

Waitangi Day: New Zealand's National Day **A2**



SPEAKEASY NEWS

L'actualité au cœur des cours d'anglais



Nathan

New Zealand is a unique country, and its national day is unique too!



New Zealand is unique in many ways. Its nearest big neighbour Australia is more than 4,000 kilometres away! Because it is so isolated, it has some unique plants and animals, like the kiwi, a bird that can't fly. People from NZ are often called "Kiwis" too.

New Zealand also has sheep... a lot of them! In fact, according to the 2013 census, there are almost seven times more sheep than people in New Zealand!

Help

neighbour (n) normally, a person who lives next to you or close to you

census (n) normally every 10 years, the government asks residents to answer questions about where they live, their marriage status, their job, etc

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Fifteen percent of the population is Maori. The Maori arrived in *waka* (large canoes) from Polynesia about 1,000 years ago. The Maori name for the country is *Aotearoa*, which means "the Land of the Long White Cloud."



Maori people in a "waka" for a Waitangi Day ceremony.

Help
cloud (n) when it rains, there are grey or black clouds.

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Maori and British Influences

On 6 February, 1840, a representative of British Queen Victoria signed a peace treaty with 40 Maori chiefs. The treaty was signed in a place called Waitangi. The treaty established that New Zealand was part of the British Empire, and that the Maori were British citizens.

Many countries' national days celebrate independence or a revolution, but New Zealand's national day, Waitangi Day, on 6 February, celebrates peace. In 1906, New Zealand became independent from Great Britain. But to honour the country's history, Waitangi Day continues to be the national day.

In the past, Maori culture wasn't respected by *Pakeha* (the Maori word for white people) but now Waitangi Day is a day to eat Maori food, do Maori dances (like the *haka*, the ceremonial dance that the New Zealand rugby team does before matches) and watch *waka* canoe races.

Waitangi Day is a day to celebrate Maori culture, with dances like the "haka".



Help

peace (n) opposite of *war / conflict*
citizen (n) person who has the nationality of a country and the right to a passport