

Cook Islands

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Cook Islands Latest News

New Zealand recently suspended millions of dollars in budget funding to the Cook Islands, as the relationship between the two constitutionally linked countries continues to deteriorate amid the island group's deepening ties with China.

About Cook Islands

- The Cook Islands are a group of **15 small islands** that are spread over **2 million sq. km** in the **South Pacific Ocean**.
- These islands are geographically positioned **both in the Southern and Eastern hemispheres** of the Earth.
- The islands are situated in the **center of the Polynesian Triangle**—about **halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand**.
- The Cook Islands are located to the **east of Niue, Tonga, and Samoa**; to the **northeast of New Zealand**; to the south of Kiribati and to the **west of French Polynesia**.

- **Named after Captain Cook**, who **explored them in 1773**, the islands were **once autonomous, home to tribes of mixed Polynesian ancestry**.
- The islands cover a total land area of 240 sq. km.
- They are divided into a **northern group of six islands** and a **southern group of nine islands**.
 - **Northern Islands:** These are mostly **low-lying** and **sparsely populated coral atolls**; and include the islands of Manihiki, Nassau, Penrhyn, Pukapuka, Rakahanga, and Suvarrow and are covered in **light vegetation** and equipped with stunning **white sand beaches**.
 - **Southern islands:** These generally consist of much **larger, higher islands** that are **volcanic in origin** and **more densely populated**. The southern island group includes **Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Atiu, Mangaia, Manuae, Mauke, Mitiaro, Palmerston, and Takutea**.
- The **distance between the two island groups is enormous**.
- The **highest point is Te Manga**, which rises to 652 m on Rarotonga Island.
- **Most of the population** is found **on the island of Rarotonga**.
- **Capital: Avarua**, which is **on Rarotonga island**.
- It is a **self-governing island country in free association with New Zealand**, an arrangement dating from August 1965.
- Under the terms of the free association, **Cook Islanders hold New Zealand citizenship** and enjoy the **right of free access to New Zealand and, by extension, Australia**.
- **System of Government: Parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy. Currency: NZ dollars (NZD)**

Source: DH

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