

Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

Across New Zealand, you can bed down at night in guest houses 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 \$100 per double. Accommodation qualifies as midrange if it costs roughly \$100 to \$160 per double, while we've given the top-end tag to double rooms costing over \$160. Price ranges generally increase by 20% to 25% in the nation's largest cities (Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch). Here you can still find budget accommodation at up to \$100 per double, but

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider low-down on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

midrange stretches from \$100 to \$200, with 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 late January, at Easter, and during winter in snowy resort towns like Queenstown. At other times, weekday rates may be 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 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.co.nz, www.lastminute.co.nz, www.hotels.co.nz) 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.aatravel.co.nz), as well as the *Holiday Parks & Campgrounds* and *Motels, Motor Lodges & Apartments* directories produced by **Jasons** (www.jasons.com).

B&Bs & Guest Houses

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.

Guest houses are usually spartan, cheap, 'private' (unlicensed) hotels, mostly low-key places patronised by people who eschew the impersonal atmosphere of many motels. Some guest houses are reasonably fancy and offer self-contained rooms.

Although breakfast is included at genuine B&Bs, it may or may not feature at guest houses. Breakfast may be 'continental' (cereal, toast and 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 within the smaller towns where restaurants are limited, may cook dinner for guests and advertise dinner, bed and breakfast (DB&B) packages.

Tariffs are typically in the \$120 to \$180 bracket (per double), though some places charge upwards of \$300 per double. Some hosts continue to be cheeky-as-a-kea, charging hefty prices for what is, in essence, a bedroom in their home. Many upmarket B&Bs demand bookings and deposits at least a month in advance, and enforce strict and expensive cancellation policies – ie cancel within a week of your arrival date and you'll forfeit your deposit plus the balance of the room rate. Check conditions before you book.

New Zealand's *Bed and Breakfast Directory* (www.bed-and-breakfast.co.nz) and *Bed & Breakfast Book* (www.bnb.co.nz) are available online, and at bookshops and visitor information centres.

Camping & Campervan Parks

Campers and campervan drivers alike converge upon NZ's hugely popular 'holiday parks', slumbering peacefully in powered and unpowered sites, cheap bunk rooms (dorm rooms), cabins and self-contained units that are often called motels or 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 \$15 and \$18 per adult, with children charged half-price; powered sites are a couple of dollars more. Cabin/unit accommodation normally ranges from \$60 to \$120 per double. Unless noted otherwise, the prices we've listed for campsites, campervan sites, huts and cabins are for two people.

A fantastic option for campervanners are the 200-plus vehicle-accessible camping grounds run by the **Department of Conservation** (DOC; www.doc.govt.nz), with fees ranging from free (basic toilets and fresh water) to \$14 per adult (flush toilets and showers). DOC publishes free brochures with detailed descriptions and instructions to find every campsite (even GPS coordinates). Grab a copy from a DOC office before you hit the road, or visit the website.

DOC also looks after hundreds of backcountry huts, most of which can only be reached on foot. For more info, see Tramping (p79).

Never just assume it's OK to camp somewhere. Always ask a local first. Check at the

PRACTICALITIES

- For weights and measures, NZ uses the metric system.
- DVDs and videos viewed in NZ are 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.
- 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 national government-owned TV stations (TV One, TV2, TVNZ 6, TVNZ 7, Maori TV and the 100% Maori language Te Reo) or the subscriber-only Sky TV (www.skytv.co.nz).