

New Caledonia Directory

CONTENTS

Accommodation	184
Activities	185
Business Hours	187
Children	187
Climate	187
Courses	187
Customs	187
Dangers & Annoyances	187
Disabled Travellers	187
Discount Cards	188
Embassies & Consulates	188
Festivals & Events	188
Gay & Lesbian Travellers	188
Holidays	189
Insurance	189
Internet Access	189
Internet Resources	189
Maps	189
Money	189
Photography	190
Post	190
Shopping	190
Telephone	190
Time	190
Toilets	190
Tourist Information	190
Visas	191
Women Travellers	191
Work	191
Transport Around New Caledonia	191
Air	191
Bicycle	192
Boat	192
Bus	192
Car, Scooter & Campervan	193
Hitching	193
Taxi	193
Tours	194

ACCOMMODATION

There's a great range of accommodation wherever you go; if you choose a hotel, it will most certainly have glorious garden or ocean views. Places to stay are usually listed in price from the cheapest option to the most expensive. For midrange to top-end places, package deals organised before you leave home are often cheaper than booking your accommodation once

PRACTICALITIES

- *Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes* (www.lnc.nc) is the only daily newspaper. *Les Infos* is a weekly current affairs papers and the *New Caledonia Weekly* is a free weekly paper published by the Office du Tourisme with what's on and helpful details for tourists.
- There's one public television station, Télé Nouvelle-Calédonie, part of the French territories broadcasting service (RFO). All programmes are in French. Canal Satellite, a network of pay channels, has more choice.
- Radio Nouvelle-Calédonie (RNC) is the national radio service. Other radio stations include Radio Djiido; Radio Rythme Bleu (RRB); NRJ, mainly music for young people; and Radio Océane.
- Videos are usually based on the PAL system.
- Plugs have two round pins (220-240V, 50Hz AC).
- New Caledonia follows the metric system. See the Quick Reference inside the front cover for conversions.

you arrive. Useful websites for booking accommodation are www.nctps.com and www.iles-loyaute.com, in French, English and Japanese.

Camping

There are numerous campsites everywhere except Noumea. Most of them have only cold showers. There is usually electricity in the shower blocks but not to the rest of the campsite. Most *gîtes* and homestays also have camping grounds. It usually costs around 1000 CFP to pitch your tent, and sometimes you pay an extra 100 CFP per person.

Gîtes

Away from Noumea, *gîtes* (small, very modest hotels) are one of the most common types of accommodation. They have bungalows (small chalets or huts, usually with

private bathrooms) that sleep between two and six people. Standards range from rustic to very comfortable. There is usually a restaurant or a communal kitchen attached to the *gîte*. Prices range from around 4000 CFP to 9000 CFP for one or two people. Bungalows should be booked in advance and you also need to order your meals 24 hours in advance in most *gîtes*.

Homestays & Farmstays

Homestays, called *accueil en tribu* or *accueil chez l'habitant* in French, are usually within a family compound or set apart slightly within a *tribu*. They are the best way to meet Kanak people and learn about their culture. Most homestays offer accommodation in *cases* or bungalows. In *cases* (traditional Kanak houses) guests usually sleep on the floor, mattresses or mats. Bungalows usually have beds.

Homestays will usually cost 1000 CFP to 6000 CFP per person per night. Meals (from about 1800 CFP for three courses) can be arranged.

Similarly to homestays, farmstays (*bien-venu à la ferme*) are the best way to meet rural Caledonians, or Broussards as they're commonly called. They reserve a warm welcome, copious meals and laughter-filled anecdotes for guests, who are welcome to join in farm activities such as feeding the animals, rounding up cattle or, at night, deer hunting. Farmstays usually offer accommodation in rooms in the family home or in bungalows. Rates start at around 2500 CFP per person with meals extra.

You will need to order your meals 24 hours in advance in most homestays and farmstays.

Hostels

New Caledonia's sole Hostelling International (HI) hostel is the Auberge de Jeunesse (p151) in Noumea. It is the cheapest place to stay in the capital.

Hotels

There is a wide range of midrange and top-end hotel accommodation in Noumea. The only other place with a top-end hotel is Île des Pins. In Grande Terre's larger towns and tourist areas there is usually a midrange hotel or two and there is one on each of the Loyalty Islands.

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

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

In Noumea the cheapest hotel rates start at about 7000 CFP for a single or double room, possibly with a kitchenette. Mid-range hotel rates generally start at 14,000 CFP and go up to about 22,000 CFP.

At the top end, rates start at 22,000 CFP for a double and go up to 56,000 CFP – higher if you want a suite.

ACTIVITIES

Abseiling

New Caledonia has many waterfalls and rock formations which are ideal for abseiling. The **Gecko Club** (☎ 783 258; www.gecko-club.com) has information about the various areas. **Pacific Free Ride** (☎ 792 202; www.pfr.nc) arranges abseiling in the south of Grande Terre, and **Association Dayu Biik** (p168) organises abseiling in the north.

Diving

Scuba diving is big here, with many dive sites, most of which are reached by boat. Prices reflect this, but a two-dive package costs from 10,000 CFP. Out on the barrier reef there are many shipwrecks and, closer, several intentionally sunk ships.

Nouvelle-Calédonie Plongée (www.nouvellecaledonieplongee.com) offers 'Plongée' cards which give a 15% discount on dives. Cards (5000 CFP and valid for one year) can be purchased at member clubs; check the website for clubs and contact details.

Fishing

Air Mer Loisir and Pacific Charter (see opposite) in Noumea rent fishing boats. **New Caledonia Fishing Safaris** (☎ 251 940; www.newcaledoniafishingsafaris.nc) runs sportfishing safaris around Poupou and other spots.

Golf

There are three 18-hole, par-72 golf courses in the country: an upmarket golf course at