

History James Belich

One of NZ's foremost modern historians, James Belich has written a number of books on NZ history and hosted the TV documentary series *NZ Wars*.

Similarities in language between Maori and Tahitian indicate close contact in historical times. Maori is about as similar to Tahitian as Spanish is to French, despite the 4294km separating these island groups.

For more about Maui and other mythological figures, Maori tribal structure and performing arts, see *Maori Culture*, p55.

New Zealand's history is not long, but it is fast. In less than a thousand years these islands have produced two new peoples: the Polynesian Maori and European New Zealanders. The latter are often known by their Maori name, 'Pakeha' (though not all like the term). NZ shares some of its history with the rest of Polynesia, and with other European settler societies, but has unique features as well. It is the similarities that make the differences so interesting, and vice versa.

MAKING MAORI

Despite persistent myths (see the boxed text opposite), there is no doubt that the first settlers of NZ were the Polynesian forebears of today's Maori. Beyond that, there are a lot of question marks. Exactly where in east Polynesia did they come from – the Cook Islands, Tahiti, the Marquesas? When did they arrive? Did the first settlers come in one group or several? Some evidence, such as the diverse DNA of the Polynesian rats that accompanied the first settlers, suggests multiple founding voyages. On the other hand, only rats and dogs brought by the founders have survived, not the more valuable pigs and chickens. The survival of these cherished animals would have had high priority, and their failure to be successfully introduced suggests fewer voyages. See *Kawhia* (p234) and the boxed text on p356 for the tales of just two of the great migratory canoes that made the voyage.

NZ seems small compared to Australia, but it is bigger than Britain, and very much bigger than other Polynesian islands. Its regions vary wildly in environment and climate. Prime sites for first settlement were warm coastal gardens for the food plants brought from Polynesia (kumara or sweet potato, gourd, yam and taro); sources of workable stone for knives and adzes; and areas with abundant big game. NZ has no native land mammals apart from a few species of bat, but 'big game' is no exaggeration: the islands were home to a dozen species of moa (a large flightless bird), the largest of which weighed up to 240kg, about twice the size of an ostrich. There were also other species of flightless bird and large sea mammals such as fur seals, all unaccustomed to being hunted. For people from small Pacific islands, this was like hitting the jackpot. The first settlers spread far and fast, from the top of the North Island to the bottom of the South Island within the first 100 years. High-protein diets are likely to have boosted population growth.

By about 1400, however, with big-game supply dwindling, Maori economies turned from big game to small game – forest birds and rats – and from hunting to gardening and fishing. A good living could still be made, but it required detailed local knowledge, steady effort and complex communal

THE MORIORI & THEIR MYTH

One of NZ's most persistent legends is that Maori found mainland NZ already occupied by a more peaceful and racially distinct Melanesian people, known as the Moriori, whom they exterminated. This myth has been regularly debunked by scholars since the 1920s, but somehow hangs on.

To complicate matters, there were real 'Moriori', and Maori did treat them badly. The real Moriori were the people of the Chatham Islands, a windswept group about 900km east of the mainland. They were, however, fully Polynesian, and descended from Maori – 'Moriori' was their version of the same word. Mainland Maori arrived in the Chathams in 1835, as a spin-off of the Musket Wars, killing some Moriori and enslaving the rest (see the boxed text, p686). But they did not exterminate them. The mainland Moriori remain a myth.

organisation, hence the rise of the Maori tribes. Competition for resources increased, conflict did likewise, and this led to the building of increasingly sophisticated fortifications, known as *pa*. Vestiges of *pa* earthworks can still be seen around the country, on the hilltops of Auckland for example.

The Maori had no metals and no written language (and no alcoholic drinks or drugs). But their culture and spiritual life was rich and distinctive. Below Ranginui (sky father) and Papatuanuku (earth mother) were various gods of land, forest and sea, joined by deified ancestors over time. The mischievous demigod Maui was particularly important. In legend, he vanquished the sun and fished up the North Island before meeting his death between the thighs of the goddess Hine-nui-te-po in an attempt to conquer the human mortality embodied in her. Maori traditional performance art, the group singing and dancing known as *kapa haka*, has real power, even for modern audiences. Visual art, notably woodcarving, is something special – 'like nothing but itself', in the words of 18th-century explorer-scientist Joseph Banks.

ENTER EUROPE

NZ became an official British colony in 1840, but the first authenticated contact between Maori and the outside world took place almost two centuries earlier in 1642, in Golden Bay at the top of the South Island. Two Dutch ships sailed from Indonesia, to search for southern land and anything valuable it might contain. The commander, Abel Tasman, was instructed to pretend to any natives he might meet 'that you are by no means eager for precious metals, so as to leave them ignorant of the value of the same'.

When Tasman's ships anchored in the bay, local Maori came out in their canoes to make the traditional challenge: friends or foes? Misunderstanding this, the Dutch challenged back, by blowing trumpets. When a boat was lowered to take a party between the two ships, it was attacked. Four crewmen were killed. Tasman sailed away and did not come back; nor did any other European for 127 years. But the Dutch did leave a name: 'Nieuw Zeeland' or 'New Zealand'.

Rumours of late survivals of the giant moa bird abound, but none have been authenticated. So if you see a moa in your travels, photograph it – you have just made the greatest zoological discovery of the last 100 years.

Abel Tasman named NZ Statenland, assuming it was connected to Staten Island near Argentina. It was subsequently named after the province of Zeeland in Tasman's Holland.

TIMELINE

AD 1000-1200

Possible date of the arrival of Maori in NZ. Solid archaeological evidence points to about AD 1200, but much earlier dates have been suggested for the first human impact on the environment.

1642

First European contact: Abel Tasman arrives on an expedition from the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) to find the 'Great South Land'. The party leaves without landing after a sea skirmish with Maori, but its legacy remains in the country's name.

1769

European contact recommences with visits by James Cook and Jean de Surville. Despite some violence, both managed to communicate with Maori, and this time NZ's link with the outside world proved permanent.

1772

A French expedition arrives, under Marion du Fresne, and stays for some weeks at the Bay of Islands to rest and refit. At first, relations with Maori are excellent, but a breach of Maori *tapu* (sacred law) leads to violence.

1790s

Whaling ships and sealing gangs arrive in the country. Relations are established with Maori, with Europeans depending on the contact for essentials such as food, water and protection.

1818-36

Intertribal Maori 'Musket Wars' take place: tribes acquire muskets and win bloody victories against tribes without them. The war tapers off in 1836, probably as a result of the equal distribution of weapons.

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK *Tony Horwitz*

If aliens ever visit earth, they may wonder what to make of the countless obelisks, faded plaques and graffiti-covered statues of a stiff, wiggled figure gazing out to sea from Alaska to Australia, from NZ to North Yorkshire, from Siberia to the South Pacific. James Cook (1728–79) explored more of the earth's surface than anyone in history, and it's impossible to travel the Pacific without encountering the captain's image and his controversial legacy in the lands he opened to the West.

For a man who travelled so widely, and rose to such fame, Cook came from an extremely pinched and provincial background. The son of a day labourer in rural Yorkshire, he was born in a mud cottage, had little schooling, and seemed destined for farm work – and for his family's grave plot in a village churchyard. Instead, Cook went to sea as a teenager, worked his way up from coal-ship servant to naval officer, and attracted notice for his exceptional charts of Canada. But Cook remained a little-known second lieutenant until, in 1768, the Royal Navy chose him to command a daring voyage to the South Seas.

In a converted coal ship called *Endeavour*, Cook sailed to Tahiti, and then became the first European to land at NZ and the east coast of Australia. Though the ship almost sank after striking the Great Barrier Reef, and 40% of the crew died from disease and accidents, the *Endeavour* limped home in 1771. On a return voyage (1772–75), Cook became the first navigator to pierce the Antarctic Circle and circled the globe near its southernmost latitude, demolishing the ancient myth that a vast, populous and fertile continent surrounded the South Pole. Cook also crisscrossed the Pacific from Easter Island to Melanesia, charting dozens of islands between. Though Maori killed and cooked 10 sailors, the captain remained strikingly sympathetic to islanders. 'Notwithstanding they are cannibals,' he wrote, 'they are naturally of a good disposition'.

On Cook's final voyage (1776–79), in search of a northwest passage between the Atlantic and Pacific, he became the first European to visit Hawaii, and coasted America from Oregon to Alaska. Forced back by Arctic pack ice, Cook returned to Hawaii, where he was killed during a skirmish with islanders who had initially greeted him as a Polynesian god. In a single decade of discovery, Cook had filled in the map of the Pacific and, as one French navigator put it, 'left his successors with little to do but admire his exploits'.

But Cook's travels also spurred colonisation of the Pacific, and within a few decades of his death, missionaries, whalers, traders and settlers began transforming (and often devastating) island cultures. As a result, many indigenous people now revile Cook as an imperialist villain who introduced disease, dispossession and other ills to the Pacific (hence the frequent vandalising of Cook monuments). However, as islanders revive traditional crafts and practices, from tattooing to *tapa*, they have turned to the art and writing of Cook and his men as a resource for cultural renewal. For good and ill, a Yorkshire farm boy remains the single most significant figure in the shaping of the modern Pacific.

Tony Horwitz is a Pulitzer-winning reporter and nonfiction author. In researching Blue Latitudes (or Into the Blue), Tony travelled the Pacific – 'boldly going where Captain Cook has gone before'.

Contact between Maori and Europeans was renewed in 1769, when English and French explorers arrived, under James Cook (see the boxed text, opposite) and Jean de Surville. Relations were more sympathetic, and exploration continued, motivated by science, profit and great power rivalry. Cook made two more visits between 1773 and 1777, and there were further French expeditions.

Unofficial visits, by whaling ships in the north and sealing gangs in the south, began in the 1790s. The first mission station was founded in 1814, in the Bay of Islands, and was followed by dozens of others: Anglican, Methodist and Catholic. Trade in flax and timber generated small European-Maori settlements by the 1820s. Surprisingly, the most numerous category of European visitor was probably American. New England whaling ships favoured the Bay of Islands for rest and recreation; 271 called there between 1833 and 1839 alone. To whalers, 'rest and recreation' meant sex and drink. Their favourite haunt, the little town of Kororareka (now Russell) was known to the missionaries as 'the hellhole of the Pacific'. New England visitors today might well have distant relatives among the local Maori.

One or two dozen bloody clashes dot the history of Maori-European contact before 1840 but, given the number of visits, inter-racial conflict was modest. Europeans needed Maori protection, food and labour, and Maori came to need European articles, especially muskets. Whaling stations and mission stations were linked to local Maori groups by intermarriage, which helped keep the peace. Most warfare was between Maori and Maori: the terrible intertribal 'Musket Wars' of 1818–36. Because Northland had the majority of early contact with Europe, its Ngapuhi tribe acquired muskets first. Under their great general Hongi Hika, Ngapuhi then raided south, winning bloody victories against tribes without muskets. Once they acquired muskets, these tribes saw off Ngapuhi, but also raided further south in their turn. The domino effect continued to the far south of the South Island in 1836. The missionaries claimed that the Musket Wars then tapered off through their influence, but the restoration of the balance of power through the equal distribution of muskets was probably more important.

Europe brought such things as pigs (at last) and potatoes, which benefited Maori, while muskets and diseases had the opposite effect. The negative effects have been exaggerated, however. Europeans expected peoples like the Maori to simply fade away at contact, and some early estimates of Maori population were overly high – up to one million. Current estimates are between 85,000 and 110,000 for 1769. The Musket Wars killed perhaps 20,000, and new diseases did considerable damage too (although NZ had the natural quarantine of distance: infected Europeans usually recovered or died during the long voyage, and smallpox, for example, which devastated native Americans, did not make it here). By 1840, the Maori had been reduced to about 70,000, a decline of at least 20%. Maori bent under the weight of European contact, but they certainly did not break.

'I believe we were all glad to leave New Zealand. It is not a pleasant place. Amongst the natives there is absent that charming simplicity... and the greater part of the English are the very refuse of society.'

Charles Darwin, referring to Kororareka (Russell), in 1860

For a thorough overview of NZ history from Gondwanaland to today, visit <http://history-nz.org>.

1840

On 6 February, the Treaty of Waitangi is signed by 40 chiefs in a sovereignty settlement presented by William Hobson. Copies of the treaty are circulated countrywide to collect signatures. NZ becomes a nominal British colony.

1844

Young Ngapuhi chief, Hone Heke, challenges British sovereignty, first by cutting down the British flag at Russell, and then by sacking the town itself. The ensuing Northland War continues till 1846.

1853–56

Provincial and central elected governments established. In 1853 the first elections are held for the New Zealand parliament; votes are restricted to adult, male, British subjects, and Maori votes are limited due to property-right rules.

1860–61

First Taranaki war. Starting with the controversial swindling of Maori land by the government at Waitara, the war involves many military participants from the Waikato tribes (despite being traditional enemies of the Taranaki Maori).

1861

Gold discovered in Otago by Gabriel Read, an Australian prospector. As a result, the population of Otago climbs from less than 13,000 to over 30,000 in six months.

1863–64

Waikato War. Up to 5000 Maori resist an invasion mounted by 20,000 imperial, colonial and 'friendly' Maori troops. Despite surprising successes, Maori are defeated and much land is confiscated.

MAKING PAKEHA

By 1840, Maori tribes described local Europeans as 'their Pakeha', and valued the profit and prestige they brought. Maori wanted more, and concluded that accepting nominal British authority was the way to get them. At the same time, the British government was overcoming its reluctance to undertake potentially expensive intervention in NZ. It too was influenced by profit and prestige, but also by humanitarian considerations. It believed, wrongly but sincerely, that Maori could not handle the increasing scale of unofficial European contact. In 1840, the two peoples struck a deal, symbolised by the treaty first signed at Waitangi on 6 February that year. The Treaty of Waitangi now has a standing not dissimilar to that of the Constitution in the US, but is even more contested. The original problem was a discrepancy between British and Maori understandings of it. The English version promised Maori full equality as British subjects in return for complete rights of government. The Maori version also promised that Maori would retain their chieftainship, which implied local rights of government. The problem was not great at first, because the Maori version applied outside the small European settlements. But as those settlements grew, conflict brewed.

In 1840, there were only about 2000 Europeans in NZ, with the shanty town of Kororareka (now Russell) as the capital and biggest settlement. By 1850, six new settlements had been formed with 22,000 settlers between them. About half of these had arrived under the auspices of the New Zealand Company and its associates. The company was the brainchild of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who also influenced the settlement of South Australia. Wakefield hoped to short-circuit the barbarous frontier phase of settlement with 'instant civilisation', but his success was limited. From the 1850s, his settlers, who included a high proportion of upper-middle-class gentlefolk, were swamped by succeeding waves of immigrants that continued to wash in until the 1880s. These people were part of the great British and Irish diaspora that also populated Australia and much of North America, but the NZ mix was distinctive. Lowland Scots settlers were more prominent in NZ than elsewhere, for example, with the possible exception of parts of Canada. NZ's Irish, even the Catholics, tended to come from the north of Ireland. NZ's English tended to come from the counties close to London. Small groups of Germans, Scandinavians and Chinese made their way in, though the last faced increasing racial prejudice from the 1880s, when the Pakeha population reached half a million.

Much of the mass immigration from the 1850s to the 1870s was assisted by the provincial and central governments, which also mounted large-scale public works schemes, especially in the 1870s under Julius Vogel. In 1876, Vogel abolished the provinces on the grounds that they were hampering his development efforts. The last imperial governor with substantial power was the talented but Machiavellian George Grey, who ended his second governorship

in 1868. Thereafter, the governors (governors-general from 1917) were largely just nominal heads of state; the head of government, the premier or prime minister, had more power. The central government, originally weaker than the provincial governments, the imperial governor and the Maori tribes, eventually exceeded the power of all three.

The Maori tribes did not go down without a fight, however. Indeed, their resistance was one of the most formidable ever mounted against European expansion, comparable to that of the Sioux and Seminole in the US. The first clash took place in 1843 in the Wairau Valley, now a wine-growing district. A posse of settlers set out to enforce the myth of British control, but encountered the reality of Maori control. Twenty-two settlers were killed, including Wakefield's brother, Arthur, along with about six Maori. In 1845, more serious fighting broke out in the Bay of Islands, when Hone Heke sacked a British settlement. Heke and his ally Kawiti baffled three British punitive expeditions, using a modern variant of the traditional *pa* fortification. Vestiges of these innovative earthworks can still be seen at Ruapekapeka (south of Kawakawa). Governor Grey claimed victory in the north, but few were convinced at the time. Grey had more success in the south, where he arrested the formidable Ngati Toa chief Te Rauparaha, who until then wielded great influence on both sides of Cook Strait. Pakeha were able to swamp the few Maori living in the South Island, but the fighting of the 1840s confirmed that the North Island at that time comprised a European fringe around an independent Maori heartland.

In the 1850s, settler population and aspirations grew, and fighting broke out again in 1860. The wars burned on sporadically until 1872 over much of the North Island. In the early years, a Maori nationalist organisation, the King Movement (see the boxed text, p219), was the backbone of resistance. In later years, some remarkable prophet-generals, notably Titokowaru and Te Kooti (see the boxed text, p369), took over. Most wars were small-scale, but the Waikato War of 1863–64 was not. This conflict, fought at the same time as the American Civil War, involved armoured steamships, ultramodern heavy artillery, telegraph and 10 proud British regular regiments. Despite the odds, the Maori won several battles, such as that at Gate Pa, near Tauranga, in 1864. But in the end they were ground down by European numbers and resources. Maori political, though not cultural, independence ebbed away in the last decades of the 19th century. It finally expired when police invaded its last sanctuary, the Urewera Mountains, in 1916.

WELFARE & WARFARE

From the 1850s to the 1880s, despite conflict with Maori, the Pakeha economy boomed on the back of wool exports, gold rushes and massive overseas borrowing for development. The crash came in the 1880s, when NZ experienced

The Waitangi Treaty Grounds (p172), where the Treaty of Waitangi was first signed in 1840, is now a tourist attraction for Kiwis and non-Kiwis alike. Each year on 6 February, Waitangi hosts treaty commemorations and protests.

Scottish influence can still be felt in NZ, particularly in the south of the South Island. NZ has more Scottish pipe bands per capita than Scotland itself.

Maurice Shadbolt's *Sea-son of the Jew* (1987), is a semfictionalised story of bloody campaigns led by warrior Te Kooti against the British in Poverty Bay in the 1860s. Te Kooti and his followers compared themselves to the Israelites who were cast out of Egypt.

'Kaore e mau te rongu – ake, ake!' (Peace never shall be made – never, never!)

War chief Rewi Maniapoto in response to government troops at the battle of Orakau, 1864

1865–69

Second Taranaki war. Caused by Maori resistance to land confiscations stemming from the first Taranaki war, this is perhaps the war in which the Maori people come closest to victory.

1868–72

East Coast war. Te Kooti, having led an escape from his prison on the Chatham Islands, leads a holy guerrilla war in the Urewera region. He finally retreats to establish the Ringatu Church.

1882

First refrigerated cargo to Britain. Exports to Britain had been dominated by the wool trade, but this development allows diversification into meat and dairy, and establishes NZ's early lead in the industry.

1890–1912

The Liberal government is in power over an economy recovering from depression. Their major leader is Richard John Seddon, 'King Dick, as I am usually known'.

1893

Votes for women granted, following a campaign led by Kate Sheppard, who had been petitioning the government for years. NZ becomes the first country in the world to grant the vote to women.

1914–18

NZ's contribution to WWI is quite staggering for a country of just over one million people: about 100,000 NZ men serve overseas, and close on 60,000 became casualties, mostly on the Western Front in France.

LAND WARS *Errol Hunt*

Five separate major conflicts made up what are now collectively known as the New Zealand Wars (also referred to as the Land Wars or Maori Wars). Starting in Northland and moving throughout the North Island, the wars had many complex causes, but *whenua* (land), was the one common factor. In all five wars, Maori fought both for and against the government, on whose side stood the Imperial British Army, Australians and NZ's own Armed Constabulary. Land confiscations imposed on the Maori as punishment for involvement in these wars are still the source of conflict today, with the government struggling to finance compensation for what are now acknowledged to have been illegal seizures.

Northland war (1844–46) 'Hone Heke's War' began with the famous chopping of the flagpole at Kororareka (now Russell, p168) and 'ended' at Ruapekapeka (south of Kawakawa). In many ways, this was almost a civil war between rival Ngapuhi factions, with the government taking one side against the other.

First Taranaki war (1860–61) Starting in Waitara (p253), the first Taranaki war (p248) inflamed the passions of Maori across the North Island.

Waikato war (1863–64) The largest of the five wars. Predominantly involving Kingitanga (see the boxed text, p219), the Waikato war was caused in part by what the government saw as a challenge to sovereignty. However it was land, again, that was the real reason for friction. Following defeats such as Rangiriri (p218), the Waikato people were pushed entirely from their own lands, south into what became known as the King Country.

Second Taranaki war (1865–69) Caused by Maori resistance to land confiscations stemming from the first Taranaki war, this was perhaps the war in which the Maori came closest to victory, under the brilliant, one-eyed prophet-general Titokowaru. However, once he lost the respect of his warriors (probably through an indiscretion with the wife of one of his warriors), the war too was lost.

East Coast war (1868–72) Te Kooti's holy guerrilla war; see the boxed text, p369.

To find out more about the New Zealand Wars, visit www.newzealandwars.co.nz.

'God's own country, but the devil's own mess.'

Prime Minister Richard (King Dick) Seddon, speaking on the source of NZ's self-proclaimed nickname 'Godzone'

its Long Depression. In 1890, the Liberals came to power, and stayed there until 1912, helped by a recovering economy. The Liberals were NZ's first organised political party, and the first of several governments to give NZ a reputation as 'the world's social laboratory'. NZ became the first country in the world to give women the vote in 1893, and introduced old-age pensions in 1898. The Liberals also introduced a long-lasting system of industrial arbitration, but this was not enough to prevent bitter industrial unrest in 1912–13. This happened under the conservative 'Reform' government, which had replaced the Liberals in 1912. Reform remained in power until 1928, and later transformed itself into the National Party. Renewed depression struck in 1929, and the NZ experience of it was as grim as any. The derelict little farmhouses still seen in rural areas often date from this era.

In 1935, a second reforming government took office: the First Labour government, led by Michael Joseph Savage, easily NZ's favourite Australian. For a time, the Labour government was considered the most socialist government outside Soviet Russia. But, when the chips were down in Europe in 1939, Labour had little hesitation in backing Britain.

NZ had also backed Britain in the Boer War (1899–1902) and WWI (1914–18), with dramatic losses in WWI in particular. You can count the cost in almost any little NZ town. A central square or park will contain a memorial lined with names – more for WWI than WWII. Even in WWII, however, NZ did its share of fighting: a hundred thousand or so New Zealanders fought in Europe and the Middle East. NZ, a peaceful-seeming country, has spent much of its history at war. In the 19th century it fought at home; in the 20th, overseas.

BETTER BRITONS?

British visitors have long found NZ hauntingly familiar. This is not simply a matter of the British and Irish origin of most Pakeha. It also stems from the tightening of NZ links with Britain from 1882, when refrigerated cargoes of food were first shipped to London. By the 1930s, 100 giant ships carried frozen meat, cheese and butter, as well as wool, on regular voyages taking about five weeks one way. The NZ economy adapted to the feeding of London, and cultural links were also enhanced. NZ children studied British history and literature, not their own. NZ's leading scientists and writers, such as Ernest Rutherford and Katherine Mansfield (see the boxed text, p408), gravitated to Britain. This tight relationship has been described as 'recolonial', but it is a mistake to see NZ as an exploited colony. Average living standards in NZ were normally better than in Britain, as were the welfare and lower-level education systems. New Zealanders had access to British markets and culture, and they contributed their share to the latter as equals. The list of 'British' writers, academics, scientists, military leaders, publishers and the like who were actually New Zealanders is long. Indeed, New Zealanders, especially in war and sport, sometimes saw themselves as a superior version of the British – the Better Britons of the south. The NZ-London relationship was rather like that of the American Midwest and New York.

'Recolonial' NZ prided itself, with some justice, on its affluence, equality and social harmony. But it was also conformist, even puritanical. Until the 1950s, it was technically illegal for farmers to allow their cattle to mate in fields fronting public roads, for moral reasons. The 1953 American movie, *The Wild One*, was banned until 1977. Sunday newspapers were illegal until 1969, and full Sunday trading was not allowed until 1989. Licensed restaurants hardly existed in 1960, nor did supermarkets or TV. Notoriously, from 1917 to 1967, pubs were obliged to shut at 6pm. Yet the puritanical society of Better Britons was never the whole story. Opposition to Sunday trading stemmed, not so much from belief in the sanctity of the Sabbath, but from the belief that workers should have weekends too. Six o'clock closing was a standing joke in rural areas, notably the marvellously idiosyncratic region of South Island's west coast. There was always something of a Kiwi counterculture, even before imported countercultures took root from the 1960s.

Nearly 200,000 Kiwi men (67% of NZ males aged 18 to 45) served in WWII.

Wellington-born Nancy Wake (codenamed 'The White Mouse') led a guerrilla attack against the Nazis with a 7000-strong army. She had the multiple honours of being the Gestapo's most-wanted person and being the most decorated Allied servicewoman of WWII.

The Six O'Clock Will referred to the frantic after-work drinking at pubs when men tried to drink as much as possible from 5.05pm until strict closing time at 6pm.

1935–49

First Labour government in power, under Michael Savage. This government creates NZ's pioneering version of the welfare state, and also takes some independent initiatives in foreign policy.

1939–45

NZ troops back Britain and the Allied war effort during WWII, while a hundred thousand or so Americans arrive from 1942 to protect NZ from the Japanese.

1974

Pacific Island migrants who have overstayed visas (dubbed 'overstayers') subjected to Dawn Raids (crackdowns by immigration police) under Robert Muldoon and the National government. These raids continue till the early 1980s.

1975

Waitangi Tribunal set up to investigate grievances of Maori people in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi. The tribunal's power is later extended to allow investigations of Crown confiscations as far back as 1840.

1981

Springbok rugby tour divides the nation. Many New Zealanders show a strong anti-apartheid stance by protesting the games. Other Kiwis feel that sport and politics should not mix, and support the South African tour going ahead.

1984

Fourth Labour government elected, adopting an anti-nuclear foreign policy, and a more-market economic policy. Social restrictions are removed almost as fast as economic ones – the pubs still close at six, but am, not pm.

There were also developments in cultural nationalism, beginning in the 1930s but really flowering from the 1970s. Writers, artists and film-makers were by no means the only people who 'came out' in that era.

COMING IN, COMING OUT

The 'recolonial' system was shaken several times after 1935, but managed to survive until 1973, when Mother England ran off and joined the Franco-German commune now known as the EU. NZ was beginning to develop alternative markets to Britain, and alternative exports to wool, meat and dairy products. Wide-bodied jet aircraft were allowing the world and NZ to visit each other on an increasing scale. NZ had only 36,000 tourists in 1960, compared with more than two million a year now. Women were beginning to penetrate first the upper reaches of the workforce and then the political sphere. Gay people came out of the closet, despite vigorous efforts by moral conservatives to push them back in. University-educated youths were becoming more numerous and more assertive.

From 1945, Maori experienced both a population explosion and massive urbanisation. In 1936, Maori were 17% urban and 83% rural. Fifty years later, these proportions had reversed. The immigration gates, which until 1960 were pretty much labelled 'whites only', widened, first to allow in Pacific Islanders for their labour, and then to allow in (East) Asians for their money. These transitions would have generated major socioeconomic change whatever happened in politics. But most New Zealanders associate the country's recent 'Big Shift' with the politics of 1984.

In 1984, NZ's third great reforming government was elected – the Fourth Labour government, led nominally by David Lange and in fact by Roger Douglas, the Minister of Finance. This government adopted an antinuclear foreign policy, delighting the left, and a more-market economic policy, delighting the right. NZ's numerous economic controls were dismantled with breakneck speed. Middle NZ was uneasy about the antinuclear policy, which threatened NZ's ANZUS alliance with Australia and the US. But in 1985, French spies sank the antinuclear protest ship *Rainbow Warrior* (see the boxed text, p181) in Auckland Harbour, killing one crewman. The lukewarm American condemnation of the French act brought middle NZ in behind the antinuclear policy, which became associated with national independence. Other New Zealanders were uneasy about the more-market economic policy, but failed to come up with a convincing alternative. Revelling in their new freedom, NZ investors engaged in a frenzy of speculation, and suffered even more than the rest of the world from the economic crash of 1987.

The economy remained fairly stagnant until the late 1990s, when a recovery began. In politics, a National (conservative) government replaced Labour in 1990, and introduced proportional representation in 1996. A Labour government (now technically a Labour-led coalition), led by Helen Clark, returned

NZ's staunch antinuclear stance earned it the nickname 'The Mouse that Roared'.

The Ministry for Culture & Heritage's history website (www.nzhistory.net.nz) is an excellent source of info on NZ history.

to office in 1999, and was re-elected in 2002 and 2005. The ensuing years have shown some improvement in the labour market, with 2007 giving the country the lowest unemployment rate on record. An election in 2008 will be watched with interest to see if the Labour party can continue its long stay in power.

The early 21st century is an interesting time for NZ. Like NZ food and wine, film and literature are flowering as never before, and the new ethnic mix is creating something very special in popular music. There are continuities, however – the pub, the sports ground, the quarter-acre section, the bush, the beach and the bach – and they too are part of the reason people like to come here. Realising that NZ has a great culture, and an intriguing history, as well as a great natural environment, will double the bang for your buck.

1985

Rainbow Warrior sunk in Auckland Harbour by French government agents to prevent the Greenpeace protest ship from making its intended voyage to Moruroa, where the French government is conducting a nuclear-testing programme.

1987

The international stock market crash known as 'Black Monday' hits the NZ economy particularly hard, following optimistic financial investment in the free-market atmosphere. The economy takes years to recover.

1992

Government begins reparations for land confiscated in the Land Wars, and confirms Maori fishing rights in the 'Sealord deal'. Major settlements of historical confiscation follow including, in 1995, reparations for the Waikato land confiscations.

1996

NZ changes from a two-party 'first past the post' (FPP) electoral system to Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) representation, allowing minority parties such as the Greens to take a representative role in government.

2004

Maori Television begins broadcasting – for the first time, a channel committed to NZ content and the revitalisation of Maori language and culture hits the small screen.

2005

Election returns Helen Clark in the third successive Labour government by a two-seat majority over the National Party. The newly formed Maori Party takes four electoral seats.

The Culture

THE NATIONAL PSYCHE

New Zealand is like that little guy at school when they're picking rugby teams – quietly waiting to be noticed, desperately wanting to be liked. Then, when he does get the nod, his sheer determination to prove himself propels him to score a completely unexpected try. When his team-mates come to congratulate him he stares at the ground and mumbles, 'It was nothing, ay'.

While a proud little nation, Kiwis traditionally don't have time for show-offs. Jingoistic flag-waving of the American or (increasingly) Australian sort is generally frowned upon. People who make an impression on the international stage are respected and admired, but flashy tall poppies have traditionally had their heads lopped off. This is perhaps a legacy of NZ's early egalitarian ideals – the ones that sought to avoid the worst injustices of the 'mother country' (Britain) by breaking up large land holdings and enthusiastically adopting a 'cradle to grave' welfare state. 'Just because someone's got a bigger car than me, or bigger guns, doesn't make them better' is the general Kiwi attitude.

NZ has rarely let its size get in the way of making a point on the international stage. A founding member of the League of Nations (the precursor to the United Nations), it ruffled feathers between the world wars by failing to blindly follow Britain's position. It was in the 1980s, however, that things got really interesting.

Modern Kiwi culture pivots on that decade. Firstly, the unquestioned primacy of rugby union as a source of social cohesion (which rivalled the country's commitment to the two world wars as a foundation of nation-building) was stripped away when tens of thousands of New Zealanders took to the streets to protest a tour by the South African rugby side in 1981. They held that the politics of apartheid not only had a place in sport, they trumped it. The country was starkly divided; there were riots in Paradise. The scar is still strong enough that most New Zealanders over 35 will recognise the simple phrase 'The Tour' as referring to those events.

The tour protests both harnessed and nourished a political and cultural renaissance among Maori which had already been rolling for a decade. Three years later, that renaissance found its mark when a reforming Labour government gave statutory teeth to the Waitangi Tribunal, an agency that has since guided a process of land return, compensation for past wrongs and interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi – the 1840 pact between Maori and the Crown – as a living document.

At the same time antinuclear protests that had been rumbling for years gained momentum, with mass blockades of visiting US naval ships. In 1984 Prime Minister David Lange barred nuclear-powered or armed ships from entering NZ waters. The mouse had roared. As a result the US threw NZ out of ANZUS, the country's main strategic military alliance which also included Australia, declaring NZ 'a friend but not an ally'.

The following year an event happened that would completely change the way NZ related to the world when French special agents launched a terrorist attack in Auckland Harbour, sinking Greenpeace's antinuclear flagship *Rainbow Warrior* and killing one of its crew. Being bombed by a country that NZ had fought two world wars with and the muted or nonexistent condemnation by other allies left an indelible mark. It strengthened NZ's resolve to follow its own conscience in foreign policy and in 1987 the *Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament & Arms Control Act* became law.

From the Boer to the Vietnam War, NZ had blithely trotted off at the behest of the UK or US. Not anymore, as is demonstrated by its non-involvement in the current Iraq conflict. That's not to say that the country shirks its international obligations. NZ troops continue to be deployed in peacekeeping capacities throughout the world and are currently active in Afghanistan.

If that wasn't enough upheaval for one decade, 1986 saw another bitter battle split the community – this time over the decriminalisation of homosexuality. The debate was particularly rancorous, but the law which previously incarcerated consenting gay adults was repealed – paving the way for the generally accepting society that NZ is today. Just 13 years later the wonderful Georgina Beyer, an openly transsexual former prostitute, would win a once safe rural seat off a conservative incumbent – an unthinkable achievement in most of the world, let alone in NZ a decade ago.

Yet while the 1980s saw the country jump to the left on social issues, simultaneously economic reforms were carried out that were an extreme step to the right (to paraphrase one-time Hamiltonian Richard O'Brien's song *The Time Warp*). The bloated public sector was slashed, any state assets that weren't bolted to the floor were sold off, regulation was removed from many sectors, trade barriers dismantled and the power of the unions greatly diminished.

If there is broad agreement that the economy had to be restructured, the reforms carried a heavy price. The old social guarantees are not as sure. There is poverty in NZ (a 2005 OECD report stated that one in six NZ kids experience poverty, defined as living in households earning less than half the national median income), South Auckland sees Third World diseases such as tuberculosis and New Zealanders work longer hours for lower wages than their Australian cousins would ever tolerate.

Yet there is a dynamism about NZ that was rare in the 'golden weather' years before the reforms. NZ farmers take on the world without the massive subsidies of yore, and Wellington's inner city – once virtually closed after dark by oppressive licensing laws – now thrives with great bars and restaurants. Gradually some of the excesses of the 1980's reforms have been wound back under the Helen Clark-led Labour government and the economy seems all the better for it.

As with the economic reforms, the 'Treaty process' of redress and reconciliation with Maori makes some New Zealanders uneasy, more in their uncertainty about its extent than that it has happened at all. A court decision suggesting that some Maori might have unforeseen rights to stretches of the country's seabed and foreshore (not the beaches themselves, but the area from the high tide outwards) hit a raw nerve amongst some. The assumption had long been that access to the beach was a NZ birthright, although its basis in law proved to be shaky. The conservative National Party, ailing in opposition, tapped into public unease over this new and unexpected dimension to the Treaty process, claiming the country was moving towards 'separatism' – and shot up in the opinion polls. The Labour government, spooked by the public response, passed a law that confirmed the seabed and foreshore in Crown (public) ownership but offered Maori groups the chance to explore their 'customary rights' to places they had traditionally used.

Many Maori, feeling they had been denied due process, were angry, and a *hiko* (march) of 15,000 protested at Parliament, amid speculation that political allegiances were being re-drawn. The speculation was well founded: the momentum generated by the *hiko* led directly to the formation of the Maori Party, which won four of the seven electorates reserved for Maori in the 2005 general election (unseating a Labour MP in each) and even hinted, in the horse trading after the election, that it might back the centre-right National Party. It remains as an independent (and not necessarily left-wing)

Ironically, the person responsible for the nuclear age was a New Zealander. In 1917 Ernest Rutherford was the first to split the nucleus of an atom, having already laid out the theoretical basis of modern nuclear physics. Giving credit to his NZ background he said: 'We don't have the money, so we have to think'. His face appears on the \$100 note.

For many, Sir Edmund Hillary, the first person to climb Mt Everest, was the consummate New Zealander: humble, practical and concerned for social justice. His death in 2008 was marked with an outpouring of grief, particularly in NZ and Nepal, where he was responsible for setting up hospitals and schools.

Maori voice in Parliament and it's quite possible that in the 2008 general election it will hold the balance of power.

For the younger generation, for whom the 1980s are pre-history, political apathy is the norm. Perhaps it's because a decade of progressive government has given them little to kick against – unlike those politicised by the anti-Iraq War movements in the UK, US and Australia. Ironically, as NZ has finally achieved its own interesting, independent cultural sensibility, the country's youth seem more obsessed by US culture than ever.

This is particularly true within the hip-hop scene where a farcical identification with American gangsta culture has developed into a worrying youth gang problem. Even more ridiculous is the epidemic of boy racers, pulling burnouts and street-racing in souped up V8s.

Despite all the change, key elements of the NZ identity are an unbroken thread, and fortune is still a matter of economics rather than class. If you are well served in a restaurant or shop, it will be out of politeness or pride in the job, rather than servility.

In country areas and on bush walks don't be surprised if you're given a cheery greeting from passers-by, especially in the South Island. In a legacy of the British past, politeness is generally regarded as one of the highest virtues. A 'please' and 'thank you' will get you a long way. The three great exceptions to this rule are: a) on the road, where genteel Dr Jekylls become raging Mr Hydes, especially if you have the misfortune of needing to change lanes; b) if you don't speak English very well; and c) if you are Australian.

The latter two traits are the product of insularity and a smallness of world view that tends to disappear among Kiwis who have travelled (and luckily many do). The NZ/Australian rivalry is taken much more seriously on this side of the Tasman Sea. Although it's very unlikely that Kiwis will be rude outright, visiting Aussies must get pretty sick of the constant ribbing, much of it surprisingly ill-humoured. It's a sad truth that while most Australians would cheer on a NZ sports team if they were playing anyone other than their own, the opposite is true in NZ.

You might on your travels hear the phrase 'number-eight wire' and wonder what on earth it means. It's a catchphrase New Zealanders still repeat to themselves to encapsulate a national myth: that NZ's isolation and its pioneer stock created a culture in which ingenuity allowed problems to be solved and tools to be built from scratch. A NZ farmer, it was said, could solve pretty much any problem with a piece of number-eight wire (the gauge used for fencing on farms).

It's actually largely true – NZ farms are full of NZ inventions. One reason big offshore film and TV producers bring their projects here – apart from the low wages and huge variety of locations – is that they like the can-do attitude and ability to work to a goal of NZ technical crews. Many more New Zealanders have worked as managers, roadies or chefs for famous recording artists (everyone from Led Zeppelin and U2 to Madonna) than have enjoyed the spotlight themselves. Which just goes to show that New Zealanders operate best at the intersection of practicality and creativity, with an endearing (and sometimes infuriating) humility to boot.

LIFESTYLE

Living on an island has its perks, especially in summer. By the middle of the week your average Kiwi office worker is keeping a nervous watch on the weather, praying that the rain will hold off for the weekend so that they can head to the beach, maybe start working on the garden or at least get the kids out of the house for a few hours. Of course, the more gung-ho are already making the most of the long summer evenings – there's Carmen the teacher taking the kayak out

Of city dwellers, Wellingtonians feel safest about walking in their city at night, while Christchurch residents feel least safe.

NZ is defined as a state in the Australian constitution. At the time of Australia's federation into one country it was hoped that NZ would join. On this side of the Tasman that idea proved as unpopular then as it does now.

Kiwi inventions include the disposable syringe, the child-proof top for pill bottles and the tear-back Velcro strip.

'SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF NEW ZEALAND?' Russell Brown

That, by tradition, is the question that visitors, especially important ones, are asked within an hour of disembarking in NZ. Sometimes they might be granted an entire day's research before being asked to pronounce, but asked they are. The question – composed equally of great pride and creeping doubt – is symbolic of the national consciousness.

When George Bernard Shaw visited for four weeks in 1934, he was deluged with what-do-you-think-of questions from newspaper reporters the length of the country. Although he never saw fit to write a word about NZ, his answers to those newspaper questions were collected and reprinted as *What I Saw in New Zealand: the Newspaper Utterances of George Bernard Shaw in New Zealand*. Yes, people really were that keen for vindication.

Other visitors were willing to pronounce in print, including the British Liberal MP, David Goldblatt, who came to NZ to convalesce from a heart attack in 1955, became fascinated with the place and wrote an intriguing and prescient little book called *Democracy At Ease: a New Zealand Profile*.

Goldblatt found New Zealanders a blithe people; kind, prosperous, fond of machines, frequently devoid of theory. In 'a land in which the practice of neighbourliness is most strongly developed' no-one went wanting, yet few seemed to aspire. He admired the country's education system and its newspapers, despaired of its tariffs and barriers and wondered at laws that amounted to 'the complete control of the individual by the government'.

He was far from the first visitor to muse about NZ's contradictions – the American academic Leslie Lipson, who weathered the WWII years at Wellington's Victoria University, admired NZ's 'passion for social justice' but fretted about its 'restraint on talent' and 'lack of cultural achievement'.

For the *bon vivant* Goldblatt, the attitude towards food and drink was all too telling. Apart from one visit to a clandestine European-style restaurant in Auckland, where the bottles were hidden under tables, he found only 'the plain fare and even plainer fetch and carry of the normal feeding machine of this country' and shops catering 'in the same pedestrian fashion for a people never fastidious – the same again is the order of the day'.

Thus, a people with access to some of the best fresh ingredients on earth tended to boil everything to death. A nation strewn almost its entire length with excellent microclimates for viticulture produced only fortified plonk. Material comfort was valued, but was a plain thing indeed.

It took New Zealanders a quarter of a century more to shuck 'the same dull sandwiches', and embrace a national awareness – and, as Goldblatt correctly anticipated, it took 'hazards and misfortunes' to spur the 'divine discontent' for change.

But when it did happen, it *really* happened.

fishing after school; and Steven the quantity surveyor with the surfboard in the car, itching to hit the breaks during the last few hours of daylight.

For all the stereotypes of the active healthy Kiwi (and it's true, Carmen and Steven actually exist), other clichés are just as real. Susan's working late at the office. Again. (New Zealanders have among the longest working hours in the developed world.) She'll probably grab some fast food on her way home and, yes, she does want fries with that. (Twenty percent of NZ adults are obese.) Then there's Dean, hanging around on the street with his other teenage mates, trying to look staunch while sweating into his hoodie. The fact is, there is no one NZ lifestyle.

Most Kiwis (except perhaps the farmers) would probably wish it rained a little less and they got paid a little more, but it sometimes takes a few years travelling on their 'Big OE' (Overseas Experience – a traditional Antipodean rite of passage) before they realise how good they've got it. In a 2007 study of the quality of life in the world's major cities, Auckland was rated fifth-best and Wellington 12th.

For most of its history, NZ's small population and plentiful land has seen its people live in stand-alone houses on large, green sections of land. And while that's still the norm, for a number of reasons it has started to change.

Aucklanders are the only city-dwellers who rate watching TV as one of their top three leisure activities. In Christchurch the most popular activity is sports, while in Auckland City and Waitakere (West Auckland) it's socialising with friends in cafés and bars.

According to a recent poll, 90% of NZ's city residents feel that they enjoy a good or extremely good quality of life. Wellingtonians have the most civic pride; residents of South Auckland's Manukau City, the least.

No matter where you are in NZ, you're never more than 128km from the sea.

NZ's happiest residents live in Rodney district, north of Auckland, where 92% described themselves as happy or extremely happy in a 2007 poll.

In Auckland, concern about suburban sprawl and poor public transport, and the gentrification of once-poor inner-city suburbs, has seen a boom in terraced housing and apartments, either in the central city or on its fringes. As immigration-fuelled population growth continues to put pressure on space and prices, more Auckland citizens are learning to do without the birthright of owning their own home – let alone one with a backyard.

Wellington's inner-city boom is slightly different. As the public service has shrunk and large companies have moved their head offices away, old office buildings and warehouses have been converted for apartment living.

At the same time, a parallel trend has seen a rush to the coastlines, and to beautiful areas such as Nelson, at the top of the South Island, where property values have rocketed and orchards have been ploughed under to make way for more housing. In the process, an icon of the Kiwi lifestyle, the bach (pronounced 'batch') – a rough beach house, often passed down through families – has begun to disappear. Many New Zealanders feel this as a loss, especially when the land goes to foreign buyers, and the fear that coastal land is getting beyond the reach of ordinary families is a significant political issue.

The growth in economic inequality in recent decades has seen a serious problem, with overcrowding in a few poor urban areas such as South Auckland. Two or three families can share a single house, with attendant public health problems. A partial return to the public housing policies that created a chunk of the country's current housing stock aims to address this problem.

Family trends, meanwhile, are similar to those in other Western countries: New Zealanders are marrying later (the median age for marriage has increased from just over 20 to over 30 years of age in the last 20 years) or not marrying at all. For those under 25 years of age, de facto unions are now more common than formal marriage, and about a third of all people between the ages of 15 and 44 who are living in partnerships are not legally married. About 21,000 couples still get married every year, and half that many get divorced.

Recent law changes have extended matrimonial property principles to unmarried couples, including same-sex couples. Despite the obligatory outrage from conservatives, Civil Unions were introduced in 2005 – creating a new category of union similar to but separate from marriage – without any major plagues descending and with the support of the majority of the population.

ECONOMY

NZ's economy has been strong in recent years with high growth buoyed mainly by good export returns from farmers (despite a high dollar) and strong tourism. NZ's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) currently stands at around \$130 billion per annum. Unemployment is extremely low (just over 3%), but the upshot of this is a shortage of both highly skilled workers and labourers (particularly fruit pickers at harvest time).

Government budget surpluses have run higher than expected, sparking calls for tax cuts for individuals. However this would add extra inflationary pressure in an environment where the Reserve Bank has already lifted the official interest rate numerous times in an attempt to curb spending (Kiwis aren't great savers). In turn, this has put the squeeze on mortgage holders.

The median annual income is \$24,400, and wealth is far less evenly spread than it was 25 years ago – 18% earn more than double that, while 43% survive on less than \$20,000. The wealthiest region is Wellington, where one in 20 adults reaps more than \$100,000 per annum.

With regards to wealth, NZ sits 21st among the 30 OECD countries on a measure of GDP per head in terms of 'purchasing power parity', indicating that its people are nearly a fifth less affluent than those of Australia, or roughly as wealthy as the average Spaniard.

Back in the heady post-WWII days, NZ was towards the top of the list, buoyed by strong demand for wool, meat and dairy products. Things changed for the worse in 1973 when the country's preferential arrangements with Britain ceased after the UK joined the European Economic Community (later the European Union). NZ was forced to find new markets, and now it exports mainly to Australia, the US, Japan and China. The main commodities exported (in order of value) are dairy products, meat, wood, fish and machinery. The country imports a great deal more than it exports (especially consumer and other manufactured goods) leading to a problematic balance of payments.

POPULATION & MULTICULTURALISM

There are more than 4¼-million resident New Zealanders, and almost one in three of them live in the largest city, Auckland, where growth has been fuelled both by a long-term drift north and more recent waves of immigration. The general drift to the cities means that urban areas now account for about 86% of the population.

The Maori population was somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 at the time of first European contact 200 years ago. Disease and warfare subsequently brought the population near to collapse, but a high birth rate now sees about 15% of New Zealanders (565,000 people) identify as Maori, and that proportion is likely to grow.

The implication of the Treaty of Waitangi is one of partnership between Maori and the Crown (representing the New Zealanders who are 'Pakeha', or of British heritage), together forging a bicultural nation. After decades of attempted cultural assimilation it's now accepted in most quarters that the indigenous culture has a special and separate status within the country's ethnic mix. For example, Maori is an official language and there is a separate electoral role granting Maori guaranteed parliamentary seats.

Yet room has had to be found for the many New Zealanders of neither British nor Maori heritage. In each new wave of immigration there has been an unfortunate tendency to demonise before gradually accepting and celebrating what the new cultures have to offer. This happened with the Chinese in the mid-19th century, Croats at the beginning of the 20th, Pacific Islanders in the 1970s and most recently the Chinese again in the 1990s. That said, NZ society is more integrated and accepting than most. People of all races are represented in all levels of society and race isn't an obstacle to achievement.

Auckland has been the prime destination for ethnic Chinese since immigration rules were relaxed in 1987. While many Asian immigrants have chosen to cluster in Auckland's eastern suburbs, visitors are often surprised by the 'Asianisation' of its central city, where thousands of Asian students reside, either studying at Auckland University, learning English, or both.

Occasional incidents involving Asians – including some high-profile Asian-on-Asian crimes – have added to disquiet about Asian immigration in some parts of society. But opinion polls indicate that most Aucklanders tend to value the contribution of new migrants. Today, more than 21% of Aucklanders are of Asian extraction.

About 20% of Auckland Chinese were born in NZ, but considerable attention has been focused on the so-called '1.5 generation': young Chinese born overseas but socialised (and sometimes educated) in NZ. The traditionally quiescent culture of Chinese New Zealanders has been challenged in recent years, and a dynamic group of young ethnic Asians is emerging into leadership roles not only within their own community, but in wider NZ society.

Auckland is easily the most multicultural centre in NZ, with only slightly over half of the population of European descent (as opposed to around 80% in

People born in other countries make up 23% of NZ residents. Of these, the main regions of origin are the UK and Ireland (29%), the Pacific Islands (15%), North-East Asia (15%) and Australia (7%).

most of the South Island). It is effectively the capital of the South Pacific, with over 170,000 people of Pacific Island heritage living there. Pacific Islanders make up about 7% of the nation's population but 16% of Auckland's.

NZ never had an official 'white' immigration policy as Australia did, but for decades it tended to regard itself as an outpost of Britain. Now it is other influences – NZ's role in the Pacific, its burgeoning economic links to Asia, its offering of sanctuary to refugees – which will continue to shape what it is to be a New Zealander.

SPORT

The arena where Kiwis have most sated their desperation for recognition on the world stage is sport. For most of the 20th century, NZ's All Blacks dominated international rugby union, with one squad even dubbed 'The Invincibles'. Taking over this pastime of the British upper class did wonders for national identity and the game is now interwoven with NZ's history and culture. So when the All Blacks dip out of the Rugby World Cup at semi-final stage (as they have done no fewer than four times in recent tournaments), there is national mourning. Few seem to take solace in (or barely notice) the success of the NZ women's team, the Black Ferns, who have won the last three Women's Rugby World Cups. Below top international level, the Super 14 competition (with teams from Australia and South Africa) offers the world's best rugby, although local purists still prefer the National Provincial Championship (NPC).

For all rugby's influence on the culture, don't go to a game expecting to be caught up in an orgy of noise and cheering. Rugby crowds at Auckland's Eden Park (p128) are as restrained as their teams are cavalier, but they get noisier as you head south. Fans at Canterbury's excellent AMI Stadium (p543) are reputed to be the most one-eyed in the land.

In contrast, a home game for the NZ Warriors rugby league team at Auckland's Mt Smart Stadium (p128) is a thrilling spectacle, especially when the Polynesian drummers kick in. The Warriors are the only NZ team in the Australian NRL (National Rugby League) competition. Rugby League has traditionally been considered the working-class sport and support is strongest from Auckland's Maori, Polynesian and other immigrant communities.

Netball is the leading sport for women and the one in which the national team, the Silver Ferns, perpetually vies for world supremacy with the Australians – one or other of the countries has taken the world championship at every contest (except for a tie in 1979). The rivalry looks set to intensify in 2008 as both countries have disbanded their national club leagues to start a new trans-Tasman competition featuring five teams from each country.

Cricket is the established summer team sport, and the State Shield (one-day) and State Championship provincial competitions take place alongside international matches involving the national side, the Black Caps, through the summer months. Wellington's Basin Reserve is the last sole-use test cricket venue in the main centres (and only a few minutes' walk from the bars and restaurants of Courtenay Pl) while New Plymouth's Pukekura Park (p249) is simply one of the prettiest cricket grounds in the world.

Other sports in which NZ pushes above its weight include sailing, rowing, canoeing, equestrian and triathlon. The most Olympic medals NZ has won have been in athletics, particularly in track and field events.

New Zealanders not only watch sport, they play it. Many workplaces have social teams or groups of mates get together for a friendly match. The most popular sports for men to participate in are (in order) golf, cricket, tennis, touch football and rugby union. For women it's netball, tennis, golf, touch football and skiing. Other popular active pursuits include kayaking, mountain biking, walking and running.

The first referee in the world to use a whistle to halt a game was William Attack of Christchurch. He thought of this now seemingly obvious and ubiquitous refereeing tool in 1884.

In terms of taking part in physical pursuits, New Zealanders are the second most active people in the world, behind the Finnish people.

MEDIA

Almost all NZ cities have their own morning newspapers, sometimes coexisting with the Auckland-based *New Zealand Herald* (www.nzherald.co.nz). The standard of news is reasonably impartial, although the *Herald* can be relied upon for a right-wing slant to most editorials.

The magazine market is more varied, and dominated by independent publishers. The *Listener* (like the *Herald*, owned by Australian company APN, which is in turn controlled by Irish media magnate Tony O'Reilly) is published weekly and offers TV and radio listings. Auckland's own magazine, *Metro*, is a good-looking guide to the style of the city. *Cuisine* is a sleek, popular and authoritative guide to food and wine.

Free-to-air TV is dominated by the two publicly owned Television New Zealand channels (TV One and TV2), versus the Canadian-owned TV3 and its sibling music channel C4. Maori Television is a great source of locally produced programming as well as screening some interesting foreign documentaries and films. Much of it is broadcast in Maori, although subtitles are often added. A 100% Maori language second channel is planned for 2008.

Regional TV struggles, but is stronger on the South Island, where Nelson's Mainland TV and Invercargill's Southland TV are a strong part of their communities. The country's only access TV station, Triangle, reflects Auckland's cultural and ethnic diversity. The pay TV market is entirely in the hands of Sky TV, which in 2006 joined the free-to-air market by purchasing Prime TV from its Australian owners.

Radio Sport carries one of the sounds of the NZ summer: cricket commentaries. The public broadcaster, Radio New Zealand, is based in Wellington: its flagship, National Radio, offers strong news and feature programming and is available nationwide. The network of student stations, the bNet, offers an engaging and adventurous alternative (they're also the best place to hear about local gigs), and the most sophisticated of the stations, Auckland's 95bFM, is surprisingly influential in its advocacy of new alternative music.

There is also a nationwide network of *iwi* (tribal) stations, some of which, including Waikato's Radio Tauiui, offer welcome respite from the commercial networks – others, such as Auckland's Mai FM, take on the commercial broadcasters at their own game. Also worth noting are the national Pacific Island station Niu FM and the dance station George FM which started from a bedroom in Auckland's Grey Lynn and can now be heard in eight towns.

For interesting analysis of the issues of the day and the buzz on the streets check out the excellent *Public Address* blogsite (www.publicaddress.net). Wellington is well serviced by *The Wellingtonista* (www.wellingtonista.com), which serves up 'random stuff about NZ's capital city'.

RELIGION

Although the national anthem, 'God Defend New Zealand', is an appeal to the Almighty, and Parliament begins every day with prayers, New Zealanders are not a particularly pious people – far less so, according to polls, than Australians. A New Zealander is more likely to be spiritually fulfilled in the outdoors than in church. The land and sea were spiritual constants in pre-European Maori culture and they are scarcely less so today.

NZ is predominantly a Christian country (56%), although over a third of the population claim no religious affiliation at all. The number of people identifying as Christian has been falling – by 5% between the 2001 and 2006 censuses – although religion remains strong in the Pacific Island community, where 80% are members of that faith.

Reflecting its English heritage, NZ is nominally Anglican; where religion has a place in public affairs it will be of that flavour. Yet the Catholic Church

The 'Goodnight Kiwi' is a character featured in a one-minute animation that signalled the end of nightly broadcasts on TVNZ channels from 1981 to 1994 (prior to 24-hour broadcasting). The iconic clip returned in late 2007 on the digital-only TVNZ 6.

is gaining ground, increasing its numbers by 5% in recent years. Catholicism now has 508,000 adherents to Anglicanism's 555,000.

Maori spirituality has been fused with Christianity since colonisation in movements such as Ratana and Ringatu, but is increasingly expressed in its own right.

Immigrants have brought their faiths with them, but religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism in total account for less than 4% of the population.

WOMEN IN NEW ZEALAND

NZ is justifiably proud of being the first country in the world to give women the vote (in 1893). Kate Sheppard, the hero of the women's suffrage movement, even features on the \$10 bill.

Despite that early achievement, the real role for women in public life was modest for many years. That can hardly be said now. The country has its second female Prime Minister and for a time in 2000 every key constitutional position was held by a woman, including the Attorney General, Chief Justice, Governor General and Head of State – although New Zealanders can't take credit for choosing Betty Windsor for that role. At the same time a Maori Queen headed the Kingitanga (p219) and a woman led NZ's biggest listed corporation.

Yet, even with the presence of a Ministry of Women's Affairs, some benefits have been slow to come to ordinary NZ women: paid parental leave was only instituted in 2002, for example. As in most other countries, women's wages tend to be lower than men's, although the gap is closing. Women are nearly twice as likely to work more than one job and there are three times more men in the top earnings decile (over \$67,000 per annum) than women.

When NZ women complain that there aren't enough decent men to go around, they've got a point: there are 104 women for every 100 men. The man shortage is particularly acute for straight women in their 30s, an age at which Kiwi blokes are more likely to be living overseas than their countrywomen. If they do snag a keeper, chances are he'll be older – the median age for brides is 30, while its 33 for bridegrooms.

On the plus side, women live longer: the average life expectancy for women is 82, as opposed to 78 for men.

NZ has shamefully high rates of domestic and child abuse. A 2007 study suggested that as many as a quarter of NZ women had suffered some form of sexual abuse by the time they were 15. The figures were higher for rural women.

ARTS Literature

A nationalist movement arose in literature in the 1930s, challenging the notion of NZ being an annex of the 'mother country' (Britain) and striving for an independent identity. Some writers who appeared then – especially the poets Allen Curnow, Denis Glover, ARD Fairburn and RAK Mason – became commanding figures in the definition of a new culture, and were still around in the 1950s to be part of what prominent historian Keith Sinclair (himself a poet) called the time 'when the NZ intellect and imagination came alive'.

Katherine Mansfield's work began a NZ tradition in short fiction, and for years the standard was carried by novelist Janet Frame, whose dramatic life was depicted in Jane Campion's film of her autobiography, *An Angel at My Table*. Her novel *The Carpathians* (1989) won the Commonwealth Writers Prize. A new era of international recognition began in 1985 when Kerri Hulme's haunting *The Bone People* won the Booker Prize (the world is still waiting for the follow-up, *Bait*).

Glamorous Rotorua-born Jean Batten, known as Hine-o-te-Rangi (Daughter of the Skies), was a famous pilot and the most famous New Zealander of the 1930s. During a glittering career, she broke several records for long-distance solo flights.

In 1989 when Penny Jamieson was consecrated as the Bishop of Dunedin she became the world's second ever female Anglican Bishop and the first to lead a diocese in her own right.

It wasn't until 2007 that another Kiwi looked likely to snag the honour. Lloyd Jones' *Mister Pip* was pipped at the post, but the nomination rocketed his book up literature charts the world over.

Some of the most interesting and enjoyable NZ fiction voices belong to Maori writers. Witi Ihimaera's novels give a wonderful insight into small-town Maori life on the East Coast – especially *Bulibasha* (1994) and *The Whale Rider* (1987), which was made into an acclaimed film – while *Nights In The Gardens Of Spain* (1996) casts a similar light on Auckland's gay scene. His most recent novel is *The Rope of Man* (2005). Patricia Grace's work is similarly filled with exquisitely told stories of rural *marae*-centred life: try *Mutuwhenua* (1978), *Potiki* (1986) or *Tu* (2004).

Much of the best (and most popular) nonfiction of recent years has concerned NZ history: Philip Temple's 2002 book *A Sort of Conscience* (about the Wakefields, the family that drove the colonisation of NZ), the late Michael King's hugely popular *Penguin History of New Zealand* (2003) and James Belich's more academic *Making Peoples* (1996) are all fine works. If you want to try and understand NZ character, good places to start are *Great New Zealand Argument: Ideas About Ourselves* (2005), which collects writing on national identity spanning 70 years, and the award-winning *At Home: A Century of New Zealand Design* (2004) by Douglas Lloyd Jenkins.

Cinema & TV

If you first got interested in NZ by watching it on the silver screen, you're in good company. Peter Jackson's NZ-made *Lord of the Rings* trilogy was just about the best thing to happen to NZ tourism since Captain Cook.

Yet NZ cinema is hardly ever easy-going. In his BBC-funded documentary, *Cinema of Unease*, NZ actor Sam Neill described the country's film industry

NZ has one book shop for every 7500 people. That's more book shops per head of population than anywhere else in the world.

Witi Ihimaera wrote his novel *The Whale Rider* in a three-week burst in 1987, inspired by his daughters' complaints that he took them to movies with only male heroes.

NEW ZEALAND'S LORD OF THE REELS Errol Hunt

Peter Jackson was already a hero to NZ's small film industry before he directed his famous trilogy: *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), *The Two Towers* (2002) and *The Return of the King* (2003). From his very first film, *Bad Taste* (vomit-eating aliens and exploding sheep; 1987), it was obvious that he was a unique talent. It was followed by *Meet the Feebles* (muppets on acid; 1989) and an even gorier zombie movie, *Braindead* ('I kick ass for the Lord'; 1992). Two slightly-less-bloodstained films – *Heavenly Creatures* (1994) and *The Frighteners* (1996) – preceded the *LOTR* films, while the giant *King Kong* (2005) followed hard in the tiny hobbits' footsteps.

The effect of the three *LOTR* films on NZ was unparalleled: The country embraced Jackson and his trilogy with a passion. Wellington was renamed Middle-earth for the week of the first film's release in late 2001, a Minister for the *LOTR* was named in the NZ government and Jackson was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services in the film industry. The frenzy only increased for the second and third films, especially when the world premiere (world premiere!) of *The Return of the King* was held in Wellington in December 2003, and of course went on to win a record 11 Oscars.

Many Kiwis contributed to the films' success: in all, about 2000 New Zealanders had full-time jobs working on the *LOTR* films, and that's in addition to the extras (15,000 of them, including a few hundred NZ Army personnel pressed into armour and drafted into battle scenes for *The Fellowship of the Ring*). Travelling around NZ, it sometimes feels like every man and his dog had some part in the movies, or wants to tell you about a relative who did.

The effect of the *LOTR* films was not only a boost to national morale: the films' effect on NZ's economy was enormous. Of the \$650 million spent making the films, much stayed in NZ. The film industry has gone from strength to strength, with the filming of other Hollywood and local blockbusters here prompting Wellington's new nickname, Wellywood. The effect on tourism was also massive.

MIDDLE-EARTH TOURISM

If you are one of those travellers inspired to come down under by the scenery of the *LOTR* movies, you won't be disappointed. Jackson's decision to film in NZ wasn't mere patriotism. Nowhere else on earth will you find such wildly varied, unspoiled landscapes.

You will doubtless recognise some places from the films. For example, Hobbiton (near Matamata; p232), Mt Doom (instantly recognisable as towering Ngauruhoe; p309) or the Misty Mountains (the South Island's Southern Alps). The visitor information centres in Wellington, Twizel or Queenstown should be able to direct you to local *LOTR* sites of interest. If you're serious about finding the exact spots where scenes were filmed, buy a copy of Ian Brodie's nerdtastic *The Lord of the Rings: Location Guidebook*, which includes instructions, and even GPS coordinates, for finding all the important scenes. Also check the beautiful online location guide at www.filmnz.com/middle-earth. Private companies run *LOTR* tours in Tongariro National Park, Wellington, Nelson, Methven, Queenstown and Wanaka.

For fun rainy-weekend viewing, get a few old Jackson films out on DVD and look for Jackson's own performances. He stars as both the chainsaw-wielding Derek and Robert the Alien in *Bad Taste*, and has cameos as the undertaker's assistant in *Braindead*, a derelict hobo outside a cinema in *Heavenly Creatures* and a clumsy, chain-wearing biker in *The Frighteners*. In the *LOTR* films, Jackson appears as a belching hobbit outside a pub in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, a stone-throwing Helms Deep defender in *The Two Towers* and a captain of the Corsairs in *The Return of the King*. In *King Kong*, a slimmed-down Jackson plays one of the biplane machine gunners in the climactic end scene.

as 'uniquely strange and dark', producing bleak, haunted work. One need only watch Lee Tamahore's harrowing *Once Were Warriors* (1994) to see what he means.

The *Listener's* film critic, Philip Matthews, makes a slightly more upbeat observation based on three recent productions: 'Between (Niki Caro's) *Whale Rider*, (Christine Jeffs') *Rain* and *Lord of the Rings*, you can extract the qualities that our best films possess. Beyond slick technical accomplishment, all share a kind of land-mysticism, an innately supernatural sensibility.'

You could add to this list Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993), Brad McGann's *In My Father's Den* (2004), Vincent Ward's *River Queen* (2005), Robert Sarkies' *Out of the Blue* (2006) and Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures* (1995) – all of which use magically lush scenery to couch disturbing violence. It's a land-mysticism constantly bordering on the creepy.

Even when Kiwis do humour it's as resolutely black as their rugby jerseys. Check out Jackson's early splatter-fests (see the boxed text, p49), Taika Cohen's oddball loser-palooza *Eagle vs Shark* (2007) and Jonathan King's sickly hilarious *Black Sheep* (2006) – 'get ready for the violence of the lambs'. Exporting NZ comedy hasn't been easy, yet the HBO-produced TV musical parody *Flight of the Conchords* – featuring a mumbling, bumbling Kiwi folk-singing duo trying to get a break in New York – has found surprising success in the supposed irony-free zone that is the USA.

New Zealanders have gone from never seeing themselves in international cinema to having whole cloned armies of Temuera Morrison's invading the universe in *Star Wars*. Familiar faces such as Cliff Curtis and Karl Urban seem to constantly pop up playing Mexican or Russian gangsters in action movies. Many of them got their start in long-running soap opera *Shortland St* (7pm weekdays, TV2).

Other local shows worth catching are *Outrageous Fortune*, a rough-edged comedy-drama set in West Auckland, and *bro'Town*, a better-drawn Polynesian version of *South Park*. It's the Polynesian giggle-factor that seems likeliest to break down the bleak house of NZ cinema. The *bro'Town* boys

Other than 2003's winner *Return of the King*, *The Piano* is the only NZ movie to be nominated for a Best Picture Oscar. Jane Campion was the first Kiwi nominated as Best Director and Peter Jackson the first to win it.

The only Kiwi actors to have won an Oscar are Anna Paquin (for *The Piano*) and Russell Crowe (for *Gladiator*). Paquin was born in Canada but moved to NZ when she was four, while Crowe moved from NZ to Australia at the same age. NZ claims both.

(who also do stand-up comedy as the Naked Samoans) hit the big screen with the feel-good-through-and-through *Sione's Wedding* in 2006 – with the second-biggest local takings of any NZ film.

Music Gareth Shute

NZ music reaches back to the early forms of singing (*waiata*) developed by Maori since their arrival in the country. The main musical instruments were wind instruments made of bone or wood, the most well-known of which is the *nguru* (sometimes referred to as the 'nose flute'), while percussion was provided by chest- and thigh-slapping. These days, the liveliest place to see Maori music being performed is at Kapa Haka competitions (see p284), in which groups compete with their own routines of traditional song and dance. In a similar vein is the Pasifika Festival (p116) in Auckland, which has sections that represent each of the Pacific Islands, and this means a wide range of music and dance is on show in both its traditional and modern forms. Pasifika is a great place to see Cook Island drums in action, along with Polynesian styles of guitar, ukulele and guitar.

European music first arrived in NZ with immigrants from Europe, and steadily developed local variants over the early 1900s. In the 1950s Douglas Lilburn became one of the first internationally recognised NZ classical composers. More recently the country has produced a number of world-renowned musicians in this field, including opera singer Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, million-selling pop diva Hayley Westenra and composer/percussionist Gareth Farr (who also performs in drag under the name Lilith). Each of the main universities in NZ runs its own music school and these often have free concerts which visitors can attend. More large-scale performances are held at various venues within the Edge conglomerate of venues in Auckland (p129), the Michael Fowler centre in Wellington (p419), and the Town Hall in Christchurch (p542).

NZ also has a strong rock music scene, its most acclaimed exports being the revered indie label Flying Nun and the music of the Finn Brothers (see p52). In 1981 Flying Nun was started by Christchurch record store owner, Roger Shepherd. Many of the early groups came from Dunedin, where local musicians took the do-it-yourself attitude of punk but used it to produce a lo-fi indie-pop music which gained a great deal of attention from the likes of *NME* in the UK and *Rolling Stone* magazine in the US. *Billboard* even claimed in 1989: 'There doesn't seem to be anything on Flying Nun Records that is less than excellent.' Many of the musicians from the Flying Nun scene still perform live to this day, including David Kilgour (from The Clean), Martin Phillipps (from The Chills), Chris Knox (from Tall Dwarfs), and Shayne Carter (from the Straitjacket Fits, now fronting Dimmer). The university bar, Refuel, in Dunedin and the Dux De Lux in Christchurch (and during the winter, its sister bar in Queenstown) continue to be home to a flourishing indie-rock scene. Also recommended is the Wunderbar in Lyttleton (just out of Christchurch) which is a rustic venue with a fantastic hillside view of the harbour below.

Flying Nun is now owned by Warners, but continues to release exciting new acts such as The Mint Chicks and The Shocking Pinks. Other young indie labels have sprung up to take its place including Lil Chief Records and Arch Hill Recordings. For more adventurous listeners, Bruce Russell continues to play in influential underground group The Dead C, and releases music through his Corpus Hermeticum label.

Since the new millennium, the music scene in NZ has developed a new vitality after the government was able to arrange for commercial radio stations in the country to adopt a voluntary quota of 20% local music. This

Gareth Shute is the author of four books, including *Hip Hop Music In Aotearoa and NZ Rock 1987-2007*. He is also a musician and has toured the UK, Europe, and Australia as a member of The Ruby Suns. He now plays in The Conjurors, Dictaphone Blues and The Cosbys.

A wide range of cultural events are listed on www.nzlive.com – this is a good place to find out about Kapa Haka performances. Concerts and classical music recitals can be found at www.eventfinder.co.nz. For more specific information on the NZ classical music scene, see: www.sounz.org.nz.

One of the most complete listings of NZ bands that have existed over the last couple of decades is available at www.muzik.net.nz. A thriving community of bloggers also discuss issues to do with local music at www.nzmusic.com.

has enabled the more commercially orientated musicians to have solid careers. Rock groups such as Shihad and The Feelers have thrived in this environment, as have a set of soulful female solo artists (who all happen to have Maori heritage): Bic Runga, Anika Moa, and Brooke Fraser (daughter of All Black, Bernie Fraser).

However, the genres of music that have been adopted most enthusiastically by Maori and Polynesian New Zealanders have been reggae (in the 1970s) and hip hop (in the 1980s), which has led to distinct local variants of both of these musical styles. In Wellington, a thriving jazz scene took on a reggae influence to create a host of groups that blend dub, roots, and funky jazz – most notably Fat Freddy's Drop. Most of the venues for this music can be found along Courtenay Place or between the shops on Cuba Mall (see p417). The national public holiday, Waitangi Day, on 6 February also happens to fall on the birthday of Bob Marley and this has led to yearly reggae concerts being held on this day in Auckland and Wellington.

The local hip-hop scene has its heart in the suburbs of South Auckland, which have a high concentration of Maori and Pacific Island residents. This area is home to one of NZ's foremost hip-hop labels, Dawn Raid, which takes its name from the infamous early-morning house raids of the 1970s that police performed on Pacific Islanders who overstayed their visas. Dawn Raid has produced a number of successful local acts including rappers Savage and Mareko, and R&B singers Aradhna and Adeaze. Nonetheless, the most successful local rappers to date have been Scribe (originally from Christchurch) and Che Fu (from inner-Auckland suburb, Grey Lynn). The leading venue for urban music in Auckland is 4:20 on Karangahape Rd and underneath is the club, Rising Sun, which has live music as well as dance music events.

Since the new millennium, NZ has become known as a home for garage rock after the international rise of two local acts: the Datsuns and the D4. In Auckland (see p127), the main venue for rock music is the King's Arms, though two joint venues in St Kevins Arcade (off Karangahape Rd) are also popular – the Wine Cellar/Whammy Bar. Wellington has a range of bars that specialize in live music from long-standing Bodega, to the San Francisco Bathhouse, and home to heavier forms of music, Valve (see p417).

THE BROTHERS FINN

There are certain tunes that all Kiwis can sing along to, given a beer and the opportunity. The music of Tim and Neil Finn makes up a good proportion of these, and accounts for some of the best-known New Zealand pop hits on the international stage.

Tim Finn first came to prominence in the late-70s group, Split Enz. When their original guitarist quit, Neil flew over to join the band in the UK despite being only 15 at the time. Split Enz amassed a solid following in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada before disbanding in 1985. Neil went on to form Crowded House with two Australian musicians (Paul Hester and Nick Seymour) and one of their early singles, 'Don't Dream It's Over' went on to hit number two on the US charts. Tim later did a brief spell in the band, during which the brothers wrote 'Weather With You' – a song that reached number seven on the UK charts, pushing their album *Woodface* to gold sales. Crowded House continued until 1996, when they ended the first stage of their life with a huge concert in front of 100,000 people on the steps of the Sydney Opera House. Tim and Neil released a number of solo albums, as well as combining for the occasional album as the Finn Brothers. In 2007, Neil reformed Crowded House, while Tim reinvented his career as a solo artist with one of his songs picked up for the movie *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch & the Wardrobe*. Both Tim and Neil were born in the small town of Te Awamutu and the local museum has a collection that documents their work (p227).

An up-to-date list of gigs in the main centres is listed at www.grooveguide.co.nz. For those interested in indie rock, a great source of information is www.cheeseontost.co.nz, which lists gigs and has interviews/photographs of bands (both local and international).

NEW ZEALAND'S BEST PLAYLIST

In 2001, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Australasian Performing Rights Association, a poll was taken of members to come up with the top NZ songs of all time. For the soundtrack to your NZ visit, download the following top 20 songs (legally of course) to your MP3 player, or look out for the three double-CD *Nature's Best* compilations in CD stores.

- Nature – Fourmylula (1969)
- Don't Dream It's Over – Crowded House (1986)
- Loyal – Dave Dobbyn (1988)
- Counting the Beat – The Swingers (1981)
- Six Months in a Leaky Boat – Split Enz (1982)
- Sway – Bic Runga (1997)
- Slice of Heaven – David Dobbyn with Herbs (1986)
- Victoria – Dance Exponents (1982)
- She Speeds – Straitjacket Fits (1987)
- April Sun in Cuba – Dragon (1978)
- I Got You – Split Enz (1980)
- Whaling – DD Smash (1984)
- Not Given Lightly – Chris Knox (1990)
- Pink Frost – The Chills (1984)
- Jesus I Was Evil – Darcy Clay (1997)
- Weather With You – Crowded House (1991)
- Blue Smoke – Pixie Williams (1949)
- Dance All Around the World – Blerata (1972)
- Lydia – Fur Patrol (2000)
- Blue Lady – Hello Sailor (1977)

To update the list slightly, try these:

- Misty Frequencies – Che Fu (2001)
- Harmonic Generator – The Datsuns (2002)
- Not Many – Scribe (2003)
- Advice for Young Mothers To Be – The Veils (2006)
- Bright Grey – The Phoenix Foundation (2007)

Dance music had its strongest following in Christchurch in the 1990s, when it gave rise to the popular dub/electro outfit, Salmonella Dub. Drum 'n' bass has been a particular favourite locally and has spawned internationally popular acts such as Concord Dawn and Shapeshifter. Fu Bar on Queen St in Auckland is one of the best places to catch local DJs at work (see p128).

In summer, many of the beachfront towns of the country are visited by bands touring through the country. One venue of note in this respect is the Leigh Sawmill Café in Leigh (85km from Auckland), which also offers accommodation and is located near the popular scuba-diving/snorkelling spot at Goat Island.

There are also a number of festivals that take place over the summer months, including the local leg of the Big Day Out (held in Auckland in early-February) and the Christian-rock festival, Parachute (www.parachutemusic.com), in January (held near Wellington). Bi-yearly, there is also Womad (www.womad.co.nz) in New Plymouth, which combines world-music acts from overseas with local acts that draw from traditional forms of music.

Visual Arts

The NZ 'can do' attitude extends to the visual arts. If you're visiting a local's home don't be surprised to find one of the owner's paintings on the wall or one of their mate's sculptures in the back garden, pieced together out of bits of shell, driftwood and a length of the magical 'number-eight wire'.

This is symptomatic of a flourishing local art and crafts scene cultivated by lively tertiary courses churning out traditional carvers and weavers, jewellery makers, multimedia boffins, and moulders of metal and glass. The larger cities have excellent dealer galleries representing interesting local artists working across all mediums.

'How Bizarre' was a massive hit in Europe, the UK, US, and Australia during 1996. The song was by OMC – an acronym for 'Otago Millionaire's Club', which made light of the poverty-stricken home suburb of Otago.

Not all the best galleries are in Auckland or Wellington. The energetic Govett-Brewster Art Gallery (p247) – home to the legacy of sculptor and film-maker Len Lye – is worth a visit to New Plymouth in itself, and Gore's Eastern Southland Gallery (p669) has an important and growing collection of works by Ralph Hotere, Rita Angus and others.

Traditional Maori art has a distinctive visual style with well-developed motifs which have been embraced by NZ artists of every race. In the painting medium, these include the cool modernism of the work of Gordon Walters and the more controversial pop-art approach of Dick Frizzell's *Tiki* series. Likewise, Pacific Island themes are common, particularly in Auckland. An example is the work of Niuean-born Auckland-raised John Pule, who is also a poet and novelist.

It should not be surprising that in a nation so defined by its natural environment, landscape painting constituted the first (post-European) body of art. John Gully and Petrus van der Velden were among those to arrive and paint memorable (if sometimes overdramatised) depictions of the land.

A little later, Charles Frederick Goldie painted a series of compelling, realist portraits of Maori, who were feared to be a dying race. Debate over the political propriety of Goldie's work raged for years, but its value is widely accepted now: not least because Maori themselves generally acknowledge and value them as ancestral representations.

From the 1930s NZ art took a more modern direction and produced some of the country's most celebrated artists including Rita Angus, Toss Woollaston and Colin McCahon. McCahon is widely regarded to have been the country's most important artist. His paintings might seem inscrutable, even forbidding, to the visitor, but, even where McCahon lurched into Catholic mysticism or quoted screeds from the *Bible*, his spirituality was rooted in geography. His bleak, brooding landscapes evoke the sheer power of NZ's terrain. The influence of his dramatic, simple canvasses can be seen in the work of celebrated current artists, such as Ralph Hotere and Shane Cotton.

Wellingtonians are the most content with their city's art and culture scene of any city dwellers in the country.

Maori Culture John Huria

'Maori' once just meant 'common' or 'everyday', but now it means...let's just begin this chapter by saying that there is a lot of 'then' and a lot of 'now' in the Maori world. Sometimes the cultural present follows on from the past quite seamlessly; sometimes things have changed hugely; sometimes we just want to look to the future.

Maori today are a diverse people. Some are engaged with traditional cultural networks and pursuits; others are occupied with adapting tradition and placing it into a dialogue with globalising culture. The Maori concept of *whanaungatanga* – family relationships – is important to the culture. And families spread out from the *whanau* (extended family) to the *hapu* (subtribe) and *iwi* (tribe) and even, in a sense, beyond the human world and into the natural and spiritual worlds.

Maori are New Zealand's *tangata whenua* ('people of the land'), and the Maori relationship with the land has developed over hundreds of years of occupation. Once a predominantly rural people, many Maori now live in urban centres, away from their traditional home base. But it's still common practice in formal settings to introduce oneself by referring to home: an ancestral mountain, river, sea or lake, or an ancestor. There's no place like home, but it's good to be away as well.

If you're looking for a Maori experience in NZ you'll find it – in performance, in conversation, in an art gallery, on a tour...

MAORI THEN

Some three millennia ago people began moving eastwards into the Pacific, sailing against the prevailing winds and currents (hard to go out, easier to return safely). Some stopped at Tonga and Samoa, and others settled the small central East Polynesian tropical islands.

The Maori colonisation of Aotearoa began from an original homeland known to Maori as Hawaiki (see p30). Skilled navigators and sailors travelled across the Pacific, using many navigational tools – currents, winds, stars, birds and wave patterns – to guide their large, double-hulled ocean-going craft to a new land. The first of many was the great navigator Kupe who arrived, the story goes, chasing an octopus named Maturangi. But the distinction of giving NZ its well-known Maori name – Aotearoa – goes to his wife, Kuramarotini, who cried out, '*He ao, he ao tea, he ao tea roa!*' (A cloud, a white cloud, a long white cloud!).

Kupe and his crew journeyed around the land, and many places around Cook Strait (between the North and South Islands) and the Hokianga in Northland still bear the names that they gave them and the marks of his passage. Kupe returned to Hawaiki, leaving from (and naming) Northland's Hokianga. He gave other seafarers valuable navigational information. And then the great *waka* began to arrive.

The *waka* (ocean-going craft) that the first settlers arrived on, and their landing places, are immortalised in tribal histories. Well-known *waka* include *Takitimu*, *Kurahaupo*, *Te Arawa*, *Mataatua*, *Tainui*, *Aotea* and *Tokomaru*. There are many others. Maori trace their genealogies back to those who arrived on the *waka* (and further back as well).

What would it have been like making the transition from small tropical islands to a much larger, cooler land mass? Goodbye breadfruit, coconuts, paper mulberry; hello moa, fernroot, flax – and immense space (relatively speaking). NZ has over 15,000km of coastline. Rarotonga, by way of contrast, has a little

John Huria (Ngai Tahu, Muaupoko) has an editorial, research and writing background with a focus on Maori writing and culture. He was senior editor for Maori publishing company Huia (NZ) and now runs an editorial and publishing services company, Ahi Text Solutions Ltd (www.ahitextsolutions.co.nz).

You can check out a map that shows *iwi* distribution and a good list of *iwi* websites on Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org). Search under 'list of Maori iwi'.

Kupe's passage is marked around NZ: he left his sails (Nga Ra o Kupe) near Cape Palliser as triangular landforms; he named the two islands in Wellington Harbour Matiu and Makoro after his daughters; his blood stains the red rocks of Wellington's south coast.

HOW THE WORLD BEGAN

In the Maori story of creation, first there was the void, then the night, then Rangī-nui and Papatū-a-nuku (sky father and earth mother) came into being, embracing with their children nurtured between them. But nurturing became something else. Their children were stifled in the darkness of their embrace. Unable to stretch out to their full dimensions and struggling to see clearly in darkness, their children tried to separate them. Tawhiri-matea, the god of winds, raged against them; Tu-mata-uenga, the god of war, assaulted them. Each god child in turn tried to separate them, but still Rangī and Papa pressed against each other. And then Tane-mahuta, god of the great forests and of humanity, placed his feet against his father and his back against his mother and slowly, inexorably, began to move them apart. Then came the world of light, of demigods and humanity.

In this world of light Maui, the demigod ancestor, was cast out to sea at birth and was found floating in his mother's topknot. He was a shape-shifter, becoming a pigeon or a dog or an eel if it suited his purposes. He stole fire from the gods. Using his grandmother's jawbone, he bashed the sun so that it could only limp slowly across the sky, so that people would have enough time during the day to get things done (if only he would do it again!). Using the South Island as a canoe, he used the jawbone as a hook to fish up Te Ika a Maui (the fish of Maui) – the North Island. And, finally, he met his end trying to defeat death itself. The goddess of death, Hine Nui Te Po, had obsidian teeth in her vagina (obsidian is a volcanic glass that takes a razor edge when chipped). Maui attempted to reverse birth (and hence defeat death) by crawling into her birth canal to reach her heart as she slept. A small bird – a fantail – laughed at the absurd sight. Hine Nui Te Po awoke, and crushed Maui between her thighs. Death one, humanity nil.

over 30. There was land, lots of it, and a flora and fauna that had developed more or less separately from the rest of the world for 80 million years. There was an untouched, massive fishery. There were great seaside mammalian convenience stores – seals and sea lions – as well as a fabulous array of birds.

The early settlers went on the move, pulled by love, by trade opportunities and greater resources; pushed by disputes and threats to security. When they settled, Maori established *mana whenua* (regional authority), whether by military campaigns, or by the peaceful methods of intermarriage and diplomacy. Looking over tribal history it's possible to see the many alliances, absorptions and extinctions that went on.

Histories were carried by the voice, in stories, songs and chants. Great stress was placed on accurate learning – after all, in an oral culture where people are at the libraries, the past is always a generation or two away from oblivion.

Maori lived in *kainga*, small villages, which often had associated gardens. Housing was quite cosy by modern standards – often it was hard to stand upright while inside. From time to time people would leave their home base and go to harvest seasonal foods. When peaceful life was interrupted by conflict, the people would withdraw to *pa*, fortified dwelling places.

And then Europeans began to arrive (see p31).

MAORI TODAY

Today's culture is marked by new developments in the arts, business, sport and politics. Many historical grievances still stand, but some *iwi* (Ngāi Tahu and Tainui, for example) have settled historical grievances and are major forces in the NZ economy. Maori have also addressed the decline in Maori language use by establishing *kohanga reo*, *kura kaupapa Maori* and *wananga* (Maori-medium preschools, schools and universities). There is a generation of people who speak Maori as a first language. There is a network of Maori radio stations, and Maori television is attracting a committed viewership. A recently revived Maori event is becoming more and more prominent –

Arriving for the first time in NZ, two crew members of Tainui saw the red flowers of the pohutukawa tree, and they cast away their prized red feather ornaments, thinking that there were plenty to be had on shore.

Maori legends are all around you as you tour NZ: Maui's *waka* became today's Southern Alps; a *taniwha* formed Lake Waikaremoana in its death throes; and a rejected Mt Taranaki walked into exile from the central North Island mountain group, carving the Whanganui River.

Matariki, or Maori New Year. The constellation Matariki is also known as the Pleiades. It begins to rise above the horizon in late May or early June and its appearance traditionally signals a time for learning, planning and preparing as well as singing, dancing and celebrating. Watch out for talks and lectures, concerts, dinners, and even formal balls.

RELIGION

Christian churches and denominations are important in the Maori world: televangelists, mainstream churches for regular and occasional worship, and two major Maori churches (Ringatu and Ratana) – we've got it all.

But in the (non-Judeo Christian) beginning there were the *atua Maori*, the Maori gods, and for many Maori the gods are a vital and relevant force still. It is common to greet the earth mother and sky father when speaking formally at a *marae*. The gods are represented in art and carving, sung of in *waiata* (songs), invoked through *karakia* (prayer and incantation) when a meeting house is opened, when a *waka* is launched, even (more simply) when a meal is served. They are spoken of on the *marae* and in wider Maori contexts. The traditional Maori creation story is well known and widely celebrated (see opposite).

THE ARTS

There are many collections of Maori *taonga* (treasures) around the country. Some of the largest and most comprehensive are at Wellington's Te Papa Museum (p405) and the Auckland Museum (p102). Canterbury Museum (p531) in Christchurch also has a good collection, and Hokitika's West Coast Historical Museum (p504) has an exhibition showing the story of *pounamu* (nephrite jade, or greenstone).

You can stay up to date with what is happening in the Maori arts by reading *Mana* magazine (available from most newsagents), listening to *iwi* stations (www.irirangi.net) or weekly podcasts from Radio New Zealand (www.radionz.co.nz/genre/maori,pacific). Maori Television also has regular features on the Maori arts – check out www.maoritelevision.com.

Maori Television went to air in 2004, and it was an emotional time for many Maori who could at last see their culture, their concerns and their language in a mass medium. Over 90% of content is NZ made, and programmes are in both Maori and English: they're subtitled and accessible to everyone. If you want to really get a feel for the rhythm and metre of spoken Maori from the comfort of your own chair, switch to Te Reo, a Maori-language-only channel launched in March 2008.

Ta moko

Ta moko is the Maori art of tattoo, traditionally worn by men on their faces, thighs and buttocks, and by women on their chins and lips. *Moko* were permanent grooves tapped into the skin using pigment (made from burnt caterpillar or kauri gum soot), and bone chisels: fine, sharp combs for broad work, and straight blades for detailed work. Museums in the major centres – Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch – all display traditional implements for *ta moko*.

The modern tattooist's gun is common now, but bone chisels are coming back into use for Maori who want to reconnect with tradition. Since the general renaissance in Maori culture in the 1960s, many artists have taken up *ta moko* and now many Maori wear *moko* with quiet pride and humility.

Can visitors get involved, or even get some work done? The term *kirituhi* ('skin inscriptions') has arisen to describe Maori motif-inspired modern tattoos that non-Maori can wear. If you'd like to experience *ta moko*, or even get *kirituhi*, your first stop is www.tamoko.org.nz. This website has articles, galleries and links to artists within NZ.

Depending on area, the *powhiri* has gender roles: women *karanga* (call), men *whaikorero* (orate); women lead the way on to the *marae*, men sit on the *paepae* (the speakers' bench at the front). In a modern context, the debate around these roles continues.

See Hirini Moko Mead's *Tikanga Maori*, Pat and Hiwi Tauroa's *Visiting a Marae*, and Anne Salmond's *Hui* for detailed information on Maori customs.

See Ngahuaia Te Awekotuku's *Mau Moko: The World of Maori Tattoo* (2007) for the big picture, with powerful, beautiful images and an incisive commentary.

Carving

Traditional Maori carving, with its intricate detailing and curved lines, can transport the viewer. It's quite amazing to consider that it was done with stone tools, themselves painstakingly made, until the advent of iron (nails suddenly became very popular).

Some major traditional forms are *waka* (canoes), *pataka* (storage buildings), and *whareniui* (meeting houses). You can see sublime examples of traditional carving at Te Papa (p405) in Wellington, and at the following:

Auckland Museum (p102) Maori Court.

Hell's Gate (p339) Near Rotorua; carver in action every day.

Iwi Art Gallery (p419) Wellington (commercial operator).

Nga Hau e Wha (Marae of the Four Winds; p533) In Christchurch.

Otago Museum (p581) Dunedin. Nice old *waka* and meeting-house carvings.

Parihaka (p259) Historic site on Surf Highway 45, Taranaki.

Putiki Church (p274) Interior covered in carvings and *tukutuku* (wall panels), Wanganui.

Taupo Museum & Art Gallery Taupo (p291) Carved meeting house.

Te Manawa (p282) Museum with a Maori focus, Palmerston North.

Waikato Museum (p219) Beautifully carved *waka taua* (war canoe) in this Hamilton museum.

Wairakei Terraces Taupo (p302) Carved meeting house.

Waitangi Treaty Grounds (p172) *Whare runanga* (meeting house) and *waka taua* (war canoe).

Wanganui Regional Museum (p274) Wonderful carved *waka* (canoe), Wanganui.

Whakarewarewa Thermal Village (p327) The 'living village' – carving, other arts, meeting house and performance, Rotorua.

The apex of carving today is the *whare whakairo* (carved meeting house). A commissioning group relates their history and ancestral stories to a carver, who then draws (sometimes quite loosely) on traditional motifs to interpret or embody the stories and ancestors in wood or composite fibreboard.

Rongomaraeroa Marae, by artist Cliff Whiting, at Te Papa in Wellington is a colourful example of a contemporary reimagining of a traditional art form. The biggest change in carving (as with most traditional arts) has been in the use of new mediums and tools. Rangī Kipa uses a synthetic polymer called Corian to make his *hei tiki*, the same stuff that is used to make kitchen benchtops. You can check out his gallery at www.rangikipa.com.

Weaving

Weaving was an essential art that provided clothing, nets and cordage, footwear for rough country travel, mats to cover earthen floors, and *kete* (bags) to carry stuff in. Many woven items are beautiful as well as practical. Some were major works – *korowai* (cloaks) could take years to finish. Woven predominantly with flax and bird feathers, they are worn now on ceremonial occasions, a stunning sight.

Working with natural materials for the greater good of the people involved getting things right by maintaining the supply of raw material and ensuring that it worked as it was meant to. Protocols were necessary, and women were dedicated to weaving under the aegis of the gods. Today, tradition is greatly respected, but not all traditions are necessarily followed.

Flax was (and still is) the preferred medium for weaving. To get a strong fibre from flax leaves, weavers scraped away the leaves' flesh with a mussel shell, then pounded till it was soft, dyed it, then dried it. But contemporary weavers are using everything in their work: raffia, copper wire, rubber – even polar fleece and garden hoses!

The best place to experience weaving is to contact one of the many weavers running workshops. By learning the art, you'll appreciate the examples of weaving in museums even more. And if you want your own? Woven *kete* and

VISITING MARAE

As you travel around NZ, you will see many *marae* complexes. Often *marae* are owned by a descent group. They are also owned by urban Maori groups, schools, universities and church groups, and they should only be visited by arrangement with the owners. Some *marae* that may be visited include: Whakatu Marae in Nelson through Te Hiko Maori (p463); Koriniti Marae on the Whanganui River Road (p281); Pipitea Marae in Wellington (p400); and Te Papa Museum Marae in Wellington (p405).

Marae complexes include a *whareniui* (meeting house), which often embodies an ancestor. Its ridge is the backbone, the rafters are ribs, and it shelters the descendants. There is a clear space in front of the *whareniui* (the *marae atea*). Sometimes there are other buildings: a *wharekai* (dining hall); a toilet and shower block; perhaps even classrooms, play equipment and the like.

Hui (gatherings) are held at *marae*. Issues are discussed, classes conducted, milestones celebrated and the dead farewelled. Te reo Maori (the Maori language) is prominent, sometimes exclusively so.

Visitors sleep in the meeting house if a *hui* goes on for longer than a day. Mattresses are placed on the floor, someone may bring a guitar, and stories and jokes always go down well as the evening stretches out...

The Powhiri

If you visit a *marae* as part of an organised group, you'll be welcomed in a *powhiri*. The more common ones are outlined here.

There may be a *wero* (challenge). Using taiaha (quarter-staff) moves a warrior will approach the visitors and place a baton on the ground for a visitor to pick up.

There is a *karanga* (ceremonial call). A woman from the host group calls to the visitors and a woman from the visitors responds. Their long, high, falling calls begin to overlap and interweave and the visiting group walks on to the *marae atea*. It is then time for *whaikaero* (speechmaking). The hosts welcome the visitors, the visitors respond. Speeches are capped off by a *waiata* (song), and the visitors' speaker places *koha* (gift, usually an envelope of cash) on the *marae*. The hosts then invite the visitors to *hariru* (shake hands) and *hongiri* (see below). Visitors and hosts are now united and will share light refreshments or a meal.

The Hongiri

Press forehead and nose together firmly, shake hands, and perhaps offer a greeting such as 'Kia ora' or 'Tena koe'. Some prefer one press (for two or three seconds, or longer), others prefer two shorter (press, release, press). Men and women sometimes kiss on one cheek. Some people mistakenly think the *hongiri* is a pressing of noses only (awkward to aim!) or the rubbing of noses (even more awkward).

Tapu

Tapu (spiritual restrictions) and *mana* (power and prestige) are taken seriously in the Maori world. Sit on chairs or seating provided (never on tables), and walk around people, not over them. The *powhiri* is *tapu*, and mixing food and *tapu* is right up there on the offense-o-meter. Do eat and drink when invited to do so by your hosts. You needn't worry about starvation: an important Maori value is *manaakitanga* (kindness).

backpacks have become fashion accessories and are on sale in most cities. Weaving is also found in dealer art galleries around the country.

Haka

Experiencing *haka* can get the adrenalin flowing, as it did for one Pakeha observer in 1929 who thought of dark Satanic mills: 'They looked like fiends from hell wound up by machinery'. *Haka* can be awe-inspiring; it can also be uplifting. The *haka* is not only a war dance – it is used to

Before you go touring NZ, pick up a Manaaki Card. This little beauty of a card will get you discounts at most Maori-operated tourist attractions. It also doubles as a phone card. See www.manaaki.co.nz.

CONNECTION WITH THE LAND

The best way to learn about the relationship between the land and the *tangata whenua* is to get out there and start talking with Maori. See the Maori New Zealand boxed texts in individual chapters and the colour Maoritanga section on p10 for recommendations on Maori experiences in the area.

welcome visitors, honour achievement, express identity or to put forth very strong opinions.

Haka involves chanted words, vigorous body movements, and *pukana* (when performers distort their faces, eyes bulging with the whites showing, perhaps with tongue extended).

The well-known *haka* 'Ka Mate', performed by the All Blacks before rugby test matches, is credited to the cunning fighting chief Te Rauparaha. It celebrates his escape from death. Chased by enemies, he hid himself in a food pit. After they had left, a friendly chief named Te Whareangi (the 'hairy man' referred to in the *haka*), let him out; he climbed out into the sunshine and performed 'Ka Mate'.

You can experience *haka* at various cultural performances including at Mitai Maori Village (p328), Tamaki Maori Village (p328), Te Puia (p326) and Whakarewarewa Thermal Village (p327) in Rotorua; Katoro Waka Heritage Tours (p531) and Ko Tane (p533) in Christchurch; Maori Uncut (p477) in Kaiteriteri; Maori Tours (p455) in Kaikoura; Te Hikoi Maori (p463), Nelson; Myths & Legends Eco-tours (p435), Picton; Harakeke Basket Weaving (p472), Motueka; and Ka Pai Tours (p275), Wanganui.

But the best displays of *haka* are at the national Te Matatini National Kapa Haka Festival (www.tematatini.org.nz), when NZ's top groups compete. It's held early each year in Palmerston North.

Contemporary visual art

A distinctive feature of Maori visual art is tension between traditional Maori ideas and modern artistic mediums and trends. Shane Cotton produced a series of works that conversed with 19th-century painted meeting houses, which themselves departed from Maori carved houses. Kelcy Taratoa uses toys, superheroes and pop urban imagery alongside weaving and carving design.

Of course not all Maori artists use Maori motifs. Ralph Hotere is a major NZ artist who 'happens to be Maori' (his words), and his career-long exploration of black speaks more to modernism than the traditional *marae* context.

Contemporary Maori art is by no means only about painting. Many other artists use installations as the preferred medium – look out for work by Jacqueline Fraser and Peter Robinson.

There are some great permanent exhibitions of Maori visual arts in the major centres. Both the Auckland and Christchurch Art Galleries hold strong collections, as well as Wellington's Te Papa.

Contemporary theatre

The 1970s saw the emergence of many Maori playwrights and plays, and theatre is a strong area of the Maori arts today. Maori theatre drew heavily on the traditions of the *marae*. Instead of dimming the lights and immediately beginning the performance, many Maori theatre groups began with a stylised *powhiri* (see p59), had space for audience members to respond to the play, and ended with a *karakia* (blessing or prayer) or a farewell.

Taki Rua is an independent producer of Maori work for both children and adults and has been in existence for over 25 years. As well as staging their

For the Maori arts today, check out Toi Maori www.maoriart.org.nz.

If you're buying Maori art, look for the Toi Iho Maori Made mark. It signifies that the work is created by a Maori artist (and not produced offshore). Check out www.toiio.com.

shows in the major centres, they also tour most of their work – check out their website (www.takirua.co.nz) for their current offerings. Maori drama is also often showcased at the professional theatres in the main centres as well as the biennial New Zealand International Festival. Hone Kouka and Briar Grace-Smith (both have published playscripts available) have toured their works around NZ and to festivals in the UK.

Contemporary dance

Contemporary Maori dance often takes its inspiration from *kapa haka* and traditional Maori imagery. The exploration of pre-European life also provides inspiration. For example a Maori choreographer, Moss Patterson, used *kokowai* (a body-adorning paste made from reddish clay and shark oil) as the basis of his most recent piece of the same name, and the spectacular *Maui – One Man Against the Gods* presents the Maui cycle using aerialism, *kapa haka* and dance; see www.mauitheshow.com.

NZ's leading specifically Maori dance company is the Atamira Dance Collective (www.atamiradance.co.nz). They have been producing critically acclaimed, beautiful and challenging work since 2000. If that sounds too earnest, another choreographer to watch out for is Mika Torotoro, who happily blends *kapa haka*, drag, opera, ballet and disco into his work. You can check out clips of his work at www.mika.co.nz.

Maori film-making

Although there had already been successful Maori documentaries (*Patu!* and the *Tangata Whenua* series are brilliant, and available from some urban video stores), it wasn't until 1987 that NZ had its first fiction feature-length movie by a Maori director with Barry Barclay's *Ngati*. Mereta Mita was the first Maori woman to direct a fiction feature with *Mauri* (1988). Both Mita and Barclay had highly political aims and ways of working, which involved a lengthy pre-production phase, during which they would consult with and seek direction from their *kaumatua* (elders). Films with significant Maori participation or control include the harrowing *Once Were Warriors* and the uplifting *Whale Rider*. More recently, Oscar-shortlisted Taika Waititi, of Te Whanau-a-Apanui descent, wrote and directed *Eagle vs Shark*.

The New Zealand Film Archive (www.filmarchive.org.nz) is a great place to experience Maori film, with most showings being either free or relatively inexpensive. They have offices in Auckland (see p129) and Wellington (p405).

Maori writing

There are many novels and collections of short stories by Maori writers, and personal taste will govern your choices. How about approaching Maori writing regionally? Read Patricia Grace (*Potiki*, *Cousins*, *Dogside Story*, *Tu*) around Wellington, and maybe Witi Ihimaera (*Pounamu*, *Pounamu*, *The Matriarch*, *Bulibasha*, *The Whale Rider*) on the North Island's East Coast. Keri Hulme (*The Bone People*, *Stonefish*) and the South Island go together like a mass of whitebait bound in a frying pan by a single egg (ie very well). Read Alan Duff (*Once Were Warriors*) anywhere, but only if you want to be saddened, even shocked. Definitely take James George (*Hummingbird*, *Ocean Roads*) with you to Auckland's West Coast beaches and Northland's Ninety Mile Beach. Paula Morris (*Queen of Beauty*, *Hibiscus Coast*, *Trendy but Casual*) and Kelly Ana Morey (*Bloom*, *Grace is Gone*) – hmm, Auckland and beyond? If poetry appeals you can't go past the giant of Maori poetry in English, the late, lamented Hone Tuwhare (*Deep River Talk: Collected Poems*). Famously sounding like he's at church and in the pub at the same time, you can take him anywhere.

Music plays an important role in traditional and contemporary Maori culture: see p51 for more details.

The first NZ hip-hop song to become a hit was Dalvanus Prime's 'Poi E', which was sung entirely in Maori by the Patea Maori Club. It was the highest-selling single of 1984 in NZ, outselling all international artists.

Food & Drink

Lauraine Jacobs

New Zealand enjoys a reputation internationally as a clean, green producer of food products. This little country, at almost the end of the world, has an economy where more than 55% of all export earnings are directly from the excellent dairy, meat and horticulture industries.

Throughout NZ there's a real emphasis on fresh, natural production as the temperate climate, fertile soil, and a balance of sunshine and rainfall allows farmers to grow an abundance of produce for local and export markets. And locals appreciate it, foraging at an exciting new wave of farmers markets, and everywhere else from local supermarkets and specialty food stores to road-side stalls.

Look for citrus fruit at farm stands in the North around Kerikeri, avocados and kiwifruit near Tauranga, apples and stone fruit in Hawkes Bay and whitebait on the west coasts of both islands during spring. In the south, around Nelson and Marlborough, there are fruit and vegetable stalls throughout both provinces, while freshly dug potatoes can be bought directly from farmers near Oamaru. Varietal honeys with the aromas of the specific vegetation of each region can be found, and around Cromwell in Central Otago some excellent dried fruit can be sampled at several stops.

Pre-European settlement, Maori people ate a diet that was predominantly fish, bird and root vegetables such as kumara, brought from Polynesia and cultivated in NZ. Food was often cooked in an underground pit known as a *hangi*. The first European settlers were mainly British and they introduced beef, sheep and pigs to the country. For more than a century, the Kiwi diet was the stolid fare similar to the prewar food served up throughout the UK. Lots of bread and potatoes, plain cooking with roasting and boiling as the predominant culinary techniques, and meat (mutton and beef) with three vegetables served as the bland dinner fare throughout the nation each night. For many, this style of cooking continues today, often supplemented by the ubiquitous international brands of fast food that are found through the country.

Traditionally NZ has been a nation of farmers, and in the 21st century, despite the population drift to urban areas, the farm remains the mainstay of the economy. The innovation that has kept farm management and quality among the best in the world is now evident in the immense range of new food products that can be found on shelves of stores around the country, and on café and restaurant menus.

Over the past 30 years there has been a massive shift in diet, as NZ embraced Asia and the Pacific Islands, and encouraged immigration from those regions. Young New Zealanders set off on their OE (overseas experience), bringing them into contact with the cuisines of the Mediterranean and the food of the East. Temporary work in kitchens and pubs in the UK also gave these young travellers a chance to learn about the 'new' British cuisine. They experimented with new tastes through their travels and returned home with a keen appetite for lighter, fresher fare and a desire for the fusion of the culinary delights experienced elsewhere.

At the same time some farmers moved to diversify from the traditional pastoral farming and ventured into vines, olives and kiwifruit. Wine and kiwifruit, industries hardly dreamed of 35 years ago, have grown from boutique operations and are now huge export earners, continuing to enjoy spectacular growth.

Lauraine Jacobs is an award-winning food writer, and food editor of *Cuisine* magazine. Passionate about NZ's wine and food she travels the country extensively in her quest to seek out the best culinary experiences and to discover new and exciting wines and food products.

The furry-skinned kiwifruit with an emerald green interior became the champion of pastry chefs world wide. By chance, the vines sported a new variety. Its golden sister, known as 'Gold' has a smoother skin and pale yellow interior that contains more than double the recommended daily intake of vitamin C.

There's been a stellar rise in the number and variety of cafés and restaurants in recent years. NZ food is best described as Pacific Rim fusion food; the elements and ingredients from the countries of Southeast Asia, India and the Pacific nations have found their way into the local food culture. Chefs and cooks throughout the country have sought out new products and embraced the techniques and flavours they discovered overseas.

Stir-fries, pasta, sushi and fresh, interesting salads are likely to be the meals of choice at home or when eating out. And within the regions of NZ, the locals are awakening to the regional produce of their area and celebrating the seasonal specialities, especially matched to the local wines. With good advice on where to eat and research into the specialities of the regions and food producing areas, travelling in NZ can be a culinary adventure not to be missed.

STAPLES & SPECIALITIES

One of the joys of NZ fare is the grass-fed meat. Cattle, sheep and venison munch on lush pastures year-round, enjoying the freedom of the outdoors, and producing meat that's lean, tasty and sustainably grown. Lamb is a must for any meat-eating visitor, whether it's marinated lamb chops sizzling on the barbecue, a roast leg of lamb with traditional mint sauce enjoyed around the farm table or a stylish lamb dish in a top restaurant. The perfect accompaniments are roasted potatoes and chunks of kumara (local sweet potatoes) and fresh green vegies.

New Zealanders also love their steak, and restaurants often list a fine-grained beef dish. Following hard on the heels of the Sauvignon Blanc phenomenon, local red wines have garnered international attention and both Pinot Noir and Syrah varietals make a fine accompaniment to any red meat meal.

With more than 19,000km of pristine coastline and the largest fishing grounds of any country on earth, seafood is also a must. Shellfish abound in coastal waters and the highly rated Bluff oysters are first choice with locals. Be warned, however, that it's rare to find an oyster freshly shucked-to-order in NZ. Fish shops, supermarkets and markets sell fresh oysters, sometimes in the shell, but most often already shucked and packed in sea water in small plastic containers.

POLYNESIAN SPECIALITIES

Some foods are highly prized by the Maori and Pacific Island population, but won't be found on many menus.

Mutton bird is not for all tastes, as it is very fatty and has a fishy taste, but is a must for travellers who venture to Stewart Island. Equally fatty is palusami, a favourite food with Pacific Islanders. Taro leaves or spinach are slow-cooked with coconut and corned beef to make a rich tasty meal.

Puha (prickly sow thistle) is a popular feature of Maori cooking found growing wild in backyards and farms across the country. These leafy greens are boiled up with pork, mussels or mutton bones.

Kina and paua are two types of shellfish to seek out. Kina is a sea urchin found amongst rocks on the coastline with roe that is eaten raw from within the spiny shell. Paua (abalone) has dark black meat and can be grilled or minced for fritters; it's very expensive and has a meaty savoury flavour.

Recently chefs have become interested in a range of local herbs and spices which they add to meat and fish dishes as a condiment. Peppery horopito (a bush pepper), scented kawakawa (bush basil) and kelp salt (from the seaweed plant) can be found on menus, and in packets in speciality food stores.

The restaurant industry is NZ's largest private sector employer with nearly 4% of the total workforce.

ORGANIC NEW ZEALAND

No-one is more aware of the importance of sustainability of the land than the farmers of NZ. With the country's economy, past and future, dependent on agricultural and pastoral industries, clean unpolluted soil, water and air are constant daily considerations of living.

Organic production and awareness is growing rapidly, and organic stores can be found in every major city throughout the country. In farmers markets and supermarkets organically grown and produced food will be proudly displayed and labelled. Many New Zealanders embrace the idea of organic food, convinced of the health benefits, and actively seek certified organic produce.

However, in a country that produces more food than it could possibly consume, many food products are still imported. To really taste the goodness of NZ it is necessary to check that the meat, poultry, vegetables and fruit on menus and in stores has been grown in NZ.

Seafood specialities include Greenshell mussels (which are tasty and often far larger than those served in other parts of the world), cockles, clams and scallops. Crayfish (a rock lobster) is rich and sweet, but expensive. Whitebait are a much prized tiny thread-like fish that are most commonly served in a fritter, and can be tracked down during the months of September through to December. A common Friday night family ritual is to order in fish and chips, a popular meal which is good value and in plentiful supply throughout NZ.

Apart from large-scale salmon, oyster and mussel farming, the aquaculture industry is still in its infancy. Keen fishermen will find plenty of places to catch their own rainbow or brown trout in the many lakes and rivers of NZ, and will be the only visitors to enjoy these treats as trout cannot be sold lawfully.

Visitors should also look for uniquely NZ foods such as pavlova (a cream-and-fruit-topped meringue cake) and hokey pokey ice cream (a vanilla ice cream filled with nuggets of crunchy golden toffee). Those with a sweet tooth will fall in love with the range of varietal honeys, especially Manuka honey which has extraordinary healthful and healing properties.

Breakfast is an important meal in NZ, and more frequently enjoyed in cafés that can be found in the cities and reasonably sized towns. In private homes the menu will centre around breakfast cereal (muesli is hugely popular), eggs, toast (with that amazing honey or jam) and coffee or tea. If you sleep in, seek out a local café's 'All Day Breakfast' which usually encompasses eggs, bacon, tomatoes, mushrooms and toast or bread.

Sushi seems to be a lunch choice of many in the cities, but venture into the country and it's more likely stores will offer a selection of portable food such as muffins, huge bread rolls or sandwiches stuffed with salad and chicken or ham, and NZ pies.

Dinner, the main meal of the day is served anytime from 5.30pm (probably in more rural areas) to as late as 9.30pm in more sophisticated restaurants. The older generation still calls the evening meal 'tea' and visitors should be aware that an invitation to 'tea' may not turn out to be a cup of tea but could be a full dinner with a main course of meat, fish or poultry and vegetables accompanied by wine, followed by a homemade pudding.

Owner-operated stores, known locally as the 'dairy', are ubiquitous in small towns and city suburbs. All manner of food items, ice creams rolled to order, bread, milk and newspapers and almost every staple need is stocked. Historically the dairy was the only open store on weekends and stayed open longer than other businesses. Now trading hours in the malls and supermarkets have been heavily extended, but the tradition of the dairy lives on.

Bluff oysters are unique to NZ, a wild species of oyster that are dredged from the deep waters off the southern tip of the South Island near the port of Bluff. The season starts in mid-April and lasts until the strictly administered quota catch is filled.

For years only recognised for high-quality cheddar cheese, NZ has grown its cheese market rapidly, with many small producers making artisan cheeses from cow, sheep and goat milk. All NZ cheese is currently made (by law) from pasteurised milk.

DRINKS

Trying a zingy Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc wine can be a life-changing experience as the fresh, fruity, almost herbal aromas leap out of the glass. It holds a unique position in the wine world, and is sought after all over the globe.

But it's not just wine that Kiwis drink. After work, around the barbecue, at the beach and in cafés up and down the country, beer, wine and cocktails are part of the social culture. Walk into any restaurant, and almost every table will be graced with a bottle or two of opened wine to accompany the meal. All supermarkets sell local wines, often at bargain prices, but the very best NZ wines are mainly sold in specialist wine stores or found on the wine lists of the better restaurants.

Beer too, has long been part of the Kiwi culture, and although the two main large brewing companies dominated the market for many years, boutique hand-crafted beers have become very fashionable. Nelson, the region where hops, an essential ingredient in beer, are grown has become a treasure trove of boutique beers and visitors can call in to several operations to pick up 'a dozen' or two to take to the beach.

Another speciality drink to look for is the internationally acclaimed 42Below Vodka. It's a great example of Kiwi ingenuity as innovator Geoff Ross produced uniquely NZ flavoured vodkas (kiwifruit, Manuka honey, feijoa and more), presented them in elegant bottles and recently sold his company to Bacardi for many millions. He's been retained to oversee and guard the standards.

Lemon & Paeroa is a beverage unique to NZ. L&P, as it's commonly known, is a fruity fizzy drink with a taste reminiscent of citrus. Celebrating 100 years of continuous bottling in 2007, it is made in a soft drink factory in

WINE-TOURING

Visitors to NZ who have a real passion for food and wine can follow a wine trail that will take them right through the country from North to South, rather than following traditional tourist routes.

Within each wine region, there are numerous wineries that welcome visits at the cellar door, and many have good restaurants where the food is designed to match the wines grown and produced on the estate. More adventurous travellers will find cycle tours within the regions, or can sign up for guided tours in minivans organised by wine experts. Where good wines are created, there's usually good local food too.

As most international visitors arrive through the airport of Auckland, a great place to start is with a day visit to Matakana (p152) for the Pinot Gris wines, or to Waiheke Island (p135), a 45-minute ferry ride from Auckland's downtown, to taste the island's intense red wines and the local Chardonnays.

The route that takes in the major wine-growing areas would be to head south from Auckland to Hawkes Bay (p376) to taste the Chardonnay and Syrah wines. This is a vast area so careful planning of a trail is essential to avoid endless crisscrossing.

Next it's off through extensive sheep country to the Wairapapa to try the renowned Pinot Noirs of Martinborough (p427). From there an exhilarating drive over the Rimutaka hills arrives in Wellington to cross Cook Strait to Marlborough (p448) by ferry or air.

Marlborough's Sauvignon Blancs made their mark internationally and firmly established NZ's credibility in the world of wine. (A side trip to experience the aromatic white wines of Nelson is suggested.)

The wine tourist can then hit the trail through Waipara and North Canterbury (p552) for Riesling and Pinot Noir wines, and finish in the scenic Central Otago region (p595) where wine tourism is a popular addition to the area's famous adventure tourism. The Pinot Noirs of Otago exhibit all the characteristics of the wild thyme- and heather-clad hills throughout the region.

MICROBREWERIES

New Zealanders sure can brew up a storm! Here are our picks for the best Kiwi microbreweries you're likely to meet:

- **Aotearoa Breweries** (p358) Their first batch of Mata Manuka – a honeyed golden ale – won gold at the NZ International Beer Awards. Their Mata Artesian – a hoppier drop – could only manage silver and bronze.
- **Bennett's Beer** (www.bennettsbeer.co.nz) One of Wellington's boutique-est brewers makes a Belgian Strong, a spicy 4 Seasons Ale, and the Wellington Lager, which will 'relieve you of both mental and physical exhaustion'.
- **Brew Moon Brewery** (p552) Just before the Waipara Valley wine-growing area in north Canterbury, the roadside Brew Moon Brewery in Amberley lures visitors in with three different beers on tap and an excellent café. Try the chocolatey Brew Moon Dark Side Stout.
- **Founders Brewery** (p461; www.biobrew.co.nz) NZ's first certified organic brewery is in Nelson. Take a behind-the-scenes tour and sip the immaculate product.
- **Galbraith's Alehouse** (www.alehouse.co.nz) Auckland's beer aficionados flock to this micro-brewery, cosily housed in an old library. Try the British-style Bellringers' Bitter or a whole raft of other carefully crafted brews from around the world.
- **Mussel Inn** (p483; www.musselinn.co.nz) Sensationally offbeat roadside brewhouse near Collingwood in Golden Bay. Veer off the road for a cold handle of Captain Cooker, a brown beer brewed naturally with manuka.
- **Roosters Brewhouse** (p395) Batch-brewed preservative-free stouts, ales, draughts and lagers to get you crowing.
- **Three Boys Brewery** (www.threeboysbrewery.co.nz) Three Boys IPA is available at discerning bars and restaurants in Christchurch. Packed with hops, it's an authentic version of the Indian Pale Ales originally crafted to last the long sea journey to colonial India.
- **Wanaka Beerworks** (p636; www.wanakabeerworks.co.nz) Look for this brewery's beers in restaurants around Queenstown and Wanaka. The Brewski pilsener is packed with floral, hoppy flavours and is an excellent rendition of a Czech-style lager.
- **White Cliffs Organic Brewery** (p254) White Cliffs enjoys a reputation far and wide, particularly for Mike's Mild – an amber ale with notes of fruit and roasted nuts: a real connoisseur's drop.

the North Island town of Paeroa, which has a gigantic replica of the bottle in the town centre.

Despite the country's distance from any coffee-growing area, coffee drinking has become an important part of the NZ culture. Twenty years ago coffee was made by the filter or percolator method, but today you'll find excellent espresso machines, often operated by trained baristas. Interest in coffee has coincided with the rise and rise of the café, and in the cities the coffee drinkers seek out their favourite roaster and barista. To find the best coffee, follow the tried and tested rule of joining the crowd at the busiest spot in town.

And going along with NZ's clean green image, good-quality drinking water flows from every tap. Bottled water's popularity is on the rise, no longer an extravagance, and both international brands and local waters are offered at every restaurant and café.

CELEBRATIONS

One of the most intriguing celebrations for visitors from the northern hemisphere is Christmas. And that's because the end of December marks the start of the annual summer vacation period and Kiwis begin their holidays with a huge Christmas family feast.

Some families keep to the tradition inherited from their forebears of a large roast turkey, a glazed ham, vegetables and all the trimmings, followed by a rich boiled fruit pudding with hot custard, Christmas cake and loads of champagne, wine and beer to wash it all down. But, increasingly, locals are seizing the opportunity to enjoy the hot weather by making a casual picnic meal of cold food at the beach, or celebrate with family and friends at an outdoor party where sausages, steak and seafood are cooked on a barbecue and accompanied by fresh salads. Strawberries are at their best, so a Kiwi Christmas dinner may end with strawberries and some of the creamy local ice cream.

During the harvest period in late summer (February to April) wine and food is celebrated in many of the wine-growing regions with local festivals. Wine flows freely, there's no shortage of food stalls with local specialities, and it's all terrific fun, especially as the day lengthens and the wine kicks in.

Some visitors may be fortunate enough to attend a Maori *hangi*, a feature of almost any gathering, occasion or funeral on the *marae* (Maori meeting house). A pit is dug, a fire lit, stones placed on the fire and when finally deemed hot enough, chicken, lamb, pork, kumara, potatoes, corn, pumpkin and other vegetables are covered with sacks and placed over the hot stones. The earth covers the pit and the food steams for an hour or two before being lifted out and carried to the table. The flavour of the food, which is usually not seasoned with spices or herbs, is earthy and tender. A great deal of associated drinking, chatter and comradeship are very much part of a *hangi*.

As NZ has evolved into a more multicultural society, many different ethnic groups have introduced their own celebrations. Pasifika, a festival celebrating Polynesian culture, takes place in Auckland over a weekend in February. It's two days of eating Island foods such as Pacific fruits and vegetables, sticky coconut buns, suckling pig, baked spinach or taro leaves with coconut and much more. Island sports, singing and cultural dancing take place.

In October the Diwali celebration of the Indian community has become part of the Auckland calendar and many tiny food stalls are set up near the harbour for a weekend celebration. Spicy aromas waft through the air, and the vast array of savoury snacks and jewel-like sweets are irresistible.

In rural areas, the Agricultural & Pastoral associations showcase farming practices and display their best animals at local showgrounds on a special day each year. These fun days are full of competitions and events, although the food offered tends to be basic pies, hamburgers, barbecued sausages and hot dogs. Hearty but hardly gourmet fare!

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

Farmers markets are a relatively new introduction to the shopping options in NZ. In the past five years there has been extraordinary growth and from one market in 2001 (at Whangarei in the north), the number has steadily increased each year to more than 40 throughout the country at the end of 2007.

Most are held on weekends, either Saturday or Sunday morning, and are happy local affairs where visitors will meet local producers and find fresh produce. It's a great way to find out just what food is the speciality of the region. Mobile coffee is usually available and several tastings are offered by enterprising and innovative stall holders who sell value-added food products.

Always take a bag to carry purchases as many of the sustainably minded markets ban the use of plastic bags. Arrive as early as possible – the best produce always sells out very quickly.

Look at www.farmersmarkets.org.nz to find dates and times of farmers markets throughout NZ.

The Wildfoods Festival is held in Hokitika in March. Each year the locals try to outdo each other with some gastronomically challenging treats such as deep-fried huhu grubs (a fat, nutritious larva), deep-fried fish eyes and marinated duck tongues all washed down with copious quantities of the locally brewed beer.

For an authoritative guide to food and wine, visit www.cuisine.co.nz.

TOP 10 EATING EXPERIENCES

Just as the climate changes from south to north, so do the local speciality foods of each region. In more upmarket restaurants, menus often reflect pride in the regional produce. Chefs carefully seek the very best, and celebrate fresh locally grown fruit, vegetables, olive oils, meat and locally caught fish, and often credit their suppliers on their menus. Cafés offer more casual fare and occasionally pay homage to the local producers.

Some specialities to look for on menus in the far north and the Auckland region are avocados, nuts, citrus fruits and Asian vegetables, as the sub-tropical climate allows them to flourish. North Island fish differ from the catch of more southern fishermen, and fresh snapper, hapuku, terakihi and flounder are common in the north. In the colder south there's more emphasis on groper, sole, brill, blue cod and turbot.

High-quality local lamb and beef can be found in Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Wairarapa, Canterbury and Southland, and Cervena venison, a low-fat, healthy red meat is mostly raised in these regions too.

It makes sense that fruit thrives in most of NZ's wine-growing districts, as grapes need similar growing conditions, and travellers will also find some great local food matches with the speciality wines of each region. Farmers market stall holders will willingly point travellers in the direction of restaurants and cafés that champion and use local produce.

Our favourite NZ eating experiences:

- **Amisfield Winery & Bistro** (p622) Stunning Central Otago architecture combines with excellent Pinot Noir and delicious tapas-sized plates at Amisfield. Relaxed but sophisticated, it's a regular winner of the 'Best Winery Restaurant' gong from authoritative *Cuisine* magazine.
- **Cooper's Beach** (p180) Dig up pipis from the sands of Northland's Coopers Beach and cook them up on a beachside barbecue.
- **Kai Kart** (p682) This tiny caravan in Stewart Island turns out fish and chips of the highest order. Kick off with some mussels, (the owners run a mussel farm, so freshness is guaranteed), then move on to the best blue cod you'll ever have.
- **Kepler Track** (p648) Two-minute noodles and tea from an enamel mug, with a five-star vista of lake and mountains from Luxmore Hut.
- **Kiwifruit in Motueka** (p470) The Motueka area is one of NZ's key kiwifruit growing areas. Along the roadside in season (October is good), you can pick up a bag of a ripe dozen for \$1!
- **L'Arte** (p299) Beautiful homemade delights dished up in a splendidly colourful mosaic café and sculpture garden in Taupo.
- **Lady Jane's Ice Cream Parlour** (p335) Legendary Lady Jane's offers NZ's greatest range of ice cream – Tip Top, Kapiti, NZ Natural, Kiwi, Frosty Boy and Movenpick. Make mine a triple scoop with nut choc-dip, thanks.
- **Maketu Pies** (p353) Hard to beat when plucked straight from the factory-shop warmer and enjoyed on a park bench on the foreshore, pastry flakes flying on a salty breeze.
- **Tasting Room** (p416) Sure, it's a Monteith's brand-bar with the usual 'urban hunting lodge' trimmings, but on a freezing Wellington evening, how can you beat a smoky handle of Monteith's Black Beer and a hot plate of Beef Wellington?
- **Waiheke Island** (p139) Look back at Auckland city from the balcony of Mudbrick, enjoying the Hauraki Gulf panorama, the island vibe and the fine dining.

WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

The main cities are remarkably well served with a range of eating choices from restaurants where the food is stylish and imaginative, to small places, often serving Asian cuisine, where the ambience is simple, but the food authentic and prepared with love. Cafés are found everywhere, particularly in towns along the main touring routes, and usually serve hearty country fare. Many cafés open at 7am but close by 4pm and don't serve dinner.

B&Bs in the more remote regions will often cook dinner, but usually by request well ahead of arrival. Country-style pubs can be found in most places, and although very few offer a 'gastro' experience, they serve up a basic menu to accompany a frothy cold beer.

NZ is just beginning to wake up to regional differences and specialities, mainly because of the burgeoning of farmers markets. Most of these are held on Saturday or Sunday mornings, and all are great places to explore the local food culture, meet the local food producers and taste some terrific fresh food. Most have a mobile coffee stand, and usually there will be an entrepreneur serving a 'breakfast roll' bun stuffed with fried eggs and bacon.

Although some guides suggest NZ is a country where diners do not need to tip, the Restaurant Association of NZ encourages and endorses the practice. When the service is excellent, tip around 10% of the bill.

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Vegetarians need not worry that they will find suitable food around NZ. There isn't a great range of vegetarian restaurants, but almost all restaurants and cafés offer vegetarian choices on their menus (although sometimes only one or two). Many cafés provide gluten-free and vegan options. Always check that the stocks and sauces are vegetarian as chefs who have not traditionally cooked for those with strict vegetable diets tend to think of vegetarian cooking as omitting the meat or fish that is central to a meal.

It will always pay to mention any dietary requirement when making a reservation at a restaurant or B&B, and it's essential in this meat-loving country to mention it to the host when invited to a private home.

EATING WITH KIDS

Apart from a few top-end establishments in the city centres, restaurants and cafés throughout the country welcome children. Many cafés and family-style restaurants have high chairs for small children, and even a special area for kids to play in. Children's menus list smaller portions and tend to fish and chips, burgers, chicken wings and ice cream.

HABITS & CUSTOMS

Like many western nations, NZ mealtimes are shortening and more food is eaten on the run. Many parents work and time is precious and inadequate for complicated food preparation. Marketers are providing many easy meal solutions, and a large number of urban dwellers eat meals outside the home several times a week.

DOS & DON'TS

- Do take a small gift if you're invited to someone's place for a meal. A bottle of wine, chocolates or flowers will show your appreciation.
- Do offer, if invited to a barbecue, to bring some meat, salad or wine.
- Do remember the drink-driving laws (see p700). If you intend drinking more than the limit, organise a taxi (they cannot be hailed on the street) or a dial-a-driver (a twosome, one of which will drive you home in your car, followed by his or her mate in their car).
- Do turn up on time for a restaurant reservation; if you're late you may lose your table.
- Do tip around 10% for good service – it's always appreciated.
- Don't belch at the table – it is considered the height of bad manners.
- Don't ever sit on a table or any surface that is used for preparing food, as it is culturally offensive.

Check out what Auckland and Wellington restaurants have to offer at www.menus.co.nz or www.dineout.co.nz.

Kiwis are very hospitable and it is not unusual to invite visitors to a meal. It will usually be on the weekend when cooking becomes a more leisurely activity. It's courteous to take a bottle of wine or flowers to a host, or some other small gift if asked to share a meal in a private home.

If asked to a party and invited to 'bring a plate', what is wanted is a contribution of some food. Even store-bought, ready-prepared food will be acceptable if there are no easily accessible cooking facilities.

Smoking is now banned in the workplace and any public place where food or drink is served. Smokers are banished to the outside of buildings, and it is considered very bad manners to smoke elsewhere or without requesting permission.

Environment

Vaughan Yarwood

THE LAND

New Zealand is a young country – its present shape is less than 10,000 years old. Having broken away from the supercontinent of Gondwanaland (which included Africa, Australia, Antarctica and South America) in a stately geological dance some 130 million years ago, it endured aeons of uplift and erosion, buckling and tearing, and the slow fall and rise of the sea as ice ages came and went. Straddling the boundary of two great colliding slabs of the earth's crust – the Pacific plate and the Indian/Australian plate – to this day NZ remains the plaything of nature's strongest forces.

The result is one of the most varied and spectacular series of landscapes in the world, ranging from snow-dusted mountains and drowned glacial valleys to rainforests, dunelands and an otherworldly volcanic plateau. It is a diversity of landforms you would expect to find across an entire continent rather than a small archipelago in the South Pacific.

Evidence of NZ's tumultuous past is everywhere. The South Island's mountainous spine – the 650km-long ranges of the Southern Alps – is a product of the clash of the two plates; the result of a process of rapid lifting that, if anything, is accelerating. Despite NZ's highest peak, Aoraki/Mt Cook (p571), losing 10m from its summit overnight in a 1991 landslide, the Alps are on an express elevator that, without erosion and landslides, would see them 10 times their present height within a few million years.

On the North Island, the most impressive changes have been wrought by volcanoes. Auckland is built on an isthmus peppered by scoria cones, on many of which you can still see the earthworks of *pa* (fortified villages) built by early Maori. The city's biggest and most recent volcano, 600-year-old Rangitoto Island (p133), is just a short ferry ride from the downtown wharves. Some 300km further south, the classically shaped cone of snowcapped Mt Taranaki/Egmont (p254) overlooks tranquil dairy pastures.

But the real volcanic heartland runs through the centre of the North Island, from the restless bulk of Mt Ruapehu in Tongariro National Park (p306) northeast through the Rotorua lake district (p324) out to NZ's most active volcano, White Island (p357), in the Bay of Plenty. Called the Taupo Volcanic Zone, this great 250km-long rift valley – part of a volcano chain known as the 'Pacific Ring of Fire' – has been the seat of massive eruptions that have left their mark on the country physically and culturally.

Most spectacular were the eruptions from the volcano that created Lake Taupo (p289). Considered the world's most productive volcano in terms of the amount of material ejected, Taupo last erupted 1800 years ago in a display which was the most violent anywhere on the planet within the past 5000 years.

You can experience the aftermath of volcanic destruction on a smaller scale at Te Wairoa (the Buried Village; p340), near Rotorua on the shores of Lake Tarawera. Here, partly excavated and open to the public, lie the remains of a 19th-century Maori village overwhelmed when nearby Mt Tarawera erupted without warning. The famous Pink and White Terraces (one of several claimants to the popular title 'eighth wonder of the world') were destroyed overnight by the same upheaval.

But when nature sweeps the board clean with one hand she often rebuilds with the other: Waimangu Valley (p340), born of all that geothermal violence, is the place to go to experience the hot earth up close and personal amid geysers, silica pans, bubbling mud pools and the world's biggest hot spring. Or

Vaughan Yarwood is a historian and travel writer who is widely published in NZ and internationally. His most recent book is *The History Makers: Adventures in New Zealand Biography*.

The GreenDex at the end of this book lists ecofriendly places to explore, stay or dine in throughout NZ. Discover more about ecotourism across the country with Leonie Johnsen's *Organic Explorer New Zealand* (www.organicexplorer.co.nz).

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND *Nandor Tanczos*

Aotearoa New Zealand is famous for having won some significant environmental battles. Since the 1980s we have seen the NZ Forest Accord developed to protect native forest, and the end of all native logging on public land. Our national parks and reserves now cover around a third of our land area, and a number of marine reserves have been established. We are also famous for our strong antinuclear stance.

To describe ourselves as 'clean and green', however, is fantasy. A drive in the country soon reveals that much of our land is more akin to a green desert.

The importation of European sheep and cattle grazing systems to Aotearoa New Zealand has left many hillsides with marginal productivity; bare of trees and prone to erosion. In many areas grazing threatens waterways, with stock causing damage to stream and lake margins and runoff leading to nutrient overload of waterways.

Agriculture is responsible for around half of our greenhouse gas emissions, but is exempt from paying for its carbon emissions until 2012 and then it is subsidised until 2025. Farmers do not pay for the water they take from rivers and aquifers for irrigation, and overallocation of water has become a problem in a number of areas. These environmental subsidies allow agriculture to avoid paying its true cost and drive further expansion and intensification.

Regional councils and farming groups are starting to fence and plant stream banks to protect water quality, and farming leaders are serious about trying to make farming genuinely sustainable but their efforts may be outstripped by the sheer growth in dairy farming as plantation forests are cut down to make dairy farms.

Despite increasing international and local demand for organic food, most farming in Aotearoa New Zealand relies heavily on chemical inputs of fertiliser, pesticide and herbicide. In addition, the fifth Labour government, backed by most political parties, voted to end the ban on genetically engineered (GE) organisms, in the face of overwhelming public opposition. However, apart from laboratory work we are still essentially GE free and many of us are determined to keep it that way.

you can wander around Rotorua's Whakarewarewa Thermal Village (p327), where descendants of Maori displaced by the eruption live in the middle of steaming vents and prepare food for visitors in boiling pools.

A second by-product of movement along the tectonic plate boundary is seismic activity – earthquakes. Not for nothing has NZ been called 'the Shaky Isles'. Most quakes only rattle the glassware, but one was indirectly responsible for creating an internationally celebrated tourist attraction...

In 1931 an earthquake measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale levelled the Hawkes Bay city of Napier (p381) causing huge damage and loss of life. Napier was rebuilt almost entirely in the then-fashionable Art Deco architectural style, and walking its streets today you can relive its brash exuberance in what has become a mecca for lovers of Art Deco (p383).

Travellers to the South Island can also see some evidence of volcanism – if the remains of the old volcanoes of Banks Peninsula (p547) weren't there to repel the sea, the vast Canterbury Plains, built from alpine sediment washed down the rivers from the Alps, would have eroded away long ago.

But in the south it is the Southern Alps themselves that dominate, dictating settlement patterns, throwing down engineering challenges and offering outstanding recreational opportunities. The island's mountainous backbone also helps shape the weather, as it stands in the path of the prevailing westerly winds which roll in, moisture-laden, from the Tasman Sea. As a result bush-clad lower slopes of the western Southern Alps are among the wettest places on earth, with an annual precipitation of some 15,000mm. Having lost its moisture, the wind then blows dry across the eastern plains towards the Pacific coast.

NZ is one of the most spectacular places in the world to see geysers. Rotorua's short-lived Waimangu geyser, formed after the Mt Tarawera eruption, was once the world's largest, often gushing to a dizzying height of 400m.

Energy consumption in Aotearoa New Zealand has grown three times more than population over the last 20 years. We are one of the most inefficient users of energy in the developed world and public transport is negligible in most places. Ecological values still play little part in urban planning or building design. Add to that the ongoing battle being fought in many communities over the disposal of sewage and toxic waste, a conflict often spearheaded by *tangata whenua* (Maori), and the 'clean and green' label begins to look seriously compromised.

We do have a number of things in our favour. We are blessed with a relatively high proportion of our energy coming from renewable hydrogeneration. Farm animals, except for pigs and chickens, are almost all grass fed and free range. We are starting to get serious about waste minimisation and resource recovery. But our biggest saving grace is our small population, reducing the cumulative effect of human impacts.

Also, there are many national park and reserve areas set aside to protect native ecosystems, making Aotearoa New Zealand a place well worth visiting. This is a beautiful land with enormous geographical and ecological diversity. Our forests are unique and magnificent, and the bird species that evolved in response to an almost total lack of mammalian life are spectacular, although now reduced in numbers due to introduced predators such as rats and stoats.

The responsibility of New Zealanders is to make change, not just at a personal level, but at an institutional and infrastructural level, for ecological sustainability. The responsibility of visitors to Aotearoa New Zealand is to respect our unique biodiversity, and to query and question. Every time you ask where the recycling centre is; every time you express surprise at the levels of energy use, car use and water use; every time you demand organic food at a café or restaurant; you affect the person you talk to.

Aotearoa New Zealand has the potential to be a world leader in ecological wisdom. We have a strong tradition to draw from – the careful relationship the Maori developed with the natural world over the course of many, many generations. We live at the edge of the Pacific, on the Rim of Fire, a remnant of the ancient forests of Gondwanaland. We welcome conscious travellers.

Nandor was the first MP to wear a hemp suit to parliament; he is a high-profile anti-GE campaigner.

The North Island has a more even rainfall and is spared the temperature extremes of the South – which can plunge when a wind blows in from Antarctica. The important thing to remember, especially if you are tramping at high altitude, is that NZ has a maritime climate. This means weather can change with lightning speed, catching out the unprepared.

WILDLIFE

NZ may be relatively young, geologically speaking, but its plants and animals go back a long way. The tuatara, for instance, an ancient reptile unique to these islands, is a Gondwanaland survivor closely related to the dinosaurs, while many of the distinctive flightless birds (ratites) have distant African and South American cousins.

Due to its long isolation, the country is a veritable warehouse of unique and varied plants, most of which are found nowhere else. And with separation of the landmass occurring before mammals appeared on the scene, birds and insects have evolved in spectacular ways to fill the gaps.

The now extinct flightless moa, the largest of which grew to 3.5m tall and weighed over 200kg, browsed open grasslands much as cattle do today (skeletons can be seen at Auckland Museum, p102), while the smaller kiwi still ekes out a nocturnal living rummaging among forest leaf litter for insects and worms much as small mammals do elsewhere. One of the country's most ferocious-looking insects, the mouse-sized giant weta, meanwhile, has taken on a scavenging role elsewhere filled by rodents.

As one of the last places on earth to be colonised by humans, NZ was for millennia a safe laboratory for such risky evolutionary strategies, but

with the arrival first of Maori and soon after of Europeans, things went downhill fast.

Many creatures, including moa and the huia, an exquisite songbird, were driven to extinction and the vast forests were cleared for their timber and to make way for agriculture. Destruction of habitat and the introduction of exotic animals and plants have taken a terrible environmental toll and New Zealanders are now fighting a rearguard battle to save what remains.

Birds & Animals

The first Polynesian settlers found little in the way of land mammals – just two species of bat – but forests, plains and coasts are alive with birds. Largely lacking the bright plumage found elsewhere, NZ's birds – like its endemic plants – have an understated beauty which does not shout for attention.

Among the most musical is the bellbird, common in both native and exotic forests everywhere except Northland, though like many birds it is more likely to be heard than seen. Its call is a series of liquid bell notes, most often sounded at dawn or dusk.

The tui, another nectar eater and the country's most beautiful songbird, is a great mimic, with an inventive repertoire that includes clicks, grunts and chuckles. Notable for the white throat feathers which stand out against its dark plumage, the tui often feeds on flax flowers in suburban gardens but is most at home in densely tangled forest ('bush' to New Zealanders).

Fantails are commonly encountered on forest trails, swooping and jinking to catch insects stirred up by passing hikers, while pukeko, elegant swamp-hens with blue plumage and bright red beaks, are readily seen along wetland margins and even on the sides of roads nearby – be warned, they have little road sense.

If you spend any time in South Island high country, you are likely to come up against the fearless and inquisitive kea – an uncharacteristically drab green parrot with bright red underwings. Kea are common in the car parks of the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers (p516 and p512) where they hang out for food scraps or tear rubber from car windscreens.

Then there is the takahe, a rare flightless bird thought extinct until a small colony was discovered in 1948, and the equally flightless kiwi, NZ's national emblem and the nickname for New Zealanders themselves.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Toitu te whenua – care for the land. Help protect the environment by following these guidelines:

- Treat NZ's forests and native wildlife with respect. Damaging or taking plants is illegal in most parts of the country.
- Remove rubbish. Litter is unsightly and can encourage vermin and disease. Rather than burying or burning, carry out what you carry in.
- In areas without toilet facilities bury toilet waste in a shallow hole away from tracks, huts, camp sites and waterways.
- Keep streams and lakes pure by cleaning away from water sources. Drain waste water into the soil to filter out soaps and detergent. If you suspect contamination, boil water for three minutes, filter or chemically treat it before use.
- Where possible use portable fuel stoves. Keep open fires small, use only dead wood and make sure the fire is out by dousing it with water and checking the ashes before leaving.
- Keep to tracks where possible. Get permission before crossing private land and move carefully around livestock.

KIWI SPOTTING

The kiwi is a threatened species, and with the additional difficulty of them being nocturnal, it's only on Stewart Island (p675) that you easily see one in the wild. However, they can be observed in many artificially dark 'kiwi houses', such as:

- Whangarei Museum (p161)
- Otorohanga Kiwi House & Native Bird Park (p235)
- National Aquarium of New Zealand, Napier (p384)
- Wellington Zoo (p407)
- Southern Encounter Aquarium & Kiwi House, Christchurch (p526)
- Orana Wildlife Park, Christchurch (p531)
- Willowbank Wildlife Reserve, Christchurch (p531)
- Kiwi Birdlife Park, Queenstown (p614)

The kiwi has a round body covered in coarse feathers, strong legs and a long, distinctive bill with nostrils at the tip for sniffing out food. It is not easy to find them in the wild, but they can be seen in simulated environments at excellent nocturnal houses. One of the best is the Otorohanga Kiwi House (p235), which also has other birds, including native falcons, moreporks (owls) and weka.

To get a feel for what the bush used to be like, take a trip to Tiritiri Matangi Island (p139). This regenerating island is an open sanctuary and one of the country's most successful exercises in community-assisted conservation.

BIRD-WATCHING

The flightless kiwi is the species most sought after by bird-watchers. Sightings of the Stewart Island subspecies are common at all times of the year. Elsewhere, wild sightings of this increasingly rare nocturnal species are difficult, apart from in enclosures. Other birds that twitchers like to sight are the royal albatross, white heron, Fiordland crested penguin, yellow-eyed penguin, Australasian gannet and wrybill.

On the Coromandel Peninsula, the Firth of Thames (particularly Miranda) is a haven for migrating birds, while the Wharekawa Wildlife Refuge at Opoutere Beach is a breeding ground of the endangered NZ dotterel. There's also a very accessible Australasian gannet colony at Muriwai, west of Auckland, and one in Hawkes Bay. There are popular trips to observe pelagic birds out of Kaikoura, and royal albatross viewing on the Otago Peninsula.

Two good guides are the newly revised *Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*, by Barrie Heather and Hugh Robertson, and *Birds of New Zealand: Locality Guide* by Stuart Chambers.

MARINE MAMMAL-WATCHING

Kaikoura, on the northeast coast of the South Island, is NZ's nexus of marine mammal-watching. The main attraction here is whale-watching, but this is dependent on weather conditions, so don't expect to just be able to rock up and head straight out on a boat for a dream encounter. The sperm whale, the largest toothed whale, is pretty much a year-round resident, and depending on the season you may also see migrating humpback whales, pilot whales, blue whales and southern right whales. Other mammals – including fur seals and dusky dolphins – are seen year-round.

Kaikoura is also an outstanding place to swim with dolphins. Pods of up to 500 playful dusky dolphins can be seen on any given day. Dolphin swimming is common elsewhere in NZ, with the animals gathering off the North Island

B Heather and H Robertson's *Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand* is the most comprehensive guide for bird-watchers and a model of helpfulness for anyone even casually interested in the country's remarkable bird life.

near Whakatane, Paihia, Tauranga, and in the Hauraki Gulf, and off Akaroa on the South Island's Banks Peninsula. Seal swimming is possible in Kaikoura and in the Abel Tasman National Park.

Swimming with sharks is also possible, though with a protective cage as a chaperone; you can do it in Tutukaka and Gisborne.

Trees

No visitor to NZ (particularly Australians!) will go for long without hearing about the damage done to the bush by that bad-mannered Australian import, the brush-tailed possum. The long list of mammal pests introduced accidentally or for a variety of misguided reasons includes deer, rabbits, stoats, pigs and goats. But the most destructive by far is the possum, 70 million of which now chew through millions of tonnes of foliage a year despite the best efforts of the Department of Conservation (DOC) to control them.

Among favoured possum food are NZ's most colourful trees: the kowhai, a small-leaved tree growing to 11m, that in spring has drooping clusters of bright yellow flowers (NZ's national flower); the pohutukawa, a beautiful coastal tree of the northern North Island which bursts into vivid red flower in December, earning the nickname 'Christmas tree'; and a similar crimson-flowered tree, the rata. Rata species are found on both islands; the northern rata starts life as a climber on a host tree (that it eventually chokes).

The few remaining pockets of mature centuries-old kauri are stately emblems of former days. Their vast hammered trunks and towering, epiphyte-festooned limbs, which dwarf every other tree in the forest, are reminders of why they were sought after in colonial days for spars and building timber. The best place to see the remaining giants is Northland's Waipoua Kauri Forest (p190), home to three-quarters of the country's surviving kauri.

Now the pressure has been taken off kauri and other timber trees, including the distinctive rimu (red pine) and the long-lived totara (favoured for Maori war canoes), by one of the country's most successful imports – *Pinus radiata*. Pine was found to thrive in NZ, growing to maturity in just 35 years, and plantation forests are now widespread through the central North Island – the southern hemisphere's biggest, Kaingaroa Forest, lies southeast of Rotorua.

You won't get far into the bush without coming across one of its most prominent features – tree ferns. NZ is a land of ferns (more than 80 species) and most easily recognised are the mamuka (black tree fern) – which grows to 20m and can be seen in damp gullies throughout the country – and the 10m-high ponga (silver tree fern) with its distinctive white underside. The silver fern is equally at home as part of corporate logos and on the clothing of many of the country's top sportspeople.

NATIONAL PARKS

A third of the country – more than five million hectares – is protected in environmentally important parks and reserves which embrace almost every conceivable landscape: from mangrove-fringed inlets in the north to the

Lifestyles of New Zealand Forest Plants, by J Dawson and R Lucas, is a beautifully photographed foray into the world of NZ's forests. Far from being drab and colourless, these lush treasure houses are home to ancient species dating from the time of the dinosaurs. This guidebook will have you reaching for your boots.

TOWERING KAURI

When Chaucer was born this was a sturdy young tree. When Shakespeare was born it was 300 years old. It predates most of the great cathedrals of Europe. Its trunk is sky-rocket straight and sky-rocket bulky, limbless for half its height. Ferns sprout from its crevices. Its crown is an asymmetric mess, like an inverted root system. I lean against it, give it a slap. It's like slapping a building. This is a tree out of Tolkien. It's a kauri.

Joe Bennett (A Land of Two Halves) referring to the McKinley kauri in Northland.



snow-topped volcanoes of the Central Plateau, and from the forested fastness of the Ureweras in the east to the Southern Alps' majestic mountains, glaciers and fiords. The 14 national parks, three maritime parks and two marine reserves, along with numerous forest parks, offer huge scope for wilderness experiences, ranging from climbing, snow skiing and mountain biking to tramping, kayaking and trout fishing.

Three places are World Heritage areas: NZ's Subantarctic Islands (p687), Tongariro National Park (p306) and Te Wahipounamu (p654), an amalgam of several national parks in southwest NZ which boast the world's finest surviving Gondwanaland plants and animals in their natural habitats.

Access to the country's wild places is relatively straightforward, though huts on walking tracks require passes and may need to be booked in advance. In practical terms, there is little difference for travellers between a national park and a forest park, though dogs are not allowed in national parks without a permit. Camping is possible in all parks, but may be restricted to dedicated camping grounds – check first. Permits are required for hunting (game birds) and licences needed for inland fishing (trout, salmon). Both can be bought online at www.fishandgame.org.nz.

The Department of Conservation website (www.doc.govt.nz) has useful information on the country's national parks, tracks and walkways. It also lists backcountry huts and camp sites.

Active New Zealand

New Zealand's astounding natural assets encourage even the laziest lounge lizards to drag themselves outside. Many travellers come here for the sole purpose of getting active, but the great outdoors isn't just the domain of thrill-seeking tourists. Outdoor culture is ingrained in Kiwi life: from family camping holidays to elite mountaineering, wandering into the wilderness and experiencing NZ's unpeopled majesty is the national habit.

It will come as no surprise, then, that outdoor activities across the nation are accessible and supremely well organised. Commercial operators can hook you up with whatever kind of experience floats your boat – from bungy jumping off a canyon to sea kayaking around a national park – but the beauty of NZ is that you can do a lot of stuff under your own steam, without tagging along on a tour. This is still a wild frontier – don't miss the chance to engage with nature one-on-one, a million miles from home, just you and the great void.

Adrenaline-pumping activities obviously have an element of risk – particularly white-water rafting, kayaking and anything that involves falling from a great height – but the perception of danger is part of the thrill. Chances of a mishap are arguably minuscule, but make sure you have travel insurance that fully covers you for any planned activities – for more info see p699.

See p693 for tips on aerial sightseeing, fishing, sailing and golf; see p75 for the lowdown on bird- and marine mammal-watching.

TRAMPING

Tramping (aka bushwalking, hiking or trekking) is the perfect vehicle for a close encounter with NZ's natural beauty. There are thousands of kilometres of tracks – some well marked, some barely a line on a map – plus an excellent network of huts enabling trampers to avoid lugging tents and (in some cases) cooking gear. Before plodding off into the forest, get up-to-date information from the appropriate authority – usually the **Department of Conservation** (DOC; www.doc.govt.nz), or regional i-SITE visitor information centres.

Tracks beneath the highest numbers of feet are the Routeburn, Milford, Tongariro Northern Circuit (and the one-day Tongariro Alpine Crossing), Kepler, Lake Waikaremoana, Queen Charlotte and Abel Tasman Coast. If you've got your heart set on a summer walk along the Milford, Routeburn or any other Great Walk, check out the booking requirements and get in early. If you want to avoid the crowds go in the shoulder season. DOC staff can help plan tramps on lesser-known tracks; see the DOC website for details.

When to Go

Tramping high season is during the school summer holidays, from two weeks before Christmas until the end of January – avoid it if you can. The

If you're planning your first walk, check out www.tramper.co.nz – a fantastic website with track descriptions and track ratings.

VOLUNTOURISM

NZ presents a swathe of active, outdoorsy opportunities for travellers to get some dirt under their fingernails and participate in conservation programmes. Programmes can include anything from tree-planting and weed removal to track construction, habitat conservation and fencing. Ask about local opportunities at any regional i-SITE visitor information centre, or check out www.conservationvolunteers.org.nz and www.doc.govt.nz (click on 'Getting involved', 'In your community' then 'Volunteer programme'), both of which allow you to browse for opportunities by region. See also Wwoofing (p691).

best weather is from January to March, though most nonalpine tracks can be walked enjoyably at any time from about October through to April. Winter (June to August) is not the time to be out in the wild, especially at altitude – some paths close in winter because of avalanche danger and lower levels of facilities and services.

What to Bring

For a primo tramp, the primary considerations are your feet and shoulders. Make sure your footwear is tough as old boots, and that your pack isn't too heavy. Adequate wet-weather gear is essential, especially on the South Island's waterlogged West Coast. And don't forget insect repellent to keep the sandflies at bay. If you're camping or staying in huts without stoves (eg on the Abel Tasman Coast Track or Lake Waikaremoana Track), bring a camping stove.

Books

DOC publishes detailed books on the flora and fauna, geology and history of NZ's national parks, plus leaflets (50c to \$2) detailing hundreds of walking tracks across NZ.

Lonely Planet's *Tramping in New Zealand* describes around 50 walks of various lengths and degrees of difficulty. Mark Pickering and Rodney Smith's *101 Great Tramps* has suggestions for two- to six-day tramps around the country. The companion guide, *202 Great Walks: the Best Day Walks in New Zealand*, by Mark Pickering, is handy for shorter, family-friendly excursions. *Accessible Walks*, by Anna and Andrew Jameson, is an excellent guide for elderly, disabled and family trampers, with detailed access info on 100-plus South Island walks.

New trampers should check out *Don't Forget Your Scroggin*, by Sarah Bennett and Lee Slater – all about being safe and happy on the track. The *Birdseye Tramping Guides* from Craig Potton Publishing have fab topographical maps, and there are countless books covering tramps and short urban walks around NZ – scan the bookshops.

Maps

The topographical maps produced by **Land Information New Zealand** (LINZ; www.linz.govt.nz) are a safe bet. Bookshops don't often have a good selection of these, but LINZ has map-sales offices in major cities and towns, and DOC offices often sell LINZ maps for local tracks. Outdoor stores also stock them (see the boxed text, opposite). LINZ' map series includes park maps (national, state and forest parks), dedicated walking-track maps, and highly detailed 'Topomaps' (you may need two or three of these for one track).

Track Classification

Tracks are classified according to various features, including level of difficulty. In this chapter we loosely refer to the level of difficulty as easy, medium, hard or difficult. The widely used track classification system is as follows:

Short Walk Well formed; allows for wheelchair access or constructed to 'shoe' standard (ie walking boots not required). Suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels.

Walking Track Easy and well-formed longer walks; constructed to 'shoe' standard. Suitable for people of most ages and fitness levels.

Easy Tramping Track or Great Walk Well formed; major water crossings have bridges and track junctions have signs. Light walking boots required.

Tramping Track Requires skill and experience; constructed to 'boot' standard. Suitable for people of average physical fitness. Water crossings may not have bridges.

Route Requires a high degree of skill, experience and navigation skills required. Well-equipped trampers only.

Scroggin is a mixture of dried fruit and nuts (and sometimes chocolate) that is a popular – some say essential – food item to take on your tramp.

TOP GEAR

Around the country, here are the best places to fix a fractured tent pole or buy a warmer sleeping bag:

- Auckland: **Kathmandu** (Map pp104-5; ☎ 09-377 7560; www.kathmandu.co.nz; 200 Victoria St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-7pm Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 10am-4.30pm Sun)
- Christchurch: **Snowgum** (Map pp258-9; ☎ 03-365 4336; www.snowgum.co.nz; 637 Colombo St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm)
- Dunedin: **Bivouac Outdoor** (Map p580; ☎ 03-477 3679; www.bivouac.co.nz; 171 George St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-6pm Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun)
- Hamilton: **R&R Sport** (Map p220; ☎ 07-839 3755; www.rrsport.co.nz; 943 Victoria St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-6.30pm Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun)
- Kaikoura: **R&R Sport** (Map p453; ☎ 03-319 5028; www.rrsport.co.nz; 14 West End; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun)
- Napier: **Kathmandu** (Map p382; ☎ 06-835 5859; www.kathmandu.co.nz; 8 Dickens St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-6pm Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun)
- Nelson: **R&R Sport** (Map p462; ☎ 03-319 5028; www.rrsport.co.nz; cnr Rutherford & Bridge Sts; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-7pm Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun)
- New Plymouth: **Kiwi Outdoors Centre** (Map p246; ☎ 06-758 4152; www.kiwioutdoorsstores.co.nz; 18 Ariki St; ☎ 9am-4pm)
- Palmerston North: **Bivouac Outdoor** (Map p283; ☎ 06-359 2162; www.bivouac.co.nz; 400 Ferguson St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-6pm Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun)
- Queenstown: **Alpine Sports** (Map p612; ☎ 03-422 7099; www.alpinesports.co.nz; 39 Shotover St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm)
- Rotorua: **Outdoorsman Headquarters** (Map p326; ☎ 07-345 9333; www.outdoorsman.co.nz; 6 Tarawera Rd; ☎ 9am-5.30pm)
- Taupo: **Outdoor Attitude** (Map p301; ☎ 06-378 6628; 37 Tuwharetoa St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun)
- Tauranga: **Bivouac Outdoor** (Map p346; ☎ 07-579 5127; www.bivouac.co.nz; 131 Willow St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm)
- Te Anau: **Outside Sports** (Map p648; ☎ 03-249 8195; www.sportsworldteanau.co.nz; 38 Town Centre; ☎ 9am-9pm)
- Wanaka: **Good Sports** (Map p636; ☎ 03-443 7966; www.good-sports.co.nz; 17-23 Dunmore St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm)
- Wanganui: **Tussock Country Sports** (Map p273; ☎ 06-348 7679; tussockcountry@extra.co.nz; 205 Victoria Ave; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1pm Sat)
- Wellington: **Bivouac Outdoor** (Map p406; ☎ 04-473 2587; www.bivouac.co.nz; 39 Mercer St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-7pm Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun)
- Whangarei: **Kathmandu** (Map p160; ☎ 09-438 7193; www.kathmandu.co.nz; 22 James St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun)

Track Safety

Thousands of people tramp across NZ without incident, but every year a few folks meet their maker in the mountains. Some trails are only for the experienced, fit and well-equipped – don't attempt these if you don't fit the bill. NZ's climatic changeability subjects high-altitude walks to snow and ice, even in summer, so always check weather and track conditions before setting off. Consult a DOC visitor centre and leave your intentions with a responsible person before starting longer walks. See also www.mountainsafety.org.nz.

The Great Walks

NZ's nine official 'Great Walks' (one of which is actually a river trip) are the country's most popular tracks. Natural beauty abounds, but prepare yourself for crowds, especially over summer when folks from around the globe pull on their boots.

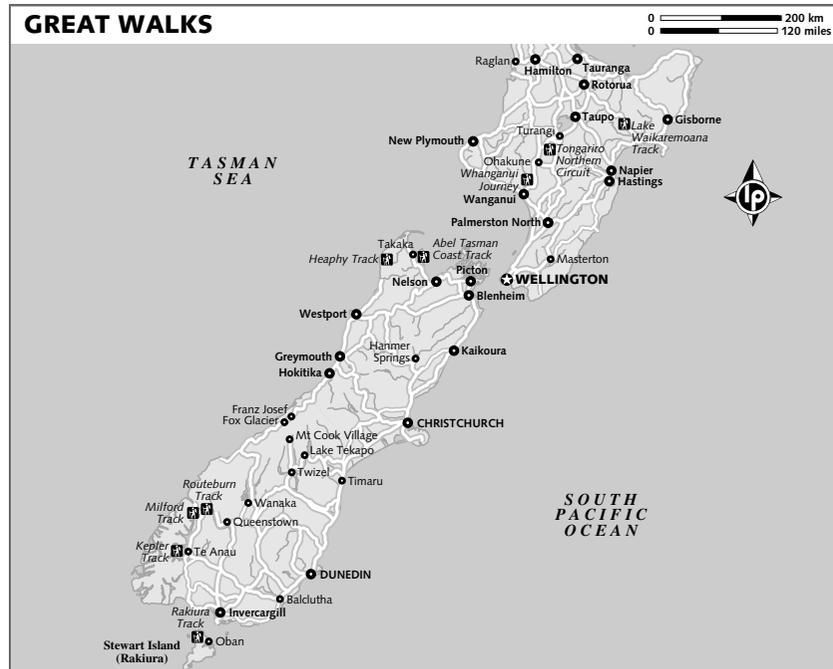
All nine Great Walks are described in this guidebook and in Lonely Planet's *Tramping in New Zealand*, and are detailed in pamphlets provided by DOC visitor centres. You will also find a ParkMap handy.

To tramp these tracks you'll need to buy a Great Walk Pass before setting out, sold at DOC visitor centres near each walk. These track-specific passes cover you for hut accommodation (from \$10 to \$40 per person per night, depending on the track and the season) and/or camping (from \$2.50 to \$15 per person per night). You can camp only at designated camping grounds; note there's no camping on the Milford Track. In the off-peak season (May to September), Backcountry Hut Passes (\$90, valid for 12 months) and pay-as-you-go hut tickets can be used instead of a Great Walk Pass in many huts. Kids under 18 can stay in huts for free on Great Walks from mid-2008!

DOC has introduced a booking system for six of the Great Walks, to avoid overcrowding and protect the environment. Trampers must book their chosen hut or campsite and specify dates when they purchase a Great Walk Pass.

- **Lake Waikaremoana Track, Abel Tasman Coast Track, Heaphy Track** – bookings required year-round
- **Kepler Track, Milford Track, Routeburn Track** – bookings required October to April
- **Rakiura Track, Tongariro Northern Circuit, Whanganui Journey** – bookings not required

Although listed as one of the nine Great Walks, the Whanganui Journey is not actually a walk, but a kayak route through Whanganui National Park.



Great Walk	Distance	Duration	Difficulty	Description
Abel Tasman Coast Track (p475)	51km	3-5 days	Easy to medium	NZ's most popular walk (or sea kayak); beaches and bays in Abel Tasman National Park (South Island)
Heaphy Track (p484)	82km	4-6 days	Medium to hard	Forests, beaches and karst landscapes in Kahurangi National Park (South Island)
Kepler Track (p648)	60km	3-4 days	Medium to hard	Lakes, rivers, gorges, glacial valleys and beech forest in Fiordland National Park (South Island)
Lake Waikaremoana Track (p378)	46km	3-4 days	Easy to medium	Lake views, bush-clad slopes and swimming in Te Urewera National Park (North Island)
Milford Track (p655)	54km	4 days	Easy	Rainforest, crystal-clear streams and 630m-high Sutherland Falls in Fiordland National Park (South Island)
Rakiura Track (p679)	29km	3 days	Medium	Bird life (kiwi!), beaches and lush bush on remote Stewart Island (off the South Island)
Routeburn Track (p633)	32km	3 days	Medium	Eye-popping alpine scenery around Mt Aspiring and Fiordland National Park (South Island)
Tongariro Northern Circuit (p309)	41km	4 days	Medium to hard	Through the active volcanic landscape of Tongariro National Park (North Island); see also Tongariro Alpine Crossing (p309)
Whanganui Journey (p279)	145km	5 days	Easy	Canoe or kayak down the Whanganui River in Whanganui National Park (North Island)

Bookings can be made online (www.doc.govt.nz), by email (greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz), by phone, by fax or in person at DOC offices close to the tracks. For full details see the DOC website. There's no charge to do a day walk on any track, but you have to pay if you're staying overnight.

Other Tracks

Of course, there are a lot more walks in NZ than just the Great ones! Try these on for size:

NORTH ISLAND

Mt Holdsworth Circuit A medium-to-hard, three-day tramp in Holdsworth Forest Park, out of Masterton. The walk passes through forest and over the top of alpine Mt Holdsworth.

Ninety Mile Beach–Cape Reinga Walkway A 50km, three-day, easy beach tramp (camping only) in Northland.

Round the Mountain, Mt Taranaki/Egmont A 55km tramping track of four days or more in Egmont National Park, comprising medium-to-hard tramping through mountainous country.

Tongariro Alpine Crossing A brilliant, 18km, one-day, medium tramp through Tongariro National Park.

SOUTH ISLAND

Arthur's Pass There are many walks in Arthur's Pass National Park; most are difficult.

Banks Peninsula Track A 35km, two-day (medium) or four-day (easy) walk over the hills and along the coast of Banks Peninsula, crossing private and public land near Akaroa. See p549.

RESPONSIBLE TRAMPING

To help preserve the ecology and beauty of NZ, consider the following tramping tips. Some of these may seem ridiculously obvious and Big Brotherly, but it's worth spelling them out for the uninitiated.

Rubbish

- Carry out *all* your rubbish. Pick up other people's rubbish too – there's nothing worse than finding a muesli-bar wrapper on a mountaintop.
- Never bury your rubbish: digging disturbs soil and ground cover and encourages erosion. Buried rubbish will likely be dug up by nosy animals, who may be injured or poisoned by it. It also takes years to decompose.
- Minimise waste by ditching superfluous packaging and figuring out exactly how much food you'll need on a meal-by-meal basis. Take reusable containers or stuff-sacks.
- Sanitary napkins, tampons, condoms and toilet paper should be carried out, despite the unglamorous inconvenience. They burn and decompose poorly.

Human-Waste Disposal

- Water contaminated by human faeces can transmit all sorts of nasties. Where there is a toilet, use it. Where there isn't one, dig a hole and bury your by-product (at least 15cm deep, 100m from any watercourse). Cover it up with soil and a rock. In snow, dig down until you're into the dirt.
- If you're in a large tramping party with a portable toilet, make sure everyone uses it.

Washing

- Don't use detergents or toothpaste in or near watercourses, even if the products are biodegradable.
- To scrub your bod, use biodegradable soap and a bucket, at least 50m from any watercourse. Spread the waste water around widely to help the soil filter it.
- Wash cooking utensils 50m from watercourses; use a scourer, sand or snow instead of detergent.

Erosion

- Hillsides and mountain slopes, especially at high altitudes, are prone to erosion. Stick to existing tracks and avoid short cuts.

Greenstone & Caples Tracks Two harder tracks on conservation land, just outside Fiordland National Park. They both meet up with the Routeburn Track – a great way to start or finish this popular walk.

Hump Ridge Track An excellent, three-day, 53km circuit beginning and ending at Bluecliffs Beach on Te Waewae Bay, 20km from Tuatapere. See p661.

Inland Pack Track A 27km medium tramp in Paparoa National Park, following river valleys through the karst landscape near Punakaiki on the West Coast.

Kaikoura Coast Track An easy, three-day, 40km walk over private and public land along the spectacular coastline 50km south of Kaikoura. See p454.

Matukituki Valley Walks Good medium-to-hard walks in the Matukituki Valley, in Mt Aspiring National Park near Wanaka.

North-West Circuit A hard, muddy eight- to 12-day walk on Stewart Island.

Queen Charlotte Track A three- to five-day medium walk in the Marlborough Sounds, affording great water views. Top-notch accommodation and water transport available. See p440.

Rees-Dart Track A 70km, four- to five-day hard tramping track in Mt Aspiring National Park, through river valleys and traversing an alpine pass.

- If a well-used track passes through a muddy patch, just power on through the mud – skirting around the outside increases the size of the bog.
- Don't remove any vegetation that's keeping topsoil in place. In fact, don't remove any vegetation at all.

Fires & Low-Impact Cooking

- Don't depend on open fires for cooking. Collecting firewood around popular campsites can strip the forest bare in quick time. Cook on a lightweight kerosene, alcohol or Shellite (white gas) stove; avoid cookers powered by disposable butane gas canisters.
- If you're bunking down in local accommodation en route, choose environmentally savvy places that don't use wood fires to heat water or cook food.
- Fires might be allowed below the tree line in areas with scant visitors. Use only dead, fallen wood in existing fireplaces, don't surround fires with rocks, and leave any extra wood for the next happy camper.
- Above the tree line in alpine areas, make sure everyone rugs up – fires here should be for cooking, not warmth.
- Put your fire out! Spread the embers and flood them with water.

Wildlife Conservation

- Hunting is illegal in all NZ parks and reserves. If you want to bring a gun, maybe you're reading the wrong book.
- Don't buy items made from native flora or fauna (you'll never get them through customs anyway).
- Don't attempt to kill animals in huts – chances are they're protected native species.
- Don't encourage scavengers by leaving food scraps around the place. Keep food-storage bags out of reach by tying them to rafters or trees.
- Feeding wildlife can lead to unbalanced populations, diseases and animals becoming dependent on hand-outs. Keep your food to yourself.

Camping & Walking on Private Property

- Always seek permission to camp on private land, and tread lightly, as always.

St James Walkway This 65km, five-day medium tramping track in Lake Sumner Forest Park/Lewis Pass Reserve passes through sumptuous subalpine scenery.

Wangapeka & Leslie-Karamea Tracks The Wangapeka is a four- to five-day medium tramping track along river valleys and overpasses. The Leslie-Karamea is a 90km to 100km, five- to seven-day tramp for experienced walkers only, negotiating river valleys, gorges and passes. The two tracks traverse the South Island's northwest, between Golden Bay and Karamea.

Backcountry Hut & Camping Fees

DOC has a huge network of backcountry huts (more than 950) in NZ's national and forest parks. There are 'Great Walk' category huts (fees payable year-round), 'Serviced Huts' (mattress-equipped bunks or sleeping platforms, water supply, heating, toilets and sometimes cooking facilities), 'Standard Huts' (no cooking equipment or heating) and 'Basic Huts' (just a shed!). Details about the services in every hut can be found on the DOC website. Backcountry hut fees per adult per night range from free to \$45, with tickets bought in advance at DOC visitor centres. Children under 10 can use huts free of charge; 11- to 17-year-olds are charged half-price. If you

do a lot of tramping, DOC sells an annual **Backcountry Hut Pass** (adult/child \$90/45), applicable to most huts except those identified in the DOC Backcountry Huts brochure – which includes many Great Walk huts in summer. On Great Walks that do not require year-round booking (see p82), backcountry hut tickets and passes can be used to procure a bunk or campsite in low season (May to September).

Depending on the hut category, a night's stay may use one or two tickets. When you arrive at a hut, date your tickets and put them in the box provided. Accommodation is on a first-come, first-served basis.

DOC also manages 250 vehicle-accessible camping grounds. The most basic of these ('basic' sites) are free; 'standard' and 'serviced' grounds cost between \$3 and \$14 per adult per night. Serviced grounds have full facilities (flush toilets, tap water, showers and picnic tables); they may also have barbecues, a kitchen and a laundry. Standard grounds have toilets and water supply and perhaps barbecues and picnic tables.

Getting There & Away

Getting to and from trailheads can be a problem, except for popular trails serviced by public and dedicated trampers' transport. Having a vehicle only helps with getting to one end of the track (you still have to collect your car afterwards). If the track starts or ends down a dead-end road, hitching will be difficult.

Of course, tracks that are easily accessed by public transport (eg Abel Tasman) are also the most crowded. An alternative is to arrange private transport, either with a friend or by chartering a vehicle to drop you at one end then pick you up at the other. If you intend to leave a vehicle at a trailhead and return for it later, don't leave anything valuable inside – theft from cars in isolated areas is a significant problem.

EXTREME ADVENTURE

Bungy jumping was made famous by Kiwi AJ Hackett's 1986 plunge from the Eiffel Tower, after which he teamed up with champion NZ skier Henry van Asch to turn the endeavour into a profitable enterprise. The fact that a pant-wetting, illogical activity like bungy jumping is now an everyday pursuit in NZ says much about how 'extreme sports' have evolved here. Bungy, skydiving, jetboating and paragliding are all well established, but keep an eye out for weird-and-wonderful activities like zorbing (rolling down a hill inside a transparent plastic ball), quad-biking, cave rafting, river sledging (white-water body boarding) and blokarting (windsurfing on wheels). Auckland's Sky Jump (p113) and Sky Screamer (p113), Wellington's Bungy Rocket (p409), and Queenstown's Shotover Canyon Swing (p616) and Ledge Sky Swing (p616) are variations on the extreme theme – all against the laws of nature, and all great fun!

Bungy Jumping

Bungy jumping (hurtling earthwards from bridges with nothing between you and eternity but a gigantic rubber band strapped to your ankles) has a bit of daredevil panache about it and prompts a heady adrenaline rush, but the behind-the-scenes action could hardly be more organised, with jumper safety of paramount importance.

Queenstown is a spider's web of bungy cords, including a 43m jump off the Kawarau Bridge (which also has a bungy theatre and museum), a 47m leap from a ledge at the top of the gondola, a 102m plunge at Skippers Canyon (called the Pipeline), and the big daddy, the 134m Nevis Highwire act. Other South Island bungy jumps include Waiau River (near Hanmer Springs) and Mt Hutt ski field. On the North Island, try Taupo, Auckland, Rotorua and Mokai Bridge over the Rangitikei River.

The 109m Shotover Canyon Swing is touted as the world's highest rope swing.

Skydiving

Ejecting yourself from a plane at high altitude is big business in NZ. There are plenty of professional operators, and at most drop zones the views on the way up (not to mention on the way down) are sublime.

Some operators and clubs offer static-line jumps and Accelerated Free Fall courses, but for most first-timers a tandem skydive is the way to go. After bonding with a fully qualified instructor, you get to experience up to 45 seconds of high-speed free fall before the chute opens. The thrill is worth every dollar (specifically as much as \$245/295 for a 9000/12,000ft jump). You'll pay extra for a video/DVD/photograph of your exploits.

Try tandem skydiving in Auckland, Matamata, Tauranga, the Bay of Islands, Taupo and Rotorua on the North Island, or in Nelson, Motueka, Christchurch, Fox Glacier, Twizel, Methven, Wanaka, Queenstown and Glenorchy on the South Island.

Jetboating

The jetboat is a local invention, dreamed up by CWF Hamilton in 1957. An in-board engine sucks water into a tube in the bottom of the boat, and an impeller driven by the engine blows it out of a nozzle at the stern in a high-speed stream. The boat is steered simply by directing the jet stream. Jetboats make short work of shallow and white water because there are no propellers to damage, there's better clearance under the boat and the jet can be reversed instantly for quick braking. The jet's instant response enables these craft to execute passenger-drenching 360-degree spins almost within the length of the boat.

On the South Island, the Shotover and Kawarau Rivers near Queenstown and the Buller River near Westport are renowned jetboating waterways. The Dart River is less travelled but also good, and the Waiaototo River near Haast is a superb wilderness experience, as is the Wilkin River in Mt Aspiring National Park. Try also the Kawarau River (out of Cromwell), the Waiau River (out of Te Anau) and the Wairahurahiri River (out of Tuatapere).

On the North Island, the Whanganui, Motu, Rangitaiki and Waikato Rivers are excellent for jetboating, and there are sprint jets at the Agrodome in Rotorua and at Waitomo. Jetboating around the Bay of Islands in Northland is also *de rigueur*, particularly the trip to the Hole in the Rock.

Paragliding

Paragliding is perhaps the easiest way for humans to achieve assisted flight. The sport involves taking to the skies in what is basically a parachute that's been modified so it glides through the air. After a half-day of instruction you should be able to do limited solo flights, and before you know it you could be soaring through the sky, 300m high. One of the best places to learn the skills is Wanaka Paragliding (p638).

Tandem flights, where you are strapped to an experienced paraglider, are offered all over the country. Popular tandem experiences include those in Queenstown, in Nelson, and from Te Mata Peak in Hawke's Bay.

SKIING & SNOWBOARDING

Global warming is triggering a worldwide melt, but NZ remains an essential southern-hemisphere destination for snow bunnies, with downhill, cross-country and ski mountaineering all passionately pursued. Heliskiing, where choppers lift skiers to the top of long, isolated stretches of virgin snow, also has its fans. The NZ ski season is generally June to October, though it varies considerably from one ski area to another, and can run as late as November.

Unlike Europe, America or even Australia, NZ's commercial ski areas aren't generally set up as 'resorts' with chalets, lodges or hotels. Rather, accommodation

For something different, how about taking off from Wellington and skydiving into Picton? An extreme way to avoid the Cook Strait ferries! See the boxed text, p420, for details.



and après-ski carousing are often in surrounding towns that connect with the slopes via daily shuttles.

The variety of locations and conditions makes it difficult to rate the ski fields in any particular order. Some people like to be near Queenstown's party scene or the classic volcanic scenery of Mt Ruapehu; others prefer the high slopes and quality runs of Mt Hutt, uncrowded Rainbow or less-stressed club skiing areas. Club areas are publicly accessible and usually less crowded and cheaper than commercial ski fields, even though nonmembers pay a slightly higher fee. Many club areas have lodges you can stay at, subject to availability – winter holidays and weekends will be fully booked, but midweek you'll be OK.

Visitor information centres in NZ, and the New Zealand Tourism Board (NZTB) internationally, have brochures on the various ski areas and packages, and can make bookings. Lift passes can cost anywhere from \$30 to \$100 a day (roughly half for children and two-thirds for students). Lesson-and-lift packages are available at most areas. Ski-equipment rental (skis, boots and poles) starts at around \$40 a day; snowboard-and-boots hire starts at around \$55. Prices decrease for multiday hire. Try to rent equipment close to where you'll be skiing, so you can exchange gear if there's a problem with the fit.

North Island

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK

The North Island is dominated by volcanic-cone skiing. Rumbling Mt Ruapehu in Tongariro National Park is the premier ski zone.

Twin resorts **Whakapapa and Turoa** (☎ 07-892 3738, snow-phone 08-322 2182; www.mtruapehu.com; daily lift pass adult/child \$80/44), on either side of Mt Ruapehu (aka Mt Doom from *Lord of the Rings*), comprise NZ's largest ski area. Lift passes are

valid at both resorts. Whakapapa, 6km above Whakapapa Village in Tongariro National Park, has 30 groomed runs. There are plenty of snowboarding possibilities, cross-country, downhill and ski touring, and the highest lift access in the country. You can drive yourself up to the slopes or take a shuttle minibus from Whakapapa Village, National Park township, Taupo or Turangi. Smaller Turoa has a beginners' lift, snowboarding, downhill and cross-country skiing. There's no road toll or parking fee and daily ski-area transport is available from Ohakune 16km away, which has the liveliest post-ski scene in the north.

Club-operated **Tukino** (☎ 0800 885 466, 06-387 6294; www.tukino.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$40/20) is on the eastern side of Mt Ruapehu, 50km from Turangi. It's quite remote, 14km down a gravel road from the sealed Desert Rd (SH1), and you need a 4WD vehicle to get in (or make a prior arrangement to use club transport). Because access is so limited the area is uncrowded, but most runs are beginner or intermediate.

See Tongariro National Park (p306) for more info.

TARANAKI

Manganui (☎ 06-759 1119, 027 280 0860; www.skitaranaki.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$35/20) offers volcano-slope, club-run skiing on the eastern slopes of spectacular Mt Taranaki in the Egmont National Park, 22km from Stratford. You can ski off the summit; when conditions permit, it's a sweaty two-hour climb to the crater, but the exhilarating 1300m descent compensates.

For local info, see Mt Taranaki (p254).

South Island

QUEENSTOWN & WANAKA

NZ's best-known (and top-rated) skiing is on the South Island, most of it revolving around the resort towns of Queenstown and Wanaka.

The Queenstown region's oldest ski field is **Coronet Peak** (☎ 03-442 4620, snow-phone 03-442 4620; www.nzski.com; daily lift pass adult/child \$85/50). A multimillion dollar snow-making system and treeless slopes provide excellent skiing for all levels. The consistent gradient and the many undulations make this a snowboarder's paradise. Night skiing usually happens on Friday and Saturday, from late June to late September. Shuttles run from Queenstown, 18km away.

Visually remarkable, the **Remarkables** (☎ 03-442 4640, snow-phone 03-442 4615; www.nzski.com; daily lift pass adult/child \$84/45) is also near Queenstown (28km away) – shuttle buses run during the season. It has an equal smattering of beginner, intermediate and advanced runs, with chairlifts and beginners' tows, and is a family-friendly field (kids under 10 ski free). Look for the sweeping run called Homeward Bound.

The highest and largest of the southern lakes ski areas, **Treble Cone** (☎ 03-443 7443; www.treblecone.com; daily lift pass adult/child \$99/50) is in a spectacular location 26km from Wanaka, with steep slopes suitable for intermediate to advanced skiers. Treble Cone also has numerous half-pipes and a terrain park for snowboarding.

Around 34km from Wanaka, **Cardrona** (☎ 03-443 7341; www.cardrona.com; daily lift pass adult/child \$77/39) has several high-capacity chairlifts, beginners' tows and extreme terrain for snowboarders. Buses run from Wanaka during the ski season, and also from Queenstown. Cardrona has acquired a reputation for the services it offers skiers with disabilities, and it was the first resort on the South Island to have an on-field crèche. In summer, the mountain bikers take over.

NZ's only commercial Nordic (cross-country) ski area, **Snow Farm New Zealand** (☎ 03-443 0300; www.snowfarmnz.com; daily trail pass adult/child \$30/15) is 35km from Wanaka on the Pisa Range, high above Lake Wanaka. There are 50km of groomed trails and thousands of hectares of open rolling country for classic ski touring. Huts with facilities are dotted along the top of the Pisa Range.

For a range of snowboarding and skiing tours in the North Island, go to www.newzealandsnowtours.com

Snow Park (☎ 03-443 9991; www.snowparknz.com; daily lift pass adult/child \$75/40) is NZ's only dedicated freestyle ski and board area, with a plethora of pipes, terrain parks, boxes, rails, hits and snow-making facilities. There's backpacker-style accommodation, a restaurant and a bar here too. It's 34km from Wanaka; 58km from Queenstown.

For info on local facilities, see Queenstown (p610) and Wanaka (p635).

SOUTH CANTERBURY

The commercial ski area **Ohau** (☎ 03-438 9885; www.ohau.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$62/24) lines the flanks of Mt Sutton, 42km from Twizel. Expect a high percentage of intermediate and advanced runs, excellent terrain for snowboarding and cross-country skiing, and a ski lodge to sleep in. See Lake Ohau & Ohau Forests (p570) for more accommodation info.

The 3km-wide basin at **Mt Dobson** (☎ 03-685 8039; www.dobson.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$60/20), a commercial ski area 26km from Fairlie, caters for learners and has a large intermediate area, a terrain park and famously dry powder. On a clear day you can see Mt Cook and the Pacific Ocean from the Mt Dobson summit. **Fox Peak** (☎ 03-684 7358, snow-phone 03-688 0044; www.foxpeak.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$45/10) is a club ski area 29km from Fairlie in the Two Thumb Range. Fox Peak has four rope tows; there's good cross-country skiing from the summit. There's also dorm-style accommodation at Fox Lodge, 3km below the ski area. For info on nearby facilities, see Fairlie (p565).

Round Hill (☎ 03-680 6977; www.roundhill.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$65/32) is a small field with wide, gentle slopes perfect for beginners and intermediates, about 32km from Lake Tekapo village. See Lake Tekapo (p566) for details on local accommodation.

CENTRAL CANTERBURY

Mt Hutt (☎ 03-302 8811, snow-phone 03-308 5074; www.nzski.com; daily lift pass adult/child \$84/45) is one of the highest ski areas in the southern hemisphere, as well as one of NZ's best. It's close to Methven and can be reached by bus from Christchurch (118km to the west). Ski shuttles run to/from both towns. The ski area's access road is a rough, unpaved ride – drivers should be extremely cautious when the weather is lousy. Mt Hutt has beginner, intermediate and advanced slopes, with a six-seater chairlift, various other lifts and heliskiing to slopes further afield. The wide-open faces are good for snowboard learners. For info on where to stay and eat in the area, see Methven (p558).

Exclusive **Mt Potts** (☎ 03-303 9060, 0800 435 472; www.mtpotts.co.nz; heliskiing per day \$810) is one of NZ's snow-white gems, sitting above the headwaters of the Rangitata River, 75km from Methven. It offers a helicopter-accessed skiing experience – the day rate buys you five full-length heliski runs. Accommodation and meals are available at a lodge 8km from the ski area – dinner, bed and breakfast (DB&B) costs from \$109. For info on the nearby town of Mt Somers, see p561.

The closest commercial ski area to Christchurch is **Porters** (☎ 03-318 4002; www.skiporters.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$70/38), 96km away on the Arthur's Pass road. Its Big Mama is one of the steepest runs in NZ, but there are wider, gentler slopes too. There's a half-pipe for snowboarders, good cross-country runs along the ridge, and lodge accommodation (DB&B \$83). For accommodation in the area, see Craigieburn Forest Park (p556).

Temple Basin (☎ 03-377 7788, snow-phone 03-383 8888; www.templebasin.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$60/35) is a club field 4km from the Arthur's Pass township. It's a 50-minute walk uphill from the car park to the ski-area lodges. There's floodlit skiing at night and excellent backcountry runs for snowboarders. For info on local facilities, see Arthur's Pass (p557).

Craigieburn (☎ 03-318 8711; www.craigieburn.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$60/35), centred on Hamilton Peak, is 40km from Arthur's Pass. It's one of NZ's most challenging club areas, with intermediate and advanced runs (no beginners). Not far away is **Broken River** (☎ 03-318 7270, snow-phone 03-383 8888; www.brokenriver.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$60/35), another club field, with a 15- to 20-minute walk from the car park and a real sense of isolation. See Craigieburn Forest Park (p556) and Arthur's Pass (p557) for details of local places to stay and eat.

Another cool club area in the Craigieburn Range is family-friendly **Mt Cheeseman** (☎ 03-344 3247, snow-phone 03-318 8794; www.mtcheeseman.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$60/30), 112km from Christchurch (the closest club to the city). Based on Mt Cockayne, it's a wide, sheltered basin with drive-to-the-snow road access. Also in Craigieburn (difficult to find, but worth the search) is **Mt Olympus** (☎ 03-318 5840, snow-phone 03-383 8888; www.mtolympus.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$60/30), 58km from Methven and 12km from Lake Ida. This club area has four tows that lead to intermediate and advanced runs, and there are solid cross-country trails to other areas. Access is sometimes 4WD-only, depending on conditions. Lodge accommodation is available. See Craigieburn Forest Park (p556) and Arthur's Pass (p557) for details of local places to stay and eat near Mt Cheeseman and Mt Olympus.

NORTHERN SOUTH ISLAND

There are two ski areas near Hanmer Springs. Accommodation is on-field, or you can stay in the township (p553). **Hanmer Springs** (☎ 027 434 1806, snow-phone 03-383 8888; www.skihanmer.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$45/20) is based on Mt St Patrick, 17km from Hanmer Springs township, with mostly intermediate and advanced runs. There are natural and groomed pipe-rides for snowboarders too. **Mt Lyford** (☎ 03-315 6178, snow-phone 03-366 1220; www.mtlyford.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$50/15) is 60km from both Hanmer Springs and Kaikoura, and 4km from Mt Lyford Village. It's a 'resort' in the true sense, with accommodation and plenty of food options available. There's a good mix of runs, suiting beginner, intermediate and advanced skiers and boarders, and a terrain park.

The sunny Nelson region also has a ski area, just 100km away (a similar distance from Blenheim). **Rainbow** (☎ 03-521 1861, snow-phone 03-322 2605; www.skirainbow.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$55/32) borders the Nelson Lakes National Park, with varied terrain, minimal crowds and good cross-country skiing. Chains are often required. St Arnaud (p468) is the closest town (32km).

OTAGO

Awakino (☎ 03-313 7229; www.brownbear.co.nz; daily lift pass adult/child \$30/20) in North Otago is a small player on the scene, but worth a visit. Oamaru (p601) is 45km away on the coast; Omarama (p606) is 66km inland. Weekend lodge-and-ski packages are good value.

Heliskiing

NZ's remote heights are tailor-made for heliskiing. From July to October, operators cover a wide off-piste (off the beaten slopes) area along the Southern Alps. The cost ranges from around \$650 to \$1100 for three to eight runs. Heliskiing is available at Coronet Peak, Treble Cone, Cardrona, Mt Hutt, Mt Lyford, Ohau and Hanmer Springs, or you can contact an independent operator:

Alpine Guides Wilderness Heliskiing (☎ 03-435 1834; www.heliskiing.co.nz; Aoraki/Mt Cook)

Alpine Heli ski (☎ 03-441 2300; www.alpinehelski.com; Queenstown)

Harris Mountains Heli ski (☎ 03-442 6722; www.helski.co.nz; Queenstown & Wanaka)

Heli Ski Queenstown (☎ 03-442 7733, 0800 123 4354; www.flynz.co.nz; Queenstown)

Methven Heliskiing (☎ 03-302 8108; www.heliskiing.co.nz/methven/index.htm; Methven)

Southern Lakes Heli ski (☎ 03-442 6222; www.southernlakeshelski.co.nz; Queenstown)

Websites such as www.snow.co.nz and www.nzski.com provide ski reports, employment opportunities, webcams and virtual tours across NZ.

The NZ Ski & Snowboard Guide, published annually by Brown Bear, is a brilliant reference for powder-hounds, detailing NZ's 26 ski areas. Check it out at www.brownbear.co.nz/ski

MOUNTAIN BIKING

NZ is laced with quality mountain-biking opportunities. Mountain bikes can be hired in major towns or adventure-sports centres like Queenstown, Wanaka, Nelson, Picton, Taupo and Rotorua, which also have repair shops.

Various companies will take you up to the tops of mountains and volcanoes (eg Mt Ruapehu, Christchurch's Port Hills, Cardrona and the Remarkables) so you can hurtle down without the grunt-work of getting to the top first. Rotorua's Redwood Grove offers famously good mountain biking, as do the 42 Traverse near National Park township (close to Tongariro National Park), the Alexandra goldfield trails in Central Otago, and Twizel near Mt Cook. Other North Island options include Woodhill Forest, Waihi, Te Aroha and Te Mata Peak; down south try Waitati Valley and Hayward Point near Dunedin, Mt Hutt, Methven and the Banks Peninsula.

Some traditional tramping tracks are open to mountain bikes, but DOC has restricted access in many cases due to track damage and the inconvenience to walkers, especially at busy times. Never cycle on walking tracks in national parks unless it's permissible (check with DOC), or risk heavy fines and the unfathomable ire of hikers. The Queen Charlotte Track is a good one to bike, but part of it is closed in summer.

CYCLE TOURING

On any given stretch of highway, especially during summer, you'll come across plenty of pannier-laden cyclists with one eye on the scenery and the other looking out for potholes. Not that potholes are really an issue – the roads here are generally solid. Most towns offer touring-bike hire, at either backpacker hostels or specialist bike shops. Bike service and repair shops can be found in big towns; see the regional chapters in this book.

Some excellent cycle-touring books are available, including Lonely Planet's *Cycling New Zealand*, and the *Pedallers' Paradise* booklets by Nigel Rushton (see www.paradise-press.co.nz). Anyone planning a cycling tour (particularly of the South Island) should check out the self-guided tour options at www.cyclehire.co.nz.

Almost every town-to-town and over-the-mountain NZ road attracts cyclists. If you're not after altitude, the Central Otago Rail Trail between Middlemarch and Clyde is a winner. The Little River Rail Trail in Canterbury (en route to Banks Peninsula) is also fabulous. For an off-the-beaten-highway option, try the Southern Scenic Route from Invercargill round Tuatapere to Te Anau.

SEA KAYAKING

Highly rated sea kayaking areas in NZ's north include the Hauraki Gulf (particularly off Waiheke and Great Barrier Islands), the Bay of Islands and Coromandel Peninsula; in the south, try the Marlborough Sounds (Picton) and along the coast of Abel Tasman National Park, where kayaking is almost as popular as tramping. Fiordland is also a hot spot, with a heap of tour operators in Te Anau, Milford, Doubtful Sound and Manapouri arranging spectacular trips on local lakes and fiords. Also try the Otago Peninsula, Stewart Island and Kaikoura down south; or Waitemata Harbour, Hahei, Raglan and East Cape up north.

CANOEING

Canoeing is so popular on the North Island's Whanganui River that it's been designated one of NZ's 'Great Walks'. You can also dip your paddle into northern lakes like Lake Taupo, as well as freshwater lakes on the South Island.

Classic New Zealand Mountain Bike Rides, by the intrepid Kennett brothers, details a variety of short and long rides all over NZ (see www.kennett.co.nz).

For wannabe paddlers, the website of the Sea Kayak Operators Association of New Zealand (www.skoanz.org.nz) has a map of NZ paddling destinations and links to operators working in each area.

Many backpacker hostels close to canoe-friendly waters have Canadian canoes and kayaks for hire or free use, and loads of commercial guided trips (for those without equipment or experience) are offered on rivers and lakes throughout the country. Many trips have an eco element such as bird-watching – a prime example is the beautiful Okarito Lagoon on the West Coast of the South Island.

WHITE-WATER RAFTING & KAYAKING

There are almost as many white-water rafting possibilities as there are rivers in the country, and there's no shortage of companies to get you into the rapids.

Popular South Island rafting rivers include the Shotover and Kawarau Rivers near Queenstown, while the Rangitata River (south of Christchurch) is considered one of the country's best. The northern end of the island also has great rafting options, including the Buller River near Murchison and Karamea River near Westport. Other West Coast possibilities include the Arnold and Waiho Rivers.

On the North Island there are plenty of raft-worthy rivers too: try the Rangitaiki, Wairoa, Motu, Mokau, Mohaka, Waitomo, Tongariro and Rangitikei. There are also the Kaituna Cascades near Rotorua, the highlight of which is the 3m drop at Okere Falls.

Rivers are graded from I to VI, with VI meaning 'unraftable'. The grading of the Shotover canyon varies from III to V+, depending on the time of year. The Kawarau River is rated IV; the Rangitata River has everything from I to V. On the rougher stretches there's usually a minimum age limit of 12 or 13 years. Safety equipment is supplied by operators. The **New Zealand Rafting Association** (NZRA; www.nz-rafting.co.nz) has an online river guide, and lists registered operators.

White-water kayaking is popular among enthusiasts but, unlike rafting, it's a solo activity requiring skills and training. From September to April, the **New Zealand Kayak School** (☎ 03-352 5786; www.nzkayakschool.com) in Murchison offers intensive multiday courses for introductory to advanced levels from \$395.

ROCK CLIMBING

On the North Island, popular rock-climbing areas include the Mt Eden Quarry in Auckland; Whanganui Bay, Kinloch, Kawakawa Bay and Motuoapa near Lake Taupo; Mangatepopo Valley and Whakapapa Gorge on the Central Plateau; Humphries Castle and Warwick Castle on Mt Taranaki; and Piarere near Cambridge. Wharepapa, about 20km southeast of Te Awamutu, is regarded as one of the best places in the country for climbing.

On the South Island, the Port Hills area above Christchurch has countless climbs, and 100km away on the road to Arthur's Pass is Castle Hill, with great friction climbs and bouldering. West of Nelson, the marble and limestone mountains of Golden Bay and Takaka Hill provide prime climbing. Other options are Long Beach (north of Dunedin), and Mihiwaka and Lovers Leap on the Otago Peninsula.

MOUNTAINEERING

NZ has a proud mountaineering history – this was, after all, the home of Sir Edmund Hillary (1919–2008), who, along with Tenzing Norgay, was the first to summit Mt Everest. When he came back down, Hillary famously uttered to friend George Lowe, 'Well, George, we knocked the bastard off!'

Check the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association (NZRCA; www.rivers.org.nz) website for rainfall and river-flow updates around the country.

The Southern Alps are studded with impressive peaks and challenging climbs. The Aoraki/Mt Cook region is outstanding; others extend along the spine of the South Island from Tapuaenuku (in the Kaikoura Ranges) and the Nelson Lakes peaks in the north to the rugged southern mountains of Fiordland. Another area with climbs for all levels is Mt Aspiring National Park. To the south in the Forbes Mountains is Mt Earnslaw, flanked by the Rees and Dart Rivers.

The Christchurch-based **New Zealand Alpine Club** (NZAC; ☎ 03-377 7595; www.alpineclub.org.nz) proffers professional information, and produces the annual *NZ Alpine Journal* and the quarterly *Climber* magazine. Professional outfits for training, guiding and advice can be found at Wanaka, Aoraki/Mt Cook, Lake Tekapo, and Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers. *Classic Peaks*, by Hugh Logan, is a classic read.

CAVING

Caving (aka spelunking) opportunities abound in NZ's honeycombed karst (limestone) regions. You'll find active local clubs and organised tours around Auckland, Waitomo, Whangarei, Westport and Karamea. Golden Bay also has some mammoth caves. One of the most awesome caving experiences is the 100m abseil into the Lost World *tomo* (cave) near Waitomo. Local underground organisations include the **Wellington Caving Group** (www.caving.wellington.net.nz) and the **Auckland Speleo Group** (www.asg.org.nz). For more info see the **New Zealand Speleological Society** (www.caves.org.nz) website.

HORSE RIDING

Horse riding is commonplace in NZ. Unlike some other parts of the world where beginners get led by the nose around a paddock, here you can really get out into the countryside on a farm, forest or beach. Rides range from one-hour jaunts (from around \$50) to week-long, fully catered treks.

On the South Island, all-day horseback adventures happen around Kaikoura, Nelson, Mt Cook, Lake Tekapo, Hanmer Springs, Queenstown, Glenorchy, Methven, Mt Hutt, Cardrona, Te Anau and Dunedin. Treks are also offered alongside Paparoa National Park on the West Coast.

On the North Island, Taupo has options for wilderness horse trekking and for rides in the hills overlooking thermal regions. The Coromandel Peninsula, Waitomo, Pakiri, Ninety Mile Beach, the Bay of Plenty and East Cape are also top places for an equine encounter.

Where to Ride In New Zealand, an annual pamphlet from the **International League for the Protection of Horses** (ILPH; ☎ 07-849 0678; www.horsetalk.co.nz/ilph), is available from visitor information centres.

SCUBA DIVING

NZ is prime scuba territory, with warm waters up north, brilliant sea-life and plenty of interesting dive sites for beginners and experts.

On (or rather, off) the North Island, get wet at the Bay of Islands Maritime and Historic Park, Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park, the Bay of Plenty, Great Barrier Island, Goat Island Marine Reserve, the Alderman Islands, Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve near Gisborne, and Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Park near New Plymouth. The Poor Knights Islands, off the east coast of the North Island, are reputed to have the best diving in NZ – the late, great Jacques Cousteau rated them among the top 10 diving spots in the world. Nearby is the diveable wreck of the Greenpeace flagship *Rainbow Warrior*.

Down south, the Marlborough Sounds Maritime Park has some interesting dives, including the *Mikhail Lermontov*, the largest diveable cruise-ship wreck

For climbing info, see www.climb.co.nz, or pick up a copy of *Classic Rock Climbing in New Zealand* by Mark Sedon.

The website www.ridenz.com has links to horse-trekking companies in various parts of the country.

in the world. Fiordland is highly unusual in that the region's extremely heavy rainfall and mountain runoff leaves a layer of peaty, brown freshwater sitting on top of some of the saltwater fiords, notably Dusky Sound, Milford Sound and Doubtful Sound. The freshwater filters out light and discourages the growth of seaweed, so divers can experience amazingly clear pseudo-deep-water conditions not far below the surface. Invercargill, with its Antarctic waters, also has a diving club.

Expect to pay anywhere from \$150 for a short, introductory, pool-based scuba course; and around \$475 for a four-day, PADI-approved, ocean dive course. One-off organised boat- and land-based dives start at around \$165.

For more on NZ's explorable depths, pick up a copy of *Lonely Planet's Diving & Snorkeling New Zealand*, or contact the **New Zealand Underwater Association** (☎ 09-623 3252; www.nzunderwater.org.nz) in Auckland. The **Dive New Zealand** (www.divenewzealand.com) website is a treasure-trove of underwater information, with the lowdown on dive and wreck sites, plus listings of operators, clubs and shops.



SURFING IN NEW ZEALAND *Josh Kronfeld*

As a surfer I feel particularly guilty in letting the reader in on a local secret – NZ has a sensational mix of quality waves perfect for beginners and experienced surfers. As long as you're willing to travel off the beaten track, you can score some great, uncrowded waves. The islands of NZ are hit with swells from all points of the compass throughout the year. So, with a little weather knowledge and a little effort, numerous options present themselves. Point breaks, reefs, rocky shelves and hollow sandy beach breaks can all be found – take your pick!

Surfing has become increasingly popular in NZ and today there are surf schools up and running at most premier surf beaches. It's worth doing a bit of research before you arrive: **Surfing New Zealand** (www.surfingnz.co.nz) recommends a number of surf schools on its website. If you're on a surf holiday in NZ, consider purchasing a copy of the *New Zealand Surfing Guide*, by Mike Bhana.

Surf.co.nz (www.surf.co.nz) provides information on many great surf spots, but most NZ beaches hold good rideable breaks. Some of the ones I particularly enjoy:

- **Waikato** Raglan, NZ's most famous surf break and usually the first stop for overseas surfies
- **Coromandel** Whangamata
- **Bay of Plenty** Mt Maunganui, now with a 250m artificial reef that creates huge waves, and Matakana Island
- **Taranaki** Fitzroy Beach, Stent Rd and Greenmeadows Point all lie along the 'Surf Highway'
- **East Coast** Hicks Bay, Gisborne city beaches and Mahia Peninsula
- **Wellington Region** Beaches such as Lyall Bay, Castlepoint and Tora
- **Marlborough & Nelson** Kaikoura Peninsula, Mangamaunu and Meatworks
- **Canterbury** Taylors Mistake and Sumner Bar
- **Otago** Dunedin is a good base for surfing on the South Island, with access to a number of superb breaks, such as St Clair Beach
- **West Coast** Punakaiki and Tauranga Bay
- **Southland** Porridge and Centre Island

NZ water temperatures and climate vary greatly from north to south. For comfort while surfing, wear a wet suit. In summer on the North Island you can get away with a spring suit and boardies; on the South Island, a 2-3mm steamer. In winter on the North Island use a 2-3mm steamer, and on the South Island a 3-5mm with all the extras.

Josh is a keen surfer originally hailing from the Hawkes Bay region. While representing the All Blacks (1995–2000) he successfully juggled surfing, pop music and an international rugby career.

WINDSURFING & KITEBOARDING

Windsurfing has thousands of Kiwi devotees – there's a lot of wind here! Auckland Harbour, Hauraki Gulf, Karikari Peninsula, Tairua, the Bay of Islands, Gisborne, Raglan, Oakura near New Plymouth and windy Wellington are just some of NZ's outstanding coastal locations. You can hire boards and receive high-standard instruction at most of these locales. For more info on windsurfing, check out www.winzurf.co.nz/windsurf. **Windsurfing New Zealand** (www.windsurfingnz.org) is the national organisation.

Kiteboarding (aka kitesurfing), where a mini parachute drags you along on a mini surfboard, is pretty 'extreme', and can be attempted at Paihia, Tauranga, Mt Maunganui, Raglan, Wellington and Nelson. You can tee up lessons at most of these places too.

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