

PORTS



Auckland, New Zealand

New Zealand's largest city -- and the world's largest Polynesian city -- sprawls across an isthmus positioned between two harbors. The City of Sails boasts more boats per capita than any other and draws Kiwis with top surf spots and cultural charms. In the Parnell area, peruse art galleries, antique shops and cafes housed in restored

Victorian buildings or venture to the harbor for a leisurely cruise or exhilarating jet boat tour. Just a ferry ride away, Waiheke Island is dotted with beaches and vineyards. Nearby Rangitoto Island is the youngest but largest of the Auckland area's 48 volcanic cones, and a trek to its summit rewards hikers with 360-degree views of emerald seas. Some excursions introduce cruise passengers to Maori culture, while other head to sheep farms for a glimpse of New Zealand's rural life. Hobbiton enchants fans of "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings" movies, and below the village of Waitomo, a series of caves radiate a glittering blue light due to a rare glowworm species.

Language: English

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD)

Tauranga, New Zealand

Tauranga is the principal city of the Bay of Plenty, noted for its good climate and fine beaches. The Mount Maunganui town center is within walking distance from the port. Tauranga also plays an important role as gateway to Rotorua, known as one of New Zealand's, most famous tourist attractions.



Language: English

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD)



Napier, New Zealand

The area is blessed with a Californian-Mediterranean climate, boasting one of the highest sunshine averages in the country. The area also is dotted with colorful vineyards and orchards, with some of the most fertile farmland you will see. Napier is called the newest city in the world, offering a marvelous, world-renowned collection of art deco buildings. Within the region are more than 20 of New

Zealand's finest vineyards, many of which are open to the public. Among the attractions in the area are the Gannet Colony at Cape Kidnappers, the Hawke's Bay Aquarium, the Spanish Mission and art deco architecture, gardens, and bush walks.

Language: English

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD)

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Wellington, New Zealand

Wooded hillsides curve like a verdant amphitheater around Wellington's harbor, welcoming travelers to the capital of New Zealand. Located at the southwestern tip of North Island, the city's attractions include the country's national museum, Te Papa, with exhibits that showcase the region's social, cultural, biological, and geological history, and Old St. Paul's cathedral, a heritage site constructed in 1866 in the Gothic Revival style of architecture. Movie buffs can opt for excursions into the Hutt Valley to see filming locales from the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy or tour Weta Workshop in nearby Miramar, the special effects and props studio that helped create blockbusters such as "King Kong" and "Avatar." No visit to Wellington is complete without a ride on the town's iconic cable car, which you can take to the top of a scenic overlook before walking down through a botanic garden to the Parliament buildings. For more memorable views, head to the Mount Victoria Lookout to watch the sunset.



Language: English

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD)



Akaroa, New Zealand

Akaroa has a unique place in New Zealand's history as the only French settlement in the country. The lovely bayside town has many streets with French names, and some descendants of the original French families still live there. It is the site of the nation's first Catholic Church and the first vineyard in the country.

Language: English, Maori

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD)

Dunedin (Port Chalmers), New Zealand

This city lies at the head of a fjord-like inlet and is surrounded by seven hills. It is said to be the most perfectly preserved Victorian city anywhere. Dunedin's Scottish heritage is everywhere, from a statue of Robert Burns in the Octagon -- the eight-sided heart of the central city -- to the country's only whiskey distillery. In addition, a jewel in the city's architectural crown is the first Church of Otago. The imposing railway station is worth visiting if only for its locomotives reproduced in stained glass.



Language: English

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD)

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Doubtful Sound, New Zealand

The grandeur of towering peaks descending into deep waters, outstanding waterfalls and fjords covered with ancient vegetation, all make up the unforgettable solitude and serenity of Doubtful Sound, New Zealand. First named 'Doubtful Harbour' by Captain Cook, who was unsure of whether or not the inlet was navigable, was later renamed

Doubtful Sound by whalers and sealers. The sound is home to several large waterfalls, notably Helena Falls at Deep Cove, and the Browne Falls, which have a fall of over 600 meters. The fjord also protects the southernmost population of bottlenose dolphins as well as fur seals, penguins, and numerous sea creatures such as sea anemones, coral, and starfish.

Language: English

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD)

Milford Sound, New Zealand

Milford Sound is the undisputed jewel of Fiordland National Park. Because of its outstanding natural beauty and cultural significance, Milford Sound has been nominated a World Heritage area. See Bowen Falls, spectacular Mitre Peak, Tutoko Glacier, and the Underwater Observatory in Harrison Cove -- a unique opportunity to look under the dark waters of Milford Sound and see the life teeming below. In fact, when you descend the 60 steps of the underwater viewing platform, you will see how much natural light penetrates these seemingly dark waters.



Language: English

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD)



Dusky Sound, New Zealand

Dusky Sound, New Zealand's longest fjord, is also one of the most beautiful, with numerous wooded islands and inlets. It was given its name by Captain Cook, who sailed past the fjord on his first voyage, in 1770, as evening was falling. The upper reaches of the sound are steep-sided, and the high precipitation of the region leads to hundreds of waterfalls cascading into the sound during the rainy season. You may also have an opportunity to spot some of the area's wildlife in the water, such as dolphins and seals.

Language: English

Currency: New Zealand Dollar (NZD)

PORTS

Melbourne, Australia

This riverside city is known as Australia's "Garden City." Amidst the skyscrapers of the urban center, you'll find tree-lined boulevards, the flourishing Fitzroy Gardens, the lakes and blooms of the Royal Botanic Gardens and a zoo where the animals roam freely in natural settings. The most popular tours also visit the 19th century mansions of the gold rush years and the penguins of Phillip Island as they make their way from sea to nest at sunset.



Language: English

Currency: Australian Dollar (AUD)



Burnie, Tasmania, Australia

Burnie is a city of rugged coastlines, beaches, and friendly neighborhoods. Visit nearby Cataract Gorge Reserve, which is home to the world's longest chairlift. Or try your hand at world-class trout fishing in Emu Bay, home to the Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens.

Language: English

Currency: Australian Dollar (AUD)

Eden, Australia

Eden is a small community on the east coast of Australia surrounded by wide beaches and imposing seaside cliffs. Popular activities include bay cruises and whale-watching tours, since a migration route for whales coming from the Antarctic sea passes right by the port. In town visitors will want to see the Killer Whale Museum, established in recognition of the importance of killer whales to the region. Local lore has it that when the community made its living by whaling, the whalers were assisted by pods of killer whales, who would drive the migrating baleen whales into the town's harbor.



Language: English

Currency: Australian Dollar (AUD)

PORTS



Sydney, Australia

Sydney is Australia's showcase city, and its grand harbor never fails to impress arriving cruise ship passengers. Its most famous attractions are the landmark Opera House and Harbor Bridge. Bondi Beach is a surfer's heaven, and Watson's Bay offers terrific views of Sydney's skyline.

View kangaroos, emus and, of course, koalas at Koala

Park, or take a stroll through The Rocks, Sydney's oldest neighborhood.

Language: English

Currency: Australian Dollar (AUD)