

Immigration Tourism Update

September 2025

Overview

- Immigration is crucial to the Government's economic growth agenda and Immigration New Zealand (INZ) is committed to ensuring that visa processing is not a barrier to New Zealand getting the migrants we need to grow.
- INZ aims to provide a trusted and effective immigration service and is committed to processing all visa applications as quickly as possible.
- Visitor visa processing remained positive for the 2024/25 financial year:
 - Most of New Zealand's visitors do not need a visa to come here and instead can travel on a New Zealand electronic Travel Authority (NZeTA), of which more than 1.6 million were approved.
 - INZ also approved over 443,000 visitor visas.
 - Combined, more than 1.6 million people visited New Zealand in this period.
- Comparatively, from 01 January to [31 August](#) 2025:
 - Over [888,000](#) NZeTAs were approved.
 - INZ also approved [almost 274,000](#) visitor visas.
 - Combined, [over 1 million](#) people visited New Zealand in this period.
- Processing times continue to improve, the average visitor visa processing time in the 2024/2025 financial year was 7 working days. These times are improving- the average from 01 January to [31 August](#) 2025 was [5](#) working days.

Total Visitor Visas applications from all nationalities (01 July 2024 – 30 June 2025)

	Submitted	Decided	Approved	Declined	Average processing time (working days)
Total	502,146	502,809	443,283	54,657	7

Total Visitor Visas applications from all nationalities (01 January – [31 August](#) 2025)

	Submitted	Decided	Approved	Declined	Average processing time (working days)
Total	303,205	309,089	273,939	32,193	5

Visitor Visas applications – Top 5 nationalities approved & declined (01 July 2024 – 30 June 2025)

Nationality	Approved	Average processing time (working days)	Nationality	Declined	Average processing time (working days)
China	226,258	6	India	14,779	9
India	64,942	9	China	10,905	6
Philippines	26,334	6	Pakistan	3,899	16
Fiji	15,289	10	Fiji	2,494	10
Thailand	14,998	5	Philippines	2,379	6

Visitor Visas applications – Top 5 nationalities approved & declined (01 January – [31 August 2025](#))

Nationality	Approved	Average processing time (working days)	Nationality	Declined	Average processing time (working days)
China	137,932	5	India	9,136	8
India	39,926	6	China	4,866	9
Philippines	17,183	4	Pakistan	2,933	12
Thailand	10,916	4	Fiji	1,540	22
Fiji	9,386	6	Philippines	1,316	11

China

- China is a very important market for New Zealand, providing opportunities for our tourism sector and connecting friends and family.
- INZ carefully monitors application flows and trends to ensure the right resources are in place to meet demand from this important market.
- New Zealand visitor visa offerings for Chinese nationals are more generous than other groups of travellers, reflecting the importance of the relationship with China. Most Chinese visitors receive a five-year multiple entry visitor visa, making it easier for Chinese visitors to return to New Zealand.
- For the 2024/2025 financial year, we received over 236,000 visitor visas.
- Processing times went from 7 working days for the 2023/24 financial year, to 6 working days in the 2024/2025 financial year. These times are improving - from 01 January to [31 August 2025](#) the average processing time is [5](#) working days.
- In May, the Head of INZ and Deputy Chief Operating Officer visited China to promote local engagement and meet with key stakeholders, namely in the education and tourism sectors.
- The visit provided valuable insights into the Chinese market, particularly around visa processing expectations and the importance of streamlined, accessible information.
- In June, the Associate Deputy Secretary joined the Prime Minister's official delegation to China, reinforcing the significance of the market and its technology-driven nature.

- These trips solidified that the Chinese market responds strongly to clear branding and expect fast, reliable communication. While language is less of a barrier due to widespread use of translation tools, the demand for timely and accurate content remains high.
- The Government recently announced changes to make it easier for Chinese tourists to travel to New Zealand as part of their plan to drive economic growth and increase the number of Chinese tourists.
- From November 2025, Chinese visitors who hold a valid Australian visitor, work, student or family visa travelling to New Zealand from Australia will be able to come to New Zealand for up to 3 months using only a New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority (NZeTA) rather than applying for a visa, as part of a trial for 12 months.
- From [late October](#) 2025, Chinese nationals will also be able to transit through New Zealand on a Transit NZeTA, without having to apply for a separate transit visa. More detail about these changes will be available and communicated mid-September.
- INZ now has more support in place to help make it easier for Chinese tourists applying for a visa. This includes
 - o additional contact points for the Chinese travel industry with staff based in China to support Approved Destination Status (ADS) agents, including a phone number they can call for direct support; and
 - o web content in Simplified Chinese: [Visitor Visa application guide for citizens of China : Immigration New Zealand](#).

China Visitor Visas (01 July 2024 – 30 June 2025)

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals (person)
All Visitor Visas	236,071	237,955	226,258	95%	208,527
General Visitor Visa	141,423	143,092	132,358	92%	146,805
Business Visitor Visa	53,325	53,289	52,763	99%	7,462
Group Visitor Visas	36,885	37,040	36,919	100%	50,580

China Visitor Visas (01 January – [31 August](#) 2025)

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals (person)
All Visitor Visas	138,724	143,244	137,932	96%	137,548
General Visitor Visa	77,455	80,379	75,573	94%	97,355

Business Visitor Visa	34,302	35,135	34,831	99%	4,331
Group Visitor Visas	24,369	25,019	24,981	100%	33,433

China – All Visitor Visas (YTD 2025)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Submitted	17,253	14,480	21,363	18,114	14,667	16,746	18,773	16,639				
Decided	21,992	13,720	20,418	18,166	16,946	15,670	20,088	15,879				
Approved	21,212	12,975	19,591	17,540	16,310	15,205	19,495	15,298				
Approval rate	96%	95%	96%	97%	96%	97%	97%	96%				
Average Processing time (working days)	6	6	5	5	5	4	4	4				
Arrivals	30,682	15,232	16,895	19,227	13,397	8,326	17,147	16,643				

China – General Visitor Visa (2025 YTD)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Submitted	8,354	7,963	11,849	9,482	9,193	10,372	10,232	9,836				
Decided	12,059	7,409	11,553	9,639	9,643	9,518	11,505	8,964				
Approved	11,371	6,755	10,780	9,049	9,068	9,110	10,983	8,437				
Approval rate	94%	91%	93%	94%	94%	96%	95%	94%				
Average Processing time (working days)	8	6	6	5	5	5	4	4				
Arrivals	30,682	10,879	10,078	12,237	8,908	6,143	13,436	11,906				

China – Business Visitor Visa (2025 YTD)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Submitted	4,561	3,359	4,293	4,636	3,306	4,446	5,456	4,209				
Decided	5,224	3,243	3,930	4,019	4,601	4,272	5,537	4,322				
Approved	5,169	3,205	3,900	3,984	4,566	4,236	5,498	4,295				
Approval rate	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%				
Average Processing time (working days)	5	6	4	5	5	4	4	2				
Arrivals	381	408	622	582	679	529	456	672				

China – Group Visitor Visa (2025 YTD)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Submitted	4,048	2,870	4,788	4,023	1,819	1,632	2,793	2,393				
Decided	4,326	2,740	4,514	4,508	2,309	1,558	2,719	2,340				

Approved	4,326	2,726	4,508	4,507	2,308	1,557	2,713	2,337				
Approval rate	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%				
Average Processing time (working days)	5	5	5	4	4	3	4	3				
Arrivals	6,032	3,624	5,909	6,132	3,612	1,421	2,874	3,829				

India

- India is a very important market for New Zealand and is the second largest source of visa required visitors to New Zealand.
- From 1 December 2025, Immigration New Zealand will only accept police clearance certificates issued by a Regional Passport Office of the Indian Minister of External Affairs when required from Indian national visa applicants living in India.
- This will ensure that the police clearance certificates we receive are more consistent and is in line with the requirements of other countries.
- In 2024, INZ decided around 85,000 visitor visa applications from Indian nationals, which accounted for 16% of the total number of visitor visa applications submitted that year.
- For the 2024/2025 financial year, we had over 77,000 Indian visitor arrivals and decided over 80,000 visitor visa applications from Indian nationals. Comparatively, from 01 January to 31 August 2025 we had over 45,000 Indian visitor arrivals and approved over 39,000 visitor visa applications from Indian nationals.
- In March, the Head of INZ travelled to India and gained some valuable insights about the travel movements of Indian nationals, including that there are a growing number of people with disposable income, who in turn are favouring shorter and more frequent trips to a variety of destinations. This means Indian nationals are booking more travel at short notice and what they want from INZ is certainty about being able to travel on chosen dates.
- In July, Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) hosted Kiwi Link India 2025, an offshore event designed to build connections between representatives of New Zealand's tourism industry and key travel industry professionals across India.
- Representatives from INZ participated in the event which took place in Goa and Delhi, with the aim of informing the Indian tourism sector about New Zealand's immigration system requirements. INZ was commended for its efficient processing times, receiving positive feedback overall.
- Participating in Kiwi Link, and the positive feedback, reflects the shared commitment between MBIE, INZ, and Tourism New Zealand to deliver great service and build strong, lasting relationships to help grow our tourism industry.
- Last year, after attending Kiwi Link in 2024, we put in place a range of initiatives to improve the timeliness of visitor visa process, including a new approach to processing visitor visa applications from large family groups to ensure a consistent experience for all family members.
- These initiatives have contributed to a reduction in processing times for Indian nationals from an average of 10 working days for the 2023/24 financial year, to 9 working days in the 2024/2025 financial year. Processing times continue to improve - from 01 January to 31 August 2025 the average processing time is 6 working days.

- INZ has also been working hard to inform the Indian market on visa requirements which has led to a significant improvement in the quality of the applications that INZ receives. For the 2024/2025 financial year approval rates for Indian visitor visas were at 80% and remain sitting at 80% from 01 January to [31 August 2025](#).
- To reflect the importance of the Indian market and ensure we are well connected, INZ has established a dedicated position in our New Delhi office to work directly with and provide support to travel agents in the market.

India Visitor Visas (01 July 2024 – 30 June 2025)

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals (person)
All Visitor Visas	75,882	76,196	61,142	80%	77,517
General Visitor Visa	63,230	64,121	50,451	79%	66,976
Business Visitor Visa	3,717	3,727	3,453	93%	2,185
Group Visitor Visas	760	647	508	79%	748

India Visitor Visas (01 January – [31 August 2025](#))

Category	Submitted (applications)	Decided (applications)	Approved (applications)	Approval rate	Arrivals (person)
All Visitor Visas	49,013	49,889	39,926	80%	45,436
General Visitor Visa	39,839	41,280	32,369	78%	38,559
Business Visitor Visa	2,595	2,643	2,439	93%	1,520
Group Visitor Visas	831	668	582	87%	608

India – All Visitor Visas (2025 YTD)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Submitted	6,149	5,887	6,763	5,782	5,433	5,228	6,524	6,978				
Decided	6,442	6,014	7,727	5,879	5,813	5,128	6,590	6,348				

Approved	5,190	4,996	6,218	4,721	4,679	4,010	5,246	5,134				
Approval rate	81%	83%	80%	80%	80%	78%	80%	81%				
Average Processing time (working days)	12	12	8	4	5	4	4	5				
Arrivals	4,052	6,092	7,539	6,566	7,812	5,104	3,655	4,760				

India – General Visitor Visa (2025 YTD)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Submitted	5,162	4,824	5,225	4,672	4,388	4,076	5,400	5,669				
Decided	5,613	5,052	6,194	4,915	4,701	3,944	5,460	5,240				
Approved	5,188	4,996	4,821	3,884	3,709	2,977	4,273	4,142				
Approval rate	81%	83%	78%	79%	79%	75%	78%	79%				
Average Processing time (working days)	12	11	7	4	4	4	4	5				
Arrivals	3,627	5,301	6,360	5,626	6,860	4,252	2,891	3,642				

India – Business Visitor Visa (2025 YTD)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Submitted	281	303	347	367	280	316	387	312				
Decided	259	309	389	359	312	308	384	305				
Approved	237	293	366	335	285	283	355	281				
Approval rate	92%	95%	94%	93%	91%	92%	92%	92%				
Average Processing time (working days)	11	10	6	4	4	3	3	5				
Arrivals	90	176	206	201	223	156	207	261				

India – Group Visitor Visa (2025 YTD)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Submitted	32	44	105	36	81	182	16	335				
Decided	35	34	93	43	91	173	32	167				
Approved	22	15	84	34	82	164	25	156				
Approval rate	63%	44%	90%	79%	90%	95%	78%	93%				
Average Processing time (working days)	8	5	4	5	6	4	4	5				
Arrivals	36	38	12	146	46	60	63	207				

**Please note the arrivals data in each table for India has also been updated for January and February in this report as the arrival data in the March update was incorrect. We apologise for any confusion this may have caused.*