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New Plymouth Festival of Lights - a 4 day New Zealand Tour

New Plymouth Festival of Lights

Experience one of New Zealand's iconic festivals on our 4 day tour to the TSB Festival of Lights 2026....

This is must see event for garden lovers and should not be missed. Join our small group tour for 4 days as we travel south and west through stunning rural scenery to New Plymouth. With private visits to many of the top gardens that feature in the Taranaki Garden Festival out time will be well utilised, - with the headline act our evening visits to view the light displays at Pukekura Park. Plenty of time to see other local sights, the city or just relax at our city central hotel.

7th to 10th JAN \$ 1750pp - Twin share



Day 1 - Departing the Bay of Plenty we head west, traversing the Waikato making a stop for morning tea, then south through the King Country on to Te Kuiti for a quick rest stop, chance to see the Colin Meads statue and the famous sheep shearer statue. Then on towards the rugged west coast for our lunch stop at Mokau and a chance to try some of the famous west coast whitebait at the local cafe.

It's then just over an hours drive south along the coast to New Plymouth, our base for the next 3 nights. Tonight, we have dinner at our city central hotel.

Day 2 - Our first day exploring the Taranaki region starts with a visit to Stratford, famous for the towns Shakespearian themed clock tower. Here we visit a small suburban garden packed with a wide variety of flowers and shrubs, a testament to the owners passion and hard work, who has featured on national television.

We continue East to one of New Zealand's most impressive private museums, the Tawhiti Museum in Hawea. The Museum is a truly unique enterprise and is the creation of artist Nigel Ogle, the attention to detail is simply stunning. Now widely acclaimed as one of the most innovative museums in New Zealand, Tawhiti uses life size exhibits and scale models to capture the history of New Zealand in a series of super-realistic displays, all designed and built on the premises by Nigel. This is also our location for lunch today (your cost) at their cafe.

After lunch we return to New Plymouth to visit Pukekura Park, the location of the Lights Festival. A chance for us this afternoon to walk through the impressive park and gardens during daylight. The park spans 52 hectares and is a nationally significant garden park with a large exotic specimen tree collection, inter-planted within an area of luxuriant native bush. Highlights are the native orchid and fern collections housed in a partially sunken conservatory. With many special display gardens, all with the stunning backdrop and views of Mount Taranaki, this is a must see destination.

Whats Included:

- 4 days on tour
- 3 nights quality accommodation
- Door to door service (Tauranga area)
- Quality air-conditioned vehicle
- Full commentary by your guide
- All dinners & breakfasts each day
- Visit to Pukekura Park Gardens
- Visit to Pukeiti Gardens
- Visit to Tupare House and Gardens
- Visit to the famous Tawhiti Museum
- Additional private garden tours

You will see:

- Stunning scenery throughout
- The Festival of Lights displays
- Amazing gardens and scenery
- Stratford's Glockenspiel Clock Tower
- Taranaki and The King Country

Not included:

- Any lunches unless specified*
- Morning/afternoon tea stops*
- Any alcoholic beverages with meals

A single room surcharge of \$ 375

Our final visit today is to a most unexpected garden where we will meet with one of the volunteers who have transformed a once neglected area of city green space into a riot of colour. The setting may feel odd to some but genuinely moving to others.

We then return to the hotel for dinner this evening before heading back to Pukekura Park for the Lights Festival, the real highlight of the trip - the TSB Festival of Lights, which transforms Pukekura Park into a world of light and wonder! Each year there are new light installations to the festival, which adds magic to the park's large exotic specimen tree collection.

Day 3 - Our first destination today is Tupare House and Garden. This 'arts and crafts' inspired property - a unique homestead set in a beautiful garden, was originally developed by Sir Russell Matthews for his family back in the 1930's. Tupare has recently earned the NZ Gardens Trust highest six-star rating - a distinction shared by only 13 other locations in New Zealand.

Changing the theme, our next garden visit is very different, to a small private but very productive garden where the owners have developed systems to grow produce for local supply. Explaining and demonstrating some of the processes they use will inspire you to do the same in your own gardens. Time here for morning tea (included).

We next head out of the city to visit a stunning private garden on the slopes of Mount Taranaki. This historic homestead is surrounded by formal 'garden rooms' each with their own style and our hosts will guide us around the the garden, telling us the story of each 'room' and naming any plants you cannot identify. This was a stand out garden for our 2022 and 2023 tour and we are sure you will be equally impressed this year.

After lunch we will include 2 or 3 smaller private gardens in New Plymouth, or if anyone prefers, we can drop you back to the hotel or in the city for you to have a look around on your own or perhaps indulge in some retail therapy.

We return to our hotel for dinner this evening and you have the option to visit Pukekura Park again after dinner to see the lights and gardens for one more time.

Day 4 - After our last breakfast together we depart New Plymouth for our drive North back to Tauranga, retracing our route from day 1. We make a comfort stop again at the small settlement of Mokau, time for a morning coffee or if you want, some more of the local New Zealand delicacy - Whitebait.

Continuing onwards, our route takes us through extensive and rugged farmland to another private garden which will be our lunch stop today. Hidden in the hills close to Te Kuiti, this garden has been a real labour of love. We will enjoy a light lunch on the homestead veranda before departing.

Following our lunch stop we continue on to Tauranga, arriving home early evening.

All Hinterland multi-day tours can be taken by clients from any region of New Zealand or Australia. Please contact us for details. Additional charges may apply.



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