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Rates of Travel to New Zealand by Country of Residence: 2009

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Part of the series: International Travel and Migration Articles

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Email: info@stats.govt.nz
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Introduction

Overseas visitors from over 200 countries arrived in New Zealand in the year ended June 2009. Australia was the leading source country, contributing 1.0 million of the 2.4 million total visitor arrivals. By contrast, about 170 countries contributed fewer than 500 visitors.

There are many factors affecting the number of visitors from each country, one being population size. This article examines the rate of travel to New Zealand by country, when adjusted for the population of each source country. This enables a clearer picture of other factors affecting travel, such as time and cost, and business and migrant links with New Zealand.

The analysis is extended within some source countries. For Australia, the rate of travel to New Zealand is examined by state and territory. Subnational analysis is also included for China, Japan, the United States, and Canada.

Calculating rates of travel to New Zealand

For most countries, the 2009 population estimate from the Population Division of the United Nations was used for the analysis. Subnational populations, and national populations for a small number of countries, were sourced from the national statistics office of the respective country. Sources are detailed in the 'Data Sources' section of this report.

Visitor arrivals from each country or subnational area of residence in the year ended June 2009 were divided by the population, to determine the rate of travel to New Zealand after adjusting for population size. Rates are stated in this report as the number of visits per 1,000 residents.

As some people may make more than one trip to New Zealand within a year, the rate does not necessarily equate to the proportion of the population who visited New Zealand.

Most analysis in this article is limited to the 71 countries which contributed 500 or more visitor arrivals in the June 2009 year. Rates for countries contributing fewer visitors tend to either be very low (for countries with large populations) or variable from year-to-year (for countries with small populations).

Factors influencing rates of travel

In addition to population size, there are many factors likely to influence the rate of travel to New Zealand. Effects of the time and cost of travel may be identifiable by the distance from New Zealand. Direct air routes may also be a factor, with increased time and cost if additional air or ground travel is required to connect with an international flight to New Zealand.

While a holiday was the main travel purpose for about half of visitors in the June 2009 year, another one-third arrived to visit friends and relatives, and one-in-ten arrived for business. Countries with strong migrant and business links to New Zealand may have higher rates of travel.

The economic standing of each country, common language, and immigration requirements (as citizens of some countries can visit New Zealand without obtaining a travel visa before arrival) are among other factors which could influence the rate of travel to New Zealand.

Many of the factors are related. For example, New Zealand has strong migrant and business ties with Australia and countries in the Pacific, largely because of their close proximity.

Overall rate of travel to New Zealand

There were 2.4 million visitor arrivals into New Zealand in the June 2009 year, and there were approximately 6.8 billion people in the world. This equates to about 0.35 visits to New Zealand for every 1,000 people.

Rates of travel from the top source countries

Eight countries contributed over three-quarters of all visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the June 2009 year. Australia was the leading source of visitor arrivals, but had the smallest population of these eight countries. This was reflected in the rate of travel to New Zealand, which at 47 visits per 1,000 residents was significantly above the rates from the other top sources.

Although less than one-tenth of Australia's, the rate from the United Kingdom (4 per 1,000) was also well ahead of the other top sources, despite its distance from New Zealand.

China had easily the lowest rate of travel of the top source countries, with fewer than 0.1 visits per 1,000 residents. However, being the world's most populous country, it was still the fourth highest source of visitor arrivals. Chinese were almost 600 times less likely to visit New Zealand than Australians.

Table 1

Rate of Travel to New Zealand Top eight source countries Year ended June 2009

Country of residence	Visitor arrivals	Population (000s)	Arrivals per 1,000 people
Australia	1,007,860	21,644	46.6
United Kingdom ⁽¹⁾	262,378	61,796	4.2
United States of America	196,787	314,659	0.6
China, People's Republic of	107,541	1,328,020	0.1
Japan	88,474	127,156	0.7
Germany	62,837	82,167	0.8
Korea, Republic of	61,733	48,333	1.3
Canada	49,946	33,573	1.5

(1) Includes Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

Rates of travel by country

Of countries which contributed 500 or more visitor arrivals in the June 2009 year, the 12 with the highest rates of travel to New Zealand were all in Oceania. Because of the clear differences in rates between regions, the rates by country are analysed region-by-region below.

Oceania

Residents of Niue had the highest rate of travel to New Zealand in 2009. The 2,000 visitor arrivals from Niue outnumbered the population of just 1,500 (equating to approximately 1,400 trips to New Zealand per 1,000 residents). The Cook Islands had the second highest rate of travel to New Zealand, with almost 600 visits per 1,000 residents.

Both of these countries are relatively close (within a four hour flight from Auckland), and many Niueans and Cook Islanders live in New Zealand. In fact, the Niuean ethnic population in New Zealand (about 22,000 at the 2006 Census) far outnumbers the population of Niue. Similarly, Cook Islands Maori living in New Zealand (58,000) number almost three times the population of the Cook Islands (20,000). This

was reflected in 'visiting friends and relatives' being the most common travel purpose from both countries. Rates of travel for a holiday or for business purposes were also high.

Norfolk Island, which is only a two hour flight from Auckland, had the third highest rate of travel to New Zealand (about 500 visits per 1,000 residents). It had the highest rate of business travel and the second highest rate of holiday travel, but its residents were less likely to visit friends and relatives in New Zealand than residents of Niue and the Cook Islands.

The next highest rates of travel to New Zealand were from Tonga (128 per 1,000) and Samoa (106), which also have strong migrant links with New Zealand. Over half of travel from these countries was to visit friends and relatives. By contrast, French Polynesia and New Caledonia had much lower rates of travel to visit friends and relatives, but much higher rates of holiday travel.

Table 2

Rate of Travel to New Zealand
From countries in Oceania⁽¹⁾
Year ended June 2009

Country of residence	Visitor arrivals	Population (000s)	Arrivals per 1,000 people			
			Total all purposes ⁽²⁾	Holiday	Visiting friends and relatives	Business
Niue	2,044	1	1,384	161	540	15
Cook Islands	11,473	20	579	75	305	34
Norfolk Island	928	2	498	147	223	55
Tonga	13,355	104	128	13	70	4
Samoa	19,009	179	106	10	59	5
French Polynesia	18,793	269	70	54	5	1
New Caledonia	14,264	250	57	44	4	1
Australia	1,007,860	21,644	47	19	18	7
Fiji	24,805	849	29	4	18	2
Samoa, American	1,537	67	23	4	11	2
Vanuatu	4,365	240	18	2	3	3
Kiribati	636	98	6	0	3	1
Solomon Islands	1,074	523	2	0	0	0
Papua New Guinea	1,652	6,732	0	0	0	0

(1) Only countries contributing 500 or more visitor arrivals in the year ended June 2009 are shown.

(2) Includes the purpose categories of education, conferences and conventions, other, and not stated.

Asia

Singapore, with 6 trips per 1,000 residents, had the highest rate of travel to New Zealand of all countries outside Oceania. This was twice the next highest rate in Asia, which was 3 visits per 1,000 residents from Brunei and Hong Kong. Even this was high compared with almost all other countries outside Oceania. Singapore, Brunei, and Hong Kong have among Asia's highest per capita incomes (World Bank, 2009), and all have direct flights to New Zealand.

Within Asia, Korea had the next highest rate of travel to New Zealand in 2009. However, the 61,700 visitor arrivals from Korea were less than half the June year peak of 129,400 visitor arrivals from that country in 1997. Subsequently, the rate of travel to New Zealand was 1.3 trips per 1,000 residents in 2009, compared with 2.8 per 1,000 in 1997. A large decrease in visitor arrivals has also been recorded from Taiwan, reflected in its rate falling from 2.9 in 1995 to 0.7 in 2009. The rates during the peak in travel from Korea and Taiwan were similar to the 2009 rates from Brunei and Hong Kong.

Japan is another country which contributed far fewer visitors in 2009 than in previous years. During the peak in visitors from Japan in the June 2003 year, the rate of travel to New Zealand was 1.3 trips per 1,000 residents. In 2009, this rate had almost halved to 0.7.

Visitor arrivals from China increased from just 2,900 in 1992 to 123,800 in 2008, before easing to 107,500 in 2009. Despite the rapid increase, the 2009 figure still equated to fewer than 0.1 trips to New Zealand per 1,000 residents. If the rate of travel was equal to nearby Japan (0.7), visitor arrivals from China would have numbered over 900,000. If equal to Korea (1.3), the figure would have been 1.7 million.

Table 3

Rate of Travel to New Zealand

From countries in Asia⁽¹⁾

Year ended June 2009

Country of residence	Visitor arrivals	Population (000s)	Arrivals per 1,000 people
Singapore	29,026	4,737	6.1
Brunei Darussalam	1,293	400	3.2
Hong Kong (SAR)	21,754	7,022	3.1
Korea, Republic of	61,733	48,333	1.3
Taiwan	16,768	23,069	0.7
Malaysia	19,277	27,468	0.7
Japan	88,474	127,156	0.7
Thailand	19,365	67,764	0.3
Philippines	7,996	91,983	0.1
China, People's Republic of	107,541	1,328,020	0.1
Sri Lanka	1,211	20,238	0.1
Cambodia	557	14,805	0.0
Indonesia	8,209	229,965	0.0
Viet Nam	2,110	88,069	0.0
India	24,014	1,198,003	0.0
Pakistan	588	180,808	0.0

(1) Only countries contributing 500 or more visitor arrivals in the year ended June 2009 are shown.

Note: SAR – Special Administrative Region

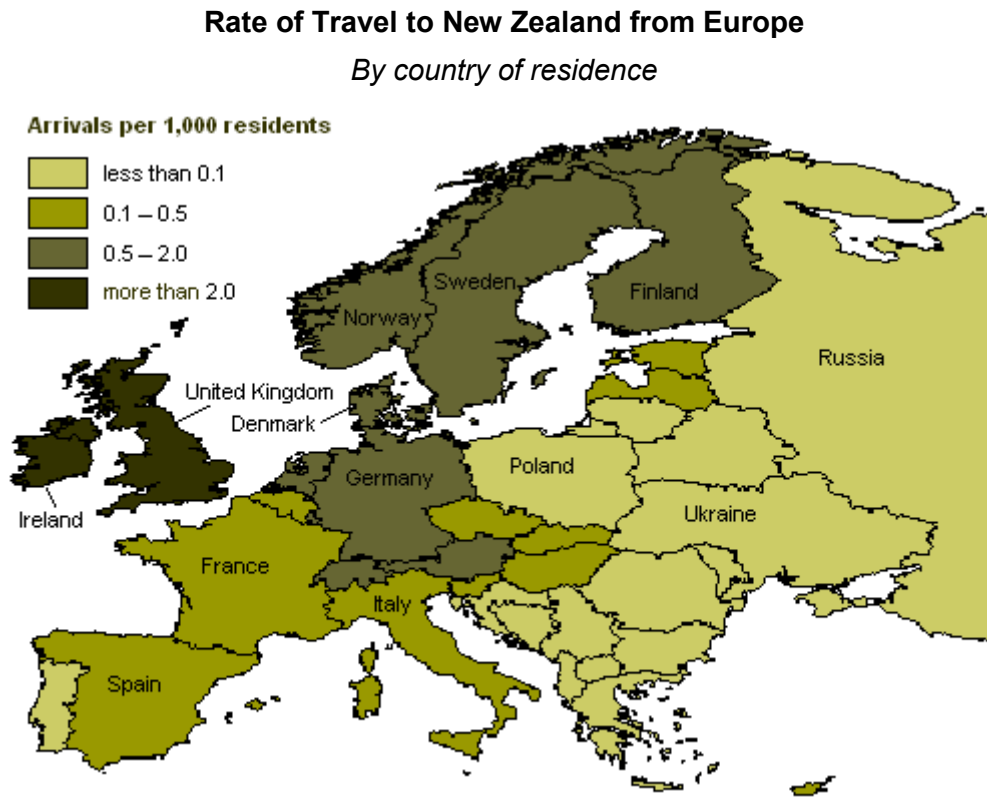
Europe

Ireland (4.3 per 1,000) and the United Kingdom (4.2) had among the highest rates of travel to New Zealand outside of Oceania. This probably reflects the historical ties between New Zealand and these countries. The United Kingdom continues to be a leading source of immigrants to New Zealand, and a leading destination of emigrants from New Zealand.

Scandinavian countries had relatively high rates for Europe. These included Denmark (1.9), Sweden (1.2), Norway (0.8), and Finland (0.7). Similar rates were recorded from Switzerland (1.9), the Netherlands (1.5), Austria, and Germany (each 0.8). Despite the longer distance, these compared well with rates of travel from countries in Asia and the Americas.

Interestingly, the rates of travel from France (0.4), Spain (0.2), and Italy (0.1) were relatively low. In fact, they were similar to rates from Eastern European countries, which were led by Estonia (0.4), the Czech Republic, and Slovenia (each 0.3).

Figure 1



The Americas

There were 1.5 visitor arrivals from Canada for every 1,000 residents. This was more than double the rate of travel from its neighbour the United States (0.6).

Table 4

Rate of Travel to New Zealand
From countries in the Americas⁽¹⁾
Year ended June 2009

Country of residence	Visitor arrivals	Population (000s)	Arrivals per 1,000 people
Canada	49,946	33,573	1.5
United States of America	196,787	314,659	0.6
Chile	4,439	16,970	0.3
Uruguay	822	3,361	0.2
Argentina	6,155	40,276	0.2
Brazil	11,065	193,734	0.1
Mexico	2,985	109,610	0.0
Colombia	805	45,660	0.0

(1) Only countries contributing 500 or more visitor arrivals in the year ended June 2009 are shown.

Central and South American countries had lower rates of travel to New Zealand, the highest being from Chile (0.3), Argentina, and neighbouring Uruguay (each 0.2). There are direct flights to New Zealand from both Chile and Argentina.

Africa and the Middle East

Almost all countries in Africa contributed fewer than 0.1 visits to New Zealand per 1,000 residents. The exception was South Africa (0.5 visits for every 1,000 residents), which has migrant and sporting ties with New Zealand. Populous countries such as Nigeria (155 million people), Egypt, Ethiopia (each 83 million), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (66 million) all contributed fewer than 500 visitor arrivals in the June 2009 year.

Rates from the Middle East tended to be higher, led by the United Arab Emirates which contributed 1.4 visitors per 1,000 residents. Almost one-third of visitors from this country were born in New Zealand. In fact, only 13 percent of visitors from the United Arab Emirates had been born there, reflecting its high expatriate population. Another influence on the rate of travel from the United Arab Emirates could be the four daily flights between Dubai and New Zealand.

Table 5

Rate of Travel to New Zealand
From countries in Africa and the Middle East⁽¹⁾
Year ended June 2009

Country of residence	Visitor arrivals	Population (000s)	Arrivals per 1,000 people
United Arab Emirates	6,574	4,599	1.4
Israel	6,320	7,170	0.9
Qatar	1,035	1,409	0.7
Bahrain	514	791	0.6
South Africa	23,122	50,110	0.5
Oman	721	2,845	0.3
Saudi Arabia	4,075	25,721	0.2
Turkey	946	74,816	0.0

(1) Only countries contributing 500 or more visitor arrivals in the year ended June 2009 are shown.

Rates by state or province

Statistics NZ captures the state or province of residence for some of New Zealand's main visitor source countries. Using subnational populations from the national statistical organisations of each country, rates have been calculated within Australia, China, Japan, the United States, and Canada.

Australia

Within Australia, the east coast states – which are closest to New Zealand – had the highest rates of travel to New Zealand. These were led by Queensland (62 arrivals per 1,000 residents), which in particular had a high rate of travel to visit friends and relatives. New Zealand-born accounted for 37 percent of visitor arrivals from Queensland, the highest proportion of any Australian state or territory.

Interestingly, South Australia (20 per 1,000) had the lowest rate of travel to New Zealand, despite being closer than Western Australia and the Northern Territory. There are also direct air services between New Zealand and South Australia (Auckland – Adelaide), whereas there are no direct services between New Zealand and the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory. South Australia contributed the lowest proportion of New Zealand-born visitors (14 percent), and this was reflected in it having the lowest rate of travel to visit friends and relatives. It also had the second lowest rate of holiday travel, after the Northern Territory.

The rates of travel from Western Australia for a holiday or to visit friends and relatives were similar to those from Victoria, despite a nearly eight-hour flight from Perth compared with a four-hour flight from Melbourne. However, there was a relatively low rate of business travel from Western Australia.

Table 6

Rate of Travel to New Zealand
By Australian state and territory
Year ended June 2009

State or territory of residence	Visitor arrivals	Population (000s)	Arrivals per 1,000 people			
			Total all purposes ⁽¹⁾	Holiday	Visiting friends and relatives	Business
Queensland	267,840	4,350	62	24	28	5
New South Wales	362,411	7,041	51	20	18	9
Australian Capital Territory	16,432	348	47	23	15	5
Victoria	220,242	5,365	41	16	14	8
Western Australia	72,374	2,204	33	14	14	2
Tasmania	11,553	500	23	12	7	3
Northern Territory	4,998	222	23	8	11	1
South Australia	32,989	1,612	20	10	5	3
Australia unspecified	19,021	...	...	...	...	...

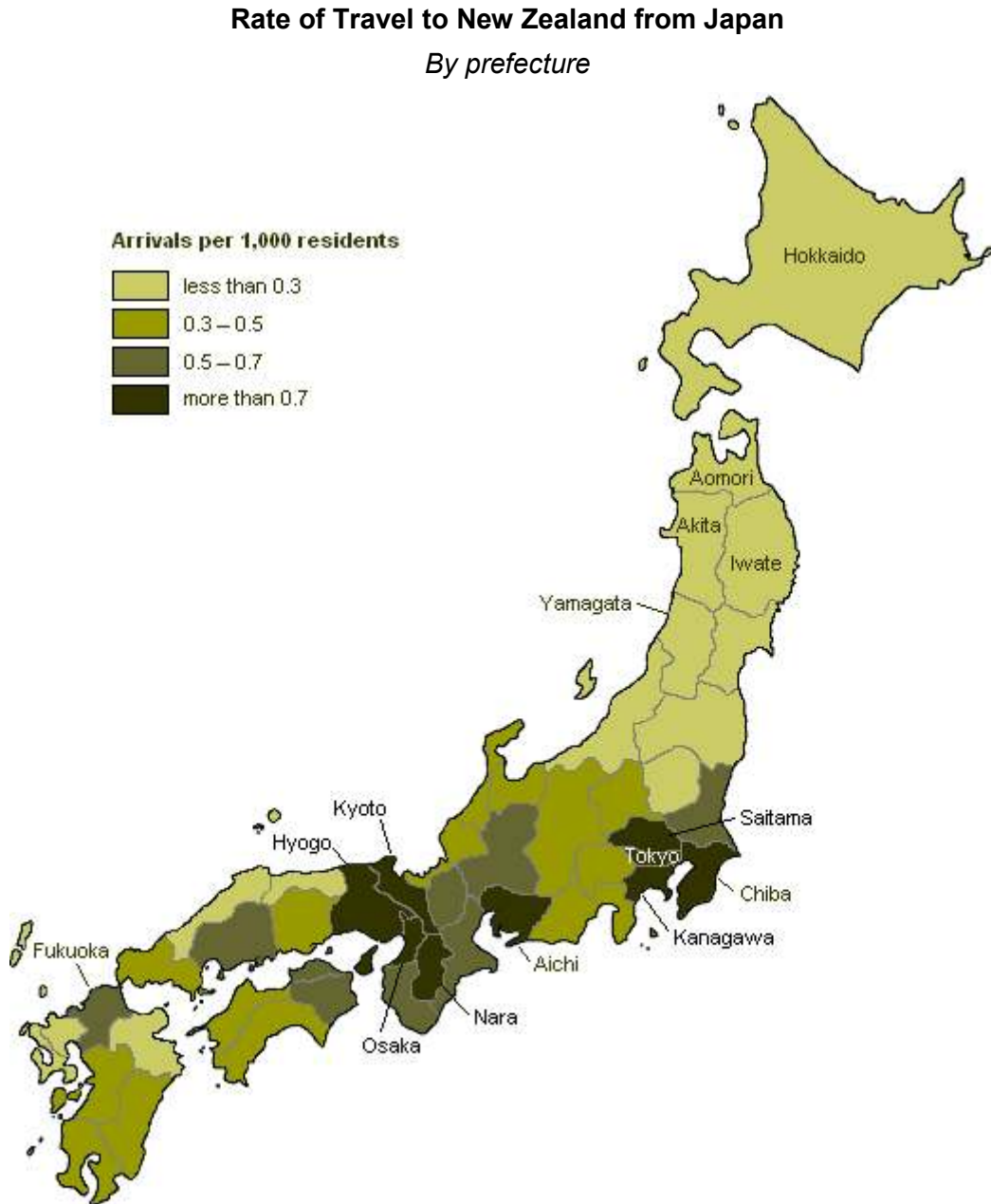
(1) Includes the purpose categories of education, conferences and conventions, other, and not stated.

Japan

Within Japan, the highest rates of travel to New Zealand were in and around the major cities of Tokyo and Osaka (which both have direct air services to New Zealand). Tokyo had the highest rate of travel, with 1.3 visits per 1,000 residents in the June 2009 year. Tokyo's neighbouring prefectures include Kanagawa, Chiba (each 0.9), and Saitama (0.7). Osaka contributed 0.8 visits per 1,000 residents, similar to the nearby prefectures of Nara (1.0), Hyogo, and Kyoto (each 0.9), all in the Kansai region.

Among the prefectures with the lowest rates of travel to New Zealand were those in the north of the island of Honshu, including Iwate, Akita, Aomori, and Yamagata (each 0.1). The most remote Japanese prefectures, Okinawa and Hokkaido, had rates of 0.4 and 0.3, respectively.

Figure 2



People's Republic of China

Only two-thirds of visitor arrivals from China stated a province of residence. Because of this, the rates presented in this section will be understated, and the level of understatement may vary by area. They should therefore be used with caution.

Beijing (0.8 arrivals per 1,000 residents) and Shanghai (0.7 per 1,000) had significantly higher rates of travel to New Zealand than other areas in China. Without accounting for the likely understatement, rates from these municipalities were comparable with the rate of travel to New Zealand from the countries of Germany (0.8) and Japan (0.7). Beijing and Shanghai have the highest average incomes within China (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2009), are highly urbanised, and have direct flights to New Zealand (and to Australia, which many Chinese visit in conjunction with New Zealand).

The next highest rates of travel were from the provinces of Zhejiang – which neighbours Shanghai – and Guangdong. These provinces also have relatively high average incomes. Guangdong province includes the major cities of Guangzhou and Shenzhen, and borders Hong Kong, from where there are numerous daily flights to New Zealand.

Table 7

Rate of Travel to New Zealand
From selected Chinese provinces
Year ended June 2009

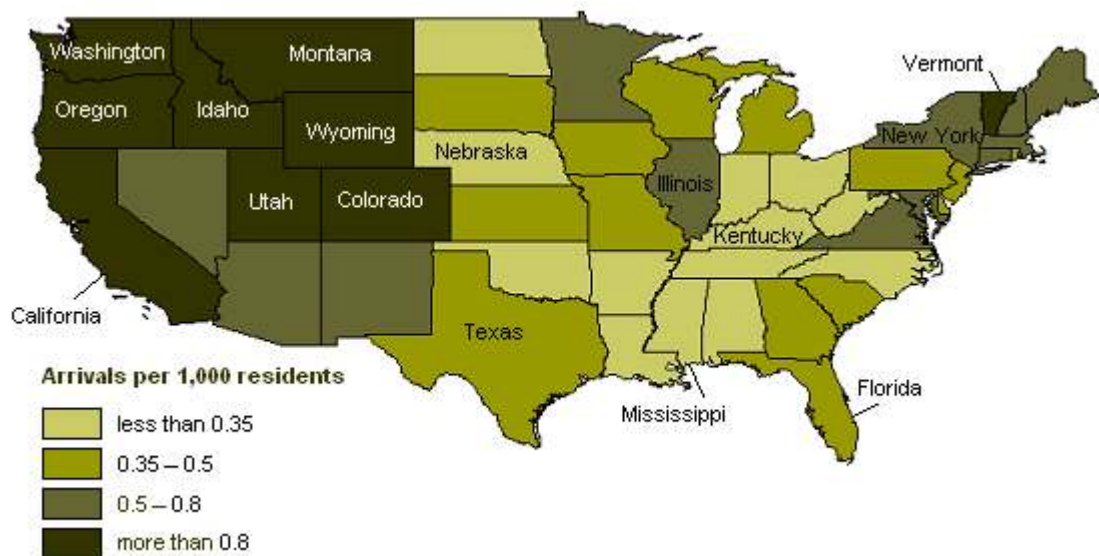
Province of residence	Visitor arrivals	Population (000s)	Arrivals per 1,000 people
Beijing	12,845	1,633	0.8
Shanghai	13,335	1,858	0.7
Zhejiang	5,639	5,060	0.1
Guangdong	10,254	9,449	0.1
Liaoning	3,249	4,298	0.1
Tianjin	797	1,115	0.1
Jiangsu	4,106	7,625	0.1
Other provinces	21,505	...	...
China unspecified	35,811	...	...

United States of America

Rates of travel to New Zealand were generally higher in the west of the United States. This is no surprise given the closer distance and direct flights to New Zealand from Honolulu, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Vancouver (in south-western Canada).

Figure 3

Rate of Travel to New Zealand from the United States of America
By state



Hawaii had the highest rate of travel to New Zealand, with 3.7 trips per 1,000 residents. This was followed by the District of Columbia (2.0), in the east of the United States, then Alaska (1.5). Next were

the western states of Colorado (1.4), Washington, California, Wyoming (each 1.3), Utah (1.2), Oregon, and Montana (each 1.1).

Rates were lowest in southern and central states. Least likely to travel to New Zealand in the June 2009 year were residents of Mississippi and West Virginia (each 0.1), followed by Arkansas, Alabama, Nebraska, and Kentucky (each 0.2). Mississippi, West Virginia, Arkansas, and Kentucky were the states with the lowest median incomes in 2007–08 (US Census Bureau, 2009). The rates of travel from these states were similar to rates from the countries of Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil in South America.

Canada

Rates of travel to New Zealand were highest from the western provinces of Canada, which are closer to New Zealand. British Columbia led all provinces with 3.5 visitors per 1,000 residents – similar to Hawaii and noticeably higher than western states on the United States mainland. British Columbia's largest city is Vancouver, which is served by direct flights to New Zealand.

The next highest rate of travel was from Alberta (2.3), which neighbours British Columbia, followed by Ontario and Saskatchewan (each 1.3) which are further east. Predominantly French-speaking Quebec had a lower rate of travel to New Zealand, with 0.4 trips per 1,000 residents.

Table 8

Rate of Travel to New Zealand
From selected Canadian provinces
Year ended June 2009

Province of residence	Visitor arrivals	Population (000s)	Arrivals per 1,000 people
British Columbia	15,433	4,420	3.5
Alberta	8,199	3,632	2.3
Ontario	17,155	12,987	1.3
Saskatchewan	1,314	1,024	1.3
Nova Scotia	901	940	1.0
Manitoba	1,029	1,214	0.8
Quebec	3,479	7,783	0.4
Other provinces	756	...	...
Canada unspecified	1,680	...	...

Conclusion

There is substantial variation in the rate of travel to New Zealand, both between and within countries. Many factors contribute to this variation, and these factors are often inter-related.

Distance is a key factor, clearly shown by the much higher rates of travel from Oceania, and the rates from west to east within the United States and Canada. However, rates of travel from Europe compared well with Asia and the Americas, despite the greater distance to New Zealand.

The importance of migrant and other historical ties to New Zealand was illustrated by the rates from the United Kingdom and Ireland being among the highest outside Oceania, despite the long distance to travel. A high proportion of New Zealand-born visitors contributed to Queensland having the highest rate of travel to New Zealand of any state or territory in Australia. Also, the highest rates of travel within Oceania were from countries with very high rates of travel to visit friends and relatives; these being Niue, the Cook Islands, Norfolk Island, Tonga, and Samoa.

Higher-income areas tended to have higher rates of travel to New Zealand. This was shown by higher rates from countries in Western Europe compared with Eastern Europe, North America compared with Central and South America, and the Middle East compared with Africa.

Rates also tended to be higher from highly urbanised areas, particularly when served by direct flights to New Zealand. Examples were Singapore and Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai within China, and Tokyo, Osaka and surrounding prefectures within Japan.

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