**NEW ZEALAND**

**Geography**

New Zealand consists of two islands that are located south−east of Australia in the SouthPacific. Both islands are wellknown for their beautiful scenery. There are active volcanoes, caves, deep glacial lakes, amazing fjords, and longsandy beaches. The majority of the people live on the North Island, mainly for its mild climate and economic potential, since the capital city, **Wellington**, as wel las the largest city, **Auckland**,are also situated here. New Zealand's largest natural lake, the Taupo, is also to be found on the North Island. On the South Island you can find the Southern Alps, a 300−mile long mountain range, with the highest peak **Mount Cook** (3,754 metres). There are more than 360glaciers in the Southern Alps.

**Climate**

New Zealand has a **mild** and t**emperate** [maritime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oceanic_climate) climate. Conditions **vary** sharply across regions from extremely wet on the [West Coast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Coast_Region) of the[South Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Island) to almost [semi arid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semi-arid_climate) in [Central Otago](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Otago) and the [Mackenzie Basin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mackenzie_Basin) of inland Canterbury and [subtropical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subtropical) in [Northland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Auckland_Peninsula).  Of the seven largest cities, [Christchurch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christchurch) is the driest The southern and south-western parts of the South Island have a cooler and cloudier climate.

**Economy**

New Zealand has a modern, prosperous and [developed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developed_economy) [market economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market_economy)

**Currency**

The currency is the [New Zealand dollar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand_dollar), informally known as the "Kiwi dollar";

**History**

It is generally agreed that the first settlers in New Zealand came from Eastern Polynesia in the Central Pacificaround AD 800. These were most likely the ancestors of the Maori population.The first European to reach New Zealand was a Dutch sailor, **Abel Tasman**, in 642. However, it was the British naval officer **James Cook** who really explored the country and colonists and tradesmen soon followed him to the islands. Great Britain took control of the South Island by right of discovery, and theNorth Island also became a British colony in 1840, when the Treaty of Waitangi wassigned by the Maori northern chiefs. TheMaori were promised protection. A few years later **war** broke out between theMaori and the British, as some Maori were not willing to sell their land to the newcomers and felt deceived by the Treaty. The Maori resistance was more or less crushed by 1870. The effort to achieve independence from Britain culminated after WWII, and New Zealand became formally **independent in 1947**. It is still a member of the **Commonwealth.**

**Political system**

New Zealand is a **constitutional monarchy** in which the British monarch is the formal head of state and appoints a governor − general. Legislative power resides with the single−chamber House of Representatives (**Parliament),** whose members are elected for three−year terms. The party that has a majority in the House forms the government, which comprises the prime minister (the leader of the winning party) and their ministers. There are two major parties − **National and Labour.**

**People**

The majority of the population (about74 per cent) are made up of those of European descent. The Maoris form the second largest group (about 13.5 percent). New Zealanders are known for being friendly and easy going.

**Language**

[English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) is the predominant language in New Zealand, spoken by 98 percent of the population. [New Zealand English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand_English) is similar to [Australian English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_English) and many speakers from the Northern Hemisphere are unable to tell the [accents](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accent_%28linguistics%29) apart. [Many places](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_dual_place_names_in_New_Zealand) have officially been given dual Maori and English names in recent years.

**Holidays**

Since 1960, February 6 is celebrated by New Zealanders as **Waitangi Day**. It is an occasion for thanksgiving, and for remembering the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Some recognise **Anzac Day**, a public holiday held on 25 April each year. This is a holiday to honour those New Zealanders who were killed in the two world wars. The holiday celebrates those values admirable about this nation −comradeship, unity, courage, self−sacrifice, and loyalty.

**New Zealand's flag**, like the Australian one, has a royal blue background with a small Union Jack, the flag of Great Britain, in the top-left corner. The four five-pointed red stars represent the Southern Cross star formation that is found in the Southern Hemisphere.

**Použitá literatura**

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