

7 Traditions Only New Zealanders Understand

New Zealand may be a young country, but it's not devoid of compelling traditions. A culmination of Maori customs and European-based quirks have helped this country carve out its own set of customs. To give you a better idea, here are seven traditions that only Kiwis will be able to understand and relate to.

Gumboot Day



Taihape is a small town in the centre of the North Island that prides itself on being 'the gumboot capital of the world'. Every year since 1985, the community celebrates Gumboot Day — **1**. The iconic festival is held on the Tuesday after Easter, and its biggest ambition every year is to break the world record for the longest gumboot throw.

Taihape Gumboot Sculpture

A chocolate carnival on the world's steepest street

2 What outsiders may not know is that this is the main venue for the city's annual Cadbury Chocolate Carnival. To kick off the sweet festivities, giant Jaffa balls (that's an orange chocolate that's unique to New Zealand) race down this steep stretch of road. There are also competitions, choc-filled activities, and an iconic Crunchie Train to entertain the crowds.



Baldwin Street Jaffa Race

The haka

Rugby fans will know this one quite well. The haka, a traditional Maori war dance, has been immortalised by New Zealand's All Blacks team, though its significance is celebrated in other local customs as well.

3 These days, you might see a haka performance if you visit a marae, or if you partake in any special Maori celebrations and rituals.



Navy Haka



The hongi

Not to be confused with a hangi, which is a traditional meal, the hongi is a personal, customary greeting, usually saved up for special occasions. The pressing of noses and foreheads is how this physical greeting is exchanged. 4 A hongi is common practice when welcoming visitors onto Maori grounds, as well as within traditional ceremonies.

Hongi Between a Maori Warrior and a Member of the US Airforce

Powhiri

Whenever you're entering a Maori house (whare), meeting place (marae) or tribe (iwi), you will participate in this traditional welcoming ceremony. A powhiri usually begins with three warriors challenging the guests to see if they are coming into their territory in peace, 5 Presentations, waiata (traditional songs) and speeches usually follow, and then the powhiri ends with the aforementioned hongi.



Powhiri Welcoming New Zealand Defence Force Contingents Onto A Marae



A hangi

Now we get to the customary Maori cooking method. A hangi is prepared underground, using heated rocks that are buried in a pit oven. Food is placed on top of the stones (usually meat is cooked first), and items are covered with flax mats or hessian bags for three hours during the cooking process. **6**, though you can have these meals when you partake in various Maori encounters across the country.

Hangi

All things Kiwiana

7. In brief, Kiwiana are cultural relics that helped shape Kiwi identity and the local way of life. This includes the Edmonds Cookbook, which has been teaching New Zealanders to make their favourite dishes for many generations, as well as the classic Buzzy Bee toy, paua shells, Maori carvings, and the ever-contested pavlova.



Paua House at the Canterbury Museum

These extracts have been removed from the texts above. Find the blank where they belong. Write the number in the correct box.

- while a kaikaranga (female caller) leads the visitors towards them.
- Baldwin Street, in Dunedin, is renowned for being the world's steepest street.
- While it's not a 'tradition' in the strictest sense, this is something that locals truly understand and cherish.
- a fun-filled family event that includes the town's famed gumboot throwing contest.
- In the past, the pre-battle war cries and dances were performed to incite fear, and proclaim the strength of Maori warriors.
- This is usually saved for special occasions,
- This symbolises the passing of the breath of life ('te ha' in Maori) from one person to another.

Finish these sentences.

1. Gumboot Day is celebrated on _____
2. Participants in the Cadbury Chocolate Carnival have to _____
3. You may see a haka performance _____
4. The hongi consists of _____
5. In Powhiri, after showing visitors are coming in peace, there are _____
6. A hangi is cooked _____
7. Kiwiana are _____