

Te ao Māori – The world of Māori



As *tangata whenua*, New Zealand's indigenous population, Māori people occupy a unique place in our society. They are a proud people with a tradition of focusing on community gain rather than individual.

Much in the Māori world can be traced and explained through *whakapapa* (genealogy) and *tūrangawaerua* (place of belonging/spiritual home). It is common for Māori to introduce themselves by identifying the geographic landmarks unique to their tribe and by referring to their ancestors. For Māori, the two worlds – spiritual and material – are closely linked. All activities in the everyday world come under the influence of *wairua* (spirituality).

It has also been said that while English speakers view the future as being in front of them, Māori are a people who think of the past as being in front of them. The stability and identity of Māori is grounded in where they have come from, looking to history to interpret the new.

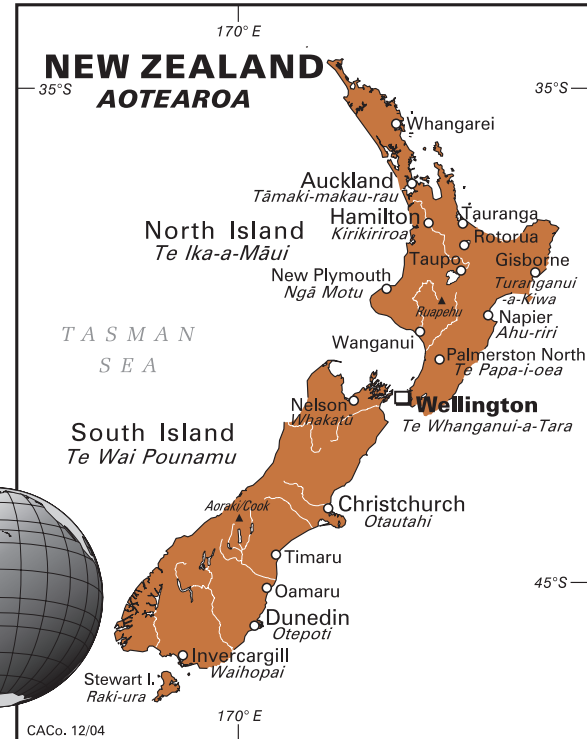
Population

The 2001 census showed that one in seven people (586,000) in New Zealand were of Māori ethnicity and by 2021 New Zealand's Māori population is projected to reach 749,000. Māori people live throughout New Zealand, but most are concentrated in the northern regions of New Zealand: Northland, Auckland, Waikato and the Bay of Plenty.

Everyday life

Māori people will often shake hands and kiss when they meet. When Māori men shake hands with women their handshake is usually gentle. It is not necessary to *hongi* (press noses once or twice) when you meet and greet a Māori friend in the street. The *hongi* is customarily reserved for more formal occasions, or at times when you meet someone new or someone you haven't seen for a while.

The traditional Māori *hāngi*, where food is cooked on hot stones in the ground, is still common. It is often put down for special ceremonies and when catering for a crowd. When visiting Māori homes it is usual to remove shoes before going inside. It is considered impolite to sit on tables or bench tops – places where food is prepared or placed. The head is considered a sacred part of the body and shouldn't be touched.



Te reo – The language

Under the Treaty of Waitangi, *te reo* is considered one of the *taonga* (treasures) of Māori and is guaranteed protection. The 1987 Māori Language Act declared Māori an official language of New Zealand and established the Māori Language Commission.

Māori was the main spoken language in 1840 and it remained strong for almost another hundred years. Although from the 19th century Māori was discouraged in most schools, its rapid decline began during and after World War Two when Māori moved to towns and cities in large numbers looking for work.

Separating Māori from their language and traditional culture affected their sense of status and ability to fully decide their future. So, for many today, speaking Māori is much more than keeping a unique language alive. It's a powerful way to rebuild self-image implicit in language and culture in the Māori community.

There were several initiatives to revive the Māori language with the first strong push starting in the 1960s. The first *te kōhanga reo* (language nest) opened in 1982 and more followed. They are like Māori kindergartens that encourage and teach Māori language and knowledge to Māori infants.

New Zealand Māori is most closely related to languages such as Cook Islands Māori, Tahitian and Hawai'ian. It is more distantly related to other languages of Polynesia, such as Samoan and Tongan.

Sounds

The Māori alphabet has five vowels. Vowel sounds are regular and may be either short or long. A little line (macron) above some vowels indicates a longer vowel sound. Sometimes writers will double the vowel instead of using a macron to indicate the long vowel. The longer vowel sounds are pronounced as follows: *ā* in 'far'; *ē* as in 'measure'; *ī* as in 'fee'; *ō* as in 'awe'; and *ū* as in 'rude'.

There are eight consonants (*h, k, m, n, p, r, t, w*), and two sounds where two letters together represent one sound; *wh* and *ng*. *Wh* is close to the *f* sound in 'father'. *Ng* is pronounced like the *ng* in the word 'singer'.

Numbers

0	<i>kore</i>
1	<i>tahi</i>
2	<i>rua</i>
3	<i>toru</i>
4	<i>whā</i>
5	<i>rima</i>
6	<i>ono</i>
7	<i>whitu</i>
8	<i>waru</i>
9	<i>iwa</i>
10	<i>tekau</i>
11	<i>tekau mā tahi (mā: and)</i>
12	<i>tekau mā rua</i>
20	<i>rua tekau</i>
100	<i>kotahi rau</i>

Common words and phrases

<i>Tēnā koe</i>	Greetings (one person)
<i>Tēnā kōrua</i>	Greetings (two people)
<i>Tēnā koutou</i>	Greetings (several people)
<i>Haere mai</i>	Welcome/Come here
<i>Kia ora</i>	Hello/Thanks
<i>Kei te pēhea koe?</i>	How are you?
<i>Kei te pai</i>	I am well
<i>Haere rā</i>	Goodbye (to someone leaving)
<i>E noho rā</i>	Goodbye (by those leaving)
<i>Ka kite</i>	See you later
<i>Kia kaha</i>	Be strong
<i>Ka pai</i>	Well done
<i>Mana</i>	Respect
<i>Koha</i>	Gift
<i>Aroha</i>	Love
<i>Whānau</i>	Family
<i>Tamariki</i>	Children
<i>Tūpuna</i>	Ancestor
<i>Tāne</i>	Man
<i>Wahine</i>	Woman
<i>Pākehā</i>	European New Zealander
<i>Hui</i>	Meeting
<i>Whareniui</i>	Meeting house
<i>Whare kai</i>	Dining room
<i>Haere mai ki te kai</i>	Come and eat
<i>Hāngi</i>	Earth oven and the food cooked in it
<i>Kai</i>	Food
<i>Kai moana</i>	Sea food
<i>Puku</i>	Stomach



Marae

As you travel throughout the country you are likely to see many *marae*. These community complexes are a focal point where Māori meet, discuss and debate matters of importance, celebrate the living, and farewell their dead. It is on the *marae* that Māori is predominantly spoken.

There are more than a thousand *marae* throughout New Zealand. Some can be found in the hearts of cities – a vital meeting place for urban Māori. Rural *marae* usually occupy more land. There will be a big open space at the front and several buildings, often equipped to cater to and accommodate several hundred people. The main building is the *wharenuī*, (meeting house) which may be used for *hui* (meetings), sleeping and celebrations such as weddings, and *tangihanga* (funerals).

There is a specific order of ceremony when visiting a *marae*, the order differing from one tribal area to another. The difference lies mainly in the order of speechmaking. Some *marae* practise *paeke* where *tangata whenua* (hosts) speak first, others practise *taūtūtu*, where speeches alternate between *tangata whenua* and visitors.

Visitors always wait at the entrance until the *kuia* (older women) of the *tangata whenua karanga* (call) the visitors onto the marae.

Speeches of welcome and *mihi* (greeting) from the *tangata whenua* come first. The *mihi* has a particular format where the speaker will talk about:

- *The land*
- *The reason for gathering*
- *The buildings*
- *The ancestors and the dead*
- *The living*

Speeches may alternate between *manuhiri* (visitors) and *tangata whenua* (i.e. *taūtūtu*) and are usually followed by a *waiata* (song/chant) that complements the words spoken and shows unity. The last *manuhiri* speaker places *koha* (a donation/ 'give what you can') on the floor or ground equidistant between the two groups. The *koha* is a gift or reciprocation of *aroha* (love) and is an important concept, essential to total well-being of the people. Then comes the *harirū* (handshake) and *hongi*. Sometimes foreheads will touch.

Tangihanga

The word *tangi* expresses the shedding of tears during a loss. *Tangihanga* encompasses the

mourning rituals, the expression and sharing of grief. During the three days of mourning, visitors are welcomed onto the *marae* in the traditional way and eulogies refer to *whakapapa*, the spirit 'going back to Hawaiiiki'; the mythical homeland of Māori.

Haka

The haka is a dance and chant usually performed by men. It was part of the Māori warrior's conditioning for war and battle. In pre-European times there were many kinds of *haka*: for amusement, for welcoming visitors, and war dances. Over the years the *haka* has been adopted by sections of the military and by sports teams. It is often used on formal occasions to welcome or farewell.



Dominion Post Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ

