

New Zealand

Your stay in New Zealand will be marked by the outdoors no matter what you do or where you live because the outdoors is an ever-present part of Kiwi life. New Zealanders are proud to share their culture and love of nature with YFU exchange students.

You will have the advantage of getting to know the landscape and understanding Kiwis, or New Zealanders, by learning their history and experiencing their relationship to the natural world around them. Though the native Maori make up only 15 percent of the population in

New Zealand today, their cultural influence is integral to life on the islands. You will probably find your host family to be relaxed, easygoing, and not as hurried as people in the US. New Zealanders tend to function at a more casual pace. The weekend is an important family time in New Zealand.

Short Facts

Culture: Though the native Maori make up only 15 percent of the population in New Zealand today, their cultural influence is integral to life on the islands. Their culture relied for a long time on oral rather than written history, which was passed on through stylized songs and chants. This oratory song and chant has developed into an art. Other Maori arts include poi dancing, action songs, and martial arts; crafts such as wood, bone, and jade carving; basketry and weaving; and a magnificent kind of wood paneling called tukutuku, which you can see in their whare hui (meeting houses).



Kiwi

Encounter



Most

Varied landscapes

Geography: New Zealand is situated halfway between the equator and the South Pole, off Australia's coast in the Tasman Sea, with the Pacific Ocean to the east. While made up of many islands, the country is split between two main islands, North Island and South Island. Some of the smaller islands are inhabited, while others have been declared sanctuaries for plants and wildlife. The islands' climate is considered temperate. Because it's in the southern hemisphere, the seasons in New Zealand are the reverse of the seasons in the US. New Zealand enjoys one of the most varied landscapes in the world - complete with mountains, volcanoes, and boiling mud pools.

History, Government, and Economy: Apart from Australia, New Zealand was the last habitable part of the world to be reached and explored. The first settlers were the Polynesians who arrived around 800 AD and are now known as the Maori. They greeted the next visitor to New Zealand shores, Englishman James Cook, who mapped the country. After Cook, missionaries followed and then settlers. As with many bicultural societies, New Zealand has seen conflict between the Maori and white settlers; however, the government is actively pursuing policy aimed at improving bicultural relations. A British colony until 1947, the New Zealand government is a constitutional monarchy headed by a parliament and an appointed governor general. The country today is known for strong environmental principles and practices. Sheep are still the backbone of the New Zealand economy, though tourism contributes significantly.

Academic Programs: Your school will probably offer a range of courses, including practical and technical subjects, from which you can choose. Year and semester students participate in many outdoor activities such as camping and water sports which are an important aspect of education in New Zealand.

