



Cyclists Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

Across New Zealand, you can bed down at night in guesthouses that creak with history, facility-laden hotels, comfortably uniform motel units, beautifully situated

campsites and hostels that range in character from clean-living and relaxed to tirelessly party-prone.

Accommodation listings in this guidebook are ordered by budget from cheapest to most expensive. We generally designate a place as budget accommodation if it charges up to \$65 per single or \$80 per double. Accommodation qualifies as midrange if it costs roughly \$80 to \$150 per double, while we've given the top-end tag to any double room costing over \$150. Price ranges generally increase by 20% to 25% in the nation's largest cities (Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch). Here you will find budget accommodation at up to \$100 per double, midrange between \$100 and \$200, and top end rooms more than \$200.

If you're travelling during peak tourist seasons, book your bed well in advance. Accommodation is most in demand (and at its priciest) during the summer holidays from Christmas to the end of January; at Easter; and during winter in snowy resort towns like Queenstown and Wanaka. At other times, you might find that weekday rates are cheaper than weekend rates (except in business-style hotels in larger cities, where the reverse applies), and you'll certainly discover that low-season rates abound. When they're not run off their feet, accommodation

PRACTICALITIES

- For weights and measures, NZ uses the metric system.
- Videos you buy or watch will be based on the PAL system – the same system used in Australia, the UK and most of Europe.
- Use a three-pin adaptor (the same as in Australia; different to British three-pin adaptors) to plug yourself into the electricity supply (230V AC, 50Hz).
- For news, leaf through Auckland's *New Zealand Herald*, Wellington's *Dominion Post* or Christchurch's *The Press* newspapers, or check out www.stuff.co.nz.
- To get your fix of cycling news check out the local peddling magazines: *Spoke*.
- Tune in to Radio National for current affairs and Concert FM for classical and jazz (see www.radionz.co.nz for frequencies). Kiwi FM (www.kiwifm.co.nz) plays 100% NZ music; Radio Hauraki (www.hauraki.co.nz) cranks out the classic rock (too much Split Enz is barely enough...).
- Watch one of the four national commercial TV stations (TV One, TV2, TVNZ 6 and Maori Television) or the subscriber-only Sky TV (www.skytv.co.nz).

operators often offer walk-in rates that are significantly below advertised rates – ask late in the day. Also see the big-name global accommodation websites (www.wotif.com, www.lastminute.com, www.hotels.com etc) for last minute deals.

Visitor information centres provide reams of local accommodation information, often in the form of folders detailing facilities and up-to-date prices; many can also make bookings on your behalf. Alternatively, flick through one of NZ's free, widely available accommodation directories, including the annual *New Zealand Accommodation Guide* published by the **Automobile Association** (AA; www.aa.travel.co.nz), as well as the *Holiday Parks & Campgrounds* and *Motels, Motor Lodges & Apartments* directories produced by **Jasons** (www.jasons.com).

Camping & Campervan Parks

Those keen to sleep in NZ's hugely popular 'holiday parks', slumber peacefully in al-fresco sites, cheap bunk rooms (dorm rooms), cabins and self-contained units that are often called tourist flats. Well-equipped communal kitchens, dining areas and games and TV rooms often feature. In cities holiday parks are usually a fair way from the action, but in smaller towns they can be impressively central or near lakes, beaches, rivers and forests.

The nightly cost of holiday-park camping is usually between \$12 and \$16 per adult, with children charged half-price; powered sites are a couple of dollars more. Cabin/unit accommodation normally ranges from \$50 to \$100 per double. Unless noted otherwise, the prices we've listed for campsites, huts and cabins are for two people.

If you'll gladly swap facilities for wilder, less-developed locations such as national parks, head for one of the 250-plus, vehicle-accessible campsites managed by the **Department of Conservation** (DOC; www.doc.govt.nz). DOC also looks after hundreds of back-country huts, most of which can only be reached on foot.

CAMPING ON THE RIDE

While much of the riding covered in this guide is decidedly rural, there are actually few opportunities to simply pitch your tent on the roadside. Kiwi farmers are renowned

for their hyper-protective attitudes when it comes to uninvited guests on their land. Never assume that you can hop a fence and crash for the night – always seek permission from land owners and respect private property. In many smaller communities you'll be allowed to pitch your tent on the verge of the rugby grounds and every New Zealand town has a rugby pitch. Check with the local tourist information if this is kosher and be prepared to pay a few dollars for the privilege.

Farmstays

Farmstays open the door on the agricultural side of NZ life, with guests encouraged to get some dirt under their fingernails at orchards and dairy, sheep and cattle farms. Costs vary widely, with B&Bs generally ranging from \$80 to \$120. Some farms have separate cottages where you can fix your own food, while others have low-cost, shared, backpacker-style accommodation.

Farm Helpers in NZ (FHINZ; www.fhinz.co.nz) produces a booklet (\$25) that lists around 190 farms throughout NZ providing lodging in exchange for four to six hours work per day. **Rural Holidays NZ** ([☎](tel)03-355 6218; www.ruralholidays.co.nz) lists farmstays and homestays throughout the country on its website.

Guesthouses & B&Bs

Bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation in private homes is a growth industry in NZ, popping up in the middle of cities, in rural hamlets and on stretches of isolated coastline, with rooms on offer in everything from suburban bungalows to stately manors owned by one family for generations.

Guesthouses are usually spartan, cheap, 'private' (unlicensed) hotels, mostly low-key places patronised by people who eschew the impersonal atmosphere of many motels. Some are reasonable fancy, offering self-contained rooms.

Although breakfast is included at genuine B&Bs, it may or may not feature at guesthouses. Your morning meal may be 'continental' (cereal, toast, tea or coffee), 'hearty continental' (add yoghurt, fruit, home-baked bread or muffins), or a stomach-loading cooked meal including eggs, bacon and sausages. Some B&B hosts, especially in isolated locations or in small towns