



# THERMAL CYCLE

**North Island loop • Auckland • Coromandel Peninsula • Hot Water beach • Lake Rotorua • Geo thermal reserve and geysers • Experience Maori culture • Beautiful coastal rides**

**5 days: Auckland to Auckland Total 201 miles (322km)\* US\$2,299 + tax**

*\*All distances are approximate and can be adjusted to suit your level of ability.*

*The Thermal Cycle tour takes you on a journey of a unique and surprising land. New Zealand's North Island, named Te Ika-a-Maui by the Maori, is remarkably different to anywhere else. It is a land of active volcanoes, hot springs, geysers, and unique flora and fauna. Favoured by the Maori people for its bountiful natural resources, the North Island has a rich cultural history, which you'll learn more about as you make your way round. We cover various distances on this trip, from 25 and 55 miles (40 - 80km) per day, with the opportunity to do more or less if you prefer. The Thermal Cycle is fully vehicle-supported, so there's plenty of freedom on the road. Our specialist cycling guides are experienced, compassionate and enthusiastic. This trip is a great add-on to our South Island trips if you want to see the best of both islands.*

## **Who did we design this trip for?**

**This trip is designed for cyclists wanting a taste of cycle touring in New Zealand, at the same time as experiencing some of the wonderful highlights of the North Island. You'll complete a loop of the North Island, from Auckland and back, with the opportunity to cycle around 200 miles (322km). There is the chance each day to cycle more than the daily mileage, or jump in the support vehicle and do less, depending on your mood. This is your cycle tour and we are here to help you make it as physically demanding as you like.**

*Tuesday*

### **Arrive in Auckland, cycle Thames to Coromandel Town**

If you're flying in long-haul, you'll leave the Northern Hemisphere on Sunday evening and arrive in New Zealand early Tuesday morning. It's hard to get your head around, as you'll lose a day to the dateline – but you'll get it back on the way home, so just go with the flow! You'll just need to make sure you arrive in Auckland by 9am to clear customs and the luggage hall before we meet you at 10am. Alternatively, we can pick you up in central Auckland at 9.30am. We'll start by fitting and adjusting your bike to your liking and then we're off! Our first ride takes us along the Coromandel Peninsula, past beaches and rolling farmland, and is a fantastic chance to stretch your legs and warm up those cycling muscles. This ride is rated as one of best day trips from Auckland and you'll see why – it's a great introduction to New Zealand.

**Notes: Cycling distance - 34miles (55km) - Thames to Coromandel Town (ascent 250m, descent 250m, 2 hills).**

**ACCOMMODATION:** Coromandel Lodgings, Coromandel (L,D)

*Wednesday*

### **Cycle Coromandel to Whitianga, hike to Cathedral Cove**

From the Coromandel we'll head straight up and out of town. While we'll only cover a small distance today, we'll give ourselves plenty of time to go up and over a major hill. If we make good time, there are plenty of other options too. After arriving into the seaside town and our accommodation in Whitianga, we'll drive the short distance over to Hahei and take a walk to the famously beautiful Cathedral Cove. This stunning marine reserve is only accessible on foot or by boat, and the clear waters and white sands make it an idyllic spot. Enjoy the sea air over a fantastic meal and then have a restful sleep.

**Notes: Cycling distance - 31 miles (50km) - Coromandel to Whitianga (ascent 400m, descent 400m, 1 hill).**

ACCOMMODATION: Whitianga Lodgings, Whitianga (B,L,D)

Thursday

### **Cycle Whitianga to Whangamata via Hot Water Beach**

Today we'll catch the ferry across the inlet, and ride the quiet roads south towards Whangamata, a popular surf spot at the base of the Coromandel Peninsula. Watching the surfers show off their moves is a great excuse for a break today! Along the way we'll take a short detour to Hot Water Beach, a favourite spot in this area for a fun do-it-yourself spa experience. Take a spade for a short walk along the beach, dig yourself a hole, and voila – the strangest bath you've ever had! Once at Whangamata, we'll jump in the bus, give our legs a break and drive the main roads south to Rotorua, another interesting kiwi town!

**Notes: Cycling distance - 47 miles (75km) - Whitianga to Whangamata via Hot Water Beach (ascent 275, descent 275m, 2 hills).**

ACCOMMODATION: Cedarwood Lodge, Rotorua (B,L,D)

Friday

### **Cycle Lake Rotorua, visit a Thermal area and Maori Marae**

From our lodgings on the lake, we'll head out on the "loop de lac" (a circumnavigation of Lake Rotorua) finishing back at our lodge. If you're really keen, you can do it twice – once in each direction – it's worth it! After lunch, we'll head out to Hells Gate Geothermal Reserve, a unique place of extreme contrasts. You'll see remarkable formations and colours, cascading hot water and unearthly vistas, even examples of "land coral". Tonight you'll get to know a bit more about the local Maori culture and share a traditional Maori feast called a hangi. The meal is prepared by wrapping up the ingredients and burying it in the earth to cook over hot stones. This method is very healthy and akin to steaming except it imparts a wonderful smoky flavour at the same time. Vegetarians are also well catered for. We'll stay in our lodge another night before we head back to Auckland.

**Notes: Cycling distance - 27 miles (43km) - Lake Rotorua loop OR 54 miles (86km) - double loop (no real hills!).**

ACCOMMODATION: Cedarwood Lodge, Rotorua (B,L,D)

Saturday

### **Cycle South Auckland, depart**

For our last day together, we'll head back towards Auckland for our final ride. After lunch, we'll jump on our bikes and follow the Firth of Thames, one of New Zealand's most important coastal stretches for shorebirds, and cycle the coastline to Kawakawa Bay. Once there, we'll continue into Auckland, where we'll have you at the airport in time to catch evening flights back home or down south for a South Island trip if you're keen to see more. We'll make sure you finish your trip refreshed and reenergized, ready to take on the world again. (B,L)

**Notes: Cycling distance - 35 miles (56km) - Mangatawhiri to Kawakawa Bay (ascent 150, descent 150m, 3 hills).**

## **Important Information**

**ACCOMMODATION:** The *Thermal Cycle* is a fully-supported cycling tour of the North Island with all accommodation included, from the moment we pick you up, to when we drop you off at the end. We stay in comfortable bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments, so while we appreciate creature comforts on our cycle tours, they're not a scenic tour of luxury hotels of the North Island. Rooming is twin-share, although single rooms are available

on request at an extra charge. We find that most solo travellers get on great sharing a room with a fellow cyclist of the same gender. We use a variety of accommodation and most places have ensuite bathrooms, but there are a couple of places where the bathrooms are shared – so we ask you to share with other group members on occasion.

**RECOMMENDED FLIGHTS:** If you're flying in on the first day of the trip (Tuesday) we recommend arriving at Auckland airport by 9am. If you're departing on the last day (Saturday), please plan flights that depart from Auckland after 7pm. If you're considering alternative flight times, please call us so we can make the arrangements and make sure your trip runs as smoothly as possible.

**TRIP START:** Tuesday - on the first day of the trip we can either pick you up from the Quest Hotel, 363 Queen St, at 9.30am, or Auckland International airport at 10am.

**TRIP END:** Saturday - on the last day of the trip, we can drop you at Auckland airport in time for flights after 7pm, or anywhere in central Auckland in the early evening.

**FITNESS:** You must have a good level of cycling fitness to enjoy yourself on the *Thermal Cycle*. You don't have to be young and extremely fit (although if you are, you won't be bored) but you should be in the habit of doing at least some regular cycling. Age and experience are not as important as attitude. If you're concerned about your fitness level, have a chat with us so we can help make sure you've chosen the most suitable trip.

**EXPERIENCE:** You don't need any cycle touring experience to enjoy the *Thermal Cycle* tour, but if you're a seasoned cycle tourer you'll still find plenty of challenges. All we ask is that you be energetic and in good shape. We manage the challenge level to suit your experience and we have an impeccable safety record. We hold all relevant government licenses and our staff are highly trained and experienced.

**FLEXIBILITY:** The off-the-beaten path and non-commercial nature of some of the accommodation on this tour means we occasionally need to make changes to the itinerary. We try to make as few changes as possible, but retain the flexibility to make sure your trip is as good as it can be.

**INCLUDED:** The trip fare is US\$2299 + 15% NZ government taxes. We quote all prices in US dollars, so our guests from all over the world can more easily relate prices to their own currencies. The trip fare includes just about everything, specifically:

- Good quality road bikes for your entire tour. There is no extra charge for bike rental, but there is the option to upgrade to a high performance bike should you prefer.
- All guiding services. We have two guides per trip. You'll have a lead guide who drives the support vehicle and is responsible for leading the trip and maintaining the bikes. You'll also have a co-guide that will cycle with you and is responsible for your meals and accommodation. Having two guides means we have the flexibility to make sure you always have a great time! We operate with small groups and don't hesitate to offer a second departure when our trips start getting full.
- Accommodation for the entire period you are with us. We can also organise accommodation for you if you want to arrive earlier or leave later.
- All breakfast (B), lunches (L), and dinners (D) as described in the itinerary. Alcohol is not generally included, although we do spring for a few drinks here and there!
- All cycling and activities described in the itinerary. There are many optional activities available at extra cost, particularly in Rotorua, and these are not included. None of these activities are compulsory and nor will your trip seem less awesome if you don't do any additional options. Although some people enjoy hang gliding, bungee jumping, jet boating, skydiving, and so on, others prefer to focus on their cycling. It's completely up to you, but we're here to help you organise whatever you want to do!

**NOT INCLUDED:** This is your holiday, and we are serious about not nickel-and-dime you! You'll have a few meals

and drinks to cover, extra activities if you choose them, and you'll probably feel like tipping your guides at the end of a fabulous time, but you won't be pulling out your wallet every few minutes on your *Thermal Cycle* tour!

**DON'T BE A STRANGER!** When you get back from your trip, please let us know how you got on! We have an official 'post-trip survey' that we always look forward to receiving as it helps us fine tune our trips, but we like to just stay in touch too. We have other adventures, trips to other destinations and lots going on that we'd like to include you in. Also if you'd tell your friends about this little quirky New Zealand company you've discovered, we'd really appreciate it!

**We'll see you soon!**