



▼ OCEANIA

Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

## BACKGROUND

**Land and Climate.** New Zealand covers 103,737 square miles (268,680 square kilometers) and is about the same size as Colorado. The country's indigenous name is Aotearoa ("Land of the Long White Cloud"). This mountainous island nation lies in the South Pacific about 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) southeast of Australia. Its two principal landforms are the North Island and the South Island. The more populous North Island has fertile agricultural land, the largest man-made forest in the Southern Hemisphere, and a few isolated snowcapped volcanoes. It also boasts hot springs and geysers in its thermal region. On the South Island, the Southern Alps provide magnificent scenery and opportunities for sports such as skiing. There are many glaciers, lakes, and rivers. Southwest coastal fjords rival those of Norway. Coastal lowlands are used for agriculture. Both islands have many sandy beaches. Other islands include Stewart Island, south of the South Island, and the Chatham Islands, far to the east. Numerous other small islands are mostly uninhabited.

The climate is temperate, with plenty of sunshine, adequate rainfall, and few extremes in weather. In the winter, however, particularly in the south, high humidity makes it seem rather cold, even though average winter temperatures rarely go below 40°F (4°C). Summer highs average about 73°F (23°C). Hot winds bring higher summer temperatures to the east coast. The seasons are opposite those in the Northern Hemisphere.

**History.** The first discovery of the islands is attributed to Kupe, a Polynesian explorer. Maori migrations from Polynesian

islands probably began before AD 900. These early Maori were warlike, highly organized, and skilled in many crafts. In 1642, Dutch explorer Abel Tasman sighted the islands and named them Staten Landt. He did not go ashore because of an unfriendly Maori reception, and the islands remained largely uncolonized until the early 1800s. Dutch geographers changed the islands' name to Nieuw Zeeland—after the Dutch province of Zeeland—but the Dutch were not directly involved in colonizing the islands. Instead, England's Captain James Cook, who first visited the Maori in 1769, opened the door to European (chiefly British) settlement. Western contact led to a decline in the Maori population due to the introduction of diseases and modern weapons in tribal warfare.

In 1840, the Maori and British signed the Treaty of Waitangi, which allowed *kawanatanga* (governance) by the British monarch but granted the Maori legal protection and rights to perpetual ownership of their lands and resources. Only the Crown was entitled to buy land from the Maori, but the law was not always observed, and improper purchases and illegal leases were made. Colonization and Western settlement proceeded rapidly after 1840. In 1852, Britain granted New Zealand internal self-government, and by 1907 the nation became an independent dominion within the British Empire (later, Commonwealth). In the 20th century, the Maori population rebounded and the Maori people integrated with residents of European descent. However, the Maori maintain many distinct aspects of their cultural heritage.

## New Zealand

New Zealand contributed heavily in terms of soldiers to both world wars. After World War II, New Zealand turned its focus from European ties to Pacific ties, developing trade links with growing Asian economies. Conversely, by the 1990s, Britain was focusing on European integration. This divergence has raised the question of whether New Zealand's status as a democratic monarchy, with the British queen as nominal head of state, reflects the country's independent outlook. Many New Zealanders favor a future (though not necessarily immediate) transition to a local head of state.

### THE PEOPLE

**Population.** New Zealand's population of 4.1 million is growing by 1 percent annually. About 85 percent of the population lives in urban areas. The principal metropolitan areas are Auckland, Christchurch, and Wellington (the capital). Auckland and its suburbs hold one-third of the nation's people and constitute New Zealand's commercial and industrial center.

The majority (68 percent) of New Zealanders are Pakeha (of European descent), and about 15 percent are Maori. Inter-marriage between Pakeha and Maori is common, and the question of ethnic identity is largely a matter of self-identification. The Maori are Polynesians and live mainly on the North Island. Pacific Islanders (Tongans, Samoans, Cook Islanders, and others) began migrating to New Zealand after 1946 and today comprise a significant minority. Although immigration from Pacific islands continues, it is now eclipsed by immigration from China, South Korea, India, and other Asian countries. Two-thirds of both the Pacific Islander and Asian populations live in Auckland, the nation's most multicultural city.

**Language.** English and Maori are both official languages. The latter is used for Maori ceremonies or other special occasions. Maori people also speak English, and some Pakeha speak a little Maori, which they may learn in school. Many Maori words (*Pakeha*, *kiwi*, etc.) have been adopted into English. Many New Zealand English words or phrases differ from American English. For example, a car's trunk is a *boot* and the hood is a *bonnet*. Others include *come around* (come over), *over the road* (across the street), *pop downtown* (go downtown), and *go to the loo* (go to the bathroom). A *bathroom* is a place to take a bath, *lift* is an elevator, and *petrol* is gasoline. A *bit of a dag* is a humorous character.

**Religion.** About 56 percent of New Zealanders identify themselves as Christians, of which Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, and Methodists comprise the largest denominations. The Ratana and Ringatu Christian churches have significant numbers of Maori adherents. Only a small minority of New Zealanders attend church on a regular basis; attendance is higher on religious holidays. The largest non-Christian religions are Hinduism (1.7 percent), Buddhism (1.7 percent), and Islam (1 percent). About 35 percent of New Zealanders indicate in census data that they have no religious affiliation.

**General Attitudes.** New Zealanders are open, friendly, and hospitable. Compared to that of U.S. citizens, their lifestyle is more relaxed and informal. For example, while a U.S. citizen might discuss occupations, incomes, and career objectives with colleagues, a New Zealander is more apt to discuss leisure activities and family interests. New Zealanders are, on the whole, self-reliant, practical people. They enjoy working around their homes and gardens. They believe their society should be caring and help people through public programs. They are curious about the world around them: two-thirds of the population reads a newspaper daily and many travel over-

seas. They value home ownership and a good education. The Maori heritage emphasizes family, hospitality, friendship, and a strong sense of community.

In many parts of the country, especially the North Island, there is a multicultural society in which Pakeha, Maori, and others share many values and customs. Despite the general harmony between Pakeha and Maori, relations have been strained in recent years in disputes over land and resource rights. In a major settlement signed in 1997, the government apologized for past abuses, paid reparations, and returned large portions of land to a South Island Maori group. Many landmark names were changed, including New Zealand's highest peak, Mount Cook, which is now Aoraki. Other disputes are still being considered as the nation strives to achieve greater social justice.

**Personal Appearance.** Western-style clothing is the standard. People wear casual clothing in public, although it is usually neat and clean. European fashions are popular, but New Zealand also has its own fashion industry. It is common for New Zealanders to wear shorts (weather permitting) when playing sports, going shopping, and visiting friends. Maori wear traditional costumes for ceremonies and cultural events.

### CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

**Greetings.** New Zealanders greet each other with a handshake. In formal situations, men often wait for women to offer their hand before shaking. Pakeha greet formally with *Hello*, *how are you?* More informal greetings include *Hello* or *Hi*. But most common would be *Gidday* (Good day), *Yeah*, *Gidday*, or *Gidday*, *How's it going?* After an initial introduction, most people switch from addressing each other by title and surname to using first names. However, people generally do not address their elders by first name unless invited to do so.

Maori may greet with a hug or a traditional *hongi*—pressing noses together with eyes closed. The *hongi* is used with non-Maori on a *marae*, the sacred space in front of a Maori *wharenui* (great house). Maori greeting phrases include the ceremonial *Nau mai* (Welcome). *Tena koe*, *Tena korua*, and *Tena koutou* are polite ways to say "Hello" to one, two, or many people, respectively. *Kia ora* (Be well) is a more common and less formal hello in predominantly English-speaking environments; it can also mean "Thank you." Upon parting, Maori may say *Haere ra* (Farewell) and reply *E noho ra* (Stay well). An increasingly common and less formal good-bye is *Ka kite ano* (See you later).

**Gestures.** New Zealanders often supplement their conversation with hand gestures. If conversation is not possible or polite, a nod, wave, or raise of the eyebrows serves as a sign of recognition. Traditional social courtesy is valued but not necessarily practiced by all segments of the population. Most younger women do not expect traditional courtesies from men (and some may find them patronizing). However, it is still considered polite to give up bus seats or to open doors for the elderly. It is also considered polite to avoid chewing gum or using a toothpick in public and to cover yawns with the hand. Personal space usually is important during conversation; standing too close is uncomfortable for many people.

**Visiting.** New Zealanders entertain often in the home. They like to have friends over for dinner. Garden barbecues are especially popular on weekends. Guests are expected to feel at home. They might remove their shoes unless told otherwise by the hosts. Dinner guests almost always take a gift, usually a small contribution to the meal, chocolates, or good wine if the

hosts enjoy it. Houseguests always leave a gift with their host family. When welcomed on a *marae*, one leaves a *koha* (gift of money). The *koha* is a donation toward the cost of hospitality; the larger the gift, the more important the giver.

Dropping by a friend's home unannounced is quite common, although such visits after 8 p.m. are not appropriate. Inviting people for afternoon *tea* (around 3 p.m.) is also popular. For a more formal *tea*, hosts take out the best tablecloth, cups, and saucers and serve fairly substantial refreshments—enough to be considered a meal by some. For less formal occasions, friends may simply enjoy chatting over cake and coffee.

Even when not invited for *tea* or a meal, guests are nearly always offered refreshments. It is rude not to at least offer a drink. Even a repairman who is staying only briefly would be offered a drink. Common refreshments include coffee, tea, soft drinks, finger sandwiches, cakes, and *biscuits* (cookies).

**Eating.** New Zealanders eat a light breakfast before work or school, or by 8 a.m. Lunch is in the early afternoon, and dinner (many call it *tea*) is around 6 or 7 p.m. The family generally eats dinner, the main meal, together. Dessert is often included, and coffee is nearly always served at the end, especially in restaurants. People eat in the continental style; the fork is in the left hand and the knife remains in the right. Hands are kept above the table. To indicate one is finished with a meal, one places the utensils parallel on the plate.

When people eat out, dinner is closer to 8 p.m. In a fine restaurant, staff members consider it their job to let diners take their time. They do not hurry unless requested. At restaurants, people generally are quiet and do not speak too loudly. Ice is not served with drinks. New Zealanders do not practice tipping because wages are considered the duty of the employer, not the customers.

## LIFESTYLE

**Family.** A traditional Pakeha family has two parents and two children. Women account for at least 40 percent of all workers, so it is common for both parents to work. The number of single parents is increasing. Family ties are looser than they once were, but people still believe in supporting one another. Parents often give financial help to their adult children until they finish their education (although it is becoming increasingly common for students to finance their own education through part-time work and government interest-free loans). Among Polynesians, extended family connections are important. In some cases, several generations live together in one house. For Maori, the *marae* is important in binding families together. Ceremonies, important meetings (*hui*), and recreational activities take place on the *marae* and in the *wharenui*.

**Housing.** The typical family home is a detached single-storey home on a quarter-acre lot with a yard in front and back. Yards often contain vegetable and flower gardens. A typical home is either wooden or brick. A separate dining area and a living room are typical, though modern homes may offer an open-plan combination kitchen, dining, and living area. Most families own their homes rather than rent. Many New Zealanders like to restore colonial-era villas, which have large verandas and ornate lattice work. As city life becomes more popular, there is a trend away from detached housing and toward higher-density semi-detached and apartment-style living. Many city lots with old homes have been subdivided to accommodate an extra dwelling, and sometimes a single home is removed to make way for two or three new townhouses. Almost all homes have access to plumbing and electricity. In

urban areas, homes have access to a water supply, although many rural homes obtain their water from an external storage tank that is filled with water from the roof.

**Dating and Marriage.** Although most New Zealand parents restrict one-to-one dating until their children are 15 or 16, group social activities usually begin around age 12. The youth enjoy going to movies, dancing, and having parties. Older teens may go with a group of friends to the local pub for dancing and drinking. On average, women marry at age 27; men tend to marry a little later. Many choose to live together before or instead of marrying. Weddings can be lavish, with a home or garden ceremony followed by a large party, which may include a sit-down meal and a dance.

**Life Cycle.** Traditionally, babies born to Christian families were baptized soon after birth, but baptism is becoming less common. Many infants are named after a relative, such as a grandparent, uncle, or aunt. At age 16, New Zealanders are allowed to begin driving and at age 18 can buy alcohol and cigarettes and vote in elections. Despite this, 21 is considered the age when one truly becomes an adult, so a person's twenty-first birthday is an important occasion. The celebration usually includes a large party, often held in the family home, to which family and friends are invited. This gathering usually involves large amounts of alcohol, and partygoers may give speeches about the host, often trying to embarrass him or her in front of the guests with anecdotes from the past. Most funerals follow Western traditions, with a wake, memorial service, and burial in a cemetery.

**Diet.** The New Zealand diet has become lighter and more diverse in recent years. *Kaimoana* (seafood) and fresh vegetables play a greater role than in the past. Red meat is eaten less often and portions are smaller. Beef, pork, and roast lamb are still common, as is fish, but poultry is gaining popularity. Fruits are plentiful. Meat pies and *sausage rolls* (sausage wrapped in pastry) were popular, but now more people prefer hamburgers, pizza, and fish and chips. *Vegemite* (yeast extract) is used as a bread spread, but peanut butter, honey, and jam are also popular. Fruits are abundant, including apples, bananas, apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, cherries, strawberries, and tomatoes. New Zealanders believe their cheeses and ice cream are among the best in the world. European and Asian foods are popular, especially in larger cities.

A traditional Maori meal is the *hangi*, a combination of meat, seafood, potatoes, *kumara* (sweet potatoes), carrots, and other vegetables all cooked in wire racks lined with cabbage leaves. The dish is steamed for hours in an *umu* (earth oven).

**Recreation.** Many New Zealanders love sports. Half the people are paying members of sporting clubs. Rugby is the national sport. The national rugby team, the All Blacks (so named because of their uniform color), has achieved success in world competition. Soccer is popular in winter, while cricket is the favorite for summer. Field hockey and softball are popular with both men and women. Girls and women often play netball, a game similar to basketball. Tennis, lawn bowling, and *athletics* (track-and-field) are also enjoyed in the summer. Since no area is far from the mountains, sea, or rivers, there are many opportunities for mountaineering, *tramping* (hiking), fishing (both deep-sea and freshwater), hunting (on a limited basis), swimming, walking, jogging, and sailing. New Zealanders spend considerable time outdoors, playing sports, gardening, or fixing up their homes. Gardening is one of the most common leisure activities, and people take pride in growing produce to share at a weekend barbecue. Cultural

## New Zealand

activities, such as participating in craft groups, are also popular. Traveling is common. For example, more than one-fifth of the population makes a visit abroad each year.

**The Arts.** Maori performing arts, or *kapa haka* include songs, chants, and dances. These art forms may convey legends, love poems, tributes to ancestors, oral histories, and political statements. Performers often use face paint as an alternative to traditional *moko* (facial tattoos), which feature elaborate designs. A popular form of the *haka* (traditional dance) is a war dance performed by men, who make powerful moves, shout fierce chants, and display aggressive facial gestures, such as widening the eyes and sticking out the tongue. This type of *haka* has become an internationally-recognized symbol of New Zealand, due in part to the All Blacks's tradition of performing the dance prior to competition. A common dance performed by women includes the swinging of *poi* (percussive balls on the end of a string). Maori folk arts include wood and bone carvings, which record traditional beliefs and tribal affiliation, and *taaniko* weaving (plaiting flax to produce clothing with colorful geometric patterns).

Classical orchestras, theater and dance companies all enjoy success, and contemporary painters and sculptors exhibit in galleries throughout the country. New Zealand's domestic film industry has enjoyed significant growth in recent years, and New Zealand's pristine natural environment and topographical variation have made the nation a favorite location for filmmakers from around the globe.

**Holidays.** Public holidays include New Year's (1–2 Jan.); Waitangi Day (6 Feb.), for the 1840 treaty; Easter (including Good Friday and Easter Monday); Anzac Day (25 Apr.), to honor the armed forces and war dead; Queen Elizabeth II's Birthday (first Monday in June); Labour Day (fourth Monday in October); Christmas; and Boxing Day (26 Dec.). Boxing Day comes from the old British tradition of giving small boxed gifts to service workers or the poor on the day after Christmas. It is now a day to visit and relax. Each province celebrates an Anniversary Day.

## SOCIETY

**Government.** New Zealand is a democratic parliamentary monarchy within Britain's Commonwealth. As such, it recognizes Queen Elizabeth II as head of state. She is represented in the country by a governor-general (currently Anand Satyanand). The head of government is the prime minister (currently Helen Clark), who is the leader of the majority party or coalition in the nation's 120-seat unicameral Parliament, the House of Representatives. Members of Parliament are elected to three-year terms. The voting age is 18. Regional councils oversee transportation and other issues. Local matters are managed by city councils and, in rural areas, district councils.

**Economy.** New Zealand has a modern industrialized economy. While only 5 percent of the population is employed in agriculture, New Zealand's international trade depends heavily on the sector. The most important exports include wool, lamb, beef, fruit, fish, cheese, wine, and timber products. New Zealand is one of the world's largest exporters of wool. Important industries include food and wood processing, forestry, textiles, and machinery. Tourism is another vital economic sector; the nation's diverse landscapes attract foreign visitors with interests in hiking, river rafting, skiing, wildlife watching, and

## POPULATION & AREA

Population .....	4,115,771 (rank=124)
Area, sq. mi. ....	103,737 (rank=74)
Area, sq. km. ....	268,680

## DEVELOPMENT DATA

Human Dev. Index* rank .....	19 of 177 countries
Adjusted for women .....	18 of 156 countries
Real GDP per capita .....	\$24,996
Adult literacy rate .....	99% (male); 99% (female)
Infant mortality rate .....	5 per 1,000 births
Life expectancy .....	78 (male); 82 (female)

other outdoor activities. Real gross domestic product per capita has doubled in the last generation—a reflection of growing prosperity and a strong middle class. Unemployment is relatively low but higher among Maori. New Zealand enjoys a free-trade agreement with Australia, called Closer Economic Relations. The currency is the New Zealand dollar (NZD).

**Transportation and Communications.** A private car is the preferred mode of transportation, although many urban residents ride a bus to work. All major cities have good bus systems. Trains and domestic airlines also operate between cities and industrial centers. Many New Zealanders use bicycles for short-distance transportation. Ferries regularly carry passengers and cars between the two main islands.

An excellent communications system provides efficient domestic and international service. Numerous radio and television stations and other media operate throughout New Zealand. Auckland, Christchurch, and Wellington have daily newspapers. New Zealand ranks among the world's leading nations in the number of internet users per capita.

**Education.** Education is free and compulsory between ages five and sixteen. Most children enter school at age five, but preschools are also available. Secondary education begins at age 13. Most secondary schools require their students to wear uniforms. Some high schools are segregated by sex. More than half of all students continue two years after the compulsory requirements to finish high school (also called *college*). A rigorous state exam given in the fifth year of secondary school is required for university admission. The government administers seven universities. Continuing, technical, and vocational education is available to those who do not pursue a university degree. New Zealand women have higher qualification rates than men and have a larger enrollment in higher education.

**Health.** A comprehensive social security program provides healthcare coverage for the aged, disabled, sick, and unemployed. The public healthcare system is maintained by taxes, although some elements of care are being privatized or simply left to an emerging private sector. While all New Zealanders are entitled to use the public system, many workers choose to carry private insurance to expand their healthcare options. Private hospitals receive some government subsidies. Medical facilities are generally good and readily available.

## AT A GLANCE

**Contact Information.** Embassy of New Zealand, 37 Observatory Circle NW, Washington, DC 20008; phone (202) 328-4800; web site [www.nzembassy.com](http://www.nzembassy.com). Tourism New Zealand; phone (866) 639-9325; web site [www.purenz.com](http://www.purenz.com).

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