

# New Caledonia Quickstart Guide



**Useful Information  
for planning your trip**



# Welcome to New Caledonia

**“The place where I want to be!”**



# Bienvenue en Nouvelle-Calédonie

There are so many wonderful ways and reasons for you to fall in love with New Caledonia.

In 1774, Captain Cook discovered this beautiful tropical paradise, and now it's your turn.

New Caledonia is a lot more than beautiful beaches. In fact, you'll discover a combination of experiences you will find nowhere else on earth.

A unique blend of Kanak, French and Melanesian cultures, surrounded by the world's largest lagoon and second largest coral reef, which are now on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

It is home to an archipelago of beautiful islands and features more than 900 species of coral, many of which are unique to New Caledonia.

New Caledonia is blessed with a semi-tropical climate all year round. And the warmth of the weather is only matched by that of your welcome.

It is also one of the four richest areas on earth in terms of its biodiversity, including the largest variety of endemic botanical species as well as one of the richest tropical forests in the world.

New Caledonia is a haven for lovers of nature and adventure. 'La Grande Terre' or the mainland offers a diverse range of scenery and sights to experience.

The diversity of landscapes is beyond imagination. Magnificent flora and fauna. The bush and wide open spaces. Swimming and diving in the crystal clear waters. The Melanesian tribes in the valleys are often to be discovered in beautiful settings including lush tropical vegetation.

New Caledonia also offers one of the finest gourmet experiences outside of France. Savour a dinner cooked by a Michelin trained chef. Freshly-baked croissants, baguettes and pâtisseries. Delicious fresh tropical fruits and seafoods.





New Caledonia consists of three provinces: The Southern Province which includes the cosmopolitan capital city of Nouméa and the spectacular Isle of Pines; the Northern Province including remote Melanesian villages and unspoilt ranges; and the Loyalty Islands which features three pristine palm-fringed islands – Lifou, Maré and Ouvéa.

Throughout the country you will find a strong Melanesian tradition in the architecture, arts, crafts and hospitality. This combines with a distinct French influence, creating a European style and elegance.

Enjoy it all in a level of comfort to suit you, from a palm thatched bungalow metres from the water's edge to a luxury five star hotel or resort. From an indulgent long weekend to an unforgettable longer escape.

New Caledonia really does have something for everyone. And it's all just 2 hours direct flight from Brisbane and less than 3 hours from Sydney and Auckland.

**Vive la différence!**



# Paradise is less than 3 hours away flying Aircalin



# Fly Aircalin and enjoy genuine South Pacific hospitality with a real French touch.



Aircalin is the international airline of New Caledonia – and you get a taste of our wonderful country as soon as you step on board.

The word 'calin' in French means a hug which is a reflection of our attitude when we welcome you on board every flight.

You will enjoy a relaxing ambience and atmosphere that is a combination of real Melanesian hospitality and a touch of French class.

We are a full service airline and we go out of our way to make sure that your flight is an absolute pleasure.

When you fly with Aircalin you can travel with confidence, because we operate one of the youngest and most modern fleets of Airbus aircraft in the South Pacific rim area. We also offer at least eight flights a week from Sydney to Nouméa, three from Brisbane and four from Auckland.

Our cabin service managers and flight attendants will do the utmost to ensure that your flight is smooth, comfortable, enjoyable and entertaining.



**Hibiscus 'Business' Class**

Economy class on Aircalin is in a class of its own, with our aircraft specially configured to ensure a very relaxing atmosphere and the maximum individual space available. And you can watch the miles fly by as we offer one of the finest entertainment programmes available on international flights.

Our Business Class is called Hibiscus Class, and is designed to give passengers a touch of class, with an interior inspired by New Caledonia's beautiful lagoon.

For more information contact Aircalin:

Australia - 1300 364 181 • New Zealand - 09 308 3363

Or visit: [www.aircalin.com](http://www.aircalin.com)

**Bon Voyage!**



**Hibiscus 'Business' Class**



# New Caledonia

## Useful Facts and Information

There is no better place to experience the Pacific with a “taste of France” than New Caledonia, where Melanesian tradition blends with French sophistication. This mix of stylish yet casual, French but ultimately Pacific, comes together incomparably in Nouméa, the cosmopolitan capital.

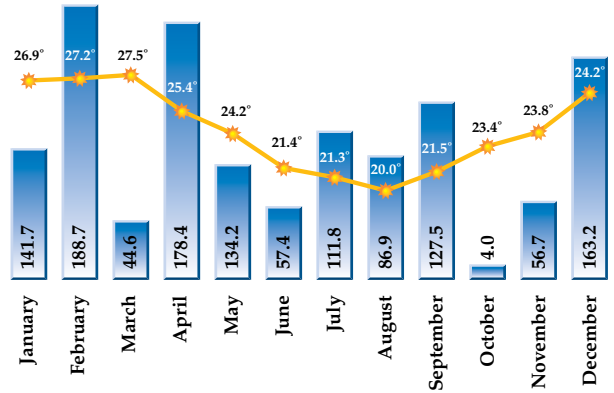
New Caledonia has the largest lagoon in the world, and UNESCO has taken an important step in making sure that it is keeping the natural wonders of this amazing destination in their true condition. New Caledonia also has the second longest reef in the world at approximately 1,600km.

### Where is New Caledonia?

New Caledonia lies in the heart of the Pacific Ocean, a mere 2 hours direct flying time from Brisbane and less than 3 hours from Sydney and Auckland. Aircalin also offers at least 8 flights per week ex Sydney, 3 flights per week ex Brisbane and 4 flights from Auckland.



Temperature in Degrees Centigrade, Rainfall in Millimetres



### Delightful Tropical Climate

New Caledonia, the ‘Land of eternal spring’, is blessed with a pleasant semi-tropical climate all year round. The warm season, from September to March, averages around 25°C, and the temperature is rarely too hot. The mild season, from April to August, averages around 20°C. This means that the water temperature stays warm enough for swimming all year round.

### What to wear

New Caledonia enjoys a pleasant and temperate climate making light clothing appropriate.

For the cooler nights (in the winter months), we recommend a couple of sweatshirts or similar and casually elegant dress wear if you are planning to go out to some of the wonderful restaurants, night-spots or casinos in Nouméa.



## Passport & Visas

If travelling on a valid Australian, New Zealand or EEC passport, you do not need a visa for stays of up to 3 months, although you will need to have a return ticket. All passports must be valid for 6 months from the date of arrival.

Some other nationalities may require a visa. For further information please contact the French consulate website: [www.ambafrance-au.org](http://www.ambafrance-au.org) or [www.ambafrance-nz.org](http://www.ambafrance-nz.org)

## Travel Insurance

It is recommended that you purchase travel insurance before departure from Australia and New Zealand.

## Vaccinations & Health

There are no requirements for vaccinations for people travelling from Australia and New Zealand.

## Medical Facilities

There are excellent medical facilities in the capital city of Nouméa - doctors, dentists, hospitals as well as pharmacies. Modern medical centres and dispensaries can be found on both the mainland and on the islands.

## Drinking Water

Tap water is drinkable and of excellent quality. Local and imported mineral water can be purchased in shops, hotels and when eating out.

## Currency

The local currency is the French Pacific Franc (XPF). Australian and New Zealand dollars and Travellers Cheques are accepted for exchange by all banks and most hotels, or at Nouméa (Tontouta) Airport.

Banks have branches in many localities, some of them with ATMs. The most common credit cards used are Visa and Mastercard, while American Express and Diners Club are readily accepted. Bankcard is not accepted.

## Time Difference

Local Time in New Caledonia is normally one hour ahead of Australian Eastern Standard Time. During the Daylight Saving Time period, the time in New Caledonia remains one hour ahead of Queensland but is then on the same time as New South Wales and Victoria.

New Caledonia is 1 hour behind New Zealand time, and 2 hours during Daylight Saving.



## Is New Caledonia an expensive destination?

New Caledonia is an affordable destination, with local products and French products surprisingly inexpensive-often cheaper than in Australia and New Zealand.

New Caledonia offers an enormous choice of dining options, with over 150 restaurants and cafés in Nouméa alone catering for all tastes and budgets. Cuisine is varied with Seafood platters, authentic French cooking, Italian, Indonesian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese and traditional Melanesian.

There are also quality supermarkets where you can gather an inexpensive selection of freshly baked baguettes, quality meats, French cheeses, pâtés and tropical fruits. Inexpensive beer and French wines and champagnes are also available at the supermarkets.



## Electricity

Electricity is 50 cycles-220V, so that most appliances will work without any problem. However, most sockets are different and an adaptor will be needed for non-French appliances (these are readily available at departure airports), although some hotels in Nouméa have New Zealand and Australian sockets.

## Languages

French is the official language, but there are about 30 different Melanesian dialects. English is widely spoken, particularly by those in the tourism industry. A few phrases in French are always welcomed by the locals.

## Accommodation

New Caledonia offers a vast array of accommodation options from 5 star hotels, to luxury apartments, to simple rural lodgings and camping sites.

## Car Hire

Rental cars in New Caledonia include the standard international franchises plus small locally owned car rental agencies. There are 6 rental car agencies that have offices at Tontouta International Airport (Nouméa Airport). To rent a car in New Caledonia the driver must be over 21 years and hold a valid driver's license. Note: Tolls apply on some major roads.

## Telecommunication Services

Internet: Major hotels have comprehensive business centres and internet facilities. There are also many internet cafés in Nouméa.

Mobile Phones: Thanks to agreements between The OPT, Vodafone and Optus, the roaming system provides the possibility of using a mobile telephone on a network without the need to change your telephone number.

It is also possible to buy a quota of communication minutes through a code card which allows the user to make local and international calls from all mobile and fixed lines.

## Romance

New Caledonia is an ideal location to get married, spend a honeymoon, celebrate an anniversary or enjoy a romantic short break.



## Shopping

Whilst New Caledonia is not a duty free haven for electronics or electrical equipment, the shopping experience can be described as truly European. You can choose from the latest in designer clothes and cosmetics from Europe, as well as a great selection of wines and other gourmet products. This is combined with a wide range of interesting Melanesian handicrafts and souvenirs.

## Business Hours

Business life has adapted to the climate, and consequently most shops and offices are open between 7.30am and 6.00pm, closing for lunch officially between 11.30am and 1.30pm. However, you will find that banks and post offices stay open throughout lunch, but close at around 3.45pm. Some shops are open on Saturday, and supermarkets are usually open on Saturday and Sunday morning.

## A Safe Destination

In 1998, the 'Nouméa Accord' was ratified by a referendum which provided for a greater autonomy for New Caledonia within the French Republic. This historic democratic decision has resulted in New Caledonia becoming a model of secure political stability and making it a very safe destination.





## Guide to Nouméa and Districts

# Things to discover in Nouméa

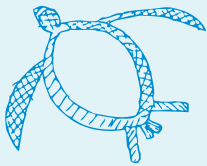
Where the French Riviera meets the South Pacific



Your holiday will start in Nouméa, a bustling cosmopolitan city with a distinct French ambience. From here there is so much to explore, including some of the world's most dazzling tropical islands.

### LEGEND

- |                           |                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Le Meridien Nouméa      | 10 Place des Cocotiers            |
| 2 NC Nouvata Park Hotel   | 11 Nouméa Aquarium                |
| 3 La Pacifique Hotel      | 12 New Caledonia Museum           |
| 4 Ramada Plaza            | 13 Nouméa Market                  |
| 5 La Promenade Hotel      | 14 Bernheim Public Library        |
| 6 Le Lagon Hotel          | 15 Saint-Joseph Cathedral         |
| 7 Novotel Surf Hotel      | 16 Zoological and Forest Park     |
| 8 Kuendu Beach Hotel      | 17 Noumea Municipal Museum        |
| 9 Tjibaou Cultural Centre | 18 Maritime History Museum        |
|                           | 19 Geological Museum              |
|                           | 20 Ouen-Toro walkways & viewpoint |
|                           | 21 Amédée Lighthouse              |
|                           | 22 Canard Island                  |
|                           | 23 Coral Palms Island Resort      |
|                           | 24 Tina Golf course               |
|                           | 25 Pierre Vernier Walk            |
|                           | 26 Anse Vata                      |
|                           | 27 Baie des Citrons               |
|                           | 28 Kuendu Beach                   |



- Le Petit Train city tours depart twice a day. Catch the Little Train for an original and fun commentary tour of Nouméa. Pick up from your hotel for a 1.5 hour tour including Nouméa Bays, Port Moselle Market, the city centre and the tropical Botanic Gardens.
- Bus Pass. Hop on and off with this shuttle service, offering 3 shuttles per day. You can use it to stop and visit Nouméa's main highlights including the Aquarium, Port Moselle morning markets, city centre, Botanical gardens, Tjibaou Cultural Centre and Ouen Toro lookout.
- La Baie de la Moselle and the famous market which is open daily from 5am to 11am. Moselle Bay shelters a large modern marina which is the departure point for boat excursions, including trips to Amédée lighthouse and many other island paradises.
- Anse Vata is a mecca for tourists and home for a wide variety of water sports. Anse Vata is also a pleasant place to go for a walk under the coconut palms. Here you will find hotels, businesses, restaurants and nightclubs, as well as the Tourism Office.
- Baie des Citrons is a very sheltered bay, this is an extremely family-friendly bay with a lovely beach, cafés, restaurants and nightclubs.



14 Le Petit Train



15 Port Moselle, Nouméa



## Nightlife

In Nouméa, especially at sunset, cafés, piano-bars and karaoke come alive with Happy Hours from 5pm to 6.30pm. Later in the evening, nightclubs open their doors to those who love dancing to the rhythms of the Pacific or international music along “Anse Vata” and “Baie des Citrons”. Or try your luck at one of the Casinos.



## A delicious experience

Cuisine plays a vital part in the way of life in New Caledonia. Where else in the South Pacific but Nouméa would you find over 150 restaurants, serving a variety of styles.

There is no shortage of Fine Dining Restaurants offering a real taste of gourmet French cuisine. You can also savour a wide selection of fine food from around the world, both à la carte and theme buffets with a show.



Chefs make a point of preparing quality cuisine using fresh lagoon and agricultural produce. You should also try mouth-watering Melanesian food such as a ‘Bougna’ – a combination of chicken, lobster or fish, with yams, bananas, sweet potatoes and coconut milk, wrapped in banana leaves and baked in the ground in a Kanak oven.



16 Preparing a Bougna



To whet your appetite, there is a wide choice of reasonably priced French wines and the local beer.

You can also succumb to the timeless temptation of French-style sidewalk cafés, or pack a picnic from the fresh array of foods available from so many shops and stalls.

## Museums and Cultural Centre

- Tjibaou Cultural Centre, designed by famous architect Renzo Piano, is one of the masters of modern architecture conveniently situated just 10 minutes from downtown Nouméa. The structure represents 10 Melanesian “Great Houses” interpreted in an artistic manner. The centre has a rich art collection and is home to many South Pacific ancient artefacts and an amazing collection of contemporary art.
- The Museum of New Caledonia is dedicated to the archeology and ethnology of the region
- The Nouméa Municipal Museum (below) was built in colonial style in 1874 and retraces the development of Nouméa.



- The Maritime History Museum features a permanent exhibition based on New Caledonia’s maritime history, from the first sailors to travel the Pacific in canoes to Captain James Cook and La Perouse.
- The New Zealand War Cemetery at Bourail.



Tjibaou Cultural Centre: Architect Renzo Piano

## Nature and Discovery

- La Place des Cocotiers. Coconut Square is a popular stumping ground for Nouméa's locals who pass by as they do their shopping or conduct their daily business.
- The Henry Millard Horseracing track. From May to October there are racing events held here.
- L' Aquarium des Lagon. The Nouméa Aquarium has a huge array of marine life. It is a real window onto the New Caledonian lagoon as it shows the splendor of the coral reefs and their inhabitants.



Nouméa Aquarium

- Ile aux Canards. Duck Island is easily accessible by taxi boat from Anse Vata beach, and is a wonderful place for an excursion for the young and old alike where you can swim and snorkel along the underwater trail, have lunch and lay back on a deck chair.



Amédée Island

- Le Phare Amédée - Amédée Island and Lighthouse is a short 45 minute crossing departing from Port Moselle, with coconut palms and beautiful white sandy beaches. A 150 year old 56 metre lighthouse from the Second Empire stands proudly. The white sand beach is surrounded by crystal clear waters, beautiful corals teeming with colourful tropical fish.

## Adventure Activities

- Kite Surfing and Wind Surfing. New Caledonia is well known on the international circuit for Kite and Windsurfing due to the favourable trade winds. Classes and hiring of equipment is readily available.



- 4WD Experience. A few hours away from Nouméa, you will get a taste of adventure for a day on the wild fascinating terrain of the Great South.
- Jet Ski. Get your adrenalin running as you explore the largest lagoon in the world, on crystal clear waters, where you have a very good chance of meeting turtles, dugongs or dolphins. Beautiful lagoons are only a jet ski ride away!
- Horse Riding. New Caledonians love horses and there are lots of horse back riding opportunities, including everything from pony rides close to Nouméa to horse treks along mountain trails or even two or three day horse rides.



- Golf. New Caledonia is an incredibly sporty destination which has 3 international golf courses, with the closest only 10 minutes from downtown Nouméa.



- **Hiking.** New Caledonia offers an exciting world of discovery for nature lovers and walkers. The mainland offers some of the best hiking in the South Pacific, with long, marked trails heading into mountain areas, where native plants and birds flourish offering a real wilderness experience.



- **Surfing.** There are so many waves that go unriden every day in New Caledonia, so try something different for a unique "French style" surf adventure. There are several surf lodges to choose from, which keep guests to a minimum to guarantee world class waves for each individual.



- **Fishing,** in all of its forms, is one of New Caledonia's very special leisure activities. For many years, New Caledonia has been seen as a destination for record-breaking catches, attracting keen fishermen from the four corners of the globe.

- **Quad Biking.** Straddled over your four-wheeled machine, go on a discovery of the Great South, accompanied by an experienced guide.



- **Helicopter Rides.** For an unforgettable experience, go on a 30 minute helicopter flight to discover the most beautiful lagoon in the world as you travel towards Amédée Lighthouse, the coral reef and its small islands



- **Diving.** New Caledonia has so much in store for you – 24,000 square kilometres of lagoon protected by a huge 1,600 kilometre coral reef, a wide variety of brilliant flora and fauna with clear, calm water.



Kanuméra Bay, Isle of Pines

## Yacht Charter

Chartering a yacht in Nouméa is a great way to have a New Caledonia vacation. The largest lagoon in the world offers more than 100 anchorages with deep water sailing to the Isle of Pines and the Loyalty Islands.

Noumea charters the largest number of yachts and power boats but others can be chartered from Isle of Pines and the Loyalty Islands.

Go on a memorable catamaran sail to a remote atoll with Dal'Ocean Charters for either a full or half day.



## Self Drive

New Caledonia has excellent roads, but you drive on the right hand side of the road. You can drive around La Grande Terre (main island), Isle of Pines or the Loyalty Islands. The speed limit is 110km/hr on La Grande Terre's open roads. Visitors will really enjoy the opportunity to do as little or as much driving as they like.

Meet the locals, go diving, hiking or perhaps explore the open plains of the west coast, or the tropical waterfalls on the east. The best way to do this is to have your own wheels to discover it all at your own pace. There is a range of accommodation options along the way.

## French Speaking Schools

Would you like to learn French or improve your French and at the same time spend a nice holiday having fun? CREIPAC is the French language school for you, a public institution dedicated to the promotion of the French language in the Pacific region.

The school is situated in old historical buildings by the sea. At CREIPAC students of all ages are taught French in a warm island atmosphere. It is open all year round and provides tailor-made teaching with fully qualified teachers who have very good experience in French as a second language.

CREIPAC also offers the opportunity of a home-stay with a local family. Whatever age or level you are, they can find a class that suits you!



## Public Transport

Nouméa has an excellent and reliable public bus system, which operates from near all major hotels to the city and major tourist destinations. Operating from 5am to 7pm weekdays, buses run every 15-20 minutes.

On weekends the schedule starts a little later and finishes a little earlier, with up to 30 minutes between departures. There are eight routes which are numbered and colour-coded for convenience.

The green bus goes through the city centre to the main beaches and through to Kuendu beach in Nouville, while the blue bus goes north to the Magenta Airport and the Tjibaou Centre.

Tickets can be purchased on board or at the main bus stations. Local bus – [www.karuiabus.com](http://www.karuiabus.com)

