

North Island: Lord of the Rings 5-Day Highlights

Explore the magical filming locations that brought Middle-earth to life across the North Island.

Best For: Movie fans, nature lovers, self-drive travellers

Duration: 5 Days

Start/End: Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland

Recommended Vehicle: Car or Campervan

Day 1: Auckland → Matamata (Hobbiton)

What to Do:

- Take the guided Hobbiton Movie Set tour
- Enjoy a drink at the Green Dragon Inn
- Explore the lush Waikato countryside

Where to Stay:

- 🚐 *Freedom camping:* Firth Tower Reserve (self-contained only)
- 🏕️ *Campground:* Opal Hot Springs & Holiday Park

Must-Try Flavours:

- Hobbiton's Ale at the Green Dragon
- Local cheeses from Putaruru

Day 2: Matamata → Piopio (Trollshaw Forest)

What to Do:

- Hike part of the Tongariro Alpine Crossing
- View Mount Ngauruhoe, aka Mount Doom
- Explore volcanic landscapes in the national park

Where to Stay:

- 🚐 *Freedom camping:* Mangahuia DOC Campsite
- 🏕️ *Campground:* Discovery Lodge

Travel Tip:

- Weather can change rapidly — pack layers and start early if hiking.
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Day 3: Piopio (Trollshaw Forest) → Tongariro National Park (Mount Doom)

What to Do:

- Visit Hairy Feet Scenic Film Location Tour
- Take photos among limestone cliffs and native bush

Where to Stay:

- 🚐 *Freedom camping:* Piopio Domain
- 🏕️ *Campground:* Waitomo TOP 10

Need to Know:

- Tours are guided only — book ahead online.
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Day 4: Tongariro National Park (Mount Doom) → Wellington (Rivendell & Wētā Workshop)

What to Do:

- Visit Kaitoke Regional Park (Rivendell)
- Take a studio tour at Wētā Workshop
- Walk around Mount Victoria's forest (used for the Nazgûl chase)

Where to Stay:

- 🚐 *Freedom camping:* Evans Bay Marina
- 🏕️ *Campground:* Wellington Top 10 Holiday Park

Must-Try Flavours:

- Fresh seafood on the Wellington waterfront
 - Craft beer at a local brewery
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Day 5: Explore Wellington

What to Do:

- Visit Te Papa Museum
- Optional: Take a guided LOTR location tour

- Shop for souvenirs and Middle-earth memorabilia

Final Tip:

- The Interislander ferry to the South Island departs from here — perfect if you're doing the full LOTR loop!

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