

2010 Working Holidays New Zealand

Our first year in operation has been a great success. 3 of our clients have returned to Japan saying they loved it. One more remains in New Zealand studying in NZ and will stay the full year.

We left Japan last February a little nervous but enthusiastic. The trip to NZ was easy with Korean Airlines. Although some of the girls packed a little too much and we had to repack some cases to meet the baggage requirements.

We spend 3 days in Auckland which was fun. We stayed in backpackers in the center of the city. We had good food in cheap restaurants and travelled around on foot and used the inner city tourist bus.

Walking was a great way to see the city. Of course we crossed the harbor in a ferry and looked around beautiful Devonport. One of the original Auckland coastal suburbs. We also opened our bank accounts in Auckland which was easy and didn't take long.

We flew down to Nelson and on day one there was a little rain. But it was the only rain we saw for 4 weeks. The rest of February and March was wonderful weather. We drove out to Motueka and the back packers. It took 40 minutes.

We quickly settled in and visited the apple pack house. The next day we looked around Motueka. I showed the girls how to use their bank cards at the ATM and at the supermarket. There were 2 supermarkets in Motueka. We checked out the internet cafes and all the local shops. Everything we needed was in Motueka which was 5 minutes drive from the backpackers.

Of course my number one priority was to check out the beautiful Kaiteriteri beach it was fantastic and soon we were regularly visiting there for swimming and coffee.

The season was a slow start so we had a few days work but also some days off until about the 26th of February. So we visited some wineries, the market in Nelson which was great, we also caught a salmon in Golden bay, went horse riding and attended a food festival and a jazz concert.

Once the girls started work we did something every weekend including sailing and hiking in Abel Tasman National Park. It was all about 10 minutes from the backpackers.

The girls found the job easy and fun and they got on well with the other workers. They meet other tourists from China and Korea who were also working in the pack house.

I left in the middle of March but the girls continued their adventures visiting a seafood festival and travelling down to Christchurch and Kaikoura where they went whale watching.

They even went sky diving!

The highlights for me were the beach, sailing, walking in the park, catching and eating our salmon. But the best part was seeing the girls grow in confidence to the point where they were happy to drive and do things on their own. Eventually they all toured the entire South Island by car. They even watched the All Blacks play rugby. 2 girls went onto drive and bus around the North Island. They even flew to Australia for a week.

I cannot list everything they did but they saw everything there was to see and had great fun.

What I enjoyed was being able to often join them for dinner after work and chat and have a beer in the peaceful location of the back packers. We had the whole place to ourselves amongst the apple trees.

Everyone went onto study English one girl stayed in Nelson at local government college and studied English for 3 months. They gave her a lovely apartment right next to the college. 2 studied in Christchurch and one went down to beautiful Wanaka during winter. They all skied and snowboarded. Of course it was cold by June in the mountains.

But the cities don't usually get snow. Rina who is staying in Nelson is lucky as spring is now coming and she will get the most of the next summer in New Zealand before she returns to Japan. A full year gets you nearly 2 summers.

It was a great adventure.

Andy Russell tour coordinator