

Faculty Led International Culture and Leisure Studies

Itinerary prepared and booked by Absolute Aotearoa for The College at Brockport, NY

Day 1 – 30 December 2017 - Christchurch

Welcome to Christchurch, New Zealand! It is a short trip into the city where you will evidently see The Rebuild of Christchurch is in full swing after the devastating 2011 earthquake, some of the historical buildings are being repaired and the Restart Mall is a hive of activity. Take the time to stroll around the Botanical Gardens, visit the 'Cardboard Cathedral' or take a ride on the city trams. Christchurch is slowly returning to what it was prior to 2011 - a bustling South Island city, with so much to do! Cameron will take you on a city tour and stop along the way so you can all get some lunch.

This afternoon we head to Heathcote Valley where we will take a Gondola Ride up to the summit of Mt Cavendish to check out the spectacular views of Christchurch and its surrounding areas. The Time Tunnel will give you an informative overview of local history. Once you have spent enough time here, it is back down to the bus and off to our accommodation.

This evening we have dinner booked for 7:30pm – a casual location located right next door to our hostel, so no need to travel!

Accommodation – All Stars Inn

Day 2 – 31 December 2017 – Christchurch to Oamaru

This morning we will begin to take our bags to the bus at 8.30am for a 9am departure. It is time to head to Oamaru, but not without a few stops first! Cameron has an absolute favourite of past group members to visit – top secret, of course! – before we hit the road and travel south down the Canterbury Plains to Timaru. In Timaru we will stop to pick up lunch items and then head to Caroline Bay to stretch out in the sun on the white sand east coast beach. Be sure to pack your swimsuit and towel in your day pack as a swim may be just the thing to ward off that jet lag!

Once we've had enough sun we will head to Oamaru, stopping off to visit Steam Punk a quirky museum type location which is set in an alternate futuristic version of 19th century Victorian England, that features steam powered technology. Bring your sense of humour and get ready to explore – you won't see another place like this!

Later we will check in at our accommodation – a true Kiwi experience tonight, where we will be staying at Riverside Haven, a popular lodge and campground. Here we can swim in the river, pat and feed the friendly farm animals and later join the guests for a spit roast dinner and listen to some live music as we see in the New Year. A great way to meet Kiwis from all over and really get to know our culture.

Accommodation – Riverside Haven

Day 3 – 01 January 2018 – Oamaru to Dunedin

Happy New Year! You are about 16 hours ahead of your friends and family back home and get to see in 2018 first! We'll be leaving at 10am today and are headed to the student capital of the South Island – Dunedin. Dunedin is well known for its Scottish ancestry which is clear in the architecture of its buildings – tomorrow we'll even be checking out a castle. But in the meantime...

We're off to see something very cool at a secret driver stop. You definitely want to make sure you have charged your camera batteries as you will be needing a camera for sure! Following this stop, we're off to another! And then another! Cam has a lot up his sleeve to show you this morning!

We will arrive into Dunedin, home to the Blue & Gold rugby colours and you will have a free afternoon to explore this student city. While the students are all away on summer holidays, the city will be nice and quiet, and not too busy.

Our accommodation tonight is one with a difference, 2 adjacent 1920's early colonial homes, converted to accommodate visitors to the region. Original and unique architectural features are still in perfect condition as designed for the prominent families at the time.

Tonight we are off to the Speight Brewery. New Zealand is well known for its beer, and Speights is an iconic brand which you will see heavily advertised, especially in the South Island. Infact your first night in Christchurch saw you having dinner at the Speights Ale House! So time to see how this beer is made firsthand.

Accommodation – Manor House Backpackers

Day 4 – 02 January 2018 – Dunedin to Queenstown

So we mentioned that you'll be seeing a castle in Dunedin, and we weren't lying! Off to Larnach Castle this morning for a guided tour of the castle and grounds. With its rich history dating back to 1871, the castle and grounds have been lovingly restored by the Barker family. With numerous national and international accolades, and with Eliza Larnach still said to be keeping a mournful eye on the upstairs of this property after an early death, this place has everything!

Once done, we are going to head inland, travelling along route 8, where you will see the Otago farmland at its best. Keep your eyes open for the NZ Merino sheep, their wool has been used for Icebreaker clothing for many, many years. Infact, Icebreaker have invented the "Baacode" system where you are able to trace the lineage of your garment right back to which Sheep Station it's wool came from!

With stops here and there along the way, we will find ourselves arriving in the tourism mecca of New Zealand, Queenstown, this afternoon. Queenstown is exceptionally popular during summer, no more so than over the New Year period, so brace yourself for a crazy, jammed packed town, surrounded in sheer beauty!

Accommodation – Absoloot Backpackers

Day 5 – 03 January 2018 - Queenstown Free Day

A free day in Queenstown today, you can use this day at your leisure and join many of the optional activities (additional cost) at your choice. We recommend you go and visit Ferg Burger if you didn't already last night. Although, if you did visit last night, we bet that you will want to go again today!

Accommodation – Absoloot Backpackers

Day 6 – 04 January 2018 – Queenstown Free Day

Today is another free day in Queenstown, however for those that are interested Cam will be more than happy to take those of you out to Milford Sound on an all day trip, that will include a boat cruise on the Sound. He will let you all know about this as you arrive in Christchurch, but for those who definitely want to do this, let us know! We do require a minimum of 10 people on the trip. This is a FULL day trip (at an additional cost), which will be around 12hours but Milford Sound is definitely worth it for how beautiful it is (go on, Google it!).

Accommodation – Absoloot Backpackers

Day 7 – 05 January 2018 – Queenstown to Franz Josef

9am and we are out of Queenstown, heading up the “Wild West Coast” for Franz Josef. First there will be a stop in Wanaka where Amanda recommends you tell Cam he needs to stop off at the little bakery so you can all go in and purchase a cream doughnut for morning tea. They are ridiculously good and an iconic food item in New Zealand. Oh yeah, Wanaka is pretty cool too! We'll spend a little bit of time here so you can have a look at the town before we set off to Franz.

Franz Josef is a 12 kilometre long glacier which is fed by a 7.7square mile large snowfield at high altitude. Here we will be able to take a great walk to the base of the glacier. For those who would love to do a hike on the glacier there is the option to do this tomorrow morning before we leave.

Due to the deterioration on the face of the glacier, all hikes must be flown in by helicopter. For a 4 hour guided tour, including guide, helicopter ride and appropriate gear needed, the cost will be approximately NZ\$425per person. It is an amazing experience!

Accommodation – Glow Worm Backpackers

Day 8 – 06 January 2018 – Franz Josef to Greymouth

For those that are participating in a heli-hike, the rest of the group will hang out in the local area where there are many easy walks you can join, or maybe you just want to sit in a café with a hot cup of coffee and reflect on the past week.

Once our hikers are back, we'll make sure everyone has had lunch and then we are off! We'll stop along the way in Hokitika at the Green Stone factory – the iconic New Zealand Ponamu – where you can make purchases. Did you know that it is not considered good luck to purchase your own personal Ponamu? It is best that you and a friend

Sample itinerary provided by Absolute Aotearoa Limited

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work together to buy each other's items and then "gift" them to each other. Ponamu also makes a very lovey and personal gift for someone back home.

We will arrive into Greymouth late afternoon, our hotel is a 5 minute walk from the rugged West Coast beach, a great place to watch the sunset over the Tasman Sea. We've also got dinner covered tonight.

Accommodation – Ashley Hotel

Day 9 – 07 January 2018 – Greymouth to Nelson

This morning we are going bush! We've been driving through the native West Coast Rainforest for some the past couple of days, so now it is time to get up close and personal. We will be joining a 2hour buggy off road buggy tour through private farmland and native bush – what better way to see it! Prepare for some fun as these are self-drive buggies that you will share between the group.

After our morning adventure we will head to Punakaiki – also known as Pancake rocks.

From here we leave the West Coast and are headed to the sunny location of Nelson, located at the top of the South Island.

Accommodation – Bridge Street Backpackers

Day 10 – 08 January 2018 – Nelson Free Day

A free day to relax in Nelson...or...how about Abel Tasman National Park??!! Today is your choice of optional activities. You may choose to do a Cruise and Walk or a Cruise, Walk and Kayak out in the gorgeous setting of Abel Tasman or you might like to hire a bike from the hostel and cycle around Nelson, along with visiting the absolute Centre of New Zealand. The choice is yours!

Accommodation – Bridge Street Backpackers

Day 11 – 09 January 2018 – Nelson to Picton to Wellington

You have a few hours left in the South Island as we depart at 9am and head for Picton where we will catch the ferry over to the North Island, home to Cam & Amanda. We will be on the boat for approximately 3.5hours and cafes are onboard so you can chill out, maybe even get a nap in before arriving into the capital city of New Zealand, Wellington.

Our arrival into Wellington is at 5pm and our hostel is just around the corner to check into.

Accommodation – Cambridge Backpackers

Day 12 – 10 January 2018 – Wellington

This morning we have a visit to the Parliament buildings where you will take a guided tour and learn the political systems and processes of New Zealand. The afternoon is then yours, however we highly recommend you visit Te Papa, the national museum of New Zealand. It is amazing!

Accommodation – Cambridge Backpackers

Day 13 – 11 January 2018 – Wellington to Taupo

Today Cam gets to bring you all into Taupo, our home town! Taupo has the largest lake, 238sq mi, in the Southern Hemisphere and it is actually a large caldera volcano. That is still dormant!

Make sure you tell Cam to stop for a cream horn in Sanson as one of your stops along the way. Have your cameras ready for the Central Plateau – home to the three volcanoes, Mt Ruapehu, Mt Ngauruhoe and Mt Tongariro. Mt Ngauruhoe may look familiar – he was also Mt Doom in The Lord of the Rings. Taupo is best known in New Zealand for Skydiving. It is the cheapest location and the views are outstanding. Best feeling in the world! The highest water touch bungy is also here and is such a beautiful jump location – it is also a little cheaper than Queenstown for the budget conscious.

By tonight Amanda will be dying to meet you all! So hopefully we can all catch up at the local pub for dinner.

Accommodation – Finlay Jacks

Day 14 – 12 January 2018 – Taupo Free Day

A free day at the big lake today. Parasailing, boat cruises, skydiving, bungy jumping, hiking, kayaking, mountain biking and more! For those who want to participate in the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, the best one day walk in New Zealand and one that regularly gets ranked in the top ten best day walks in the world.

The Tongariro Alpine Crossing is a full day, where you will hike 18kilometres (11miles) over Mount Tongariro. You do need a moderate fitness to cover this track. For the more adventurous you can also include a hike up Mount Ngauruhoe – also known as Mount Doom from Lord of the Rings. A high level of fitness is required for this and remember, including this portion it is additional to the 18 kilometre track you are already hiking!

Enjoy your day in our home town!

Accommodation – Finlay Jacks

Day 15 – 13 January 2018 – Taupo to Rotorua

First stop today is at the Lady Knox Geyser – an impressive way to start out day! We will leave Taupo by 9am to ensure we see this geyser go off at 10.15am. This is a one time a day occurrence, and while manipulated so you can see a geyser go off, it is a real geyser! After this we will spend a couple of hours at Wai-o-Tapu Geothermal grounds where you can explore various geothermal activity and boiling mud pools.

We will arrive into Rotorua where if you like, we can go OGO! OGO is essentially the same as Zorbing, rolling down the hill in a giant hamster ball and so much fun! This is an optional activity, but worth it!

We will check into our accommodation – which is home to a gigantic rock climbing wall! – and get ready for our evening pick up which will take us out to Tamaki Maori Village. Here you will experience an authentic Hangi dinner (food cooked in an earth oven) and a Maori performance. Tamaki Maori Village also has a replica of a Maori Village before the Europeans came to New Zealand which you can walk around and even participate in a few games with your hosts.

Accommodation – Rock Solid Backpackers

Day 16 – 14 January 2018 – Rotorua to Raglan

Surfs up! What better way to start ending our trip on a completely different coast of New Zealand with a completely different sand colour. Yip, sand colour. The sand here is an impressive black colour due to being iron rich. But first, a stop to see the cutest Kiwi you'll meet while here in New Zealand, the actual Kiwi! A guided tour around the Kiwi House will give you a great perspective in how endangered these birds are and what is being done to protect them. You will also get to see many different birds and reptiles native to New Zealand, including the Tuatara who dates back to the age of the dinosaurs.

This afternoon you are all booked in for a 2 hour surf lesson, all gear is provided.

Accommodation – Karioi Lodge

Day 17 – 15 January 2018 – Raglan Free Day

So, who loves surfing?! Today is a free day, so if you got the surfing bug, have a chat with the hostel and they can arrange more surfing for you (additional cost). Cam will also run a shuttle out to Raglan town for those who want to go and chill out in a small vibrant town.

Accommodation – Karioi Lodge

Day 18 – 16 January 2018 – Raglan to Auckland

Ahhh, last day of travel and up to the big smoke we go. For perspective, Auckland city is the largest in New Zealand. Its widespread population is more than the total population of the South Island! It has more sail boats per capita than any other place in the world, hence the nickname "City of Sails" and is the 12th most expensive city in the world on the housing market. New York is 21st. But, it's a pretty cool city with a great marine waterfront.

Tonight we will have our leaving dinner down at the Viaduct - Auckland's waterfront and reminisce over time spent travelling in New Zealand. Tonight's dinner attire is "Smart Casual".

Accommodation – Ramada Suites

Day 19 – 17 January 2018 – Auckland to USA

This morning we have time to check out Auckland city a little more and also check out the views from a great vantage point – at the top of the Sky Tower! If you need one more adrenaline based activity before you leave later today, why not jump off it too?!

It's been about 3 weeks now and the time has come to head back to Auckland International Airport and drop you all off so you can all head home. Always a sad time!

Activities Included:

Mt Cavendish Gondola, Christchurch
Arrival Dinner, Christchurch
Steampunk, Oamaru
Speights Alehouse Private Tour, Dunedin
Larnach Castle Private Tour, Dunedin
Dinner, Greymouth
2hr Bush Buggy Rain Forest Adventure, Greymouth

Rainbow Springs & Kiwi House Tour, Rotorua
Surf Lessons, Raglan
Leaving Dinner, Auckland
Skytower Entry, Auckland
Tamaki Maori Cultural Show and Dinner, Rotorua
Wai-o-Tapu Thermal Grounds, Rotorua
Parliament Tour, Wellington