Driving on the left in New Zealand

If you come from a country that drives on the right, give yourself time to adjust, because you're not just driving on the other side of the road, you're driving a motorhome.

Keep your face by the middle of the road

You're sitting on the right-hand side of the vehicle, so keep your face roughly in line with the centre line of the road. It gives you a reference point for where the left-hand side of the motorhome is, and stops you drifting towards the edge. It's particularly helpful on narrow roads and at roundabouts.

Take your time when you first collect the vehicle

Get used to:

- the width and height
- the mirrors and reversing camera
- the braking distance
- the turning circle

And don't plan a massive driving day straight after picking it up.

NZ road rules to keep you safe



Got a queue behind you? Pull over

Also be considerate of other drivers, NZ doesn't have many passing lanes or dual carriageways - pull over and let the line of traffic behind you past - they'll thank you for it!

Who gives way at intersections

- Always follow Stop and Give Way signs and traffic lights.
- If you're turning, give way to traffic that isn't turning.
- Turning right? Give way to oncoming traffic turning left.
- No signs and none of these fit? Give way to your right.
- You can't turn left on a red light, but you may get a green arrow.

Keep left

Habit takes over when you're not thinking. Keep left after every turn, and when you pull out of a campsite or petrol station first thing in the morning.

One-lane bridges

NZ has a lot of one lane bridges - the red arrow on your side means you need to give way.

Speed

The maximum speed for a larger motorhome is 90 km/h - check with your rental company what the speed limit is for your motorhome if at all unsure.

Phones

Don't use your mobile phone while driving - You will be fined if you are seen by an officer.

Parking

Unlike some other countries you can't park on the other side of the road facing the oncoming traffic. Again you could be fined. Always park on the left side of the road in the direction you are travelling.

Roundabouts

Go round clockwise. Give way to all traffic coming from your right. Indicate left before you leave. Remember the face by the middle of the road rule.

Allow more time

Winding and gravel roads take longer than the map says. Slow down, and don't plan to drive into the dark.

Stop for the view safely

Wait for a lookout or a spot where you can pull right off the road. Never stop on the road itself.

Experience the New Zealand locals know.

Where to stay tonight: on a Kiwi farm, vineyard or orchard

Private land, real hosts: park on a farm, vineyard or orchard with a host who knows the area.

Safe and quiet: your own site for the night. No crowded car parks, no knocking on the window.

Plan it in minutes: tell Josephine, our trip planner, where you're going and she lines up a place for each night.

Stay in the know: Keep up to date with road closures, weather events and fun things to do near where you're travelling.

Arrive a tourist, leave a friend.

"On arrival they quickly made us feel at home. We had a blast talking all night, like visiting family!"
Florian, Masterton · Jan 2026

"Stu was the most welcoming host … we enjoyed a warm bath under the stars and a delicious homemade pizza. Would come back in a heartbeat."
Elisha, Shaya Moya Ecosite · Feb 2026

"Janet and Andre are really friendly and welcoming hosts and we really enjoyed spending time with them."
Jeremy, Te Oranga, Whangārei · Feb 2026

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Photo: Peyman Shojaei on Unsplash (Unsplash License, free to use). Scotland, UK, another drive-on-the-left country.