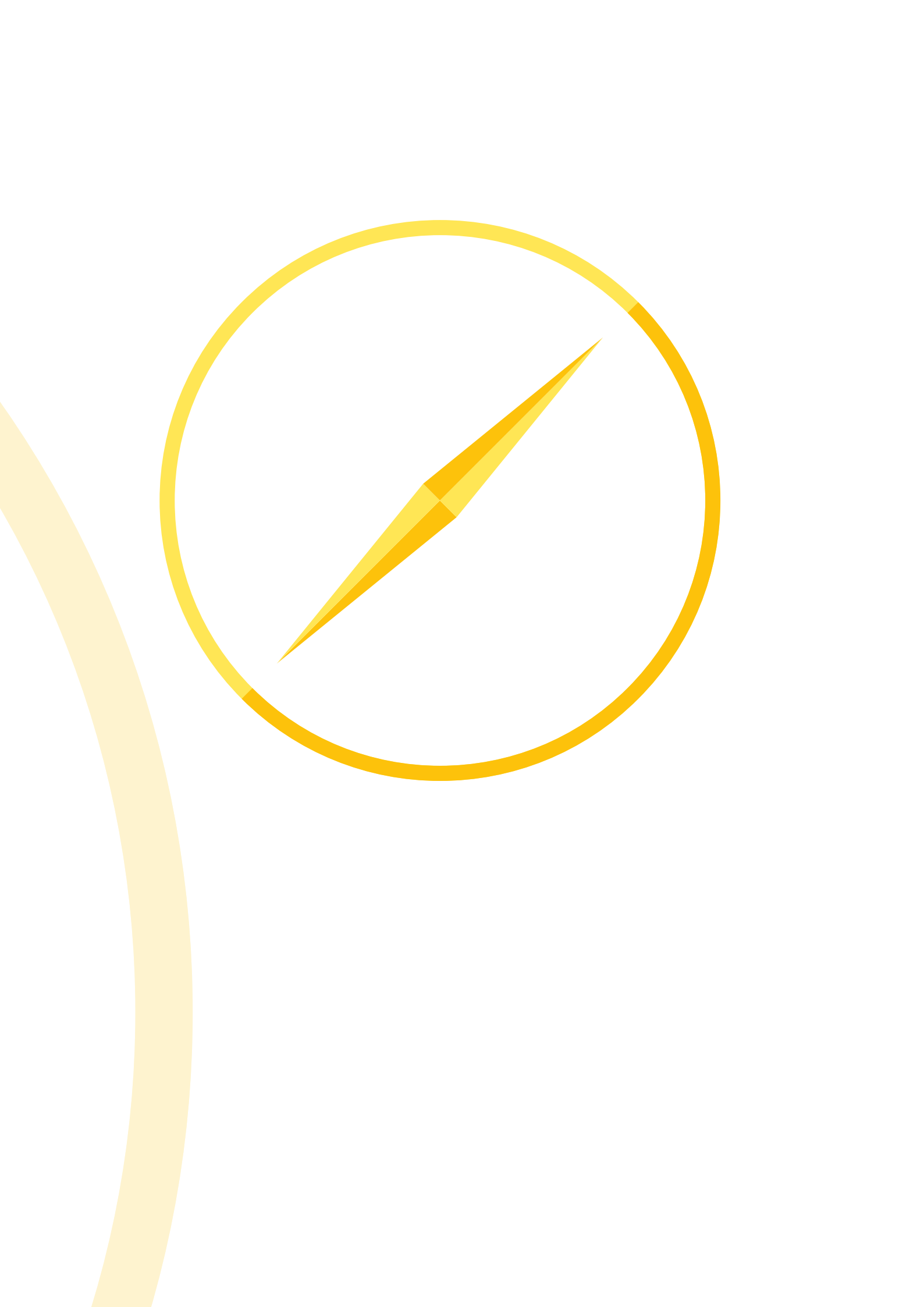




Cheapflights ✈

COMPASS 2017





**Welcome to the
Cheapflights
Compass 2017,**
a research initiative
by global flight
search and travel
deals platform,
Cheapflights.

Our team analysed the results of 2.9 million searches over one year on Cheapflights.co.nz. We dissected the destinations, poured over the airfares, determined desirable days to book, tackled top timeframes and worked out the window when New Zealanders could score the most affordable flights.

The Cheapflights Compass reveals what's hot, which destinations offer the best value, where to go and most importantly, how to bag a bargain.

- ✈ What are the most popular countries and cities to visit in New Zealand, Australia, Asia Pacific and in far-flung locations if you're up for long haul travel to Europe, Africa or the Americas?
- ✈ What smart swaps will give you a similar holiday for less by flying to a different destination in another country – or even a different city in the same country?
- ✈ And in the ultimate battle of the postcodes, how does where you live make a difference to the price of your airfare.

No matter where you're dreaming of going, we've got you covered.

Notes

All flight prices are based on searches on the Cheapflights website and its worldwide group websites for round trip fares with departure dates from March 2016 to February 2017.

Includes all searches for fares with a departure from a New Zealand city. Lowest average fare prices are based on the cheapest fare returned in each search.

Domestic: all searches for departures from New Zealand cities for destinations within New Zealand.

Trans-Tasman: all searches for departures from a mainland capital city within New Zealand for a destination within Australia.

Asia Pacific: searches for departures from New Zealand cities to the most popular destinations in Asia or Pacific Islands (top 52 destinations).

Long haul: searches for departures from New Zealand cities to selected gateway destinations in regions outside Asia Pacific (9 destinations).

Total searches: 2,906,000

2015: Year-on-year comparative data looks at searches from September through October 2015

How are Kiwis Searching for Flights and Holidays?

Those Who Seek, Will Find

Collectively, Kiwi travellers racked up more than two years of searching for the best fares via Cheapflights. With more than 3.5 million visits to the website or app over one year, locals stayed on the site for four minutes on average, before ending their session or moving on to book.

Going Mobile

The majority of Kiwis opted to search for flights on their smartphones – more than 53% of visits – followed by desktop (39%) and tablet (8%). And they also stayed on the site longer when using a mobile device – five and a half minutes versus just under four minutes for desktop users.

The Cheapflights app is fast becoming an app-solute favourite for Kiwi travellers too, assisting with over 400,000 sessions alone.

Golden Rules

No matter where in the world you want to go, a few rules hold true for searching and booking across all regions.

When to Search?

Got the ‘back to work blues’ on a Monday? You’re not alone. Searching for flights to anywhere but the office is highest on a Monday and Tuesday, declining throughout the week, hitting its

lowest level on Saturday, before increasing again on Sunday.

The most popular time of day to search is between 6pm and 8pm.

The day of the week you choose to search on can affect the price, with fares varying by 3% for Asia Pacific destinations. But the day you decide to depart and how far in advance you book have a much bigger impact on price.

Asia Pacific

Day of Search		Average Airfare by Day of Search	
Monday	15.7%	Monday	\$1,085
Tuesday	16.0%	Tuesday	\$1,077
Wednesday	15.1%	Wednesday	\$1,085
Thursday	14.0%	Thursday	\$1,093
Friday	12.8%	Friday	\$1,104
Saturday	12.2%	Saturday	\$1,110
Sunday	14.3%	Sunday	\$1,096

Search day figures and patterns vary by destination country. All are all within 3% of these results.

What Day to Fly?

Friday is the most popular day to travel – and it is generally the most expensive too, with travellers looking to maximise their trip with a weekend at their destination (especially closer ones). If you're not fussed on weekend arrivals, you can get a cheaper fare by picking a different travel day.

Fare differences between the cheapest and most expensive day vary by 4% for Asia Pacific and Trans-Tasman, 10% for domestic travel and 5% for long haul.

Which Month to Go?

The most popular time for Asia Pacific and long haul travel is in the summer holiday period during December and January, with a smaller winter peak in June and July.

Trans-Tasman travel is relatively steady throughout the year, with peak domestic travel between January and March.

When to Start Looking and Booking?

When you book affects how much you pay. And the best time to book depends on where you are going.

One to three months before departure is the cheapest time to book Asia Pacific and Trans-Tasman flights, with three to six months the best for long haul destinations.

Domestic searches have a much shorter booking window, with most bookings less than three months out.

Booking early is the guaranteed route to your destination, but is it the route to the cheapest fare? Generally, the closer to departure date, the more expensive the fare becomes, particularly less than one week out.

Here's the rub – booking last minute attracts a premium, but booking more than six months before departure is actually more expensive. The trade-off for certainty by booking well in advance is a pricey airfare.

Domestic

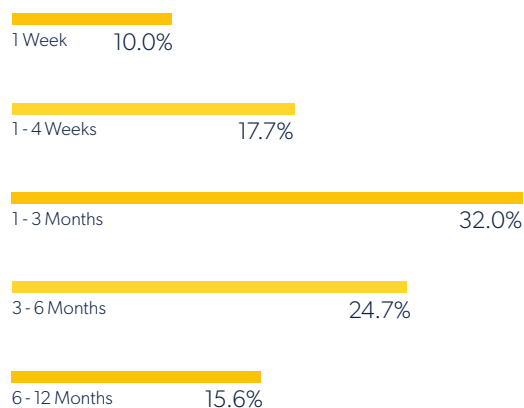
Kiwis are a spontaneous bunch, with 32% of domestic travel booked less than a week before departure – but travellers pay a 60% price hike compared to booking three to six months ahead.

Those booking one to four weeks ahead are hit with a 27% fare increase. And there's no respite for early birds – more than six months in advance costs an extra 21%.

Trans-Tasman

Like to plan ahead? Great, but booking too early will cost you. You'll pay 10% more to book six to 12 months ahead, compared to one to three months. That's better than leaving it too late though – book in the last week and you'll pay an 18% penalty.

Asia Pacific: Pre-Book



Asia Pacific: Average Airfare by Day of Search



1-3 months before departure is the most common search time for almost all countries. But there are some different patterns: Samoa and Tonga have high numbers searching within a week of departure (>20%); French Polynesia and the Maldives have high levels of early search (6+ months before ~ 25%).

Asia Pacific

The most popular time to search for Asia Pacific flights is one to three months before departure, but one to six months ahead of time will get you the lowest airfares.

Book too early or late and you'll pay the price – 9% more within a week of departure and 5% more when you book more than six months in advance.

Don't book last minute if you're heading to Tonga – it will cost you up to 56% more. You'll also pay 20% more for late bookings to Fiji, Indonesia, Samoa and the Cook Islands.

Long Haul

Booking six to 12 months in advance will secure your seat early, but cost you 5% more. Booking one to four weeks ahead will cost you an extra 7%.

Last minute Lucys and Larrys will be hit with a whopping 17% price hike for booking within a week of departure.

Best Time to Book



Domestic

3 to 6 months



Trans-Tasman

1 to 3 months



Asia Pacific

1 to 6 months



Long Haul

3 to 6 months

TGIF! Most Popular Departure Dates

Friday is the most popular departure day for domestic, Trans-Tasman, Asia Pacific and long haul journeymen, with holidaymakers squeezing an extra weekend into their breaks.

Asia Pacific

Generally, Sunday is the least popular day to set off. However, if you can fly on less popular days like Monday or Tuesday you'll still save 3-4%.

Travelling to Tonga is an exception. Depart on Thursday instead of Sunday and you will save a massive 60%, and arrive closer to the weekend to boot.

Long Haul

For long haul flights, Friday is the most popular departure day, with weekends the least popular. Friday and Saturday are the most expensive days to leave (+5%), and you'll pay 8% more to fly to London on a Friday. Tuesday is the cheapest day to fly. You could also save up to 12% by choosing the cheaper departure days of Monday through Wednesday.

Trans-Tasman

Wednesday is the cheapest departure day, but only by \$23 on average, compared to popular Friday's most expensive fare.

Domestic

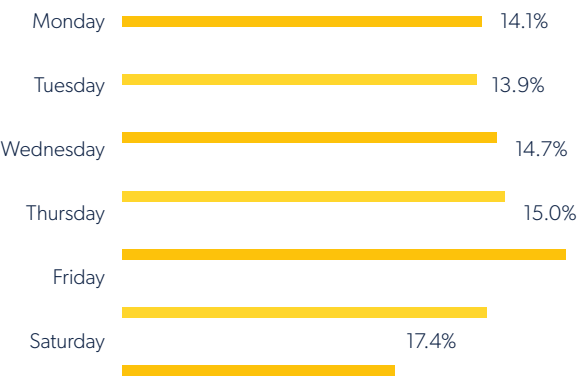
You can save 10% by opting to fly domestic on a Wednesday.

Months Matter

Fancy a December break?
Welcome to the club. December
is the most popular month to fly

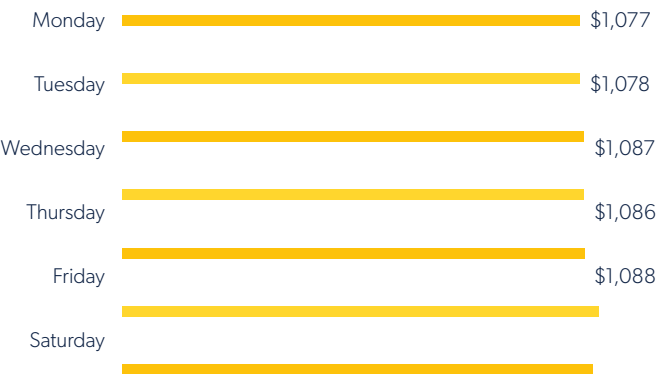
– and the most expensive. Be
prepared to pay top dollar and
deal with crowded airports.

Asia Pacific: Day of Departure



The Friday peak and Sunday low is a common pattern for most.

Asia Pacific: Average Airfare by Day of Departure



The potential savings by day of week can vary by destination. The top 10 destinations all have variations of at least 6% in fares between the most and least expensive days and some Pacific destinations can vary by 66%.

Asia Pacific

It seems New Zealanders are
always dreaming of Asia Pacific
holidays, with searches spread
relatively evenly year-round. There
is a slight increase from August
to October as end of year travel
planning gets underway.

December is the most searched
departure month, but it also has
the highest airfares at \$1,466 on
average (69% more than May,
the cheapest month) as demand
skyrockets.

New Zealanders also prefer
different parts of Asia Pacific at
different times of year – South East
Asia in December, South Asia in
January and February, then Pacific
Islands and South East Asia for the
winter months (May to August).

Long Haul

New Zealanders planning long haul getaways hit the new year running, with January through May the most common period to search for flights. There is then a drop in searches in June and July, and another in November and December.

December is the most popular departure month (14%), with Christmas catch-ups in the northern hemisphere a big driver. Fares peak at the same time – up to 42% higher for London and 54% more for Los Angeles, New York and Rio. That sound you hear? The cheers of all those without school aged children who can holiday during school term for much less.

Prices jump again, though not by as much, during another travel peak from June to September (\$1,678 on average) as Kiwis head north to escape the winter.

Trans-Tasman

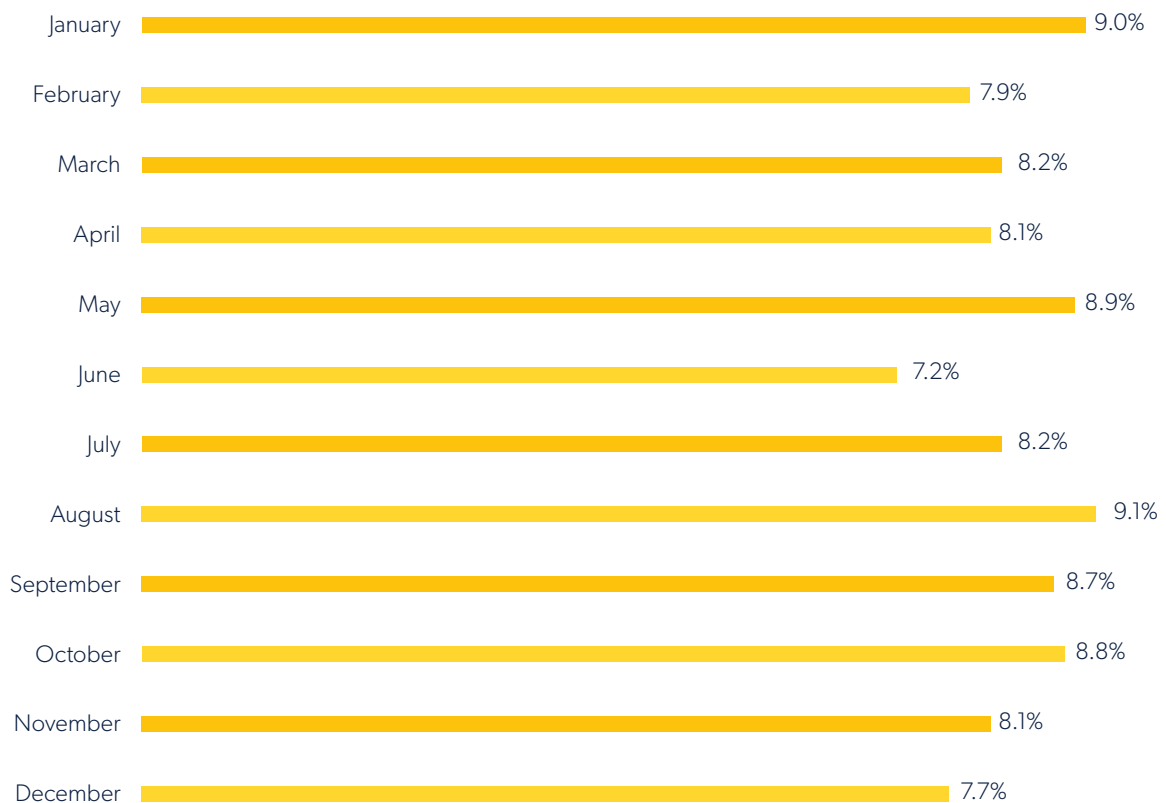
January and May are the most popular months to travel to Australia, but there is not much variation throughout the year.

May is the cheapest travel month (\$400), with December rising 33% to be the most expensive (\$533).

Domestic

January has the most departures and December the most expensive fares (+44%), while May is the cheapest time to fly (\$150 on average).

Asia Pacific: Most Popular Month to Search



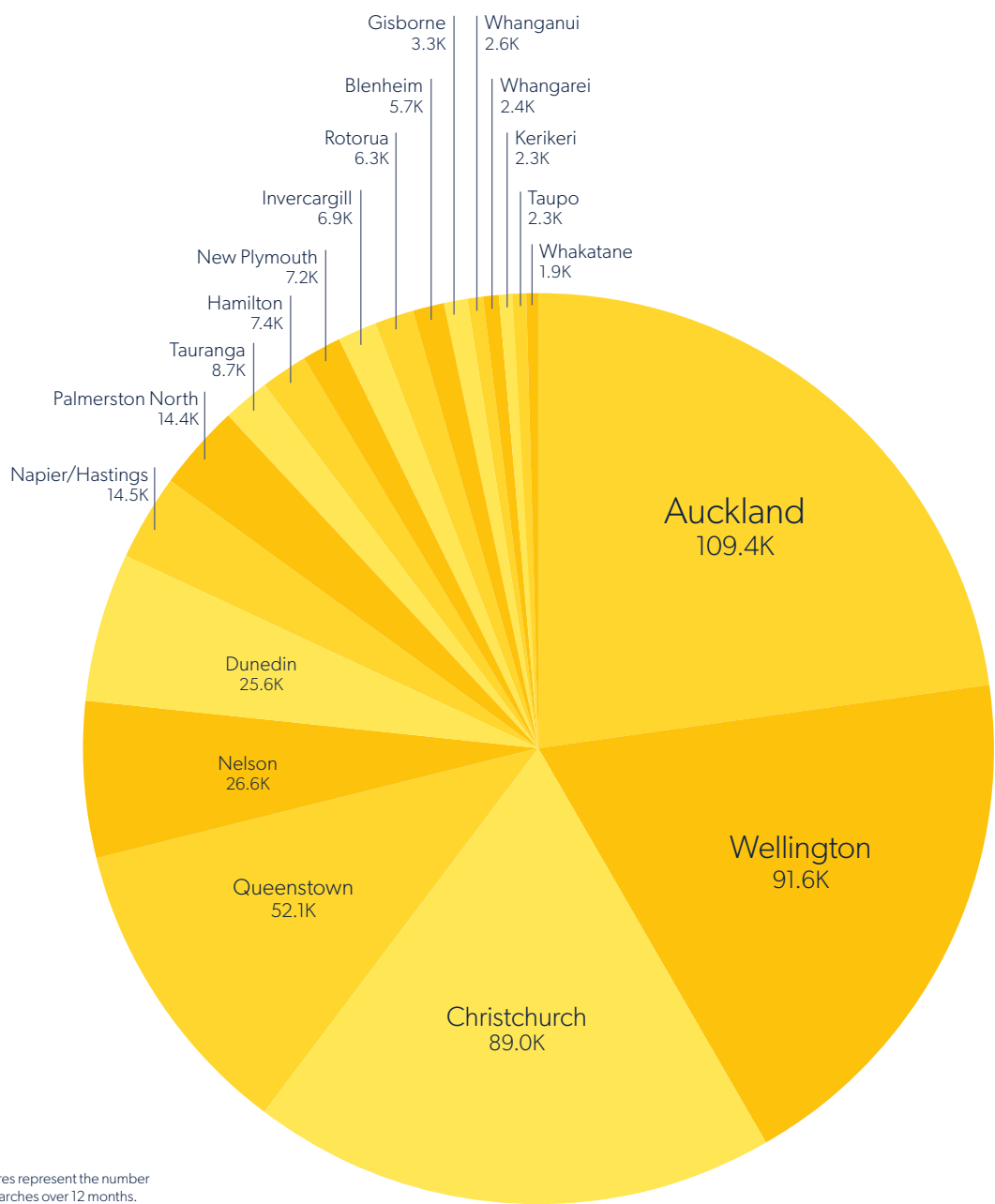
Most Popular, Affordable and Expensive Destinations

Domestic

Auckland is New Zealand’s most popular destination (followed by Wellington and Christchurch), and equal cheapest with Wellington, both under \$200. Queenstown rounds out the top four, but has an average airfare of \$100 more.

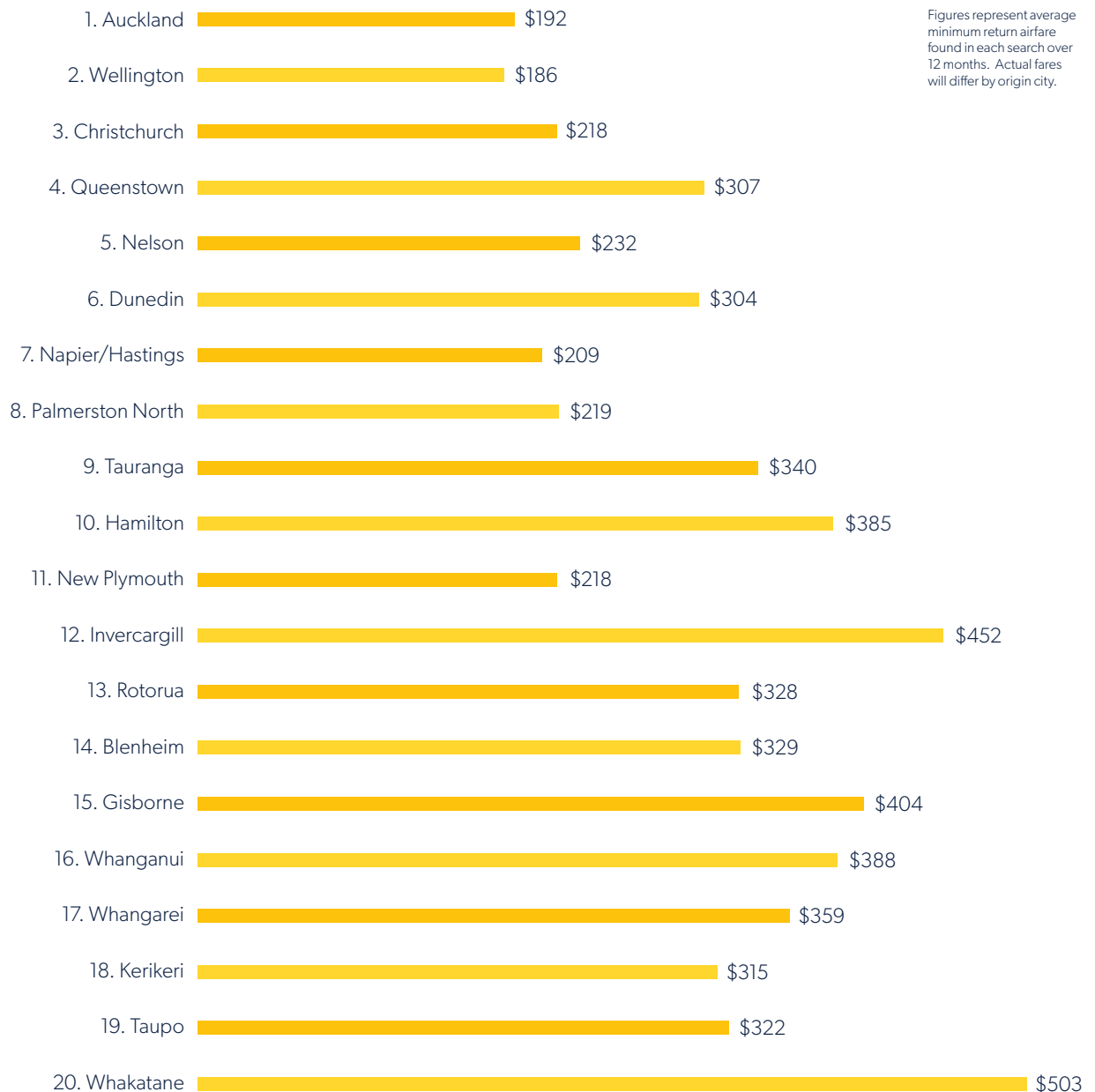
Nelson and Dunedin are the next most popular, but have two to four times fewer searches than the top four.

Domestic: Top 20 Most Popular Destinations



Figures represent the number of searches over 12 months.

Domestic: Average Minimum Airfare



Trans-Tasman

Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and the Gold Coast are the most popular cities for New Zealanders crossing the ditch, and are also the cheapest Trans-Tasman destinations.

Surprisingly, Perth, double the distance of the east coast favourites and the second most expensive destination (double the top four fares), ranks fifth most popular.

Trans-Tasman: Searches by City of Origin

Auckland	359K
Christchurch	64K
Wellington	58K

Figures represent the number of searches over 12 months in thousand.

Asia Pacific

Home may be where the heart is, but for many holidaying takes them away from home and to Asia Pacific destinations. And more often than not, to India.

India is the most searched country, almost three times more than the second highest, Fiji. Thailand, Indonesia and China round out the top five.

Strong heritage connections and close geographic proximity see more affordable Pacific Islands take four of the top 10 country spots for most searched destinations – Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga.

India may be the most popular, but it’s far from the cheapest destination, coming in at twentieth (\$1,362).

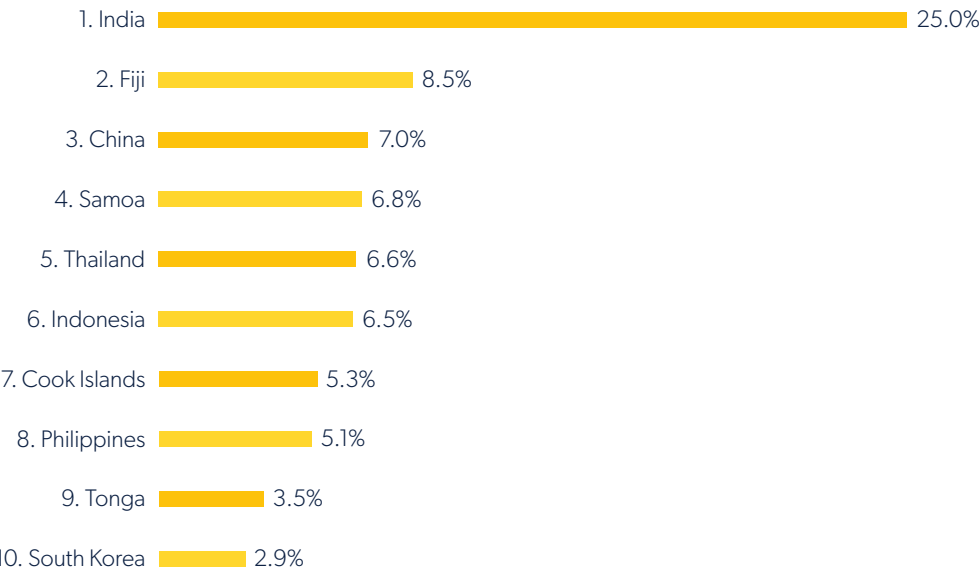
Airfares to the Pacific Islands are typically 30% cheaper than fares to South East Asia, with Tonga (\$640) and Cook Islands (\$657) most affordable by country, more than four times cheaper than Bora Bora (\$2,741). Bali takes the crown as South East Asia’s cheapest destination (\$885).

When it comes to most searched cities, Delhi romps into top spot, twice as popular as second ranked Nadi, with no Chinese or North Asian cities in the top ten.

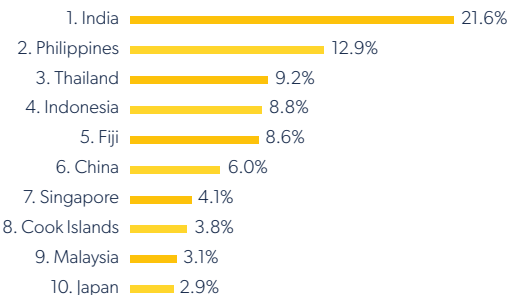
Bora Bora puts French Polynesia at number 16 on the most popular list, with further afield destinations – UAE, Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Israel and Lebanon – in the top 29.

Asia Pacific: Most Popular Destinations by Departure City

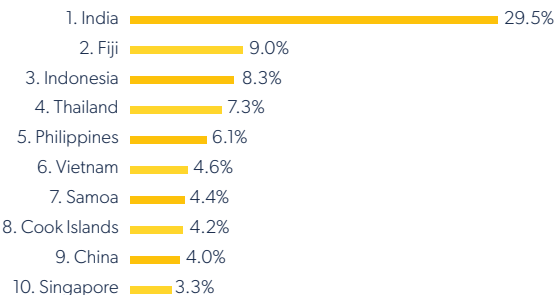
Auckland



Christchurch

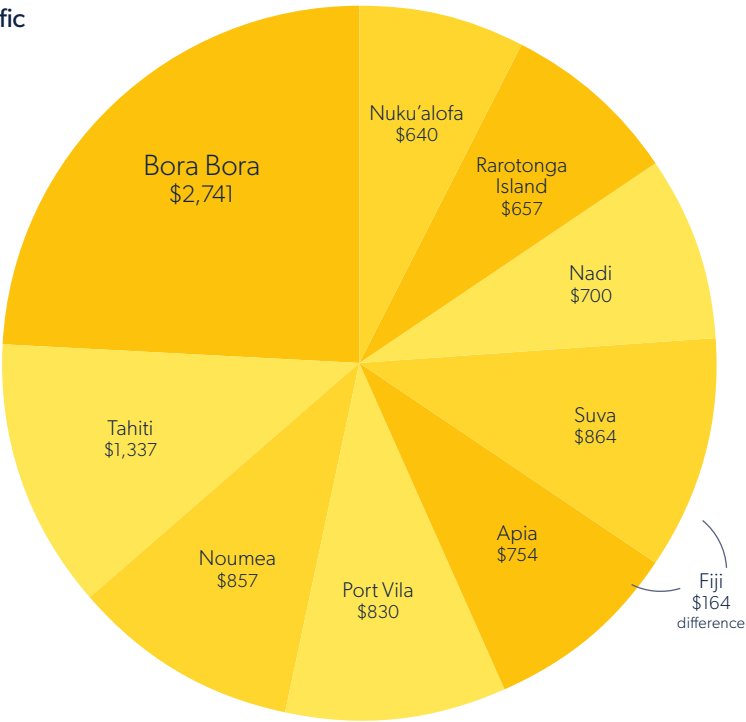


Wellington

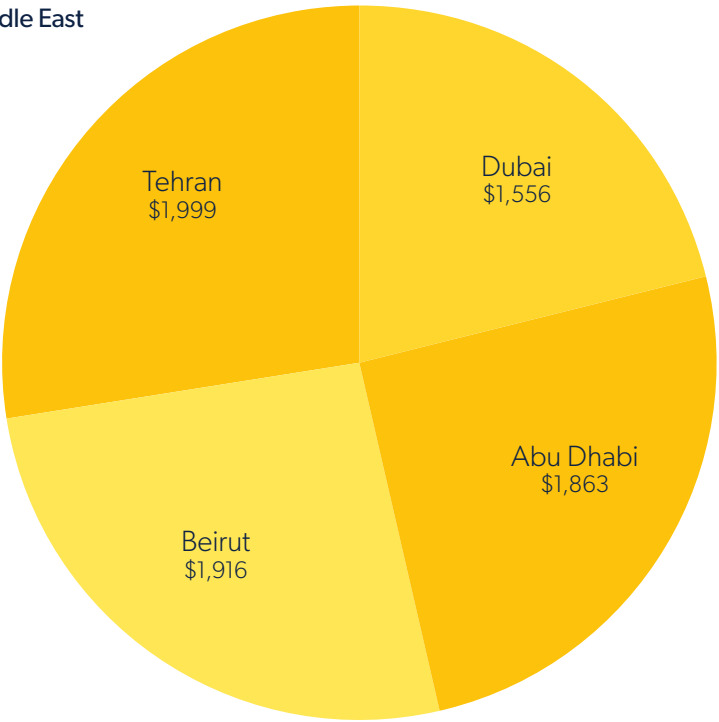


Average Airfares

Pacific



Middle East



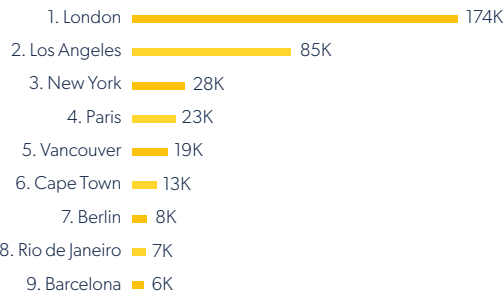
Long Haul

Hooray for Hollywood! Los Angeles is the cheapest of the long haul flights, with Paris overtaking traditional cheaper entry points like Amsterdam to be Europe’s most inexpensive destination, on the back of efforts by French tourism to woo tourists.

London is the most popular destination, recording more than double the searches of Los Angeles, even though airfares are almost \$700 more.

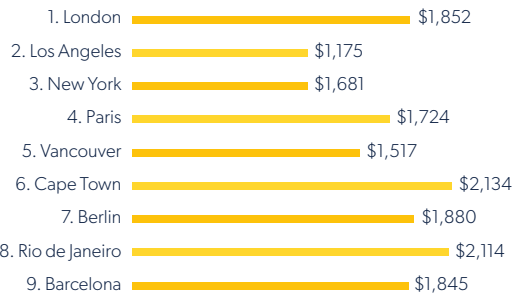
The heart of the Old Dart also clocked up six times as many searches as New York and more than seven times as many as Paris – despite being Europe’s most expensive destination (\$1,852), apart from Berlin (\$1,880). Only Rio and Cape Town (both over \$2,100) had more expensive minimum airfares.

Long Haul: Popular Cities



Figures represent the number of searches in thousands over 12 months.

Long Haul: Average Airfare



Figures represent average minimum return airfare found in each search over 12 months. Actual fares will differ by origin and destination city.

City of Origin: Postcode Bandits

When it comes to forking out for airfares, Christchurch and Wellington are disadvantaged by more expensive fares, compared to Auckland.

Fares to Asia Pacific are 15-18% more than from Auckland, and up to 27% more for travel to Raratonga and Kuala Lumpur. Long haul fares are slightly more palatable, with a 9-10% price premium over Auckland.

Trans-Tasman is more affordable, but there are larger outliers.

Domestic

It is more expensive to get to Auckland from Christchurch than the reverse.

Ironically, it is cheaper to get to Queenstown from Auckland, than from Christchurch or Wellington, even though they are both closer.

Domestic: Average Fare for Top 6 Destination Cities

	Auckland	Christchurch	Wellington	Queenstown	Nelson	Dunedin
Auckland		\$186	\$149	\$268	\$174	\$271
Christchurch	\$200		\$158	\$303	\$228	\$228
Wellington	\$148	\$154		\$351	\$121	\$247

Trans-Tasman

Three in four (75%) Trans-Tasman searches are from Auckland, the cheapest departure city for most destinations in Australia.

Wellington is the most expensive on average – 23% more to Sydney and 30% more to the Gold Coast. Christchurch fares are even worse, paying a 34% premium to enjoy Queensland's golden strip.

Trans-Tasman: Average Airfare by Destination

	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Gold Coast	Perth	Cairns	Adelaide	Hobart	Sunshine Coast	Canberra	Average
Auckland	\$397	\$405	\$436	\$359	\$806	\$654	\$586	\$593	\$629	\$658	\$552
Christchurch	\$398	\$391	\$494	\$481	\$821	\$672	\$578	\$555	\$642	\$652	\$568
Wellington	\$487	\$415	\$497	\$467	\$860	\$709	\$612	\$618	\$695	\$631	\$599
Difference to Auckland fare											
Auckland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Christchurch	0%	-4%	13%	34%	2%	3%	-1%	-6%	2%	-1%	3%
Wellington	23%	2%	14%	30%	7%	9%	4%	4%	10%	-4%	8%

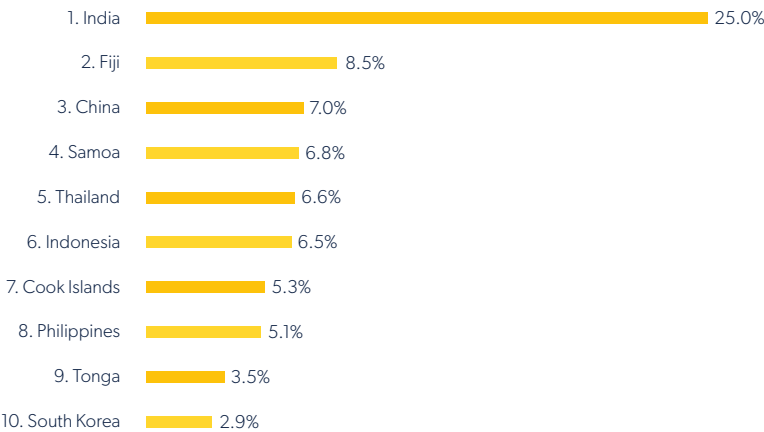
Asia Pacific

The popularity of destinations depends on where you are leaving from. India features in more searches with departure points on the North Island.

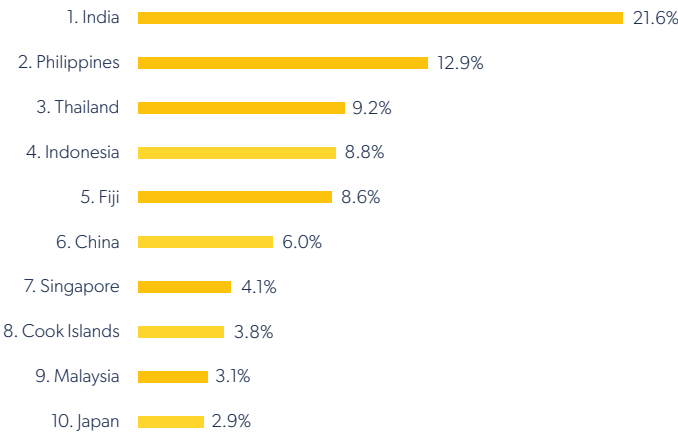
South East Asian destinations dominate in Christchurch, and Pacific Islands beyond Fiji are more popular from Auckland.

Asia Pacific: Top 10 Destinations by Departure City

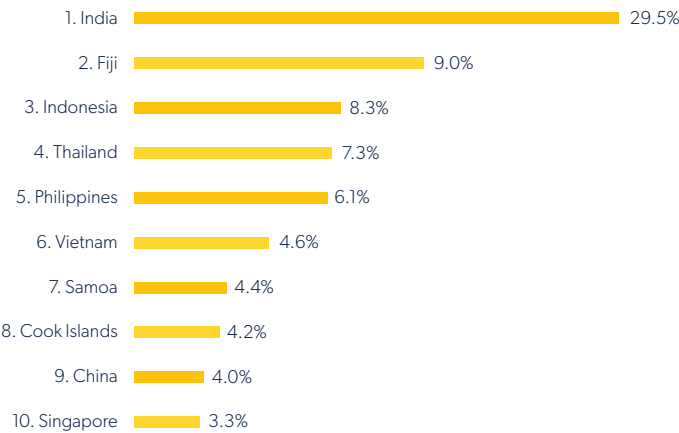
Auckland



Christchurch



Wellington



Long Haul

Almost eight in 10 (78%) searches are for Auckland departures, with demand helping to keep prices down.

Those in Christchurch and Wellington will pay 9% and 10% more for their long haul fares respectively. Christchurch residents pay 18% more to get to Barcelona, but just 3% more for Cape Town.

Long Haul: Average Airfares by Destinations

	London	Los Angeles	New York	Paris	Vancouver	Cape Town	Berlin
Auckland	\$1,784	\$1,158	\$1,635	\$1,673	\$1,492	\$2,105	\$1,834
Christchurch	\$1,993	\$1,206	\$1,730	\$1,813	\$1,563	\$2,163	\$1,962
Wellington	\$2,023	\$1,258	\$1,799	\$1,851	\$1,509	\$2,241	\$2,064
Difference to Auckland fare							
Auckland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Christchurch	12%	4%	6%	8%	5%	3%	7%
Wellington	13%	9%	10%	11%	1%	6%	13%

Swap and Save

Same, Same, but Different

Got a dream destination in mind but the flights are just so darn expensive? Don't shelve your plans, change them. Travelling to a different but similar destination within a region, even a different city within the same country, can save hundreds of dollars in fares – up to \$500 in South East Asia.



See You in Manila

Flying into Manila instead of Cebu saves you almost \$200 on your Philippines getaway.



Thai-m to Save

Forget Koh Samui and fly into Phuket and you'll save \$370 on a Thai getaway.

Rio de Janeiro	Barcelona	Average
\$2,045	\$1,780	\$1,723
\$2,336	\$2,104	\$1,875
\$2,336	\$1,967	\$1,894
-	-	-
14%	18%	9%
14%	11%	10%

What Was Happening in 2015?

Domestic

Similarly to this year, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch were the most popular domestic destinations, with the cities also topping the list for most affordable flights (\$243, \$231 and \$242 respectively).

Regional destination, Paraparaumu, also made the cheap list with return average airfares of just \$242.

Trans-Tasman

East coast cities Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane dominated Trans-Tasman travel with 44% of searches. Fast forward to now and Sydney has pipped Melbourne to the post on popularity and affordability.

Regional hubs of Ayr (\$197), Ballina (\$222) and Kempsey (\$223) also topped the most affordable list last year.

Asia Pacific

Denpasar-Bali was a firm favourite and took out top spot, followed by Bangkok and Manila.

Today, these three hot spots have been pushed out to third, fifth and sixth respectively, by Delhi, Nadi and Apia.

Looking beyond the capital cities of the region however, Palembang (\$485), Bintulu (\$522) and Maliana (\$554) had the cheapest average return airfares in 2015.

Cheapflights Fare-Casting 2018

Paris Bounces Back

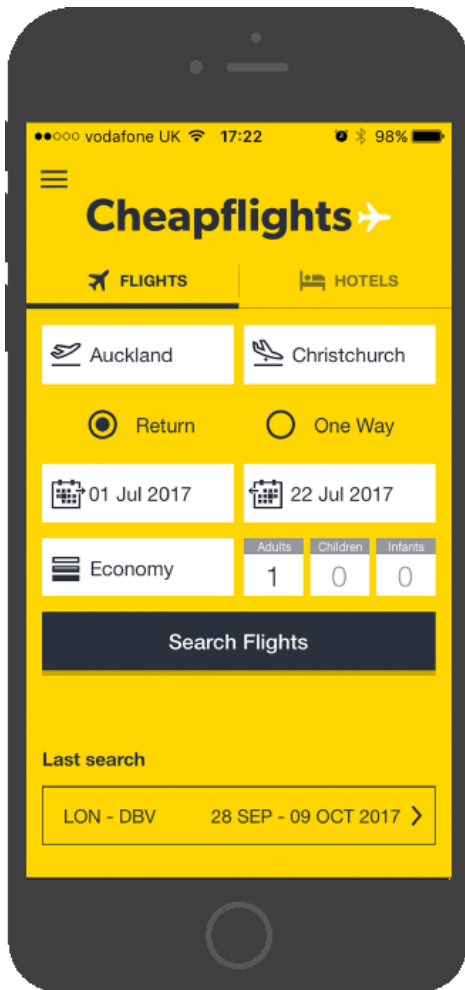
New Zealanders' love affair with London will continue, but the appeal of significantly cheaper fares will see Paris become a preferred gateway to Europe.

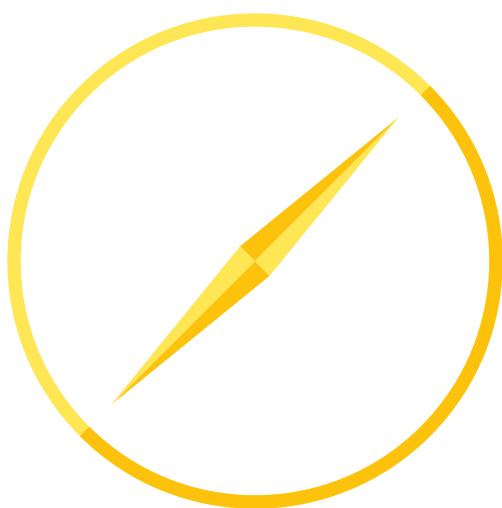
Rise of India

It's further than the Pacific Islands and South East Asia, but India will cement its spot at the top of New Zealanders' wish lists, with multiple cities featuring in the top 20 destinations.

Luxury Travel to Bora Bora

The well-heeled, including cashed up Americans moving to New Zealand in the wake of the Trump Presidency, will see French Polynesia climb the rankings of the most popular destinations.







Designed by

Cheapflights ✈

2017