

Country Guide for
NEW ZEALAND



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1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: South Pacific.

Tourism New Zealand

Level 7, 89 The Terrace, Wellington, New Zealand

Tel: (4) 917 5400. Fax: (4) 915 3817. Web site: <http://www.tourisminfo.govt.nz> (trade information) or <http://www.purenz.com> (consumer information).

Administrative headquarters only. Trade and consumer enquiries should be directed to NZTB's branches around the world.

New Zealand High Commission

New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TQ

Tel: (020) 7930 8422 or (0991) 100 100 (visa information and immigration service; calls cost £1 per minute). Fax: (020) 7839 4580. Web site: <http://www.immigration.govt.nz> or <http://www.newzealandhc.org.uk>

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 0900-1700 and 1000-1600 (immigration service).

Tourism New Zealand

New Zealand House, Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TQ

Tel: (020) 7930 1662 or (09069) 101 010 (recorded information line; calls cost 60p per minute). Fax: (020) 7839 8929.

E-mail: enquiries@nztb.govt.nz

Web site: <http://www.purenz.com> (trade information) or <http://www.nztb.govt.nz> (consumer information).

British High Commission

Street address: 44 Hill Street, Wellington, New Zealand

Postal address: PO Box 1812, Wellington, New Zealand

Tel: (4) 472 6049. Fax: (4) 473 4982 or 471 1974 (consular section). E-mail: bhc.wel@xtra.co.nz

Web site: <http://www.brithighcomm.org.nz>

Consulates in: Auckland and Christchurch.

New Zealand Embassy

37 Observatory Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20008

Tel: (202) 328 4800. Fax: (202) 667 5227 or 328 4836 (immigration service). E-mail: nz@nzemb.org

Web site: <http://www.nzemb.org>

Consulate General in: Los Angeles. Tel: (310) 207 1605. Fax: (310) 207 3605.

Tourism New Zealand

501 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 300, Santa Monica, CA 90401

Tel: (310) 395 7480. Fax: (310) 395 5453. E-mail: nzinfo@nztb.govt.nz

Web site: <http://www.purenz.com>

Also deals with enquiries from Canada.

Embassy of the United States of America

Street address: 29 Fitzherbert Terrace, Thorndon, Wellington, New Zealand

Postal address: PO Box 1190, Thorndon, Wellington, New Zealand

Tel: (4) 472 2068. Fax: (4) 471 2380. Web site: <http://www.usembassy.state.gov/wellington>

Visa enquiries should be directed to the Consulate General in Auckland.

US Consulate

2 GENERAL

PO Box 92022, Auckland 1, New Zealand

Tel: (9) 303 2724. **Fax:** (9) 366 0870 or 379 3722 (visa section). **Web site:** <http://www.usconsulateauckland.org.nz>.

New Zealand High Commission

99 Bank Street, Suite 727, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6G3

Tel: (613) 238 5991 or 238 6097 (immigration service). **Fax:** (613) 238 5707. **E-mail:** nzhcott@istar.ca

Web site: <http://www.nzhcottawa.org>

Consulate General in: Vancouver.

Canadian High Commission

PO Box 12049, Wellington, New Zealand

Tel: (4) 473 9577. **Fax:** (4) 471 2082. **E-mail:** wlgtn@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Web site: <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/newzealand>

Government Trade Office in: Auckland.

Country dialling code: 64.

General

Area: 266,171 sq km (102,374 sq miles).

Population: 3,792,200 (1998).

Population Density: 14.0 per sq km.

Capital: Wellington. Population: 365,000 (1996, including Kapiti). Auckland, with a population of 1,015,000 (1996, including Pukekohe), is the largest urban area in the country.

Geography: New Zealand is 1930km (1200 miles) southeast of Australia and consists of two major islands, the North Island (114,470 sq km/44,197 sq miles) and the South Island (150,660 sq km/58,170 sq miles), which are separated by Cook Strait. Stewart Island (1750 sq km/676 sq miles) is located immediately south of the South Island, and the Chatham Islands lie 800km (500 miles) to the east of Christchurch. Going from north to south temperatures decrease. Compared to its huge neighbour Australia, New Zealand's three islands make up a country that is relatively small (about 20% more land mass than the British Isles). Two-thirds of the country is mountainous, a region of swift-flowing rivers, deep alpine lakes and dense subtropical forest. The country's largest city, Auckland, is situated on the peninsula that forms the northern part of North Island. The southern part of North Island is characterised by fertile coastal plains rising up to volcanic peaks. Around Rotorua, 240km (149 miles) south of Auckland, there is thermal activity in the form of geysers, pools of boiling mud, springs of hot mineral water, silica terraces, coloured craters and hissing fumaroles which make Rotorua a world-famous tourist attraction. The South Island is larger, although only about one-third of the population live there. The Southern Alps extend the whole length of the island, culminating in Mount Cook, the country's highest peak. In the same region are the Franz Josef and Fox glaciers.

There are also four Associated Territories: The Cook Islands, about 3500km (2175 miles) northeast of New Zealand; Niue, 920km (570 miles) west of the Cook Islands (area 260 sq

km/100 sq miles); Tokelau, three atolls about 960km (600 miles) northwest of Niue (area 12 sq km/4 sq miles) and the Ross Dependency, which consists of over 700,000 sq km (270,270 sq miles) of the Antarctic.

Note: Cook Islands and Niue have separate individual sections in the World Travel Guide.

GOVERNMENT: Constitutional monarchy since 1907. Head of State: HM Queen Elizabeth II since 1952, represented locally by Governor-General Sir Michael Hardie Boys since 1996. Head of Government: Prime Minister Helen Clark since 1999.

Language: English is the common and everyday language, but other languages are also spoken, including Maori, which is New Zealand's second official language (spoken by approximately 15% of the Maori population).

Religion: 60% Christian: Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Methodist are all represented.

Time: New Zealand: GMT + 12 (GMT + 13 from the last Sunday in October to the last Sunday in March).

Chatham Island: GMT + 12.45 (GMT + 13.45 from the last Sunday in October to the last Sunday in March).

Electricity: 230/240 volts AC, 50Hz. Most hotels provide 110-volt AC sockets (rated at 20 watts) for electric razors only.

Communications:

Telephone: IDD is available. Country code: 64. Outgoing international code: 00. Most public phones take cards purchased from bookstalls; some also accept credit cards, but very few still accept coins.

Mobile telephone: Extensive AMPs network operated by Telecom New Zealand (web site: <http://www.telecom.co.nz>) and smaller GSM 900 network. handsets can be hired from the main network provider Telecom New Zealand. There are also mobile telephone shops at Auckland and Christchurch airports.

Fax: Most hotels provide facilities.

Internet/E-mail: ISPs include Kiwilink (web site: <http://www.kiwilink.co.nz>). There are cybercafés in the city and smaller town central business districts. Travellers may access the internet at many hotels and youth hostels.

Post: Post offices are open 0900-1700 Monday to Friday. Airmail to Western Europe takes four to five days and to the USA three to ten days.

Press: The English-language daily newspapers with the highest circulation include New Zealand Herald, The Press, Evening Post and The Dominion.

BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies: From time to time these change.

BBC:

MHz15.3611.969.7407.145

Voice of America:
MHz17.7415.2411.769.760

3 PASSPORT

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
British	Yes	1	Yes
Australian	Yes	No	No
Canadian	Yes	No	Yes
USA	Yes	No	Yes
OtherEU	Yes	2	Yes
Japanese	Yes	No	Yes

PASSPORTS: Passport valid for at least 3 months beyond the intended period of stay required by all. Some governments are not recognised by New Zealand and citizens in doubt should check with the New Zealand Immigration Service (see address section).

VISAS: Required by all except the following:

(a) countries referred to in the chart above, including US nationals from American Samoa, Swains Island and nationals of New Zealand Associated Territories (Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue) for up to 3 months, although transit visas are required for the following nationals only holding one **way tickets:** Cook Islands, Fiji, Indonesia, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Tokelau and Tonga;

(b) 1. nationals of the UK and other British passport holders who have evidence of the right to live permanently in the UK for visits of up to 6 months providing they hold a passport valid for 6 months beyond departure date and onward or return tickets;

(c) 2. nationals of EU countries for visits up to 3 months, but Portuguese nationals must have right of residence in Portugal;

(d) nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Bahrain, Brazil, Brunei, Chile, Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region or British Nationals Overseas passports), Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Kiribati, Korea (Rep. of), Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, Nauru, Norway, Oman, Qatar, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Vatican City and Zimbabwe for visits of up to 3 months;

(e) transit passengers continuing their journey by the same or first connecting aircraft within 24 hours, providing they hold onward or return documentation and are not leaving the airport (some nationals passing through New Zealand always require a transit visa, even when not leaving the airport; enquire at the New Zealand Immigration Service for details).

Note: All nationals listed above must have sufficient funds to cover the duration of stay. This may be NZ\$1000 for each person for every month or NZ\$400 if the accommodation is already paid for.

Types of visa and cost: Visitor: £30. Transit: £35. Work: £45. Student: £40. Residents: £200, per application for a family of four. For details of special visitor categories, including group, conference and business visitor visas, contact the New Zealand Immigration Service (see address section).

Validity: The maximum period of time most visitors can remain in New Zealand is 9 months within an 18-month period. Visitors not requiring visas are initially allowed a stay for up to 3 months, after which they can apply in New Zealand for an extension of up to 9 months.

Application to: Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy or Immigration Service at High Commission); see address section.

Application requirements: Visitor: (a) Completed application form. (b) 1 passport-size photo. (c) Passport valid for 3 months beyond the date of departure. (d) Sufficient funds for duration of stay. (e) Onward or return ticket. (f) Fee (payable in cash or by bank/building society cheque, credit card, money order or bank draft). (g) For business trips, a company/sponsor letter.

Work: (a)-(g) and, (h) Valid offer of employment in writing from a New Zealand employer with a full job description and, in many cases, confirmation that that position cannot be filled by a New Zealander. Student: (a)-(g) and, (h) Confirmation of placement at an approved educational institution.

Working days required: Visitor and Transit: 7. Work: 14. Student: 7. Residents: 3-4 months. Returning Residents: 14.

Temporary residence: Enquire at the nearest New Zealand High Commission or Immigration Service for details.

4 MONEY

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZ\$) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of NZ\$100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of NZ\$2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10 and 5 cents.

Currency exchange: Exchange facilities are widely available throughout New Zealand.

Credit cards: MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club and Visa are widely accepted. Check with your credit card company for details and other services which may be available.

Travellers cheques: Can be exchanged at official rates at trading banks, large hotels and some shops. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in US Dollars, Pounds Sterling or Australian Dollars.

Currency restrictions: There are no restrictions on the import and export of foreign or local currency.

Banking hours: 0900-1630 Monday to Friday.

5 DUTY FREE

The following items may be imported into New Zealand by persons over 17 years of age without incurring customs duty:

200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g tobacco or a mixture of all three weighing no more than 250g; 4.5 litres of wine or beer; 1.125 litres or 40oz of spirits or liqueurs; goods to a total value of NZ\$700.

Prohibited items: Because of the importance of agriculture and horticulture to the New Zealand economy, certain animal products, fruit, plant material or foodstuffs that could contain plant or animal pests may not be allowed into the country. For further information, contact the nearest Embassy, High Commission or Consulate. The import of the following items is also prohibited: firearms and weapons (unless a special permit is obtained from the New Zealand police); ivory in any form; tortoise or turtle shell jewellery and ornaments; medicines using musk, rhinoceros or tiger derivatives; carvings or anything made from whalebone or bone from any other marine animals; cat skins or coats and certain drugs (eg diuretics, depressants, stimulants, heart drugs, tranquillisers, sleeping pills) unless covered by a doctor's prescription.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1-2 2001 New Year. Feb 6 Waitangi Day. Apr 13 Good Friday. Apr 16 Easter Monday. Apr 25 ANZAC Day. Jun 4 Queen's Birthday. Oct 25 Labour Day. Dec 25-26 Christmas. Jan 1-2 2002 New Year. Feb 6 Waitangi Day. Mar 29 Good Friday. Apr 1 Easter Monday. Apr 25 ANZAC Day. Jun 3 Queen's Birthday. Oct 21 Labour Day. Dec 25-26 Christmas.

Note: Each region also observes its particular anniversary day as a holiday.

7 HEALTH

	<i>Special Precautions</i>	<i>Certificate Required</i>
Yellow Fever	No	No
Cholera	No	No
Typhoid and Polio	No	-
Malaria	No	-
Food and Drink	1	-

1: Tap water is considered safe to drink. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat.

There are no snakes or dangerous wild animals in New Zealand. Sandflies are prevalent in Fiordland, but these can be effectively countered with insect repellent. The only poisonous creature is the very rare katipo spider.

Health care: Medical facilities, both public and private, are of a high standard. Telephone numbers for doctors and hospitals are listed at the front of the white pages of local telephone directories. Should visitors need drugs or pharmaceutical supplies outside normal shopping hours, they should refer to 'Urgent Pharmacies' in the local telephone directory for the location of the nearest pharmacy or check with their hotel. Many hotels have doctors on call. Long-staying visitors with a valid permit to stay for two or more years are entitled to health care services on the same basis as New Zealand citizens. There is a reciprocal health agreement with the UK, which entitles short-term British visitors to publicly-funded health treatment. They will receive free treatment as a hospital inpatient, but must pay some charges for any services provided by outpatients and private doctors. Medical insurance is advised to cover any additional charges.

Travel - International

AIR: New Zealand's national airline is Air New Zealand (NZ).

Approximate flight times: From Auckland to London is 28 hours, from Wellington is 30 hours and from Christchurch is 30 hours 30 minutes.

From Auckland to Los Angeles is 12 hours 45 minutes, to New York is 17 hours 45 minutes, to Singapore is 11 hours 15 minutes, and to Sydney is 3 hours 20 minutes.

International airports: Auckland (AKL) (web site: <http://www.auckland-airport.co.nz>) is 22.5km (14 miles) south of the city (travel time - 40 minutes). Buses and taxis are available to the city.

Christchurch (CHC) airport is 10km (6 miles) northwest of the city (travel time - 20 minutes).

Buses and taxis are available to the city.

Wellington (WLG) is 8km (5 miles) southeast of the city (travel time - 30 minutes). Buses and taxis are available to the city.

Airport facilities at all the airports mentioned above include incoming duty-free shop with a full range of items, car hire (Avis, Budget and Hertz), bank/currency exchange facilities open to cover the times of all international flights, telephone booths for hotel reservations and visitor information centres.

Departure tax: Up to NZ\$25 (depending on airport); children aged under 12 are exempt. Children aged between 2-11 leaving from Wellington pay NZ\$10.

SEA: The principal ports are Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, Dunedin, Picton and Opuia, which are served by international shipping lines sailing from the USA and from Europe. For further details contact Tourism New Zealand (see address section).

Travel - Internal

AIR: Air New Zealand (NZ), Mount Cook Airlines and Qantas New Zealand operate domestic flights between the major airports (see Travel - International), as well as 27 other airports throughout the two islands.

RAIL: Tranz Rail Ltd operates a reliable rail service on 4000km (2485 miles) of railway with many routes of great scenic attraction. Tranz Scenic (which is part of Tranz Rail) operates eight scenic long-distance trains. The Overlander runs between Auckland and Wellington (daytime and overnight) with good views of forests, gorges and volcanic peaks. The Coastal Pacific runs between Christchurch and Picton along the east coast between the snow-capped Kaikoura Mountains and past the Kaikoura coast, which is famous for whale-watching. The TranzAlpine runs between Christchurch and Greymouth through spectacular landscapes of gorges and river valleys and across the snow-capped Southern Alps. There are also express services between Auckland and Rotorua, Auckland and Tauranga and Wellington and Napier. There are dining cars on some trains, but there are no sleeping cars on overnight services. All services are one-class travel only. For further information contact Tranz Rail Reservations (tel: (4) 498 3303; fax: (4) 498 3090; e-mail: passengerservices@tranzrail.co.uk; web site: <http://www.tranzrail.co.nz>) or Tranz Scenic (tel: (0 800) 802 802 (toll free; New Zealand only)).

Travel passes: 'Travelpass New Zealand' is a three-in-one travel pass which allows unlimited travel on InterCity coaches, Tranz Scenic trains and Interislander ferry services across Cook Strait. It is issued for periods between 5 days and over 8 weeks and can be bought outside New Zealand from any InterCity Coachlines office, Tranz Rail travel centre or accredited travel agency. The 'Best of New Zealand Pass' incorporates all train and ferry services as well as selected coach

services and the Taieri Gorge Railway for travel over 180 days. For further information, contact Tourism New Zealand (see address section).

ROAD: There are 92,000km (57,200 miles) of roads. Traffic drives on the left. Coach: InterCity Coachlines (web site: <http://www.intercitycoach.co.nz>) operates scheduled services throughout the country. Newmans Coachlines (web site: <http://www.newmanscoach.co.nz>) operates services in both islands. It is advisable to make reservations for seats. Contact an InterCity Travel Centre or Tourism New Zealand for details and information on travel passes (valid for rail, coach and ferries). Bus: There are regional bus networks which serve most parts of the country. Taxi: There are metered taxis throughout the country. Car hire: Major international firms and local firms have offices at airports and most major cities and towns. It is recommended to hire vehicles from members of the New Zealand Vehicle Rental & Leasing Association. The minimum age for driving a rented car is 21. The legal speed limit is 100kph (60 mph) on the open road and 50 kph (30 mph) in built-up areas. Distances are indicated in kilometres. Both driver and passengers are legally required to wear seat belts at all times. For further information contact The New Zealand Automobile Association (tel: (9) 377 4660; fax: (9) 309 4563). Documentation: National driving licences are valid for nationals of 52 countries, including EU countries, Australia, Canada, USA, South Africa, Switzerland, and Norway. For further information, contact Tourism New Zealand (see address section).

URBAN: Good local bus services are provided in the main towns; there are also trolley buses in Wellington. Both Auckland and Wellington have zonal fares with pre-purchase tickets and day passes.

SEA: The North and South Islands are linked by modern ferries operating between Wellington and Picton, carrying passengers and vehicles across Cook Strait. The Interislander makes several daily crossings (journey time - 3 hours) with long-distance train connections from Wellington and Picton railway stations; the faster Lynx, a high-speed catamaran, takes 1 hour 45 minutes, but only operates during the summer months (December-April); Top Cat is an inter-island fast ferry operating a 1 hour 40 minute service all year between Wellington and Picton (web site: <http://topcatferry.co.nz>). Reservations on all ferry services are highly recommended, particularly for visitors taking their vehicles. Information can be obtained from Tourism New Zealand (see address section) or via the Tranz Rail reservation line (tel: (4) 498 3303 or (0 800) 802 802, toll free; New Zealand only).

JOURNEY TIMES: The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from Wellington to other major cities/towns in New Zealand.

	AirRoadRail
Auckland1.009.0010.00
Rotorua1.155.456.00
Napier1.006.306.00
N. Plymouth1.008.30-
Palmerston N.0.302.302.30
Picton0.30--
Christchurch0.45*7.20*5.20
Dunedin1.20*12.20*11.20
Queenstown2.05*15.40-
Bay of Islands2.0014.00-
Nelson0.206.00-
Mt Cook2.0010.00-
Glaciers (west coast)**1.458.20-

NOTE*: Plus ferry crossing of 3 hours. **Plus 2.30 hours by road.

8 ACCOMMODATION

MOTELS & HOTELS: New Zealand offers a wide range of top class hotels, exclusive retreats, motels, moderately priced accommodation and guest-houses. Rates on the whole are cheaper in rural areas, while every city and town also offers a choice of budget hotels and motels. Budget accommodation, often with self-catering facilities, is increasingly popular. Further information can be obtained from the Motel Association of New Zealand (Inc), Level 5, Paxus House, 79 Boulcott Street, Wellington (tel: (4) 499 6415; fax: (4) 499 6416; web site: <http://www.manz.co.nz>); or the Hospitality Association of New Zealand, PO Box 503, 8th Floor, Education House, 178-182 Willis Street, Wellington (tel: (4) 385 1369; fax: (4) 384 8044; website: <http://www.hanz.org.nz>). Disabled travellers: Every new building and every major reconstruction is required by law to provide reasonable and adequate access for people with disabilities. The law specifies that every motel and hotel must provide a certain number of units with accessible facilities. New Zealand is recognised as a world leader in providing accessibility for the disabled. Grading: Hotels are graded from 1-4 stars. Motels are graded on a separate scale of 1-5 stars.

GUEST-HOUSES & PRIVATE HOTELS: Usually located in restored, older buildings, guest-houses and private hotels offer moderately-priced accommodation, often with shared bathroom facilities, but with generally high standards. Country pubs: The cheapest type of accommodation and particularly popular on the west coast of the South Island. Farm and home stays: A number of established companies can arrange farm holidays, where visitors stay with a family as a guest, sharing bathroom facilities. Many farms are conveniently located for outdoor activities such as fishing, skiing and horse trekking. Prices usually include breakfast and dinner. An independent review of various types of accommodation in New Zealand is offered by Holdsworth (web site: <http://lodgings.co.nz>).

CAMPING/CARAVANNING: There are many campsites throughout New Zealand, which is reputed to have some of the world's best camping grounds. Rates and facilities vary considerably. It is advisable to make advance reservations from December to Easter. Motorcamps, cabins and tourist flats: These are characteristic for New Zealand. 'Motorcamps' are a combination of camping grounds offering tent and caravan sites (with electricity), simple cabin accommodation and central communal bathroom and cooking facilities. They can be found almost everywhere. Visitors are required to provide their own tents and equipment, which can be hired from a number of companies. Occupants are usually required to supply their own linen, blankets and cutlery. Cabins are ideal for budget travellers and contain only beds and rudimentary furniture (visitors need to bring their own bedding). Tourist flats are at the top end of the cabin scale and usually offer sheets and bedding as well as fully-equipped kitchens. Full details can be obtained from the New Zealand Tourism Board (see address section).

Youth Hostels: The Youth Hostel Association runs 58 hostels throughout the country, and reservations can be made in advance from December to March. The association's address is PO Box 436, Christchurch (tel: (3) 379 9970; fax: (3) 365 4476; e-mail: info@yha.org.nz; web site: <http://www.yha.org.nz>).

BACKPACKING: Backpackers' hostels are located all over the country. For further information contact The Budget Backpacker Hostels (BBH), 99 Titiraupenga Street, Taupo, New Zealand (tel: (7) 377 1568; e-mail: bbh@backpack.co.nz; web site: <http://www.backpack.co.nz>). BBH also issue a Backpacker card costing NZ\$20, which entitles the holder to discounted transport within New Zealand.

North Island

In order to simplify this section, the two main islands are described separately. However, North and South Islands may easily be incorporated into a single visit, as travel between the two, either by boat or plane, is quite straightforward (see the Travel - Internal section).

Visitors are most likely to arrive in New Zealand at Auckland, the country's largest urban area with a population of just over 1 million. Although New Zealand's centre of commerce and **industry, Auckland offers varied and beautiful scenery**: to the east, the attractive twin harbours and sand beaches offer a tranquil escape from city life; to the west, there are further black-sand beaches and the rugged Waitakere rainforest. Sometimes referred to as the 'City of Sails', Auckland is reputed to have more boats per capita than any other city. The city offers excellent shopping, galleries, museums and theatres, it has a university and provides a multicultural environment characterised by a blend of European and Polynesian cultures. An exploration of the beach and town of Takapuna just across the water is recommended. Public transport is swift and cheap with a flat-fare system. The driver will often provide useful information.

The beaches of Northland, the peninsula stretching away from Auckland, are particularly popular with swimmers and sunbathers. There are many small beach settlements throughout the country, ideal for a quiet and relaxing holiday. The forests of Northland Forest Park contain some of the world's oldest trees, the famous kauri, many of which are hundreds of years old and the area is a popular destination for hiking trips. Cape Karikari, the location for films such as *From Here to Eternity* and *The Piano*, is a wide, rugged, dark sand beach surrounded by steep hills and craggy rocks. Many of the Northland's natural attractions can be explored via the Twin Coast Discovery route, which runs along the Northland coast out from and back to Auckland via the Bay of Islands. The latter consists of 144 islands that are renowned for excellent diving, boating and game fishing.

Another spectacular touring route, the Pacific Coast Highway, runs along the bays, inlets and harbours of the Coromandel peninsula, east of Auckland, along the length of the narrow Bay of Plenty before reaching the remote East Cape and heading down to Hawke's Bay and Napier (see below). The volcanic hills of the Coromandel Peninsula retain much of their original rainforest (also containing large numbers of giant kauri trees). The area's spectacular coastline includes sandy beaches, Korokawa (rugged site of an ancient gold mine) and warm water springs, one of the best-known being located at Hot Water Beach. A popular holiday destination in this area is the Bay of Plenty, whose benign climate and sandy beaches attract many visitors. Known for its mild climate, the bay has an abundance of orchards, particularly citrus and kiwi fruit. The main centre of the region, Tauranga, has all the amenities of a major city, including holiday accommodation ranging from luxury hotels to backpacker hostels. Hawke's Bay, on the southern end of the Pacific Coast Highway, is best known for its high annual sunshine hours and numerous vineyards. The main city in the eastern region of Northland is Gisborne which, along with Hawke's Bay, is one of the country's main wine-growing regions. Around forty wineries (ranging from large commercial estates to small boutiques) are open for free wine tasting. It was hailed as the 'first city to see the sun' of the year 2000. South of Gisborne, the region's other major city, Napier, was razed by an earthquake in 1931 and subsequently rebuilt in the art deco style of the time. Today it boasts some of the world's finest collections of art deco. The bay is also home to UNESCO-listed Te Urewera National Park, the largest native forest on the North Island.

The Waikato and Taupo areas, in central North Island, contain some of the world's most productive farmlands. Further south are the famous water-sculptured Waitamo limestone caverns and glow-worm grottoes.

Around 150km (95 miles) west of the Waitamo caves, the geothermal city of Rotorua is one of the best-known tourist resorts the country. Rotorua presents a good base for exploring the geysers and the large thermal zone of the North Island. There are also other areas of geyser

activity in the region - one such is Orakei Korako, about 30 minutes from Rotorua. Rotorua is also a major centre of Maori culture and there is an arts centre where young Maoris continue the tradition of carving wood and stone. Souvenirs can be purchased, and visitors might also see the shy, nocturnal kiwi. Besides Rotorua, four active volcanoes may also be visited in the North Island.

At the centre of the North Island lies Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake, which offers excellent opportunities for fishing; in the northeast coastal towns, there are also good facilities for deep-sea fishing. South of Lake Taupo, the UNESCO-listed Tongariro National Park is dominated by the area's tallest mountain, Mount Ruapehu (2797m/9177ft), still an active volcano, and a major ski resort.

Whanganui: Whanganui, on the west coast of the North Island, lies at the mouth of the Whanganui River, New Zealand's longest navigable waterway. Visitors can travel up river by jetboat or riverboat into the heart of Whanganui National Park, which has been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO. Both Whanganui and the nearby Egmont National Park, also a UNESCO-listed World Heritage area, provide excellent trails for nature walks. Nearby Mount Taranaki, an extinct volcano, stands majestically amidst vast areas of lush farming land. The city of Taranaki (population 50,000) is well known for its parks and gardens and, in particular, its colourful display of rhododendrons and azaleas in spring.

In the south of the North Island, Wellington, New Zealand's capital, has its buildings grouped along a series of steep hillsides overlooking a deep harbour. A compact city, Wellington is the country's centre of culture, arts, restaurants, fashion and nightlife. Shopping facilities are excellent and hotels offer splendid views across to the nearby South Island. Every two years, Wellington hosts the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts, the country's main cultural event. The Te Papa Museum of New Zealand was opened in February 1998 on the city's spectacular waterfront and combines cultural exhibitions with education, entertainment and leisure activities. Wellington is also the terminus for ferries and for trips to the islands in the straits. Popular destinations for excursions from Wellington include the rural Wairarapa area (home to a number of wineries and forest parks), Cape Palliser (whose wild coastline provides a habitat for large colonies of seals) and the Kapiti Coast (home to a bird sanctuary at Kapiti Island Nature Reserve and renowned for its white sandy beaches).

South Island

To the north of the South Islands, the sheltered waterways of the lush and green region known as Marlborough Sounds attract numerous boating, fishing or swimming enthusiasts. The Marlborough province is well known for its wine and food, with some of New Zealand's best known wines - such as 'Cloudy Bay' or 'Montana' - originating from this region. Nelson is a small, sunny but cool city on the coast, where visitors will find a garden town with spectacular beaches and a growing arts community. Besides being an interesting place for art and culture lovers, the city is a good starting point for excursions to the three national parks in the vicinity. The UNESCO-listed Abel Tasman National Park, New Zealand's only coastal national park, has a rocky coastline with good beaches. Nelson Lakes National Park, also on the UNESCO World Heritage list, offers winter activities during winter and swimming in the summer. The Kahurangi wilderness, another UNESCO World Heritage area, has a good selection of walking trails, such as the well known Heaphy Track.

The Kaikoura coast, further south, was once a whaling station and is now a world-famous conservation area, renowned for offering the possibility to observe sperm whales at close range. To the west, on the edge of the Canterbury Plains, lies the 'Garden City' of Christchurch, the South Island's largest city. The River Avon flows through the centre of this distinctively 'English' city, flanked by tree-lined avenues, old stone buildings and stately homes. Amidst numerous leafy parks, the neo-Gothic Cathedral and its surrounding square form the nucleus of the city. Other places of interest include the Old Canterbury University, the Canterbury Museum, the Chamber of

Commerce Building, Riccarton House and the Provincial Council Buildings. There are also numerous galleries and museums. For excursions from Christchurch, the nearby Banks Peninsula has a number of excellent beaches and bays suitable for swimming and other watersports. From Christchurch a number of roads lead up to the Southern Alps, passing through a land of densely wooded hills, lakes, vast open spaces, and glaciers. The spectacular scenery is dominated by the mighty Mount Cook (3754m/12,313ft), better known by its Maori name Aoraki (cloud piercer). Mount Cook National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage area and contains more than 20 peaks over 3000m/9840ft. Nudging one side of Mount Cook is the spectacular Tasman Glacier, one of the longest outside the Himalayas. All types of skiing are available, including heli-skiing as well as guided climbing trips. Also worth a visit is the small town of Arthur's Pass, which can be reached via a drive through a rainforest along narrow roads, and which is a good starting point for climbing and trekking trips to the UNESCO-listed Arthur's Pass National Park nearby. At the foot of the Southern Alps' western slopes, the West Coast is one of New Zealand's wildest and most untouched natural areas. This is a wild, sparsely populated region with dramatic mountain and forest views, pristine forest-fringed lakes and lush rainforests as well as glaciers. Most of its natural environment is still intact and preserved in national parks and World Heritage areas. The Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Region consists of five UNESCO-listed national parks and is a renowned destination for trekking and outdoor activities. Nature lovers will also find the spectacular Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers worth visiting.

Further south, the Fiordland region, also listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage area, offers huge tracks of unexplored wilderness consisting of numerous lakes, mountains and a pristine coast. Nestling beside Lake Wakapitu at the foot of the Remarkables Range, Queenstown is known as New Zealand's 'adventure capital' as well as being the country's premier ski resort. Nearby Te Anau is known as the 'walking capital' of New Zealand and is a good base for exploring the surrounding fiords, mountains and forests. From Te Anau, a 20-minute drive leads to Lake Manapouri, which is the starting point for the famous Doubtful Sound walking trek. From the same starting point, but travelling north, a scenic road leads to one of New Zealand's best-known fiord towns, Milford Sound.

The green and fertile province of Southland in the north and northwest has a reputation for excellent camping. The region is home to the town of Invercargill and the city of Dunedin (which is Gaelic for 'Edinburgh'), both of which have strong Scottish roots and retain a distinctive Celtic flavour. In Dunedin, this is perhaps best reflected in the city's famous whiskey distillery (reputedly the world's southernmost distillery) as well as in the large number of 19th century Edwardian buildings and mansions. Invercargill has a number of museums, including the Subantarctic Audio Visual and Gallery, which displays the flora and fauna of New Zealand's sub-Antarctic islands. The nearby Otago Peninsula is renowned for its wildlife, which includes colonies of the rare yellow-eyed penguin named hoiho. Also close by is the Catlins Forest Park, which offers a number of scenic walking routes.

Across the Foveaux Strait, New Zealand's third largest island, Stewart Island, only has around 500 inhabitants. Travel across the 37km (20 mile)- strait is either by air (Southern Air operates scheduled flights from Invercargill) or by boat (the Foveaux Express and Southern Express catamarans sail twice daily from Bluff to Halfmoon Bay; journey time - 1 hour). Day trips are possible, but visitors to Stewart Island should note that storms may cause occasional delays to both air and ferry services and return trips may have to be postponed.

9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

New Zealand's wild coastlines and national parks (two-thirds of the country is mountainous and nearly a quarter is protected as some form of park) create perfect conditions for every kind of outdoor activity. Not surprisingly, some of the world's most cutting-edge adventure activities

originated in New Zealand, while more traditional sports, such as sailing, rugby, cricket or golf, continue to be pursued with unwavering passion.

Adventure sports: Adventure sports: The Awesome Foursome is an adrenaline trip that combines a helicopter flight, a bungee jump, high-speed jetboating and whitewater rafting all in one day.

Bungee jumping: Bungee jumping was first commercialised by New Zealanders and the country remains the world's prime destination for the sport. Famous jump-off points include the Kawaru River Bridge, the Skippers Bridge, the Pipeline, the Ledge (near Queenstown), Taupo and Mangaweka (in the North Island), Hanmer Springs (in the South Island) and the Bungee Rocket (at New Brighton Pier). Rap jumping, which consists in abseiling headfirst down a cliff, is currently popular at the Bay of Islands, Auckland, Wanaka and Queenstown. River sledding involves riding down a river holding on to a polystyrene sled or boogie board and is possible on the Rangitaiki River near Rotorua (North Island) and Queenstown (South Island). Paragliding (also referred to as 'parapenting') is billed as the closest possible equivalent to flying and is a cross between parachuting and hang-gliding; beginners' courses are available near Queenstown and Wanaka while experienced paragliders tend to head to Christchurch, Wanaka or the Daney Pass. Jetboating, another New Zealand invention, consists of high-speed boat trips in special power boats. It is available to people of all ages and popular on many of the country's best known rivers. Surf rafting invites visitors to accompany experienced rafters through crashing waves while simultaneously being offered a commentary on the coastline nearby. Best locations are Piha Beach (near Auckland, North Island) and Otago Peninsula (near Dunedin, South Island). Zorbing involves being strapped into an inflatable transparent plastic ball, which is then rolled down a grassy hill or onto a river. Queenstown is generally regarded as New Zealand's 'adventure capital'

Watersports: Watersports: New Zealand's coastline stretches for a total of roughly 16,000km (10,000 miles) and the conditions for swimming and diving are ideal. Many dive spots are easily accessible from the shore, particularly those in Northland (North Island). The Poor Knights Islands (near Whangarei) are particularly renowned among divers (Jacques Cousteau cited them as one of the world's top diving destinations). Many different types of diving are available, including kelp forests at Stewart Island (home to the huge Paua shellfish), black and red coral in the Fiordlands, and wreck-diving, notably at the Rainbow Warrior, the famous Greenpeace boat which was sunk off the Bay of Islands. Divers need to bring their diver's certification cards. Many dive stores offer equipment rental and support facilities. A detailed brochure with information on New Zealand's best dive sites can be obtained from Dive Industry New Zealand, PO Box 875, Auckland (tel: (9) 623 3252; fax: (9) 623 3523; e-mail: nzu@nzunderwater.org.nz; web site: <http://www.nzunderwater.org.nz>). The long coastlines also offer excellent opportunities for surfing, with some of the best breaks located at Raglan, Murawai, Piha, Mahia Peninsula (near Gisborne) and Palliser Bay (near Wellington). Swimming with dolphins is possible in the Bay of Islands (north of Auckland), Whakatane, the Coromandel Peninsula and Kaikoura (South Island); numbers are limited and advance booking is recommended. Whale watching is possible on the eastern coast of South Island all year round (with the greatest number of sightings in winter, from April to August). For further information and details of prices contact Whale Watch (web site: <http://www.whalewatch.co.nz>). Sailing and yachting are extremely popular and Auckland - 'the city of sails' - is one of the top locations. Charters with a skipper and crew can be hired to sail around the coast or as far as the Pacific Islands. Excursions to the remote maritime reserves in the Bay of Islands, Hauraki Gulf and Marlborough Sounds are also possible. Whitewater rafting trips ranging from a couple of hours to five days are available on many rivers, including the Wairora (near Tauranga), the Mohaka (in Hawke's Bay) and the Kaituna (near Rotorua), which also features the world's highest commercially rafted waterfall at 7m (23 ft).

Windsurfing is particularly popular around Wellington, Taupo, Auckland and the Bay of Islands while kayaking is widely practised on rivers throughout the country.

Wintersports: Wintersports: New Zealand offers good skiing and snowboarding, with ideal conditions from June to October. Resorts tend to be less crowded than European ones. On the North Island, the best ski regions are Whakapapa and Turoa (both located on Mount Ruapehu). Other good ski slopes can be found in the Southern Lakes region (particularly Queenstown and Wanaka) and Mount Hutt (where the season is from late May to early November). Heli-skiing trips are available in Wanaka, Queenstown and Mount Hutt, while cross-country skiing is possible on a 26-km (16-mile) trail through the Pisa range near Wanaka. Glacier skiing and glacier walking can be enjoyed at the Tasman, Fox and Franz Josef glaciers in the Southern Alps.

Mountaineering: Mountaineering: New Zealand has some of the highest peaks in the southern hemisphere. Climbers are advised to hire a commercial guide or contact a local alpine club before setting out.

Caving: Caving: The Waitomo Caves, whose 'Lost World' cave can be abseiled into through shafts of sunlight, are the most visited. Other ways to explore the country's many underground caves is through cave rafting or tubing, where participants are kitted out with a wetsuit and helmet (complete with light) and then float through the cave system on custom-made tyres. Mountain biking: Bicycles can be hired easily; special tours offer lifts up to volcano tops (notably at Mount Ruapehu, the Otaga Peninsula and the Remarkables Range). Cycle helmets are compulsory and most buses, if not all trains, allow bicycles on board.

Golf: Golf: New Zealand has over 400 golf courses. Green fees are relatively low compared to other countries. Most clubs welcome visitors, but it is best to telephone in advance, particularly at weekends. For further information contact the New Zealand Golf Association (fax: (4) 499 7330; web site: <http://www.nzga.co.nz>).

Walking: Walking: A variety of walks for all ages and levels of fitness is available. Many of the country's footpaths pass through national parks or protected forest areas. Trails are categorised according to four different types: paths (easy, suitable for all ages and fitness levels, including wheelchair users), walking tracks (easy), tramping tracks (more demanding, requiring good fitness) and routes (very challenging and for experienced hikers only). The Department of Conservation (DOC) has singled out eight different walks which are generally the best known and most popular, including the Lake Waikaremoana Track (in Te Urewara National Park), the Abel Tasman Coastal Track (New Zealand's most widely used recreational track), the Milford Track (the country's most famous track in World Heritage-listed Fiordland Park) and the Rakiura Track (a remote walk on Stewart Island to New Zealand's southernmost parts). These tracks generally take from one to several days, with accommodation provided en route, either in the form of basic camping and huts or comfortable lodges. A network of remote tramping tracks also exists, but walkers attempting these should be well prepared and able to read maps and use a compass. In most cases a Great Walks Pass must be obtained from the Department of Conservation, who have local offices throughout the country. For further information, contact the Department of Conservation in Wellington (tel: (4) 472 5821; fax: (4) 499 0077; web site: <http://www.doc.govt.nz>).

Fishing: Fishing: Brown and rainbow trout are particularly popular. Salmon fishing is best in the Waimakariri, Rakaia, Rangitata and Waitaki rivers on the East Coast (the season being from mid-December to late April). Permits are only required for trout and salmon fishing and there is a special Tourist Licence (available only from the Tourism Rotorua Information Office) which allows holders to fish anywhere in the country for a one-month period. For further information contact

the New Zealand Professional Fishing Guides Association, PO Box 16, Motu, Gisborne (tel: (6) 863 5822; fax: (6) 863 5844; web site: <http://www.troutnewzealand.com>).

Wildlife: Wildlife: As New Zealand was separated from other land masses some 100 million years ago, many plant and animal species are unique to the country. This is particularly true in the case of birds, which attract birdwatching enthusiasts from all over the world. Owing to the lack of predators, many of the country's birds never fully developed wings and, hence, live on the ground. The best-known native bird is the kiwi, also the country's unofficial national symbol. Others include the emu, the kea and weka as well as the endangered kakapo, the world's largest parrot. New Zealand is also home to the world's largest insect, the weta (a mouse-sized cricket), and the tuatara (a reptile whose lineage stretches back to the dinosaurs). Famous locations for birdwatching include Taiaroa Head (near Dunedin), known for colonies of royal albatrosses, and Stewart Island, where kiwis can be observed at night.

Rugby,: Rugby, netball and cricket are the national sports. Other sports particular to New Zealand include lawn bowls, a popular sport played from September to April with greens in most towns, and sheep dog trials. Throughout the year, a number of triathlon races and endurance events are held.

10 SOCIAL PROFILE

Food & Drink: New Zealand has a reputation as a leading producer of meat and dairy produce with lamb, beef and pork on most menus. Venison is also widely available. Locally produced vegetables, such as kumara (a natural sweet potato), are good. There is also a wide range of fish available including snapper, grouper and John Dory. Seasonal delicacies such as whitebait, oysters, crayfish, scallops and game birds are recommended. New Zealand is also establishing a reputation for French-type cheeses: Brie, Camembert, Bleu de Bresse and Montagne Bleu. New Zealand's traditional dessert is pavlova, a large round cake with a meringue base, topped with fruit and cream. Many picnic areas with barbecue facilities are provided at roadside sites. Restaurants are usually informal except for very exclusive ones. Waiter service is normal, but self-service and fast-food chains are also available. Some restaurants invite the customer to 'BYO' (bring your own liquor). Drink: New Zealand boasts world-class domestic wines and beers, some of which have won international awards. A wide range of domestic and imported wines, spirits and beers is available from hotel bars, 'liquor stores' and wine shops. Bars have counter service and public bars are very informal. Lounge bars and 'house bars' (for hotel guests only) are sometimes more formal and occasionally have table service. The minimum drinking age in a bar is 18. There is some variation in licensing hours in major cities and some hotel bars open Sunday, providing a meal is eaten. In most hotels and taverns, licensing hours are 1100-2300 except Sunday.

Nightlife: New Zealand has an active and varied entertainment industry. Theatres offer good entertainment ranging from drama, comedy and musicals to pop concerts and shows. In large cities there are often professional performers or guest artists from overseas. Visitors should check 'What's On' in local papers. There are also cinemas and a small selection of nightclubs in larger cities. Information is also available on (web site: <http://www.itsoninnz.co.nz>).

Shopping: Special purchases include distinctive jewellery made from New Zealand greenstone (a kind of jade) and from the beautiful translucent paua shell. Maori arts and crafts are reflected in a number of items such as the carved greenstone tiki (a unique Maori charm) and intricate woodcarvings often inlaid with paua shell. Other items of note include woollen goods, travel rugs, lambswool rugs, leather and skin products. Shopping hours: All shops and businesses are open

0900-1700 Monday to Saturday, as a minimum; many stores and most malls are also open Sunday between 1000-1300. In resorts, most shops are also open in the evenings.

Special Events: For further details and exact dates, contact Tourism New Zealand (see address section). The following is a selection of major events held in New Zealand in 2001: Jan 1-31 2001 Auckland Anniversary Regatta. Jan 1-6 ASB Tennis Classic (International Women's WTA tennis), Auckland. Jan 8-13 Heineken Tennis Open, Auckland. Feb Womad, Auckland; Bay of Islands International Billfish Tournament; Air New Zealand Wine and Food Festival, Marlborough. Feb 3 Martinborough Fair. Mar Pacifica 2001, Auckland; International Annual Waitaki River Salmon Fishing Contest, Waitaki River, Canterbury. Mar 1 Ironman New Zealand (triathlon), Taupo. Mar 17-24 Scottish Week, Dunedin. Apr Royal Easter Show, Auckland; Lake Taupo International Trout Fishing Contest; TV2 International Laugh Festival, Wellington. May Rotorua Tagged Trout Competition. Jul Rally of New Zealand, Auckland; Air New Zealand Queenstown Winter Festival. Aug Bay of Islands Jazz & Blues Festival. Nov Ellerslie Flower Show, (largest floral exhibition in the southern hemisphere). Dec Festival of Lights, New Plymouth.

Social Conventions: Should a visitor be invited to a formal Maori occasion, the hongi (pressing of noses) is common. Casual dress is widely acceptable. New Zealanders are generally very relaxed and hospitable. Stiff formality is rarely appreciated and after introductions first names are generally used. Smoking is restricted where indicated. Tipping: Service charges and taxes are not added to hotel or restaurant bills. Tips are not expected.

11 BUSINESS PROFILE

Economy: Although New Zealand is primarily thought of as an agricultural country, this sector employs less than 10% of the workforce and contributes just 8% of GDP. Nonetheless, it remains an important source of export earnings, particularly from wool, meat and dairy products. Barley, wheat, maize and fruit are the main crops. The fishing industry has been growing rapidly. There are significant natural resources of which the energy-related ones, principally coal but also natural gas, have been heavily developed. There are also deposits of iron, gold and silica. From the late 1970s a new generation of industrial enterprises centred on these natural resources were established to replace the declining traditional industries (textiles, agricultural machinery and fertilisers). Between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s, New Zealand underwent one of the most radical economic transformations of any Western industrialised country, with extensive privatisation, the dismantling of many welfare systems, abolition of subsidies and tariff barriers and of a plethora of corporate regulations. Unemployment, which rose quickly in the wake of the reforms, peaked in the mid-1990s and has since declined gradually but remains a major problem in some parts of the country. Overall, New Zealand is a prosperous Western-style economy and is set to remain so. Recent economic performance has been somewhat variable, although a measure of stability has now been achieved following the damage caused in 1997/98 by the knock-on effects of the Asian financial crisis. Australia is New Zealand's largest trading partner, and the two governments have recently established a completely free trading regime between them. Japan, the USA and the UK are the other major trading partners. New Zealand is a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, the international forum for the world's main industrialised economies), the South Pacific Forum (which aims to promote economic co-operation in the region) and the recently-established Asian-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum.

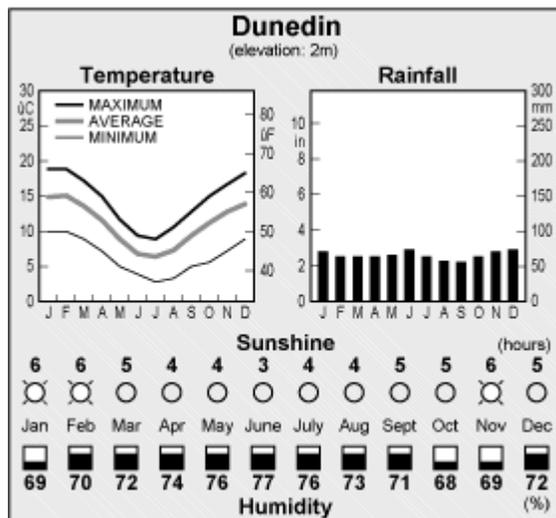
Business: Business wear is generally conservative and both sexes tend toward tailored suits. Appointments are necessary and punctuality is appreciated. Calling cards are usually exchanged. The business approach is fairly conservative and visitors should avoid the period from Christmas

to the end of January. The best months for business visits are February to April and October to November. Office hours: 0900-1700 Monday to Friday.

Commercial Information: The following organisation can offer advice: Wellington Chamber of Commerce and Industry, PO Box 1590, Level 9, 109 Featherston Street, Wellington (tel: (4) 472 2725; fax: (4) 471 1767; info@wgtm-chamber.co.nz; web site: http://www.wgtm-chamber.co.nz).

Conferences/Conventions: The largest centres are in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Many hotels also have facilities. There are over 20 regional convention bureaux in New Zealand, most of which are members of NZ Convention Association (Inc), PO Box 33-1202, Suite 3, Level 1, 15 Huron Street, Takapuna, Auckland (tel: (9) 486 4128; fax: (9) 486 4126; e-mail: info@nzconventions.co.nz; web site: http://www.conventionsnz.co.nz). The organisation is also known as Conventions New Zealand.

12 CLIMATE



Subtropical in the North and temperate in the South. The North has no extremes of heat or cold but winter can be quite cool in the South, with snow in the mountains. The eastern areas often experience drought conditions in summer; the West, particularly in the South Island, has more rain.

Required clothing: Lightweight cottons and linens are worn in the North Island most of the year and in summer in the South Island. Mediumweights are worn during winter in the South Island. Rainwear is advisable throughout the year, and essential if visiting the the South Island's rainforest areas.

13 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: New Zealand was first settled at least 1000 years ago by the Polynesian Maoris, a well-ordered tribal society led by hereditary chiefs and a powerful priesthood. The first European arrival was the Dutchman Abel Tasman in 1642, but it was not until the voyages of Captain James Cook in 1769 and 1779 that the islands were charted and explored. British settlers began

to emigrate after British sovereignty was established in 1840, and Wellington was founded soon afterwards. New Zealand was granted internal self-government in 1852, and the later years of the century saw a rapid growth in investment, communications and agricultural production. In 1893, New Zealand became the first country in the world to extend the vote to women. New Zealand became a Dominion in 1907, and its forces took part in both World Wars. The country is a member of the Commonwealth and also several other international organisations, including ANZUS, the Five Power Defence Agreement and the South Pacific Forum. Membership of Western alliances was suspended, however, when Labour Prime Minister David Lange, elected in 1984, declared New Zealand nuclear-free and prevented US and British vessels which might be nuclear-powered or carrying nuclear weapons from entering New Zealand's ports. While these policies put the small country on the international stage, Lange's government was engaged in radical economic reform at home. Lange eventually resigned at the beginning of August 1989, to be replaced by one of his Cabinet members, Geoffrey Palmer. Palmer himself resigned in early September 1990, just weeks before the scheduled general election at the end of October 1990. This was won by the opposition National Party which had been out of office for a decade. The new Government quickly reversed the Labour government's policy on visiting warships but continued to express strong opposition to French nuclear tests in the South Pacific (politically essential after the Rainbow Warrior affair in which French military personnel bombed the Greenpeace vessel of the same name, killing one person). The tests ended in 1995 and New Zealand resumed diplomatic relations with France in 1997. Following a sharp recession in the early 1990s, the economy had recovered sufficiently by October 1993, when the next general election fell due, for the National Party to be returned to office with a narrow majority. After several close calls, the government survived until the first general election to be held under New Zealand's new electoral system (see Government below) in October 1996. The outcome was striking for a remarkable increase in the number of Maori MPs - from six to 15 - which came close to giving them a representation proportional to their presence in the community as a whole. But with no party enjoying an overall majority, an alliance was agreed between the National Party and New Zealand First (NZF), a newly-formed party with a nationalist agenda. Jim Bolger continued as Prime Minister, with NZF's Winston Peters as his deputy and treasurer. After bouts of public unrest over cuts in social programmes and a series of disputes within the ruling coalition, Bolger resigned in November 1997 in the face of a leadership challenge from one of his cabinet ministers, Jenny Shipley, who subsequently became New Zealand's first woman Prime Minister. Shipley faced the electorate two years later, with another woman, academic Helen Clark (peculiarly known as 'Ice Spice') leading the Labour Party. A closely fought campaign was eventually won by Labour although, lacking an overall majority, they will need the support of the small left-wing environmentalist Alliance Party to sustain the Government.

Government: Legislative power is held by the unicameral 120 seat House of Representatives, which is elected for a 3-year term. A system of mixed member proportional representation was introduced at the election of October 1996, when the legislature increased from 99 to 120 seats. As in the UK, the leader of the largest party in the House normally becomes prime minister, and holds executive power at the head of an executive council (cabinet). The British monarch is the head of state, represented by the Governor General.

14 OVERVIEW

Country Overview: Imagine a unique land of breathtaking scenery: craggy coastlines, sweeping golden beaches, verdant forests, snow-capped alpine mountains, gurgling volcanic pools, flashing fish-filled rivers and glacier-fed lakes, all beneath a brilliant blue sky. New Zealand is accessible, spread over three relatively small islands with modern and efficient transport, quiet roads, plenty of flights and two stunningly scenic rail journeys. Other pluses are friendly, English-

speaking people, virtually no crime, and a trio of rich cultural influences - adventurous Polynesian navigators (Maori), pioneering European settlers who followed a thousand years later, and modern Pacific Rim immigrants.

The plant and animal life are unmatched, giving opportunities for close-up experiences with birdlife (including kiwi), seals, dolphins and whales. Enjoy the chance to explore two of the richest New-World wine regions on the planet, taste wonderful cuisine, stroll on moody beaches, tramp through the national parks or over alpine passes. Try bungee jumping, caving or **whitewater rafting**: you can ski or snowboard on eerily quiet world-class slopes, scuba dive in unique colour-filled marine reserves, sail on exciting waters or meander tournament-class golf courses. If that's not your bag, immerse yourself in culture in the museums and galleries of New Zealand's main cities, Auckland, Christchurch and the capital Wellington.

New Zealand's time as an original, fully-fledged tourist haven has come. Long-haul flights are the fastest growing and most lucrative and the country's isolation, once a bane, is now a boon.