

## What are the cultural do's and don'ts in New Zealand?

Sarah Ryder - 2016-02-19 - [Living in New Zealand](#)

- In New Zealand it is very good manners to say, "Thank you," when someone does something for you, and to say, "Please," when you ask for something.
- It is better to say "Thank you," rather than just nod your head or a smile.
- If you have done something wrong by accident, a simple, "I'm sorry," followed by an explanation often clears up any misunderstanding or bad feelings.
- Some, but not all, New Zealanders shake hands when they are first introduced. Keep your handshake short and firm.
- Try to look at the person when you are talking to them. This might be very difficult for you at first but in New Zealand it is considered rude not to look at the person when you are talking with them.
- An arm-length distance from the other person is best when you have a conversation. In New Zealand this is considered the normal distance to respect a person's personal space.
- Speak politely to shopkeepers. New Zealanders do not usually negotiate the price of an item unless the item is very valuable or they are buying a lot of something.
- Return anything that you have borrowed clean and as soon as possible. It is a good idea when you are borrowing something to ask, "How long can I borrow this for?" or "When would you like it back?"
- When someone says "No", the person means "No". Please accept the person's decision when they say no.
- New Zealanders can speak very fast. If people are speaking too quickly just ask them to "Please slow down".
- If you're not sure of anything you can ask. New Zealanders are generally very helpful.

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