

Some Aspects of Māori Culture

General

- a. natural shyness
- b. embarrass someone and you will lose their respect
- c. sharing food is the norm
- d. humour is important, but laughing with, not laughing at
- e. people and their welfare are the most important concern; be kind to one another
- f. do not sit on tables
- g. no one is really wrong, it's just that some ways are better than others
- h. wait for grace to be said before eating
- i. 'Māori time' is based on completion of tasks rather than the clock

Meeting others

- a. take food or another small gift when visiting
- b. awahi, that is hugging and/or kissing and/or hongī, is an accepted part of greeting everyone, from the oldest to the very youngest
- c. shoes are often removed when going indoors
- d. meetings are usually opened and closed with a spiritual acknowledgement (karakia, blessing)
- e. a kapu ti should be available as soon as greetings are completed
- f. visitors should not be left on their own
- g. accept gifts, knowing that in time it will be your turn to give
- h. once you have been accepted into the group it is appropriate to help with general tasks such as doing dishes
- i. do not start cleaning up while guests are still at the table or present

Communication

- a. eyes lowered when being spoken to is a sign of respect; to ask someone to look you in the eye can be a form of challenge
- b. movement of shoulders, eyebrows, and other body language is often used as a means of communication
- c. using te reo, for example in greetings, is usually appreciated; even if you make a mistake, there is recognition that you are making an effort
- d. emphasis should be on the positive: frequent praise brings out the best in people
- e. correct pronunciation is very important because mispronunciation risks saying something very different from what you intended
- f. listening carefully is an appreciated skill
- g. dozing during speeches does not necessarily mean that the person is not paying attention
- h. do not start to speak until the previous speaker is completely finished
- i. do not cross between a speaker and the audience
- j. silence can mean disagreement (rather than agreement)
- k. conflict can be very heated, but people still respect each other even after strong things have been said
- l. using whakatauki (Māori proverbs) and/or Māori images attracts Māori interest

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