

NEW ZEALAND

COUNTRY INFORMATION

NEW ZEALAND is an independent nation and a member of the British Commonwealth. It has a diverse multi-cultural population of 4.2 million people, the majority of whom are of British descent. The Maori people are the indigenous people of Aotearoa (New Zealand) and first arrived in waka hourua (voyaging canoes) from their ancestral homeland of Hawaii over 1000 years ago. Today, Maori make up over 14 percent of the population. Their language and culture has a major impact on all facets of New Zealand life. Ten percent of New Zealand's population is termed "Islander", having originated from the islands of the South Pacific including Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Cook Islands, Niue and Pitcairn.

Passport and Visa Information

- U.S. citizens eligible for a visa waiver do not need a visa for tourist stays of three months or less.
- Passport must be valid for **three months** beyond intended stay.

Note: Please be aware that although Ker & Downey will advise you of the current information concerning visas and other requirements, it is your responsibility to reconfirm the information and obtain all necessary documents for entry to countries listed on your itinerary. Visa requirements change frequently.

Health Requirements and Information

No particular health certificates or vaccinations are required for entry into New Zealand.

Customs

Free import for passengers 17 and over include:

- 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250 grams of tobacco
- 3 bottles of alcohol each no more than 1125 ml of spirits and 4.5 liters of wine or beer
- Fur apparel that has been owned and used for 12 months

Amounts of NZ\$10,000 or more must be declared on arrival and departure.

Airport Information

Auckland International Airport is a major International hub and offers shopping, dining, currency exchange, and rental car facilities.

Christchurch International Airport has shopping, dining, and car rental facilities.

Queenstown International Airport has cafés, a duty free shops and car rental facilities.

Airport Departure Tax

International airport departure taxes are charged approximately 25 NZD on departure from Queenstown, Christchurch and Wellington International Airports.

Driving

Hiring a car is a great way to enjoy the flexibility of getting to know a particular region at your own pace. New Zealanders drive on the left hand side of the road (as in the UK and Australia). Drivers give way (or yield) to all traffic crossing or approaching from the right. Speeds and distances are quoted in kilometers.

International visitors can drive in New Zealand using their valid overseas license. If the license is not written in English, an international Driving Permit or official English translation must also be carried with the license when driving. Drivers must carry their license with them at all times and should be aware that New Zealand strictly controls drunk driving, the use of seatbelts and speed limits with random checks and cameras.

We suggest you also check with your local motoring association for reciprocal road side assistance and other touring benefits with New Zealand affiliates.

The minimum rental age ranges between 21 to 25 years depending on the type of vehicle hired.

Climate

Temperatures are pleasantly warm in summer, occasionally reaching 86°F . The warmest months are December, January, February and March (average maximum temperatures ranges between 20–25°C (68°–77°F), and the coldest are June, July and August with average maximum day temperatures ranging between 10–12°C (around 50°F) in the south and 15–17°C in the north (around 60°F).

Most areas of the North and South Islands have between 2000 and 2400 hours of sunshine a year. There is no rainy season; rainfall is distributed evenly throughout the year. Much of the North Island has a “Mediterranean” climate and the South Island has hot summers and cool winters.

New Zealand’s National Meteorology Service (www.metservice.co.nz) provides information on current weather conditions and general climate information specific to each part of the country.

| Auckland, New Zealand | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Ave. Max Temperature (°F) | 49 | 50 | 47 | 43 | 36 | 33 | 31 | 34 | 37 | 41 | 44 | 48 |
| Ave. Min Temperature (°F) | 74 | 74 | 72 | 67 | 63 | 58 | 56 | 58 | 61 | 63 | 67 | 70 |
| Ave. Precipitation (in) | 3.10 | 3.10 | 3.90 | 4.00 | 4.40 | 5.40 | 5.60 | 5.20 | 4.10 | 3.50 | 3.60 | 3.60 |

Weather conditions may vary in other locations of New Zealand.

Clothing

In keeping with New Zealand’s relaxed lifestyle, dress is informal on most occasions. Smart casual clothes are acceptable at most restaurants, lodges and nightspots. Men are generally not expected to wear suits and ties, except in a few of the top formal bars, lodges and restaurants, such as Kauri Cliffs and The Farm at Cape Kidnappers where a jacket is required in the evening for dinner.

In summer it is usually warm enough to go out in the evenings without a jacket, but a light jacket or jersey should be packed for cooler weather and visits to the high country. You can expect some rain, so include a light waterproof jacket or coat.

Swimsuits, sarongs and beachwear are needed for visiting in summer, and be sure to bring plenty of sunscreen. The burn time is usually around 11–14 minutes on a summer day – and that is with or without clouds! A hat is also good for protection against the sun as well as sunglasses for sun reflection.

Currency

New Zealand's unit of currency is the New Zealand dollar (NZ\$). Coins have values of 10, 20 and 50 cents, and \$1 and \$2; notes have values of \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100.

- All major credit cards and traveler's checks, in any international currency, are widely accepted.
- Banks in New Zealand are open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm and are normally closed at weekends.

Gratuities

Tipping is not compulsory or expected – hotels and restaurants do not add a service charge to their bills. Tipping is entirely discretionary in appreciation of good service. Employees do not depend on gratuities for their income nor are service charges routinely added to accounts by hotels and restaurants; however a tip of up to 10% in recognition of excellent service has become the custom in cafés and restaurants. You should not feel obliged to tip tour guides or concierge; it is however appropriate where service has been exceptional. Taxi drivers and hotel porters also appreciate a small change tip for their services.

Plant and Wildlife

New Zealand's high rainfall and many sunshine hours give the country a lush and diverse flora – with 80 percent of the trees, ferns, and flowering plants being native. From the kauri forests of the far north to the mountain beech forests and alpine tussock of the Southern Alps, you will find fascinating plants and trees in every region. You will be awed by the majestic evergreen native forests that include rimu, totara, many varieties of beech, and the largest native tree of them all, the giant kauri. Underneath the trees you will find dense and luxurious undergrowth including countless native shrubs, a variety of ferns, and many mosses and lichens.

About 80-100 million years ago, New Zealand drifted away from the massive supercontinent of Gondwanaland into the South Pacific. Since then, a unique flora and fauna has evolved, with a large number of beautiful native birds (including the national icon, the flightless kiwi) and plants, as well as direct descendants of prehistoric wildlife, including the tuatara, weta, and giant snail.

Food

New Zealand's "Pacific Rim" cuisine style takes its inspiration from regions and countries such as Europe, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Polynesia, Japan and Vietnam. This unique blend of influences has created a mouth-watering range of flavors and food available from cafés and restaurants nationwide.

For dishes that have a distinctly New Zealand style, look out for lamb, pork and venison; salmon, crayfish, Bluff oysters, paua (abalone), mussels and scallops; kumara (sweet potato); kiwifruit and tamarillo; and pavlova, the national dessert, made from meringue and lashings of fresh whipped cream topped with fresh fruit or berries.

While the main centers support a few elegant, silver-service restaurants, the trend is towards more relaxed café-bar dining. There is a wide variety of international food available including Japanese, Indian, Halal, Italian, Mexican, Chinese, Malaysian, and Thai. There are more than 900 Asian restaurants throughout New Zealand.

While you are there, take the opportunity to discover more about New Zealand wines. White wines, particularly Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, have achieved an international reputation for excellence, whilst the reds (in particular, Pinot Noir) are also gaining recognition.

Shopping

Minimum hours for shops and businesses are 9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday. Many stores are also open Saturdays and Sundays, with some closing late one night a week – either Thursday or Friday. In resort locations most stores are open to the early evening, e.g. 7:00pm. Some supermarkets and petrol stations are open 24/7. Almost all shops are closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Day and Good Friday.

New Zealand offers a huge variety of shopping from arts and craft markets, galleries and museum shops to exclusive designer stores. For traditional New Zealand souvenirs look for examples of superb Maori carvings in wood, bone and pounamu (greenstone or jade). Also available are jewelry and ornaments made from the iridescent paua shell (abalone), treasured by Maori for centuries.

New Zealand potters are recognized as among the world's finest and today many fine artisans are also working in stone, wood, glass and metals. The country's vast wool industry makes it possible to find wonderful hand-knitted wool sweaters, beautiful wall hangings, homespun yarns and top-quality sheepskins. New Zealand artists are earning an enviable reputation abroad and there are a number of galleries displaying for sale a wide range of work. These are able to be purchased and freight will be arranged to your country of origin.

GST

GST stands for Goods and Service Tax and is similar to the British system of VAT. All goods and services are subject to a 12.5 percent Goods and Services Tax (GST) included in the displayed price. Visitors are not able to claim this tax back; however, when a supplier ships a major purchase to a visitor's home address (e.g. artwork) an exception from GST can be applied for.

Time Zone

GMT +12

Language

English and many minority languages

Voltage

230/240 Volts AC 50Hz

Flat three-pin or two-pin plugs are used although an adapter is required.

Emergency Numbers

Emergency: 111 will call ambulance, fire brigade or police and is free of charge.

International Calling

To call New Zealand from the U.S. or Canada, dial (011 + 64) before the number. Omit any leading 0 in the area code.

To call the U.S. or Canada from New Zealand, dial (00 + 1) before the number.

Suggested Reading List

Frame, Janet. *An Angel at My Table*. Second in an autobiographical trilogy about her life, reveals her struggles in private life while being one of New Zealand's famed novelists.

Ihimaera, Witi. *The Whale Rider*. A story set in New Zealand about the granddaughter of a chief of the Maori tribe in Whangara, New Zealand.

King, Michael. *The Penguin History of New Zealand*. A nice history of how New Zealand was founded and settled.