

Volcanoes & Geysers: Rotorua — Knowledge Organiser

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Key facts

- New Zealand sits on the edge of two of Earth's tectonic plates, so it has volcanoes and earthquakes.
- Rotorua, on the North Island, is famous for its geysers and bubbling mud pools.
- A geyser shoots hot water and steam high into the air.
- Underground heat (geothermal energy) is also used to make electricity.

Key vocabulary

- Volcano — an opening in the Earth where lava and gases escape.
- Geyser — a spring that shoots hot water and steam upward.
- Geothermal — heat energy from inside the Earth.
- Tectonic plates — giant pieces of the Earth's surface that slowly move.

Why here?

Because New Zealand lies where two tectonic plates meet, heat rises close to the surface. In Rotorua, this heats underground water, creating geysers, steaming hot springs and bubbling mud — and even a distinctive smell of sulphur!

Living with the land

People use geothermal heat for energy and bathing, and Māori have long valued these warm waters. But living on plate boundaries also means New Zealand must prepare for earthquakes.