

FEATURE DESTINATION – NEW ZEALAND



New Zealand is a country of rare seismic beauty: glacial mountains, fast-flowing rivers, deep, clear lakes, hissing geysers and boiling mud. There are also abundant forest reserves, long, deserted beaches and a variety of fauna, such as the kiwi, endemic to its shores. Any number of vigorous outdoor activities - hiking, skiing, rafting and, of course, that perennial favourite, bungee jumping - await the adventurous. You can swim with dolphins, gambol with newborn lambs, whalewatch or fish for fattened trout in the many streams. The people, bound in a culture that melds European with Maori ancestry, are resourceful, helpful and overwhelmingly friendly. The extraordinary place names - try Te Awamutu, Whangamomona or Paekakariki for tongue-trippers - are resonant and, with a modicum of practice, easy to pronounce.

Because it's such a compact place, travel within New Zealand - whether by plane, bus, rail, car or campervan - is affordable and efficient. Accommodation too is cheap and varied. And the culinary promise of venison, fresh seafood, sublime ice cream and award-winning wines should more than whet the appetite.

Wellington

The capital city of New Zealand, Wellington (population 345,000) is situated on a splendid harbour at the southern tip of the North Island. Often maligned by its northern counterparts for its ill-tempered weather - the winds are often of gale-force calibre in winter - Wellington is a lively city of culture and arts (with festivals almost every month), and great ethnic restaurants and cafes. It is also home to the country's government and national treasures.

Auckland

The largest city in New Zealand, Auckland (population 1,002,000) is almost enclosed by water and covered in volcanic hills. Like Sydney, Auckland has a spectacular harbour and bridge (and a fanatical number of yachting enthusiasts) which has earned it the sobriquet 'City of Sails'. A magnet for the people of the South Pacific islands, Auckland now has the largest concentration of Polynesians in the world. Highlights include the **Auckland Museum**, which houses a memorable display of Maori artefacts and culture, and **Kelly Tarlton's Underwater World & Antarctic Encounter**, a unique simulacrum of ocean and exploration activities.

Otago & Southland

Three highlights dominate Otago and Southland, which cover the south of the South Island : **Queenstown** with its adrenaline activities; the walkways of **Fiordland National Park**; and **Otago Peninsula**, which boasts New Zealand's first foray into ecotourism. Queenstown, set in a glacial valley on the edge of Lake Wakatipu, is a town synonymous with hairy adventures: parasailing; schussing down icy rapids in jet boats; white-water rafting; and bungee jumping off Skippers Canyon Bridge - the latest and most terrifying being a plunge 300m from a helicopter.



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STAFF PROFILE

Anthony McDermott – Senior Reservations Consultant

Anthony was born a very long time ago in Mombasa, Kenya where his father was Station Master in Nairobi. This is when travel got into his blood. At the age of 7, the family moved to Yorkshire where he grew up and was educated before moving to Durham to complete a Diploma in Travel & Tourism. Moving to London to work for Contiki gave Anthony his first real exposure to Australia and like the man in the "ad" he liked it so much that although he couldn't afford to buy it, immigration was the next best option.

Thinking this was a fantastic but underpopulated country he increased the population by two beautiful daughters and lived in the Blue Mountains of NSW for six years before moving to Mornington, Victoria to be with family. Anthony joined Drive Travel in April of this year where he continues his affair with travel.

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