

## A New Land: Aotearoa, ‘The Land of the Long White Cloud’

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New Zealand lies in the South Pacific Ocean in the Southern Hemisphere, half way between the Equator and South Pole in the latitude of the Roaring Forties. It sits about 2200 km or 1400 miles east of Australia and 10,400 km or 6,500 miles south-west of the USA and it takes at least 24 hours of direct flying to travel from Auckland, our northern most and largest city, to Ireland. It consists of two main islands, now rather unimaginatively named the North and South Island, and a third much smaller island, called Stewart Island, which is about 25 kilometres or 15.5 miles off the South Island. It is a small country, similar in geographical size to the United Kingdom or Japan, with a much smaller population and a relatively brief recorded history. According to the New Zealand Statistics department, on 28 April 2016 the population of NZ was 4,683,413. However before the 1200s this country was not populated by humans at all (Worthy, Holdaway, 2002, p. 2).

Physical isolation and geographical variety are strong factors in New Zealand’s independence and individuality in art, music and literature which had all become distinctive by the early 20th century. Surprisingly its individuality in food production and presentation has taken longer to develop. Perhaps this is because of the very temperate climate which has made it possible to grow many introduced crops brought by respective migrations of settlers since the 1300’s, and which encouraged those people to continue with their original and traditional food styles and preferences.

The first migrants sailed in double-hulled canoes from East Polynesia, among the last such voyages in the exploration and settlement of the Pacific Islands, with canoes landing in several dispersed sites around the coast of New Zealand. Māori tribes derive ancestry from this migration, which even today is captured in oral tradition, as the recital of genealogy or ‘whakapapa’ (Sinclair 1980, p.22). Although each canoe and subsequent tribe had names for their new landing places and landmarks, the name given to the overall land in Māori was Aotearoa, which means ‘the land of the long white cloud’.

Some 300 years later, the southern part of the country was next discovered by the Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman, in 1642. He named it ‘Staten Landt’, believing it to be part of a large continent he had already charted by that name and which is now called Cape Horn. But to avoid confusion, Tasman’s cartographer renamed it ‘Nieuw Zeeland’, after one of the two maritime provinces of the Netherlands (Wilson 2012, p.4).

Then as Captain James Cook first circumnavigated the country and charted the coastline and islands in 1769, the anglicised name became accepted.

At Mercury Bay on 15 November 1769, and at Queen Charlotte Sound on 30 January 1770, [Cook] made proclamations which helped ensure that Britain, and not another European power such as France, became New Zealand’s mother country (Wilson, 2012, 4).

New Zealand became a separate colony of the United Kingdom in 1840 and separate from New South Wales in Australia, to which it was administratively joined until that point. Interestingly, what are now called the North, South and Stewart islands were first known respectively as ‘the provinces of New Ulster, New Munster and New Leinster’ (Watters, 2014, p.1).

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### New Ideas for a new country

The country emerged in the early 20th Century as self-governing, with a growing reputation for political independence on the world stage, despite its original ties with Mother England.

Each year, on the 6th February, New Zealand commemorates Waitangi Day, on which a treaty was signed between the new English immigrants, led by the royal representative, Hobson, and representatives of some of the indigenous Māori tribes, in 1840 (Orange, 2011). Much of the subsequent debate, literature and even bloodshed in New Zealand’s history have been over this small but significant piece of paper. Māori claim indigeneity in New Zealand and have vigorously asserted this since early times of colonisation. Land wars between Māori and government forces in the 1860s incited debate about Māori representation in the newly formed constitution, and, in 1867, four parliamentary seats were set up specifically for Māori.

Other law changes in 1893 and 1896 completed the almost total separation of the Māori and European electoral systems. From then until 1975 only so-called half-castes (people with one Māori and one European parent) were allowed to choose which seats they wished to vote in (Atkinson, 2014, p.1).

After nearly 100 years of separate votes, but continuing interracial marriage and confusion of ethnicity, the four Māori electoral seats were finally abandoned in 1975 as they were seen to be tokenistic and encouraging an apartheid form of government. But the more recently created Māori Party, and additional Māori representation in parliament retain strong support.

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In 1893 a new Electoral Act became law, as a result of which, 'New Zealand became the first self-governing country in the world in which all women had the right to vote in parliamentary elections' (Atkinson, McIntyre, 2016, p. 3). This 1893 Electoral Act which gave all New Zealand women the vote included Māori women.

For over a century the colonists asserted a dominant influence on life in New Zealand and many indigenous cultural practices were suppressed or discouraged. After 1840 English was made the official language of New Zealand and Māori were expected to assimilate with Pākehā (non-Māori) ways of being, in all areas of life. From 1840 until approximately 1940, the dominant domestic, artistic, cultural and political conventions were British.

Tribal life centres on extended family groups which 'belong' to a piece of land or area. Māori call themselves Tangata Whenua, people of the land. There is a tribal marae or meeting place, and here many social functions, discussions, meetings decision-making, celebrations and rites of passage such as funerals occur. Although many Māori left these centres to seek work and prospects elsewhere in the new era, the late 19th and early 20th centuries, their family ties were not severed, and many still returned to their home marae for key moments or events. These gatherings most often centred upon or culminated in sharing food and the strength of these cultural ties, and above all the use of the language were preserved.

In the late 20th century a Māori 'Renaissance', an attempt by activist groups and key political leaders, to 'reconcile Aotearoa with New Zealand' (Hill, 2009, p.149) served to revolutionise the country into acceptance of its biculturalism. One of the puns used in this campaign was to interpret the Māori name of New Zealand as being 'Aotearoa, the land of the wrong white crowd' (Johnson, 2005, p.137). Since the 1980's New Zealand/Aotearoa now has three official languages; English, Māori and New Zealand Sign Language.

People have the right to speak in Maori or New Zealand Sign Language and they can be used in legal proceedings with interpreters. Māori is also taught in most schools and there are Māori immersion educational facilities (NZ Human Rights Commission).

Even now with greater immigration from Pacific, Asian and Eastern European countries and more diversity of language in New Zealand, there is a strong sense of preservation and advocacy for the Māori language, from both Māori and Pākehā (non-Māori) New Zealanders. There are Māori language radio stations, television channels (one nationally funded) newsletters, websites and magazines and a growing number of practitioners of the language. In education, the entire range, from early childhood centres to universities, offer courses and qualifications in Te Reo Māori, (Māori language) as well as teaching other subjects in Māori, such as Education, Social

Sciences, and English with a Māori cultural focus, at the branches of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, or specialist Māori tertiary colleges. This strong biculturalism has brought with it a stronger appreciation of indigenous ways of making and eating food, or kai, (a word which is the Māori term for food) and new ways to promulgate this message. But it has been a slow-cooked revolution.

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### Māori food practices; Pre-colonisation

When Māori first came to New Zealand they brought seed stock and some animals with them from East Polynesia (Anderson, 2002, p.2). New Zealand has few indigenous plants considered 'vegetables', but two examples still in frequent use are pūhā, (sowthistle) and an acidic form of spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*), called New Zealand spinach (de Lang, 2008). Māori traditionally consumed these, along with parts of native plants such as fern roots and cabbage tree hearts as vegetables, and introduced the yam, taro from Polynesia, also kūmara (sweet potato) and gourd which had already been introduced to the islands from South America via East Polynesia. Other foodstuffs brought with these settlers were paper mulberry and the Pacific cabbage tree (*Cordyline fruticosa*). But it was too cold for tropical plants from their home islands, such as coconut, breadfruit and banana. The Polynesians also introduced the dog and the rat, but there is no evidence of any other mammal being introduced in skeleton remains from this time (Irwin, 2012, p.7).

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, Māori were great hunters and gatherers and lived on birds and fish cooked with wild herbs and roots. However they had no metal or ceramic cooking vessels and methods of cookery were severely limited as the only containers to hold liquid were Hue (gourds) or bowls made from wood or stone. One major culinary feature which remains popular was the use of wet steam & smoke to cook food in an underground oven, (umu or hāngi) in which Maori could roast and steam large feasts or banquets (hakari), using baskets and wrapped leaves to separate each food item. In several parts of New Zealand they also used natural geothermal areas to heat food in hot pools or used hot rocks to fry or steam. Their diet relied on seafood, and the abundant bird life for protein, including our native bird the kiwi and causing the extinction of one of the largest birds on earth, the moa among other species (Anderson, 2002, p. 20). The most common sea food was shell fish; an abalone they called paua, and a clam-like shell fish they called pipi or toheroa and these are still enjoyed today. All plants and creatures gathered from the sea were called kai moana collectively as well as having individual names. Their pre-European diet is also noteworthy for having had no form of alcohol, despite later developing food practices based on fermentation. The sweet potato (kumara) was an important crop and cultivation was taken very seriously as it was a main source of carbohydrate. Large plantations were sown and worked

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on collectively, with prayers and chants intoned throughout (Leach, 1984). Planting for this crop was based upon the lunar cycle, usually when the moon's fullness was rising in the middle days of the cycle, and was harvested in early winter, as the constellation of Matariki, known in the north as the Pleiades, was visible in the southern sky (Davidson, 1987). After their long growing season, kumara were harvested in large baskets and often stored in earth pits, like the ice houses of old, or when cured, in small huts raised on posts, called pātaka, along with other food such as dried fish, preserved birds and seed, to deter predators such as rats (Wright and Cook, 2012, p.2).

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### The colonial period

After the Europeans came, Māori quickly adopted several of the imported ingredients and developed their own ways of treating them. Their most unusual development was for maize which Māori started soaking in sacks in rivers and fermenting, as a food preservation method, during periods of intertribal conflict in the early 19th century (Burton, 2013). The name – kaanga pirau (rotten or stinking corn) – indicates the method and the effect. Later generations who could get past the rotten smell developed a taste for it, which many Māori retain in the 2000s.

Another important introduced food was the pig, distinguished as two main breeds; the 'Captain Cooker', introduced by Cook as early as the 1770's and the kunekune pig which, although called a native pig (the Māori word kune means fat or round), were probably also introduced (Irwin, 2012, p.7).

The introduction of the potato, sugar and white flour transformed Māori ways of cooking and introduced European tastes. But the new ingredients also encouraged them to develop their own methods and recipes. Most notable and still popular today is Māori bread, Rewana, made with a potato yeast, a kind of sour dough, and the 'boil up' in which a combination of meat and vegetable was steamed together. Puha, the bitter green mentioned earlier and pork are the most common basis of a 'boil up' (Royal and Scott, 2013), which is a one pot stew-like meal cooked in a watery stock.

Further significant additions to the diet of the new colony came with the introduction of sheep, cows, poultry and bees, for farming, and rabbits, deer opossum and goats for hunting. For cultivation – as well as the potato, corn and wheat – onions, brassicas, pumpkins, marrows and squash all flourished in the temperate climate and fertile soil as did many fruit trees. The Tainui tribe of the Waikato area I now live in became renowned for the peach orchards which they developed along the fertile banks of the Waikato River and which they then used for freight and transport;

By the mid-1850s baskets of fruit were transported to Port Waikato by canoe, bound for the Auckland

markets. By 1863 Tainui [tribe] owned 39 schooners which travelled the Pacific and to Australia trading vast quantities of produce (Peachgrove School website, accessed 27 April 2016).

The majority of Pākehā (non-Māori) immigrants to New Zealand after 1840 were of British descent, and so it is not surprising that nineteenth-century British settlers in New Zealand tried as much as possible to retain the food traditions of their homeland. With the development of regular trading ships, and productive farming methods, they were able to import their standard fare, or reproduce it. An important difference is that with the readily available meat in the wild and under domestication, the settlers' diet was more carnivorous, especially for the poor, than had been the case in the home country (Burton, 2009, p.10). Mutton, occasionally lamb, became the main meat, while pork and beef were more for special occasions. 'Colonial Goose' or stuffed mutton, was a standard roast dish for Sundays, although its avian namesake, the goose, has never been cultivated or farmed commercially in New Zealand, except by small holders at markets. Interestingly poultry and game birds were not traditionally cooked and even in my childhood, in the mid-20th century, a roast chicken was a rare treat, although eggs were plentiful. Along with eggs, butter and milk and a rather basic cheddar style cheese were also well provided, and with so many settlers or communities being isolated from each other, with no railroads until the 1880s and few very rough roads, households had to be self-sufficient. From these earliest times the traditions of home gardens and home baking have been strong, with scones, sponges, fruit cakes and baked puddings among the most prevalent (Veart, 2008 p. 200). With the advent of refrigerated shipping in the 1880s New Zealand became an exporter of primary produce, effectively one vast farm, producing butter, milk products, meat and wool for the British Isles as its chief market. Boiled, fried or roasted mutton, potato, silver beet (chard) or cabbage with the addition of carrot, pumpkin or kumara became the base meal of New Zealanders as they moved into the 20th century.

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### The post-colonial period - the Empire bites hard

The country retained its strong loyalty to Britain, sending soldiers to fight in the Boer War and even after gaining independent status as a dominion, in 1907, to fight with Britain and the Allies in World Wars I and II. After the Second World War many changes began to occur in the lifestyles and culinary practices of New Zealanders. American servicemen had used New Zealand as a base for the Pacific theatre of war, and brought with them significant food influences; coffee as opposed to tea drinking, soft drinks, biscuits or cookies candy, chewing gum and a liking for a wider range of cakes such as chocolate, coffee, and nut cakes than had been popular before.

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Another change that occurred during the two World Wars was that New Zealand military staff posted in diverse countries acquired an awareness of new food and tastes, even those who were prisoners. My father was typical of this change. Interred in an Italian Prisoner of War camp from 1940-1942, he returned to New Zealand with a love of garlic, beans, tomatoes and salads; all of which he cultivated in his extensive vegetable garden along with potatoes, cabbages, carrots and pumpkins. Others returned from France, Greece, the Pacific or Asia, having experienced hospitality and friendship with new tastes and textures of food. When New Zealand opened doors to refugees after World War II, the new migrants brought with them their own traditional food ideas, eventually laying the connections to import new products. Asian food markets and restaurants, Jewish, Italian Greek delicatessens and Belgian butcheries became established in the main centres, although all had to focus upon a British style of staple food as well as their own additions. In Wellington, the Greek migrants opened oyster bars and fish and chip shops, but also began to import olive oil, olives, salted fish and feta cheese for their own people (Pittaway, 2014, p.3). Vineyards were planted by Dalmatian and Italian immigrants, although it took another four decades before wine would rival beer as the drink of the nation.

The settlement and development of New Zealand has coincided with world-wide advances in technology and communications, to which we have been willing and ready adapters; photography, cinema, telephone, radio, television and of course the internet. All of these have contributed to documenting and dispersing a growing awareness of our own history and identity, while linking us with each other and the outside world. Radio was the most significant medium from the 1920s until the 1960s when television became widespread.

These influences coincided with the emergence of an important media figure on radio called 'Aunt Daisy', with a regular morning show which ran from the 1930s until the 1960s. This was the alias of an indefatigable broadcaster, Maude Basham, who had retained work in radio throughout the financial depression of the 1930s and become her household's breadwinner when her husband lost his own job. Her radio show invited recipes from listeners, and discussed new household appliances and products (it was part of the national commercial network of radio stations and relied heavily upon sponsorship). Aunt Daisy's show was broadcast nationwide and generated an annual cookbook and booklets of handy hints and homilies (Pittaway, 2013, p.5). Recipes in these books show the changes in technology, ingredients and food styling, from pioneer; brawn, Cornish stew (Basham M. B., 1945); to proudly nationalised; kumara tart (Basham M. B., 1945, p. 24), Pukeko (a swamp bird) Casserole (Basham M. B., 1948, p. 89), Maori Kisses, kiwi biscuits (Basham B. E., 1968, p. 82). After many travels abroad, Basham particularly favoured the American preferences for combining sweet and savoury flavours, such as in glazed ham and 'French' toast.

(Veart, 2008, p. 201). However 'the meat and three veg' format remained the traditional 'kiwi' meal, occasionally enhanced as a casserole, or the larder or refrigerator stocks were less frequently augmented with game, or fish.

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### The emergence of a modern New Zealand cuisine

After the introduction of television in 1960, as a government-driven enterprise, shows were initially bought in from Britain and the only locally made productions were news and quiz shows for half a decade. However a national New Zealand television industry grew, with home-grown and produced music, drama, comedy entertainment and documentary programmes. This included the 'Galloping Gourmet' cooking show, in which the English born Graham Kerr became New Zealand's first television celebrity chef (NZOnscreen 2016). With an ex-army training and a European perspective, Kerr's lively and witty style made him a household name in New Zealand in the late 1960s, although his use of cream and wine in main dish recipes earned him criticism from both weight watchers and teetotal groups. Even more extravagant were two British cooks called Hudson and Halls, who were partners on screen from 1976 until 1984 (and in life, before the homosexual law reform bill was passed in 1986). But none of these chefs did more than titillate the tastes of the emerging middle classes, who were keen to experiment with new produces such as avocados, shrimps, and fondues, and learn about wine. For the majority of people the British influenced diet, augmented by home grown vegetables and fruit, and which by now had expanded to include fish and chips and pies, battered seafood such as oysters or crab, especially as takeaways, was perfectly satisfactory. A 'slap up' meal out was still unusual, although there were new restaurants and specialist eateries opening. But roast meat and steaks with chips, or baked vegetables presided as the most popular restaurant food (Burton, 2009).

Another important media figure who has continued to be a significant influence on households though her work on radio, television and as a prolific writer of cookbooks, is Alison Holst, who trained as a domestic scientist and originally taught at cooking schools, but after success as a cooking demonstrator and then host of several television cooking shows, was also employed by various marketing boards to promote New Zealand produce at home and abroad and to diversify the meals and dishes put on the average family table (Holst, 2011, p.112). Holst has produced over one hundred book titles since the 1970s and the titles alone indicate her concern for the ordinary householder to extend the range of the domestic menu; 'Food without fuss' (1972), 'Meals without meat' (1990), 'the Microwave Cookbook' (1982), 'the Muffin Cookbook' (1994), 'Best Potato Recipes' (1995), 'The Very Easy Vegetarian Cookbook' (1998). In the 1980s Holst was the face of an advertising campaign for The New Zealand Egg Marketing Board with the slogan, 'When there's an egg

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in the house there's a meal in the house' (Holst, 2011, p. 160). Her recipes and books have tended to emphasize the more relaxed lifestyle of New Zealanders, and show influences from many of our Pacific neighbours, such as; recommending the use of coconut and tropical fruit, the Pacific Islands; the barbecue, whose use we share with Australia as a popular summer cooking appliance; salads and whole foods from California; stir-fries and spicy sauces or marinades from South East Asia. While other chefs such as Peter Gordon have been acknowledged as introducing 'Fusion Cooking' to New Zealand, Alison Holst certainly made the way ready for this, over decades of influence.

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### The Empire bites back

Since the later twentieth century, there has been a particularly strong relationship with streams of immigrants arriving from New Zealand's immediate neighbours, the Pacific. With the liberalisation of immigration laws in the 1980s and the arrival of many new Asian migrants, New Zealand cuisine expanded to include Thai, Japanese, Malaysian, Vietnamese and regional Chinese fare in both restaurant and takeaway food offerings.

'The seven largest ethnicities among Pacific peoples are Cook Island, Fijian, Niuean, Samoan, Tokelauan, Tongan and Tuvaluan peoples. In New Zealand, ethnicity is self-defined and people can and do belong to more than one (NZ Govt. statistics 'Population' 2010).

Several other major political changes to life in New Zealand have had long-reaching impact upon the culinary life and contributed to this slow burning revolution against the food of the British Empire. The most important was that in 1973 Britain joined the EEC, The European Economic Community and effectively severed the ties of loyalty to guarantee purchase of New Zealand's primary produce. After the shock of betrayal it became clear that we no longer 'had to' produce British styled food. We could develop our own styles and tastes more according to the relaxed and informal society that we had become. We could play with ingredients and means of production. Informal, domestic forms of cooking such as the barbecue could be celebrated. Fish and poultry became more popular and prevalent, as the primary producers tried to diversify to reach new markets. The kiwi-styled burger with salad and beetroot became a popular takeaway, well before the arrival of McDonald's fast food stores and food writers in magazines, on television and radio began to challenge firmly held traditions such as cooking a hot midday Christmas dinner, in the middle of summer.

In addition to food changes in the lifestyles of New Zealanders, gradual changes in the alcohol licensing laws have also contributed to changing patterns of behavior with drinking, including what is consumed and also how often and where it comes from. Until the 1970s public houses closed at 6 o'clock, and restaurants struggled to get licensed to sell liquor. Then in the 1980s the Sale of Liquor

Act loosened these rules and also made it possible for supermarkets to sell alcohol, shortly after which, in the 1990s the legal drinking age was lowered to 18. All of these shifts in regulation coincided with a growing wine industry which has flourished since the 1980s, and, in the last twenty years or so, a boutique beer movement has gained appeal with a younger clientele (Devlin, 2015).

The 'Whole Earth' movement endorsed many of the practices New Zealanders had already been using in our homes and gardens, and also served to bring to the fore many Māori practices of sustainability, collectivism and sharing of food, as well as a recognition that there was a heritage which had been ignored on our very shores. The 'Māori Renaissance' movement was supported by both Pakeha and Māori (Hill, 2009, p.170) and while it was a political movement to gain recognition for rights promised to Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi but not given in reality, it also led to a wider representation of Māori in media and entertainment as well as in politics. One of the leaders of a revival of Māori food gathering and preparation is Charles Pipi Tukukino Royal, a former army chef who was named New Zealand Innovative Chef of the Year in 2003 (Kinaki website, 2001). Royal has set up an industry harvesting and packaging native herbs (kinaki) for local and international use, and since 2003 has overseen the addition of these flavours, such as horopito (Māori pepper plant), pikopiko, (edible fern fronds) and kawakawa (Māori bush basil) to dishes served at homes and in restaurants (Royal, 2010).

When a government sponsored Māori television channel was launched in 2000, after a long gestation period and several false starts, it was not expected to survive in the competitive market driven environment of the media. However, it is a successful channel providing news, drama, reality television shows in Māori language, with English subtitles or the reverse. Inexpensive older American or British comedy shows such as 'Mr. Ed, the talking horse' have been brought in then dubbed with Māori language voice-overs. There have been a number of Māori cooking shows on both mainstream and Māori television channels, as it is now such a strong genre for programming. Māori television unashamedly copies many internationally popular brands, such as 'Masterchef' to adapt to a tribal competition, 'Marae kai Masters', where pairs of people from different tribal marae or meeting houses, take up culinary challenges through elimination rounds (Māori television website). Other shows feature seafood or kai moana, hunting, 'on the road' styled series, as well as shows that celebrate local and Pacific food styles or stylists, ('Kia ora' with Ann Thorp, 'Cam's kai' with former New Zealand 'Masterchef' runner up, Cameron Petley). Most recently a significant partnership has grown between international chef Peter Gordon and Māori television, in a series called 'Fusion feasts', in which he visits marae and tribes around New Zealand, working with local people to create menus that incorporate traditional Māori with international flavours ('Fusion feasts', Māori Television website).

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In a newspaper interview Gordon, who runs four restaurants in London, explains that he has a Māori father and tribal connection by blood, but felt 'a disconnection; culturally diluted'. He goes on to state:

Going foraging with Charles Royal and finding wild asparagus was amazing... Also, to my shame, I didn't know we had indigenous wild mushrooms... (Daniells, 2014).

This newly merged cooking is best demonstrated in the way that Gordon has regularly promoted the cooking of hāngi or earth oven feasts, and directed several large food events. For one occasion, the celebration of Maori New Year, Matariki, he supervised a hakiri or feast for over 600 guests, with a menu that included traditional English, European, Asian and Maori ingredients:

... pork loin topped with red curry coconut, horopito and tomato paste; chickens marinated in turmeric, manuka honey, ginger, cumin and kawakawa; and boned, rolled loins of lamb, stuffed with garlic, rosemary, fennel seeds and smoked paprika (Pellegrino, 2010).

The effect of modern means of travel, mainstream media, the prevalence and impact of lifestyle magazines and now the internet mean that New Zealanders are no longer isolated from each other and the world by geography and distance. It has taken over a century, but New Zealand's slow-cooked food revolution is now ready to serve.

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