

# **Destination Guide**

## ***New Zealand***

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S/V Felicity

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## Introduction

### About Felicity and her crew

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We are Ken and Cathy from Seattle, Washington and left our home in August of 2000. We sailed down the West Coast of the US and participated in the Baja Ha Ha sponsored by Latitude 38 that fall. After cruising Mexico for five months, we sailed the traditional Coconut Milk Run through French Polynesia, Rarotonga, Niue, Tonga and finally New Zealand.

*Felicity* is a 1987 Tashiba 31 designed by Bob Perry and built by the Ta Shing yard in Taiwan. She is a heavy double-ender, which we have extensively outfitted for long-distance cruising. Learn more about *Felicity* at [www.svfelicity.com/boat](http://www.svfelicity.com/boat).

Along our voyage, Cathy keeps a running log and we've taken lots of pictures. We share this with our family and friends on the Web at [www.svfelicity.com](http://www.svfelicity.com) and invite you to visit the site if you want more info on our travels. Our guide to cruising the Coconut Milk Run as well as future Destination Guides will be available as we continue our journey. Please let us know if you would like anything added or changed in this guide for future cruisers or you have any questions we haven't answered. Our email addresses are [ken@svfelicity.com](mailto:ken@svfelicity.com) and [cathy@svfelicity.com](mailto:cathy@svfelicity.com).

### About this guide

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When we set off to cross the Pacific, we didn't think much about New Zealand other than to buy some guide books. In Tahiti, cruisers started talking about where to park the boat and we found ourselves making reservations at a marina without much outside assistance or knowledge. After arriving in New Zealand, we've learned many things that aren't covered in normal guide books but about which cruisers have questions.

This Destination Guide does not provide detailed information on what to see and do – Lonely Planet and other qualified books do that very well. What it does provide, is a quick introduction to the country for yacht crews arriving for the first time and planning to stay for four to six months during cyclone season.

This guide has been prepared based on our own first-hand experience and is intended to provide insight on how things worked for us during our stay from November 2001 to June 2003. Your experiences will differ from ours. The officials you meet may be different. The rules may change. Technology and services may improve or degrade – or even disappear. This guide is simply a resource that provides somewhat recent opinions based on our own experiences.

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## Officialdom

### Pre-Arrival Check-In

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You will need to notify the authorities before arriving in New Zealand territorial waters. If you are checking into Russell Radio, Des can do this for you. If you are arriving from Fiji or Tonga, pick up a check-in packet before leaving. The packet will have all the forms the authorities will ask you to fill in and you can save time by having these ready when you arrive.

### Ports of Entry

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There are many ports of entry but the majority of cruisers choose to make landfall in Opuia in the Bay of Islands simply because it's the closest to the tropics. The marina in Opuia was not on our charts but was easy to find – it is where the Yacht Club is indicated. During business hours, contact Customs on VHF 16 for directions. After hours, there are two good options. There is a long breakwater dock on your port side marked for quarantine. Secondly, you may anchor out – ensure your quarantine flag is flying. Customs will contact you.

Those that chose to bypass the Bay of Islands often had a good weather outlook and generally headed straight for their final destination where they planned to either work on the boat or base themselves while traveling via land. We know of boats that went directly to Whangarei, Auckland, and Tauranga.

### Immigration (extensions, multiple-entry)

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Upon arrival, visitors from the United States are granted a three-month visitor's visa. This visa can later be extended at any immigration office in three-month increments up to twelve months total which covers visitors planning to stay in the country for one cyclone season.

If you plan to fly out of the country one or more times during your stay, be sure to visit immigration before leaving and apply for a multiple-entry visitors permit and visitors visa. If you are planning to visit the Immigration office in Auckland on Queen Street, we suggest that you arrive between 7:30 and 9:30 in the morning, to ensure you can complete the process in one day. You can do this at the same time you extend your visa. This will ensure that you will be able to get back on the plane to New Zealand without an outward-bound air ticket. The Visitor's Visa should state that Funds are waived and Outward passage is waived. You'll need to take a passport photo and fill in an application for this.

When you arrive in the country, Immigration will stamp your passport as you've had done in other countries. Note however, that when extending your visa or obtaining the visitor permit, a full-page sticker is placed into your passport (two full pages for the permit and visa). Ensure you have empty pages available, as they won't place the sticker onto a partially used page. For US passport holders, the US consulate in Auckland can add pages to your passport if necessary. Note: if you are a US citizen and need to renew your passport from NZ, the US process now requires new passports to be issued in the US. Passports can no longer be issued directly from an overseas US consulate or embassy. We have friends who have done this, and the process took a couple of weeks.

For cruisers thinking of staying in the country longer than one season, there are several options to consider. Read the Customs section next for boat tax implications. For immigration, there are three primary choices:

#### Special Extension

A visitor visa extension for an additional season to accomplish boat repairs is a fairly straight-

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forward request. We took in a copy of the extension that Customs provided us (see Customs) along with a list of boat work that we planned to complete. We had one quote from a NZ company, but otherwise just our own list of boat work. The checkout date we received was identical to what we had requested of Customs, which was June 30. Even though we plan to leave in May, we wanted a little bit of wiggle room in case weather or boat work delayed us.

#### Work Visa

if you choose to get a local job, going through the process to obtain a work permit/visa will provide you with up to three years in the country depending on your job offer. We're told by those that are working that it is best to get this before coming into the country.

#### Residency

Applying for residency is an option for those planning on spending a longer time in New Zealand. This option provides you with virtually unlimited time in New Zealand, the opportunity to officially import your boat to avoid paying duty and the option of citizenship should you fall in love with New Zealand. You don't have to apply right away and if you are considering this, it would be wise to talk with other cruisers that have been here several years and have gone through this process. Residency decisions are based on a points system and you can find detailed information on the Web at <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/>. If you plan to work, explore the residency option as the offer of a job often provides adequate points to gain residency.

### **Customs**

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The two biggest questions cruisers seemed to have about Customs this year were about liquor limits and the temporary importation permit. For alcohol, we found that "reasonable" quantities for personal consumption were ok. The customs agent that checked us in defined "reasonable" as four bottles of wine and four liters of hard alcohol per adult. Open bottles didn't count towards the total for us. If you happen to have more than the reasonable definition for some reason, they can bond the excess.

The temporary importation permit becomes important if you decide to stay past the 12-month limit without permission from Customs and they assess duty on your boat. It is also important if you import the boat duty-free as part of your residency and sell the boat before the imposed two-year restriction. We reported the purchase price for our boat converted to New Zealand dollars at the current exchange rate. One cruiser was told by customs to report the fair market value if the boat were to be sold in New Zealand. This sounds reasonable to us as boat prices are much lower in New Zealand than in the U.S. and duty should be assessed on local prices.

When electing to stay longer than the 12-month limit, request permission from Customs first. We would highly recommend the basis of the request be focused on the extensive work needed to the boat and not on your continued enjoyment of New Zealand. List the work you plan to complete and request a date of departure from the country. Include a copy of your import permit. Our request was sent in early March and we received an approved response within two weeks. We addressed our letter to: New Zealand Customs, Attn: Client Services, PO Box 29, Auckland.

For current regulations and information on New Zealand Customs, refer to their site at <http://www.customs.govt.nz/>.

### **MAF**

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Try to arrive in NZ with no fresh food if you can. The MAF (quarantine officers) were very nice and their primary concern is that you don't introduce disease to the country, which can affect the agriculture industry.

#### They will take\*:

- All cheese
- Fresh and frozen meats
- Canned meat from the UK and some other European countries

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- All fresh produce
  - Milk (US dried milk and canned milk was OK)
  - Opened butter
  - All eggs, fresh and dried.
  - Wild rice, whole oats, whole barley, whole wheat, soy beans – basically anything that can go to seed.
  - Nuts only in their shells
  - Loose popcorn (microwave bagged popcorn is OK)
  - Honey, unless unopened and made in NZ
  - Your trash and vacuum bags – yeah
  - They may ask to see your hiking boots to check for dirt – they would clean them, not take them
  - Bottom paint, unless approved in NZ
  - Asked about bug spray, but let us keep our one can of Raid as long as we promised to only use it on the boat.
  - Clams of any kind, queen conch, and corals, other shell collections seem to be fine.

\* This list is based on our experiences entering NZ in November 2001. We have friends who spent the 2002 cruising season back in the tropics and told us MAF was more lenient in 2002 than in 2001. They left some cheese, butter and meat if it was in its original packaging and from New Zealand originally. We cannot speak directly to this, as it might be due to a more lenient MAF official, or that many of their provisions were from NZ.

#### They did not take

- Canned meat from the any place we had been (Their main concern is UK meats due to Mad Cow)
- Canned cheese from the US
- Peanut butter
- Sprouting seeds may be OK, but they have to take a look at them.
- They did not take our spices, but they may ask to see them
- They did not take any flour, rice or pasta, but did ask to look at some. I think a good rule is if your rice and pasta doesn't appear to be moving with small protein supplements, they'll leave it alone.
- Tapas, wood carvings and baskets (they asked if we had them, but didn't take or even ask to see them.
- We are not shell collectors, but we did not hear of anyone's shell collections being taken

For current regulations and information on New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, refer to their site at <http://www.maf.govt.nz/>.

#### **Pets**

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We don't have pets on board but have friends that do. If you plan to bring a pet to New Zealand, you will probably have researched the issue and understand the options. Note that the biggest issue seems to be timing of various shots but those stopping in Tahiti have a good opportunity to get these done there. Good information can be found at [www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/imports/animals/standards/](http://www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/imports/animals/standards/).

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## Local Cruising

By the time we arrived in New Zealand, we had been on the boat steady for 18 months and were ready for some time on dry land. However, there are excellent places to go for those looking to explore via boat. The Bay of Islands offers un-crowded anchorages outside of the late December and January school holiday time. Great Barrier Island and the outlying islands near Auckland are also favored cruising grounds. For those more adventuresome, the Marlborough Sounds on the north end of the South Island is supposed to be wonderful cruising.

We can't recommend any local cruising books, but we know who can. Boat Books near Westhaven Marina has friendly staff and a good selection of relevant boating books. A review of local cruising guides is available at <http://www.boatbooks.co.nz/cruznz.html> or email them at [crew@boatbooks.co.nz](mailto:crew@boatbooks.co.nz).

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## Marinas

While it is certainly possible to anchor out for an extended stay in New Zealand, we don't know of any cruiser that has done so. This section details the primary marina choices that we estimate the majority of the cruising fleet chooses to stay at.

There are several more marinas in New Zealand but many don't permit live-boards, are too small to accommodate transient vessels, or are simply not located where cruisers would prefer to park the boat. If you plan to haul the boat and leave it on the hard while traveling around the country, several more options are available.

Find an extensive list of marinas with contact info at <http://www.nzmarine.com/nzmarinas.php>.

### Opua

It is tempting to just stay parked at the marina when you clear in at Opua as it offers a nice, modern facility, which is in the heart of the Bay of Islands cruising ground. It is close to the tourist destinations of Pahia, Keri Keri, and Russell and you are surrounded by quite beautiful scenery with a low-key lifestyle.

Opua, however, is at the extreme north end of the north island, which means you are a long way from the rest of New Zealand when touring by car. Public facilities such as grocery stores are available but note that the local economy is driven by tourism which means things like chandleries and nightlife are limited.

### Whangarei

Whangarei is a nice small to medium sized town with a well-protected marina and excellent marine facilities. Pile moorings are in the town basin and cruisers that have stayed here simply rave about the hospitality they receive. For cruisers looking to become involved in the local community or place children in school, Whangarei should be on the short list of options.

### Gulf Harbour

Gulf Harbour is located on the Whangaparaoa peninsula and is an approximate 45-minute drive to Auckland. The marina is large and can accommodate many visiting yachts. It is less expensive than Westhaven and Bayswater marinas in Auckland yet still provides a central location with excellent boat yard facilities. The facilities (e.g. docks and washrooms) are well maintained but showing their age. Note that the Auckland ferry that previously ran between Gulf Harbour and Auckland is no longer in service.

### Bayswater

This is the marina we chose to stay at because of its central location, attention to cruiser needs, and nice facilities. The marina is located directly across from Auckland and has nice, modern facilities – in fact, the nicest we have found in New Zealand. Washrooms are individual rooms with toilet, shower, sink and counter. The marina provides an ever-expanding lounge with complimentary computers connected to the Internet. The marina provides 24-hour security and assistance with docking, if requested. A ferry travels between Bayswater and Auckland once an hour, Monday-Friday (twice per hour during rush hour).

Locals criticize Bayswater for the floating breakwater or “wave attenuator,” which allows some swell to enter the marina. We've found this to be limited to windless days when chop from large boats heading past Auckland hits the marina. Rocking is usually over within 30 seconds and we hardly notice it anymore. Those with larger boats are closer to the breakwater and may experience more rocking than those on smaller boats farther back in the marina.

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Key services and amenities located around Bayswater include:

- **Grocery:** Foodtown in Takapuna is a large fairly new, 24-hour grocery store and is where we most often shop. New World in Devonport is also nice.
- **Gyms:** Just Workout in Takapuna (there is also one in Auckland) is a low-key gym with top-quality weight machines, cardio equipment and facilities at a reasonable price. Just Workout has a good selection of personal trainers but limited aerobic classes. Just Workout offers 6-month and now monthly rates.

Les Mills in Takapuna is a larger facility with more customers, but offers longer hours and an extensive aerobic class schedule including spinning, yoga, hip-hop aerobics, step aerobics and kick boxing. Les Mills also has first rate equipment and facilities. It does offer a rather high daily drop-in rate of \$15 NZD. You must join for a minimum of 1 year, but you can purchase a transferable membership, and it seems common for people to sell Les Mills memberships in the local [Trade and Exchange](#) paper. Les Mills also has a huge downtown Auckland gym and others around NZ you can use with a standard membership.

- **Personal Trainers:** Cathy works out with Gavin Houghton, G-Force Athletics, 021 826 242, [g.force@ihug.co.nz](mailto:g.force@ihug.co.nz). Ken works out with Michael Richards, 021 177 8064. Both will offer you a free introductory gym visit and personal assessment.
- **Shopping:** Devonport has several boutique shops and cafés and is a great place to bum around on the weekend. Takapuna also has many boutique shops plus the Westfield mall. The Glenfield mall is among the largest we've found but a bit farther away.
- **Hair Salon:** Ken and I both go to Louise, the owner of Louise Simpson Hair Studio in Devonport. 95 Victoria Rd, 09 445 0600
- **Spa:** Cath goes to Waxdoll Beauty Studio in Devonport. Sara, the owner is of this small spa, is great and offers most spa services. Ph: 09 445 2342. [www.waxdoll.co.nz](http://www.waxdoll.co.nz). [Spa de Serville](#) in downtown Auckland at Prince's Wharf is also a swanky day spa.
- **Massage Therapist:** Frith Maunder, TONE Massage, 1 Barry's Point Rd, Takapuna. Phone: 09 489 4229 or 021 675 250. Both Ken and Cath go to Frith and highly recommend her.
- **Jewelry:** Without a doubt, Ken at Robinson Designer Goldsmith 408 Lake Road, Takapuna, can make some incredible settings for those pearls you've been collecting across the Pacific. Pass along a hello from us when you visit him. 09 489 9948
- **Mini Storage:** We offloaded some boat gear to a storage unit to make life onboard a little less cluttered and to make boat work easier. Storage units, especially larger ones, tend to be quite full. We're at Wairau Self Storage, about a 15 minute ride away.
- **Wine:** New Zealand has great wines, and Kingsley Wood at First Glass has never steered us wrong. Check out their Wednesday night wine tastings. 5 Huron Street, Takapuna ph: 09 486 6415 [www.first-glass.co.nz](http://www.first-glass.co.nz)
- **Coffee:** Starbucks is on Hurstmere Road in Takapuna. Mmmmmm! Sierra Café is also a nice coffee shop and café on Hurstmere. The Atomic Café on Ponsonby in downtown Auckland also comes highly recommended.
- **Mexican Food:** Ok, it's in Auckland but the Mexican Café across from the Sky Tower simply has to be mentioned for the best Mexican food in New Zealand. Let us know if you find one better – for that matter, let us know if you find a good steakhouse somewhere!
- **Pizza Serafino:** This is our favorite pizza restaurant. They are in Belmont and will deliver to Bayswater Marina. The pizzas are smaller than the big chain pizza joints, but pizzas are excellent. 147 Lake Road, 09 445 0620.

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- **Soul Bar & Bistro:** Soul Bar is one of our favorites. It's a bit expensive, but is a nice treat. It is also downtown at the Auckland viaduct basin and central to all of the America's Cup hoopla. 09 356 7249

## **Westhaven**

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This city-run marina is the largest in the country and is located just west of downtown. Facilities are similar to Gulf Harbor with much higher prices. We didn't find the staff helpful and they discourage live-aboards. They will allow a live-aboard for three months and we know that several cruisers extended this to six months. For those planning to work in the city, Westhaven is an option to consider but for others we'd highly recommend Bayswater.

## **Tauranga**

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One of the most popular choices for cruisers, Tauranga is located farther south on the north island and provides excellent facilities including a highly regarded boat yard, a quaint town, and low prices. For cruisers that don't want the city life of Auckland and want to be centrally located for land travel, Tauranga is an excellent choice. The marina is relatively new and the staff reportedly bends over backwards for cruisers. Labor rates are lower than Auckland and parts can be easily sent down inexpensively via courier. The current can rip at over 5 knots in the marina, so time your entrance for slack tide when you enter for the first time.

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## Basic Services

### Electrical

The electrical service you will find in marinas and boatyards is typically 15 or 30 amp, 230v, 50hz. For North American boats wired for a single voltage of 110-120v, two primary options exist if you wish to plug into shore power. A 220-240v battery charger can be fit to the boat or a transformer can be used to change the voltage.

We chose to purchase a custom transformer to meet our specific needs. The unit is portable and consists of a permanent cord to run to the dock, which has the NZ plug installed. A custom removable cord runs from the transformer to our 110v Marinco connector. This cord was constructed by cutting our old shore power cord to fit. The transformer is protected by a circuit breaker and is constructed of powder-coated aluminum with the electrical components suspended in epoxy. The casing has been weatherproofed to NZ electrical standards.

Some marinas, especially in the Auckland area, may require an electrical Warrant of Fitness (WOF). This consists of an electrician visiting your boat and inspecting the wiring and plug polarity. We happened to get a stringent inspector who required changes to the transformer. The supplier was happy to make the changes and should this year have a standard offering that offers a turnkey solution for cruisers. The WOF is good for four years and is a sticker that you place on the boat (we put it on the transformer).

If you choose to go the transformer route, contact Transformer Specialties, Inc. and speak with Karl. They were continually recommended to us and we were extremely happy with the product, service and price. Our transformer cost less than \$900 NZ and is rated for 1500 watts. We may at some point permanently mount it into the boat and install the wiring to switch over from one voltage to the other as the transformer will work in all European countries with 220-240v power. Note that less expensive transformers are available from industrial suppliers but these are vented to air and not weatherproofed or marinized.

Note that North American power systems are designed for an electrical frequency of 60hz. The power in New Zealand runs at a frequency of 50hz and the transformer does not change this. In *most* cases, this will be irrelevant to cruisers. If you have motors on board (e.g. AC driven refrigeration) that are designed to run at 60hz for extended periods, heat dissipation issues may cause motor burnout. We have had no issues with short-run motors like our blender. Electrical clocks designed to run at 60hz will not keep time. Since the majority of refrigeration systems are either DC or engine driven and AC-driven clocks with motors are rare, we suspect most cruisers reading this guide will not have any issues with electrical frequency.

### Television

Four public television channels produced by TVNZ, plus Prime, which is sourced from NineMSN in Australia are broadcast throughout New Zealand. Additional channels are available on a pay basis through SKY Television on either a UHF or satellite system.

All television signals (as well as video rentals) are in PAL format, which means North American NTSC systems will not work here. Most TVs and VCRs are designed to run on 220-240v. If you will be purchasing a transformer, consider having a standard NZ plug installed which you can run into the boat to provide power for NZ appliances.

Some televisions and VCRs are designed for multi-system and multi-voltage but these are also often more expensive. We purchased a Panasonic 13" TV and a Phillips VCR which fit this category. Both handle PAL, NTSC, and SECAM (French) systems. If you want to receive more than the standard broadcast channels, contact SKY Television for their current options as cable is not available in New Zealand.

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The SKY Television UHF option adds up to five additional channels including SKY Sport/ESPN, SKY Movies, Discovery Channel, SKY 1 (more current NBC/ABC/CBS shows), and SKY News/CNN. Different packages are available to combine channels. A decoder box is supplied and any standard marine TV antenna will work fine, though ones with a power booster work much better. The SKY Web site doesn't explain the UHF option well and our best source of information was just to talk with a rep. Note that you can request up to three boxes per "residence" meaning that you can split the bill between three boats. If all are delivered at the same time, they are covered under one install fee – even though installation simply consists of plugging in the box to your antenna and ensuring the decoder card is programmed correctly.

The SKY Television satellite option is more expensive to install but costs less per month (go figure!). Note that it does require a stable platform to mount the dish on. The poles at Bayswater Marina are not steady enough – we tried!

For more information, see [www.skytelevision.co.nz](http://www.skytelevision.co.nz).

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## Telephone

### Calling Cards

For cruisers looking to call home, there are several calling card options, which are drastically less expensive than traditional calling cards from the US. Surprisingly (or not!), it is less expensive to call the US from New Zealand than it is to make a long distance call within our home state. Most mini marts sell prepaid cards and many have options of topping up when funds run down. Note that some go out of business.

We use the Telecom NZ Yabba card. It offers a flat rate of \$.25 NZD per minute to call the US or for someone in the US to call NZ. We've seen cards that offer rates as low as \$.10 NZD per minute. The Yabba card offers a clear connection and the ability to top up at any time via credit card. We cannot use our Yabba card when using our mobile phones. Telecom is the primary phone company in New Zealand and investing in one of their phone cards carries the benefit of not having your phone card provider go out of business (which happened to one of the cheaper cards early in 2002).

### Mobile Phones

A nice convenience for traveling around the country is a cell phone. Many motels/hotels as well as tourist activities have toll free numbers, which cost you nothing to call. Incoming calls are charged to the caller, not you. The only time you pay for the call is when you call a non-toll free number. Note that toll free calls start with either 0800 or 0508.

The two primary providers are Vodafone and Telecom NZ. The Vodafone phones use a removable SIM card that contains your phone number and the phone data, such as your personal phone book. This lets you move from phone to phone easily. Vodafone phones can easily be taken to Australia as well (note that the cheaper prepay-only phones need to be unlocked to do this – plus the slightly more expensive phones are much nicer to use). Telecom phones are NZ only and are programmed by the dealer.

Mobile phone customers have a choice between being on a plan or signing up for a prepay account. Vodafone requires residency to have a plan but Telecom does not. We've found that the Vodafone prepay account was the best choice for us and we rarely spend more than \$50 NZD per month. We use a land line with the Yabba calling card for all international calls.

### Land Lines

Telecom NZ and Telstra Clear can provide a land line to your slip if the marina allows the installation. Install charges are variable but will likely be a minimum of \$250 for cable and connectors. Our install cost \$450. Some marinas may offer you a phone line hooked up to their trunk for a fixed fee each month – note that you'll pay business rates for phone calls.

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## Internet

There are three primary choices for personal Internet access:

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### **Dial-Up**

Dial-up connections are possible throughout NZ and connection speeds are often above 24kbs even in the most remote locations. See the telephone section for installation. Popular providers include [Xtra](#) (Telecom), [Telstra Clear](#), and [iHug](#). All are less than \$30/month NZD for unlimited access.

### **ADSL**

ADSL is available in many areas and through Telecom is known as JetStream. A version of JetStream named JetStart is limited to 128kbs and is provided for a fixed monthly fee and up to 5gb of international traffic. This is a cost-effective addition if you also have a phone line installed but does require the purchase of an ADSL modem. Our ADSL account through Xtra also enables us to do dial-up for a low hourly charge or fixed monthly fee when we are traveling.

### **Wireless**

In the Auckland area, several wireless providers are providing varying services. This service is evolving very quickly and rates are falling with competition but still expensive in 2002. If this is an option that may be suitable to you, research on the Web will provide better answers than we can provide in this guide. Note that some marinas are also offering a Wi-Fi connection to customers.

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## Boat work

New Zealand has become widely known as a producer of high-quality mega yachts in recent years. This quality extends to the boat yards as well, but as can happen anywhere, there are good suppliers and not-so-good suppliers. A good reference for the marine industry is at <http://www.marex.org.nz/>.

### Labor

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In general, labor costs tend to be lower outside of Auckland but so does the availability of good people. Tauranga seems to have the reputation for the most reasonable costs, Gulf Harbor has an excellent paint shed, and Half Moon Bay and Westpark are good low-key haul-out locations near Auckland.

The key to finding good help, if you want it, is through word of mouth. The challenge is finding good help that isn't booked out for 3-6 months already. We're having canvas and upholstery work done after a long wait and the work is progressing slowly but we are happy with the results.

### Parts

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Unlike our hometown of Seattle where we could find virtually everything we needed within one or two chandleries, finding boat parts in Auckland is more like a treasure hunt. There are small consumer stores where the prices are higher and the selection is limited to what you might find in a small West Marine. But it seems that most gear we're looking for is spread out in specialized stores within a 50km circle.

Selection of yachting gear is also more limited. Sometimes this is just because popular US brands would be unreasonably priced for the local market. Items such as paint are limited in supply due to government regulations and permits. For example, Pettit Trinidad which is a top-ranked bottom paint in the US is not approved for distribution within New Zealand at the moment (note that a local company is working on approval and it should be available by early 2003).

Local parts are reasonably priced, but are often not a bargain. Prices for imported parts tend to be 5-30% higher than prices we would pay in the US. We've found that if we don't mind waiting for the shipping, it's often cheaper to buy from a US source and have the items sent down. Even with postage, most items still turn out to be less expensive. Shipping time is usually 3-10 days, even for postal mail. Ordering from West Marine online has been turnkey and shipping is less expensive through them than we've found elsewhere.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) of 12.5% is payable on all items in NZ. Overseas visitors can have this exempted for gear that is considered to be permanent yacht equipment that will be exported with the yacht. Interpretation of this exemption is not uniform. Generally, most marine stores will be liberal on the interpretation and you simply provide them with a copy of the Customs form you get when you check into the country. We've had a couple of marine suppliers not provide us with this exemption (e.g. for engine belts/impellers). Non-marine retailers (e.g. selling TVs) will most likely not know about this form but good on ya' if you can talk your way out of the tax. Note that tax is always charged on the labor.

For imported items, sometimes our packages come through Customs with no issues. All postal mail packages have come through easily. Some Fed-Ex, DHL, or UPS packages have required us to send Customs a copy of our import permit but there doesn't seem to be any reasoning in when or why. In all cases, we have not had to pay GST – even on clothes.

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## Cars and Driving

It seems that most cruisers buy a car within a short time of arriving in New Zealand. This enables the crew to explore the country and also facilitates practical chores like shopping. Roads in NZ are of generally good quality but outside of the motorway around Auckland, are two-lane highways.

### Selecting and Buying a Car

Five to ten year old cars are relatively less expensive than similar cars in the US and carry the benefit of having much less mileage. Many are Asian imports that have been driven for less than 60-90k kilometers before being imported to New Zealand. When selecting a car, note the difference between a first-time import, an import that has been previously registered, and a NZ new car.

First-time imports have been thoroughly inspected by the government and inadequate equipment repaired or replaced. The vehicle still needs to pass a Warrant of Fitness (WOF) though. If buying from a dealer, ensure they are responsible for any repairs still required. At auctions, you are responsible for these repairs.

Both an import that has been previously registered and a NZ new car need to have a current WOF as a condition of sale. The WOF is updated at least every six months and should be less than 30 days old when you buy a car from either a dealer or private party.

Radios in imported cars usually require a band expander. This \$20-40 NZD item changes the incoming frequencies to a range that is appropriate for the NZ market. This usually results in the need to add between 10.0 and 12.5 to the FM signal (so 88.0 on the display receives 98.0 or so). NZ new cars will have a radio made for the European market. Note that band expanders for US radios are available but are prohibitively expensive for average radios.

A good reference for buying cars is at <http://xtra.autopoint.co.nz/>. With the absence of a standardized blue book, use this site to gauge the relative price of a car you are interested in by looking at the private party ads. This site lets you search both dealer and private ads.

### Car Fairs and Auctions

Car fairs are held every Sunday in the Auckland area and provide a chance for private sellers to display and sell their car at a fair price. Learn more at <http://www.carfair.co.nz/>.

Auctions seem to be a popular way for cruisers to find a cheap car fast. Turners Auctions (<http://www.turners.co.nz/>) are perhaps the most widely known but there are other auction houses as well such as [www.hammerauctions.co.nz](http://www.hammerauctions.co.nz). We attended a few auctions and there were certainly some good deals, especially when one considers the exchange rate of the US dollar or the pound. It's buyer beware and be sure to buy and read the Turner's guide to auctions (if you go to Turners) if you consider going this route. Even though we didn't buy, it was a fun way to spend the afternoon (at least the first time).

### Insurance

Insurance is not required in New Zealand. Insurance is primarily for the car, though full-coverage policies also often include third-party liability insurance. The price for insurance is absurdly inexpensive compared to what we were used to paying in the US so if you're not sure you want to carry it, at least price it out first.

When pricing a policy, agents can give you either a tourist policy for the time you intend to use the car or a normal policy. Our six-month tourist rate came to more than \$1,000 NZD. The annual regular rate was \$525. We were essentially told to say that you wanted a quote for an annual contract as they don't require any documentation of how long you plan to stay.

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Our policy is through the Automobile Association of New Zealand who can be contacted at [www.nzaa.co.nz](http://www.nzaa.co.nz). Policies are also available through banks and regular insurance agents. One that is advertised on TV a lot is [www.ami.co.nz](http://www.ami.co.nz).

## **Driver Licensing**

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There is no need to acquire a NZ driver license for stays of less than twelve months. Thereafter, you should apply for a local driver license according to local law. For current license holders, this means payment of a fee and passing the theory test. Study books are available in any major bookstore or directly from AA.

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## Touring

### Guide books

Lonely Planet gets two thumbs up for an excellent job of being an all-in-one book. It misses some things, but you'll discover these easily enough through tourist brochures wherever you go. Frommer's does a slightly better job with accommodation but poor in practically everything else.

### Maps

The two primary mapping companies that publish comprehensive map books are Wises and Kiwi Maps. We purchased the Kiwi Map book for all of New Zealand and the Wises for Auckland. We've developed a taste for Wises over time, but both are good. Online maps are available at [www.wises.co.nz](http://www.wises.co.nz) if you need a quick picture or driving directions.

### Ferries

Fullers operates most of the Auckland ferries and a timetable can be found at <http://www.fullers.co.nz/timetables/>. Multiple-trip punch card passes can be purchased for a discount. All tickets for Auckland ferries are processed at the Auckland terminal, so if you are boarding from any other location you may pay in Auckland.

When traveling by car between north and south island, refer to <http://www.interislandline.co.nz/> for booking information. The InterIslander service is less expensive. The Lynx is a faster ferry but due to speed restrictions in the channel leading to Picton is only approximately 30-40 minutes faster. The sooner you book your tickets, the cheaper the rates – up to 50% off the standard fares with a steadily declining discount.

### Airfare

Prices for Air New Zealand fares within New Zealand are inexpensive and getting cheaper at the time of this writing. If travel or boat work gets in the way of visiting some places, consider a short flight to a particular city for a week or two. You'll save driving time and gain flexibility. Note the Kiwi term for round trip tickets for anything is a *return ticket*.

### Lodging

Lodging prices are generally quite reasonable when compared to US or European options. Those on a tight budget will find backpacker dorm rooms as cheap as \$8/night, and many backpackers have private rooms with ensuite bathrooms for very reasonable rates. Standard motel rooms usually average between \$70-110/night outside of the main cities.

While Lonely Planet and Frommer's do a good job of pointing out the best accommodation options, the AA lodging guide ([www.nzaa.co.nz](http://www.nzaa.co.nz)) is the most comprehensive. This is updated each year and available for purchase from any AA office (or complementary at some hotels). AA also has a Touring Guide which is helpful

### “Don't Miss” List

As we learned across the Pacific, every cruiser has a unique idea of a perfect anchorage or of the best island to visit. We won't bore you with our view of the perfect activities to do while in New Zealand, but wanted to share some of our favorites:

- **Small shops:** Stopping in the small towns to visit the craft shops has convinced us that this is where you can find the best art and jewelry. We've found some really unique pieces and often the artist is behind the counter. Surprises abound!
- **Cabbage Tree:** Pahia is a nice town in the Bay of Islands and was the first town we visited in New Zealand. The Cabbage Tree store (both!) has been our favorite tourist

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shop in all of New Zealand with top quality stuff. Great Christmas shopping store. While you're in Pahia, stop by and say hi to Des and check out the radio setup he uses to run Russell Radio.

- **Agrodome:** Perhaps one of the most touristy activities we've done was also one of the most professional and educational. The Agrodome in Rotorua showed off all aspects of rural NZ farming. Our favorite part of the show was the sheep dog demonstration.
- **Te Papa and the Auckland War Memorial Museum:** These two museums are worth a day each. The Auckland museum has an extensive display of both Maori art and artifacts from across the Pacific.
- **Penguins:** We can't get enough of them! Oamaru has the little blue penguins and December is the best time to go to see lots of them. The later you go, the less you will see, but don't skip it even if you only see a few. Dunedin's Penguin Place was a well-run organization and the commentary and close viewing was spectacular. December is also a good time to visit there.
- **Glaciers:** After three tries, we have yet to be on the west coast of the south island with clear skies. We're told that a helicopter trip up to the ice caves is spectacular during clear skies and are hoping for a visit before we leave.
- **Bungy!:** Can you come to New Zealand and not bungy? Ok, many of you can but we couldn't – even Cathy who is not keen on heights. Queenstown is worth the wait and even the wimpiest of bungy jumps there is full of thrills set in a spectacular location. There are also lots of other adventure activities for the whole family.
- **Kaikoura:** Just north of Christchurch, this sleepy tourist community is known for their wildlife adventures. Swim with dolphins and seals, view whales, or take a walk to the seal colony. Lots of art galleries are around and on a clear day, the view from the water tower is amazing.
- **Doubtful Sound overnight cruise:** 24 hours on a small ship designed for less than 70 passengers. More remote than Milford Sound and plenty of chance to interact with nature without the buzz of helicopters and tour boats.

## **Kiwi-isms**

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These are a few American English and Kiwi translations which might help. Some of these you'll find in Australia, the UK and Canada as well, but a few are uniquely Kiwi.

<u>American English</u>	<u>Kiwi</u>
Round Trip Ticket	Return ticket
Gas	Petrol
Propane	Gas
Dinner	Tea (sometimes used when dining at a person's home)
Tea	A cuppa
Fillet Mignon	Eye Fillet (pronounce the final t)
Lobster	Crayfish
Local clams	Pipis
French Fries	Chips
Chips	Crisps

Cookies	Biscuits or bickies
Candy	Lollies
Catsup	Tomato sauce (we don't like it as much, we've switched to sweat chili sauce for chips –give it a try)
Bell pepper	Capsicum
Sweet potato	Kumara
Romaine lettuce	Cos
Café au lait (more or less)	Flat white
Black coffee	Long black
Appetizer or starter	Entrée
Entrée	Main
Flip flops	Jandels
Girls basketball	Netball
American Football	Grid Iron
Lots	Heaps
Good for you	Good on ya
Sweet, or great	Sweet as
No problem	Good as or no worries
No sweat	Easy As
Cooler	Chilly bin
Zee	Zed
Parking lot	Car park
Thanks	Ta
Hood	Bonnet
Trunk	Boot
Flashlight	Torch
Pharmacist	Chemist
Mini-mart	Dairy
To go or take out (food)	Takeaway
Bangs (referencing a haircut)	Fringe
Napkin	Serviette
Diaper	Nappy
Two consecutive weeks	Fortnight
Sweater	Jumper
Freeway	Motorway
Auto body shop	Panel Beater
Slip (in the marina)	Berth

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Buoy	Buoy (pronounced Boy)
Power boat	Launch
Sailboat	Yacht

## **Shopping and eating out**

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### Sizes:

Men's clothing sizes tend to run large at many stores

Women's clothing sizes tend to be one smaller in NZ. So if you wear a size 8 in the US, you will probably be a 10 NZ. Many clothes list three sizes in the label, NZ, USA, and AUS (Australian)

Shoes sizes are the same as the US

### Tipping:

We are always in a quandary and do not want to offend regarding tipping. We have asked many of our Kiwi friends, and they have told us you do not tip. On the very rare occasions that you do, it is waitpersons in restaurants only and 10% is plenty. Don't worry about the person that cuts your hair, taxi drivers etc. Our Kiwi friends say service employees may expect tipping from American's but they don't do it. This is made evident when you see a bill from a restaurant in a tourist area where a tip line as been added. If you eat at a similar restaurant in a small town in New Zealand, there is rarely a line for a tip.

You also will usually have to ask for your bill and often pay at the counter, even in fairly nice restaurants. If you're unsure, just ask your waitperson.

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## More Questions

If we haven't answered something that you're dying to know, please shoot us an email at [ken@svfelicity.com](mailto:ken@svfelicity.com) or [cathy@svfelicity.com](mailto:cathy@svfelicity.com) and we'll answer as quickly as possible. Likewise, if there are things we've missed that would help out future cruisers, please point those out to us and we'll add them to this guide. Your comments – both good and constructive – are much appreciated.

Cheers!