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Wellington is [the capital city of New Zealand](#). It is located at the southwestern tip of the [North Island](#), between [Cook Strait](#) and the [Remutaka Range](#). Wellington is the [third-largest city](#) in New Zealand (second largest in the North Island), and is the administrative centre of the [Wellington Region](#). It is the [world's southernmost capital of a sovereign state](#). Wellington features a temperate maritime climate, and is the world's windiest city by average [wind speed](#).

[Māori](#) oral tradition tells that [Kupe](#) discovered and explored the region in about the 10th century. The area was initially settled by [Māori iwi](#) such as [Rangitāne](#) and [Muaūpoko](#). The disruptions of the [Musket Wars](#) led to them being overwhelmed by northern iwi such as [Te Āti Awa](#) in the early 19th century.

Wellington's current form was originally designed by Captain [William Mein Smith](#), the first Surveyor General for [Edward Wakefield's New Zealand Company](#), in 1840. Smith's plan included a series of interconnected [grid plans](#), expanding along valleys and lower hill slopes, but without actually taking the terrain into account. The Wellington [urban area](#), which only includes urbanised areas within Wellington City, has a population of 209,800 as of June 2025. The wider Wellington [metropolitan area](#), including the cities of [Lower Hutt](#), [Porirua](#) and [Upper Hutt](#), has a population of 433,900 as of June 2025. The city has served as [New Zealand's capital](#) since 1865, a status that is not defined in legislation, but established by convention; the [New Zealand Government](#) and [Parliament](#), the [Supreme Court](#) and most of the public service are based in the city.

Wellington's economy is primarily [service-based](#), with an emphasis on finance, business services, government, and the film industry. It is the centre of New Zealand's [film](#) and special effects industries, and increasingly a hub for information technology and innovation, with two public research universities. Wellington is one of New Zealand's chief seaports and serves both domestic and international shipping. The city is chiefly served by [Wellington Airport](#) in [Rongotai](#), the country's [third-busiest airport](#). Wellington's transport network includes [train and bus lines](#), which reach as far as the [Kāpiti Coast](#) and [the Wairarapa](#), and ferries connect the city to the [South Island](#).

Often referred to as New Zealand's cultural capital, the culture of Wellington is diverse and often youth-driven. One of the [world's most](#)

liveable cities, the 2021 Global Livability Ranking tied Wellington with Tokyo as fourth in the world. From 2017 to 2018, Deutsche Bank ranked it first in the world for both liveability and non-pollution. Cultural precincts such as Cuba Street and Newtown are renowned for creative innovation, "op shops", historic character, and food. Wellington is a leading financial centre in the Asia-Pacific region, being ranked 46th in the world by the Global Financial Centres Index for 2024. The global city has grown from a bustling Māori settlement, to a colonial outpost, and from there to an Australasian capital that has experienced a "remarkable creative resurgence".