

Trampers Directory

CONTENTS

Accommodation	332
Business Hours	335
Children	336
Climate	336
Customs	339
Department Of Conservation	339
Embassies & Consulates	339
Food & Drink	339
Holidays	342
Insurance	342
Internet Access	343
Maps	343
Money	344
Permits & Fees	345
Telephone	345
Time	345
Tourist Information	346
Tramper Organisations	346
Visas	347
Women Trampers	347

PRACTICALITIES

- *Wilderness* (www.wildernessmag.com) is an excellent magazine for trampers, with articles on long treks and day walks in every issue.
- Electricity is 230V AC, 50Hz – as in Europe and Australia – and Australian-style three-prong plugs are used.
- New Zealand uses the metric system for all weights, measures and distances.
- Public laundries are rare in New Zealand, but virtually every accommodation place provides a coin-operated washing machine and dryer.
- The legal drinking age in New Zealand is 18.
- *Going Bush* by the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council is a great brochure covering the basics of tramping. It's available free at most DOC offices or visitor information centres.

ACCOMMODATION

To find your way around New Zealand's caravan parks, hotels, motels and so on, pick up a copy of the *New Zealand Accommodation Guide* published by the **Automobile Association** (AA; ☎ 09-966 8720; www.aatravel.co.nz) – it has more than 3000 listings and can be accessed online. **Jasons Travel Media** (☎ 09-912 8400; www.jasons.com) also produces a variety of free travel directories, including *New Zealand Holiday Parks & Campgrounds* and *New Zealand Motels & Motor Lodges*.

Camping & Caravan Parks

Camping grounds, also referred to as caravan parks and holiday parks, are found just about everywhere, including in conveniently located spots near the centre of many towns. Camping fees are either for unpowered sites, or powered sites with electrical outlets for caravans and campervans. They are also set as a fixed rate for two people, or as a per-person rate.

Large commercial camping grounds usually have well-equipped communal kitchens and dining areas, showers, a laundry and even TV lounges. They also offer bunkrooms, a range of cabins and self-contained units known as tourist flats.

BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING

You can camp in the backcountry on all tracks except the Milford. On most other Great Walks (Routeburn, Kepler, Abel Tasman Coast Track, Heaphy and Lake Waikaremoana) you have to book a camp site as you would a bunk in a hut, and there will be times when all the sites are booked. On other Great Walks you must stay at designated sites or in overflow areas near the huts.

On all other tracks you can camp anywhere, as long as you are at least 500m from the trail. You can also camp near huts, and use their water and cooking facilities. A **backcountry hut ticket** (\$5) is required to set up camp outside Serviced huts (see p334). Except on the popular Great Walks, the overwhelming majority of trampers in New Zealand, be they Kiwis or overseas visitors, do not camp along the tracks. The

hut system is so extensive and affordable, and the sandflies so bad at times, that it's hard to justify hauling a tent and sleeping mat into the mountains.

DOC CAMPING GROUNDS

The Department of Conservation (DOC) operates more than 230 camping grounds (conservation camping areas) throughout New Zealand. There are DOC camp sites in reserves and in national, maritime, forest and farm parks.

There are three types of DOC camping grounds. **Serviced grounds** (per adult \$8-14) have flush toilets, hot showers, tap water, kitchen and laundry areas, outdoor lights, picnic tables and rubbish collection, and usually have powered as well as unpowered sites. They may also have barbecues or fireplaces, a shop and a campervan waste-disposal point.

Standard camping areas (per adult \$3-10) are more basic, with minimal facilities, including cold running water, vault (long-drop) toilets, fireplaces and not much else.

Basic camping areas (free) usually have just a cold-water tap and places to pitch tents. Sometimes access to these sites is difficult – you may have to walk rather than drive – but they are worth it if you're geared for camping.

You can check with local DOC visitor information centres for details on facilities, such as what you need to take and whether you should book. Reservations can be made for all serviced camping grounds; contact the DOC office nearest the camping ground.

Guesthouses & B&Bs

B&B (bed and breakfast) accommodation in private homes is a growth industry in New Zealand. You'll find such accommodation in everything from suburban bungalows and farm cottages to stately manors in the most impressive sections of the cities. Guesthouses are usually Spartan, inexpensive, 'private' (unlicensed) hotels – mostly low-key places patronised by people who eschew the impersonal atmosphere of many motels.

Breakfast is part of the stay at genuine B&Bs and may be 'Continental' (cereal, toast, fruit, yogurt, tea and coffee) or 'full' (eggs, bacon, pancakes and other cooked

goodies). Many B&B owners will also pick you up from the airport or bus station, run you out to the track for a small additional fee, store your excess luggage while you are tramping and let you clean your clothes when you get back. Tariffs are typically around \$80 to \$150 (per double), though there are a growing number of upscale B&Bs with rates that start at \$200 and climb from there.

Hostels

New Zealand practically overflows with hostels – or backpacker lodges as they are also known. These range from small home-stay-style affairs with a handful of beds, to huge complexes in the centre of cities such as Auckland and Christchurch that have hundreds of beds, plus Internet cafés, booking desks and even rooftop bars and hot tubs. Virtually all of them have fully-equipped communal kitchens, common areas, laundry facilities and a way to check your email. Most backpacker lodges charge extra if you need to hire bedding, so it's best to travel with your own sleeping bag. A bed in a dorm ranges from \$22 to \$29 per night, and many hostels also offer double and twin rooms.

Most hostels belong to one of three national organisations: **YHA New Zealand** (☎ 0800-278 299, 03-353 9192; www.yha.co.nz) has more than 60 hostels, and **VIP Backpacker Resorts** (☎ 09-816 8903; www.vip.co.nz) has 70 member hostels. **Budget Backpacker Hostels** (BBH; ☎ 03-379 3014; www.bbhc.co.nz) is the largest, with around 325 hostels, home-stays and farm-stays. Its *BBH Backpacker Accommodation* booklet, commonly known as the 'Blue Brochure', is a handy publication to travel with. Membership of one of these organisations costs around \$40 per year, but it will save you from \$1 to \$3 a night with their member hostels. The prices in this guidebook are nonmembership rates.

Hotels & Motels

The least expensive form of hotel accommodation is the humble pub. The main business of these hotels is serving beer, but they often do a sideline in relatively cheap upstairs beds with shared bathrooms. Some even offer 'dorm rooms'. In the cheapest pubs, singles/doubles might cost as little as \$30/40, though \$40/60 is more common. Just keep in mind

LIVING IN THE HUTS

One of the unique aspects of tramping in New Zealand is the country's network of almost 1000 huts, located everywhere from deep in the bush to high on the mountains. Backcountry huts provide security during foul weather, allow you to carry less, and minimise the environmental impact trampers have on the land. But hut life means communal living, and in recent years DOC has begun an education campaign to remind trampers of the following points.

Share the Bunks

When huts are crowded, everybody needs to shift across on the platform bunks and share the mattresses. Nobody wants to sleep on the bare floor. It's important to remember that purchasing a hut ticket does not guarantee you a bunk.

Be Quiet in the Evening & Early Morning

Huts in the middle of the bush are not places for blaring radios, excessive drinking or all-night partying. Be considerate of trampers who hit the sack early or sleep in late. Try to minimise your use of a torch at night and early in the morning.

Pack Out Rubbish

Carry out your rubbish and do not leave half-burnt trash in the fireplace. In almost every hut, signs urge trampers to 'pack it in and pack it out'. Still, the volume of rubbish left behind is disturbing.

Replace Firewood

Wood stoves in huts are primarily for heat on cold nights. If you must light a fire, make sure to restock the wood box with both kindling and logs for the next party, which may arrive wet and cold.

Conserve Water

Most huts are equipped with rainwater tanks, which can run dry during hot summers. Use rainwater sparingly and do not use soap to bathe in nearby rivers and lakes.

Keep Huts Clean

Leave muddy boots and gaiters outside. Before leaving in the morning, clean the counters, tables and floor. Is there anything more demoralising after a long day of tramping than entering a dirty hut?

Pack Ear Plugs

In larger huts along popular tracks, somebody will inevitably snore at night. If you're a light sleeper, pack ear plugs. You might also want to carry a juicy novel, since there is always a lot of downtime in the huts in the evening.

Pay Your Hut Fees!

Huts in New Zealand are extremely affordable. But to maintain the system, everybody – locals and overseas visitors alike – needs to purchase hut tickets for every night they use huts, or an annual pass.

that on weekends the band downstairs might be playing late into the night.

At the other end of the scale are resorts and five-star hotels with names like Hilton and Sheraton attached to them. Such places offer a variety of rooms and suites, plus restaurants, lounges and amenities such as pools, spas and minibars, and prices that range from \$150 a double to more than \$200.

In the middle are motels, which generally charge from \$80 to \$100 for a double room, and have rooms with en suite bathrooms, mini-kitchens, tea- and coffee-making facilities, and a TV.

Huts

BACKCOUNTRY HUTS

DOC has a network of almost 1000 huts in national, maritime and forest parks. Other

than on Great Walks (see right), most hut fees range from \$5 to \$10 per night for adults, paid with tickets purchased in advance at any DOC visitor information centre, outdoor shop or even from shuttle-bus companies servicing the track. The exceptions are alpine Serviced huts (\$20 to \$35 per night) and huts maintained by tramping clubs.

Tickets cost \$5 each. Children 11 years and older are half-price and use a special 'youth ticket'. Children under 11 pay half-price for Great Walks huts and can use all other huts free of charge.

Huts fall into four categories, and depending on the category, a night's accommodation may require one to three tickets. The majority of backcountry huts in New Zealand are Serviced or Standard. On arrival at a hut you simply date the tickets and deposit them in the box provided. The huts operate on a first-come, first-served basis.

The best huts have stoves and fuel, bunks or sleeping platforms with mattresses, toilet and washing facilities, and a water supply. They may also have lighting, heating, radio communications, drying facilities and a hut warden. These Serviced huts cost three tickets (\$15) per night, and are limited to Coromandel Forest Park and Westland/Tai Poutini and Aoraki/Mt Cook National Parks.

Other serviced huts may have bunks or sleeping platforms with mattresses, as well as toilet and washing facilities and a water supply. Many also include gas cookers and heating. The cost is two tickets (\$10) per night.

Standard huts are more basic, with bunks or sleeping platforms, toilets and a water supply only. You provide your own stove and fuel. These huts cost one ticket (\$5) per night.

There is no fee for a Basic hut/bivvy, which are usually just simple shelters or bivouacs, often with no bunks, mattresses or other amenities. You will probably end up in one at some point if you plan on doing a lot of tramping.

On the popular tracks, huts usually cater for 24 people and are mostly located three- to five-hours' walk apart. There is a two-night limit on bunks during peak tramping season. Many huts will also be

BACKCOUNTRY HUT PASSES

If you plan to do a lot of tramping, a **Backcountry Hut Pass** (adult/child \$90/45) might be a wise investment. The pass allows you to stay overnight at all Serviced and Standard huts (on a first-come, first-served basis). The pass is valid for one year from the date of purchase.

If you spend nine nights in Serviced huts, the pass has paid for itself. But keep in mind that it does not apply to Great Walks, nor can it be used at Pinnacles Hut in Coromandel Forest Park, anywhere in Northland, or at most huts in the Aoraki/Mt Cook and Westland/Tai Poutini National Parks.

staffed by wardens. These temporary summer employees keep an eye on the huts, provide track information and first aid, and collect fees and tickets.

GREAT WALKS HUTS

Backcountry hut tickets and passes cannot be used at Great Walks huts and camp sites during summer. Great Walks passes must be used instead, which range in price from \$10 for the Rakiura Track to \$40 for the Routeburn Track. If you don't have a pass when you arrive at the hut, the warden will charge you a premium rate.

BUSINESS HOURS

Reviews in this book won't list business hours unless they differ greatly from the standard ones listed below. The exceptions are with outdoor equipment shops, because of the necessity for trampers to pick up stove fuel and maps – often at the last minute or early in the morning – before hitting the track, and restaurants, where there is no norm.

Banks (☎) 9.30am–4.30pm Mon–Fri)

Bars & pubs (☎) noon–2am) Sometimes later.

DOC offices (☎) 8.30am–4.30pm Mon–Fri) Many DOC visitor information centres may be open daily during summer.

Post offices (☎) 8.30am–5pm Mon–Fri) Main branches also open 9.30am to 1pm Saturday.

Shops & businesses (☎) 9am–5.30pm Mon–Fri, and until 2pm or 5pm Sat) Many offer late-night shopping until 8pm or 9pm Thursday or Friday.

Supermarkets (☎) 9am–7pm daily) Until 9pm in larger cities.

CHILDREN

Thanks in part to its hut system and range of tracks, New Zealand is well suited for a tramping holiday with children. Along some tracks, such as the Heaphy (p166), Routeburn (p261) and Lake Waikaremoana (p70), it would be unusual not to have kids in the huts each night.

The huts mean that children (or you as a parent) can carry less gear and start each day with dry clothes, ensuring a comfortable experience in the bush. DOC also encourages families to go tramping by not charging children under the age of 11 for hut tickets, camp sites and Great Walks passes, and offering a 50% discount to older kids.

The key to a successful tramp with kids is to carefully select the track to match their level of endurance. Children younger than 10 years of age do best on tracks that are well benched and bridged, and where the next hut is only four or five hours away. An alternative for parents with very young children (ages four to six) not up for the rigours of tramping every day, is to use a hut as a base camp, taking them on day walks only.

The other important thing about tramping with children is to make sure you pack enough food. After a day outdoors, parents are often shocked to see their children consume twice as much as they would at home. With my son, there is always a battle at dinner for the last serving of macaroni and cheese – and he usually wins.

For a guide to travelling with children, pick up Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children*.

CLIMATE

Lying between 34°S and 47°S, New Zealand is squarely in the 'Roaring Forties' latitude – meaning it has a prevailing and continual wind blowing over it from west to east, ranging from gentle freshening breezes to occasional raging winter gales. Coming across the Tasman Sea, this breeze is relatively warm and moisture-laden. When it hits New Zealand's mountains the wind is swept upwards, cools and drops its moisture. When the wind comes from the south it's from Antarctica and is icy and cold; a southerly wind always means cold weather.

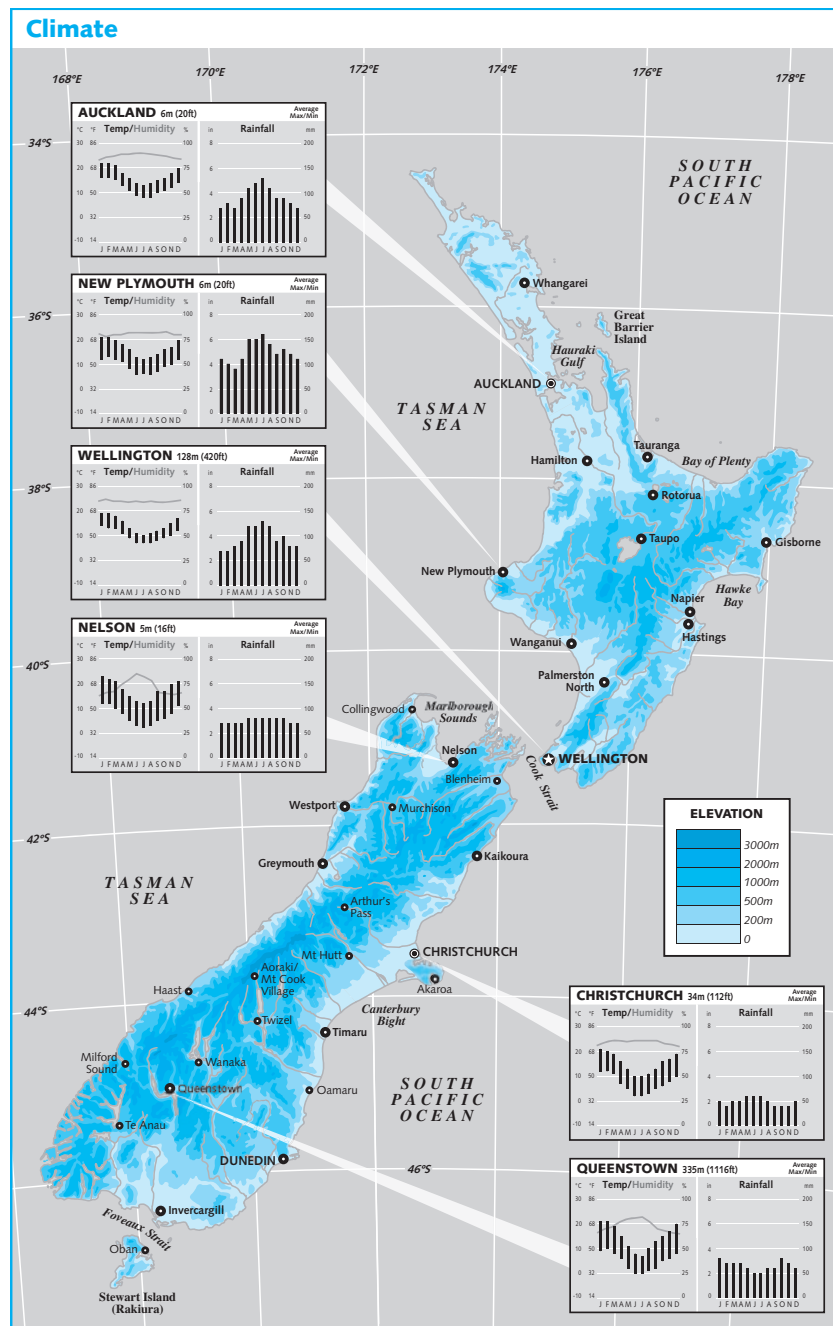
The South and North Islands, because of their different geological features, have two distinct patterns of rainfall.

In the South Island the Southern Alps act as a barrier for the moisture-laden winds coming across the Tasman Sea. This creates a wet climate on the western side of the mountains and a dry climate on the eastern side; annual rainfall is more than 7500mm in parts of the west but only about 330mm across some of the east, even though it's not far away.

The South Island's geography also creates a wind pattern in which the prevailing wind is swept upwards, cools and loses its moisture in the form of rain or snow, then blows down onto the Canterbury Plains as a dry wind. It then gathers heat and speed as it blows downhill and across the plains towards the Pacific coast. In summer this wind can be very hot, dry and fierce. Called a katabatic wind, it is similar to other famous mountain-influenced winds in the world, including the Chinook wind formed by the Canadian and USA Rockies. In the Grey valley, on the South Island's west coast, is another kind of downhill wind, locally called 'the Barber'.

In the North Island, the western sides of the high volcanoes also get a lot more rain than the eastern sides, although since there's no complete barrier (as there is in the Southern Alps) the rain shadow is not as pronounced. Rainfall is more evenly distributed over the North Island, averaging around 1300mm per year. In the North Island rain falls throughout the year; typically, rainy days alternate with fine days, which is enough to keep the landscape perennially green.

It is a few degrees cooler in the South Island than the North Island, and of course it's colder in winter (June, July and August) than in summer (December, January and February). There are several regional variations. It's quite warm and pleasant in Northland (the far north of the North Island) at any time of year; it's almost always a few degrees warmer than the rest of the country. Higher altitudes are always considerably cooler, and it's usually windy in Wellington, which catches winds whisking through Cook Strait in a sort of wind tunnel from the Tasman Sea to the Pacific Ocean.



READING THE WEATHER

The usual weather pattern in New Zealand is a cycle of high-pressure systems (anticyclones or ridges) followed by low-pressure systems (troughs or depressions), travelling west to east. Anticyclones normally pass the northern portions of the country at intervals of three to seven days, bringing fine weather with light or moderate winds. In between are depressions of rain, strong winds and lower temperatures.

Two early signs of approaching bad weather are an increase in wind speed and the appearance of high cloud sheets. These sheets, which look as if they are stacked on top of each other, are known as hog's backs and are the outriders of northwesterly storms. As the depression moves on, the wind changes direction, often quite suddenly, and a weather change results.

The wind is the key to reading the weather in the bush. As a general rule, northwesterlies bring wet weather and storms, while southerlies are a sign of a cool frontal change, often followed by clear conditions. Northeasterlies also signal good weather approaching, whereas southwesterlies are cool, rain-laden winds.

Most important, however, is to keep in mind that weather in New Zealand changes quickly and is highly unpredictable beyond a day or two. Because most of the country's mountain ranges run roughly north-south, they make their own weather. It is not uncommon to have rain on the windward (western side) of a range, fine weather on the lee side, and miserable conditions of heavy wind and rain along the ridge tops.

The higher you are, the more severe the weather can be, with significantly lower temperatures, stronger winds and rain that can quickly turn to snow. Snowfall and blizzards can occur at any time of the year in alpine areas, so you must be properly equipped.

If heavy storms move in once you are on the track, the best idea is to stay in a hut and take a day off, especially if you are in an alpine area. Be patient and don't worry about missing a bus or train at the end of the tramp. Errors of judgment in the face of pressing deadlines and time limitations are one of the main causes of mishaps in the bush.

Snow is mostly seen in the mountains, and it can snow above the bush line any time of year. However, in the South Island there can also be snowfalls at sea level in winter, particularly in the extreme south.

One of the most important things trampers need to know about New Zealand's climate is that it's a maritime climate, rather than the continental climate typical of larger land masses. This means the weather can change with amazing rapidity.

Weather Information

In good weather, most of the tracks described in this book are safer than walking around town, but what really makes them dangerous is New Zealand's unpredictable weather. A glorious tramp in perfect conditions can suddenly become a fight for survival in a blizzard, and an easy two-hour walk can turn into a grim struggle against wind, wet and cold over a washed-out track and swollen rivers.

Weather forecasts should be watched but not treated as gospel. Because the country is narrow, especially the South Island,

weather travels quickly and can change several times a day. This is particularly true in high country above the tree line.

New Zealand's prevailing weather comes from the southwest, an area which has no inhabited land and very little sea or air traffic, making accurate reporting difficult. In Fiordland weather tends to hit the area a day before it is forecast.

Perhaps the best source for extended outlooks is the **Meteorological Service of New Zealand** (MetService; www.metservice.co.nz). **MetPhone** (per minute \$1.30) offers recorded forecasts for all regions, including national parks and other mountain areas – most forecasts take a minute. For a regional forecast you ring ☎ 0900-999 plus the area code of the region (eg Northland would be ☎ 0900-999 09). To find ☎ 0900 numbers for specialised reports call the **MetService toll-free helpline** (☎ 0800-932 843).

From the MetService website you can also obtain five-day outlooks, mountain forecasts and hazardous weather warnings. Online weather conditions and brief four-day forecasts are also available from sites

like www.stuff.co.nz and www.doc.govt.nz (navigate to 'Weather', under 'Explore').

Almost all DOC offices and national-park headquarters receive local weather forecasts at around 9am and again in the evening. These are good places to obtain a weather forecast and it's a wise practice to call in at one of these offices before embarking on any tramp.

Many huts near high alpine crossings, or those manned by hut wardens, are also equipped with radios and receive daily weather forecasts. Trampers should delay heading out from these huts until the 9am forecast has been received from park headquarters.

CUSTOMS

Per person customs allowances are 200 cigarettes (or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco), 4.5L of wine or beer, and one 1125ml bottle of spirits or liqueur.

Being an island nation, New Zealand is particularly concerned about visitors bringing in foreign plants, insects or animals. If you're arriving with a tent, boots, sleeping bag or other outdoor equipment, make sure it is spotlessly clean and free of any dirt or plant material. Officials will inevitably check your gear, and if there is mud and grass caked in the tread of your boots, you will be held up in customs while they are cleaned.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Of all New Zealand's organisations for assisting travellers, the most useful for trampers is the Department of Conservation/Te Papa Atawhai (DOC).

When it was created in 1987, **DOC** (www.doc.govt.nz) replaced the Lands and Survey Department and the New Zealand Forest Service, and took on the functions of several other government agencies. This unprecedented reorganisation of the country's crown lands and natural resources affected every national, forest and maritime park and scenic reserve. Today, DOC manages a vast network of recreational facilities, including over 13,000km of track (see p338), almost 1000 huts, 14,000 bridges and boardwalks, and 1570 toilets.

Also under the DOC umbrella is the welfare of the country's wildlife and the promotion and development of recreational

policies. Described in one brochure as a 'voice for conservation', DOC is responsible for conserving New Zealand's natural resources.

Trampers can obtain heaps of information, brochures, books and maps from DOC offices and visitor information centres. The DOC website also has information on tracks, huts, Great Walks and outdoor recreation.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

New Zealand Embassies & Consulates

You can find details of New Zealand's embassies and consulates at www.nzembassy.com.

Australia (☎ 02-6270 4211; nzccba@austarmetro.com.au; Commonwealth Ave, Canberra, ACT 2600)

Canada (☎ 613-238 5991; info@nzhcottawa.org; ste 727, Metropolitan House, 99 Bank St, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6G3)

France (☎ 01 45 01 43 43; nzembassy.paris@wanadoo.fr; 7ter, rue Léonard de Vinci, 75116 Paris)

Germany (☎ 30-206 210; nzembassy.berlin@t-online.de; Atrium, Friedrichstrasse 60, 10117, Berlin)

Ireland (☎ 01-660 4233; nzconsul@indigo.ie; 37 Leeson Park, Dublin 6)

Netherlands (☎ 70-346 9324; nzemb@xs4all.nl; Carnegiealaan 10, 2517 KH The Hague)

UK (☎ 020-7930 8422; email@newzealandhc.org.uk; New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TQ)

USA (☎ 202-328 4800; nz@nzemb.org; 37 Observatory Circle NW, Washington DC 20008)

Embassies & Consulates in New Zealand

Most embassies, including the following, are in Wellington (☎ 04):

Australia (☎ 473 6411; 72-78 Hobson St)

Canada (☎ 473 9577; 3rd fl, 61 Moleworth St)

France (☎ 384 2555; 34-42 Manners St)

Germany (☎ 473 6063; 90-92 Hobson St)

Netherlands (☎ 471 6390; 10th fl, Investment Centre, cnr Featherston & Ballance Sts)

UK (☎ 924 2888; 44 Hill St)

USA (☎ 462 6000; 29 Fitzherbert Tce)

FOOD & DRINK

After three or four days of tramping, you can indulge yourself with more than just a greasy bag of fish and chips. In the last few years the local dining scene has changed quite a bit. In major cities and towns you can find Italian, Middle Eastern, Indian, Chinese and Mexican cuisine. Vegetarians won't go hungry either, as most cities and

TRACK STANDARDS

The Department of Conservation (DOC) manages more than 13,000km of tracks, which have been divided into six categories of standard according to their degree of development. Factors include how they are marked, the extent to which rivers and streams are bridged, and the type of recreational experience to which they lend themselves. The vast majority of tramps described in this book fall into the last three categories, but the track standard is noted in the introductory box to each tramp.

Easy Access Tracks (Totalling 30km)

Easy walking for up to one hour; suitable for people of all abilities, including wheelchair users. These have an even surface and no steps. All waterways have bridges.

Short Walks (Totalling 170km)

Easy and well formed, short walks are always benched and bridged. These paths are suitable for people of most ages and fitness levels. Most can be walked in street shoes and some are accessible to wheelchairs.

Walking Tracks (Totalling 2429km)

Easy and well formed day walks. Walking shoes or light hiking boots are recommended. Suitable for people with low to moderate fitness and abilities. These are clearly signposted and all water crossings have bridges.

Great Walks (Totalling 380km) & Easy Tramping Tracks (Totalling 895km)

The country's best-known walks and other easy tramping tracks, such as the Greenstone Track, are comfortable tracks for multiday tramping. Tracks have signs, poles or markers, and major water crossings are bridged. Light hiking boots are required. These popular tracks have 'Great Walk' and Serviced huts (see p334), which are often large and may be crowded in peak season.

Tramping Tracks (Totalling 7803km)

Tramping tracks offer challenging hiking. They are often well formed, but may be rough, muddy or steep. The country's largest category of tracks is marked by orange directional markers, poles or rock cairns. Tramping boots are required and you should expect river crossings. These tracks are only suitable for people with high-level tramping skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills.

Routes (Totalling 1458km)

These require a high degree of outdoor skill, extensive remote-area tramping experience, and route-finding ability. Routes are marked with orange markers, poles or cairns, have steep and rugged sections, and many waterways will be unbridged. These should only be considered by highly experienced and very well-equipped trampers with a moderate to high level of fitness.

towns will have a noodle shop, curry house or a vegetarian-dedicated restaurant – if not all three – offering a variety of meatless meals.

If you want to eat fast food Kiwi-style, fish and chips, meat pies and sausage rolls are about as traditional as it gets, and are found at every takeaway outlet. There are also a large number of Chinese takeaways. Top off any meal by stopping in at a dairy for a large scoop of New Zealand's famous ice cream.

If you're staying at backpacker lodges between tramps and you're on a budget,

head to a large supermarket for a variety of New Zealand staples: lamb that is easy to grill, fresh green-lipped mussels that can be steamed in white wine and garlic, or giant scones riddled with dates from the bakery counter that are perfect with your morning coffee.

ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

New Zealanders are great beer drinkers, and both the beer and the pubs are pretty good. Almost all the beer is now brewed by two companies, New Zealand Breweries and Dominion Breweries (DB), with

TRAMPING CUISINE: SCROGGIN BAGS & MILK TEA *Jim DuFresne*

Andrew and Greg, my long-time Kiwi tramping partners, begin every tramp by opening up their scroggin bags. Not a bag of scroggin, as in a packet of trail mix or gorp, but a shopping sack full of Mora, Snowflake, Twix and Cadbury chocolate bars, packages of biscuits and handfuls of lollies (hard candy). Then, every 30 minutes on the track, they stop and open up their scroggin bag again. I don't, because the weight of their biscuits and lollies usually exceeds my entire food bag, but by the second day of our tramp I am begging them for a Snowflake. They relent, but only after lecturing me on the importance of scroggin when tramping in New Zealand. The steeper the mountain, the more scroggin you'll need to reach the top.

There is only one thing more important in a Kiwi food bag than scroggin...teabags. One of New Zealand's most enduring traditions happens every afternoon in the middle of nowhere: milk tea at a backcountry hut. The first thing Andrew and Greg do after slipping off their boots for the day (that in itself is a glorious ritual) is boil a billy of water so they can join a hut-full of trampers already sipping a cup of tea, most likely with a spot of milk in it. It's the civilised way to tramp; after a long day on the trail you relax the feet, sip that steaming cup of Earl Grey and enjoy conversation that always seems to drift to the scenery along the track, the weather, or the alpine pass you just crossed.

Older trampers often talk about 'billy tea', and how they first had to build a campfire and then, after tossing in the tea leaves, rotated the pot clockwise to make the tea stronger, or anticlockwise to weaken it. Finally, they would swing the billy around their head, to settle the leaves on the bottom, and pour. Today, with a stove and tea bags, it's only minutes before Greg is pouring me a mug and asking how I like my tea.

'With a Snowflake on the side, please.'

Steinlager, DB Bitter, DB Export and Lion Red being the most popular brands.

New Zealand also has a thriving wine industry, and many wineries have established international reputations for their whites.

On the Tramp

The food you eat on a tramp should be nourishing, tasty and lightweight. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day and for most trampers includes muesli, porridge or dried breakfast cereal. Bread, butter/margarine, honey, tea/coffee, sugar and instant milk are other staples.

Lunch is normally eaten between huts and should therefore require little preparation. Bread/crackers, butter/margarine and tasty cheese are about all you need. Pita bread will stand up better than crackers to being crammed into a backpack. Dried fruit, readily available throughout New Zealand, is a great way to round off lunch.

Dinner must be hot and substantial. Instant soup, often referred to as cup-a-soup, and two-minute noodles are an ideal starter to help counter the biggest appetites. Rice and pasta dinners are a popular second course with trampers; instant-pasta dinners

are good as they cook in a few minutes. Among the common New Zealand brands that work well are Continental and San Remo pasta and rice dinners. Always check the preparation time of packaged food; 20 minutes is the limit and it's better if the simmering time is less than 10 minutes.

Vacuum-packed freeze-dried meals designed for tramping are expensive in New Zealand, but not as bland as they once were. **Back Country Cuisine** (☎ 0800-223 583; www.backcountrycuisine.co.nz), made in Invercargill, is an excellent brand and by far the most widely distributed in New Zealand. Dinners, such as Thai chicken curry and roast lamb with vegetables and mashed potatoes, come in single (\$7) and two-person (\$12) packets.

It's important to maintain energy levels while tramping, so snacks during the day are important. Scroggin is what Kiwis call trail mix or gorp. You can either purchase it at the bulk food areas of supermarkets or make it yourself by combining chocolate bits, nuts, sultanas and other dried fruit. Or you can simply pack along a variety of chocolate bars.

Biscuits (cookies) are great while you are tramping and before bed with tea. Other useful items are cordial concentrate powder

(a great thirst quencher that adds flavour to purified water) and butter and powdered milk, because many dried packet dinners require them.

Unfortunately for trampers, New Zealand is not known for its instant coffee, but the tea is very good. So is Milo, a chocolate-malted drink made with boiling water or hot milk. Many Kiwis also pack a tube of sweetened condensed milk to make their drinks richer.

BUYING FOOD

New Zealand has several large supermarket chains (Pak'nSave, New World, Countdown and Supervalu Plus, for example) with excellent prices and wide selections. If the supermarket is closed, or the town is too small to support one, there is always the good old corner dairy – a smaller shop that sells a bit of everything, mostly food lines. Another national chain of interest to trampers is **Bin Inn** (www.bininn.co.nz). There's almost 40 Bin Inn stores in NZ, where you can purchase a wide range of dried fruits, veggie tables, pasta and cereals in small quantities.

COOKING

It can't be stressed enough that you should pack a stove for any tramp other than a Great Walk, where every hut has a row of gas stoves. Even then, if you're on the Routeburn or Kepler at the height of the season, you'll be waiting in line for an open stove. Some huts have a few old pots, but do

WATER

Often beginning in snowfields high above the bush-line, and then cascading down the mountains as gurgling streams, New Zealand water is regarded as some of the cleanest and clearest in the world. In towns and cities, there is absolutely no problem with drinking the tap water. In the back-country, water from all lakes, rivers and streams should be treated (filtered or boiled) before drinking, because the diarrhoea-causing protozoan parasite, *Giardia lamblia*, has been found in New Zealand. Most huts, however, are equipped with a rainwater tank that provides water safe for drinking without being treated.

See p359 for more information.

you really want to use them? For kitchenware, all you need is a billy with a securely fitting top, a large cup, a spoon and a 1L water bottle.

Anglers will want to haul along a frying pan, a small bottle of cooking oil and some bread crumbs. But don't ever plan on catching fish for dinner; that's a guarantee you won't get a strike all day.

HOLIDAYS

Christmas in New Zealand falls in the middle of summer and during school holidays, which run from mid-December to the end of January. This is the height of the tramping season, a period when the Routeburn, Milford, Abel Tasman Coast and Lake Waikaremoana Tracks will be booked solid, and the huts on many other popular tracks (Heaphy, Tongariro Northern Circuit, Rees-Dart, St James Walkway etc) will be full by mid-afternoon.

If you want to avoid crowds during this period, head to the South Island and choose tracks in less-known areas, such as forest parks.

Public holidays observed in New Zealand include the following:

New Year 1–2 January

Waitangi Day (New Zealand Day) 6 February

Good Friday/Easter Monday March or April

Anzac Day 25 April

Queen's Birthday First Monday in June

Labour Day Fourth Monday in October

Christmas Day 25 December

Boxing Day 26 December

INSURANCE

Don't underestimate the importance of a good travel-insurance policy; nothing will ruin your holiday plans quicker than an accident or having that brand new digital camera stolen. Buy a policy that generously covers you for medical expenses, theft or loss of luggage and tickets, and for cancellation of – and delays in – your travel arrangements.

You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals directly, rather than you having to pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim later, make sure you keep all documentation. Some policies ask you to call back (reverse charges) to a centre in your home country where an immediate assessment of your problem is made.

Read the fine print to make sure a policy doesn't exclude tramping or mountaineering as dangerous activities; it would be prudent to make sure that your policy specifically covers risks incurred during these pursuits. Buy travel insurance as early as possible to ensure you'll be compensated for any unforeseen accidents or delays. If items are lost or stolen, get a police report immediately – otherwise your insurer might not pay up.

INTERNET ACCESS

Getting connected in New Zealand is relatively simple in all but the most remote locales, such as huts. Internet cafés are widespread, and in mid-size towns and cities they buzz with rows of terminals, high-speed connections and even cameras and headphones for more personal online communication. Even in some of the smallest towns there is usually some commercial place to check your email.

Most hostels and hotels also provide Internet connections, as do a growing number of camping grounds and libraries, which usually allow nonresidents to go online without excessive fees or paperwork. Still, the best place to quickly check email, book tickets or reserve a bed somewhere is an Internet café. Expect to pay \$4 to \$6 per hour.

MAPS

The best maps are the locally produced topographical sheets. Along with the specific maps of national parks, forest parks and tracks, also produced locally, they are the type most commonly used by trampers.

Topographical maps in several different series are produced by the Wellington-based company Terralink International, under contract to the government's Land Information New Zealand. The best series for tramping is the 1:50,000 Topomap 260 series, which covers the country in 295 sheets. The Topomap 262 series features a smaller scale (1:250,000) and covers the country in 18 sheets, with each map as large as, for example, the East Cape. They are of little use to trampers due to lack of detail.

The Parkmap series covers 26 forest and national parks in both the North and South Islands. Map scales range from 1:50,000

GOING DIGITAL WITH MAPPING

If you're planning to spend an extensive period of time tramping in New Zealand, or know you'll be back, you might consider going digital with your maps. Maps on a CD is an inexpensive way to obtain a lot of topos, along with software tools that make them quick and easy to use.

The best program for New Zealand is **Map Toaster Topo** (www.maptoaster.com), featuring a search tool for places and road names, integrated aerial photography and GPS compatibility. You can purchase every 1:50,000 topo for the North Island or South Island for \$119 to \$289, or the entire country for \$199 to \$399. Purchase every paper map for New Zealand and it will cost you more than \$3000.

(*Abel Tasman*) to 1:250,000 (*Fiordland*), but most are around 1:80,000 to 1:100,000. While these provide less detail than topographical maps, they are still suitable for most well-marked tracks. Many also contain track notes, tramping times and information on the park's natural history, and they are usually the maps posted in huts. They do not all have contour lines; some rely on hill shading to show relief.

Some areas in this book are covered in the Holidaymaker series. These maps concentrate on the more popular tourist areas and include 1:50,000 *Great Barrier Island*, 1:100,000 *Marlborough Sounds* and 1:100,000 *Banks Peninsula*. There are also the Trackmap and Terramap series, which cover more than a dozen popular tramping tracks, including the Milford, Routeburn, Greenstone, Lake Waikaremoana, Rees-Dart, St James Walkway and Kepler.

Buying Maps

Maps are best purchased at DOC offices or at park visitor information centres throughout the country, as well as map shops, bookshops and outdoor shops. The DOC office or counter where you purchase your hut tickets or Great Walks passes will also sell the corresponding maps. The DOC conservancy office will usually stock the maps for its entire region. Occasionally, by mid- to late summer, some visitor information centres and DOC offices in smaller

MAPS IN THIS BOOK

The maps in this book are designed as a reference guide when reading the text, *not to be used while tramping the track!* They are no substitute for the detailed topographical maps recommended for each walk. A map legend for the maps in this guidebook is found on the inside front cover.

towns will be out of topo and park maps, even for their own region.

The best place to purchase maps online in advance of your trip is **Map World** (☎ 03-374 5399; www.mapworld.co.nz), based in Christchurch. Once you've landed in Auckland head to **Auckland Map Centre** (☎ 09-309 7725; www.aucklandmapcentre.co.nz; National Bank Centre, 209 Queen St) for any map of the country.

MONEY

The relatively strong New Zealand dollar has appreciated significantly against the US dollar in recent years, but less dramatically against other prime currencies such as the euro. See inside the front cover for a list of exchange rates that were current just prior to publication, or check the website www.xe.com.

New Zealand's currency is the NZ dollar, made up of 100 cents. There are \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 notes, and 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, \$1 and \$2 coins. There are no notable restrictions on importing and exporting travellers cheques. Though not prohibited, cash amounts equal to or exceeding the equivalent of NZ\$10,000 (in any currency) must be declared on arrival or departure.

ATMs

The country's major banks – including the Bank of New Zealand, ANZ, Westpac and ASB – have 24-hour automated teller machines (ATMs) attached to various branches, which accept cards from other banks and provide access to overseas accounts. You'll find ATMs widespread across both islands.

Many NZ businesses use Eftpos, a convenient service that allows you to use your bank card (credit or debit) to pay for services or purchases direct, and often withdraw cash as well. Eftpos is available practically

everywhere these days, even in places where it's a long way between banks.

Credit & Debit Cards

The best way to carry most of your money is within the electronic imprint of a plastic card. Credit cards such as Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted for everything from a hostel bed to hut tickets, and such cards are essential (in lieu of a large cash deposit) if you want to hire a car. Charge cards such as Diners Club and American Express (AmEx) are not as widely accepted.

Apart from losing them, the problem with credit cards is maxing out your limit (and going home with hefty bills and interest charges) and the exchange fees most cards tack on for purchases in a foreign currency.

A cheaper option is a debit card, with which you can draw money directly from your home bank account using ATMs, banks or Eftpos machines around the country. Any card connected to the international banking network – Cirrus, Maestro, Plus or Eurocard – should work, provided you know your PIN. The best option is to carry both.

Moneychangers

Banks are open 9am to 4.30pm weekdays, a few are open on Saturday and those at international airports are open daily. At most banks there's no charge for changing travellers cheques. Moneychangers (bureaux de change) can be found in major tourist areas and at airports. They charge a fee, but have slightly longer weekday hours (9am to 9pm) and are usually open Saturday and sometimes Sunday.

On the Tramp

On a few tramps, such as the Abel Tasman Coast Track and the Queen Charlotte Track, you will have the opportunity to pop into a takeaway store or small café, or even spend a night at a lodge. But generally there is little, if anything, to purchase on most tracks.

Taxes & Refunds

Goods and Services Tax (GST) adds 12.5% to the price of all domestic goods and services. Most prices are quoted inclusive of GST – but beware of small print

announcing GST exclusive, when you'll be hit for the extra 12.5% on top of the stated cost. There is no refund of GST paid when you leave NZ.

Tipping

Tipping is becoming more widespread in New Zealand, although many Kiwis still regard it as a foreign custom. You should tip in a restaurant if you feel you have received exceptional service. The tip should be 5% to 10% of the bill.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are a safe form of currency and generally enjoy a better exchange rate than foreign cash in NZ. They can also be readily replaced if they are lost or stolen. But the ubiquity of debit cards access in this country tends to make travellers cheques seem rather clumsy. AmEx, Visa, MasterCard and Thomas Cook travellers cheques are all widely recognised.

PERMITS & FEES

Tramping permits are not needed in New Zealand, with the exception of a handful of private trails, such as the Banks Peninsula Track (p196). You do need hut tickets to stay in Serviced and Standard huts (see p334). For any Great Walk, you need a Great Walks pass for the huts and camp sites (see p335). No permits or admission fees are required for entry or day walking in national parks, even on Great Walks.

TELEPHONE

Telecom New Zealand (www.telecom.co.nz) is the country's key domestic provider and also has a stake in the local mobile (cell) market. The other mobile network option is **Vodafone** (www.vodafone.co.nz).

Toll-free numbers in NZ begin with ☎ 0800 or ☎ 0508 and can be called free of charge from anywhere in the country. Numbers preceded by ☎ 0900 are usually recorded information services, charging upwards of \$1 per minute, and cannot be dialled from payphones. Telephone numbers beginning with ☎ 0800, ☎ 0508 or ☎ 0900 cannot be dialled from outside of NZ.

International calls can be made from payphones, with the cost and dialling code depending on the provider. International calls from NZ are relatively inexpensive – often

less than 10c a minute – depending on the service or phonecard you have purchased.

If dialling New Zealand from overseas, the country code is ☎ 64 and you need to drop the 0 (zero) from the area code.

Mobile Phones

Local mobile-phone numbers are preceded by ☎ 021, ☎ 025 or ☎ 027. Mobile-phone coverage is good in cities and towns, but can be patchy away from urban centres on the South Island or anywhere in the bush (see the boxed text on p359).

Phone Codes

The entire South Island and Stewart Island use the ☎ 03 area code. The North Island has four regional codes: ☎ 09 in Auckland and Northland; ☎ 07 on the Coromandel Peninsula, Bay of Plenty and central North Island; ☎ 06 on the east coast, the lower-central North Island and Taranaki; and ☎ 04 in and around Wellington.

When making local calls in the same town, you don't need to dial the phone code. But when dialling within a region, even between two towns with the same phone code, the full code, including the 0 (zero), must be used.

Phonecards

New Zealand has a wide range of phonecards available, and these can be purchased at hostels, newsagencies and post offices for a fixed dollar value (usually (\$5, \$10, \$20 and \$50). Cards with the best rates utilise a network of local numbers; those that are accessed by a toll-free number usually have a higher per-minute rate. Almost all payphones in New Zealand are now card-operated.

One of the phonecards with the best rates in New Zealand is **KiaOra** (www.kiaoracard.co.nz), which charges only 5c per minute for calls within the country, and 7c to 8c for international calls to countries such as the USA, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, Denmark and Germany.

TIME

Being close to the International Date Line, New Zealand is one of the first places in the world to start a new day. New Zealand is 12 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and Universal Time Coordinated

(UTC), and two hours ahead of Australian Eastern Standard Time.

During summer New Zealand observes daylight-saving time, with clocks advanced one hour on the last Sunday in October and wound back one hour on the first Sunday of March.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Before you arrive in New Zealand, check out the **Tourism New Zealand** (www.newzealand.com/travel) website. It contains visitor information, facts about the country, links to more than 100 New Zealand websites, and brochures that can be downloaded.

There are visitor information centres in nearly every city or town, providing information and brochures, and making bookings for transport, accommodation and tours. The **i-SITE Network** (www.newzealand.com/travel/i-sites) is comprised of more than 80 large centres that are affiliated with Tourism New Zealand. Each one has trained staff who can also act as travel agents, booking most activities, transport and accommodation.

Many visitor information centres also sell DOC brochures, hut tickets, and topographical and park maps. Some even have DOC counters where Great Walks passes can be booked and purchased.

You can obtain a list online of all **DOC offices** (www.doc.govt.nz). The DOC visitor information centres set up to assist trampers

with brochures, the latest track conditions and suggestions for other tramps are all covered in this book in the Information section for each tramp or park.

TRAMPER ORGANISATIONS

There are several national organisations in New Zealand which are of interest to trampers, including the following:

Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (FMC); ☎ 04-233 8244; www.fmc.org.nz; PO Box 1604, Wellington) A national association of more than 100 tramping clubs that in 2006 celebrated its 75th anniversary. The FMC lobbies for public access and preservation of scenic areas and promotes safe use of the backcountry. Membership (\$30 a year) includes the quarterly magazine *FMC Bulletin* and many discounts, including DOC hut passes.

New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC); ☎ 03-377 7595; www.alpineclub.org.nz; PO Box 786, Christchurch) Established in 1891 – and one of the oldest and most respected mountaineering organisations not only in New Zealand but in the world – NZAC conducts mountaineering classes, maintains a handful of huts and publishes the *Climber Magazine*. It also produces an excellent series of guidebooks to mountaineering in New Zealand.

New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (☎ 04-385 7162; www.mountainsafety.org.nz; PO Box 6027, Wellington) Produces a wide range of brochures and publications that promote basic outdoor skills. It has literature on everything from survival and mountaineering to hypothermia and bushcraft. The council also publishes an excellent manual entitled *Mountaincraft*. Their pamphlets can often be picked up at no cost from DOC offices, or downloaded from its website.

HELEN CLARK: CLIMBER, SKIER, TRAMPER & PRIME MINISTER

New Zealand's prime minister is a survivor, whether it's political battles in the Beehive or whilst climbing Mt Tutoko in Fiordland National Park. At home, Helen Clark is known for her love of outdoor adventure; skiing, climbing and tramping whenever she has a few days free. On the political stage she has a reputation for being one of the fittest prime ministers in the world.

Clark, the eldest of four girls, grew up on a family farm in Waikato. She was introduced to tramping at an early age when her father led her into nearby Pironga Forest Park and then to the summit of Mt Pironga. She began skiing while at the University of Auckland but didn't become addicted to outdoor adventure until 1991, when she became the deputy leader of the opposition and suddenly had more free time to head outside.

'Then I realised that I'd probably wasted 20 years when I hadn't done enough outdoors,' Clark told the Federated Mountain Clubs. 'So I made it a priority to get back out there and learn to cross-country ski and start picking up other outdoor interests.'

She has since skied Tasman Glacier, climbed Ball Pass, tramped the Heaphy, Hollyford and many other tracks, ice climbed on Fox Glacier and kayaked in Abel Tasman National Park. Outside of New Zealand her adventures include climbing Mt Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa, and reaching 6000m on Aconcagua, the highest mountain in South America. At the Beehive she's often seen skipping the lifts and taking the stairs instead.

TRAMPING CLUBS

Joining a tramping club on a walking outing can be a great way to explore New Zealand, because you'll meet like-minded locals who know all about the bush. Check out the website of the **Federated Mountain Clubs** (www.fmc.org.nz) for a list of such clubs throughout the country – there are more than 100 of them. The following are the major clubs, each with websites that often include a schedule of organised tramps.

North Island

Auckland Tramping Club (www.aucklandtramping.org.nz; PO Box 2358, Auckland)

Gisborne Canoe & Tramping Club (www.fmc.org.nz/gisborne_tramping; PO Box 289, Gisborne)

Hutt Valley Tramping Club (www.hvtc.org.nz; PO Box 30-883, Lower Hutt)

Levin Waiopahu Tramping Club (www.lwtc.org.nz; PO Box 479, Levin)

Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club (www.mtsc.org.nz; PO Box 245, Palmerston North)

Massey University Alpine Club (<http://muac.massey.ac.nz>; c/- MUSA, Massey University, Private Bag, Palmerston North)

North Shore Tramping Club (www.nstc.org.nz; PO Box 33-262, Takapuna, North Shore City, Auckland)

Tararua Tramping Club (www.ttc.org.nz; PO Box 1008, Wellington)

Victoria University of Wellington Tramping Club (www.vuwtc.org.nz; PO Box 600, Wellington)

Waikato Tramping Club (www.wtc.org.nz; PO Box 685, Hamilton)

Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club (www.wtmc.org.nz; PO Box 5068, Lambton Quay, Wellington)

West Auckland District Tramping Club (www.welcome.to/wadt; PO Box 20-058, Glen Eden, Auckland)

South Island

Avon Tramping Club (<http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~xhayward/club.htm>; PO Box 13-164, Christchurch)

Canterbury University Tramping Club (www.cutc.org.nz; c/- UCSA, PO Box 31-311, Christchurch)

Christchurch Tramping Club (www.ctc.org.nz; PO Box 527, Christchurch)

Nelson Tramping Club (www.nelsontrampingclub.orcon.net.nz; 114 Vanguard St, Nelson)

Otago Tramping & Mountaineering Club (<http://crash.ihug.co.nz/~Sapett/index.html>; PO Box 1120, Dunedin)

Over Forties Tramping Club (www.oftc.org.nz; PO Box 2063, Christchurch)

Southland Tramping Club (www.fmc.org.nz/southland; PO Box 41, Invercargill)

VISAS

Australian citizens, or holders of current Australian resident return visas, do not need a visa to enter New Zealand, and can stay in the country as long as they like. Australians do not require a work permit.

Citizens of Britain, and other British passport holders who have evidence of the right to live permanently in the UK, do not need a visa; on arrival you are issued with a permit to stay for up to six months.

Visitors from another 53 countries that have visa-waiver agreements with NZ do not require a visa for stays up to three months, provided they can show an onward ticket, sufficient funds to support their stay and a passport valid for three months beyond the date of their planned departure from NZ. Nations in this group include Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark,

Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the USA. On arrival people from these countries are issued with a permit for a stay of up to three months.

Citizens of all other countries require a visa to enter New Zealand, available from any New Zealand embassy or consulate. For more information on visas and permits for NZ, see the website of **Immigration New Zealand** (www.immigration.govt.nz).

WOMEN TRAMPERS

There are few hassles awaiting women travellers in New Zealand. You should, however, exercise the same degree of caution you would in any other country and observe the normal safety precautions (such as not walking through isolated

urban areas alone at night and avoiding hitchhiking alone).

Women interested in rock climbing, mountaineering and other alpine pursuits can contact **Women Climbing** (<http://womendclimbing.freezope.org>; PO Box 25-438, Panama St, Wellington), a national organisation with regional clubs in Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch. Founded in 1985, the society organises regular trips and stages rock-climbing and mountaineering courses.

Women Travel New Zealand (www.womentravel.co.nz) is an internet-based network of operators and lodge owners in New Zealand, who offer a range of travel services and accommodation options especially suited for women.

Finally, Australian-based organisation, **Bushwise Women** (☎ 02-6684 0178 in Australia; www.bushwise.co.nz), arrange tramping trips for women only, with many of them taking place in New Zealand.

Transport

CONTENTS

Getting There & Away	349
Entering the Country	349
Air	349
Getting Around	351
Air	351
Boat	352
Bus	353
Car & Motorcycle	354
Hitching	356
Train	356

Getting to this isolated corner of the Pacific means a long flight and an expensive ordeal for many overseas trampers. Once here, however, you'll find New Zealand is well serviced by good airlines and an extensive bus network, which can whisk you away from the biggest cities to the remotest tracks without emptying your money pouch.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Disembarkation in NZ is generally a straightforward affair, with the usual customs declarations to endure and a few that are special to trampers and anglers (see p339). However, recent global instability has resulted in conspicuously increased

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

security levels in NZ airports, particularly in the international terminals, and you may find that customs procedures are now more time consuming. Be patient!

Passport

There are no restrictions when it comes to citizens of foreign countries entering NZ. If you have a visa (p347), you should be fine.

AIR

There are large number of competing airlines servicing NZ, and thus a wide variety of air fares to choose from if you're flying in from Asia, Europe or North America – though ultimately you'll still pay a lot for a flight, unless you jet across the Tasman Sea from Australia. Since NZ's peak tourist season coincides with the tramping season you should consider making your arrangements well in advance.

Airports & Airlines

New Zealand has seven airports that handle international flights, with Auckland receiving the bulk of the overseas traffic.

Auckland (code AKL; ☎ 0800-247 767, 09-256 8899; www.auckland-airport.co.nz)

Christchurch (code CHC; ☎ 03-358 5029; www.christchurch-airport.co.nz)

Dunedin (code DUD; ☎ 03-486 2879; www.dnairport.co.nz)

Hamilton (code HLZ; ☎ 07-848 9027; www.hamiltonairport.co.nz)

Palmerston North (code PMR; ☎ 06-351 4415; www.pnairport.co.nz)

Queenstown (code ZQN; ☎ 03-442 3505; www.queenstownairport.co.nz)

Wellington (code WLG; ☎ 04-385 5100; www.wlg-airport.co.nz)

Air New Zealand (airline code NZ; ☎ 0800-737 000; www.airnz.co.nz; hub Auckland International Airport) is New Zealand's national airline, flying to airports across Europe, North America, eastern Asia and the Pacific, as well as being the major carrier within the country. It offers great service and has an impeccable safety record, despite the windy runways encountered in places such as Wellington and New Plymouth.

Other airlines connecting New Zealand to international destinations include the following (phone numbers listed are for dialling from within NZ):

Aerolineas Argentinas (airline code AR; ☎ 09-379 3675; www.aerolineas.com; hub Buenos Aires International Airport)

British Airways (airline code BA; ☎ 09-966 9777; www.ba.com; hub Heathrow Airport, London)

Cathay Pacific (airline code CX; ☎ 09-379 0861; www.cathaypacific.com; hub Hong Kong International Airport)

Emirates (airline code EK; ☎ 09-968 2200; www.emirates.com; hub Dubai International Airport)

Freedom Air (airline code SJ; ☎ 0800-600 500; www.freedomair.com; hub Auckland International Airport)

Garuda Indonesia (airline code GA; ☎ 09-366 1862; www.garuda-indonesia.com; hub Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Jakarta)

Japan Airlines (airline code JL; ☎ 09-379 9906; www.jal.com; hub Narita Airport, Tokyo)

KLM Pacific (airline code KL; ☎ 09-309 1782; www.klm.com; hub Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam)

Korean Air (airline code KE; ☎ 09-914 2000; www.koreanair.com; hub Incheon Airport, Seoul)

Lan Chile (airline code LA; ☎ 09-977 2233; www.lanchile.com; hub Santiago International Airport)

Lufthansa (airline code LH; ☎ 0800-945 220; www.lufthansa.com; hub Frankfurt Airport)

Malaysia Airlines (airline code MH; ☎ 0800-777 747; www.malaysiaairlines.com; hub Kuala Lumpur International Airport)

Pacific Blue (airline code DJ; ☎ 0800-670 000; www.flypacificblue.com; hub Brisbane Airport)

Qantas (airline code QF; ☎ 0800-808 767; www.qantas.com.au; hub Kingsford Smith Airport, Sydney)

Royal Brunei Airlines (airline code BI; ☎ 09-302 1524; www.bruneiair.com; hub Bandar Seri Begawan Airport)

Singapore Airlines (airline code SQ; ☎ 0800-808 909; www.singaporeair.com; hub Changi International Airport, Singapore)

Thai Airways International (airline code TG; ☎ 09-377 3886; www.thaiairways.com; hub Bangkok International Airport)

United Airlines (airline code UA; ☎ 0800-747 400; www.united.com; hub Los Angeles International Airport)

DEPARTURE TAX

There is a departure tax of between \$22 and \$25 (depending on the airport) when leaving New Zealand. This tax is not included in the price of airline tickets, and must be paid separately at the airport before you board your flight.

BAGGAGE RESTRICTIONS

The 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA mean all airlines now impose tight restrictions on carry-on baggage. No sharp implements of any kind are allowed onto the plane – this means you need to pack items such as pocket knives, camping cutlery and first-aid kits into your checked-in luggage.

If you're carrying a camping stove, remember that airlines also ban fuels and gas cartridges from all baggage (see p352), both check-in and carry-on. Empty all fuel bottles and buy what you need at your destination.

Tickets

Generally there's nothing to be gained by buying a ticket direct from the air-line – dis-counted tickets are released to selected travel agents and discount agencies, and these are usually the cheapest fares going. The exception is booking on the Internet, where reduced administrative costs are reflected in lower fares and online ticket specials.

Automated online ticket sales work well if you're doing a simple one-way or return trip on specified dates, but are no substitute for a seasoned travel agent with the lowdown on special deals and strategies for avoiding layovers.

Paying by credit card offers some protection if you unwittingly end up dealing with a rogue, fly-by-night agency in your search for the lowest fare, as most card issuers provide refunds if you can prove you didn't get what you paid for. If you have doubts about the agent, at the very least call the airline and confirm that your booking has been made.

For making online bookings, you could start by checking out the following useful websites:

Airbrokers (www.airbrokers.com) USA-based.

Cheap Flights (www.cheapflights.com, www.cheapflights.co.uk) USA- and UK-based.

Expedia (www.expedia.com) USA-based.

Flight Central International (www.flightcentre.com) With sites for flights from New Zealand, Australia, UK, USA, South Africa and Canada.

Flights.com (www.flights.com) International site.

Roundtheworldflights.com (www.roundtheworldflights.com) UK-based.

STA Travel (www.statravel.com) Linked to worldwide STA sites.

Travel Online (www.travelonline.co.nz) New Zealand-based.

Travel.com (www.travel.com.au) Australia-based.

Travelocity.com (www.travelocity.com) USA-based.

Asia

Most Asian countries offer competitive airfare deals, with Bangkok, Singapore and Hong Kong being the best places to find discount tickets. **STA Travel** (Bangkok ☎ 02-236 0262; www.statravel.co.th; Singapore ☎ 6737 7188; www.statravel.com.sg; Tokyo ☎ 03-5391 2922; www.statravel.co.jp) has offices in numerous cities around the region.

Australia

Air New Zealand and Qantas operate a network of trans-Tasman flights linking NZ cities with most Australian gateway cities, while a few other international airlines include Australia and New Zealand on their Asia-Pacific routes.

Budget airline, Freedom Air, flies regularly between Australia's east coast (which includes the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne) and the New Zealand centres of Dunedin, Palmerston North, Wellington and Hamilton. A second budget airline, Pacific Blue, also offers handy trans-Tasman routes from a number of Australian capital cities (such as including Sydney, Perth and Adelaide) to New Zealand's main cities of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

For reasonably priced fares, try one of the numerous Australian capital-city branches of **STA Travel** (☎ 1300 733 035; www.statravel.com.au) or **Flight Centre** (☎ 13 31 33; www.flightcentre.com.au).

Canada

The routes flown from Canada are similar to those from mainland USA, with most Toronto and Vancouver flights stopping in a US city such as Los Angeles before heading on to New Zealand.

Canadian discount air-ticket sellers are also known as consolidators, and their air fares tend to be about 10% higher than those sold in the USA. **Travel CUTS** (☎ 866-246-9762; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency, with offices in all major cities.

Continental Europe

Frankfurt is the major arrival and departure point for flights to and from New Zealand, with connections to other European cities. From Frankfurt most flights to NZ travel via one of the Asian hubs.

A good option in the Dutch travel industry is **Holland International** (☎ 0900-8858; www.hollandinternational.nl). For cheap fares in Germany there's **STA Travel** (☎ 069-7430 3292; www.statravel.de), and in France try **OTU Voyages** (☎ 01 40 29 12 12; www.otu.fr).

UK & Ireland

Depending on which airline you travel with, most flights to New Zealand depart from London and go via Asia or the USA. If you come across Asia you can often make stopovers in countries such as India, Thailand, Singapore and Australia; in the other direction, stopover possibilities include New York, Los Angeles, Honolulu and a variety of Pacific islands.

Popular agencies in the UK include **STA Travel** (☎ 0870 163 0026; www.statravel.co.uk) and **Trailfinders** (☎ 0845 058 5858, 020-7628 7628; www.trailfinders.com).

USA

Most flights between the USA and NZ are to and from the USA's west coast, with the lion's share routed through Los Angeles. If you're travelling from other parts of the USA, your travel agent can arrange a discounted add-on fare to get you to the city of departure.

Discount travel agents in the USA are known as consolidators. San Francisco is the ticket consolidator capital of America, although some good deals can be found in Los Angeles, New York and other major cities. **STA Travel** (☎ 800-781 4040; www.statravel.com) has offices throughout the USA.

GETTING AROUND

AIR

Trampers who want to spend their time on the tracks, as opposed to on a bus, can make the most of a widespread network of domestic flights. Small operators are even available for transport to some of the tracks themselves, such as the Hollyford and Dusky Tracks and Stewart Island.

CAMPING STOVES & AIRLINES

You cannot take stove fuel, in any form, on an aeroplane. But, in the past, trampers have also run into problems flying with white-spirit stoves (such as MSR stoves), even when the fuel tanks and bottles are empty. To resolve this, Air New Zealand developed a procedure in 2003 for travel lining with stoves that have fuel containers on internal and international flights. Qantas quickly followed suit with a similar procedure.

- Completely drain all fuel from the fuel tank and bottle.
- Allow the empty fuel bottle to drain for at least one hour, and leave it uncapped for at least six hours to allow any residual fuel to evaporate. To bypass this draining/evaporation requirement, add cooking oil to the fuel bottle (to elevate the flash point of any residual liquid) and then empty it.
- Securely fasten the cap of the fuel bottle and wrap the stove in an absorbent material, such as paper towel. Place it in a polythene or equivalent bag, close it with an elastic band or twine, and pack it in checked-in baggage.
- At check-in, complete and return a *Carriage of Camping Stove & Accessories* form to verify you have completed the above steps.

Airlines in New Zealand

New Zealand's major domestic airline is Air New Zealand, which has an extensive network that covers most of the country. Several smaller airlines – Eagle Air and Air Nelson among them – are partly owned or booked by Air New Zealand, and are collectively represented under the banner Air New Zealand Link.

The next biggest carrier is regional airline Origin Pacific Airways, which offers services to 10 cities, including Auckland, Christchurch and Nelson. Australian-based airline Qantas also maintains some routes between major urban areas.

Apart from the major operators, there are also a host of local and feeder airlines. Services that may interest trampers include Stewart Island Flights' service between Invercargill and Stewart Island, flights to Great Barrier Island from Auckland, and Wellington–Picton flights that cost little more than the ferry fare.

New Zealand regional airlines that are of interest to trampers include the following: **Air New Zealand** (☎ 0800-737 000; www.airnz.co.nz) Offers the most direct flights between main destinations under the banner of Air New Zealand Link.

Great Barrier Airlines (☎ 0800-900 600, 09-275 9120; www.gbair.co.nz) Connects Great Barrier Island with Auckland, Whangarei and the Coromandel Peninsula.

Mountain Air (☎ 0800-222 123, 09-256 7025; www.mountainair.co.nz) Flies between Great Barrier Island, Auckland and Whangarei.

Origin Pacific (☎ 0800-302 302, 03-547 2020; www.originpacific.co.nz) Flies to 10 cities across both islands.

Qantas (☎ 0800-808 767; www.qantas.com.au) Flies between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Rotorua and Queenstown.

Soundsair (☎ 0800-505 005, 03-520 3080; www.soundsair.co.nz) Hops across Cook Strait, connecting Wellington with Picton (up to 16 times a day), Kaikoura and Nelson.

Stewart Island Flights (☎ 03-218 9129; www.stewartislandflights.com) Flies between Invercargill and Oban on Stewart Island, or drops trampers at Mason Bay on the island's remote west coast.

Wings & Water Te Anau (☎ 09-249 7405; wingsandwater@teanau.co.nz) With regularly scheduled flights to the Dusky Track, it can also be chartered to fly into many other Fiordland tracks.

BOAT

New Zealand may be a nation of islands but there's virtually no long-distance water transport around the country. Boat services that are of interest to trampers include the following:

Fullers Cruises (☎ 09-367 9111; www.fullers.co.nz) Offers speedy catamarans between Auckland and Great Barrier and Rangitoto Islands.

Interislander (☎ 0800-802 802, 04-498 3302; www.interislander.co.nz) Ferries between Wellington and Picton.

SeaLink (☎ 0800-732 546, 09-300 5900; www.sealink.co.nz) Operates between Auckland and Great Barrier Island.

Stewart Island Experience (☎ 0800-000 511, 03-212 7660; www.stewartislandexperience.co.nz) Ferry service between Bluff and Stewart Island.

BUS

Bus travel in NZ is relatively easy and well organised, with services transporting you to the far reaches of both islands. But it can be expensive, as well as time consuming. On longer hauls between major cities, always check the cost of a one-way flight – often it's only a few dollars more than a bus.

The dominant carrier throughout the country is **InterCity** (☎ 09-623 1503; www.intercitycoach.co.nz). Smaller regional operators fill in any gaps in the service and in the North Island they include the following:

Alpine Scenic Tours (☎ 07-378 7412; www.alpine.scenic-tours.co.nz) Service between Turangi and National Park, the gateways to Tongariro National Park.

Go Kiwi Shuttles (☎ 0800-446 549, 07-866 0336; www.go-kiwi.co.nz) Door-to-door service between Auckland and Thames, the gateway to Coromandel Forest Park.

Northliner Express (☎ 09-307 5873; www.northliner.co.nz) Auckland to Northland routes, including Kaitiāia, the gateway to the Cape Reinga Walkway.

White Star (☎ 04-478 4734) Shuttles between Wellington, Palmerston North, Wanganui and New Plymouth – all bases for trampers.

South Island shuttle companies of interest to trampers include the following:

Abel Tasman Coachlines (☎ 03-548 0285; www.abeltasmantravel.co.nz) Runs between Nelson and the small towns near Abel Tasman and Kahurangi National Parks.

Akaroa Shuttle (☎ 0800-500 929; www.akaroashuttle.co.nz) Operates between Christchurch and Akaroa.

Atomic Shuttles (☎ 0800-248 885, 03-322 8883; www.atomictravel.co.nz) Has extensive coverage, including services between Christchurch, Invercargill, Picton, Queenstown, Wanaka and the west coast.

Coast to Coast (☎ 0800-800 847; www.coast2coast.co.nz) Travels Greymouth to Christchurch, stopping at Arthur's Pass along the way.

Cook Connection (☎ 0800-266 526, 021-583 211; www.cookconnect.co.nz) Runs between Mt Cook, Twizel and Oamaru.

Hamner Connection (☎ 0800-377 378) Provides transport between Christchurch and Hamner Springs.

Karamea Express (☎ 03-782 6757) Operates between Karamea, near the end of the Heaphy Track, and Westport.

K Bus (☎ 0800-881 188, 03-578 4075; www.kahurangi.co.nz) Roams the top half of the island, providing service to Christchurch, Picton, Nelson and St Arnaud.

Scenic Shuttle (☎ 0800-277 483) Operates between Te Anau and Invercargill via Tuatapere.

Southern Link Shuttles (☎ 03-358 8355; www.yellow.co.nz/site/southernlink) Runs from Christchurch to Hamner Springs and on to Nelson.

Topline Tours (☎ 03-249 8059; www.toplinetours.co.nz) Connects Queenstown and Te Anau.

Wanaka Connexions (☎ 03-443 9122; www.wanakaconnexions.co.nz) Links Wanaka with Queens-town, Christchurch, Te Anau and Invercargill.

Bus Passes

InterCity offers numerous bus passes, either covering the whole country, or the North and South Islands separately. If you're planning to cover a lot of ground, the passes can work out cheaper than paying as you go, but they lock you into using InterCity buses (rather than the often cheaper and more convenient shuttle buses).

The best pass for trampers is **Flexi-Pass** (www.flexipass.co.nz), which is valid for one year and allows you to travel anywhere, and in any direction, on the InterCity network. You can get on and off wherever you like, and can change bookings up to two hours before departure without penalty. The pass is purchased in five-hour blocks of travel time, from a minimum of 15 hours (\$156) up to a maximum of 60 hours (\$557), with the average cost of each block becoming cheaper the more hours you purchase.

Backpacker Buses

Backpacker buses are organised tours that can get you from point A to point B with a hop-on, hop-off service. While they can be a cost-effective alternative to InterCity, most trampers find them too restrictive in their routes and they're not always the best value if you are going to spend large blocks of time walking the tracks.

If you're interested, the following operators are best suited for trampers:

Kiwi Experience (☎ 09-366 9830; www.kiwiexperience.com) The largest of the hop-on, hop-off buses, Kiwi Experience's familiar pea-green buses operate a comprehensive service of 21 routes and add-ons around the North and South Islands.

Magic Travellers Network (☎ 09-358 5600; www.magicbus.co.nz) Hop-on, hop off buses, with 17 main trips throughout the country.

Reservations

During the summer school holidays and on public holidays, you should book well in advance for popular routes. At other times you should have few problems getting a seat on your preferred service. Still, it's wise to book at least a day or two in advance,

LOCAL TRANSPORT TO/FROM THE TRACKS

New Zealand is laced with tracks, and serviced by people willing to drive you to the end of one. Local transport to and from the tramps is excellent, and you can easily spend a season here tramping without ever having to rent a car or stick out your thumb.

The most common way of reaching a trail is with the tramper buses, vans or mini-buses that service tracks around Mt Aspiring, Fiordland, Abel Tasman, Kahurangi, Egmont, Tongariro and Whanganui National Parks, and Great Barrier Island. Many have regular routes and scheduled stops, while others are on-demand. During the summer tramping season you can often arrange to split the fare with another party going in. Fares, telephone numbers and other details for these companies are covered in the Getting To/From the Tramp sections of the tracks they service.

There are also several places where water transport is more convenient than travelling on land. Regular launch and water-taxi services operate along the Abel Tasman Coast Track, departing from Marahau. Water transport is also available to tracks in the Marlborough Sounds, Lake Te Anau, Doubtful Sound, Lake Hauroko, Lake Waikaremoana and Stewart Island. See the Getting To/From the Tramp sections for details on each area.

particularly on shuttle services that use small 20-seat mini-buses. Trampers who want to be picked up at a trailhead along a bus route must always book in advance. You can no longer flag down buses in New Zealand.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The best way to explore New Zealand in depth, or to reach the start of a remote track, is to have your own transport. Good-value car- and campervan-hire rates are not hard to track down, or you can consider buying your own set of wheels.

Automobile Associations

New Zealand's **Automobile Association** (AA; ☎ 0800-500 444; www.aa.co.nz) provides emergency breakdown services, tourist brochures and guidebooks, excellent touring maps and detailed accommodation guides. It also maintains links with similar bodies throughout the world, so if you're a member of an affiliated organisation in your home country, bring proof of membership with you.

Driving Licence

International visitors to NZ can use their home-country driving licence – if your licence isn't in English, it's a good idea to carry a certified translation with you. Alternatively, use an International Driving Permit (IDP), which is usually issued on the spot by your home country's automobile association and is valid for 12 months.

Fuel & Spare Parts

Both petrol and diesel are readily available from service stations with well-known international brand names. Prices vary from place to place but petrol isn't pumped cheaply in New Zealand, with costs averaging around \$1.55 per litre. More remote destinations may charge a small fortune to fill your tank and you're better off getting fuel before reaching them – places in this category include Milford Sound (fill up in Te Anau) and Mt Cook (buy fuel in Twizel or Lake Tekapo).

Cities and major towns will have places that can repair a vehicle or replace a worn tire. Parts shops are also common in New Zealand, for those who think they can replace their own fan belt or water pump.

Hire

Competition between car-rental companies in NZ is pretty fierce, so rates tend to be variable and lots of specials come and go. Car rental is most competitive in Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington and Picton. The main thing to remember when assessing your needs is distance – if you're planning to travel far, you need unlimited kilometres. You need to be at least 21 years old to hire a vehicle.

The large well-known companies include **Budget** (☎ 0800-283 438; www.budget.co.nz), **Hertz** (☎ 0800-654 321; www.hertz.co.nz) and **Thrifty** (☎ 09-256 1405; www.thrifty.co.nz), which all have offices or agents in most cities and major towns. With a national firm expect to pay from \$65 a day for a compact.

TRAILHEAD VANDALISM

Theft from cars is a problem everywhere, but especially for trampers who leave vehicles at trailheads. Vandalism occurs more often in the North Island, but even remote trails in the South Island are sadly not immune to it. At many tracks, including most in this book, there is either public transport to the trailhead or secure car storage nearby. It's wise to use such services. If you do plan to leave a car while tramping, make sure all valuable items are locked and hidden in the boot (trunk). Leaving any gear visible on the seat is an invitation for someone to steal it.

There are also a vast number of local firms. These are almost always cheaper – from \$30 a day – but usually come with serious restrictions.

The national firms often offer one-way rentals (ie you pick up the car in Auckland and leave it in Christchurch) but there are a variety of restrictions on these, and sometimes a substantial drop-off fee. On the other hand, an operator in Christchurch may need to get a vehicle back to Auckland and will offer an amazing one-way deal. It's cheaper if you rent for a week or longer, and there are often low-season and weekend discounts. Credit card is the usual payment method.

Insurance

When it comes to renting a vehicle, know exactly what your liability is in the event of an accident. Rather than risk paying out a large sum of cash if you do have an accident, you can take out your own comprehensive insurance policy, or (the usual option) pay an additional daily amount to the rental company for an 'insurance excess reduction' policy. This brings the amount of excess you must pay in the event of an accident down from around \$1500 or \$2000 to around \$150 or \$200. Smaller operators offering cheap rates often have a compulsory insurance excess, taken as a credit-card bond, of around \$900.

Most insurance agreements won't cover the cost of damage to glass (including the windscreen) or tyres, and insurance coverage is often invalidated on beaches and

certain rough (4WD) roads, so always read the fine print.

Purchase

If you're travelling in a group or planning a long stay in New Zealand, buying a car and selling it at the end of your stay can be a cheap, enjoyable and efficient way to reach tramping routes. It is a particularly good option for trampers thinking of hiring a car, because you're not paying for days of unused rental while you're on the track.

Auckland is the easiest place to purchase a car, followed by Christchurch. An easy option for an inexpensive car is to scour the notice boards of the large city backpacker lodges, where other travellers sell their cars before moving on. You can often pick up a car for around \$1000, which might come with a few tools, road maps and even camping gear. For more detailed information on purchasing a car, get hold of Lonely Planet's *New Zealand* guide.

Road Conditions & Hazards

For the most part New Zealand's roads are two lanes outside the cities, and are well-maintained and signposted with numerous directional signs. Unsealed (gravel) roads are common in more remote areas, but are easy to negotiate at a reduced speed. Some roads that lead to remote tracks may be either extremely rutted, or even flooded after a heavy rainfall. In that case, either drive with extreme caution or use local tramper transport.

The three main concerns when driving in rural New Zealand are one-lane bridges (make sure there's nobody coming from the other direction), farmers using a road to move sheep to another paddock, and mountains where roads are often a never-ending series of tight turns and hairpins. In all three cases, mishaps can be avoided by being observant, patient and slowing down.

Traffic outside the cities is usually pretty light and you'll find, for the most part, Kiwis to be very polite and non-aggressive drivers. Still, it's easy in this rugged land of narrow roads to get stuck behind a slow-moving truck or campervan on long uphill climbs. Again, bring plenty of patience and you'll arrive without a dent.

Road Rules

Kiwis drive on the left-hand side of the road and all cars are right-hand drive. A give-way-to-the-right rule applies, and is interpreted to the extreme here – if you're turning left and an oncoming vehicle is turning right into the same street, you have to give way to it.

Speed limits on the open road are generally 100km/h; in built-up areas the limit is usually 50km/h. A 'LSZ' sign stands for 'Limited Speed Zone', which means that the speed limit is 50km/h (although the speed limit in that zone is normally 100km/h) when conditions are unsafe due to weather, limited visibility, pedestrians, cyclists or animals on the road, excessive traffic or poor road conditions. Speed cameras are used extensively throughout the country. At single-lane bridges, a smaller red arrow pointing in your direction of travel means that *you* give way, so slow down as you approach and pull over to the side if you see a car approaching the bridge from the other side.

All new cars in NZ have seat belts back and front, and it's the law to wear them – you're risking a fine if you don't. Small children must be belted into an approved safety seat.

Buy a copy of the *New Zealand Road Code*, which will tell you all you need to know about life on the road. Versions applicable to both cars and motorcycles are available at AA offices and bookshops, or you can check the online rundown of road rules on the website of the **Land Transport Safety Authority** (www.ltsa.govt.nz/roadcode).

HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country and we don't recommend it. Trampers who decide to hitch should understand they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. Women travelling alone should be extremely cautious about hitching anywhere.

Having said that, New Zealand is a good place for hitching, although you will undoubtedly get stuck somewhere for a long period of time. Hitching is particularly common to and from tracks that lie off the beaten path and away from public transport. Most drivers on such routes know exactly where you want to go when they see the loaded backpack.

TRAIN

In New Zealand, you travel on trains for the journey, not in order to get anywhere.

Tranz Scenic (☎ 0800-872 467, 04-495 0775; www.tranzscenic.co.nz) operates several stunning routes, though the only train useful for trampers is the *TranzAlpine*, which passes through Arthur's Pass on its run between Greymouth and Christchurch. The train is an extremely scenic ride, thus a very popular one. Seats on the *TranzAlpine* are often booked solid for weeks in advance during summer.

Other trains include the *Overlander* between Auckland and Wellington, and the *TranzCoastal* between Christchurch and Picton. Reservations can be made through Tranz Scenic and at most train stations, travel agents and visitor information centres.

Health & Safety

CONTENTS

Safety on the Tramp	357
Staying Healthy	359

It is extremely important to understand the risks involved when tramping in New Zealand, and to be prepared for them. Many of the country's most popular tramps are in alpine regions where the weather is unpredictable, the climate harsh and a snowstorm in early or late summer is not an unusual occurrence. Every year trampers get lost, injured in falls, drown while crossing swollen rivers or suffer from hypothermia.

This is not intended to alarm. With proper precautions and knowledge of potential hazards, thousands of people enjoy safe and healthy tramping holidays in New Zealand every year.

SAFETY ON THE TRAMP

Be prepared for the unexpected. Before or after you arrive in New Zealand, it's easy to obtain information and brochures on how to tramp safely in this mountainous country.

The best place to go for reliable information and good solid advice is the **New Zealand Mountain Safety Council** (www.mountainsafety.org.nz), which publishes a number of free pamphlets with good information for trampers, with titles such as *Bushcraft*, *Outdoor First Aid*, *Survival* and *Hypothermia*. They are widely available at DOC offices and visitor information centres, and can be downloaded from the council's website.

Getting Lost

The New Zealand bush is very dense, and people have become hopelessly lost on simple 15-minute walks, some not being found for many days (if at all). And it's not always the overseas visitors who get lost; often, experienced trampers who know the areas they're tramping in go missing.

Before heading out, always make sure that someone responsible knows where you're going, what route you intend to take and when you expect to return – so that they can notify police if you go missing. Then remember to let them know when you've returned safely.

Fill out an intentions form or 'Help Form' at the DOC office, national park headquarters or visitor information centre at the start of the trip, and write in the hut logbooks along the way, giving the names

TRAMPING SAFETY – BASIC RULES

- Choose a track standard that suits your level of fitness and experience (see p340), and allow plenty of time to finish before dark.
- Always seek local advice about current track and weather conditions – from the local DOC office, national park headquarters etc – before you set out. Keep an eye on the weather throughout the day, remembering that it can change extremely quickly.
- Go with at least one other person and stay on the track. Always leave details of your intended route, the number of people in your group and your expected return time with someone responsible before you set off; let that person know when you return.
- Purify river or lake water before drinking it.
- Take a first-aid kit and everything else you're supposed to – like a water purifier, warm clothes, relevant map and so on.
- If you meet heavy rain and the rivers in your path have risen, either stay where you are until the rivers recede, retrace your steps or take another route. Don't cross a flooded river unless you are absolutely certain you can get across safely.

of all your party members and details about when you were there and where you are going. Do this even if you don't stay in the huts – it will make it far easier to find you if you do go missing.

Have the proper map for every track you tramp – do not depend on the maps in this book. Pack a compass (for instructions on using a compass see p366) and stick to the tracks.

If you do get lost, remember the following basic rules:

- Stop, stay calm and carefully plan what to do.
- If you think you can retrace your route then do so; otherwise, stay put or move to an open area such as a clearing or a river bank. The last thing you want to do is hopelessly wander in the bush.
- If you have to spend a night in the bush, find or make a shelter, put on extra clothes and build a fire.
- Help searchers to find you by building arrows or cairns out of rocks and wood, laying out brightly coloured items that can be easily seen from the air, and by burning green wood and leaves to produce smoke.

Crossing Rivers

At many rivers and major streams you'll find swing bridges, walkwires or even cableways to ensure a safe crossing. Smaller streams require only a quick wade to reach the track on the other side. But any crossing must be carefully considered – take time to choose a good spot to cross, and remember that a strong current in water that reaches higher than your knees is often too difficult to cross without the mutual support of several people with a pole between them.

During and immediately after heavy rain is a particularly dangerous time to ford. It doesn't take long – sometimes less than an hour of hard rain – to turn a mountain creek into an impassable thunder of white water. If this is the case, search for a bridge or walkwire nearby, or camp and wait, rather than attempt a crossing. Remember that streams and rivers rise quickly, but return to their normal levels almost as fast. If you wait a day, or even an afternoon, the water will often subside enough for you to ford safely.

When choosing a place to cross, look for an area where the river is braided into several channels, or where the water is flowing over an even river bed. Then cross the river at an angle moving with the current. If you are alone, use a 2m-long pole as a 'third leg' to ensure you always have two contact points with the river bed when moving. If there are several of you, link arms around shoulders or waists and cross at the same time, walking in a line parallel to the opposite bank. The strongest trampler should be the first person facing the current.

Never attempt to cross if the water is discoloured, when there is the sound of rolling boulders or if debris and trees are being carried along in the current. You also need to select a good exit point and make sure there is sufficient recovery area if you decide to back out and retreat to the bank.

Current practice calls for leaving the hip belt of your pack hooked (to stop the pack from riding over your head during a fall) but the chest strap unhooked. If you fall, unhook the hip belt, immediately slip off the pack and adopt a river-float position – on your back with your feet pointed downstream. Use your arms to move to the nearest bank or float to a shallow area to exit.

Rescue & Evacuation

If someone in your group is injured or falls ill and can't move, leave somebody with that person while another person or two goes for help. If there are only two of you, leave the injured person with as much warm clothing, food and water as it's sensible to spare, plus the whistle and torch. Mark the position with something conspicuous – an orange bivvy bag or perhaps a large stone cross on the ground. Remember, the rescue effort may be slow, perhaps taking some days to remove the injured person.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

If no other emergency communications are available (see the boxed text, opposite), use the internationally recognised emergency signals. Give six short signals (with a whistle, a yell or the flash of a light) at 10-second intervals, followed by a minute's rest. Repeat the sequence until you receive a response. If the responder knows the signals, this will be three signals at 20-second intervals,

COMMUNICATING IN THE WILDERNESS

There are three ways that trampers equip themselves in New Zealand to communicate with Police Search and Rescue in case of an emergency. One of the most common is carrying a mobile phone to dial ☎ 111. Keep in mind that mobile phones will not work in much of the mountains, usually only from peaks and ridges, and that their battery life may not last until the time you are found and rescued. The other two methods are mountain radios and personal locator beacons (PLBs), which use far less battery power and have no limitations on coverage.

The Mountain Radio Service is a volunteer organisation that provides radio communication in remote areas, such as in huts and along tracks. You rent a radio from a club, outdoor shop or other places that serve as depots – a list of depots is available from **New Zealand Land Search and Rescue** (www.nzlsar.org.nz) – and return it when you finish. The cost is \$5 per day. The small radio (the weight and size of a pack of butter) comes in a plastic case with a spool of wire that serves as an antenna, and an extra set of batteries. Every night, base-station operators across the country generate a call in which they give out weather information and then check in with each party in their area with a radio, recording itinerary changes, including an evacuation if one is needed.

If using either mobile phones or mountain radios in an emergency, be ready to provide information on where an accident occurred, how many people are injured and the specific injuries sustained. If a helicopter needs to come in, note the terrain and weather conditions at the place of the accident.

PLBs are even smaller devices. When activated by a trampler they alert the Wellington Search and Rescue Headquarters, via orbiting satellites, that help is needed. Within hours a rescue team reaches your location, eliminating a lengthy and expensive search-and-rescue operation. PLBs can be rented at many outdoor shops, DOC visitor information centres and other businesses, and cost \$25 for up to seven days.

followed by a one-minute pause, and then a repetition of the sequence.

HELICOPTER RESCUE & EVACUATION

In New Zealand, most search-and-rescue evacuations are done by helicopter. If a helicopter arrives on the scene, there are a couple of conventions you should be familiar with. Standing face on to the chopper, arms up in the shape of a letter 'V', means 'I/We need help'. Arms in a straight, diagonal line (like one line of a letter 'X') means 'All OK'.

In order for the helicopter to land, there must be a clear space of 25m by 25m, with a flat landing-pad area of 6m by 6m. The helicopter will fly into the wind when landing. In cases of extreme emergency, where no landing area is available, a person or harness might be lowered. Take extreme care to avoid the rotors when approaching a landed helicopter.

STAYING HEALTHY Water

Tap water is clean and safe to drink in New Zealand. Water in lakes, rivers and streams

will look clean and may be OK, but since the diarrhoea-causing *Giardia* parasite has been found in some waterways, water from any of these sources should be purified before drinking. The protozoan *cryptosporidium* (crypto) has also been found in some feral animals and livestock (mainly possums and cows). DOC can advise on the occurrence of *Giardia* and crypto in national parks and forests, and along tracks it administers.

WATER PURIFICATION

The simplest way to purify water is to boil it. Vigorous boiling for around five minutes should be satisfactory, but at high altitude water boils at a lower temperature, so germs are less likely to be killed. Boil it longer in these environments.

Filtering is also acceptable with *Giardia*-rated filters, which are widely available from outdoor-equipment retailers. If a filter will remove *Giardia* it will also remove crypto.

If you cannot boil or filter water it should be treated chemically. Iodine is effective and is available in tablet form, but follow the directions carefully and remember that too much iodine can be harmful. Before

buying anything, check the manufacturer's specifications to ensure the tablets will kill the Giardia parasite.

If you can't find tablets, tincture of iodine (2%) or iodine crystals can be used. Two drops of tincture of iodine per 1L of clear water is the recommended dosage; the treated water should be left to stand for 30 minutes before drinking. Iodine crystals can also be used to purify water, but this is a more complicated process because you have to first prepare a saturated iodine solution. Iodine loses its effectiveness if exposed to air or dampness, so keep it in a tightly sealed container. Flavoured powder will disguise the taste of water treated with iodine or other chemicals, and is a good idea if you're travelling with children.

Common Ailments

BLISTERS

Probably the most common physical problem among trappers is blisters on the feet. While not serious, a blister on a heel or toe can be a painful ordeal. Prevent blisters by breaking in your boots before embarking on a tramp, and using thick socks – or two pairs of socks – to eliminate friction.

As soon as tenderness is felt (commonly called a 'hot spot'), stop and treat it. Apply a special blister dressing. Once a blister has formed, do not cover it. Cut the padded dressing so it surrounds the blister or broken skin. Large blisters can be pricked with a sterile needle and covered with a dressing.

FATIGUE

A simple statistic: more injuries happen towards the end of the day than earlier, when you're fresher. Tiredness can simply be annoying on an easy tramp, but it can be life-threatening on narrow exposed ridges, or in bad weather. You should never set out on a tramp that is beyond your capabilities for the day. If you feel below par, have a day off. To reduce the risk, don't push yourself too hard – take rests every hour or two and build in a good 30-minute lunch break. Towards the end of the day, take down the pace and increase your concentration. You should also eat properly throughout the day to replace expended energy. Things such as nuts, dried fruit and chocolate are all good energy-giving snack foods.

KNEE PAIN

Sometimes, while climbing or descending long steep slopes, trappers experience knee pain. This is especially true when descending, as you are placing a lot of weight on your knees at an often rapid pace.

If you anticipate such a problem, seriously consider using a pair of walking poles. It is estimated that a pair of poles reduces the strain and impact on knees and thigh muscles by 20%.

Also, while descending, take plenty of breaks to give your knees a chance to recover. Maintain a slow pace, don't allow gravity to induce you to run downhill, and never short-cut switchbacks – always follow the trail as it weaves back and forth to gradually descend a ridge.

SUNBURN

Sunburn is a serious problem in New Zealand, and trappers and others who spend a great deal of time outdoors are among those most at risk of sunstroke – and in the long term, of developing skin cancer. You get sunburnt surprisingly quickly in New Zealand, as the ozone layer is among the thinnest in the world, making exposure to the sun particularly dangerous. If you do get mild sunburn, rub on calamine lotion.

The following are ways to reduce the risk of sunburn:

- Cover up, even when it's cloudy, and especially when you are at high altitude or crossing snowfields. Take extra care to cover areas that aren't normally exposed to the sun, such as your feet.
- Protect your eyes with good-quality sunglasses, particularly if near water, sand or snow.
- Use sunscreen on bare arms and legs. Select one with a SPF factor of at least 15+, preferably higher.
- Wear a hat while tramping. Baseball caps are OK, but a Kiwi tramping hat, made of cotton and featuring a full brim, provides better protection for your ears and neck. They are sold in outdoor shops throughout the country and can usually be purchased for less than \$20.
- If your nose, lips and ears are still getting burnt, use zinc cream.
- Choose well-shaded spots for rest stops and lunch breaks.

DEHYDRATION & HEAT EXHAUSTION

Dehydration is a potentially dangerous, and generally preventable condition, caused by excessive fluid loss. Sweating, combined with inadequate fluid intake, is one of the most common reasons for dehydration in trappers, but other important causes are diarrhoea, vomiting and high fever.

The first symptoms of dehydration are weakness, thirst and passing small amounts of very concentrated urine. This may progress to drowsiness, dizziness or fainting upon standing up, and finally, coma.

It's easy to forget how much fluid you are losing via perspiration while you are tramping, particularly if a strong breeze is drying your skin. You should always maintain a good fluid intake – a minimum of 3L a day is recommended.

Dehydration and salt deficiency can cause heat exhaustion. Salt deficiency is characterised by fatigue, lethargy, headaches, giddiness and muscle cramps. Salt tablets are overkill – just adding extra salt to your food is probably sufficient.

HEATSTROKE

This is a very serious, and occasionally even fatal condition, that occurs if the body's heat-regulating mechanism breaks down, and the body temperature rises to dangerous levels. Long, continuous periods of exposure to high temperatures and insufficient fluid intake can leave you vulnerable to heatstroke.

Symptoms include feeling unwell, not sweating very much (or at all) and a high body temperature (39°C to 41°C). Where sweating has ceased, the skin becomes flushed and red. Severe throbbing headaches and a lack of coordination will also occur, and the sufferer may be confused or aggressive. Eventually the victim will become delirious or convulse. Hospitalisation is essential, but in the interim, get the victim out of the sun, remove his or her clothing, cover the person with a wet sheet or towel, then fan them continually. Administer fluids if the person is conscious.

HYPOTHERMIA

This is a serious problem in New Zealand because of the country's extremely volatile and changeable weather. A number of trappers, caught in bad weather without

adequate equipment, die from hypothermia every year. You should always be prepared for cold, wet or windy conditions – even if you're just out walking or hitching – but this is especially important if you're tramping in the bush.

Hypothermia occurs when you lose heat faster than your body can produce it, leading to a drop in your core temperature. It is surprisingly easy to progress from getting very cold, to being dangerously cold, through a combination of wind, wet clothing, fatigue and hunger – even if the air temperature is above freezing. Symptoms of mild hypothermia are exhaustion, numbness in limbs (particularly fingers and toes), shivering and clumsiness. More severe cases include slurred speech, irrational or violent behaviour, lethargy, stumbling, dizzy spells and muscle cramps. Irrationality may take the form of sufferers claiming they are warm and trying to take off their clothes.

Prevention of hypothermia includes dressing in layers – silk, wool and synthetic pile fibres are all excellent insulating materials. A hat is important because a lot of heat is lost through the head. A strong, waterproof outer layer is essential, since keeping dry is vital. Carry food containing simple sugars to generate heat quickly, and lots of fluid.

To treat mild hypothermia, get out of the wind and rain, and replace wet clothing with dry, warm gear. Have a hot drink – never alcohol – and eat high-kilojoule, easily digestible food. Apply mild heat to the chest region (for example, by using hot-water bottles). Gentle exercise will also generate heat.

It is impossible to detect hypothermia in yourself, so it's important not to travel alone in situations where you are likely to get it. The early recognition and treatment of mild hypothermia is the only way to prevent severe hypothermia, which is a critical condition requiring urgent medical attention.

AMOEBCIC MENINGITIS

This very serious disease can be a danger if you bathe in natural hot thermal pools. Fortunately, it's no danger at all if you know how to protect yourself from it.

The amoeba that causes the disease can enter your body through the orifices of your head, usually via the nostrils but occasion-

ally the ears as well. Once it gets inside the nose it bores through the tissues and lodges in the brain. It's very easy not to contract the disease – just keep your head out of the water.

SPRAINS

Ankle and knee sprains can occur when tramping, particularly in rugged areas that require extensive bouldering, or when traversing scree slopes at an angle. If you anticipate such conditions, pass up the ultralight low-cut hiking boots – which are basically glorified tennis shoes – and choose all-leather boots with adequate ankle support.

Mild sprains should be wrapped immediately with a firm bandage to prevent swelling. Often a day or two spent resting and elevating the leg will allow you to continue with the tramp. For more serious sprains seek medical assistance.

Bites & Stings

BEEES & WASPS

These are a problem in some places in New Zealand, especially in late summer. Bees and wasps are attracted to food (at picnic sites etc) and are especially numerous in beech forests, where they are attracted to the honeydew, and in open fields. If you stumble upon a bee or wasp nest in the bush, you should move quickly but quietly from the area.

Bees rarely sting without provocation (such as being stood or sat on) and sting only once, leaving their barbed sting and a sac of poison in the flesh. Remove the sting as fast as possible using fingernails or tweezers, but avoid squeezing the poison sac. Wasps, however, can sense panic and

rapid movements, and assuming a threat will sting without being provoked.

There is really no satisfactory cure for bee and wasp stings; you can only counteract the effect by washing the sting thoroughly with soap and water, and then applying antiseptic to prevent a secondary infection.

MOSQUITOES & SANDFLIES

Although no outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases have been reported in New Zealand, bites from these flying insects can be very itchy and annoying.

Mosquitoes usually appear after dusk, and are particularly bad on the west coast near Auckland and along the west coast of the South Island. Avoid bites by covering bare skin and using an insect repellent. Insect screens on windows and mosquito nets on beds offer protection, as does burning a mosquito coil and spraying clothes and netting with a pyrethrum-based compound. Mosquitoes may be attracted by perfume, aftershave or certain colours. They can bite through thin fabrics or on any small part of skin not covered by repellent.

Another insect that can drive you wild in New Zealand is the sandfly. This tiny black creature is found in inland areas, as well as around the coasts, particularly Fiordland, Westland, along the Heaphy Track and on Stewart Island, where it lives in bushes, trees and grasses. Its bite can be extremely itchy, and can irritate for several weeks. Wearing shoes, thick socks, long trousers, long-sleeved shirts and plenty of insect repellent is not only advisable, but is practically a necessity where sandflies are present. The most effective insect repellents contain DEET.

Clothing & Equipment

CONTENTS

Clothing	363
Equipment	365
Buying & Hiring Locally	368

Mishaps in the bush begin with people being unprepared, or when they underestimate the difficulty of a track or New Zealand's erratic weather. Tramping in this mountainous country, regardless of which track you choose, should not be taken lightly. If you arrive without the proper gear, either hire it or look into joining a guided trip where the company supplies the necessary equipment.

This section is divided into two parts: the first outlines some of the things to consider when buying the basic gear and includes an equipment check list for a tramping trip; the second part details clothing and equipment considerations specific to New Zealand.

CLOTHING Layering

Layering, or the use of multiple layers of clothing, is the only way to dress for a climate as varied as New Zealand's and to accommodate the many exertion levels of tramping. You can remove or add layers according to conditions. Never underestimate the wide range of daily temperatures that can occur in New Zealand, particularly in the alpine country, where you can easily wake to brilliant sunshine and go to bed in a snowstorm.

Pack a set of lightweight thermal underwear made from polypropylene or some other high-tech synthetic fabric. Synthetic thermals, rather than wool, silk or cotton, will do the best job of wicking moisture away from the skin to the surface of the garment. A common form of dress on the tracks is polypropylene leggings under a pair of baggy hiking shorts; this allows maximum freedom of movement while providing protection from cold weather, light rain, excessive sun, and bugs.

An insulating layer provides essential additional warmth. Many trampers use a jersey or jacket of pile or fleece fabric, such as Polartec, rather than a wool sweater. Like wool, the synthetic fleece will keep you warm when wet, but it also dries incredibly fast. Avoid cotton hooded sweatshirts, as they will not insulate when wet and take forever to dry. Also toss into your backpack some woollen mittens and a wool or fleece hat. The body loses most of its heat through its extremities, particularly the head.

Long trousers (pants) should preferably be of light wool, stretch nylon or synthetic pile – never denim jeans.

Waterproof Shells

Ideal specifications for a coat are for it to be made of a breathable waterproof fabric, with a hood that is roomy enough to cover headwear but which still affords peripheral vision, plus capacious map pockets and a good-quality heavy-gauge zip, protected by a storm flap. Make sure the sleeves are long enough to cover warm clothes underneath and that the overall length of the garment allows you to sit down on it.

Although restrictive, overtrousers are essential if you're tramping in wet and cold conditions. As the name suggests, they are worn over your trousers. Choose a model with slits for pocket access, and long ankle zips so that you can pull them on and off over your boots.

Footwear

Many trampers now opt for the new-style lightweight nylon boots made by many sporting-shoe companies. These are 'day-walking boots' designed for trail hiking, easy terrain and carrying light loads. Such boots are fine for easy and benched tracks such as the Kepler, Milford, Routeburn and Greenstone.

For more difficult tracks and alpine routes, traditional leather walking boots are a much wiser choice. These boots offer more support with a stiff leather upper, a durable sole and protective shanks. Today, most top-of-the-line leather boots also include a Gore-Tex lining to offer the

ultimate in protection and comfort when tramping. Choose boots like these when you anticipate doing long spells of traversing scree slopes or 'bouldering' (scrambling

from boulder to boulder) along river beds – conditions which are found along the Cascade Saddle Route, Whakatane–Waikare River Loop and Welcome Flat.

EQUIPMENT CHECK LIST

This list is a general guide to the things you might take on a tramp. Your list will vary depending on the kind of tramping you want to do, whether you're camping or staying in huts and lodges, and on the terrain, weather conditions and time of year.

Clothing

- boots and spare laces
- gaiters
- hat (warm), scarf and gloves
- overtrousers (waterproof)
- rain jacket
- runners (training shoes), sandals or thongs (flip flops, jandals)
- shorts and trousers or skirt
- socks and underwear
- sunhat
- sweater or fleece jacket
- thermal underwear
- T-shirt and long-sleeved shirt with collar

Equipment

- backpack with waterproof liner
- first-aid kit
- food and snacks (high energy) and one day's emergency supplies
- insect repellent
- map, compass and guidebook
- map case or clip-seal plastic bags
- plastic bags (for carrying rubbish)
- pocket knife
- sunglasses
- sunscreen and lip balm
- survival bag or blanket
- toilet paper and trowel
- torch (flashlight) or headlamp, spare batteries and bulb (globe)
- water container
- whistle (for emergencies)

Overnight Walks

- cooking, eating and drinking utensils
- dishwashing items
- matches and lighter and candle
- portable stove and fuel
- sewing/repair kit
- sleeping bag and bag liner/inner sheet
- sleeping mat
- spare cord
- tent, pegs, poles and guy ropes (if not staying in huts)
- toiletries
- towel
- water purification tablets, iodine or filter

Optional Items

- altimeter
- backpack cover (waterproof & slip-on)
- binoculars
- book
- camera, film and batteries
- candle
- day-pack
- emergency distress beacon
- GPS receiver
- groundsheet
- mobile phone
- mosquito net
- notebook and pen/pencil
- swimming costume
- walking poles
- watch

Most trampers also carry a pair of 'camp shoes', thongs (flip flops, jandals) or sport sandals. These will relieve your feet from the heavy boots at night or during rest stops, and sandals are useful when fording waterways.

GAITERS

If you will be tramping through snow, deep mud or scratchy scrub, consider using gaiters to protect your legs and keep your socks dry. The best are made of strong synthetic fabric - with a robust zip protected by a flap - and have an easy-to-undo method of securing around the foot.

SOCKS

The best tramping socks are made of a hard-wearing mix of wool (70% to 80%) and synthetic (20% to 30%) material, and are free of ridged seams in the toes and heels. Socks with a high proportion of wool are more comfortable when worn for several successive days without washing. On any trip longer than two days you should have three pairs of socks.

EQUIPMENT Backpack

For day tramps a day-pack will suffice, but for multiday tramps you'll need a backpack of between 45L and 90L. It can be tough deciding whether to go for a smaller or bigger pack. This can depend on the destination, and whether you plan to camp or stay in huts or lodges. Your pack should be big enough for your gear without the need to strap bits to the outside – where they can get lost or damaged, or in the case of foam mats, leave ugly souvenirs on bushes. Assemble the gear you intend to take and try loading it into a pack to see if it's big enough. Keep in mind that when the pack's weight increases, your enjoyment decreases.

A good backpack should have an adjustable well-padded harness, and a chest strap to evenly distribute the weight between your shoulders and hips. It's good to have external pockets for quick access to water bottles, snacks and maps. Finally, even if the manufacturer claims your pack is waterproof, use a heavy-duty plastic liner to ensure everything stays dry. The best liner (one you'll see most Kiwis using) is a large bright-yellow one with outdoor tips on it, produced by the New Zealand

STOVE FUEL

As is to be expected in this country of trampers, various types of stove fuel are widely available throughout New Zealand. Trampers who use white gas (Shellite, Fuelite or Coleman Fuel) in their stoves, need to ask for white spirits at outdoor shops, petrol stations or hardware stores. Other fuels, such as methylated spirits, kerosene or gas cartridges, are available mainly at camping and outdoor shops in larger towns and cities.

You cannot take fuel on planes (see p352), which is why there is often fuel available at hostels in major cities – such as Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington – as trampers have to leave it before boarding a flight.

Mountain Safety Council and sold at DOC offices, outdoor shops and visitor information centres.

Sleeping Bag & Mat

Sleeping bags have either down or synthetic fillings, and are mummy or rectangular in shape; choose according to your needs. Down is warmer than synthetic for the same weight and bulk, but unlike synthetic fillings, does not retain warmth when wet. Mummy bags are best for weight and warmth, but can be claustrophobic. Sleeping bags are rated by temperature. The given figure (-5°C for example) is the coldest temperature at which you should feel comfortable in the bag.

If you're planning to stay in huts you won't necessarily need a sleeping mat (either self-inflating or foam). Most huts have mattresses and are warm enough that a lightweight to medium-weight bag of synthetic fibres (such as Quallofil or Lite Loft) is more than sufficient.

Before your trip, you can check online with **DOC** (www.doc.govt.nz) to see if the huts you intend to stay at have mattresses and gas cookers. But keep in mind that if you're tramping a popular track during high season, the hut might be full when you arrive, in which case a sleeping mat makes a night on the floor much more pleasant.

Stoves

It's best to pack a portable stove even when using the huts. Most huts don't have gas cookers (stoves), and preparing dinner in

NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT

Maps & Compass

Always carry a good map whilst walking (see p343), and know how to read it. Before the tramp, ensure that you understand the contours and the map symbols, plus the main ridge and river systems in the area. Familiarise yourself with the true north–south directions, and the general direction you are heading in. On the trail, identify major landforms (mountain ranges, gorges etc) and find them on the map. This will give you a better understanding of the local geography.

Buy a compass and learn how to use it. The attraction of magnetic north varies in different parts of the world, so compasses need to be balanced accordingly. Compass manufacturers have divided the world into five zones; make sure your compass is balanced for your destination. There are also ‘universal’ compasses that can be used anywhere in the world.

How to Use a Compass

This is a very basic introduction to using a compass and will only be of assistance if you are proficient in map reading. For simplicity, it doesn't take magnetic variation into account. Before using a compass we recommend you obtain further instruction.

1. Reading a Compass

Hold the compass flat in the palm of your hand. Rotate the bezel so the red end of the needle points to the N on the bezel. The bearing is read from the dash under the bezel.

2. Orientating the Map

To orientate the map so that it aligns with the ground, place the compass flat on the map. Rotate the map until the needle is parallel with the map's north/south grid lines and the red end is pointing to north on the map. You can now identify features around you by aligning them with labelled features on the map.

3. Taking a Bearing from the Map

Draw a line on the map between your starting point and your destination. Place the edge of the compass on this line with the direction of travel arrow pointing towards your destination. Rotate the bezel until the meridian lines are parallel with the north/south grid lines on the map and the N points to north on the map. Read the bearing from the dash.

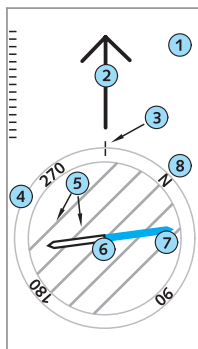
4. Following a Bearing

Rotate the bezel so that the intended bearing is in line with the dash. Place the compass flat in the palm of your hand and rotate the base plate until the red end points to N on the bezel. The direction of travel arrow will now point in the direction you need to tramp.

5. Determining Your Bearing

Rotate the bezel so the red end points to the N. Place the compass flat in the palm of your hand and rotate the base plate until the direction of travel arrow points in the direction in which you have been tramping. Read your bearing from the dash.

- 1 Base plate
- 2 Direction of travel arrow
- 3 Dash
- 4 Bezel
- 5 Meridian lines
- 6 Needle
- 7 Red end
- 8 N (north point)



the fireplace or over a wood stove can be a long ordeal, and the last thing you need after a long day of tramping. On popular tracks the competition for stoves in huts can be fierce.

Tent

A tent is obviously a necessity when doing tracks without huts, such as the Cape Ringa Walkway, but they can also come in handy on popular tracks when huts might

GPS

Developed by the US Department of Defence, the Global Positioning System (GPS) is a network of more than 20 orbiting satellites that continually beam encoded signals back to earth. Small computer-driven devices (GPS receivers) decode these signals to give an extremely accurate location reading – to within 30m anywhere on earth, at any time, in almost any weather. The system's theoretical accuracy increased over tenfold in 2000, when a deliberate in-built error (intended to fudge the reading for all but US military users) was removed. Cheap hand-held GPS receivers now cost less than US\$100 (although they may have an in-built averaging system that minimises signal errors). Other important factors to consider are weight and battery life.

It should be understood that a GPS receiver is of little use to hikers unless used with an accurate topographical map – the GPS receiver simply gives your position, which you must locate on the local map. GPS receivers only work properly in the open. Directly below high cliffs, near large bodies of water or in dense tree-cover, for example, the signals from a crucial satellite may be blocked (or bounce off the rock or water) and give inaccurate readings. GPS receivers are more vulnerable to breakdowns (including dead batteries) than the humble magnetic compass – a low-tech device that has served navigators faithfully for centuries – so don't rely on them entirely.

Altimeter

Altimeters determine altitude by measuring air pressure. Because pressure is affected by temperature, altimeters are calibrated to take lower temperatures at higher altitudes into account. However, discrepancies can still occur, especially in unsettled weather, so it's wise to take a few precautions when using your altimeter.

1. Reset your altimeter regularly at known elevations such as spot heights and passes. Do not take spot heights from villages where there may be a large difference in elevation from one end of the settlement to another.

2. Use an altimeter in conjunction with other navigation techniques to fix your position. For instance, taking a back bearing to a known peak or river confluence, determining the general direction of the track and obtaining your elevation should give you a pretty good fix on your position.

Altimeters are also barometers and are useful for indicating changing weather conditions. If the altimeter shows increasing elevation while you are not climbing, it means the air pressure is dropping and a low-pressure weather system may be approaching.

Route Finding

While accurate, the maps in this book aren't perfect. Altitude inaccuracies are often caused by air-temperature anomalies. Natural features (river confluences, mountain peaks etc) are in their true position, but sometimes the location of villages, huts and tracks is not quite so, possibly because a village spreads over a hill, or the map size doesn't allow for details of the trail's twists. But, by using several basic route-finding techniques, you'll have few problems following our descriptions:

- Always be aware of whether the trail should be climbing or descending.
- Check the north–south arrow of the map and determine the general direction of the trail.
- Time your progress over a known distance and calculate the speed at which you travel in the given terrain. From then on, you can determine with reasonable accuracy how far you have travelled.
- Watch the path – look for boot prints and other signs of previous passage.

be full, or if any amount of snoring keeps you awake at night. They don't have to be roomy, because even if you're staying in a tent you can still use the hut to cook meals and for shelter during the day.

A three-season tent will fulfil the requirements of most trampers. Because of the amount of climbing usually done in New Zealand, weight is a major issue, with most trampers selecting tents of around 2kg

to 3kg that will sleep two or three people. Make sure the tent has good bug netting to keep pesky sandflies out at night, and has a waterproof rain fly and floor to keep you dry during a storm.

Walking Poles

In New Zealand, tramping with walking poles is extremely popular, especially on tracks and routes above the bush-line. A pair of lightweight telescopic poles will help you balance, give you an added push when climbing steep ridges and slopes, and ease the jarring on your knees during descents.

BUYING & HIRING LOCALLY

Most major towns in New Zealand will have at least one outdoor shop specialising in tramping and camping supplies, but prices will be noticeably higher than what you would pay in Australia or North America. Among the brands of outdoor equipment seen Downunder is New Zealand's own **Macpac** (www.macpac.co.nz), with backpacks, tents and clothing that is among some of

the most innovative and best-constructed in the world.

In this book, outdoor shops are listed under the Supplies & Equipment section for each town. There are also three major outfitters with stores across the country: **Bivouac Outdoor** (www.bivouac.co.nz), **Kathmandu** (www.kathmandu.co.nz) and **Snowgum** (www.snowgum.com.au).

Backpacker lodges and outdoor shops in popular tramping areas such as Queenstown, Te Anau and Nelson, will often hire a variety of gear for a daily or weekly charge. Prices vary but generally you can count on paying \$8 to \$10 a day for a two-person tent, \$5 to \$8 for a sleeping bag and \$5 to \$10 for a stove. Thus, overseas travellers who want to tramp more than one track should plan on bringing all their own gear, or at least the major items such as boots, backpack, sleeping bag and stove. If a tent is needed for an easy tramp, such as the Abel Tasman Coast Track, you can purchase an inexpensive one for under \$40 at discount chain stores such as the **Warehouse** (www.thewarehouse.co.nz).

Glossary

alpine – all areas above the *bush-line*

bach – holiday home

backcountry – anywhere away from roads or other major infrastructure

benched – a trail cut into the hillside for easier tramping

billy – small pot

bivouac – rudimentary shelter under a rock ledge, or a small hut

bivvy – see *bivouac*

bouldering – hopping from one boulder or rock to the next, often done along a river where there is no trail

bridle – a track that also accommodates horses

burn – small river

bush-line – boundary between the last patches of forest and the *alpine* area

cage – box suspended by pulleys from a cable, in which you pull yourself across a river, also known as a *flying fox*

cairn – stack of rocks marking a track, *route* or fork

cascade – small waterfall

circuit – loop track that brings the trumper back to where they started without covering the same ground

cirque – rounded, high ridge or bowl formed by glacial action

contour – to walk around a hill maintaining approximately the same altitude; a line on a map connecting land points with the same elevation; *side*; *traverse*

dairy – milk bar, convenience store

disc – metal or plastic trail marker

DOC – Department of Conservation, which oversees most trails and huts in New Zealand

face – steep, generally featureless hillside

flat – open, level area of grass or gravel

flying fox – see *cage*

ford – to cross a stream or river where there is no bridge

fork – an alternative track leading off from a junction

gorge – narrow ravine, where a river or stream often flows through a series of pools and *casca*des

gorp – ‘good old raisins and peanuts’; trail mix; *scroggin*

graded – levelled track for easier tramping

Great Walks – eight tracks and a river journey that are New Zealand’s most famous trips, requiring special passes

head – uppermost part of a valley

iwi – tribe

jandals – thongs (flip flops)

jersey – jumper or pullover of wool or fleece

Kiwi – New Zealander

LINZ – Land Information New Zealand, which produces InfoMap topographical maps, including Topomap, Parkmap and Trackmap

longdrop – outdoor toilet or privy

moraine – an accumulation of debris piled up by a glacier

Pakeha – European settler

pounamu – greenstone or jade

ridgeline – crest of a ridge, which is often used for travel through *alpine* areas

route – feasible passage from one place to another, but not necessarily marked or easy to follow

saddle – low place on a ridge or between two peaks, providing the easiest access from one catchment to another

scree – slope of loose stones found in *alpine* areas

scroggin – trail mix; *gorp*

side – see *contour*; *traverse*

slip – an area where huge volumes of earth and rocks have ‘slipped’ from the hillside, obliterating parts of a track; also called a landslide

snow pole – post used to mark a *route* above the bush line

spur – side trail; small ridge that leads up from a valley to the main ridge

swing bridge – bridge over a river or creek, held by heavy wire cables

switchback – zigzagging track that is designed to reduce the steepness of a climb or descent

talus – see *scree*

tapu – sacred

tarn – small *alpine* lake

terrace – raised flat area often featuring a bluff-like edge

tor – isolated natural column of rock

torch – flashlight

track – a cut and well-marked trail

tramline – a bush-logging tramway or the remains of one

traverse – cross a slope horizontally; *contour*; *sidle*
trig – triangular marker used by surveyors; also called trig point or trig station
true left/right – the left/right side of a waterway as seen when facing downstream

walkways – New Zealand's national network of walking tracks
walkwire – flimsy (but adequate) cable set-up for crossing streams and rivers
white spirits – white gas that is used in camping stoves

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'