



New Zealand weather is very changeable...it is an island after all, well two islands to be more specific. You might hear the locals talk about four seasons in a day, and at certain times during the year it may certainly feel that way. It is also the reason why Kiwis tend to wear layered clothing, as it is easier to change for the type of weather during the day.

New Zealand has four distinct seasons, but you'd be surprised how different the weather can be in different regions. On the North Island for instance in winter, you could easily spend a Saturday on the slopes of Mt Ruapehu skiing, and then on a Sunday find yourself surfing on the coast.

The various regions and landscapes each have or create their own micro-climates, so let's have a little closer look at them.

The Winterless North

Northland at the top of the country is considered the winterless North. A subtropical climate means it's mild in winter, and warm with a high degree of humidity during the summer. It also means rainfall is slightly higher than other parts of the North Island, which makes the vegetation very lush. The weather tends to be wetter when Cyclones are active in the tropics, often sending remnants of these storms to Northland's shores.

Auckland

The summers in Auckland are generally warm, and also have quite a high level of humidity. Winters are quite mild and damp.

The Coromandel

The Coromandel enjoys plenty of sunshine year round, and sunny beach days here are simply bliss. Because the weather in New Zealand predominantly originates from the West, the East Coast waters are generally calmer. Combined with many secluded bays in the Coromandel, this simply adds to the magic. Even on a sunny winter's day hanging out on the Coromandel beaches is pleasant.

When it rains though in the Coromandel, it can pour due to the mountain ranges in the Coromandel's interior. Especially in Cyclone season the weather can be particularly bad at times.

Central Plateau

The weather in the Central Plateau is generally a little cooler than the rest of the North Island, due to its elevation. Rainfall is pretty similar than elsewhere, but around the volcanoes it's a different story all together.

These majestic volcanic mountains dominate the landscape and pretty much can create their own weather. There may even be big differences in weather on the same day on opposite sides of the mountains. Weather here can change extremely fast, so be prepared for Alpine weather conditions year round should you go hiking in Tongariro National Park. The winds up the mountain can also get to ferocious speeds, so we advise you always check the weather forecast before venturing out. On a nice day though, be prepared for epic adventures!

Hawke's Bay and East Cape

The East Coast of New Zealand is one of the sunniest and warmest places in New Zealand, receiving the most annual sunshine hours just after Nelson, and it's the reason why there are many wineries here. While it may be raining cats and dogs on some parts of the island, the East Coast may be basking in the sun, but at the same time the sun is probably the main weather hazard here., and you can burn extremely fast due to the strong sunshine. This is generally the same across New Zealand, but be particularly careful here.

Wellington

Wellington is one of the windiest cities in the world, and offers a mild, temperate marine climate. It is however slightly cooler than the northern regions of the North Island, but maybe that's just the winds...There's a Kiwi saying about Wellington though which goes : "You can't beat Wellington on a good day"!

Nelson and Abel Tasman National Park

Nelson and Abel Tasman National Park are the other regions of New Zealand that enjoy the most sunshine. It truly does make Abel Tasman National Park a coastal paradise with all its golden beaches. The Motueka Valley is known for its fruit orchards which you'll see scattered around the landscapes here.

West Coast and Glaciers

A few hours southwest of Nelson, it is a completely different climate all together. This is the wettest region of the country, and it's due to its exposure to the predominant weather systems from the Tasman Sea and the Southern Alps which just lie behind. Annual rainfall is high, but dry spells do occur, generally in late summer and during winter. The lush vegetation all of that rain creates, combined with the backdrop of the wild and rugged Tasman Sea are quite impressive though. The summers are mild, never too hot, and winters generally start with frost.

Note that the same type of weather occurs in Fiordland National Park and the Milford and Doubtful Sounds.

Lakes District (Wanaka and Queenstown)

The climate inland of the South Island, is determined by the Southern Alps to the West, but many areas here are also sheltered from the weather patterns coming from the Tasman Sea due to the mountains further South and West. Therefore this regions is relatively dry in summer, and it's not uncommon for temperatures to reach around 30 degrees Celsius. Winters however are very cold and frosty, and needless to say it snows here. Two of the most popular ski resorts of New Zealand are found here : Cardrona and Treble Cone.

Canterbury and East South Island

The eastern side of the South Island is protected by the Southern Alps to the West, which means that summers are dry and warm, and temperatures regularly reach 30 degrees Celsius and more. Winters are cold with frequent frost.

The landscapes in the South Island are often dominated by the Southern Alps which form its spine from top to bottom. When venturing out in these Alpine regions, always check the weather forecast and weather here can change rapidly.