stunning nature, we return to Rotorua by 5-6 pm. Dinner this evening is outside your tour package, but your guide will gladly suggest the best local spots.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L



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Day 9 Rotorua to Tongariro (6km, 2hrs)

We'll pick you up from Rotorua between 8:30–9:00am and travel south through geothermal landscapes, past Lake Taupō, and into native forest on the central plateau.

Our first hike is a 2-hour loop to Taranaki Falls, part of the Tongariro Northern Circuit Great Walk track, where you'll see stunning volcanic views and native plants. Then, we'll take a short walk to Tawhai Falls, also known as 'Gollum's Pool' from The Lord of the Rings.

After checking into cozy lodgings, enjoy a hearty two-course Kiwi meal and a drink while watching the sunset over the volcanoes. Relax in the hot tub or unwind before tomorrow's adventures.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L D

Day 10 Tongariro Alpine Crossing (20km, 6-8hrs)

This morning, we tackle the world-famous Tongariro Alpine Crossing, a stunning hike through lava fields, crater lakes, steaming vents, alpine meadows, and mountain peaks. Enjoy spectacular views of Mt Ngauruhoe, Mt Ruapehu, and the central plateau.

As Lonely Planet says, it's "a life-changing experience." Your guides will share local stories and geology to bring the trail to life. Good weather and fitness are needed.

After celebrating at the trail's end, relax in the outdoor spa before pre-dinner drinks in the lounge. Tonight, we'll enjoy a casual meal at a lively local restaurant and bar.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L D

Day 11 The Old Coach Road (15km, 5hrs)

Today we hit the Old Coach Road Trail, a 15km journey through history with cobbled roads, viaducts, tunnels, and railway relics, all set amid stunning native forest and epic views of Ohakune.

If we're feeling adventurous, we'll add extra trails or tackle the rugged heights of Mt Ruapehu, the North Island's tallest peak.

Tonight, we raise our glasses to an unforgettable walking adventure with a final celebration dinner!

MEALS INCLUDED: B L D

Day 12 Rainforest and Waterfalls (5km, 3-4hrs)

After a hearty breakfast, we bid farewell to the National Park. Ready to stretch your legs? Your guide will pick a favourite short walk to kick off the day.

last on our Bucket List, we'll explore Lake Rotopounamu (Greenstone Lake) beneath legendary Mt. Pihanga, finishing with a chill picnic on Five Minute Beach surrounded by vibrant native forest.

Thanks to Project Tongariro, native birdlife is thriving, so keep your eyes peeled for the local wildlife!

We'll have you back in Taupō by 3–4pm or Rotorua by 5–6pm, with stores of amazing memories of your North Island adventure.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L



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What's Included



Accommodation in comfortable lodges, rooms with ensuite facilities, plus two nights in a historic hotel in central Rotorua



Transport and transfers between walk destinations



All meals during the tour—great local cuisine (two self catered nights in Rotorua not included)



Fully qualified, knowledgeable guide



DOC concession fees

What's Not Included

Alcohol - We do provide a glass of local wine or craft beer per person each evening; you can purchase more with dinner if you wish.

Pre- and post-tour accommodation

Two self-catered dinners on nights 4 & 8, in Rotorua

Please Note:

Rooms are double or twin, either one queen bed or two separate beds. If you have a preference for a twin room please let us know when you make your booking. Solo travellers can choose to share or pay a single supplement for a private room. All rooms have ensuite facilities.

Dietary needs?

We're happy to cater for gluten free, dairy free and vegetarian diets—just let us know at time of booking.



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Your travel check list:


The following is a list of recommended items. Please also use your own experience to supplement this list. If you're unsure about anything, feel free to contact us. Raincoats, back packs, and hiking poles can be organised for you at no cost but these need to be pre booked.


Avoid walking in cotton, jeans, or silk — they dry slowly and can leave you feeling damp and cold. Instead, dress in three layers: a moisture-wicking base (merino or polypropylene), an insulating middle layer, and a waterproof outer layer for wind and rain protection. You can handwash at the accommodation if necessary.




✓	Waterproof rain jacket with hood (a must) and waterproof over trousers (if you have them)
	Boots or sturdy walking shoes with ankle support, spare laces
	Thermals (top and bottom) merino or polypropylene are recommended
	Polar fleece jacket or top (mid layer)
	Gloves, warm hat
	Woolen or thermal hikers socks 3-4 pair
	Hiking shorts or zip off long trousers (quick-dry fabric-no jeans). Gaiters, if you have them.
	Drink Bottle
	Medium size (35-40l) day pack with waterproof liner
	Camera/ phone and charger/ torch
	Sun hat , sun glasses sun block,
	Swimsuit and small towel
	One set of casual wear for the evening, including casual shoes or sandals
	Personal toiletries and essential medications, a small personal first aid kit, insect repellent
	Hiking Poles (if you normally use them)



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Frequently asked questions:

How do I book a tour?

A deposit of \$900 per person confirms your place and can be paid via credit card (Visa or Mastercard, no surcharge) through our website: <https://www.tuataratours.co.nz/make-a-payment/>, or by bank transfer to Tuatara Tours NZ Ltd: 01 0797 0308837 00.

When is the balance due?

The final balance is due 90 days prior to departure. A reminder will be sent via email. You're welcome to pay in instalments, as long as the full amount is received by the due date.

What if I need to cancel?

Our cancellation policy for the 12 Day Bucket List Walk is:

- Outside 60 days, Non refundable deposit, date changes are possible but deposits are non-refundable
- 60-31 days, 30% cancellation fee
- Within 30 days 100% cancellation fee

These terms are non negotiable so we strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance in case of unforeseen events. This tour is operated in conjunction with a local tour operator, Walking Legends.

How big are the groups? Our tours typically accommodate up to 12 people, though we can cater to larger groups on request.

Will I be with the same people for 12 days? Our 12-day Bucket List Walk is made up of three 4-day tours, run back-to-back. Your group might include others doing the full 12 days, along with some joining for just one region—so the group mix can change along the way! You'll likely have a different guide in each area too, giving you a great mix of personalities, stories, and local flavour.

Do I have to share a room? Tours are priced on a twin-share basis (two people per room). Let us know if you prefer a queen bed or two singles. Solo travellers will be paired with another solo of the same gender, or you can opt to pay a single supplement for your own room.

Am I fit enough? The 12 Day Bucket List Walk is graded Challenging, suited to walkers with an above average fitness level. You should feel confident walking over 20km on partially formed tracks and roads with some steep inclines and possible stream crossings. This tour includes the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, a strenuous walk of 7-8 hours in an alpine environment. Good walk fitness and preparation, including stair climbing will be good preparation for this walk. Not sure if it's right for you? Just give our team a call — we're happy to chat.

How much luggage can I bring? Space is limited, so we ask that you bring one small day pack and one overnight bag or suitcase (maximum 20kg). Complimentary hire of raincoats, backpacks, and hiking poles is available by prior arrangement.

When is the best time to do the tour? The 12 Day Bucket List Walk runs in December, February, March and April. Tours run in all weather, so come prepared. Please refer to our gear list for what to bring.

Can you pick me up for the tour?

We offer pick-ups and drop-offs from selected locations in central Rotorua and Matamata. Unfortunately, we cannot collect guests from Airbnb properties or private homes in residential suburbs.



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Frequently asked questions:

What time do we return to Taupō and Rotorua on the last day?

On the final day, we aim to drop you back in Taupō between 3–4pm, and in Rotorua between 5–6pm—perfect timing for your onward travel or a relaxed evening back in town.

Is breakfast included on the first day?

Please have breakfast before your pick-up on the first day, as the tour begins immediately afterward. From then on, all meals are included as per your itinerary. Dinner on nights 4 and 8 is not included, your guide will be happy to recommend the best local spots.

What kind of meals are provided?

Breakfasts, packed lunches, trail snacks, hot drinks, and most dinners are included. Nights 4 and 8 in Rotorua are self-catered, perfect for sampling local flavours.

Meals feature cooked and continental breakfasts, hearty packed lunches, and 2- or 3-course Kiwi dinners with fresh veggies and desserts. Each dinner includes a complimentary drink; extra drinks can be purchased.

What facilities are available at the lodges?

On the 12 Day Bucket List Walk, you'll stay in a variety of boutique and character lodges & hotels, which have been chosen for their amazing location & atmosphere. Rooms are single, twin-share or doubles with comfy beds & crisp linen. You'll have an ensuite room for each of the 11 nights of the trip.

The trip includes 2 nights in a studio room at a historic hotel in central Rotorua on nights 4 and 8 between each 'leg' of the journey.

Is WiFi available?

Wi-Fi is available throughout the lodges we stay at, though speeds may vary during peak times. During the day in the more remote trail locations, phone signal is intermittent. It might be a good time for a digital detox.

Are there drying facilities at the Lodge?

There are no drying rooms available but plenty of wide, covered verandahs for drying wet gear and there is a guest laundry available at your Rotorua accommodation.

Is alcohol included?

A glass of local wine or craft beer per person is provided each evening and you can purchase more with dinner.

Do I need hiking boots?

We strongly recommend well-fitting walking boots with good tread and ankle support. After periods of rain certain sections of trail can be muddy, so hiking boots will be best to tackle this.

Do I carry a full pack? No! You'll only need to carry a day pack with the essentials, wet weather gear, lunch, a drink bottle, sunhat, and anything else you'd like for the day. Since you return to the same lodges each night, there's no need to bring your full luggage on the trail. We have raincoats, day packs and pairs of hiking poles that you are welcome to borrow for the trip, just let us know in advance.

Are the tours guided?

Yes, the 12 Day Bucket List Walk is a fully guided experience. Your guide will bring local knowledge to enhance your journey and ensure your safety and comfort along the way.



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TERMS & CONDITIONS

Tuatara Tours NZ Limited accepts bookings subject to the following terms:

Contract

This contract is between Tuatara Tours and you, the client—defined as any person travelling or intending to travel on a tour operated by Tuatara Tours. The contract, including all matters arising from it, is governed by New Zealand law and subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the New Zealand courts. Only employees or directors of Tuatara Tours have the authority to vary or omit any of the terms stated herein.

Cancellation Policy Due to Travel Restrictions

If your trip is impacted by travel restrictions imposed by the New Zealand government or any other government, Tuatara Tours will either work with you to transfer your trip to a future date at no additional cost, or provide a full refund.

Price

All prices are quoted in New Zealand dollars and include 15% GST. Prices are based on rates current at the time of publishing. Tuatara Tours reserves the right to modify prices without notice if deemed necessary or appropriate.

Accommodation on organised tours is based on twin or double share. Solo travellers will be paired with another traveller of the same sex. A single supplement is available upon request.

Confirmation of Booking

Bookings are confirmed upon receipt of the full tour price, which is due 90 days prior to the start of the tour. Tuatara Tours and its agents reserve the right to decline any booking at their discretion.

Cancellation

If a client wishes to cancel a Tour the following charges will be applied: (Unless stated otherwise)

- Non refundable deposit Outside 60 days, date changes are possible but deposits are non-refundable
- 60–31 days, 30% cancellation fee
- Within 30 days 100% cancellation fee

These cancellation fees are non-negotiable. We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance.

Travel Insurance

Tuatara Tours strongly recommends that clients take out travel insurance, including tour cancellation cover and any other relevant insurances. It is the client's responsibility to ensure adequate coverage. Tuatara Tours cannot be held liable for any failure to obtain appropriate insurance.

Medical Conditions

You must inform us at the time of booking of any medical condition, history, or medication you are currently taking.

Changes to Tours

Tuatara Tours will make every effort to operate all tours as advertised. However, reasonable changes to the itinerary may be made if deemed necessary or advisable. Clients will be informed of any changes as soon as reasonably possible. Where a tour service must be substituted, a service of similar quality and standard will be provided.

Weather

Adverse weather may prevent planned activities from proceeding as scheduled. The tour guide may decide to alter the itinerary based on weather conditions, prioritising group safety. Tuatara Tours and its contracted suppliers are not responsible for changes resulting from weather-related circumstances.



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General conditions

Tuatara Tours, its agents, contractors and guides do not accept responsibility or liability for loss, damage to, or theft of personal belongings (owners risk) or for any expenses, including medical and transport expenses arising from a personal accident, injury, illness, or hospitalisation. Tuatara Tours and their guides reserve the right to make any alterations to the itinerary in the interest of safety, or unforeseen circumstances due to causes such as weather, illness or misadventure. Every reasonable endeavour will be made to keep to published schedules but no guarantee is given. Tuatara Tours will not be held liable for costs incurred by change, delay or the missing of connecting services. Tuatara Tours reserves the right to exclude a person from a tour at any time, if in the opinion of the guide or operator, that person may be likely to risk the health, safety or comfort (including unsociable behaviour) of other clients, him or herself or the environment. In such circumstances, Tuatara Tours will not be obliged to offer any refund or transfer ticket. These terms and conditions apply to each participant including in a group booking. Where a booking is made on behalf of a group of two or more people then each participant in the group must be made aware of and accept these terms and conditions.

RISK DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

In any adventure activity, there is an element of risk involved. Risks in undertaking this activity include (but are not limited to): hypothermia, heat exhaustion, physical injury caused by environment i.e. rock falls, and physical injury caused by self, i.e. falling over.

The staff and management of Tuatara Tours and any of its agency partners take all practicable steps to identify and minimise potential dangers. The Operator makes all arrangements for all tours on the condition that it shall not be liable for any sickness, injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity which may be occasioned, either directly or indirectly, by reason of any defect in any vehicle, vessel or aircraft, by weather, by any other cause, or through acts of default of a company or person engaged in conveying the passengers, or in carrying out arrangements for these activities.

We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance prior to your trip.

By participating in this activity, you are expressly assuming those risks and responsibilities and are, to the maximum extent permitted by law releasing the Operator, its officers, employees, directors, agents and any other person associated with us, from any liability, claims, loss, damages or expenses (whatsoever and irrespective of whether direct, indirect or consequential) caused by any event including but not limited to: personal injury or death; property loss or damage; acts which may be construed as negligible or accidental; any other loss, damage, suffering, emotional or nervous disorder suffered by you or any other person in relation to this activity. You accept that you have been advised to obtain adequate travel insurance for all persons named on the booking.

In participating in the activity, the customer agrees to be bound by the following conditions:

- My successors, executors and administrators are bound by the Terms and Conditions;
- I agree not to commence any litigation proceedings in any country in relation to the risks and liabilities set out above and to indemnify the Operator against any claims;
- I confirm and warrant I am physically fit and suffer no medical conditions, which may affect my ability to participate in the activity;
- I confirm I am aware that professional medical assistance may be difficult and/or take some time to access due to the remote areas in which we are travelling;
- I consent to receive medical treatment in the case of injury, accident or illness during the activity and to indemnify the Operator against any claims, costs or expenses in respect of the treatment;
- I agree that any film, sound, video or other recordings taken of or during the activity will not be used in any production, or advertising without prior consent of the Operator, however the Operator may use such recordings itself at its complete discretion without any prior approval; and
- I agree to listen to my driver/guide/host, follow their instructions and make sure any children in my care do the same. Furthermore, the Operator will not be responsible for any personal injury and or property damage caused by you and any costs for such injury / damage will be your responsibility.



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Custom Tours Available

Want to change the itinerary or create something entirely new? We enjoy designing custom adventures for friends, families, work groups and clubs. Get in touch!

Keen to join a tour? Enquire now



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Australia free dial 1800 044 633

World +64 3 962 3280



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Web: www.tuataratours.co.nz

You might also like these other walks....

The 8 Day Bucket List Walk
Great Barrier Island Escape



Official Partner

Tuatarata Tours is proud to be in an official partnership with Ngā Haerenga The New Zealand Cycle Trail.

The objective of the partnership is to create a nationwide network of cycle trails that connect the Great Rides with the rest of New Zealand.



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Space for your own notes:



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