

# Discover Wellington tour

## PRE TOUR

- Arrive on time (usually xx morning tour; xx afternoon tour)
- Make sure you:
- Check your Runsheet on the App (REZDY)
- Confirm your pick-ups with anyone else helping you
- Check on traffic conditions (plan to leave early if there has been a crash/breakdown on the route)
- Check on weather conditions (if likely to be wet take umbrellas).
- Aim to leave the office at 8:45am/12:15pm depending on your first pick up location. It can take up to 30 minutes to the City on busy days in peak hour traffic

## ON TOUR

*Rendezvous with anyone assisting with your pick-up run at the prearranged destination [usually Wellington iSite]. If you have to switch passengers around at this point, **ensure you have everyone on board** before commencing your tour.*

*For all tours welcome the Group, outline the itinerary, and go through the H & S Checklist:*

### Health & Safety Checklist

- 1) **Ensure clients have appropriate footwear and weather protection.**
- 2) **Explain the level of fitness required and offer options to sit out parts of the tour.**
- 3) **Check to what extent clients can understand your instructions in English**
- 4) **Taking care when entering and exiting the buses/vans**
- 5) **Taking care not to cross the road on exiting vehicles (e.g., particularly at Mt Victoria Lookout, Wahine Memorial)**
- 6) **Warn clients about possible hazards that will be encountered during tour. Uneven ground in many sites (loose gravel, soft dirt and mud and tree roots), danger of falling branches in high winds in particular**
- 7) **Explain that under New Zealand law you must wear a seatbelt, but it is the responsibility of the passenger to do so. Children under 16 are the caregiver's responsibility. If not accompanied, it is the driver's responsibility.**
- 8) *Remind clients to take their bags with them, or at least tuck them under seats when not in vehicles.*

### *CRUISE SHIP TOUR DEPARTURE*

- Following pickup from the Port drive along the Quays (point at Wellington Central Railway Station, Parliament Buildings, Museum of Wellington) towards **Te Papa Tongarewa** on Cable Street

### *FIT DEPARTURE*

- After driving past Te Papa Tongarewa, carry on round to **Oriental Parade** past **Freyberg Pool** and **Oriental Parade** beach and the **Seven Sisters**
- Head around the Bays to **Cobham Drive** towards **Miramar** stopping at the famous **Wellington** sign (Photo stop 1)
- Drive into the suburb of Miramar through the **Miramar Village** (pointing out the **Roxy**) and loop around to **Stone Street Studios** before heading back through Miramar towards **Seatoun**
- Drive south over the **Pass of Branda** to **The Wahine Memorial** (Photo stop 2) on the southern coast
- Head around the south coast through **Moa Point**, then under the **Wellington International Airport runway** then through Lyall Bay and Kilbirnie up Alexandra Road to **Mt Victoria Lookout** (Photo stop 3)
- Head down Roseneath (via Palliser Road) to the heart of the entertainment area – **Courtenay Place** and **Cuba Street**.
- Drive onto and down **Willis Street** and **Lambton Quay** and drop the group off near **Cable Car** Lane (provide the pre-paid ticket), and advise you will meet the group at the top at the **Cable Car/Botanic Gardens Lookout** in a few minutes (usually within about 10 minutes)
- Allow the group a few minutes to take photos (photo stop 4) and visit the **Cable Car Museum**.
- Once you have the group back on board, drive along Upland Road and over the **Kelburn Viaduct**, then drop down Glenmore Street pas the **Wellington Botanic Gardens** onto Bowen Street (pointing out historic **Tinakori Road** and **Te Ahumairangi**).

- Drive past the **unique Beehive, Parliament Buildings**, and finally the **Gothic Old St Paul's Cathedral**.
- Drop off the group at the Port/city drop-offs

## **Summary tour:**

The 'core' tour stories that should be delivered as part of your tour (as a minimum - take the Quiz when you are ready...)

### **Cruise Ship Tour Departure**

Start: Pickup from the Port

#### ***Wellington's Journey as the Capital***

Wellington's selection as the capital city was a turning point in New Zealand's history. Prior to Wellington, the capital was located in Okiato, a small town near Kororaraka/Russell, and then Auckland from 1842 to 1865. During this period, most of New Zealand's wealth and population were concentrated in the South Island, particularly in cities like Dunedin, which had thrived during the Otago Gold Rush. As tensions rose between the North and South Islands, with South Island politicians frustrated by the long voyages to Auckland, a solution was sought. An independent decision was made by three Australian Commissioners, who were tasked with finding a more central location for the capital. Their choice fell on Wellington due to its large, sheltered harbour and central location between the two main islands.

Thus, Wellington's motto, "Supreme in Situ," reflects its strategic significance and near-ideal placement, though the city is known for its 'breeziness' and seismic activity.

Wellington's current metropolitan population is around 220,000, which gives it a quaint, village-like feel compared to other major cities. However, the Wellington region, including nearby cities, has a combined population of about 440,000. This relatively small but dynamic city is renowned for its liveability, ranking highly due to factors like safety, education, healthcare, and environmental quality. As the world's windiest city—outstripping even Chicago—Wellington benefits from its location between mountain ranges and the Cook Strait. The consistent winds keep pollution levels low and contribute to its clean and vibrant environment.

As your guests embark on this scenic journey, Wellington's vibrant cityscape will soon unfold. Begin by driving along the Quays, where they'll witness the blend of old and new in the heart of the capital.

#### ***The Lord of the Rings Stadium: A Sporting and Cinematic Landmark***

Our regional stadium, with a capacity of 35,000 seats, is a significant site in Wellington's cultural landscape. Known for hosting various events from high-profile rugby matches featuring the All Blacks to international rock concerts by legends like David Bowie and Elton John, this stadium is a hub of activity. Notably, it played a role in the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, with an amusing anecdote from the film's early days. In March 2002, after the success of "The Fellowship of the Ring," Peter Jackson, the film's director, orchestrated a unique event at the stadium. During a cricket match between New Zealand and England, Jackson enlisted the help of the audience to record the sound of an Orc army for "The Two Towers." The crowd's enthusiastic participation, combined with the stadium's acoustics, captured a powerful roar that was later used to enhance the film's epic battle scenes.

### ***Wellington Central Railway Station and Parliament Buildings***

Point out the grand Wellington Central Railway Station, a nod to the city's architectural heritage, with its majestic columns and classical design. Just down the road, they'll pass the iconic Parliament Buildings, including the distinctive Beehive, where New Zealand's political heart beats. As you drive by, share some insights into New Zealand's unique political system and the history of these important landmarks.

### ***Museum of Wellington***

Next, draw attention to the Museum of Wellington, a cultural gem that captures the essence of the city's history and its deep connection to the sea. Located in a beautiful heritage building, this museum is a tribute to Wellington's maritime past and present, making it a perfect precursor to the coastal views ahead.

### ***FIT Departure***

### ***Te Papa Tongarewa***

Continuing along Cable Street, you'll reach the renowned Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand's national museum. The translation Te Papa Tongarewa from te reo Māori (the indigenous language) to English means our 'Basket or Container of Treasures [Taonga]', which is a rather lovely way to think of a museum isn't it? Looking after all the nation's most precious possessions.

This institution is more than just a museum; it's an immersive experience that tells the stories of the land, the people, and the unique culture of Aotearoa. It was early example of a more interactive modern museum, which is now common around the world.

Mention the diverse exhibits, from natural history to contemporary art, that make Te Papa a must-visit attraction.

### ***Oriental Parade***

From Te Papa, your journey takes you along the picturesque Oriental Parade, where the beauty of Wellington Harbour comes to life. Oriental Parade may be dubbed the Riviera of the south now, and is a hot spot when the sun comes out, but it wasn't always that way – in fact it was just a one-man town during the early days of European settlement.

The earliest recorded resident was pioneer **George Duppa** who erected a prefabricated house that he had brought out from England in the area below what is now Saint Gerard's Monastery, but George renamed it Oriental Bay after the ship The Oriental that he arrived in Wellington on in 1839.

The bay was so remote that it was also used for quarantine purposes – with patients tended to by a physician and nurse in a tent located on the beach. There was also another undesirable element with the bay area used by the whalers for boiling whale blubber, which was reportedly an unpleasantly pungent smell.

In 2004, the Council shipped 22,000 tonnes of sand from Golden Bay, near Nelson in the south island to enlarge the beach areas of Oriental Bay.

As you drive by the **Seven Sisters**, a row of historic wooden houses, share the story of these charming homes that have stood the test of time, offering a glimpse into Wellington's past: These houses are of architectural value for although they were designed following convention and traditional style, each house was designed differently to create an atmosphere of individualism. They are an unusual example of a New Zealand interpretation of San Franciscan terrace housing. These houses have had long individual histories, with a number of significant people having occupied them. For example at number 188, one of New Zealand's most prominent Māori leaders and politicians Sir Apirana Ngata lived for 15 years. These houses are all associated with their architect Joshua Charlesworth, a prominent Wellington architect who designed several prominent Wellington buildings including banks, churches, post offices and most famously the Wellington Town Hall (1902-04).

To the left is the old Band Rotunda built in 1919 and the sea wall was built in the 1920s. Wellington was the first city in Australasia to establish a municipal orchestra and they would play weekend concerts here and at several other rotundas built across the city 'for the enjoyment of the people of Wellington'.

The beautiful Norfolk pines from Norfolk Island. that skirt the Promenade were planted in 1917.

## **Around the Bays to Cobham Drive**

The route now winds around the scenic bays past Ōmarukaikuru/Pt Jerningham towards Cobham Drive. The new seaward pedestrian and cycle path forms part of the *Tahitai* ('One Tide, One Journey') route that, once complete, will connect the city to Te Motu Kairangi (Miramar Peninsula).

The Bays have something of a rustic seaside holiday feel, even though we are only about 1 mile from downtown Wellington city as the Tui flies. You get a glimpse of the great variety of architectural genres and styles of the homes from 19<sup>th</sup> century bungalows to ultra-modern apartments. You also get to see some of the 200 private cable cars (funiculars) that dot the hills of the city. The most expensive in front of us there cost around \$500,000 NZD to build, so you can imagine how expensive the actual homes are..

Around this area we also have Kororā (little Blue Penguins) - the world's smallest – remarkably waddle across the road and nest (sometimes under people's homes and boat sheds) during April – May, and can be seen at other times of the year also, so there are signs reminding motorists to be careful driving around these bays.

Note the wind sculptures as we like to make the most of our powerful wind with many kinetic sculptures. Wellington one was one of the first cities in New Zealand to set up a sculpture trust for public sculpture, which began in the early 1980s.

The coastline here is a photographer's dream, with stunning views across the harbour. Soon, you'll arrive at the famous Wellington sign, perched on the Miramar Peninsula. This is your first photo stop, where guests can capture the perfect shot of this iconic landmark, symbolizing Wellington's vibrant film industry.

## **Miramar – The Heart of Wellington's Film Industry and a beacon of conservation**

Miramar was a very working-class suburb and in fact, the very first State house (1937) was built here. New Zealand is a socially liberal country and was a leader in developing the 'welfare state' (like Scandinavian countries), where the Government would look after its citizens "from the cradle to the grave" – part of the social contract with its citizens.. alas times have changed..

Entering the suburb of Miramar, you're now in the heart of Wellington's film industry. As you drive through Miramar Village, point out the Roxy Cinema, a beautifully restored art deco theatre that's a favourite among locals and filmmakers alike. Continue to loop around to Stone Street Studios, where many blockbuster films, including the legendary

"The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, were brought to life. Share stories of the films and the magic that happens behind the scenes here in Miramar.

As we drive through Miramar, often dubbed 'Wellywood,' you'll see how this residential suburb has become the epicenter of New Zealand's film industry. Unlike traditional Hollywood studios, Miramar's film hub evolved organically, with Peter Jackson repurposing old factories into state-of-the-art film facilities. This unique approach reflects New Zealand's resourcefulness and creativity, creating a world-class film industry within a suburban setting with limited local resources.

Miramar's significance extends beyond its film industry. The area is also notable for its conservation efforts, with the Miramar Peninsula being the first New Zealand suburb declared 'pest-free' in late 2023 (there are no rats, stoats or possums for example). This achievement, resulting from a massive community effort, has led to a remarkable increase in birdlife and demonstrates the local commitment to environmental stewardship. The integration of film production and conservation highlights the dynamic nature of Wellington's creative community and its dedication to preserving its natural beauty.

### **Seatoun, The Pass of Branda and the Wahine disaster**

Leaving Miramar, the tour heads towards Seatoun, a charming seaside suburb. The journey takes you over the Pass of Branda, a dramatic stretch of road with breathtaking views. The Pass of Branda was named after the well-known pass at the head of Loch Awe in the Argyll and Bute area of Scotland.

Pause for a few moments at The Wahine Memorial on the southern coast, your second photo stop. Here, recount the tragic story of the Wahine disaster, one of New Zealand's worst maritime tragedies, and how it forever changed the city of Wellington:

The sinking of the Lyttelton–Wellington ferry Wahine on 10 April 1968 was New Zealand's worst modern maritime disaster. Would-be rescuers stood helplessly on the beach at Seatoun as the Wahine succumbed to one of the worst storms recorded in New Zealand history. It seemed impossible that so many lives could be lost so close to shore. Although the main cause of the accident was the atrocious weather, a subsequent court of inquiry found that errors of judgement had been made both on board the ferry and on shore. Shipwrecks had been common in the 19th century (there are 70 around the coast), but this was the 1960s – how could a large, modern vessel founder within sight of New Zealand's capital city?

The Union Steam Ship Company's 9000-ton roll-on roll-off (RO-RO) passenger ferry Wahine, was the largest ship of its kind in the world when completed two years earlier. There were 734 passengers and crew on board. The ship lost radar on entering the harbour early in the morning, hitting the notorious Barrett's Reef in the Harbour



entrance (in 100 knot winds = 185kph = Hurricane force) and limped to Steeple Rock by Seatoun Beach where it eventually founded and capsized.

Fifty-one people lost their lives that day, another died several weeks later, and a 53rd victim died in 1990 from injuries sustained during the sinking. The Wahine's demise also marked a coming of age for television news broadcasting in New Zealand, as images of the disaster were beamed into the nation's living rooms. The footage was later screened around the world as the international media focused on Wellington.

### **The Southern Coast and Beyond**

As we travel along the South Coast, take in the dramatic and rugged landscape that defines this part of Wellington. The South Coast is known for its steep cliffs, rocky shores, and windswept beaches. This area is a favourite among locals for outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, and diving. The unique geological formations and the raw beauty of the coast make it a captivating place to explore. The South Coast is also home to a variety of native plants and animals, adding to its ecological significance. The interplay between the land and sea creates a dynamic environment that is constantly changing, offering new vistas and experiences with every visit.

The geology is very ancient. The cliffs and rocks you see along the coastline were formed during the Triassic period, over 200 million years ago (this is when the continent of Zealandia was still connected to the supercontinent *Gondwana*), shaped by volcanic activity and tectonic movements. The coastline is a geological treasure trove, with layers of sedimentary rock that tell the story of the region's geological past. These formations provide insights into the natural history of New Zealand, revealing evidence of ancient marine environments and the forces that have shaped the landscape.

### ***Mountains Visible from the Coast***

On a clear day, you can see several prominent mountains from the South Coast. Across the Cook Strait, you can sometimes spot the peaks of both the inward and coastal the Kaikoura Ranges on the South Island. The tallest mountain is Tapuae-o-Uenuku, at 10,000 feet it is the highest peak in the northeast of New Zealand's South Island. The name translates from Māori as "footprint of the rainbow", though is usually regarded as being named after Chief Tapuaenuku. Because it is technically challenging to climb, it was used as a training ground by Sir Edmund Hillary the New Zealand mountaineer who first conquered Mt Everest in the Himalayas' in 1953, along with Tenzing Norgay of Nepal.

### ***Cook Strait (Te Moana-o-Raukawa) and the Meeting of the Waters***

As we look out over the water, we see the Cook Strait (Te Moana-o-Raukawa), the narrow body of water that separates New Zealand's North and South Islands. Named after Captain James Cook, the first European to navigate the strait in 1770, it is one of

the most challenging and treacherous stretches of water in the world. The strait is approximately 22 kilometres wide at its narrowest point and is known for its strong currents and unpredictable weather. 20,000 years ago during the last great glacial era you could walk between the two islands, as the sea level was 100 metres lower than today. Despite these challenges, it is a vital maritime route, with numerous ferries and cargo ships passing through daily. The Cook Strait is also a significant ecological region, home to a variety of marine life, including dolphins, whales, and numerous fish species. Its dynamic nature and crucial role in connecting the two islands make it a fascinating and essential part of New Zealand's geography.

The South Coast of Wellington is where the waters of the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea meet in the Cook Strait. This convergence creates a unique marine environment (and Reserve) with a mix of water temperatures and currents, supporting a diverse range of marine life. The meeting of these bodies of water also contributes to the strait's notoriously unpredictable weather and strong currents, making it a challenging but essential route for maritime navigation.

A number of swimmers have not been deterred from the Cook Strait wither and have around 70 people have been recorded as swimming across the Strait. Some mad enough to do it multiple times! The fastest male (and person overall) to swim across the Cook Strait is Andrew Donaldson (UK) who completed the crossing from South to North in 4 hours 33 minutes 50 seconds on 7-8 March 2023. The fastest woman was Denise Anderson (New Zealand) who took 5 hours and 4 minutes in 1986.

### ***Mt Victoria Lookout***

Our next destination is the Mt Victoria Lookout, ascending via Alexandra Road. Mount Victoria, also known as Matairangi and colloquially as Mt Vic, is around 200 metres (640 ft). Mount Victoria gives its name to the suburb of Mount Victoria to the west

Mount Victoria's original Māori name is Tangi Te Keo, though Matairangi is also used. The first name derives from a legend in which two taniwha – a water spirit in Maori mythology - tried to escape from Wellington Harbour which was then an enclosed lake. One taniwha became stranded and died, and its spirit turned into a bird named Te Keo, which flew to the top of the mountain and mourned (tangi). The second name translates as "to examine the sky".

The forest on Mt Victoria, which you will soon see skirts the entire downtown of Wellington is a unique feature of the city. Around the world there are many great cities with great city parks, however there aren't that many with a large forest in such a central location. This is the Town Belt, a permanent recreational reserve and very forward-thinking idea when it was established at Wellington's birth as a colonial town in 1839.

The area was laid out by the New Zealand Company to form access to green areas for all the towns citizens. It was intended to be a "broad belt of land," the Wellington Town Belt, "which ... the Company intends to be public property, on condition that no buildings ever be erected upon it". The land was taken over initially by the Crown (as the sale of the land to the New Zealand Company was found to be invalid. It later transferred to the Wellington City Council. Wellingtonians have managed to protect this public reserve from development ever since. It is often referred to as our 'backyard' and 'the lungs of the city'. It has become an integral part of Wellington's movement to protect and expand the green space available to bring back our native bird life. The entire Town Belt is around 600 acres (almost 1100 hectares). Bigger than both Hyde Park in London (350-acres, 140 hectares) and Central Park in Manhattan, New York (843 acres, 341 hectares).

One of the not so smart things the early settlers did however was to burn off the original forest and bush, which left the soft greywacke clay (prone to erosion) resulting in the hillside starting to crumble. The settlers cleared the land to establish little farm lets and to graze dairy cattle to provide the town's milk supply (which continued till the 1920s). So the settlers had to quickly stabilise the hillside with some kind of fast-growing expansive trees. Now the majority of forest you now see is not made up of native trees but rather introduced species. In the 1870s work began at the Wellington Botanic Gardens (New Zealand's oldest) to test different tree species to see what could grow commercially as a forest industry for the fledgling colony. At that time a botanist came from San Francisco with Monterey pine seeds, and we made a fascinating discovery: pine grows up to four times faster in our nutrient rich volcanic soils than the United States. A pine tree can fully mature in only 25 years, which was ideal for creating a sustainable forestry industry. So the hillside was promptly planted with So most of these trees are 150-year-old Monterey Pines courtesy of California, along with Eucalyptus trees from Australia. We now have a philosophy of regrowing exclusively with native trees.

Invite the group to disembark at the Lookout where they will be treated to panoramic views of the city, harbour, and beyond (Photo Stop 3). Encourage everyone to take in the 360-degree views, capturing Wellington from one of its most iconic vantage points.

### ***Roseneath to the Heart of the City***

Descending from Mt Victoria, the tour takes you through Roseneath, a suburb known for its beautiful homes and stunning views of the harbour. The drive continues down Palliser Road, bringing you to the bustling entertainment district of Courtenay Place, the heart of Wellington's nightlife and cultural scene. Point out the lively atmosphere and

the eclectic mix of bars, restaurants, and theatres that make this area a favourite among locals and visitors alike.

### ***Cuba Street***

From Courtenay Place, head to Cuba Street, a vibrant, bohemian area known for its colorful shops, quirky cafés, and street art. This is the soul of Wellington's creative scene, where you can sense the city's unique, artsy vibe.

### ***Willis Street and Lambton Quay***

The journey continues onto Willis Street and Lambton Quay, two of Wellington's main arteries. These streets are lined with a mix of modern and historic buildings, where high-end shopping meets daily business life. It's here that you truly feel the pulse of the city.

### ***Cable Car Ride and Botanical Gardens Lookout***

Next, drop the group off near Cable Car Lane, where they'll embark on a short but scenic ride up to the Wellington Botanic Gardens. Provide them with pre-paid tickets and explain that you'll meet them at the top in just a few minutes. At the summit, they'll have time to explore the lookout (Photo Stop 4) and visit the charming Cable Car Museum, which offers a glimpse into the history of this beloved Wellington icon.

### ***Kelburn Viaduct and Glenmore Street***

Once everyone is back on board, drive along Upland Road, passing over the Kelburn Viaduct. The route takes you down Glenmore Street, where you'll pass the lush Wellington Botanic Gardens, an oasis of tranquility in the city.

### ***Bowen Street and historic Tinakori Road***

As you descend onto Bowen Street, point out the historic Tinakori Road, a street steeped in Wellington's colonial past. Mention Te Ahumairangi, a prominent hill in the area, offering more insight into the city's geographical and cultural history.

### ***The Beehive and Parliament Buildings***

Your tour wouldn't be complete without another view of the Beehive and Parliament Buildings. As you pass by, highlight the importance of these buildings in New Zealand's political landscape.

### ***Old St Paul's Cathedral***

Finally, as you near the end of the tour, make a stop at Old St Paul's Cathedral. This Gothic Revival masterpiece, with its stunning wooden interior, is a fitting conclusion to a journey that has explored both the old and new of Wellington.

### **Drop Off at Port/City Locations**

As you drop the group off at their respective locations, you'll leave them with memories of a city that is as rich in history as it is in natural beauty, a place where every corner has a story to tell.