

But of course New Zealand is not a perfect country - it has the worst suicide rate in the world for young adults (almost double that of the USA) and crime and drugs can be found in many places. However NZ is also well known for its excellent primary schools which result in a well-educated population. School includes lots of art, music games and sport - and almost every school has a swimming pool! There are many different churches in NZ but actually less than 10% of the population attends church regularly and a recent survey showed that only 15% of the people are interested in hearing the Gospel, as opposed to 65% in the USA.



True story!


Sister Bena is a friend of ours who lives near the city of Auckland in the North Island of New Zealand. She and her husband have 6 sons and 2 daughters, but they also take care of lots of other children, from babies to teens, who come from bad homes. Some have parents who have beaten them or didn't take care of them, and often such children don't understand what love is and so they act in bad ways, like stealing and lying, or being mean to other people. They need to learn about Jesus, but sadly they are often not welcomed in some churches because of their bad behavior. Sister Bena and her family love and care for them and show them each day what love really is. She teaches them about the Bible and helps them learn to know Jesus for themselves - because Jesus loves each and every one of us! If you would like to write to one of Sister Bena's special children, let us know and we'll give you her address. Wouldn't it be fun to make a friend who lives on the other side of the world? 'Til next time,

Your friend, Shirley

Facts from: www.nationmaster.com and thanks to our friend Lloyd Freeth in NZ. World Kids PAL Page is a ministry of IMOF Inc, 8069 FM 1251E, Henderson, TX. Tel: (903) 889-2233 E-mail: shirley@imofinc.org www.imofinc.org
Answers: RA - sun; PA - village; WAHINE - woman; TAMARIKI - children; MOANA - sea; KAI MOANA - seafood.



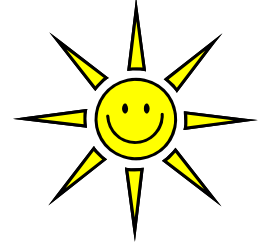
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Fun facts for kids!  *True stories!*

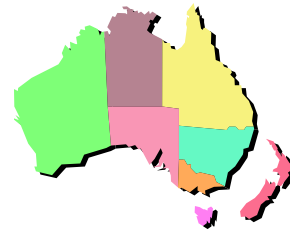
PAL Page

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Do you know which nation is the very first to start each day?



It is the closest to the International Dateline and so if you went there and then flew in a plane headed east, you would soon cross the dateline and be in "yesterday"! The country we will learn about this month is called **NEW ZEALAND** and consists of two large islands and several smaller ones. You can find it in the southwestern part of the Pacific Ocean, next to its more famous neighbor - the huge island nation called Australia. New Zealand looks very small but that is really because it is surrounded by so much ocean. It is actually larger than Britain (and about the size of Colorado) as it has a total area of about 100,000 sq miles. On the map it looks as though it is very close to Australia but in fact you must cross more than 1,200 miles of the Tasman Sea to get there!



The South Island is slightly larger than the North Island and since New Zealand is in the southern hemisphere it means that the weather in the North Island is hotter than in the South Island - and in the southernmost parts of THAT island the winter can be **VERY** cold with lots of snow!

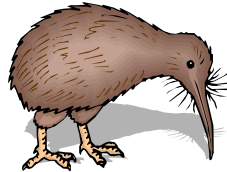
Remember the winter months there are from June to August!



Unlike Australia, New Zealand is very mountainous - in fact both the North and South Islands have mountains much taller than any in Australia! The South Island has magnificent snow-capped mountains called the Southern Alps which have peaks over 12,000 feet high! In fact New Zealand is an extremely beautiful country with many natural wonders including glaciers, incredible waterfalls (like this one in the picture), hot pools and geysers, and even some volcanoes. Another interesting fact is that although its neighbor Australia is SO much bigger (28 times the area of land) the total length of its coastline is not even TWICE that of New Zealand!! So it is not surprising that NZ also has many beautiful beaches!



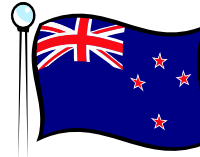
You may have heard of the many strange mammals that are found only in Australia - such as kangaroos, the duck-billed platypus and koala bears - but actually there are only TWO mammals that are native to New Zealand - bats and a native rat! There are no snakes and only one type of poisonous spider, but there are some fascinating native birds. The famous Kiwi (the national bird) is only rarely seen now except in zoos and protected areas, but it is one of several intriguing birds that cannot fly. Another is the Kakapo, which is a flightless parrot that is very rare and only comes out at night! The largest bird ever known (like a giant ostrich but now extinct) was called the Moa and its bones are often still found in swamps in New Zealand. Also you can still see several varieties of penguins swimming in the cold seas around the islands, and it is not uncommon for whales to become stranded on beaches - when people come out in big crowds to help them return to the ocean.



The first big group of people that came to live in New Zealand arrived in canoes from islands in the South Pacific around 1200s and they settled in the North Island. A Dutchman arrived in 1642 and named the country New Zealand, after a place in Holland, and then in 1769 Captain Cook explored the islands and claimed them for England.



The first missionary arrived and preached his first sermon on Christmas Day 1814 and in 1840 the chiefs of the native Maori people agreed to hand over the country to England. So NZ became a British colony and many immigrants arrived from Britain to live in this beautiful land. Today NZ is an independent nation but the Head of State is still the Queen of England. The NZ flag shows the Union Jack of Great Britain with the stars of the Southern Cross constellation to show that NZ is in the southern hemisphere. NZ's capital is Wellington, but its largest city is Auckland with over a million people - about ONE FOURTH the total population of the whole country!!



Most New Zealanders originated from Great Britain, but about one eighth are descended from the original Maori natives. More recently there have been many new immigrants from the Polynesian islands and nearby Asian countries. The usual greeting in NZ is not hello, hi or good morning, but "Good day" and in the Maori language this is "Kia ora". This picture is of a Maori "wahine" and she might still live in a "pa" in the countryside. See if you can guess the meaning of some of the following Maori words and match them up with the correct picture:



RA PA WAHINE TAMARIKI MOANA KAI MOANA



The original Maori food (kai) was typically sweet potatoes, leafy vegetables, birds, fish, eels and shellfish. A special dish was called "hangi" - meat and vegetables cooked in a pit lined with stones, with a fire on top. The fire heats the stones and the stones cook the food. Nowadays many Maoris live in the cities and have become mixed in with the general population.