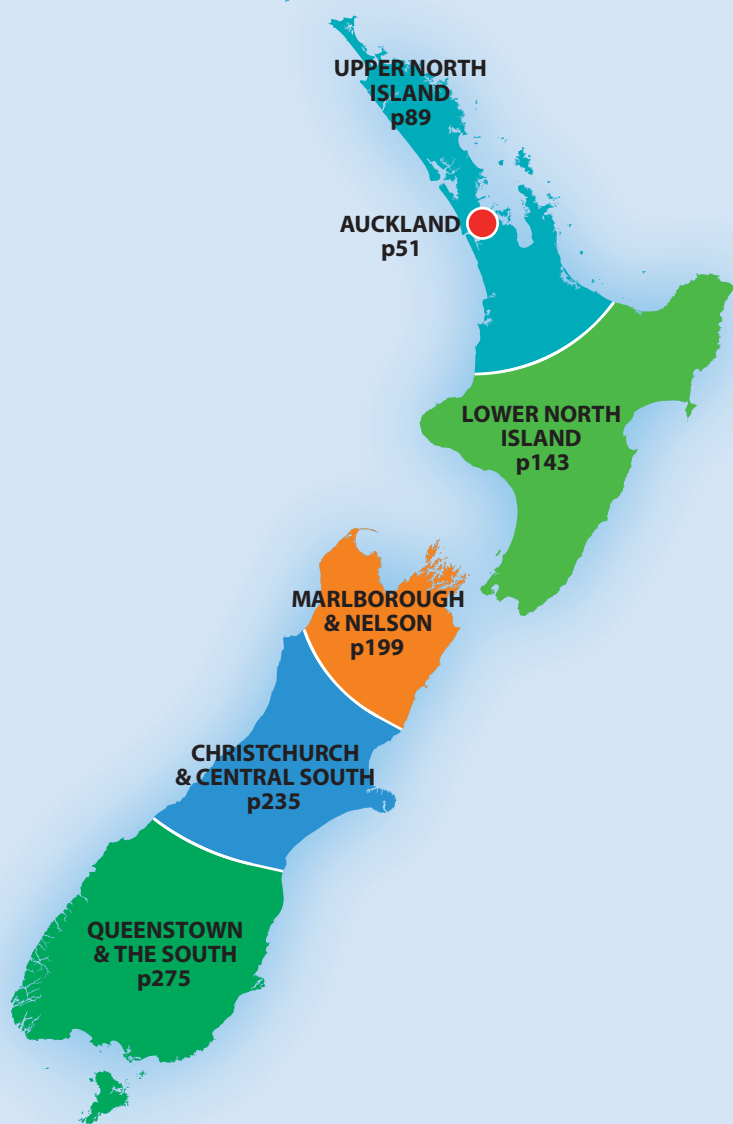




discover
**NEW
ZEALAND**

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DISCOVER NEW ZEALAND



Auckland (p51) New Zealand's big smoke is a real soap-opera hero: hip, gritty and really good-lookin'.



Upper North Island (p89) Rotorua's geysers and Maori culture, Waitomo's caves and Napier's art deco...here is a mixed-bag of Kiwi surprises.



Lower North Island (p143) Cafes, bars, restaurants...Wellington rocks! Further afield lie photogenic mountains, and the sunshine and wine of the East Coast.



Marlborough & Nelson (p199) The sunny side of the south offers wine, whale-watching and the fabulous Abel Tasman National Park.



Christchurch & Central South (p235) Head from civilised Christchurch, the South Island's biggest city, to the ice-clad heights of Aoraki/Mt Cook.



Queenstown & the South (p275) Peaks, glaciers, fiords and sounds are ground zero for adrenaline junkies (bungy jumping, skiing, white-water rafting...).

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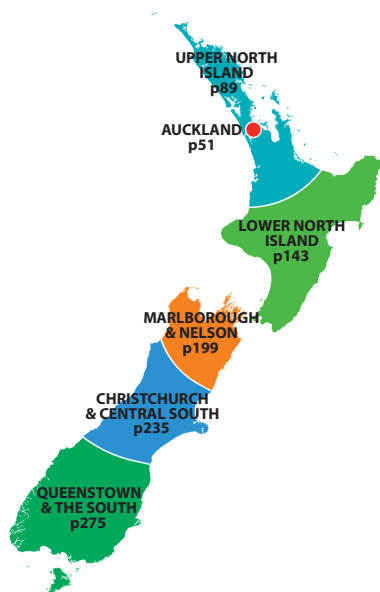
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THIS IS NEW ZEALAND



You probably already know how ludicrously photogenic New Zealand is. You may also know that adventure sports rule here (bungy jumping, skiing, skydiving, white-water rafting etc).

Then there's NZ's antinuclear stance, its rich Maori culture, its passion for rugby, its abundant sheep, its sauvignon blanc...

But there's one aspect of Aotearoa that you probably haven't counted on – the extent to which the average Kiwi will genuinely want you to have a really, really good time. Perhaps it's just insecurity, but whatever the motivation, it's in the interactions with everyday, eager-to-please Kiwis that lasting memories are made. As a Maori proverb suggests: *He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata! He tangata!* (What is the most important thing in the world? It is people! It is people!).

Politically and economically, recent years have seen a lot of changes down here. In 2008, just as the US was trading in George Bush for Barack Obama, Helen Clark's centre-left Labour government was ousted after nine years in power, and John Key's centre-right Nationals took the stage. Then the global economy went belly-up. Will affable, laid-back Key be able to pull NZ out of the gloom?



But enough politics – most Kiwis are more interested in the rugby. In 2011 NZ will host the Rugby World Cup. New Zealand's All Blacks are the most successful rugby team in history (with a 74% winning record) but they've only snagged the Cup once. After yet another dazzling failure in France in 2007, the pressure is on the All Blacks to redeem themselves on home soil. Whether you're visiting before, during or after the event, expect to hear a *lot* about it.

Whatever the economic or rugby prognosis, you can be guaranteed of a warm welcome in NZ. Kiwis love sharing their gorgeous country with visitors, and in turn seeing it anew through foreign eyes. You're in for a treat.

'It's in the interactions with everyday, eager-to-please Kiwis that lasting memories are made'
