

## **Christmas in New Zealand – A Kiwi Celebration**

Christmas in New Zealand happens during summer, so celebrations are very different from many other countries. Families usually celebrate outdoors, going to the beach, swimming, surfing, playing backyard cricket, or traveling to holiday houses near the coast. Barbecues, called “barbies,” are very popular and bring people together in gardens, parks, and beaches. Māori culture has an important influence on Christmas celebrations, with greetings like “Meri Kirihimete,” traditional songs, haka performances, and values such as whānau (family), hospitality, and togetherness. Christmas food mixes British traditions with fresh summer flavors, including lamb, ham, seafood, salads, and desserts like pavlova with fruit. A Māori curiosity is Maui, a legendary hero from Māori mythology who inspired the character in Disney’s movie Moana. He is known for his strength, intelligence, and magical powers.