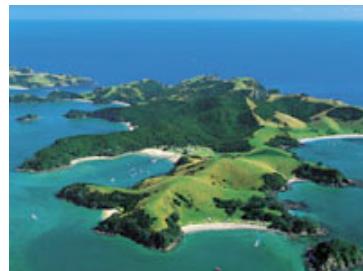




New Zealand



New Zealand, 'Land of the Long White Cloud', is a small, sparsely populated country consisting of two major islands, North and South Island, and a scattering of smaller ones. Despite its small size it is crammed with magnificent natural beauty and has an incredible amount to offer; the only complaint travellers have is that they haven't allowed enough time in the country. Fresh air, breathtaking scenery and outdoor activities are the main attractions of New Zealand, with a tremendously friendly, honest and helpful population, colloquially nicknamed after their country's distinct symbol, the unusual but amiable flightless kiwi bird.



Urupukapuka Island, Bay of Islands, North Island © New Zealand Tourist Board

The two islands have surprisingly different characters. The North Island has dramatic volcanic landscapes and highly active thermal areas, long stretches of beautiful beaches and excellent sailing, ancient indigenous forests and a strong Maori cultural influence. The South Island has a slower pace of life dominated by a magnificent spine of mountains, the snow-covered Southern Alps, and the spectacular scenery of the southern waterways of the fjord lands, with glaciers, deep lakes and verdant forests.

The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 was New Zealand's founding document, an attempt to settle disputes between the European settlers and the Maoris, conceding the country to British rule while guaranteeing the Maori people possession of their land and cultural identity. Today, integration has been replaced by a policy of upholding two different cultures alongside each other. Their shared love of sport, most notably the revered national sport of rugby union, and their enthusiasm for adventure and the outdoors is the unifying factor among the whole population.

New Zealand offers a huge variety of action-packed and laid back activities, from bungee jumping to skiing, swimming with dolphins, scenic flights and boat cruises on the fjords, as well as several world famous walking trails with unrivalled scenery. Alternatively visitors can immerse themselves in culture at the museums and galleries of the country's main cities - Auckland and the capital Wellington in the North, and Christ Church in the south.

New Zealand is an easy and compact place in which to travel and its spectacularly dramatic landscape alone, famous for its setting for the 'The Lord of the Rings' film trilogy, makes the long trip to these southern islands more than worthwhile.

Basics

Time: Local time is GMT +12 (GMT +13 from the last Sunday in October to the last Sunday in March).

Electricity: Electrical current is 230 volts, 50Hz. Oblique flat blade plugs are standard.

Money: Local currency is the New Zealand Dollar (NZD), divided into 100 cents. Most businesses accept MasterCard and Visa, and while Diners Club and American Express are also widely accepted in the main tourist centres, they might have limited acceptance elsewhere. Travellers cheques and foreign currency can be exchanged at banks, bureaux de change and some hotels. ATMs can be found in all towns and cities.

Currency Exchange Rates				
NZ\$1.00	NZ\$5.00	NZ\$10.00	NZ\$100.00	NZ\$1,000.00
A\$ 0.82	A\$ 4.08	A\$ 8.15	A\$ 81.51	A\$ 815.13
C\$ 0.70	C\$ 3.49	C\$ 6.97	C\$ 69.70	C\$ 697.00
€ 0.45	€ 2.24	€ 4.47	€ 44.71	€ 447.06
NZ\$ 1.00	NZ\$ 5.00	NZ\$ 10.00	NZ\$ 100.00	NZ\$ 1,000.00
R 5.07	R 25.37	R 50.73	R 507.30	R 5,073.03
£ 0.39	£ 1.95	£ 3.90	£ 39.01	£ 390.15
US\$ 0.62	US\$ 3.11	US\$ 6.22	US\$ 62.20	US\$ 622.05

Note: These rates are not updated daily and should be used as a guideline only.

Language: The official languages are English and Maori.

Entry requirements for Americans: United States citizens must have a valid passport. No visa is required for a stay of up to three months.

Entry requirements for UK nationals: British citizens holding a passport endorsed British Citizen, or a passport accompanied by documents that establish right of abode in the UK, do not require a visa for a stay of up to six months. British citizens with passports endorsed British National (Overseas) may stay for up to three months without a visa. In all other cases, a visa is required.

Entry requirements for Canadians: Canadian citizens must have a valid passport. No visa is required for stays of up to three months.

Entry requirements for Australians: Australian nationals must have a passport valid on arrival for travel to New Zealand. No visa is required.

Entry requirements for South Africans: South Africans must have a valid passport. No visa is required for a

stay of up to three months.

Entry requirements for Irish nationals: Irish nationals require a valid passport, but no visa is necessary for a stay of up to three months.

Passport/Visa Note: Visitors must be in possession of a return ticket, documents for onward travel and proof of sufficient funds. Visitors must hold per month of stay NZ\$400, if holding evidence of pre-paid accommodation. In other cases, visitors must hold NZ\$1,000 per month of stay. Passports must be valid for at least three months beyond period of stay, or for one month if country of origin has consular representation in New Zealand.

Health: There are no health risks associated with travel to New Zealand. New Zealand's accident compensation scheme (ACC) covers emergency treatment for visitors, but health insurance is recommended to cover any additional charges and for those not entitled to free emergency treatment. Those intending to participate in adventure activities, such as bungee jumping, white water rafting, etc should ensure that their travel insurance covers these types of activities.

Tipping: Gratuities are not expected and service charges are not applied to bills, but it is acceptable to tip at your discretion.

Climate: The weather in New Zealand is changeable throughout the year. The North Island has mild winters and warm and humid summers, the South Island has lower temperatures with cold winters and extensive snowfields and glaciers. Snow falls on all the mountains in winter. The west coast receives the most rain. Summer months are from November to April.

Safety: New Zealand has a reputation as one of the safest destinations in the world, however sensible precautions against petty theft are still advised.

Customs: Quarantine procedures mean that strict bio-security regulations are in place at immigration points into the country. It is illegal to import most foodstuffs, and care should be taken when importing wood products, golf clubs and shoes (which may have soil and dirt attached), and items made from animal skin. The immigration arrivals card has full details.

Business: Business in New Zealand is usually conducted formally and conservatively. Standard business etiquette applies; punctuality is important, business attire is formal (for men and women suits are appropriate), meetings begin and end with a handshake and business cards are exchanged. Business hours are usually 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Communications: The international access code for New Zealand is +64. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0061 for Australia). City/area codes are in use, e.g. (0)9 for Auckland and (0)4 for the Wellington region. Vodafone offers GSM 900 coverage in and around the main cities and popular holiday areas. Internet cafes are widely available.

Duty Free: Travellers to New Zealand over 17 years do not have to pay duty on 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g tobacco, or a proportionate mix of these; 1.125 litres or 1 litre spirits or liqueurs, and 4.5 litres wine, port or sherry, or 4.5 litres beer. Goods exceeding the allowances must be declared. Personal effects not dutiable include items such as jewellery, binoculars, portable radios, prams, camping equipment, cameras and video cameras. Prohibited items include concealed firearms, foodstuffs, animals, plants and plant products. It is forbidden to export Greenstone, Maori antiquities and Paua shells (unless they are products manufactured from such shells).

AUCKLAND

Auckland is situated on a narrow strip of land, flanked by two magnificent harbours to the east and west. The shallow Manukau Harbour opens out to the Tasman Sea to the west, while the Waitemata Harbour lies at the heart of the city centre and is Auckland's deepwater port. It has a vibrant waterfront that has flourished with the successful hosting of the 2002/2003 America's Cup, the international yachting event of the year, and the trendy restaurants and waterside cafes are a constant hive of activity.

Known as the 'City of Sails', with a larger boat-to-person ratio than anywhere else on earth, it is a paradise for sailing enthusiasts and every weekend the waters of the Hauraki Gulf come alive with a flotilla of colourful sails. The best way to experience the city is from the water, sailing around the attractive harbour or on a ferry cruise to one of the many stunning islands dotted about the Gulf.



Auckland harbour © New Zealand Tourist Board

Auckland is the largest and most cosmopolitan city in New Zealand and a major gateway to the rest of the country. Yet it is also one of the least densely populated in the world, covering an area twice the size of London but with barely a million inhabitants. It has a friendly small-town atmosphere and a relaxed pace of life.

Beyond the bustling downtown area, dominated by the southern hemisphere's tallest building, the Sky Tower, the city sprawls outwards, with low-slung buildings and wooden houses among leafy parks and walking tracks. The suburbs wind their way around picturesque bays and harbours and between volcanic hills that provide panoramic views over the city and mountains, encompassing numerous green urban parklands that are dotted with sheep.

Attractions

Auckland Museum

Situated on The Domain, an extensive central city parkland on one of Auckland's extinct volcanic hills, the Auckland Museum overlooks the city and the attractive Waitemata Harbour. It is one of the most visited attractions in the city, housing a remarkable collection of Maori and Pacific Island artefacts and cultural displays. Originally

built as a World War I Memorial in 1929, the building was dedicated to the memory of New Zealand victims in both World War I and II. The 'New Zealand at War' exhibition has since been joined by extensive displays about the people and the country, its cultures, art and natural history. There is a Children's Discovery Centre on the middle floor. For many, a highlight of a visit to the museum, is the three times daily Maori cultural performance of song and dance, providing an entertaining insight into Maori mythology and history.

Address: Domain Drive, The Domain, Parnell; **Telephone:** (0)9 309 0443 or (0)9 306 7067; **Website:** www.aucklandmuseum.com; **Transport:** City tour buses, the Link bus and public services 645 and 655 stop on Parnell Road, five minutes walk away; **Opening time:** Daily from 10am to 5pm. Closed on 25 December and 25 April; **Admission:** A NZ\$5 donation is suggested (adults). The Maori performance requires an admission of NZ\$15 (concessions available) and this includes the museum donation

Hauraki Gulf Islands

The Hauraki Gulf is studded with numerous islands such as Rangitoto, Waiheke and Great Barrier Island and those close to the mainland make a good day trip. Some are recreation retreats, and others are conservation islands with restricted access, reserves for the protection of rare bird, animal and plant life. Waiheke is the most popular of the gulf islands, with picturesque bays and white sandy beaches, rolling farmlands and hills cloaked with vineyards and fine wineries. The town enjoys the slow and relaxed pace of island life, along with chic little restaurants and cafes, and is home to many art galleries and craft shops. The nearest island to the city is the uninhabited Rangitoto, a large volcanic cone with an unusual landscape of black distorted lava shapes that governs the view over the harbour. It is possible to hike up to the crater rim and explore the lava caves on the slopes. Each island has a different character with different things to do, whether it is to explore natural geological features or to enjoy the isolation, relax on white beaches or wander about the galleries and cafes. Some visitors prefer simply to sail around the islands on a yacht or ferry cruise and enjoy the scenery from on board.

Website: www.gotothegulf.com; **Transport:** Frequent ferries leave from the wharves around the Ferry Building

Sky Tower

The Sky Tower, at 1,076ft (328m), is the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere and has unforgettable views over the city, the harbour and the gulf islands. It is part of the Sky City Entertainment Complex, with a casino, theatre, hotel and conference centre. Visitors to the tower can splash out on dinner in the revolving restaurant, or admire the view from one of the four circular observation decks, reached by a glass lift. There is an outdoor deck, glass floor panels, an audio visual guide and touch computer screens providing geographical information. The Sky Deck is the highest viewing level with spectacular 360-degree views.

Address: Sky City Complex, Victoria and Federal Streets; **Telephone:** (0)9 363 6000; **Website:** www.skycity.co.nz; **Opening time:** Daily from 8.30am to 11pm (12pm on weekends); **Admission:** NZ\$25 (adults), NZ\$8 (children). To climb to the Sky Deck level is an extra NZ\$3. Other concessions are available

Bay of Islands

The Bay of Islands is famous for its beautiful coastal scenery and it is one of North Island's major attractions. The bay is interspersed with numerous little coves and inlets and sandy beaches, and the historical townships of Paihia, Waitangi and Russell are the central hubs of the area, from where an unbelievable array of activities and tours can be arranged. Sailing and boat cruises around the islands are the main attraction, but the natural surroundings and warm waters of the bay make it an ideal place for kayaking, swimming, diving and fishing. The bay is also of historical significance as the place where the Treaty of Waitangi was first signed between the European settlers and Maori chiefs in 1840.

Website: www.bay-of-islands.co.nz

WELLINGTON

The capital city of New Zealand, Wellington is located at the southern tip of the North Island. It is situated on a splendid harbour and hemmed in by steep hills, creating a compact inner city centre with a mix of historic and modern buildings. It is the second largest city in the country, the energetic centre for culture and arts, and is the entertainment, commercial and political capital of New Zealand, with an air of pronounced sophistication and vibrancy. Apart from its importance as the capital, it is the main departure point for the South Island.

Also called 'Windy Wellington', it lives up to its name especially in winter when the lashing winds from the Cook Strait whistle through the wind funnels created by the high-rise buildings of the central business district. The bustling, pretty waterfront area is a sheltered refuge with a graceful promenade, featuring shops, restaurants and various leisure activities. Brightly coloured sails scud across the harbour, the reliable wind providing excellent sailing and windsurfing opportunities. The ferry to the picturesque Days Bay, one of Wellington's best swimming beaches, affords excellent views of the city from the water. Dominating the waterfront is the Te Papa Museum, the pride and joy of the nation that embodies the quintessence of New Zealand and its people.

In the city centre the Parliamentary District is the architectural masterpiece of Wellington, including the Old Government Building, the second largest wooden building in the world; the unmistakable modernist Beehive, the executive offices of Parliament; Parliament House and the Victorian Gothic National Library.



Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington © NZ Tourism Board - Te Papa Museum

The cable car takes people up to the Botanic Gardens for vistas of the city centre and across the harbour to the Hutt Valley, one of the scenic locations used in the filming of 'Lord of the Rings'. Another film site is Mt Victoria, offering sweeping panoramic views of the city and its suburbs, the surrounding hills and bays, and the harbour.

Attractions

Te Papa Museum

Wellington's leading attraction and one of the world's largest national museums, Te Papa is a tribute to all that is New Zealand; its people and history, natural environment, arts and culture. Interactive technology and superb displays bring the story to life. Motion simulators allow visitors to witness the explosive creation of pre-historic New Zealand, or to experience a virtual reality bungee jump. There is also an interactive section on volcanoes and earthquakes where the effects of an earthquake can be felt from inside a house and a volcanic eruption viewed on screen. Other attractions include a range of magnificent exhibitions featuring some of the country's most important Maori treasures, a modern 'marae' or Maori meeting house, and an informative display on the Treaty of Waitangi, between the Maori chiefs and European settlers in 1840. The natural world is also explored, featuring all the natural inhabitants of the country.

Address: Cable Street, Waterfront; **Telephone:** (0)4 381 7000; **Website:** www.tepapa.govt.nz; **Transport:** Museum is within easy walking distance of railway station and bus district; **Opening time:** Daily from 10am to 6pm, Thursdays until 9pm; **Admission:** Free

Cable Car

One of the most popular tourist attractions, the cable car takes people to the lookout at Kelburn, where there is a beautiful view over the city and across the harbour. Visitors can either take a return journey or walk back down through the beautifully landscaped Botanic Gardens. At the top terminus there is the small Cable Car Museum explaining its history.

Address: Cable Car Lane, 280 Lambton Quay; **Telephone:** (0)4 472 2199; **Website:** www.WellingtonNZ.com/cablecar; **Opening time:** Monday to Friday from 7am to 10pm, Saturday 8.30am to 10pm, Sunday and Public Holidays from 9am to 10pm; **Admission:** NZ\$2.50, or NZ\$4.50 return (adults), NZ\$1 or NZ\$2 return (children). Other concessions available.

CHRISTCHURCH

The largest city on South Island, Christchurch is the most English of New Zealand's cities, named after an Oxford college. The atmosphere is reminiscent of an English university town, with school boys in striped blazers and punting on the River Avon, a grand Anglican cathedral dominating the central square, little stone-walled bridges, elegant Victorian architecture and numerous parks and exquisite gardens.

Dubbed the 'Garden City', it is the lively capital of the Canterbury region, priding itself on its green areas, arts and history as well as its sports. The surrounds offer beach suburbs, protected bays and dolphin swimming, green valleys and snow-capped mountain ranges for skiing, hiking, mountain biking and climbing. The city itself has a relaxed and cosmopolitan centre with historic trams rattling along the streets of the bustling downtown area, a lively pub and restaurant scene, theatres, street buskers, museums and art galleries.

Christchurch is the gateway to the South Island and offers the visitor an appealing mixture of historic charm and vibrant city life, a pleasing balance between urban pursuits and outdoor activities. With the least rainfall of any of the other cities and plenty of sunshine it is a perfect base for a Canterbury experience.



Tram, Christchurch © New Zealand Tourist Board

Attractions

Cathedral Square

Cathedral Square is the hub of the city centre and is dominated by the city's landmark, Christchurch Cathedral, a grand Gothic structure with a tall spire, and a cool and spacious interior with marvellous acoustics. It is possible to climb the narrow staircase to the bell tower for a splendid panoramic view of the city. In front of the cathedral, the city's most quirky character, fondly known as 'The Wizard', performs his daily eccentric routine for the crowd from atop a ladder, ranting about all things from politics and politicians to religion, love and bureaucracy. Nearby the giant chessboard painted on the square attracts avid players and spectators, with enormous pieces to be shifted during strategic moves, as challengers pit their skills against one another.

Telephone: (0)3 366 0046; **Website:** www.christchurchcathedral.co.nz; **Transport:** The cathedral is accessible on foot as it is situated in the heart of the CBD; **Opening time:** Monday to Saturday, 9am to 5pm and Sunday from 7.30am to 5pm ; **Admission:** Free admission to the cathedral, tower NZ\$4

Christchurch Tramway

Trams were part of the city's transport system until 1954 and today these heritage trams have been beautifully restored, offering visitors a unique experience that takes one on a two-mile (3km) loop of many of the city's best

features and main attractions. The drivers, who offer insight on the history, architecture, activities and points of interest, supply informative and entertaining commentary. Visitors can hop on and off at any of the stops to further explore the attractions at leisure. The most interesting sights include Cathedral Square, the Aquarium of Discovery, punting on the Avon River, the exquisite Botanic Gardens on the banks of the river, New Regent Street with its pretty Spanish mission-style architecture, the magnificent Gothic buildings of the Arts Centre, and Canterbury Museum, with an excellent Antarctic exhibition.

Telephone: (0)3 366 7830; **Website:** www.tram.co.nz; **Opening time:** Daily from 9am to 9pm (1 November to 31 March), 9am to 6pm (1 April to 31 October); **Admission:** NZ\$14 (adults), NZ\$4 (children) valid for two consecutive days

Christchurch Gondola

The spectacular ride takes visitors to the top of the crater rim of Christchurch's extinct volcano on the outskirts of the city, unfolding magnificent views of the city, over the Canterbury Plains and towards the Southern Alps, and the sweep of Pegasus Bay and Lyttelton Harbour, as it rises to 1,460ft (445m) above sea level. At the summit the Gondola Complex features the Time Tunnel Heritage Show with a walk-through exhibition and video relaying the history and geological evolution of the Canterbury region as well as Maori mythology. From the summit it is possible to walk back down through the Port Hills to Sumner Beach.

Address: Gondola Base Station, Heathcote Valley; **Telephone:** (0)3 384 0700; **Website:** www.gondola.co.nz;

Transport: Best Attractions bus that leaves from Cathedral Square to the base NZ\$6.50, return. City Bus 28 to Lyttelton, or bus 35 to Heathcote from the Colombo Street Bus Exchange, NZ\$2.50 for a 2 hour return ticket;

Opening time: Daily 10am to 9pm; **Admission:** NZ\$22 (adults), NZ\$10 (children 5-15 years)

Mt Cook National Park

Mt Cook National Park is known for its exquisite alpine beauty and is home to the highest mountain in New Zealand, Mt Cook. Its Maori name, 'Aoraki' means 'cloud piercer' and at 12,016ft (3,755m) it towers above the surrounding snow-covered peaks in the park. A third of the park is covered in permanent ice and snow and the mighty Tasman Glacier is the longest glacier outside of the polar regions. Glacial melt gives the lakes their beautiful milky, turquoise colour and there are many walks in the area to take in the dramatic beauty. Mt Cook has always been the focus of climbing and mountaineering, most notably the expeditions of Sir Edmund Hillary, who went on to be the first man to reach the summit of the world's highest mountain, Mt Everest.

Telephone: Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Visitor Centre: (0)3 435 1186; **Website:** www.mtcook.org.nz;

Transport: The Cook Connection offers daily return options to Mt Cook from a variety of different locations. There are other tour operators working within the park and its surrounds

Akaroa

The hilly Banks Peninsula is the result of two massive and violent volcanic eruptions, creating a sea-filled crater surrounded by green hills and a number of little bays that radiate out from the circular shape of land. The Maori name 'akaroa' means 'long harbour' and the little French influenced town of the same name is situated on the picturesque shores of the harbour, a long finger of water extending into the interior of the land. It is Canterbury's oldest village and its French character, due to the first European settlers, is evident in the street names, quaint historical architecture and French inspired cuisine. The pretty town is surrounded by attractive scenery; a volcanic landscape of fertile green hills scattered with woolly sheep and vineyards, and crisscrossed by walking trails and winding narrow roads. The calm waters of the harbour are perfect for water sports and boat cruises, with an opportunity to swim with dolphins.

Telephone: (0)3 304 8600; **Website:** www.akaroa.com; **Transport:** Akaroa French Connection and Akaroa Shuttle leave daily from Christchurch

QUEENSTOWN

With a reputation as the adventure sports capital of the world, Queenstown is New Zealand's premier tourist destination, offering visitors the chance to indulge in almost every adrenalin activity imaginable. But Queenstown has more to offer visitors than action packed activities.

Queenstown is a heavily commercialised, year round resort that is touristy, crowded and characterless, but with its magnificent scenery, set on the deep blue Lake Wakatipu and framed by the craggy Remarkables Range, it is appealing to adventurers and leisure seekers alike. The lake is the perfect setting for steamer cruises, there are many fine walking opportunities in the surrounding hills and valleys with breathtaking views, surrounding vineyards offer wine tasting, shopping at the town's many boutiques, and the nearby historic gold mining town of Arrowtown is a fascinating day's outing. Scenic flights take visitors on unforgettable excursions, such as those around the majestic peaks of Mt Aspiring and Mt Cook, or to Milford Sound.



Queenstown © Judith Duk

Queenstown's popularity is also due to the fact that it is a year round resort, a renowned alpine playground for skiers and snowboarders in winter and activities such as jet boating, bungee jumping, luging, white water rafting and paragliding in the summer months.

Attractions

Skyline Gondola

The gondola takes visitors to Bob's Peak, the hill above the town and has incredible views over Queenstown, the lake and of the Remarkables Range. At the top of the gondola is the Luge offering three-wheel cart rides for all different ages and abilities, or there are numerous walks on the mountain with beautiful views of the area. At the bottom terminal is the Kiwi and Birdlife Park featuring nocturnal kiwi houses and other endangered species of New Zealand.

Address: Brecon Street; **Telephone:** (03) 441 0101; **Website:** www.skyline.co.nz; **Transport:** Five minutes walk from the town centre; **Opening time:** The gondola is open daily from 9am until late; **Admission:** Gondola: NZ\$21 (adults), NZ\$10 (children). A gondola ticket including one/two/three luge rides is NZ\$28/34/36 for adults

Arrowtown

Arrowtown sits at the edge of the Otago Goldfields and was one of the country's biggest gold towns in its day. It still has reminders of the gold rush days with little miners' cottages along the tree lined streets, historic wooden buildings, and 19th century-style shops, preserved as they were during the gold rush. There are the interesting remains of a Chinese settlement, with interpretive signs, nestled along the banks of Bush Creek where gold was panned. The Chinese diggers often worked through the remains of previous miner's claims in search of undetected fine gold and were subjected to much prejudice by the other diggers. The Visitors Centre contains the excellent Lake District Museum that has a small display on local history and gold mining.

Website: www.arrowtown.org.nz; **Transport:** 20 minute drive from Queenstown

The Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers

Nowhere else in the world, outside the polar regions, can one see glaciers so close to the sea, extending more than eight miles (13km) from the highest peaks of precipitous mountains to the valley floor and surrounded by rainforest. The Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers are the two most famous glaciers, a small part of the Westland National Park, and the two small townships near to each are good bases from which to explore the area, although offering an expensive range of accommodation and cafes. They each have a good Visitors Centre with displays on the formation of the glaciers, the ice movement and the history of the region. The giant screen at Franz Josef shows the brilliant film on Glacier Country, 'Flowing West'. The glaciers are moving at an average rate of three feet (1m) a day, but the Frans Josef can move up to an incredible 16ft (5m) in one day. A wide range of companies offer guided trips to explore the spectacular ice formations, taking visitors beyond the looming terminal face of the glacier and up onto the mighty rivers of ice, through the carved passageways and channels. There are scenic flights among New Zealand's highest peaks and over the glaciers with snow landings, a great way to appreciate the magnitude and splendour of the area and guided heli-hike excursions, a chance to combine a flight with ice walking.

Website: www.glaciercountry.co.nz; **Transport:** Eight-hour bus journey from Queenstown

Lake Wanaka

Voted as one of the world's top 10 most romantic destinations, Lake Wanaka is a picture-perfect alpine lake located in the Otago region of the South Island. It is New Zealand's fourth-largest lake and certainly one of its most beautiful. The lake is popular for boating, fishing and swimming and the temperate climate ensures that this is a year-round destination.

Transport: Daily coach services link Wanaka with Dunedin, Christchurch, Invercargill, the West Coast and neighbouring Queenstown.

Airports

Auckland International Airport (AKL)

Location: The airport is situated 14 miles (22km) south of Auckland.

Time: Local time is GMT +12 (GMT +13 from the last Sunday in October to the last Sunday in March).

Contacts: Tel: +64 (0)9 275 0789 or 0800 247 767 (NZ only).

Transfer between terminals: A free bus runs between the International Terminal and the Air New Zealand and Qantas NZ Domestic Terminals from 6am until 10.30pm.

Getting to the city: An Airbus bus service leaves regularly (every 20 minutes during the day and every 30 minutes at night) for the city centre and costs NZ\$15 for a single ticket. Shuttle buses also offer economical transportation between the airport and city or suburbs on a 'shared ride' basis. Maxx also offers public transport to and from the city and surrounding areas. Visit their website www.maxx.co.nz for details Taxis are also available; the airport to city fare is about NZ\$50 to NZ\$65.

Car rental: There are numerous car rental companies including Avis, Budget, Hertz and **Ezy Rentals**.

Facilities: Facilities at the airport include left luggage, business facilities, a medical centre, banks and ATMs, bars, restaurants and shops, a crèche, a post office, a hairdresser, supermarket, Internet kiosks, tourist information and hotel reservations desks. Disabled facilities are good, but those with special needs should inform their airline or travel agent in advance.

Parking: There is short and long-term parking available, both covered and uncovered.

Departure Tax: None.

Website: www.auckland-airport.co.nz

Christchurch International Airport (CHC)

Location: The airport is situated eight miles (12km) from Christchurch.

Time: Local time is GMT +12 (GMT +13 from the last Sunday in October to the last Sunday in March).

Contacts: Tel: +64 (0)3 358 5029.

Getting to the city: The Airport Flyer offers a public bus service to and from the city centre. It costs NZ\$7 and is a 30 minute journey. There is also a door to door shuttle bus that travels to all areas within Christchurch and costs NZ\$15-20. Taxis go to the city centre for NZ\$30.

Car rental: Car rental companies include Avis, Budget, Hertz, Maui rentals and Thrifty.

Facilities: There are shops, bars and restaurants, banks, ATMs and bureaux de change at the airport. Other facilities include left luggage, mobile and sim rental, showers, a business centre, a post office, and a hotel reservations desk. Disabled facilities are good, those with special needs should inform their travel agent or airline in advance.

Parking: Short and long-term car parking is available.

Departure Tax: Airport tax is NZ\$25, except for children 11 years of age and under and transit passengers of up to six hours.

Website: www.christchurch-airport.co.nz

Wellington International Airport (WLG)

Location: The airport is situated five miles (8km) east of Wellington.

Time: Local time is GMT +12 (GMT +13 from the last Sunday in October to the last Sunday in March).

Contacts: Tel: +64 (0)4 385 5100 (24 hours).

Getting to the city: The Stagecoach Flyer bus will cost around NZ\$3.50 and NZ\$10 for an adult fare, depending on where you are going. Shuttle services and taxis all go to the city centre for around NZ\$15 and NZ\$30 respectively.

Car rental: Car rental companies include Avis, Budget, Hertz, Europcar and Thrifty.

Facilities: Facilities at the airport include left luggage, bureaux de change, ATMs, bars, shops and restaurants, a parent's room, post office and a tourist information and hotel reservations desk. Disabled facilities are good, those with special needs are advised to inform their airline or travel agent in advance.

Parking: Long and short-term parking is available.

Departure Tax: Airport tax is NZ\$25 (adults) and NZ\$10 (children).

Website: www.wellington-airport.co.nz

New Zealand Climate and Weather

The weather in New Zealand is changeable throughout the year. The North Island has mild winters and warm and humid summers, the South Island has lower temperatures with cold winters and extensive snowfields and glaciers. Snow falls on all the mountains in winter. The west coast receives the most rain. Summer months are from November to April.

The climate of Auckland is generally warm and wet, bordering on sub-tropical. Summers are warm to hot with high humidity, winters mild and damp. The city experiences plenty of rain throughout the year, but predominantly in winter. The weather can be suddenly changeable with tropical cyclones and cold fronts causing occasional extreme conditions like hailstorms.

Wellington's climate is mild, with plenty of wind. Summers are mild and sunny and winters are wet and mild. The average temperature in January and February (the two hottest months) is 61°F (16°C) and in July, the coldest month, the average temperature is 47°F (8°C).

Christchurch has a fairly dry temperate climate, with warm to hot summers and mild winters. Summer temperatures range from mild to extremely hot, often moderated by sea breezes blowing in from the northeast. Northwesterly winds, however, are not so kind; hot air blows in with increasing strength and has been known to reach storm force, wreaking havoc on occasion. Winters bring clear, cold days, with temperatures often dropping below freezing level at night, with frost. Snow is a rarity in the city, but falls occasionally in the suburban hills. An unpleasant feature of Christchurch winters is the prevalence of smog, caused by an inversion layer that forms above the city. Rainfalls can be expected any time of year, but are more likely in winter.

Tourism

Tourism New Zealand, Wellington: +64 (0)4 917 5400 or www.newzealand.com/travel

New Zealand Embassies

New Zealand Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 328 4800.

New Zealand High Commission, London, United Kingdom (also responsible for Ireland): +44 (0)20 7930 8422.

New Zealand High Commission, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 238 5991.

New Zealand High Commission, Canberra, Australia: +61 (0)2 6270 4211.

New Zealand High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 342 8656.

Foreign Embassies in New Zealand

United States Embassy, Wellington: +64 (0)4 462 6000.

British High Commission, Wellington: +64 (0)4 924 2888.

Canadian High Commission, Wellington: +64 (0)4 473 9577.

Australian High Commission, Wellington: +64 (0)4 473 6411.

Honorary Consulate of New Zealand, Wellington: +64 (0)4 234 8006.

Honorary Consul General of Ireland, Auckland: +64 (0)9 977 2252.

New Zealand Emergency Numbers

Emergencies: 111

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