

University of Canterbury New Zealand

Sarah Hedberg's Guide to the Living as a Kiwi

Table of Contents

New Zealand Overview

Christchurch Overview

Preparation/Arrival

Daily Life

University Life

Things to do: Christchurch

Things to do: New Zealand

Kiwi Slang

New Zealand Overview



“New Zealand /nju:ˈzi:lənd/ ( listen) (Māori: [Aotearoa](#) [aɔˈtɛaɾɔa]) is an [island country](#) in the southwestern [Pacific Ocean](#). The country geographically comprises two main landmasses—the [North Island](#) (or *Te Ika-a-Māui*), and the [South Island](#) (or *Te Waipounamu*)—and around 600 [smaller islands](#). New Zealand is situated some 1,500 kilometres (900 mi) east of [Australia](#) across the [Tasman Sea](#) and roughly 1,000 kilometres (600 mi) south of the [Pacific island areas](#) of [New Caledonia](#), [Fiji](#),

and [Tonga](#). Because of its remoteness, it was one of the last lands to be settled by humans. During its long period of isolation, New Zealand developed a distinct [biodiversity](#) of animal, fungal and plant life. The country's varied topography and its sharp mountain peaks, such as the [Southern Alps](#), owe much to the [tectonic uplift](#) of land and volcanic eruptions. New Zealand's [capital city](#) is [Wellington](#), while its most populous city is [Auckland](#).

Sometime between 1250 and 1300 CE, [Polynesians](#) settled in the islands that later were named New Zealand and developed a distinctive [Māori culture](#). In 1642, Dutch explorer [Abel Tasman](#) became the first European to sight New Zealand. In 1840, representatives of Britain and Māori chiefs signed the [Treaty of Waitangi](#), which declared British sovereignty over the islands. In 1841, New Zealand [became a colony](#) within the [British Empire](#) and in 1907 it [became a Dominion](#). Today, the majority of [New Zealand's population](#) of 4.7 million is of [European descent](#); the indigenous Māori are the largest minority, followed by Asians and Pacific Islanders. Reflecting this, [New Zealand's culture](#) is mainly derived from Māori and early British settlers, with recent broadening arising from increased [immigration](#). The official languages are [English](#), [Māori](#) and [New Zealand Sign Language](#), with English predominant.

New Zealand is a [developed country](#) and [ranks highly](#) in international comparisons of national performance, such as health, education, economic freedom and quality of life. Since the 1980s, New Zealand has transformed from an [agrarian](#), regulated economy to a [market economy](#). Nationally, legislative authority is vested in an elected, [unicameral Parliament](#), while executive political power is exercised by the [Cabinet](#), led by the [Prime Minister](#), who is currently [Bill English](#). [Queen Elizabeth II](#) is the country's [head of state](#) and is represented by a [governor-general](#), currently [Dame Patsy Reddy](#). In addition, New Zealand is organised into 11 [regional councils](#) and 67 [territorial authorities](#) for local government purposes. The [Realm of New](#)

Zealand also includes Tokelau (a dependent territory); the Cook Islands and Niue (self-governing states in free association with New Zealand); and the Ross Dependency, which is New Zealand's territorial claim in Antarctica. New Zealand is a member of the United Nations, Commonwealth of Nations, ANZUS, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Pacific Islands Forum, and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.”

Christchurch Overview

“**Christchurch** ([/ˈkraɪstʃɜːrtʃ/](#); [Māori: Ōtautahi](#)) is the largest city in the [South Island](#) of New Zealand and the seat of the [Canterbury Region](#). The Christchurch urban area lies on the South Island's east coast, just north of [Banks Peninsula](#). It is home to 389,700 residents,^[2] making it New Zealand's [third most-populous city](#) behind [Auckland](#) and [Wellington](#).”

Christchurch was devastated by a number of earthquakes in recent years, the largest of which being in 2011 when 185 people were killed and hundreds of buildings across the city collapsed or suffered severe damage. Since then, over 1,500 buildings in the city have been demolished, leading to an ongoing recovery and rebuilding project. See how drastically the city has changed!



While Christchurch isn't the most vibrant/energetic/fun city to be in as a student (see information below), it is the PERFECT location for studying abroad in NZ because it is centrally located and easy to travel to/from. See my list below for must-dos in Christchurch (CHCH).

Preparation/Arrival

Visa:

- Visa is electronic - you won't need to send in your passport
- Website for info and application: <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/about-visa/full-fee-paying-student-visa>(how long does this take?)

Health Insurance:

- You will get health insurance through IES, or through the University if you're direct enroll (this will be done on the international enrollment day the first week you get to NZ)
- You'll need to set up a NZ bank acct in order to get any reimbursements from the health insurance (see banking section for details on where to go)

Living:

- At UC, most exchange students live in Ilam Apartments - Student housing that's mostly international students
- Ilam Apts are 5 bedroom private flats with kitchen, fully furnished even with pots and pans, blankets and pillows!
- You can choose to "flat" if you want.. Can find a flat on UC's Noticeboard Facebook Page)

Registration:

- You don't register for classes until you get there, although you do "pre register" and they make sure you have your prereqs so that on registration day it goes very quickly

Daily Life

Money:

- Be prepared to spend a lot of money if you like to drink - there are very high taxes on alcohol, tobacco, gas
- You'll want to set up a NZ bank acct because if anything happens and insurance needs to reimburse you, you'll need a NZ bank acct
- Westpac is a good bank for short term accts
- Transferring money is super easy between NZ bank accts. All you need is your acct # and you can transfer money with the banking app

Nightlife:

- Nightlife in Christchurch (CHCH) is very mediocre at best - kiwi students host flat parties or go to club events
- If you do brave the CHCH bars, you can't wear tennis shoes - must be dress shoes (both guys and girls)
- Good bars are Engineer, Tequila Mockingbird, Boo Radley's

Transportation:

- Buying a car and getting it registered and insurance is super easy.
 - Car insurance: <https://www.aainsurance.co.nz/>
- They drive on the left side of the road
- You can easily buy a car for \$600-\$1200 NZD
- Register car at the post office
- You can take intercity bus around NZ
- Jet Star has relatively cheap flights around NZ/Australia
 - They don't check your IDs if you're flying within NZ, the ticket doesn't even need to be in your name!
- The big cities have public transport - buy a metro card for the buses in Christchurch, it makes the bus rides cheaper
- Driving is the easiest way to get around

Cellphone:

- I bought a NZ SIM and used it in my iphone (I used Spark Mobile)
- You will run out of data very fast - Get used to not having internet while traveling

University Life

Class:

- Not all class is mandatory - most classes are recorded and put online
- Grading scale is super easy - an 80 is an A!

Extracurriculars:

- Try to get involved with different clubs on campus (popular ones are Ensoc, Gentlemen's Club, CUBA Club, but there are many clubs based on your interests).
- Get prepared for club sponsored events to get rowdy - kiwis like to party
- The first week of school is O-Week. Buy tickets to the events early they are all super duper fun and the tickets do sell out.
- The Foundry (the campus bar) is lit on Thursdays (free concerts every Thursday)
- UCSA (University of Canterbury Student Association) has a Facebook Noticeboard where people sell things, make announcements, etc - have someone add you to it

Things to do: Christchurch

- Quake City Museum
- Restart mall (made out of shipping containers)
- Botanical gardens
- Saturday farmers market in the Riccarton Bush!!! GET THE SOUP!!!
- Sal's New York Pizza (they use real Wisconsin cheese!!)
- Daytrip to Akaroa

Things to do: New Zealand

South Island:

- Queenstown (this is your hub for everything that induces adrenaline, awesome night life)**
- Wanaka (smaller version of Queenstown, must do Roys Peak)-**Milford Sound & Doubtful Sound (do a cruise)**
- Arthur's Pass - **Avalanche Peak day hike**
- Dunedin (super fun student city, can see penguins, albatross, seals there, home to the steepest street)
- Kaikoura (**Swim with dolphins**, go whale watching, eat delicious seafood. Hike Mt Fyffe if you want to hate your life for 6 hours (the view IS amazing, though!))
- West Coast (Franz Josef Glacier, Fox Glacier, Hokitika Gorge)
- Abel Tasman (awesome 3 day beach hike)
- Golden Bay & Wharariki Beach
- Nelson Lakes
- Mt Cook (do the Meuller Hut overnight tramp!!!!, Hooker Valley Track)**
- Lake Tekapo and Lake Pukaki

North Island

- Lake Taupo (go to the hot river, huka falls)
- Waitomo glowworm caves (black water rafting tours are dope)
- Rotorua (awesome geothermal area, lots of Maori influence, cool redwood forests)
- Tongariro Alpine Crossing**

Kiwi Slang

-Sweet as - means cool or awesome. The “sweet” can be switched with any adjective. For example, if I ask if my friend can pick me up at 4 he could respond “easy as, see you then”.

-Chilly bin - cooler (like Yeti)

-Frother - a party “This weekend’s gonna be an absolute frother!”

-Dusty - hungover “Mate I’m dusty as this morning!”

-Goon - bagged wine. Yes, kiwis love to slap the goon.

-Chips - like England, chips are actually french fries

-Bush - the “bush” is woods/forest

-Chur - cheers, thank you

-Togs - Swim suit

-Jandals - flip flops, literally translates to Japanese Sandals

-Reckon - pretty self explanatory but I reckon you’ll hear it all the time

-Keen - interested “if you’re keen for a frother come round tonight”

-Slip slap slop - it was some kind of campaign against skin cancer - it means put on your sunscreen and cover yourself

-Kia Ora - Maori for good day/hello. Pronounced Key-Ora

-Tim Tam Slam - you bite either end off of a Tim Tam (a really good cookie) and use it as a straw to drink milk

-Meat pies - not your classic cherry pie but they’re pretty tasty!

-Hokey Pokey - honeycomb flavor (commonly found in chocolate, ice cream)