

Natural New Zealand



Queenstown shoreline



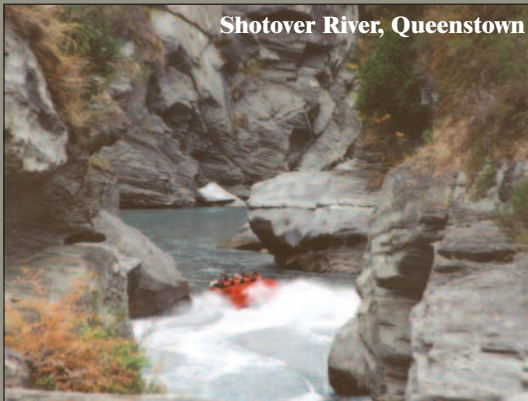
Pohutukawa – New Zealand's native Christmas Tree



Maori Culture



Shotover River, Queenstown



NEW ZEALAND

ABOUT NEW ZEALAND – HE KORERO MO AOTEAROA

New Zealand is in the Pacific Ocean, 1,200 kilometres southeast of Australia. It is similar in size to Japan or the British Isles. The landscape of the two main islands, the North Island and the South Island, is green and mountainous, with large areas of farmland and forest.

New Zealanders have a strong connection with nature and are proud of their beautiful countryside, but 85% of people live in urban areas. Auckland is the largest city, with one million people. Because of its long thin shape, the climate varies from north to south, with a sub tropical climate north of Auckland, while the South Island mountains are snow capped all year round. Many of the major towns are next to the sea, and the beach is an essential part of the New Zealand lifestyle. Our seasons are opposite to those in the northern hemisphere. January is the warmest month with temperatures ranging from 19°C to 26°C. In July the winter temperatures range from 10°C to 15°C.

New Zealanders describe their country as a great place to bring up children. While we lead the world in our use of internet and mobile phones, we still appreciate the simple things in life; a fresh meal, a walk on the beach, time to relax with family and friends.

Maori are New Zealand's indigenous people, and Maori perspectives and culture have helped to form the country's identity. Maori concepts like *whanau* (the extended family) and *mana* (dignity) are part of everyday life. All New Zealanders share a deep connection with the land and sea.

Visitors from overseas often comment on New Zealanders' friendly, open attitude. With only four million people and plenty of space, it can take time to get to know each other. Our closeness to nature gives us a sense of freedom and relaxation.

New Zealanders are high achievers in sport. Our national sport is rugby football, and the *haka*, performed by our rugby team the All Blacks is known around the world.

Building on New Zealand's Maori and British heritage are people who have come here from many countries. The Pacific Islands and Asia have contributed most of New Zealand's new migrants, but our multicultural society includes people from almost every country in the world.

New Zealand's place in the South Pacific has made us independent, adventurous and outward looking. We travel and communicate with the world, and welcome millions of international tourists every year. But while many young New Zealanders live overseas, most return home to start a family. We know we are lucky to enjoy the New Zealand way of life.

Taken from "About New Zealand" – a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and New Zealand Trade and Enterprise publication 2004.