

# International Student Support Service

## *Cultural Tips about Life in New Zealand*

### Kiwi slang and catchphrases

- "Bring a plate" = bring a plate WITH food on it (i.e. potluck)
- "Choice!" = cool/ great
- "Cheers" = thank you and goodbye
- "chook" = chicken
- "crook" = sick
- "Hi, how are you?" = hello (Note: you are usually not expected to reply so don't get offended if they walk on by)
- "Sweet as" = good (they are not complimenting your buttocks)
- "Taihoa" = wait/ slow down
- "tea" = the drink or could also mean dinner time
- "traditional Kiwi meal" = meat with potatoes and vegetables
- "Whakapapa" = a ski resort in North Island (they are not swearing at you)
- "Your eyes are bigger than your puku" = you took more than you can eat (puku = stomach)

### The things Kiwis do

- They walk barefooted (without shoes) around town but wear shoes indoors!
- They don't rinse their cutlery after scrubbing it in hot water filled with soap. (Note: Detergents are biodegradable in New Zealand. You won't die from them!)
- They brush their teeth AFTER breakfast.
- Space and privacy are important to most Kiwis.

### NZ experiences seen through the eyes of students from overseas

- "Op-shopping (shopping in second hand stores) is a fun and cheap way of shopping."
- "Most Kiwis are shy and prefer it if you approach them first."
- "Let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no'. Western culture is a verbal culture so Kiwis find it hard to read body languages prevalent in non-western cultures."
- "Don't bother using an umbrella in Wellington. You'll spend 80% of your time trying to unflip it!"
- "At home 'food' means a full feast. Here it can mean anything from snacks to a full meal."
- "If Kiwis invite you to their home or to a cafe, they don't necessarily provide all the food or pay the bill for everyone."

### Tips about everyday Kiwi life

- Asking questions in tutorials is a good way to learn
- Give someone a chocolate fish (marshmallow covered in chocolate) as a token of your appreciation
- The 21st birthday is celebrated as a big event by Kiwis
- When crossing the road, look right, then left, then right again
- Vegemite or marmite does NOT taste like chocolate!!!
- Most banks have free accounts for tertiary students.
- Sniffing is impolite but it's ok to blow your nose into a handkerchief or tissue.
- Weather and sports are safe topics to discuss if you don't know a person.
- Drinking huge amounts of alcohol is common in New Zealand but don't feel pressured to join in.

(Material gratefully sourced from the Victoria University of Wellington website)

