

Aotearoa: Te Ika-a-Māui - Māori Culture and Indigenous Rights

The Story:

Kia Ora. Welcome to the land that Māui, a cultural hero and trickster fished from the sea. From Cape Reinga, where the waters of the Pacific collide with the Tasman Sea to the magical glow-worm caves of Waitomo, explore the rich Māori culture and its spiritual connection to Papatūānuku, the Earth Mother. In the Far North, live in a traditional marae, the foundation of whanau (family), a place of ancestors and a sacred meeting ground used for cultural celebrations and tribal events. Learn the Māori



language, participate in traditional cooking in underground ovens, sing ancient songs and experience the power of storytelling to breath life into Māori history and folklore. At the Bay of Islands, learn about the Treaty of Waitangi and discuss the impact of colonialism of Māori people. Explore stunning natural landscapes from black sand beaches of Muriwai to a Rotorua bush walk. Experience family life with your hosts on Waiheke Island and learn about ecological preservation and sustainability. Become a naturalist, anthropologist and ecologist during a summer in New Zealand.

The Program:

Like Polynesian navigators and astronomers 1000 years ago, travel across the Pacific to Aotearoa, the Land of the Long White Cloud to begin your journey into the heart of Māoritanga. Upon arrival in Auckland, learn a waiata welcome song, hike sacred mountains and sample fresh fruit on black sand surf beaches. Māori experts introduce you to history, culture and story-telling traditions during your seminar in the Far North. Live on a traditional marae, visit the Treaty of Waitangi grounds in the Bay of Islands and participate in a hangi workshop to learn about traditional Māori cooking. Visit Cape Reinga and boogie board down the Te Paki Sand Dunes. Meet with local Māori teenagers to discuss contemporary issues and challenges. Then travel by ferry to Waiheke Island to become part of a local family in a community surrounded by white sand beaches and blue waters. While shopping for fresh produce in outdoor markets, hiking verdant trails with fellow Corps members and cooking with your new host family, you become integrated into daily life. Your Te Ika-a-Māui adventure continues in communities and nature reserves throughout the North Island. Enjoy surfing lessons, soak in geothermal pools, enjoy a Rotorua native bush walk and float through underground glow-worm caves on inner tubes. Work with Māori artisans and explore the nexus between the natural environment and Māori design. Learn from ecologists and naturalists about medicinal plants and native concepts of sustainability. Spend your final few days back on Waiheke Island with host family members and friends, reflecting on all you've learned, celebrating your new connections to Māori culture and preparing for the journey home.

The Activities:

Orientation in Auckland

- Take part in an ancient whakawhanaugatanga ceremony.
- Hike One Tree Hill to take in views of the Hauraki Gulf, Auckland City and Rangitoto Island.
- Relax on black sand surf beaches and learn about medicinal plants.
- Visit a Māori language school and meet local students.

Seminar in the Far North

- Participate in a traditional hangi workshop to prepare food in underground ovens.
- Work with Māori experts and educators to learn about the impact of colonialism and challenges in modern day Aotearoa.
- Ride down the mighty Te Paki sand dunes.
- Spend the day with students at Whangaroa College.

Family and Community Stay on Waiheke Island

- Develop new language skills.
- Cook with your host family.
- Attend high school with your host brother or sister.
- Spend the day on remote beaches and explore the natural beauty of the island.

Field-Based Exploration on Te Ika-a-Māui

- Learn from ecologists and activists about conservation and the Māori protest movements.
- Work with a Māori artisan and learn about traditional tattoos.
- Soak in geothermal baths surrounded by native forest.
- Tube through underground caves lit by glow worms.

Journey's End on Waiheke Island

- Stay at Piritahi Marae.
- Discuss re-entry and prepare for the journey home.
- Meet up with your host families for a final hakari celebration.

The Details:

Program: Aotearoa – Te Ika-a-Māui
Start/End: Los Angeles International Airport
Dates: 4 weeks in July and early August