

Title:

All The World Wants To Travel To New Zealand.

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Summary:

New Zealand? Think Hawaii meets Switzerland. Where else can you find so many different types of scenery and breathtaking landscapes in one country! From towering mountain peaks and glaciers to volcanoes and bubbling mud springs. And then there's the surprise. It's so very English too.

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Is it any wonder? Since Hollywood launched New Zealand big time onto the world's cinema screens with epic block busters such as Lord of The Rings, King Kong and The Chronicles of Narnia, everyone wants to visit. In fact, New Zealand is one of the most popular travel search destinations, with almost two million online searches for information each year, even beating out firm favorites such as Hong Kong and London.

New Zealand consists of two main islands, North and South about the size of Colorado. With a population of around 4 million and English as the main language, you can expect a warm welcome and a fantastic vacation experience. There is also strong, vibrant Maori culture reflected in the easy going attitude of the people and pride in their heritage.

From the West Coast of the United States, a direct flight to New Zealand is a bearable 12 hours. Close to the Australian continent, New Zealand shares the Australian love for sport and having a good time.

Think Hawaii meets Switzerland.

Where else can you find so many different types of scenery and breathtaking landscapes in one country! From towering mountain peaks and glaciers to volcanoes and bubbling mud springs. And then there's the surprise. It's so very English too. The lush green fields and rolling hills reminiscent of the English countryside and village life never seem that far away.

Major highlights and attractions.

The Bay of Islands on the North Island.

An absolute must-see on your trip. A magnificent natural treasure for anyone who enjoys getting out on the water. Catch a ferry or charter boat and immerse yourself in the unique atmosphere. Paddle a sea kayak in and out of island nooks and inlets. If you have always wanted to swim with dolphins, do it here. Many operators in the region offer excellent trips to spectacular Cape Brett and the 'Hole in the Rock' on Piercy Island.

The townships of this historical bay are alive with memories of the area's colorful past. Take time out to see the well-preserved relics both Maori and European, in romantic Russell, Paihia, Waitangi or Kerikeri.

Rotorua. What's bubbling you?

Known for its amazing geothermal earth forces, this fascinating region offers you more than natural beauty, it's also a very spiritual place. "Manaakitanga" is a deep-rooted concept in Maori culture. It's a local challenge to offer visitors the best experience possible. Voted New Zealand's Most Beautiful City three times, Rotorua's gardens, cobbled streets and diverse mix of Maori and English Tudor architecture, give the city a significant point of difference. Beyond the urban centre, a backdrop of geothermal steam, volcanic mountains and huge crater lakes remind you that this region rests immediately above the Pacific Ring of Fire.

Incidentally, Rotarua's Hell's Gate Reserve was where the "Black Gate of Morodor" was filmed for The Lord of The Rings Trilogy. Let off some steam. Steam escapes from crevices in the ground, gardens bloom alongside bubbling craters and geysers shoot for the sky.

Spa therapy. A good wrap.

160 years after the first Europeans arrived to 'spa' in Rotorua, today's visitors are still enjoying the therapeutic properties of the geothermal resources. Mineral pools, mud wraps and massage will leave you feeling rejuvenated and ready for more.

The thrill of chilling out in Glacier Country.

Nowhere in the world's temperate zones are glaciers so accessible. On the West Coast of The South Island, remnants of the ice age cascade from the vast snowfields of the Southern Alps to valley floors, almost 1,000 feet above sea

level.

You can enjoy guided excursions exploring stunning ice formations. Or take off on a scenic flight and land amidst New Zealand's highest peaks overlooking the glaciers. The two most famous villages are Franz Josef and Fox Glacier, good bases from which to plan your days exploring the glaciers.

Milford Sound. Your eighth wonder of the world?

Legendary writer Rudyard Kipling was a well traveled man. He called Milford Sound the "eighth wonder of the world." Still down South, Milford Sound lies at the heart of Fiordland National Park, a World Heritage area. Cruising the clear, still waters of the Fiord you'll encounter magnificent sights, such as the awe-inspiring Mitre Peak and Stirling Falls.

With the highest rainfall in New Zealand (think feet not inches!) so expect rain when you visit. However, when it pours, the water falls that appear all around are simply amazing.

Keep a lookout for wildlife such as dolphins, penguins and seals often seen in their natural habitat. Go on a scenic cruise and gasp at the moody majesty of the Fiord in your Milford Sound Red Boat.

Another worthwhile attraction is the Milford Deep Underwater Observatory Option. Descend 30 feet below the surface and marvel at spectacular marine life, with anemones, sponges, fish and rare red and black coral in their natural habitat.

Discover Middle Earth.

According to Oscar winner Peter Jackson, New Zealand was the only landscape on the planet that could have provided the sensational locations for Tolkien's Middle Earth. You can set off on your voyage of discovery and visit the key areas featured in the films such as The Southern Alps and Queenstown. Make sure you stop at Matamata, near Hamilton (a couple of hours drive south of Auckland) and marvel at how the landscape was transformed into the peaceful hobbit village of Hobbiton.

Auckland. The largest city.

Wellington is actually the capital, but Auckland is where many visitors first set foot in New Zealand. Imagine an urban environment where everyone lives within half an hour of beautiful beaches, hiking trails and a dozen enchanting holiday islands, that's Auckland. It's located on the North Island and called

the City of Sails. Know why? It has more boats per capita than any other city in the world. Almost entirely surrounded by water and covered with volcanic hills, the city boasts a superb harbor and a population of 1.3 million people. Add a background rhythm of Polynesian culture, a passion for outstanding food, wine and shopping - and you'll want to stay.

Auckland has a pleasant subtropical climate with mild winters (June, July and August) and warm, humid summers (December, January and February). Remember the seasons down here are reversed, so plan your vacation accordingly.

Accommodation to suit every taste.

For visitors, Auckland has all types of accommodation. Web sites such as <http://www.hotel.com.au> offer a range from backpacker to budget to luxury international hotels. As the North Island attracts more visitors than the South, it pays to check what's out there as you plan your trip.

Action. Adrenalin. Anticipation.

Auckland is a top choice if you're interested in wide open spaces and physical activities. Above the ground you can go bungee jumping, parachuting and skydiving.

On the ground you can go hiking, mountain bike riding, skiing, horse riding, rock climbing, and 'zorbing'. Underground you can go surface caving, cave rafting and hydro sliding; and on the water you can go jet-boarding, white-water sledging, rafting, boogey boarding, canoeing, kayaking, surfing and scuba diving. If there is a difficult and challenging way to get from one point to another you can do it in New Zealand.

If you're looking for some less exhilarating activities, such as retail therapy, many Auckland stores are open seven days a week. Bars, restaurants and nightclubs welcome patrons well into the night.

Whether you are stopping for a week, or planning to spend a month exploring everything in The Land of The Long White Cloud, New Zealand will make you feel right at home.