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NEW ZEALAND–AUSTRALIA TRAVEL SPECIALIST SPEAKS

By Alece Schreiber

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Have you ever approached your local travel agent with a request for information on an out of the ordinary destination? Have you seen his or her eyes glaze over? You may be in need of a niche travel specialist, one who puts all of her energies and study on one part of the world.

This is a situation that happens often when people are seeking help in planning travel to Australia. The map of Australia looks quite similar to the map of the United States. But, do you know that a huge percentage of this continent's population lives on the east, southern and west coasts? 8,000,000 of Australia's 20,000,000 people reside in Sydney. The center and most of the northern portions of the country are barren and devoid of almost all human habitation.

People may not be aware that in both New Zealand and Australia the seasons are reversed when compared to the United States. June in the eastern U.S. is similar to December in Melbourne. Conversely, December in New York is akin to June in Sydney. Spring and fall are reversed and both are good times to travel to Australia and New Zealand. Queensland, in the far northeast, Darwin in the north central area and Broome in the west, all in Australia, are tropical. In other words, for North Americans, north is south and south is north!

What time is it in Sydney or Auckland is a frequently asked question. During the North American winter, the time in Sydney is EST plus 16 hours. In Auckland, it is EST plus 18 hours. When you leave in the evening from Los Angeles for Sydney or Auckland on May 1st, you will cross the international date line and will not arrive at your destination until early morning of May 3rd. On your return, you will arrive back in LA on the same calendar day that you leave the South Pacific.

This is the type of information that you can get from an agent specializing in one or a few destinations. Don't go the route of a generalist to help when you are focused on one part of the world. Help is available so that you have accurate and informative facts on your proposed destination.

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Note: This article, may be republished and syndicated if done so in it's entirety.

Australia–New Zealand Specialist

Quick Guide To The Pacific

By Chic Retreats

The whole Pacific area is too vast to cover in one simple article, so we've selected some of the best places to stay.

Where is it?

For the purposes of this guide, the Pacific refers to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and French Polynesia. There are thousands of islands scattered around this area of the Pacific and the Coral Sea, and many are largely unexplored by tourists.

Where can I stay?

Each of these countries is used to tourism and Australia and New Zealand in particular are not short of places to stay; from grand hotels to backpacker hostels. Europeans travelling to this part of the world usually stay for some time because of the long flights and because there's so much to explore. Take the weight off your sight-seeing feet and choose to stay in one of the growing number of boutique hotels. Specifically designed for those who like to stay somewhere different on their travels, these hotels pay careful attention to design, detail and service, ensuring that your stay is comfortable and straightforward so that you can concentrate on the cities, landscapes and activities nearby. In Australia, try the Tower Lodge in the country's Hunter Valley - internationally famous for its wine production. With just twelve rooms that are simply and elegantly furnished and designed for maximum comfort whatever the weather, a stay at Tower Lodge is the perfect start to an Australian tour. By contrast, try the luxury yachts that operate out of French Polynesia. A six or seven night cruise around these beautiful islands is refined by the number of spacious bedrooms - just 30 - and the addition of several sundeck levels, champagne breakfasts and on-land excursions designed to let you see the wonder of these islands at first hand.

What can I see?

You can't possibly fit everything that this area has to offer into a couple of paragraphs, but all of the

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countries of the Pacific benefit from astonishing coastlines, unforgettable mountain, desert and forested areas, rich culture and an adventurous spirit. Whether you're bungee–jumping in New Zealand, surfing in Australia, river kayaking in French Polynesia or enjoying the scuba diving in Fiji, you're sure to want to return to the Pacific again to explore its delights.

How do I get around?

Transport varies from country to country. Australia and New Zealand are well served by airlines, so you can visit both countries in one trip, just move between New Zealand's North and South islands, or take in as much of Australia as you can. It's straightforward to hire cars in both countries and they operate public transport networks that are obviously cheaper and more regular in the cities than in rural areas. In Fiji, you can island hop by plane or, more cheaply and slowly, by ferry. Alternatively, there are reasonable bus services on the larger islands. French Polynesia is much the same, as are many of the other island groups in this part of the Pacific.

As more and more boutique hotels emerge to cater for travellers who appreciate design and service, the Pacific islands will feature in many more travel wish lists.

Chic Retreats is a collection of small, sophisticated hotels around the world that offer the traveller a true taste of luxury and service. Visit their website now by clicking on



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