## From Hawaiki

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| Hawaiki is the place from which Māori came, it is thought of as both a place and a spiritual world. |

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It is thought that Māori came to New Zealand from somewhere in the South Pacific known as Hawaiki. Image: David Eccles.

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A waka hourua, voyaging canoe. Image: Herb Kane Heritage Trust.

Hawaiki is the Māori place of origin. The first Māori are said to have sailed to New Zealand from Hawaiki. And in Māori mythology Hawaiki is the place where Io, the Supreme Being, created the world and its first people. It is the place from which each person comes, and it is where each will return after death.

Hawaiki is a place of great importance in Māori tradition, and appears in many songs, proverbs and whakapapa. In tradition, the ancestors of Māori came to New Zealand from Hawaiki, navigating the seas in their waka.

Hawaiki is strongly linked with the cycle of birth, life and death. For Māori Hawaiki represents all that is good and powerful. It is a mystical place, where people turn into birds or descend to the underworld.

### Where is Hawaiki?

Māori and Pākehā alike have wondered about the true location of Hawaiki. The actual location has never been confirmed, and it is uncertain if it is a real, physical island, or a mythical place. Some have linked Hawaiki with the Tahitian island Ra‘iātea (Rangiātea, in Māori). Like Hawaiki, Rangiātea is seen as both a physical and spiritual place.

Some people thought that Māori might have originated from Polynesia, India, or even Mesopotamia. More recently experts have agreed that is difficult to decide on the 'true' location of a place that is also mythological. The name Hawaiki is therefore used to describe an area of the Pacific from which it is most likely that Māori travelled from to get to New Zealand. It is believed that Māori came from a group of islands in Polynesia in the South Pacific Ocean. There are similarities between the Māori language and culture and others of Polynesia including the Cook Islands, Hawaii, and Tahiti.

### Arriving in Aotearoa

According to Māori, the first explorer to reach New Zealand was Kupe. Using the stars and ocean currents to find his way, he ventured across the Pacific on his waka hourua (voyaging canoe) from his homeland of Hawaiki. It is thought that Kupe made landfall at the Hokianga Harbour in Northland, around 1000 years ago.

### Tribal Waka

More waka hourua followed Kupe over the next few hundred years, landing at various parts of New Zealand. It is believed that Polynesian migration was planned and deliberate, with many making return journeys to Hawaiki. Today, iwi (tribes) can trace their entire origins and whakapapa (genealogy) back to certain waka hourua. The seven waka that arrived to Aotearoa were called;

* Tainui
* Te Arawa
* Matatua
* Kurahaupo
* Tokomaru
* Aotea
* Takitimu

### Moriori

While Māori lived throughout the North and South Islands, the Moriori, another Polynesian tribe, thought to have come from Hawaiki lived on the Chatham Islands (Wharekauri). Moriori are believed to have migrated to the Chathams, 800 kilometres east of Christchurch. In the late 18th century, there were about 2000 Moriori living on the Chathams. However, disease and attacks from Māori saw the numbers of this peace-loving tribe drop dramatically. Moriori are recognised as the indigenous people of the Chatham Islands.

***Māori Keywords***

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| waka | canoe |
| waka hourua | voyaging canoe |
| ūkaipō | origin |
| haerenga | journey |