

S&J NZ and AU > 2016 Trip Schedule and Bookings and Info

- New Zealand / Australia Trip: December 14 – December 31, 2016
- Summer weather predicts: Highs of 60s 70s and 80s

Flight Travel

Wednesday December 14, 2016 – LEAVE – Fly to LAX (Southwest)

Thursday December 15, 2016 – LEAVE 9:45PM – Fly to Auckland, NZ (Air NZ)

Saturday December 17, 2016 – ARRIVE Auckland, NZ 7:30AM

Trip Part One

4 Full Days / Nights

Rental Car

AVIS Rental Car, NZ Airport

Auckland, NZ - Hotel

December 17, checking out and leaving NZ December 21

Sofitel Viaduct Harbour

<http://www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-8577-sofitel-auckland-viaduct-harbour/index.shtml>

DAY 1 - **SATURDAY (December 17th)**

Rest, Eat and if we are up for it: explore local Auckland around the hotel in the city and try and go to the tower

Auckland Sky Tower

<https://www.skycityauckland.co.nz/attractions/sky-tower/>

If you're visiting Auckland for just one day, then a trip up the Sky Tower is a must. View the city from 220 meters high above street level. Panoramic 360° views up to 80 kilometers in every direction.

Spot key landmarks, volcanoes and other historical locations within the greater Auckland area. [Download the Sky Tower APP](#) and discover the local history and other fun facts about the Sky Tower. If [dining](#) with a view is what you're after, then you're spoilt for choice with three restaurants and cafes up the Sky Tower - [Orbit 360°](#) revolving restaurant, the superbly chic and elegant [The Sugar Club](#) or relax with your coffee, cheese board or ice cream at the [Sky Cafe](#). Don't forget to check out the [school holiday](#) activities at the Sky Tower, which are held three times a year and provide fun for the whole family. Enjoy free Wi-Fi* to Facebook, tweet and Snapchat your loved ones back home. **Adult Tickets \$28.00 each**

DAY 2 - Sunday (December 18th) - All three passes have been purchased ahead of time for these three locations for December 18th

LORD OF THE RINGS - 2 hour 40 min drive from Auckland

Driving south of Auckland past Hamilton and Waitomo on New Zealand's Highway 3, you'll pass through a blip of a town called Piopio

<http://www.dangerous-business.com/2014/11/hunting-trolls-piopio/>

\$50 each adult ticket, 90 minute tour - A farm where sheep are roaming free and the Mangaotaki Rocks rise up out of the green hills. Hairy Feet, a new tour company run by the Denize family. Their farm — with those impressive cliffs and nearby twisted, moss-covered forest — served as a recognizable location in the film "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey." What has resulted is a series of gravel pathways through the location, taking you up near the cliffs and then down into the mossy forest. You can find [Hairy Feet](#) at 1411 Mangaotaki Road in Piopio.

Tour times are **at 10 a.m.** and **1 p.m.** each day, and the cost is \$50 for adults. Tours last roughly 90 minutes. Stand in the exact spot where Gandalf bestows 'Sting' upon Bilbo, all while enjoying being on a beautiful New Zealand working farm.

Visit the Piopio film location for "The Hobbit; An Unexpected Journey" just 45 minutes south of the famous Waitomo Caves.

Come and see why Denize Bluffs, a farm location in the Mangaotaki Valley near Piopio Village, was chosen by Sir Peter Jackson and why it received more screen time than any other location in New Zealand.

Daily minivan tours take you on a journey through unusual rock formations to spectacular limestone cliffs and primeval native New Zealand forest. Stand in the actors' footsteps, have your photograph taken with 'Sting', hear all about the film-making process and enjoy being on a beautiful New Zealand working farm.

TOURS: twice daily Bookings advisable

TOUR TIMES: 10am & 1pm

(please check in 15 minutes before tour departure)

TOUR DURATION: 90 minutes

TOUR LOCATION: 1411 Mangaotaki Road, Piopio, North Island

Driving directions:

PLEASE USE DIRECTIONS BELOW AS SOME G.P.S UNITS MAY SEND YOU ON A LONGER ROUTE VIA GRAVEL ROADS

- Travel on SH3 (State Highway 3) to Piopio
- Turn onto Kaka Street at the edge of Piopio Village. (Beside GAS Station)
- Turn left off Kaka Street onto Mangaotaki Road
- Continue to travel on Mangaotaki Road for 14.11kms (approx. 15mins) to: 1411 Mangaotaki Road and "Hairy Feet Waitomo Scenic Film Location Tour"

Transport to the film sites is in a modern comfortable minivan (maximum 9 passengers)

At the film location sites there are well formed and maintained walking tracks. (Bring comfortable footwear and clothing to suit all weather conditions)

Hairy Feet Waitomo - Take a guided tour through Mangaotaki Valley and explore the exact place where the Troll Camp Fire scenes were filmed in The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey. Journey to the base of towering limestone cliffs that look exactly like the real Middle-earth.

NEXT – Same Day continues...

Tour The Glowworm Caves At Waitomo - Waitomo Glowworm Caves opened as a tourist attraction in 1889. **Opened in 1889** - Waitomo has become world-renowned attracting both local and overseas visitors captivated by the brilliance of the secluded glowworms, atmospheric cathedral caverns, deep limestones shafts and ornate decorations found in and almost the cave systems. Glowworms are small insects that emit bioluminescent - **2 hour 28 minute drive**

<http://www.waitomo.com/about-discover-waitomo/travel-to-waitomo/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.waitomo.com/Waitomo-Glowworm-Caves/Pages/default.aspx>

World renowned and a magnet for both local and overseas visitors, the Waitomo Glowworm Caves occupy a high placing in the New Zealand vacation wish-list. The glow worm, *Arachnocampa luminosa*, is unique to New Zealand. Thousands of these tiny creatures radiate their unmistakable luminescent light as our expert guides provide informative commentary on the Caves' historical and geological significance.

Waitomo Glowworm Caves are a must see for any traveller. Enjoy the world famous boat ride under thousands of magical glowworms and become a part of over 120 years of cultural and natural history.

THE BOAT RIDE

Marvel at Mother Nature's light display as you glide silently through the starry wonderland of the Glowworm Grotto. Meander underground along the Waitomo River and gaze in silence at the myriad of glow worm lights that make up the Glowworm Grotto. As you enter this galaxy of tiny living lights, you'll immediately experience a serene ambience and be fascinated

and intrigued by tiny glowworms that light your way.

Last tour at 5.30pm from 01 November - 31 March. Tours depart every half hour daily from 9am-5pm daily from 01 April - 31 October.. Allow 45 minutes.

5 min drive add this Cave **Aranui Cave** - <http://www.waitomo.com/aranui-cave/Pages/default.aspx>

Aranui Cave is set in the Ruakuri Scenic Reserve, 5 minutes drive from the Waitomo Glowworm Caves. It is named after Ruruku Aranui, the local Maori man who first discovered this previously hidden gem back in 1910. Aranui Cave has a natural cave entrance and is the smallest and most delicate of Waitomo's three main caves.

As a dry cave without a river running through it, it houses very little life past its entrance. However, just inside the entrance is a colony of native New Zealand cave wetas and further into the cave is the most beautiful collection of stalactites, stalagmites, flowstones and decorative formations. Aranui Cave is a magical, mystical place that is steeped in Maori myth and legend.

As such, it occupies a very special place in the hearts of the people of the Waitomo district. Visit soon to see the richly varied cave formations within close-up view and enjoy an experience you will never forget.

DAY 3 Monday December 19

(Explore both the city of Auckland and drive to the Beach!)

Witness Rotorua's geothermal oddities

If you want to witness some geothermal wonders first-hand, go to [Rotorua](#). Once you get past the smell of sulphur that permeates the town, you can enjoy geothermal parks, geysers, bubbling mud pools, and mineral pools in all sorts of ridiculous colors. You can't visit the North Island of New Zealand without experiencing **Rotorua**. A cultural heart for the indigenous Maori people, Rotorua is best known for its thermal mud pools and geysers which erupt on a daily basis from geothermal activity. *The Champagne Pool at*

Wai-O-Tapu - 2 hour and 50 minute drive from Auckland

<http://www.waiotapu.co.nz>

November-March: 8:30am-6:00pm (last admission **4:45pm**)

Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland

201 Waiotapu Loop Road

RD 3, Rotorua 3073

New Zealand

Tel: **(07) 366 6333**

Email: info@waiotapu.co.nz

GPS Coordinates

38°21'21" 176°22'03"

Lady Knox Geyser

At **10.15am** each day there is the opportunity to learn the history and mechanics of the Lady Knox Geyser during a presentation by an informed guide in the natural amphitheatre. It provides a unique opportunity to see a geyser in eruption

POTENTIAL / MAYBE

Coromandel Peninsula - 2 hour and 40 minute drive from Auckland

Whitianga, Hahei Beach and the NE Region //

<http://www.coromandelfun.co.nz/whitianga.html>

Hahei, Cathedral Cove

Hahei is a most spectacular and brilliantly white sandy beach - reputedly the 'most enjoyed of all the Coromandel Peninsula beaches'. The commercial centre includes Hahei cafes, restaurants, a beach store and takeaways, ice cream parlour and gift shop. There is Hahei accommodation to suit most budgets. The popular walk to Cathedral Cove starts here as does the Cathedral Cove Marine Reserve. Hereheretaura Point at the south end of the beach, now a reserve and pleasant walk, was once a large Maori Pa (village).

A highlight of the area is Cathedral Cove, the much photographed cave through the white headland. To get there turn left at the Hahei shops and go on to the car park at the end of the road. From here it is a 1 hour (each way) coastal walk with panoramic clifftop views. There is no access from Lees Road. You can also get there on the water with the Coromandel Peninsula highlights Hahei Explorer or Cathedral Cove Sea Kayaks from Hahei.

DAY 4 - TUESDAY (December 20th)

Hobbiton - REVIEW THE WEBSITE for what we are going to see / do on the tour <http://hobbiton.centaman-apac01.net/Home/tabid/38/Default.aspx>

<http://www.redcarpet-tours.com/lotr-tours/hobbiton-day-tour>

TAKES one entire day of the trip

Red Carpet Tour Schedule:

Enjoy a scenic drive through rolling hills and idyllic New Zealand towns before arriving in Matamata where you will recognize the Shire instantly. You will be totally immersed in Middle-Earth during a guided tour of the Hobbiton movie set, before enjoying a buffet lunch in the Green Dragon marquee.

“In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.”

New Zealand’s dramatic scenery - golden plains, towering mountains and enchanting valleys - played the mythical world of Middle-earth on the big screen in both *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit Trilogy*. Over 150 real New Zealand locations were used from the rolling green hills of Matamata in the North Island; Hobbiton, to Queenstown’s snowy jagged mountain peaks; the Remarkables, featured as Dimrill Dale.

Hobbiton appears exactly as it did in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* trilogies. See the Party Tree and Bag End close up, then quench your thirst with a handle of ale at the brand-new Green Dragon Inn. The Green Dragon™ Inn featured in *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy as the local meeting place for all the residents of Hobbiton. It was the perfect place to

satisfy their thirst, enjoy a meal and gossip about the comings and goings of The Shire. The inn also makes an appearance in *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. The Green Dragon Inn has a blackboard menu available of traditional Hobbit fare.

Itinerary

- 8am Pick up from central city Hotel.
- 10:20am Arrive in Hobbiton and shopping at The Shires Rest store.
- 11am Guided tour of the movie set.
- 12:30pm Drink at The Green Dragon.
- 1pm Buffet lunch in the Green Dragon marquee - included in price.
- 2pm Depart Hobbiton.
- 4:15pm Arrive in Auckland.

Tour Highlights

- Take in New Zealand's idyllic countryside on a scenic drive.
- Immerse yourself in Middle-earth on a guided tour through Hobbiton.
- Enjoy a drink at 'The Green Dragon' and a buffet lunch in the Green Dragon marquee, on this iconic New Zealand sheep farm.
- Spend 1.5 hours on the Hobbiton movie set.
- Get up close to the hobbit holes - and take as many photos as you like!
- Your driver / Guide will relay stories of filming and special things that happened.
- The entire set has been lovingly restored back to its original state and is now a permanent village.
- Very experienced and knowledgeable Red Carpet Tour Guide
- Door to door transport from your central city hotel.

Pricing

Tour cost: \$275 per person (includes buffet lunch)

- See more at: <http://www.redcarpet-tours.com/lotr-tours/hobbiton-day-tour#sthash.ghbSHCg3.dpuf>

Be a Hobbit in Matamata

No trip to New Zealand would be complete without a trip to the [Hobbiton movie set](#) in Matamata. Pose with some colorful hobbit holes, and then have a pint at the Green Dragon pub.

Flight Travel

Australia second part of the trip

Dec 21 - Dec 29

DAY 5 – Wednesday December 21

Fly to Sydney AU and then to onto Tasmania / Launceston

Arrive Launceston

Pick Up Rental Car at the Airport – Enterprise Reservation

Hotel: Check in 12/21 and Check out 12/22

Mantra Charles Hotel

287 Charles Street

Launceston

7250

AU

+61756654133

DAY 6 – Thursday December 22

Tasmania

Bridestowe Lavender Fields - The largest lavender plantation in the Southern Hemisphere and award-winning tourism destination. The flowering season reaches full color by the end of December. Strolling through the endless fields.

296 GILESPIES ROAD

NABOWLA TAS 7260

PH +61 3 6352 8182

INFO@BRIDESTOWELAVENDER.COM.AU

<http://bridestowelavender.com.au/visit-bridestowe/getting-to-bridestowe-estate/>

SEPTEMBER - APRIL

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM DAILY

WALK AMONGST THE FLOWERS

1 DECEMBER UNTIL LATE JANUARY/FEBRUARY

\$10 ENTRY PER PERSON

Guided tours are complimentary with your entry fee and are held every day at: 9.30 am, 10.30 am, 11.30 am, 1.30 pm, 2.30 pm, 3.30 pm

Flight Travel

FLY OUT – Virgin Australia to arrive in Melbourne 6:05PM

Hotel: Check in December 22 – Check out December 24

THE WESTIN MELBOURNE

205 Collins Street

Melbourne, Victoria 3000 Australia

Phone: [\(61\)\(3\) 9635 2222](tel:(61)(3)96352222) Fax: (61)(3) 9635 2122

DAY 7 – Friday December 23

AAT Kings Day Tour

The Dandenongs, Devonshire Tea, Bird Life, Puffing Billy Steam Train and Healesville Wildlife Sanctuary.

8:20am – 5:30pm

Drive through lovely Ferntree Gully to the Dandenong Ranges and Grants Reserve. Devonshire Tea, hot scones with jam and cream and your choice of tea or coffee. Feed the Crimson Rosella birds in the mountain ash tall forest. Ride on Puffing Billy, Australia's oldest operating steam train, through the spectacular rainforest of tall mountain ash, eucalypts and fern-filled gullies. Enjoy a guided tour of one of Australia's most famous wildlife parks, Healesville Wildlife Sanctuary, home to over 200 species of Australian birds, mammals and reptiles, all in a natural bushland setting. Walk through large aviaries to view native birdlife. Watch dingoes and Tasmanian Devils at play, as well as echidnas and goannas.

Healesville – Close Up / WOMBAT Play

2:05PM – Arrive 10 minutes before entry time

Melbourne Fun Option

Rooftop Cinema - Melbourne, Burgers, Beer and Cinema in an outdoor Urban location <https://www.rooftopcinema.com.au>

Movie Theater: Rooftop Bar & Cinema – Melbourne, Australia

Why It's Unique: Outdoor cinemas are somewhat commonplace in Melbourne due to the warm climate during the summer months but none of them offer patrons a view as spectacular as the Rooftop Bar & Cinema. The cinema sits atop a six story building originally built in 1925 and during the summer months it operates as a bar and theater showing an unusual mix of classic movies, cult favorites, foreign films and mainstream hits. Seats are limited to 180-200 guests so you have to arrive early if you want a good view of the screen but the cityscape is worth the price of admission.

Melbourne Food Option Mr. Burger

<https://mrburger.com.au>

<https://mrburger.com.au/#the-menu>

Locations: <https://mrburger.com.au/#undefined>

Head into [Mr Burger](#) Food Truck – home to Melbourne's best burgers. Mr Burger will make you forget about the diet and want to sink your teeth into one of their juicy gourmet burgers. Serving burgers (of course), as well as delicious chips and drinks to go, the truck is the perfect first stop at [Fed Square](#) to fill your belly and then walk around and check out some of the key attractions including [NGV](#) and [ACMI](#).

DAY 8 – Saturday December 24

Hotel: Check in December 24 – Check out December 25

St. Jerome's - The Hotel

+61 406 118 561

Level 3, Melbourne Central, Melbourne, VIC

www.stjeromesthehotel.com.au

Glamping / Camping and explore the city

DAY 9 – Sunday December 25

Flight Travel

FLY OUT – Virgin Australia to arrive in CAIRNS, 11:20AM

Hotel Shuttle arranged for pick up at 11:20

Hotel:

[The Reef House Palm Cove MGallery by Sofitel](#)

99 Williams Esplanade

Palm Cove

4879

AU

+61740802600

Rent Bikes and explore the property and relax / sleep

DAY 10 – Monday December 26

• The Great Barrier Reef Tour

Silverswift Booked and Pre-paid (add wetsuit for me on board)

7:00AM Pick UP from the Hotel

1 Scuba (3 dives, 3 locations) and 1 Snorkle

5 hours on the Reef

CALL US +61 7 4044 9944

- Tour Departs Cairns 8.30am
- Returns Cairns 4.30pm
- Experience more - visit 3 different Outer Great Barrier Reef sites
- Features unique ride control for a smoother journey

Departing daily from Cairns

Silverswift is ready to whisk you away for a day of fun and adventure on the Great Barrier Reef. This is an active day all about being in the water for your dive or snorkel adventure of a lifetime! You'll explore spectacular coral formations and underwater gardens awash with vibrantly coloured marine creatures as you visit three different outer reef sites at Flynn, Pellowe, Milln and/or Thetford Reefs. Locations vary with the day's conditions however each site is chosen for visual impact, ecological diversity and the challenge of discovery!

- Return Silverswift cruise from Cairns Reef Fleet Terminal

- Scrumptious morning tea including focaccias and muffin cakes on boarding, Afternoon tea cakes, cheese & biscuits.
- Hot and cold tropical buffet lunch.
- Reef Interpretation.
- Snorkelling equipment (mask, snorkel and fins).
- Guided Snorkel Tour
- Snorkel brief at each site.
- Qualified lifeguard supervision.
- Equipment for divers provided, including wetsuit.
- Hot freshwater showers.
- Prescription masks available at no additional cost.
- Lycra suits included

Free Unlimited Wifi

(Subject to variations according to conditions and reef sites visited)

From 7.30am	Check-in at the Silverswift Counter inside the Reef Fleet Terminal for your boarding passes.
8:15am	Vessel boarding. Complimentary morning tea/breakfast served.
8:30am	Depart Cairns Reef Fleet Terminal for the Outer Reef. On the outward journey, certified and introductory dive briefings begin.
9:50am	Arrive at first reef location. Divers gear up, while snorkellers' site briefing begins. Get ready to view the beauty of this natural wonder!
11:15am	Silverswift departs for second reef location. Option for introductory divers and certified divers to do a second dive. Snorkellers site briefing.
12:30am	Tropical hot and cold buffet lunch served in the air conditioned cabin.
1:40pm	Silverswift departs for third reef location. Snorkellers are once again briefed as to the best areas to snorkel. Guided Snorkel Tour Option for certified divers to do a third dive or second introductory dive.
2:15pm	Afternoon tea served
3:00pm	All passengers board vessel for final passenger count
3:15pm	Silverswift commences return journey to Cairns

1:30pm Silverswift arrives at Cairns Reef Fleet Terminal
1:55pm Coaches depart for accommodation

WHAT TO BRING

- Your camera.
- Swimming costume & towel.
- Hat, sunscreen & shirt.
- Certification Card for Certified Divers.
- Cash for drinks at the bar, credit card for additional dives.
- **Available for Hire:**
- Underwater digital cameras available for hire.
- Professional underwater photo and video service on board.

DAY 11 – Tuesday December 27

Get up early and get a Rental Car

WILDLIFE Kundra Koala Garden Tour and Birdworld

(Pre-paid and booked, 2 adult photos with cuddle a koala)

Friends in the Rainforest includes entry to both:

Kuranda Koala Gardens

Birdworld Kuranda.

Open: 9:00am - 4:00pm

Customers **MUST** visit Kuranda Koala Gardens first on the day of their visit.

Tickets will be issued to Birdworld from here. Koala holding photos at

Kuranda Koala Gardens are available between 9:30 - 3:30pm daily.

Return Rental Car

Take hotel shuttle to the airport

Flight Travel

FLYOUT to SYDNEY @ 4:55pm with arrival 9:00PM

Hotel: Check in December 27 and Check Out December 30

THE WESTIN SYDNEY

1 Martin Place

Sydney, New South Wales 2000 Australia

Phone: (61)(2) 8223 1111 Fax: (61)(2) 8223 1222

DAY 12 – Wednesday December 28

Bridge Climb Sydney 9:20AM

Explore the City

See the Sydney Opera House

See the Bridge

24-hour Hop on and Off Bus Tours

Food / Dessert Spots

DAY 13 – Thursday December 29

Sydney Explore the City Walking Tours, etc

Rent Bikes

DAY 14 – Friday December 30 Return to LAX from AU, and NZ

Flight Travel

Travel Day

Day 15 – Saturday Return to ALB from LAX

Flight Travel

Travel Home