



# New Zealand Summer Program

Immersion, conservation projects, adventure travel

*"Astonishing, breathtaking, extraordinary, and incredible are all understatements for Pacific Discovery. It's funny to remember waking up in the morning and thinking, What awesome thing are we doing today? This program provided an opportunity for cultural immersion, physical and mental challenges, and personal growth. I've gained an appreciation for the environment and life itself, and I am so grateful for the experiences, memories and new friends as a result of this once-in-a-lifetime adventure."*

**Kurtis Adams**

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inspiring educational adventures

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## Pacific Discovery Program Design

Our programs are more than simply a travel, time-out or study abroad experience. Each is instead an overland journey of discovery, where students are immersed in a facilitated learning environment, designed to maximize the educational and life-skills potential.

On the program we have two goals for our students:

**1** Learn about the people, culture, religion, history, environments and issues of the region the program travels through. We then relate these experiences to bigger picture concepts of globalization, human rights, environment, sustainability, and ethics.

**2** Provide a framework for students to learn about themselves, push their boundaries, question their assumptions, stimulate problem solving and inquiry skills, and gain leadership and group skills.

Our programs are as much a journey of personal development as they are a physical journey. Students are regularly encouraged to reflect and think about their values, goals, and what they wish to gain from the program experience and from their lives in general.

### Pre-program

Prior to program start, students are asked to articulate their goals for the program – this is personal and unique to each individual group member. Students are given a suggested outline of skills and competencies that they can choose to focus upon throughout the program.

### During program

At program orientation, students discuss their identified goals in a one on one meeting with the program instructors. Over the course of the program, instructors mentor each student, using ideas, tools, and strategies to help achieve their goals as well as support overall growth.

Students are encouraged to journal during the program to reflect upon their experience and better define their learning. They also

meet as a whole group to explore big topics and questions, ranging from ‘what are my core values?’ to ‘how do I be a responsible citizen in our globalized world?’

At the end of the program, students give a presentation to their group summarizing how they were challenged, what they learned, if they’ve grown, and how they intend to apply their learning to their lives and changemaking efforts moving forward.

### Transfer and follow up

Towards the end of the program, students are asked to write a letter to themselves imagining where they want to be in six months time. These letters are collected and mailed to them six months after program conclusion, helping reinforce the learning that occurred.

After the program, students are invited to join an alumni Facebook group where they remain in contact with others who have had similar experiences. This community supports the continued journey of personal development after the Pacific Discovery program experience.

Each of our programs incorporate the following six core program components. These six interdependent components, provide immense opportunity for participants to learn about themselves, to push their boundaries, question their assumptions, to stimulate problem solving and inquiry skills.

## 1. Educational focus

Our programs are experiential education programs, meaning that learning is hands-on and tangible. For example, students will learn about a country's history and culture by immersing themselves in it, meeting local people and hearing life stories.

As it important as it is, experience on its own does not translate into learning. To encourage learning from experience, our program instructors facilitate opportunities for students to regularly reflect upon their experiences, and provide historical, cultural, geographical, and environmental background so that personal experience can be connected to a broader understanding of place.

The educational component of our programs is multi-disciplinary and covers:

- Host country: history, politics, culture, geography, environment, environmental, and social issues.
- Broader themes: globalization, development, environmentalism, religion, ethics, and sustainability.
- How to travel: how to plan and keep safe, the realities of life on the road, and ethical and sustainable travel.
- Outdoor education: learning the soft and hard skills of a number of outdoor activities such as camping, trekking, cycling, and canoeing (varies by program).
- Group skills: how to work with a group, communication, and trust.
- Personal development: New skills and interests, resilience, self-reliance, self-reflection, self-discovery, and personal direction.

## 2. Service learning – volunteer and community service projects

Service-learning elements built into our programs allow participants to really immerse themselves in a place and share an experience with local people, bridging the gap that often exists between visitor and host. We work hard to ensure that the work our groups do are grounded in community needs and vision, and are executed through local leadership. Additionally, volunteer work helps build self-confidence and self-belief as students learn new skills and take on new roles. Service-learning components vary by program. Examples undertaken by students are: habitat restoration and species monitoring; assisting local students with English-language development; and improving school environments in poor rural communities.

## 3. Cultural immersion

Our students are not travelling in a 'bubble' separated from local people; instead we immerse students in the local culture through home-stays, volunteer projects, and language study. Students develop empathy for other cultures, building bridges of shared understanding.

## 4. Ethical travel and sustainability

Travel and the realities of 'life on the road' teaches a lot of valuable lessons: how to communicate and relate to people from different cultures; how to be happy with few possessions and a simple life; how to overcome temporary discomfort. Travel ultimately exposes students to the myriad of possibilities and realities in the world and in their lives. This allows for personal growth and a clarity in students' passion and direction, particularly as they do this learning away from the expectations of family, friends, and peers.

Our goal is that students will learn the 'Tao of Travel' – how to plan; how to keep safe; what to take; and how to be comfortable and find what you need in an unfamiliar place. By the end of a program, we expect most students will have the skills necessary to travel safely and independently anywhere on earth.

Students will also gain a deeper understanding of ethics and sustainability through learning respect for local customs; developing meaningful cross-cultural relationships; learning minimum-impact grassroots travel techniques; coming to understand social and ecological issues on a deeper level; and engaging in a series of reflective sessions culminating in the idea of responsible global citizenship. Students will learn that the world is both infinitely large and full of possibility and also very small in that our personal choices affect all living things.

## 5. Outdoors and wilderness exploration

We use the wilderness as a medium to take students outside their comfort zones and challenge them. Personal growth and self-confidence increases through overcoming obstacles and challenges presented during the program.

Immersion in the wilderness is an opportunity for students to become grounded, teaches appreciation for wild places, and provides us the opportunity to explore local environmental issues and relate these issues to global environmental themes.

A variety of outdoor or adventure activities are included in our programs, such as backpacking, rafting, canoeing, rock climbing, snorkeling, mountain biking, etc. These activities require physical effort, mastery of technique, teamwork and trust between members of the group, and immersion in the outdoors.

Pacific Discovery takes a 'challenge by choice' approach to the adventure components of our programs. Adventure activities and instruction are aimed at the novice/beginner level, and no prior experience in any of the activities is required. However, we are able to facilitate more challenge for anyone who is experienced in a particular discipline. Students do need to have fitness at a level that they are able to comfortably hike for 4+ hours with a backpack.

## 6. Personal and leadership development

By taking participants out of their comfort zone and challenging them physically, culturally, mentally, and emotionally, we encourage students to gain confidence. To foster this, we provide a supportive group environment. Throughout the program, students are given leadership opportunities from facilitating reflection to coordinating the daily schedule. Facilitation, reflection, and feedback allows students to further develop their skills. This is strengthened by creating an intentional learning community where the group gathers to make meaning of what they've seen and apply it to broader global themes as well as personal application.



## New Zealand Program Overview

If you're looking to get stuck into a myriad of different activities, this program is most certainly for you! Try mountain biking, rafting, lugging, backpacking and more. You'll visit 'The Shire' (Lord of the Rings movie set), the incredible Wai-O-Tapu geothermal area, and soak in hot springs. Students will experience New Zealand from top to bottom, from the beaches in the north to the "adventure capital of the world" before falling in love with Milford Sound via a cruise through the fiords (according to Rudyard Kipling, the "eighth wonder of the world"). The New Zealand summer program also includes two awesome service-learning projects, spending time at The Farm just outside the Bay of Islands in Northland, and at the Kiwi Birdlife Park down in Queenstown, giving students the opportunity to get stuck in to local conservation and sustainability efforts.

New Zealand has enjoyed 100 million years of isolation since it separated from the southern super continent Gondwana, sinking into and rising again from the ocean. This sinking, rising and isolation from other landmasses (Australia is 1300 miles away), protected unusual eco-systems where birds filled all the major niches usually taken by mammals. These eco-systems were radically compromised by colonization and the introduction of new animal species - first from the indigenous Maori some 800 years ago and more recently by European settlers.

This summer program is suitable for high school graduates, gap year students, university students and graduates, ideally 18 – 24 years.

*"I no longer question whether or not to leap into new and unknown experiences, no longer stand in the way of myself and of my happiness. This program gives every person the opportunity to learn about themselves and learn how to interact with the earth. It is freeing and exhilarating and I'll be grateful for it for the rest of my life."*

**Serena Feingold**

### Program Start / Finish

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Summer 2020/21: Start in Whangaruru, NZ // Finish in Christchurch, NZ

**Program Tuition for 2020/21 is NZD \$9,200.00**



## Program Itinerary

### Highlights

- Visit the most Northern tip of New Zealand, Cape Reinga
- Wai-O-Tapu geothermal area and cultural immersion at a Maori cultural performance and feast
- Visit Hobbiton (Lord Of The Rings movie set)
- Mountain biking in The Redwoods, Rotorua
- White water rafting on the Kaituna River
- Four days spent at The Farm, just outside the incredible Bay of Islands.
- Wellington, New Zealand's vibrant capital – Parliament tour and the Te Papa museum
- Explore Queenstown, the “Adventure Capital of the World”
- Volunteer at the Kiwi Birdlife Park
- Experience a picturesque boat cruise through the world famous Milford Sound
- Explore Mount Cook region, home to the highest mountain in New Zealand
- Hot chocolate under the starry night sky in Tekapo
- Informal lectures and discussions on history, culture, society and environment
- Very personalized and supportive small group experience – maximum 12 students
- Two experienced and inspiring Pacific Discovery Program Instructors for 9+ students supported by local guides (one experienced instructor for groups of 8 and below).

### Day 1 - 3. The Farm, Whangaruru

The program starts at The Farm: a quintessential working dairy farm, located just outside the Bay of Islands. This local, family owned, slice of paradise allows you to get up close and personal with a range of farm animals. You'll have the chance to milk, feed and look after them. You will also get a chance to kayak, hike and explore their 1000 acre “back yard”, learn horsemanship skills and get a chance to put them to the test with horse trekking. There's also opportunities to fish, drive tractors and learn survival skills amongst so many other great activities. It's an awesome place to try your hand at new things and experience what is an authentic kiwi lifestyle for so many New Zealanders!

### Day 4 - 5. Cape Reinga and Paihia

Upon arrival to Auckland we pick up our van and head north up towards Paihia, which is the epicentre of the jaw-droppingly beautiful (and famous) Bay of Islands. We head far North from Paihia, to lands less explored, and head all the way up to Cape Reinga where the Tasman sea collides dramatically with the Pacific Ocean! Cape Reinga is known for being the most spiritual place in New Zealand, according to Maori tradition. You will walk to the light house, play in the famous giant sand dunes and explore the spectacular 90 mile beach.

### Day 6 - 9. Tawharanui Service Project

Tawharanui Regional Park combines farming, conservation and recreation in an ecological open sanctuary. Tawharanui boasts some of New Zealand's most beautiful white sandy beaches, rolling pastures, shingled bays, native coastal forest and regenerating wetlands. The sanctuary is a unique blend of conservation, recreation and sustainable farming within Tawharanui Regional Park. The sanctuary includes mature and regenerating native bush, wonderful beaches, spectacular coastal cliffs, wetlands, heritage sites, a marine reserve and extensive areas of rich pasture.

# Program Itinerary

## Day 10 - 12. Rotorua Geothermal

We spend the night in Auckland before heading south to stop off at Hobbiton, 'The Shire' movie set from Lord of the Rings, where you experience your very own "middle earth" adventure. We finish this day up in Rotorua, at the heart of New Zealand's cultural and geothermal landscape. Day two is full of adventure and energy as we go mountain biking in the Redwoods, with the afternoon spent rafting down the Kaituna River. On day three we take it a little slower, recovering from all the adrenaline activities with a soak in the Waikite Valley thermal pools. We finish the day at the Tamaki Maori Village for an evening experience, consisting of a cultural immersion and a traditional hangi feast.

## Day 13 - 14. Wellington

We have one long travel day on the program from Rotorua to Wellington driving across the Great Desert Road, New Zealand's volcanic alpine plateau. Wellington, New Zealand's compact capital city, is really vibrant with great shopping, cafés and nightlife... and well worth the drive! We'll visit Parliament to learn about New Zealand's political system (way more interesting than it sounds, we promise), and visit the National Museum, the Te Papa. You will also have some free time to explore independently as a group and we can recommend some other well known attractions that you might like to visit.

## Day 15 - 16. Abel Tasman Kayaking

From Wellington, we board a ferry bound for the South Island, cruise through the twisting arms of the glacial carved Marlborough Sounds, and come ashore in Picton. We'll make our way to Abel Tasman National park renowned for its golden beaches and walking trails. You'll get a different perspective of this incredible coastline as we paddle alongside it in sea kayaks, stopping at all the beautiful lagoons throughout the day. Make sure to keep an eye out for wildlife both in the ocean and hiding in the native forest.

## Day 17 - 19. Lake Rotoiti Service Learning

We'll spend four days in Lake Rotoiti, camping and assisting on volunteer conservation projects under the guidance of fantastic Department of Conservation biodiversity rangers. On our final day we continue to Nelson, where we have a day to relax and prepare ourselves for the next expedition.

## Day 20 - 24. Back Packing Expedition

The next four days will be spent in a remote section of Kahurangi National Park, hiking/backpacking, camping, and exploring our way through spectacular wilderness. On our last day we return to civilization for some well-earned rest in Nelson.

Enjoy some free time to catch up on the last week. There are great swimming beaches and rivers nearby, a weekend market to explore, and no doubt a mountain of laundry to catch up on. Nelson is also a popular place to try tandem skydiving, stand-up paddle boarding, and mountain-biking – which you can do independently if you wish to.

## Day 25 - 27. Wanaka Rock Climbing

Voted one of the top ten road trips in the world, we travel the length of the South Island's West Coast from Nelson to Wanaka. Enjoy rugged coastlines, beautiful rainforest and spectacular glaciers. We spend two nights in Punakaiki to view the impressive blow holes, then two nights at the tiny settlement of Franz Josef, close to the glacier. We'll explore and learn about the mighty glaciers.

From a simple lodge at Glendhu Bay on the shores of Lake Wanaka, we learn how to rock-climb – our fantastic instructors introduce us to climbing technique, belaying, rappelling, and take us safely through 2 days of climbing instruction, tailored to all levels of climbing ability and fitness. There'll also be plenty of time for swimming in the lake, walking and hiking on the hills around Wanaka.

## Day 28 -29. Queenstown

Today arrive in Queenstown, known as both the "Adventure Capital of the World" and Pacific Discovery's home! You'll take a trip up the gondola and go lugging, which is great fun, and can be highly competitive! We'll spend a day volunteering at the Kiwi Birdlife Park, a wildlife refuge in Queenstown. You'll work alongside park rangers and duties could include cleaning aviaries, native tree planting, food preparation and animal observation.

We'll also spend a day over at Milford Sound, arguably New Zealand's most spectacular natural attraction. Home to fur seal colonies, penguins and dolphins - you'll be sure to spot something unusual and exciting in the water! On day 29 we say goodbye to Queenstown as we drive to Mount Cook, New Zealand's most famous and highest mountain.

## Day 30 - 33. Mount Cook and Tekapo

We wake up at Unwin Lodge which is conveniently located at the entrance to Aoraki Mt Cook National Park. We partake in a local hike and soak up the splendour of the mountain peak which is majestically watching over us. After our hike we drive to Tekapo, a stunning must-see destination which is famous for its clear night skies. We spend the night snuggled up with hot chocolate, watching the stars above us - a truly magical experience. The next day is spent making the most of the winter activities available to us; ice skating, tubing and soaking in the local hot pools.\*

## Day 34 - 35. Christchurch, Program Wrap

We drive to Christchurch where we spend the last few days exploring the city. We wrap up the program and spend time reflecting on our month adventure before we say our goodbyes - heading off back home!



## Program Costs & Details

### Program Tuition for Summer 2021 is NZD \$9,200

\$400 application fee is due when you apply. Upon acceptance onto program a \$1500 deposit is due within 14 days.

#### Included in Program Tuition:

All travel and transport; all accommodation; all meals; all activities, excursions, entry fees and adventure travel as described in the itinerary; Informal lectures from resident experts on conservation and sustainability, history, and culture. Experienced Program Instructors and local guides.

#### Not included in Program Tuition:

Travel (domestic flights) between your current location and the program.

### Suitability

Open to high school graduates, university students and graduates, ideally 18 – 24 years. This program is suitable for anyone of average fitness with an enthusiasm for conservation and new experiences. You need to be committed to, and prepared for, some physical work whilst on the volunteer component of the program i.e. trail building, tree planting or painting. You don't need to have had previous experience with travel or any of the activities offered.

### Attitude

The program is a shared group experience. We expect you to join the program with an open mind and a willingness to work together with your group mates to make the program an amazing experience for the whole group. Additionally, the program will be as much about the inner journey of personal growth and learning about yourself as it is about what you will experience in the outer physical journey. We expect you to be open to learning and challenging your ideas and assumptions.

### Group Size

The group is limited to 12 students, with experienced and qualified Pacific Discovery program instructors. Local guides assist with interpretation of some historical sites, cultural experiences, activities

### Program Leadership

We have selected a dynamic team of inspiring, supportive, resourceful, and highly experienced instructors to lead our programs. Our program instructors are committed to putting your welfare and safety first. They are people in whom you can trust and confide, who remain objective whatever the circumstances, and who take a genuine interest in your well-being. They implicitly understand the importance of balancing the needs of individuals with group objectives, facilitating a high level of group cohesion, inspiring a genuine appreciation for the areas visited and an awareness of minimum impact travel ethics. All our instructors have Wilderness First Responder (WFR) first aid certification, and extensive group leadership and risk assessment/management training.

### Accommodation

Our accommodation will be a mixture of comfortable and clean hostels, lodges and campsites. Laundry, postal, telephone and email facilities will be available most days. Accommodation is diverse, comfortable and carefully chosen to fit our needs.

### Meals

Meals are fresh, tasty, healthy and varied. Special dietary requirements and vegetarians are catered for. All meals are included in the program cost. Food preparation, shared by all students, is fun, social and often a highlight.

### Transport

We travel around New Zealand in a mini-bus with luggage trailer.



## Program Details

### Country Information

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With only 4 million people, and just one thousand years of human settlement, New Zealand has a rich and dynamic culture which reflects the impact of Maori, European, Pacific Island and Asian influences. Kiwis (named after the fascinating and distinctive native bird) are friendly, welcoming and informal, but also fiercely proud of their national achievements – especially in rugby (the All Blacks) and sailing (the Americas Cup).

With a land mass similar in size to Colorado or Great Britain, New Zealand boasts vast open spaces, spectacular landscapes, rugged mountain ranges, spectacular geothermal areas, lush rainforest and beautiful beaches. Especially attractive for the traveller is the fact that these different landscapes (as well as many cultural features of interest) are in close proximity to each other, and most of them easily accessible. Whilst the rather changeable weather reflects New Zealand's position as an island in the Pacific Ocean, the climate is generally mild.

### Free Time

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Each week there will be some designated free time in a town or city so that you can catch up on email and laundry, rest, and have your own independent experiences with others in the group. For those taking optional academic credit, this is also an opportunity for you to catch up on reading, journaling and assignments.

### Health

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There are no specific health or fitness requirements to participate in the New Zealand Summer Program. If you have any queries regarding health recommendations for travel, please contact your doctor, or a travel doctor, to discuss this. For further information refer to: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

We recommend that you carry a personal first-aid kit as well as any personal medication. Please be aware that for legal reasons, our program instructors are prohibited from administering any type of drug. Please ensure that you are adequately prepared.

*“We saw so much, did so much, learned so much, and grew so close. Traveling with Pacific Discovery will change your life. Not only do you get to see and experience an amazing part of the world, but you get to do it with people who know what's up. You will come out of an adventure a better person than you were going in, and with a whole bunch of new friends!”*

**Jane Butta**

# Application Information & Checklist

- Apply online for the program and pay \$400 application fee: [Click here to apply!](#)
- After you have submitted your application;  
You'll complete a interview with a member of the admissions team. If you are accepted you'll reserve your seat with a non refunded \$1,500 desposit. If you are not accepted you will be refunded the \$400 application fee.
- Arrange your Travel Insurance  
You are free to choose any travel insurance of your choice  
[Click here to see our recommendations...](#)  
Once you have purchased travel insurance upload a copy into your traveller portal
- Book Flights  
After you receive the flight confirmation email from Pacific Discovery, book your flights from your hometown to program start, and home from program finish. Once you have purchsed flights upload a copy of your itinery onto your traveler portal.
- Before Dec 1st**  
Submit your final payment. Your invoice and payment options are in your traveller portal. If you apply after this date, your final payment is due within 14 days of applying. Installment options are available – contact us for details.
- Decide if you will take optional transferable academic credit on the program  
[Learn more and register here.](#)
- Keep active  
Anything is good...swimming, running, walking, biking, hiking, sport, dancing. The fitter you are the more you'll get out of the program.
- Review the pre-departure information for this program in the student traveler portal on our website  
Review the gear list and gear tips  
To have a solid foundation of the cultures and regions we are going to be exploring, read/watch some of the recommended books and movies.
- Connect with us:  
Facebook.com/PacificDiscovery  
Instagram.com/pacificdiscovery/

## COVID-19

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COVID-19 has impacted all of our lives greatly, and Pacific Discovery has worked developed rigorous policies for safety based on professional advice and endorsement. The health of our students is of the utmost importance at all times. We are working closely and regularly with health professionals on our COVID-19 policy, as the we monitor the situation.

## Peace of Mind

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Pacific Discovery is an educational travel organization accredited with American Gap Association (USA). Since its inception, in 2001, Pacific Discovery has taken several thousand students, graduates, faculty, family and special interest groups, on experiential travel and volunteer programs, utilizing a staff of experienced and qualified program instructors. We have an exemplary safety record, comprehensive Risk Management Systems and a database of alumni, parents, advisors and faculty, who are happy to be contacted for feedback. The program carries public liability insurance, and student funds are held securely until disbursement.

## Any Questions? Please contact us...

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### **Pacific Discovery HQ in New Zealand**

Zach Johnston, Director

Austin Rogers, Outreach

Web. [www.pacificdiscovery.org](http://www.pacificdiscovery.org)