ST. OLAF ALUMNI & FAMILY TRAVEL

GO LETTER 2026 NEW ZEALAND

Active New Zealand Adventure
Led by Dave and Pat Van Wylen
Dec 31, 2025–Jan 16, 2026 | Optional Pre-Tour Sydney Escapade, Dec 28, 2025–Jan 2, 2026





Dear Travelers,

I am delighted to share that our 2026 New Zealand tour is an official GO. It's time to start your planning.

FLIGHTS

Feel free to purchase your flights. We strongly recommend you consider adding flight cancellation insurance to that purchase, and that you also check the details of that coverage. Here are some additional notes.

If you are taking part in the optional pre-tour Sydney Escapade:

- You should time your travel to ***arrive in Sydney*** the morning of Tuesday, December 30, 2025.
  - Many flights will leave the U.S. two days before arrival, causing you to "lose a day" en route. Your schedule may vary – pay close attention to arrival and departure dates.
  - Because most flights will arrive in Sydney in the early morning, around 6 to 7 am, we plan to start our group activities right away in the morning. If you end up with a different flight arrival time, you may wish to consider arriving a day earlier, so as not to miss any group activities.
- To connect to the main New Zealand tour, you need to book your flight ***from Sydney to Auckland*** for Friday, January 2, 2026.
  - The recommended flight is NZ 102 SYD 9:55 am AKL 3:10 pm.
  - Airport transfers in both Sydney and Auckland are included.
- Feel free to ***depart QUEENSTOWN*** any time on Friday, January 16, 2026.

If you are taking part only in the main New Zealand tour:

- You should time your travel to ***arrive in Auckland*** by mid-afternoon on Friday, January 2, 2026.
  - Many flights will leave the U.S. two days before arrival, causing you to "lose a day" en route. Your schedule may vary – pay close attention to arrival and departure dates.
- Feel free to ***depart QUEENSTOWN*** any time on Friday, January 16, 2026.

You might also find it helpful to look at our Booking Your Flights page for some helpful tips.

PREPARE FOR YOUR ADVENTURE

You'll get the most out of study travel if you research what to do during your free time. This allows you to reap the benefits of group travel, while also customizing the tour to your interests and activity level. Read more about How to Be an Independent Group Traveler.

Plus, there are a bunch of other general resources, tips, and suggestions on this page.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Finally, start thinking in earnest – if you haven't already – about the activity level required on this tour.

As a reminder, this tour is designed to be more active than our average Travel program. The times of higher activity will be balanced by down times as well. Activities are encouraged, but you can choose to spend your time alternatively as desired.

Movement between cities will be by air-conditioned private motor coach. Movement within each city and at cultural/historic sites will be on foot, requiring a lot of walking and standing, often over uneven ground.

You should be capable of walking a mile or more at a time and up to five to seven miles per day, often over uneven terrain, of climbing stairs that may not have handrails, of climbing in and out of various types of transportation, of keeping pace with an active group of travelers on long days of traveling, of dealing with the emotional highs and lows that can occur when experiencing different cultures, and be a considerate member of the group (prompt, courteous and flexible).

Any participant who has demonstrated an inability, in the opinion of the tour leader, of keeping up with the group or of safely participating in program activities may be prohibited from participating in certain activities.

I think this article from AMA Travel out of Alberta, Canada is really helpful. It mentions issues that can affect your stamina that you might not be thinking about (like excess heat) and lays out an easy plan to follow to get ready for being more active than most of us are in our daily routines at home.

As ever, I encourage you to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Best regards,



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