

13/04/2016 - 15 things no one told me about living in New Zealand



Ady Kerry/Alamy

Kiwis are a friendly bunch, you just need to get to know us.

These are all the things I've learned after living in New Zealand for two years.

When I first stepped off that plane in Auckland I had no idea what lay ahead of me. But, before I knew it, Kiwi slang made its way into my everyday sentences and the things I thought were rather strange, become the norm.

Before long this country which is so far away from my own, felt like home.



New Zealand might seem quirky to foreigners - but you'll grow to love it.

1. People go barefoot. Everywhere.



People go barefoot everywhere in NZ.

And I mean everywhere. From the supermarket to restaurants and bars. During the summer months, shoes are just simply not a requirement.

2. Groceries are expensive.

Now this may or may not be the reason why people are barefoot, but when you have to pay \$40 per 1kg of limes I can understand why footwear may take a back seat. Not that I've ever bought 1 kg of limes, but I'm just saying if I wanted to then they are bloody expensive.



Groceries aren't the cheapest.

But it's not just limes, \$3 for one pepper, \$10 for some cheddar cheese! Food is expensive in New Zealand and I think we can all agree #thankgodforpaknsave.

3. The coffee is the best. Ever.

Oh man. The coffee. It is just so good. New Zealand invented the flat white and with such an amazing brunch scene, the Kiwis have perfected the art of coffee making.



SUPPLIED

Once you've had Kiwi coffee, you don't look back.

Nowhere else I've been can quite compare on the coffee front so just beware that NZ will ruin coffee for you for life if you ever leave.

4. You have to go up and pay.

I would say in most other countries I have been to, when you are finished your meal, you ask for the bill and leave cash at the table.



Laurent Delhoume/Fairfax NZ - Don't expect Kiwis to bring the bill to you.

Well, not in New Zealand. Here, you go up to the till and pay. It can be a little confusing at first when you are sitting waiting on the bill which never appears. It also doesn't matter how many people there are, even a group of 12 would go up to the till and pay for their meal individually.

5. There is no such thing as tipping.

Yep that's right. Forget your 12.5% service charge or adding a little bit onto a taxi fare. New Zealand doesn't have a tipping culture. Leaving money behind on a table is seen as accident as opposed to a reward.



Edwina Pickles - Tipping isn't a big thing here.

A friend of mine left \$10 on a cafe table as a tip only to have the waitress run out after her to say she had left money behind.

6. The wildlife is rather different to home.

Whether it's seals, penguins, dolphins or whales, New Zealand's local wildlife always made me feel like I was on a David Attenborough show than a five-minute walk from my apartment.



DOC - NZ's local wildlife can make you feel like you are on a David Attenborough show.

7. You learn a lot about the direction of wind.

In Scotland, it's generally always windy. Whether the wind is blowing from North, East, South or West it is pretty irrelevant. All that matters is you know once you go outside you can kiss goodbye to your silky, straight hair.

In New Zealand, not only does the wind direction matter but you can actually tell which direction it is coming from. Welcome to what is known as a "Southerly", and how do you know it's a Southern wind? Because it is fricken freezing. Winds from the South come straight from the Antarctic so be sure to wrap up!

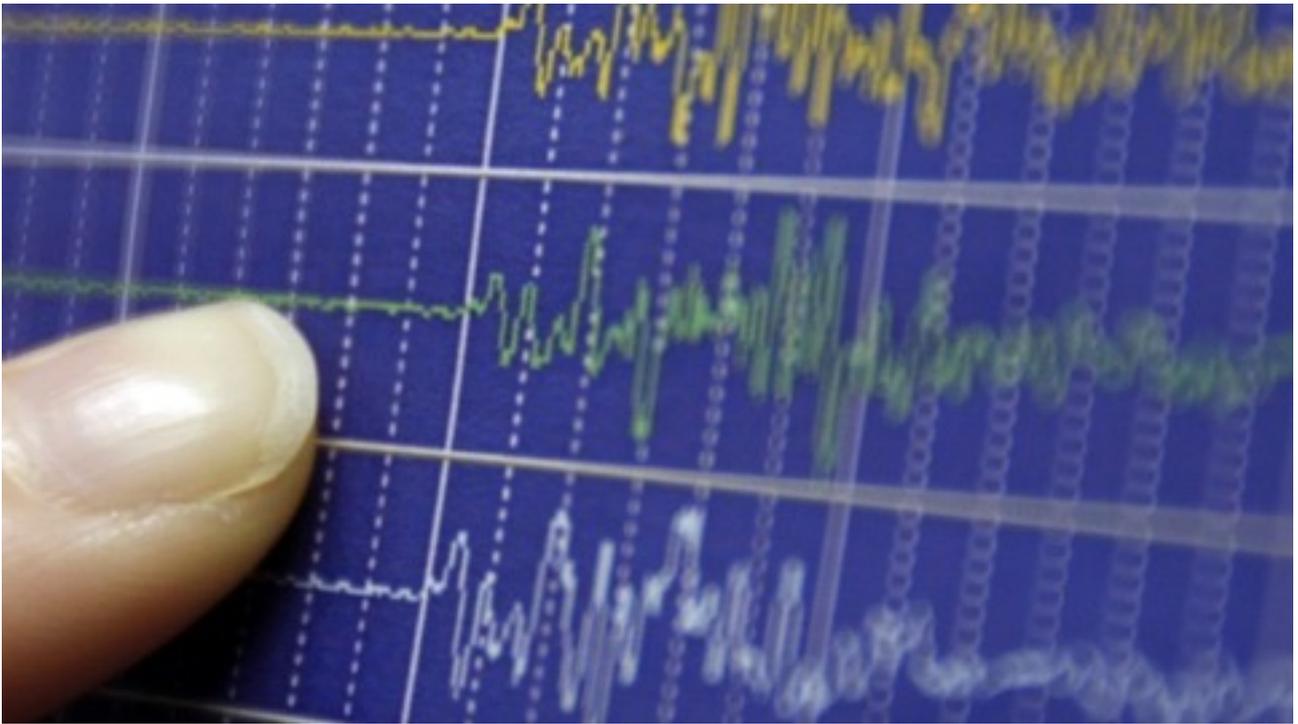


MONIQUE FORD / Fairfax NZ - You learn a lot about the direction of the wind in NZ.

8. There are earthquakes all the time.

New Zealand experiences about 15,000 earthquakes per year but thankfully most of these are so deep they cannot be felt. However, about 150-200 earthquakes are felt up and down the country each year, some much more severe than others. During my time in New Zealand I experienced four and they are scary.

Most buildings are now designed to rock with the earth to absorb the impact so they physically sway from side to side during an earthquake. Due to being on a fault line, this factor is just a normal way of life here.



Quakes are a normal thing in New Zealand.

9. New Zealand is home to the most beautiful town.

New Zealand is home to the most beautiful place I have ever visited. Queenstown. Until I arrived in NZ I had never really heard of this place nor did i know what it looked like. But seriously, wow.



Destination Queenstown - is it one of the prettiest places in the world?

10. New Zealand uses weird names for everyday items.

Although of course, English is the national language there are some words which haven't translated over.

For example, courgettes are zucchinis, cling film is glad wrap, a cool box is known as a chilli bin, a dairy is a shop, swimming shorts are togs, flip flops are jandals and sweets are lollies. There really is a whole new vocabulary to learn. Oh and "piss" is alcohol.



Supplied - Flip flops? Nah, they're your jandals.

11. Some places are seriously hard to pronounce.

Some places in New Zealand have almost unpronounceable names for newbies in the country, although once you learn them they are so satisfying to say. Take the town of "Paraparaumu" - I used to want to go there just purely so I could say the word in conversation. There is also "whakapapa" pronounced "fukapapa" and "Tawharanui" pronounced "Taf-ra-nui". Good luck asking for directions to any of these towns!

12. Watties is not Heinz.



WATTIES NZ/FACEBOOK - Wattie's - it's not Heinz. Nope.

No matter what anyone says. They are not the same things. Period.

13. However, Whittakers is pretty goddamn good.

Whittakers is the national New Zealand chocolate and it is so good!



PETER DRURY/FAIRFAX NZ - It's all about Whittaker's chocolate in NZ.

Especially the L&P version which is white chocolate with a lemony flavour coated with popping candy!

14. No one uses cash

Unless you are getting on a bus, everything is paid for with your card. I couldn't even tell you what New Zealand notes looked like as I hardly ever saw any. Even if you are buying a packet of chewing gum, you gotta pay wave that purchase.



Cash? Who uses cash in New Zealand?

15. Everyone is so friendly.

New Zealanders are the most laid back, welcoming and friendly nation ever. I can't recall a time over the past two years where anyone was ever rude to me. Their customer service is awesome as are the hospitality staff. Everyone is just so friendly and when you move so far away it's so nice to feel so accepted into the Kiwi way of life.

READER REPORT MEGAN CONWAY

(Source; Stuff)