

Useful information for our Tour to New Zealand

Climate:

We will be visiting New Zealand in spring. Average temperatures for the month of November hover around 15°C (59°F), but this varies from place to place. Daytime temperatures above 20°C (68°F) are common in the far north, while nightly lows earlier in the month can still drop below 5°C (41°F) in the mountains and the South Island.

Clothing:

Mix and match layers with a warm sweater or cardigan for evenings are ideal. Include a lightweight puffer jacket or warm fleece for cooler days. See my free [Travel Download](#) for my tried and tested tips that have served me well.

Dress code is casual, even for dinner. Include a waterproof rain jacket with hood and comfortable, waterproof shoes with good traction. Flip-flops or sandals are a good idea for wearing as slippers around the hotel.

It is essential for this tour that you pack as light as possible – a carry-on sized suitcase is recommended, even if you check it for longer flights. You'll be glad you did and there will be opportunities for hand washing items at our hotels. Don't rely on hotel laundry in view of the many 1-2 night stops we shall be making since many hotels send laundry off-site for service.

Always worth packing a swimsuit 😊

Essentials & Extras:

Powerpack to ensure your phone is always charged

Liquid detergent (small) for hand washing as needed

A refillable water bottle

A few granola bars or similar on-the-go snacks. (Non-perishable)

Baggage:

Worth repeating: travel LIGHT! There are many instances where you will need to manage your bags on/off the coach for short stays as well as several domestic flights. Carry-on size is recommended even if you check it for the long-haul flight(s). I managed 3 weeks in South Africa with just a carry on using the above tips.

Refer to the [itinerary](#) for **company imposed restrictions** on weight and/or size limits for both carry-on and checked luggage. Cross reference that with your international carrier.

In addition, you will need an **overnight bag** for our fjord wilderness experience. Your main suitcase will remain securely locked on the coach that night.

Please pack any medications in your carry-on bag just in case your bag is lost for a time.

[AirTags](#) may be worth considering for tracking. Airlines do NOT always know where your luggage is 😞

Documentation:

In addition to your passport, New Zealand requires a **NZeTA** for US citizens. (Much of this information was included in your itinerary.)

Please see the link below and you can request online. I do not recommend the app for New Zealand as it's not very user friendly.

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/about-visa/nzeta>

All international visitors to NZ must pay an **International Visitor Conservation Levy** (IVL) of \$35 NZD. If you apply for your visa online, you can pay both at the same time for a total of \$58 NZD.

You will also need to complete the **NZ Traveler Declaration**. See link below:

<https://www.travellerdeclaration.govt.nz/>

Please note this can only be completed 28 days prior to departure so around September 30th. Mark your calendar!

Finally, I recommend making a copy of your passport and carrying it in a separate area from your passport such as on your phone. Should it get lost or misplaced, it is much easier to have replaced if you have a copy available.

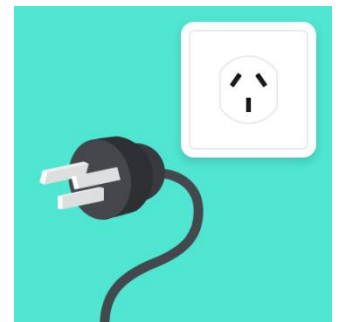
Electricity:

New Zealand operates on a 230 voltage and 50 Hz. The standard outlet/plug is called a Type 1 and looks like this (3 small flat prongs) so bring the necessary converter/adaptor to charge your phones, cameras etc.

Adapters can be purchased from local supermarkets or [purchased online](#). I recommend one with several USB ports.

Note that adapters do not convert voltage, they just allow you to plug your device into the electricity supply. So you can't plug your US hairdryer in as it runs on 120v, not 230v. I get around this by using a dual-voltage, travel hairdryer which folds in half and is lightweight. (Link in my **Travel Download**)

This [article](#) has a good overview and more detail.



Prohibited items:

Since we are flying from the U.S., the usual restrictions for liquids, sharp items aerosols etc. apply here. Check your carrier for more information.

Medications: Prescription medicines and controlled drugs (including medicines containing pseudoephedrine) have specific requirements and must be declared on your arrival declaration. Also check with the [Embassy of New Zealand](#) to ensure your medication is legal in New Zealand. Always carry prescription medication in original packaging with your doctor's prescription.

Currency:

New Zealand has its own dollar and cents.

ATMs are widely available so you may withdraw the local currency after you arrive or get some before you leave the US. This can be done through your local bank or AAA. Bank of America allows you to do it online. Check with your bank or credit card company for details and any foreign transaction fees they may charge if you wish to know in advance. Most credit cards have done away with the transaction fees in recent years.

Almost everyone accepts Visa or Mastercard. Unlike our added tax for goods, the price you see in shops, is the price you pay (like in the UK). Also, notify your card company that you will be out of the country so they don't freeze your card for unusual transactions.

As of November 2024, for easy USD conversion, everything is 40% off in New Zealand. Yes, consider me your shopping enabler

Tipping:

New Zealand does not have a strong tipping culture although this is changing. Bear in mind that unlike in the USA, servers etc. do earn a living wage and are not reliant on tips. When dining out, if the service was *outstanding*, feel free to tip, but certainly no more than 10%. Please use your own judgment on this. However, **NZD\$5 p.p./day** tip would be appreciated by our driver/guide.

For taxis round up to the nearest dollar.

Communication:

My primary means of emergency communication with the group will be through cell phone calls or texts. I therefore need all guests to have a cell phone that works in New Zealand and at the very least you have texting enabled during our tour. I recommend checking with your carrier to see what plans they offer, or purchase a cheap burner phone for the tour. T-Mobile offers free international texting. I will be asking you for your NZ-acceptable phone number at least one month before departure.

Additionally, you may wish to be aware of these options for communicating with loved ones back home:

Skype to go account

You can put money into the account and call anyone - cell phones or land lines. The person you are calling doesn't need to have an account.

Or

Download the *What's app* or *Messenger app*

This one is a little different in that everyone you call must have downloaded the app as well. You must have wi-fi* access to make the call but it's free and easy to use. You can also text for free.

Please remember when calling, we will be **21 hours ahead** of PST. E.g. at midday Monday in New Zealand it will be 3pm Sunday in Seattle.

Driving:

New Zealand drives on the left-hand side, so please be very careful when crossing the street and remember to look both ways! This dates back to England and horse and jousting days when battles were fought with swords and horses and most men were right-handed. Those darn Brits.....