



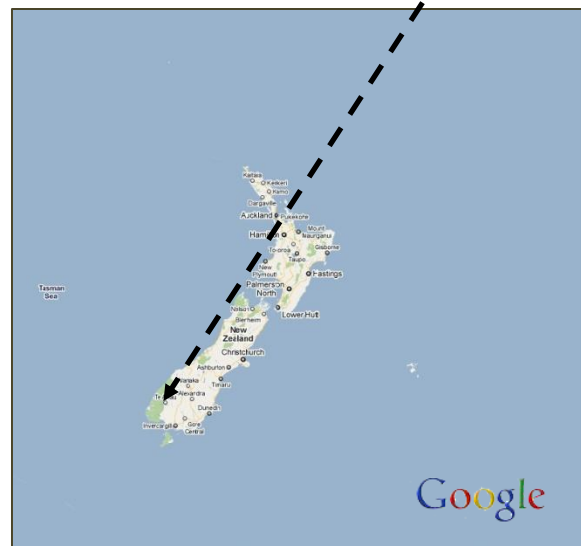
Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Doubtful Sound, New Zealand, located at 45° S and 166° E.
- We have traveled approximately 7,690 miles (12,376 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



Did you know?

- Modern bungee jumping originated in New Zealand. It is a very popular activity.
- Edmund Hillary, the first man to climb Mt Everest, was a New Zealander
- The Sky Tower in Auckland is 1,076 feet (328 meters) and is the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere



source: Auckland.co.nz



Rugby is one the most popular sports in New Zealand. It was invented about 70 years before American football and has some similarities (source: Wikipedia.org)

People and Culture

- New Zealand's first inhabitants were the Maori, arriving between 950 and 1300 AD from other parts of Polynesia. The Maori currently make up about 15% of the total population.
- Abel Tasman, a Dutch explorer, was the first European to discover the islands in 1642.
- After being a British colony and part of New South Wales (later Australia), New Zealand broke away and became a British dominion in 1907. A 1986 act ended the last British Parliament association.
- Queen Elizabeth is the official head of state and a Governor General is her representative. This official ratifies laws put forth by the elected New Zealand Parliament.
- New Zealand's population is about 4 million. Most people (about 75%) live on North Island and about one-third live in the Auckland area. The people are outnumbered by cattle (over 9 million) and sheep (about 39 million).
- Voting rights for women was granted in 1893, making New Zealand the first major country to do so.

Nature and Environment

- The country of New Zealand is comprised of two major islands, North Island and South Island, and is about the size of Colorado.
- The two islands span from tropic to arctic regions. North Island contains volcanoes and hot springs. South Island is comprised of a major group of mountains, ranging up to 12,000 feet (3,658 meters).
- The kiwi is a New Zealand's national icon. It is a nocturnal bird and burrows in the ground. Kiwis are the only known bird to have nostrils at the end of its bill, sniffing out its food. Related to the ostrich and the emu, it does not fly and can live as long as 50 years.
- The isolation of these islands resulted in many unique plants and animals that suffered when the population grew. An estimated 51 birds, three frogs, three lizards, one bat and four plant species have become extinct, with many others threatened, including the kiwi.
- Major natural exports are dairy products, meat, forestry products, fish and wool.



The kiwi (source: GoAustralia.about.com)

National Parks

There are 14 national parks, in New Zealand, ten of which are on South Island. Outdoor activities are popular in these parks.

Fiordland National Park (below) contains long, narrow inlets, including Milford Sound, and attracts people from all over the world.



source: Blogspot.com

Our Plans

- We spent one day in Bay of Islands and another day in Auckland on North Island before sailing to the South Island of New Zealand and cruising through Fiordland National Park.
- We will next head across the Tasman Sea (named for the explorer) and end our voyage in Sydney, Australia, after 29 days at sea.
- In Australia we will begin our first trek, on the island of Tasmania. Send us your questions and we will try to answer them.

Two National Anthems

New Zealand is one of three countries in the world that actually has **two** national anthems: *God Save the Queen* (The British National Anthem) and *God Defend New Zealand*. Canada and Denmark are the other two countries.

source : ListVerse.com

More Information

- <http://www.new-zealand-vacations-in-west-auckland.com/new-zealand-fun-facts.html>
- <http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/wmg/Map.html>
- <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107834.html>
- <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Asia-and-the-Pacific/New-Zealand.html>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_New_Zealand
- <http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/native-animals/birds/land-birds/kiwi/kiwi/>

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