

General

New Zealand is an island country in the south-west Pacific. The capital is Wellington; the largest city and leading port is Auckland.

New Zealand is an independent nation and a member of the British Commonwealth. Comparable in size (270,500 sq km) and/or shape to Great Britain, Japan or Colorado in the United States, New Zealand has a diverse multicultural population of four million people, making it one of the world's least crowded countries. The majority of New Zealanders are of British descent. New Zealand's indigenous Māori, a Polynesian people, make up around 15% of the population.

Climate

A temperate climate with relatively small seasonal variation makes New Zealand an ideal year-round holiday destination. The north is subtropical and the south temperate. The seasons are opposite to those in the Northern Hemisphere. The warmest months are December, January and February, and the coldest are June, July and August. In summer, the average maximum temperature ranges between 20°C and 30°C; in winter, between 10°C and 15°C. Extremes of temperature are unusual.

Physical

New Zealand comprises the North and South Islands (the two main islands), and a host of smaller islands including Waiheke, Stewart and the Chatham Islands. Tokelau and Ross are dependencies. Extensive areas of New Zealand have been set aside as national parks, including Fiordland, Aoraki/Mt Cook and Tongariro.

Protected offshore islands and oceanic reserves ensure New Zealand's unique plants and wildlife are preserved. New Zealand's wildlife includes the flightless kiwi bird, after which both the people and the fruit are named. There are also species of parrot, and frogs and reptiles. New Zealand has no native land mammals other than bats. There are no snakes.

The North Island has New Zealand's largest lake, Taupo (606 sq km), longest river, Waikato (425 km), and most of the country's active volcanoes – Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro – all of them usually quiet. Hot springs, geysers and mudpools also form part of the volcanic system centred around Rotorua.

In the South Island, one of the most striking physical features is the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana. These, along with fiords, glaciers and lakes, and the coastal plains of Canterbury and Southland, add to the variety of the South Island's scenery. New Zealand's deepest lake (Hauroko, 462 m) and deepest cave (Nettlebed, 889 m) are also located in the South Island.

Culture

More than 85% of the population lives in urban areas and nearly 72% in the 16 largest. In addition to Wellington and Auckland, New Zealand's major urban centres are Christchurch, Hamilton, Napier-Hastings and Dunedin. There are universities in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Palmerston North, Christchurch and Dunedin.

English is the everyday language of New Zealand. Both English and Māori are official languages. New Zealand's largest religious denominations are Anglican, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian.

Sport is a major part of New Zealand life and most children participate in organised sport from primary school age onwards. Sports coverage takes up about 10% of a normal daily newspaper (excluding job vacancies).



History

New Zealand has been inhabited by Māori since about AD 1000. Dutch navigator Abel Tasman mapped part of the coast during his voyage of 1642–43 and named the country after Zeeland in Holland. New Zealand was charted by Capt. James Cook on his three voyages (1769–78). Between 1792 and 1840, sealing, whaling and trading led to organised European settlement.

In 1840 the first settlement was made at Wellington by a group sent by the New Zealand Company, founded by Edward Gibbon Wakefield. In that year the Treaty of Waitangi guaranteed to Māori the full possession of their land in exchange for their recognition of British sovereignty. But as European settlement increased, Māori opposition to land settlement resulted in conflict which lasted from 1860 to 1872.

Originally governed from New South Wales (Australia), New Zealand became a separate colony in 1840 and received a large measure of self-government in 1852. In 1907 it assumed complete self-government as the Dominion of New Zealand but, preferring that Great Britain handle most of its foreign affairs, did not confirm the Statute of Westminster (1931) until 1947.

New Zealand is ruled by an elected single-house legislature presided over by a Speaker, with legislative power led by a Prime Minister. Queen Elizabeth II of Britain (succeeded 1953) is also New Zealand's sovereign and the New Zealand Government is referred to (in the formal sense) as 'the Crown'. Queen Elizabeth's representative in New Zealand is titled Governor-General.

New Zealand's own foreign affairs have been marked by participation in multilateral interventions and peacekeeping, particularly as part of United Nations forces.

The country has been a leader in progressive social legislation. An old age pension law was enacted in 1898. Further social security legislation, mainly enacted in the 1930s and 40s, provided for subsidised education and health care. New Zealand was the first country to grant women the right to vote (1893). New Zealand has a general election every three years. The Labour Party, led by Helen Clark, is in its third term as a minority government.

Population

1995	3,673,400
2005 (provisional)	4,098,300
2015 (projected)	4,418,600

Resident population at 30 June 2005 (provisional)

Main urban area

Auckland	1,241,600
Hamilton	185,000
Napier-Hastings	119,600
Wellington	370,000
Christchurch	367,700
Dunedin	114,700
Remaining main urban areas	558,000
Total, 16 main urban areas	2,956,700
Remaining areas	1,141,600
Total resident population	4,098,300



Demography

Components of population change 2001–2005

Natural increase	+ 142,000
Live births	+ 281,000
Deaths	– 139,000
Net migration	+ 97,000
Arrivals	+ 423,000
Departures	– 326,000



Households

New Zealand has about 1.4 million private households. While 37% are families with children, 25% are couple-only households and 23% are single-person households. New Zealand's median age has slowly increased and single-person households have become more common.

Distribution of private household composition

	2001	Percent	1996
Single-family households			
Couple	25.1		25.0
Couple with children	27.3		30.6
Single parent with children	9.6		9.3
Other	7.1		6.4
One-person households	23.4		20.7
Other, such as multi-family households	7.5		8.0
	100.0		100.0

Household spending

Distribution of spending, excluding property purchase and sale

	2004	Percent	2001
Household budget area			
Food	16		16
Housing	24		24
Clothing and footwear	3		3
Running and equipping the home	13		13
Transport and travel	16		16
Other goods	11		11
Other services	16		17
	100		100

Tourism

New Zealand lies around 1,600 km from Australia's eastern coast (a three and a half hour flight) and 9,000 to 12,000 km from all Pacific Rim destinations (10 to 16 hours' flight). Auckland has the busiest of the several airports servicing international travellers. Peak travel months are December to February.

Short-term visitor arrivals and New Zealand resident short-term departures

	2000	(million)	2005
Arrivals	1.7		2.4
Departures	1.2		1.8

Education

Formal education normally begins at age five, though many children enjoy subsidised pre-school education. The schooling system is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.

Formal enrolments

Sector	2004	1999
Primary	488,071	481,183
Secondary	276,583	246,213
Tertiary	368,006	253,800



Justice

New Zealand has an independent judiciary headed by the five-member Supreme Court. There are about 270 judges in New Zealand. Commercial law is increasingly compatible with Australian law.

Case convictions per 1,000 population aged 17+

2005	2000
35.1	32.9

Economy

New Zealand has a mixed economy that operates on free market principles. It has sizeable industry and service sectors complementing a highly efficient primary sector. The primary sector directly contributes 8% to GDP, more than double the OECD norm.

Businesses

New Zealand businesses are typically small: 96% employ fewer than 20 people.

	Number of businesses		Total employees	
	2005	2000	2005	2000
Number of employees				
0	211,171	172,647	0	0
1 to 5	78,149	65,974	184,500	154,090
6 to 9	17,821	14,417	128,940	104,260
10 to 19	14,858	11,546	199,400	154,110
20 to 49	8,152	6,821	241,220	204,660
50 to 99	2,329	1,933	160,740	132,410
100+	1,860	1,579	813,200	669,930
Total	334,340	274,917	1,728,000	1,419,460

Retail sales

	Year ending June	
	2005	2000
	\$(million)	
Actual sales, all retail industries	57,989.1	42,161.3

Exports

Principal exports are dairy products, meat, forest products, machinery, fruit and fish. Food processing is the largest manufacturing industry and there are a variety of small, light manufacturing industries. New Zealand produces coal, oil and natural gas and various metallic and non-metallic minerals, including pounamu/greenstone, used in jewellery.

Merchandise trade exports – top 10 destinations

	2005	2000
	\$(million)	
Australia	6,507	5,528
United States of America	4,295	3,733
Japan	3,446	3,382
People's Republic of China	1,587	766
United Kingdom	1,436	1,542
Republic of Korea	1,080	1,180
Germany	793	646
Taiwan	688	664
Belgium	475	426
Hong Kong (SAR)	532	711

Exports of main commodities

	2005	2000
	\$(million)	
All merchandise exports	30,618	26,111
Commodity		
Milk powder, butter and cheese	4,924	3,895
Meat and edible offal	4,577	3,379
Logs, wood and wood articles	1,984	2,024
Mechanical machinery and equipment	1,628	1,127
Fruit	1,212	972
Fish, crustaceans and molluscs	1,134	1,230
Aluminium and aluminium articles	1,053	1,116
Electrical machinery and equipment	1,004	844
Casein and caseinates	651	806
Wool	666	802

Exports of main services

	2005	2000
	\$(million)	
All services	11,581	8,975
Service		
Transportation	2,260	2,548
Travel	7,283	4,687
Communications services	434	386
Computer and information services	297	146
Royalties and licence fees	163	96
Personal, cultural and recreational	270	243
Merchanting and other trade-related services	309	77

National finance

Crown finance and social transfers

Source of current income	2005	2000
	\$(million)	
Income taxes	32,067	20,969
Net goods and services tax	10,686	7,690
Other taxes	5,002	4,023
Property income	2,179	1,444
Other income	1,490	1,074
Total	51,424	35,200

Social assistance as a percentage of current income

	2005	2000
	Percent	
Purpose		
Health	7.4	7.4
Education	1.5	1.9
Social welfare	26.3	34.7



Labour force

New Zealand has a comprehensive range of labour laws. Pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) tax on wage and salary earners is the single largest source of tax revenue.

Civilian employment

Sector	2005	2000
	(thousands)	
Primary	137	150
Industry	446	417
Services	1,467	1,215
Total	2,050	1,782



International travel

New Zealand's top 10 visitor source countries for 2005 were Australia, UK, USA, Japan, Republic of Korea, China (including Hong Kong), Germany, Canada, Singapore and Taiwan.

Top five visitor source countries

Country of last permanent residence	2005	2000
	(thousands)	
Australia	875	549
United Kingdom	305	182
United States of America	221	193
Japan	163	147
Republic of Korea	114	59



Earnings from wages and salaries

	2005	2000
	(dollars per hour)	
Average	19.30	15.64
Median	16.10	13.63

Environment

Transport

	2005	2000
	(thousands)	
Number of vehicles licensed		
Cars	2,212	1,905
Motorcycles	38	38
Taxis	8	8
Total including other	3,150	2,736

Energy

New Zealand industry uses energy from a range of sources. Electricity is based on hydroelectric generation supplemented by thermal and geothermal power plants. There are no nuclear power plants.

The country faces declining hydrocarbon resources. With growing industrial, commercial and domestic demand for energy of all types, alternative energy sources are returning to public interest.



Production and generation

	2005	2000
Gas production (terajoules)	163,363.20	2,426,447.00
Crude petroleum production (tonnes)	807,063.00	1,271,911.00
Geothermal production (terajoules)	75,465.10	64,219.50
Electricity generation (GWh)	39,489.00	34,374.00

Land use

	2004	1994
	(thousands of hectares)	
Grazing, arable, fodder and fallow land	11,759	13,536
Horticultural land	135	104
Planted production forest	1,808	1,488
Other land	1,827	1,479
Total land under farming	15,529	16,607
Grazing land use: stock numbers		
	(million)	
Dairy cattle	5.15	3.84
Beef cattle	4.45	5.05
Sheep	39.25	49.47
Deer	1.76	1.23

New Zealand in Profile

www.stats.govt.nz

CONTACT

Information Centre

Email: info@stats.govt.nz

Ph: 0508 525 525 toll-free

Wellington

PO Box 2922

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An overview
of New Zealand's
government, economy
and people



2006

International comparisons with our top five visitor source countries

	Unit	Most Common Date	New Zealand	Australia	United Kingdom	United States of America	Japan	Republic of Korea
Total population (estimated)	millions	2004	4.061	19.913	59.428	297.043	127.799	47.950
Average annual rate of change of population	%	2001–2005	1.37 P	0.96	0.31	1.03	0.14	0.57
Male life expectancy at birth	Years of life	2002–2005	77.0	76.4	75.7	74.3	77.9	71.8
Female life expectancy at birth	Years of life	2002–2005	81.3	82.0	80.7	79.9	85.1	79.3
Infant mortality rate	per 1,000 live births	2005	5	6	5	7	3	5
% of total population aged under 15	%	2005	21 P	20	18	21	14	20
% of male population aged 60+	%	2005	15 P	16	19	15	23	11
% of female population aged 60+	%	2005	18 P	18	23	18	28	14
CPI change (annual)	%	2005	2.8	2.5	2.9	-0.7	1.9	3.0
Exchange rate (average)	national currency units/\$US	2003	1.64	1.45	0.59	1.00	113.04	1,183.93
GDP (annual)	\$US billion	2003	80.0	527.4	1,805.7	10,918.5	4,291.1	608.1
GDP per capita	\$US	2003	19,800	26,400	30,300	37,500	33,600	12,700
Exports of goods and services	% of GDP	2003	29.8	18.1	25.1	9.5	11.8	38.2
Standardised unemployment rate (OECD)	%	2004	3.9	5.5	4.7	5.5	4.7	3.7
Civilian labour force	millions	2004	2.1	10.1	29.2	147.4	66.4	23.4
Civilian employment in service sector	%	2004	69.8	74.9	76.4	78.4	67.1	64.4

Symbol:
P = provisional

Sources: OECD, Labour Force Statistics 1984–2004;
www.oecd.org/dataoecd/41/13/18595359.pdf