**An English Speaking Country - New Zealand**

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**Geography Location**

New Zealand stretches 1600 km from north to south it consists of two large islands around which are scattered a number of smaller islands, plus a few far-flung islands hundreds of km away. New Zealand's territorial jurisdiction extends to the islands of Chatham, Kermadec, Tokelau, Auckland, Antipodes, Snares, Solander and Bounty (most of them uninhabited) and to the Ross Dependency in Antarctica.

The North Island (115,000 sq km) and the South Island (151,000 sq km) are the two major land masses. Stewart Island, with an area of 1700 sq km, lies directly south of the South Island. The country is 10,400 km south-west of the USA, 1700 km south of Fiji and 2250 km east of Australia, its nearest large neighbor. Its western coastline faces the Tasman Sea, the part of the Pacific Ocean which separates New Zealand and Australia. With a total land mass of 268,000 sq km, altogether New Zealand's land area is greater than that of the UK (244,800 sq km), smaller than that of Japan (377,800 sq km), and just a little smaller than that of Colorado in the USA (270,000 sq km). With only 3,540,000 people, and almost 70% of those living in the five major cities, that leaves a lot of wide open spaces. The coastline, with many bays, harbors and fiords, is very Ion relative to the land mass of the country.

A notable feature of New Zealand's geography is the country's great number of rivers. There's a lot of rainfall In New Zealand and all that rain has to go somewhere. The Waikato River in the North Island is New Zealand's longest river, measuring in at 425 km. Also in the North Island, the Whanganui River is the country's longest navigable river, which has made it an important water-way from historic times down to the present. New Zealand also has a number of beautiful lakes; Lake Taupo is the largest and lakes Waikaremoana and Wanaka are two of the most beautiful.

**Flora and Fauna**

As is the case for most Pacific islands, New Zealand's native flora & fauna are, for the most part, not found anywhere else in the world. And, like other Pacific islands, NZ's native ecosystem has been dramatically affected and changed by plants and animals brought by settlers, mostly in the last 200 years. Wild pigs, goats, possums, wallabies, rabbits, dogs, cats and deer have all made their mark on the native' wildlife, and blackberries, gorse, broom and agricultural weeds have infested huge areas of land.

New Zealand is believed to be a fragment of the ancient southern continent of Gondwanaland which became detached over 100 million years ago allowing many ancient plants and animals to survive and evolve in isolation. As a result, most of the NZ flora & fauna is indigenous/endemic. It has the worlds largest flightless parrot (kakapo), the only truly alpine parrot (kea), the oldest reptile (tuatara), some of the biggest earthworms, the smallest bats, so me of the oldest trees, and many of the rarest birds, insects, and plants in the world. The first Maoris brought some rats and the now extinct Maori dog (kuri) with them but the only indigenous mammals at that time were bats.

Much of New Zealand's unique flora & fauna has survived, but today over 150 native plants -10% of the total number of native species - and many native birds are threatened with extinction.

**Government and Politics**

The governmental structure of New Zealand is modeled on the British parliamentary system, elections being based on universal adult suffrage. The minimum voting age is 18 and candidates are elected by secret ballot. The maximum period between elections is three years, but the interval can be shorter for various reasons, and the government of the day can call an early election. Voting is not compulsory, although on average more than 80% of those eligible to vote do so.

The difference between the UK's Westminster system and the NZ model is that New Zealand has abolished the upper house and governs solely through the lower house. Known as the House of Representatives, it has 120 member's seats. The government runs on a party system. The party that wins a majority of seats in an election automatically becomes the government and its leader. The prime minister. The two main parties are the National (conservative) and Labor parties.

Like the UK, New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy. The traditional head of state, the reigning British king or queen, is represented by a resident governor-general, who is appointed for a five-year term. An independent judiciary makes up another tier of government.

The two-party system has traditionally made it difficult for other parties to gain much power. Nevertheless, in the 1993 election the Alliance party, composed of the Greens and other groups including Labor groups and former National Party MPs, gained 18% of the vote. Election results in

1993 were so close that the National Party was only voted in by a majority of one seat, ahead of the Labour Party, and the smaller Alliance and NZ First parties, which both had two seats.

After a referendum in 1993 to assess the public's ideas on a number of electoral reforms, New Zealanders voted overwhelmingly for proportional representation. The government has introduced the MMP (Mixed Member Proportional) electoral system, which is a limited form of proportional voting based on the German electoral system.

Under MMP, electors have two votes: an electorate vote and a party vote. Of the 120 parliamentary seats, 60 are general electorates, where the candidate who receives the most electorate votes in an electorate is voted in direct1y as the member of parliament. A further five MPs represent five Maori electorates, chosen by Maori voters using their electorate votes. The remaining 55 'list' seats are allocated according to the percentage of the party vote received from a list of candidates nominated by political parties. A party must have at least 5% of the party vote or win an electorate seat to get its allocation of proportional list seats

It remains to be seen how the new system will affect the existing political power base. The big winners from the changes are the largest minor parties, such as the Alliance, but small parties will still have difficulty gaining seats. The two main parties will continue to dominate parliament, but majority governments may become a thing of the past.

**Flag**

The New Zealand and Australian flags are very much alike. With the British flag in the top left-hand corner, the New Zealanders show the stars of the Southern Cross in red on a blue field.

**Population and People**

New Zealand's population of around 3,5 million is comprised of 78.3% New Zealand Pakeha, 13% New Zealand Maori and 5% Pacific Island Polynesian, while 1.3% are Chinese, 0.9% are Indian and 1.5% are 'Other'. Europeans are the only group declining, percentage-wise, while Maori, Polynesian, Chinese, Indian and 'Other' peoples are on the rise.

Many of the islands of the Pacific are currently experiencing a rapid population shift from remote and undeveloped islands to the 'big city' and Auckland is very much the big city of the South Pacific, with the greatest concentration of Polynesians on earth. It sometimes causes a great deal of argument, discussion and tension and much of it is not between the recent Pacific immigrants and the Pakeha population but between the islanders and the Maori, or among the various island groups themselves.

Asian migration is also increasing. As well as a sizeable Indian community, mostly from Fiji, New Zealand has been attracting migrants from East Asia, many of whom have migrated under New Zealand's recent immigration incentives to attract skilled people and especially finance to the country. Over the last 15 years or so the economic situation has led to a mass exodus to Australia and further a field, though improving economic conditions has seen a slowing of emigration.

With only about 12.6 people per sq km, New Zealand is lightly· populated by many countries' standards but it is much more densely populated than Australia with its stretches of empty country and 2.2 persons per sq km. The South Island once had a greater population than the North Island but now the South Island is the place to go for elbow room-the entire population of the South Island is barely more than that of Auckland. The nation's capital is Wellington but Auckland is the largest city. Altogether the population of the 15 largest 'urban areas' comes to nearly 70% of NZ's population-Auckland alone has 28% of the entire population. Despite its rural base, New Zealand is in fact very much an urban country.

**Religion**

The most common religion in New Zealand is Christianity. The 'big three' denominations are Anglican (Church of England) with 25% of the population, Presbyterian with 18% and Roman Catholic with 16%. Many other denominations also have followings, with Methodists, Baptists. Mormons, Brethren, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, Assemblies of God and Seventh Day Adventists all well represented, along with various other faiths including Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Baha'is. The Ratana and Ringatu faiths, also with significant followings, are Maori adaptations of Christianity.

There are also a significant number of people (16.7%) who have no religion.

**Education**

New Zealanders place a high value on education, and virtually the entire population is literate. By law, education is mandatory and free for all children between the ages of six and 15; in fact most children enter school by the age of five, and many also have attended preschools before that, all subsidized by the state. Correspondence school is available for children who live in remote places.

New Zealand has seven universities, a number of teachers' colleges and polytechnics and one agricultural college. A new and growing facet of education in New Zealand is that it is gaining a reputation, especially in Asian countries, as a good place to learn English. There are numerous language schools throughout New Zealand (but most are in Auckland) and student visas are available which permit foreign students to study in New Zealand for up to foul' years.

**Language**

New Zealand has two official languages: English and Maori. English is the language that you usually hear spoken. The Maori language, long on the decline, is now making a comeback. You can use English to speak to anyone in New Zealand, as Maori people speak English. There are some occasions, though, when knowing a little Maori would be very useful, such as if you visit a mare, where often only Maori is spoken. It's also useful to know since many places in New Zealand have Maori names.

**Holidays**

People from the northern hemisphere never seem to become completely familiar with upside-down seasons. To them Christmas simply doesn't fall in the middle of summer and how is it possible to have mid-winter cold in August?

**Public holiday's inc1ude:**

January

New Year's Day and the next day (1st and 2nd)

February

Waitangi Day or New Zealand Day (6th)

March or April

Good Friday Easter Monday

April

Anzac Day (25th)

June

Queen's Birthday (1st Monday)

October

Labor Day (4th Monday)

December

Christmas Day and Boxing Day (25th & 26th)

Newspapers and Magazines

There is no national paper although the New Zealand Herald (Auckland), the Dominion (Wellington) and the Press (Christchurch) all have wide circulations. Backing up the city newspapers are numerous local dailies, same OK, some not. The closest to a national weekly news magazine is the Listener, an excellent publication which provides a weekly TV & radio guide, plus in-depth articles on the arts, social issues and politics. The international publications such as Time and Newsweek are available almost anywhere.

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Radio and TV

There are two national noncommercial radio stations and many regional 01' local commercial stations, broadcasting on the AM and FM banes.

There are three commercial TV stations (Channels One, Two & Three) plus Sky, a subscriber television service with news, sports, and movie and documentary channels.

Arts

New Zealand has a multi-faceted arts scene with both Maori and Pakeha engaged in all kinds of traditional and modern arts. Although there are distinct 'Maori arts' and 'Pakeha .arts', in fact there is rarely a division in who practices which arts. There are Pakeha people who enjoy carving In bone and painting in traditionally Maori styles; Maori songs, poi dances, and a little bit of Maori language are taught In schools and all New Zealand children, regardless of background, learn them. Likewise, there are many Maori people who excel in the traditionally Pakeha arts - there are Maori in theatre, music and many European art forms. Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, a Maori, is one of the world's best known operatic divas, and there are many other examples.

New Zealand literature, especially, is an arena in which the Maori are making a strong mark - though the written word was not traditionally apart of Maori culture NZ is experiencing a movement of dynamic Maori writing in fiction, non-fiction, poetry and every other written form.

Maori Arts

Maori arts are dramatic in many ways, and they include various arts that people of European backgrounds might not be familiar with.

Traditionally the Maori did not keep a written history; their history was kept in long, very specific and stylized songs and chants. As in many parts of the world where oral history has been practiced, oratory, song and chant developed to a magnificent art in Maori culture. The many rituals associated with Maori protocol are also quite stylized- if you ever visit a mare and are greeted with the traditional haka (war chant) and wero (challenge), you will appreciate how artistic they are. The Maori arts of song and dance include so me special features such as the poi dance and action songs. Martial arts, using a variety of traditional weapons and movements, are highly stylized and developed

Other Maori arts inc1ude crafts such as wood, bone and jade carving, basketry and weaving, including a distinctive form of wall paneling known as tukutuku, which can be seen on mare and in Maori churches. Wood carvings, tukutuku wall panels and distinctive styles of painting (especially on the rafters and ceilings) can be seen in most Maori meeting houses. These traditional Maori arts are not used only on the mare, though - wood and bone carving, painting, basketry and various other arts are being used in both traditional and new ways, creating some vibrant artistic works.

**Literature**

New Zealand has an active literary scene, with a number of modem authors and a few old c1assics. Probably the most internationally known New Zealand writer is still Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923), who was born and raised in New Zealand and later moved to England, where she spent most of her short adult life and did most of her writing.

Frank Sargeson (1903-82) is another c1assic New Zealand author. Within the country he is probably as well known as Mansfield, especially for his three-volume autobiography, his novels and many short stories, but since he lived all his life in New Zealand, his work did not become as widely known internationally.

Maurice Shadbolt is the author of several fine historical novels a bout New Zealand - so far he' s published nine novels, foul' collections of short stories and several nonfiction books. His best known novel is probably The Season of the Jew, which won the NZ Wattie Book of the Year Award in 1987 and was chosen by the NY Times as one of the best books of that year. This book follows a dispossessed band of Maori who identify with the Jews of ancient Israel.

Janet Frame is another popular novelist, poet and short story writer. Her three-volume autobiography (To the 1sland, An Angel at my Table and Envoy from Mirror City) was made famous by the film An Angel at my Table by acc1aimed local director, Jane Campion. Janet Frame: An Autobiography is a fascinating insight to her life, and her many works are widely available.

Shonagh Koea is another popular author; her better-known works include The Woman Who Never Went Home (1987), The Grandiflora Tree (1989), Staying Home and Being Rotten (1992) and Fifteen Rubies by Candlelight (1993).

Other favorite New Zealand authors include Maurice Gee, whose novel Going West won the NZ Wattie Book Award in 1993; Fiona Kidman (The Book of Secrets); Owen Marshall (Tomorrow We Save the Orphans); Philip Temple (Beak of the Moon); and Dame Ngaio Marsh (murder mysteries).

**Cinema**

The history of New Zealand film doesn't really begin until the late 1970s when generous tax breaks were introduced to encourage local production. From some early stumbling attempts, notable feature films have survived the test of time and launched the careers of New Zealand directors and actors.

Sleeping Dogs (1977) is an accomplished psychological drama that was at the forefront of the new film industry, and which launched the careers of actor Sam Neill and director Roger Donaldson.

New Zealand films moved into art-house cinemas with Vincent Ward's Vigil (1984), a blooding film about a girl's coming of age in the rain-drenched back blocks of New Zealand. It proved too ponderously artistic for many Kiwi film-goers but wowed them at Cannes. Ward's follow-up The Navigator (1988) is a strange modern medieval hunt for the Holy Grail.

New Zealand's best known director, though Australian based and trained, is Jane Campion. Her greatest films explore New Zealand themes. An Angel at My Table (1990), based on Kiwi writer Janet Frame's autobiography, shows all the fine character development typical of her films Campion's masterpiece, The Piano (1993), about the trials of a mute woman in New Zealand's pioneer days, received Cannes and Academy A ward success. Suddenly the world noticed New Zealand's already accomplished movie Indus try. Once Were Warriors (1994), a brutal tale of modern. Urban Maori life, stunned movie-goers around the world. Heavenly Creatures, directed by Peter Jackson, also achieved critical acclaim. It is based on a famous case of matricide in the 1950s committed by two schoolgirls.

**Summary**

New Zealand stretches 1600 km from north to south it consists of two large islands around which are scattered a number of smaller islands, plus a few far-flung islands hundreds of km away. The North Island (115,000 sq km) and the South Island (151,000 sq km) are the two major land masses. A notable feature of New Zealand's geography is the country's great number of rivers. The Waikato River in the North Island is New Zealand's longest river, measuring in at 425 km. New Zealand also has a number of beautiful lakes; Lake Taupo is the largest and lakes Waikaremoana and Wanaka are two of the most beautiful. As is the case for most Pacific islands, New Zealand's native flora & fauna are, for the most part, not found anywhere else in the world. And, like other Pacific islands, NZ's native ecosystem has been dramatically affected and changed by plants and animals brought by settlers, mostly in the last 200 years.

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**Glossary**

Articles статьи

Bay залив

Blackberries ежевика

Careers карьера

Channels каналы

Christianity христианство

Climate климат

Coastline береговая линия

Concentration концентрация

Conditions условия

Ecosystem экосистема

Elections выборы

Exodus массовое бегство

Fauna фауна

Film industry кинопроизводство

Film-goers кинолюбители

Flora флора

Geology геология

Gorse утесник обыкновенный

Harbor гавань

Immigrant's иммигранты

Islander's островитяне

Isolation изоляция

Land masses континентальный массив

Literate грамотный

Mammal's млекопитающие

Martial arts военные искусства

Masterpiece шедевр

Muslims мусульмане

Navigable судоходная

Noncommercial некоммерческий

Non-fiction научная литература

Novels романы

Paper бумага

Poetry поэзия

Polytechnics политехникум

Population население

Possum опоссум

Production производство

Referendum референдум

Reputation репутация

Rural сельский

Settler поселенец

Subsidized субсидирования

Suffrage избирательное право

Tale рассказ

Tax breaks налоговые льготы

Territorial территория

Voting age возрастной ценз

Wallaby's кенгуру-валаби

**Список литературы**

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2. Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture Pearson Educated Limited, 1998.