

BEST DAY WALKS IN THE SOUTH ISLAND



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Mark Pickering

Last corrected: January 2018

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NEW WALKS

St Bathans Blue Lake

WALKS REVISED AND CORRECTED

Buster Diggings, Hogburn Sluicings

Best Day Walks

160 South Island day walks

Plenty of photos, google maps, short text keeping to essentials

Good walks for families, the fit and the unfit.

Great camping sites, and recommended cafes

No advertising

Intro: this walking ebook has been aimed at everyone. Younger independent travellers, New Zealand families, back-packers, and retired New Zealanders who want to get out and explore.

Walks: they vary from short dawdles to full-on daytramps (where you will need a good forecast and proper equipment), but they all have special features and marvellous scenery.

Maps: you will have Google maps on your device and if you search for the place name this will provide the best directions to get to the start of the walk. The map included here is a quick overview, and should not be used as a substitute for a good New Zealand topographical map. These are available for free on line.

New Zealand weather: gorgeous, fickle and unreliable, so always take adequate clothing and snacks.

Camping Sites: those mentioned are the more basic Department of Conservation (DOC) camping grounds, as well as regional park and other council camp sites. Typically these sites have a toilet (long drop) and a water supply and not much else. They suit the independent and well organised travellers. Sometimes a caretaker will be present. For larger and commercial motor camps there are good directories online.

Mountain Safety: regular walkers should take an emergency locator beacon (the author does). They can be hired for a month or so, best safety device ever.

Cafes: where mentioned that counts as a sort of recommendation. The author enjoys good coffee, interesting food, nice atmosphere (especially outdoor seating) but cafes can go bad quickly!.

NELSON & GOLDEN BAY



Centre of New Zealand
The Grampians
Dun Mountain Crossing



Harwoods Hole
Takaka Hill
The Grove
Pupu Springs & Pupu Hydro



FloraTableland
Mt Lodestone
Mt Arthur
Riwaka Resurgence
Anchorage Bay



Whariwharangi Bay
Rawhiti Cave
Collingwood Coast
Farewell Spit
Wharariki Beach

Centre of New Zealand

Short sharp hill

Seats and lookout

Bush walk and kauri tree

Great for kids

1 hour return

Sealed paths

1 kilometre return

Drive or walk to Hardy Street East or Milton Street, to Botanics Sports Field. Toilets

There are people (picky people) who express doubts this *really* is the centre of New Zealand, but it's a great wee hill climb, good views over Nelson, bush walking and a seat lookout. Very good for kids.

From the Botanic Reserve follow any of the signs that say 'Centre of New Zealand' and walk up the sealed path to the summit. Good views, and plenty of other track options for the downhill.





Cafe: Morrisons Street cafe, in Nelson, Hardy Street

The Grampians

Steep climb to viewpoint

Bush and seats

Handy to Nelson town

Fine old mansions

2 hour circuit

Gravel tracks and grass paths

3 kilometre circuit

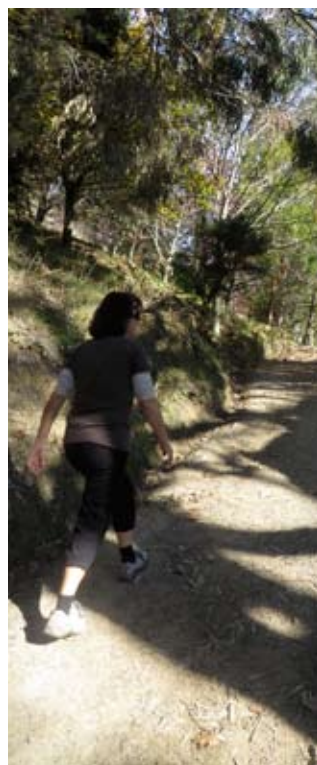
Drive or walk to the end of Collingwood Street, and walk up the last steep section of road to the main track entrance. Don't attempt to park here, park lower down.

The Grampians are a great hill area close by Nelson city, with many track and walk options. Good views and bush walking. Tracks get a bit slidey after rain.

From the top of Collingwood Street take the signposted zig-zags as the track climbs up the spur of the hill to the grassy ridgeline. Good seat here. You go past the Ronaki Track junction and keep slogging up the hill to the transmitter tower on the summit at 350 metres. Just before the summit there's a side-track to a good lookout over the city.

Turn back down to the Ronaki Track. This zig-zags sharply, downhill and take the Tawa Track down to Tawa Road. There are quite a few confusing track options here, but if you head downhill you will escape somehow. At Tawa go around Trafalgar Square to Melrose Terrace and cruise through Melrose House and gardens to Brougham Street and Collingwood Street.





Cafe: Melrose House, in Nelson, Brougham Street

Dun Mountain Crossing

Big alpine crossing, climb 700 m

Historic railway line

Beech forest and open tops

Full daywalk and mt bike trail

7-8 hours one way

Well graded gravel track

15 kilometres one way

From Nelson follow the Maitai Valley Road 12 km to the Maitai Dam carpark. Nelson: drive up Brook Street to just before the motor camp where there is signpost for the Dun Mountain walkway.

This is tremendous daytramp, climbing from the pretty Maitai Dam, crossing the strange geological formations at Coppermine Saddle, and descending down the long railway line to Nelson. This is now a mt bike trail, but it's also very good for trampers. Still an alpine crossing, so take it seriously with good gear, and give yourself an early start.

From the Maitai Dam carpark, cross the footbridge and follow the signposts upvalley along a well-graded road and pack-track. As the forest closes in you reach a stream fork, and a crossing, which might get bridged at some stage.

At first the climbing is gentle, then it starts to zig-zag steeply up the scrubby hillside, with great views when you can get your breathe back. After almost a 300 metre climb from the stream, the track levels out and starts to sidle underneath Dun Mountain. It's much easier travel now, through a smidgin of beech forest, and the final zag up to the Coppermine Saddle. The rocks are weirdly coloured, and you can see why the miners were attracted to this area. Great spot for lunch.



Follow the graded track off Coppermine Saddle (past the original mine shaft) with fine views of the Richmond Range. You are now on the old railway, and it's a long perambulating lollop past several track junctions down to the old Third House shelter.



Grab some sun in the clearing before plunging into the forest again, as the track winds endlessly around Cummins Spur and reaches a track junction. This offers a more direct route down to the Brook motor camp and Brook Street.



Flora Tableland

Historic pack track and huts

Rock bivvies and limestone caves

Beech forest and tussock tableland

Predator free area

5-6 hours return (Salisbury Hut)

Well graded bush track

20 kms return (Salisbury Hut)

From Highway 61 between Motueka and Kohatu drive to Ngatimoti (19 km from Motueka) and follow signs to Graham Valley and Mount Arthur. Middle section of road is steep and has an unstable slip.

You wander along an old goldminers trail from Nelson to Takaka, over a bush plateau riven with deep streams and karst limestone fissures. Fascinating rock bivvies, and a gloriously easy track to follow. Now the Flora area is now being maintained as a predator free 'island' so you will see many bait stations for rats and stoats. This is alpine country and snow can occur throughout the year.

The carpark is at an altitude of 900 m, with shelter, info boards, intentions logbook and toilet, and superb views looking back to Nelson. Your car has done most of the hard work for you, so it's a gentle grade down to the historic Flora Hut with it's distinctive twin huts sharing a common porch.

The pack track now follows the soothing Flora Stream, across various footbridges, to the spectacular rock overhangs at Grid Iron Gulch. 15 minutes later the track turns up Balloon Creek passing and another side-trail leads to an excellent rock shelter on the edge of open tableland, with old names carved on the rock walls.





About 30 minutes onto the 30 bunk Salisbury Hut, which has a superb view of the Arthur Range and the fierce looking Twins.

The **Potholes Track** is worth taking on the way back, time to appreciate the sinkholes, limestone outcrops, and that strange, rustling silence so characteristic of dry karst areas.



Mt Lodestone

Beaut circuit and great views

Alpine plants

Historic hut

2-3 hours circuit

Bush track

5 kms return

From Highway 61 between Motueka and Kohatu drive to Ngatimoti (19 km from Motueka) and follow signs to Graham Valley and Mount Arthur. Middle section of road is steep, can get closed after heavy rain.

Lodestone is a small peak to the north of Flora Saddle with great views, and this short sharp circuit is a good work-out, plus the bonus of the idiosyncratic and restored Flora Hut.

From the Flora carpark and saddle take the signposted Lodestone track. It's a sharp 200 m climb up the beech forest ridge, then it eases for a kilometre till the final 200 m to the 1462 m summit. Tremendous views of the Arthur Range and Kahurangi National Park. Take the alternative track down to Flora Hut, restored in 2016, then back to the Flora carpark.





Mt Arthur

Alpine peak and views

Shelter hut on way

Well poled track on tussock ridge

Snow in winter

6-7 hours return

Bush track and tops track

10 kms return

From Highway 61 between Motueka and Kohatu drive to Ngatimoti (19 km from Motueka) and follow signs to Graham Valley and Mount Arthur. Middle section of road is steep.

Mt Arthur is an impressive peak, and at 1795 m it looms over the Tableland. On a fine day it is a straightforward daytramp from the Flora carpark on a well marked track. Arthur Hut serves as a good halfway rest stop before the tops. The weather can get pretty rough up here so choose your day.

From the carpark take the bush track 300 m to Arthur Hut, sitting like an eyrie on the spur with views everywhere and pesky wekas at the hut door. Out of the bush the poled and well-worn track across the tussocks rollicks along the exposed open ridge, and climbs almost 400 m over the Winter Peak (1750m) and 10 minutes onto the high peak itself. Distracting views.





Riwaka Resurgence

Strange emergence of a river

Limestone rocks and deep pool

Lovely picnic area for families

20 minutes return

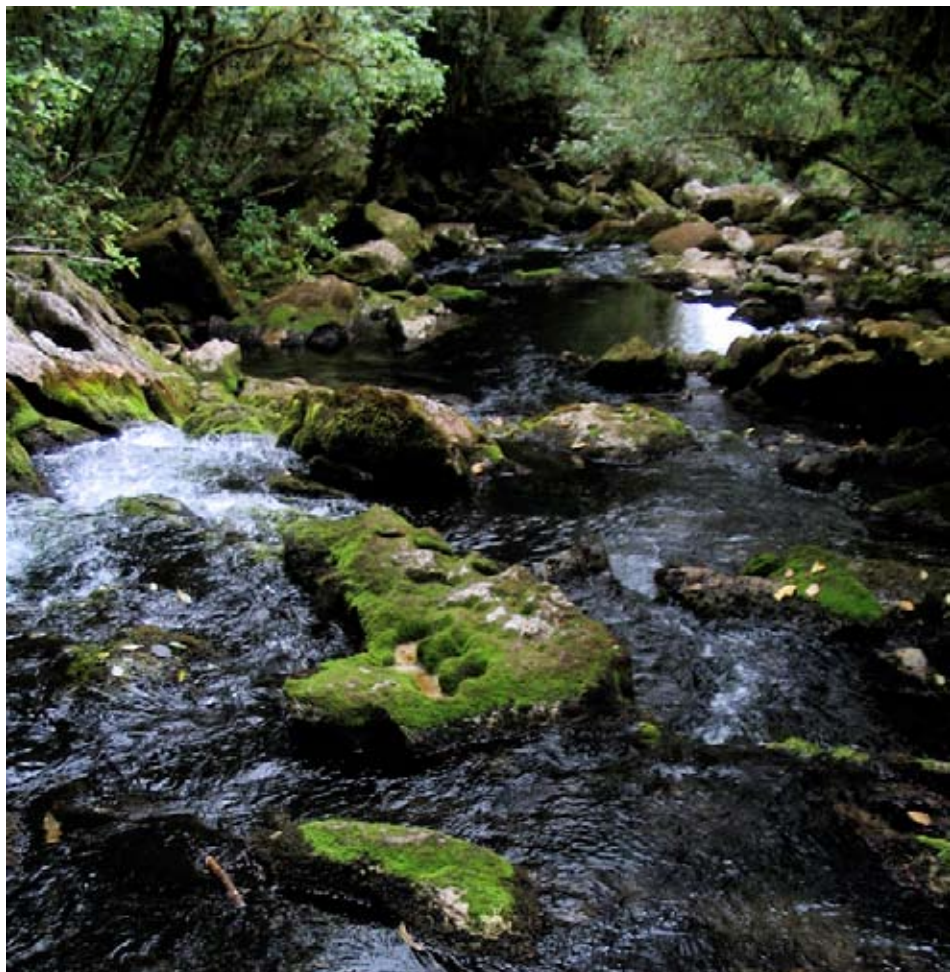
Gravel track

500 metres return

From Highway 80 (just before the Takaka Hill) take the Riwaka Valley Road 6 km to carpark and picnic area.

Very easy walk, 10 minutes, and a great spot on a hot summers day, as the ice-cold Riwaka River emerges from the Arthur Range in a tranquil and mysterious pool. Elegant shapes in the limestone rocks, luxuriant green moss, a Zen-like place, and good spot for chilling out. Lavish picnic area and toilets.





Anchorage Bay

A coastal ramble to a beautiful bay

Fine beaches and clear waters

Big hut, but popular

Ferry one way, walk back

3-4 hours one way

Graded easy paths

9 kilometres one way

From Motueka, drive north 5 km to the Kaiteriteri turn-off, then 8 km to Marahau carpark, toilets, information shelter and cafe.

Coastal walking does not get much better than this. A forested shore, a lapis lazuli sea, and tiny slivers of golden sand between. A dozen bays to explore, and many headlands to peer out from. If you do not mind sharing the track, and take plenty of suncream and water, you will have a memorable excursion.

Many people take the launch back from Anchorage Bay to Marahau, or vice versa, depending on tides and boat times. There are several boat operators that run daily (in summer) along the coast, and these water taxis add a unique dimension for walkers. If you don't take the boat, double the walking time.



Cross the Marahau board over the estuary, then follow the track as it hugs the coast for about 2 km to Tinline Bay, a sheltered area. The coastal track ambles along the sea edge 20–30 metres above the shore, past two pretty bays, Appletree and Stillwell. Side tracks lead down to each bay. It is not far from Stillwell Bay to Yellow Point and another tiny picnic area at Akersten Bay.



For the first and last time the track climbs quietly through the manuka forest up to a ridge saddle and a signposted junction. Follow along the ridge, passing a side track to Watering Cove, which was where Dumont D'Urville filled up his watering casks in 1827. Splendid views over The Anchorage as the track drops down to the brilliant sweep of sand and hut. Wait for the boat. Daydream.



Camping: beside Anchorage Hut, has to be pre-booked

Cafe: Park Cafe, in Marahau

Harwoods Hole

Huge sinkhole, weird limestone outcrops

Silent beech forest

Camping area and other walks

Good mt biking trails

1-2 hours return

Bush track

4 kilometres return

Off Highway 60 near the high saddle of the Takaka Hill, turn down the unsealed Canaan Road some 10 km to the sign-posted carpark.

This hole is 50 metres across, with encircling sheer walls of 80 metres, and a total vertical drop of 176 metres. Cavers abseil right down the throat of this gaping maw, and attempt to negotiate the complex cave system that leads out to the Starlight Cave and into Gorge Creek.

From the carpark it is easy walking through beech forest at first, then you have to clamber around large boulders where the valley gets confined. At a track junction, the right-hand branch goes around to a lookout over Gorge Creek.

For Harwoods Hole itself, take the other track choice and be careful near the lip. It's a feature that's difficult to see into and you shouldn't try! Perhaps the chill of the cold air, and the powerful sense of something pulling you down to nothingness, is enough of an experience.





Other walks and mt biking

This area has been developed with several good tracks. Wainui Saddle 2 hours return, Moa Park hut 4 hours return. A popular walk/mt bike trail circles around the plateau, plus there's the Ram-eka Track, a famous downhill run to Takaka.

Campsite: grass and beech forest at Harwoods Hole carpark, toilets and information signs

Takaka Hill

Limestone outcrops and formations

High plateau at 1000 m

Interesting circuit

1-2 hours return

Bush track and stony trails

3 kilometres return

Off Highway 60 on the Takaka Hill road almost at the summit. The start is at a signposted carpark.

Between the flat plains of Nelson and Golden Bay is the high, eerie limestone plateau sometimes known as the 'Marble Mountain'. By Highway 60 the forest has been mostly cleared, exposing a geography of stumps of fluted grey rock, like molars from a giant's jaw. It is a strange place — dry, weird, silent — unlike any other in New Zealand. Well worth stopping and exploring.

At the carpark the track is marked with poles, and it passes the two junctions of the short Bush Walk as it wanders into the rocky land. Low, alpine, scrub-like kowhai and tree daisies grow in unlikely places and the track joins the transmission 4WD road and climbs to the top. There are great views of the Mount Arthur range and the upper Takaka valley.





The trail wanders about a shattered Armageddon-like landscape, with twisted dead trees and sharp rocks, then cuts through a forest grove to reach a junction with the Link Track. The main track continues on another long loop but the Link Track follows the transmission 4WD road through the heart of this open basin, with good views. The track takes no time at all to arrive back at the carpark beside the cooling bush stream.



The Grove

Strange limestone formations

Nikau palms and bush walk

Excellent for kids

Southern rata

30 minutes circuit

Gravel tracks

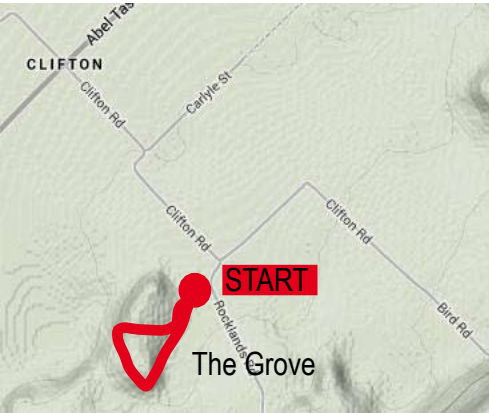
500 metres circuit

From Takaka follow the Motupipi and Pohara Road to Clifton, turn onto Clifton Road 1 km to car-park.

The Grove scenic reserve is a tiny but highly interesting area of complex limestone, with gullies, slabs, mini-canyons and a wonderful lookout. All covered with nikau palms and southern rata trees with their spectacular writhing root systems. There's a 30 minute circuit track. Take care with small kids.



Cafe: Wholemeal, in Takaka



Pupu Springs & Pupu Hydro

Crystal clear springs

Superb information shelter

Pupu hydro water race

Working power station and history

30 mins springs, 2-3 hours hydro

Bush tracks and boardwalks

7 kilometre return

From Takaka drive 2 km to the Pupu Springs turn-off, and follow the winding road 2 km to Pupu Springs, and 6 km to the carpark at the hydro walk.

These two walks can be easily combined in a half day. The first to huge natural springs, the second to the Pupu power house and an elegant investigation of a water race.

Pupu Springs

Waikoropupu Springs (but everyone calls them 'Pupu Springs'), are the largest freshwater natural springs in New Zealand, and have been dubbed 'a submerged Garden of Eden'. A well-made 30 minute track travels around the springs, which are regarded as some of the purest water in the world. Cup your hands and try some.



Pupu Hydro Walk

An uncluttered loop walk along an old gold-diggers' water race, originally constructed in 1901, then in 1929 adapted to supply power to New Zealand's smallest power station. The toy-like power system still works, and the water flows brightly along rock channels and around bluffs — a chiselled masterpiece of the goldminers' skills.

At the powerhouse there is a viewing window through which you can see the power turbines. From the carpark the track crosses a bridge and climbs up a steep zigzag trail to the end of the water race and penstocks.

The water race has boardwalks and handrails where the canal gets narrow. Occasionally fluming (a sort of aqueduct) carries the water over a gully, and the water race curves cunningly through bush and bluffs before reaching the intake weir at Campbell Creek.

A vehicle track climbs from here, and circles through the bush (with some views) and then descends back down to the carpark. Great circuit.



Cafe: Dangerous Kitchen, in Takaka

Whariwharangi Bay

Coastal track to remote bay

Historic hut

Bush landscape and views

Information shelter

3-4 hours return

Bush tracks

6 kilometre return

From takaka take the Pohara Road to Wainui Inlet and car-park at the end of McShane Road. Shelter and toilets.

Wharwharangi Bay is at the northern end of Abel Tasman National Park. The land was once farmed, and the original farmhouse is now a trampers hut. Beautiful beach and expansive estuary views over Wainui Inlet. A timeless land.

A good track wanders along the coast to a junction, where the side trail goes down to the beach. The main trail is an old vehicle road and climbs up lazy zig-zags to a bush saddle. Another side track goes uphill to Gibbs Hill, but the main track wanders down through the bush to the historic hut.

The beach is still five minutes or so away, a wide curving arc of glorious sand, backed by old macrocarpa trees.





Rawhiti Cave

Impressive cave entrance

Stalagmites and stalactites

Podocarp bush

Awkward scrambly track

2 hours return

Bush tracks and rock scrambling

2 kilometres return

From Takaka drive to Motupipi, then right onto Glenview Road and left onto Packard road and follow signs to the carpark

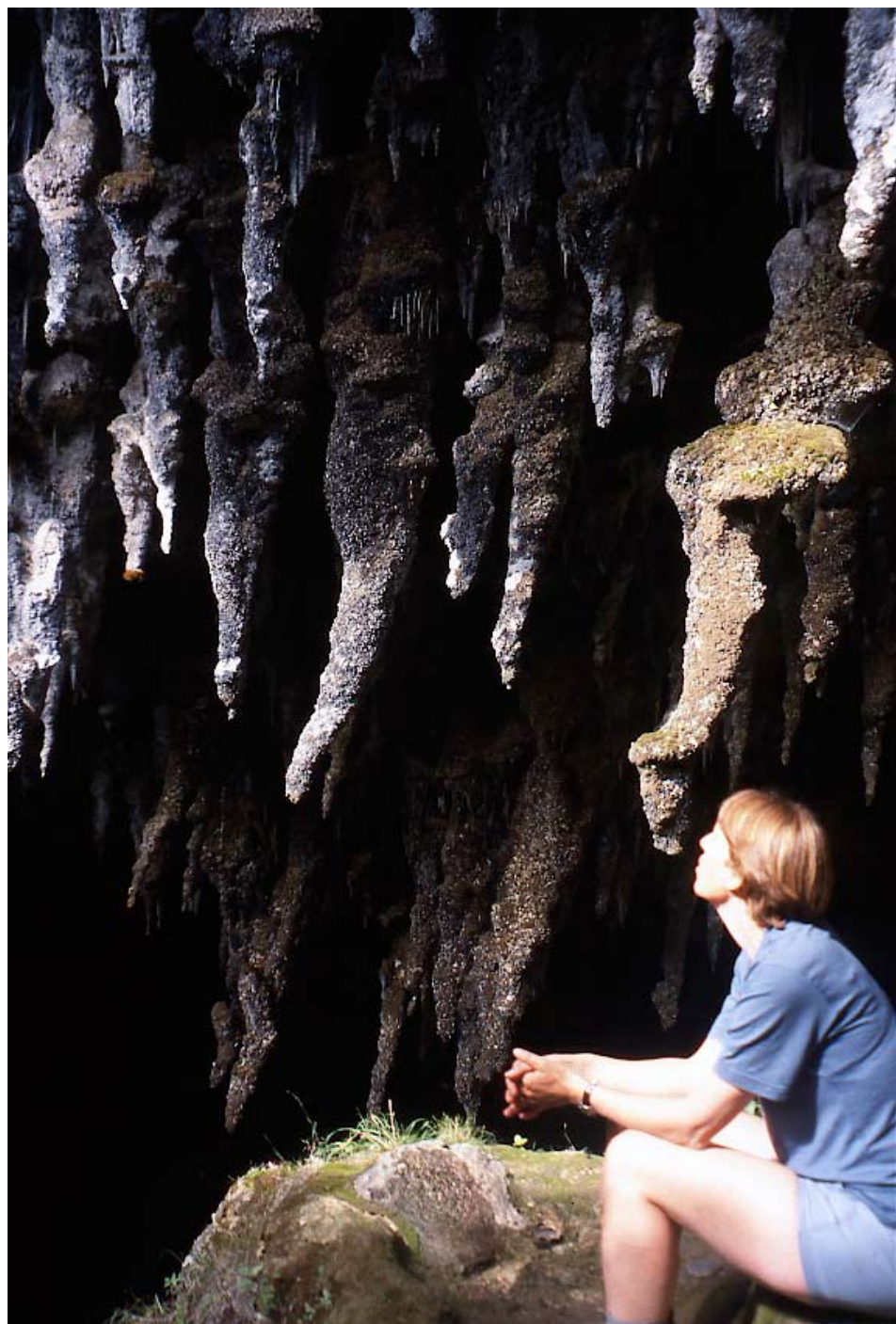
Rawhiti Cave (used to be known as Manson Cave) is a surprising gem in Golden Bay, and even people who don't like caves much enjoy it. It's a large cavernous entrance with many stalactites dangling down and twilight-zone flora. Steep tracks up and into it, and it gets greasy at the entrance. Viewing platform

From the carpark the track crosses and heads up the massive Dry River gorge through totara forest, until a steep bush track crawls up to the cave entrance some 100 m above the valley floor. You descend down to the cave mouth, and go in as far as you dare, which isn't very far. Cold, drippy but awesome.



Cafe: Dangerous Kitchen, in Takaka





Collingwood Coast

Golden beach sands

Milnthorpe coastal park

Easy, flat walking at low tide

High country landscape

3 hours return

Beach and sands

8 kilometre return

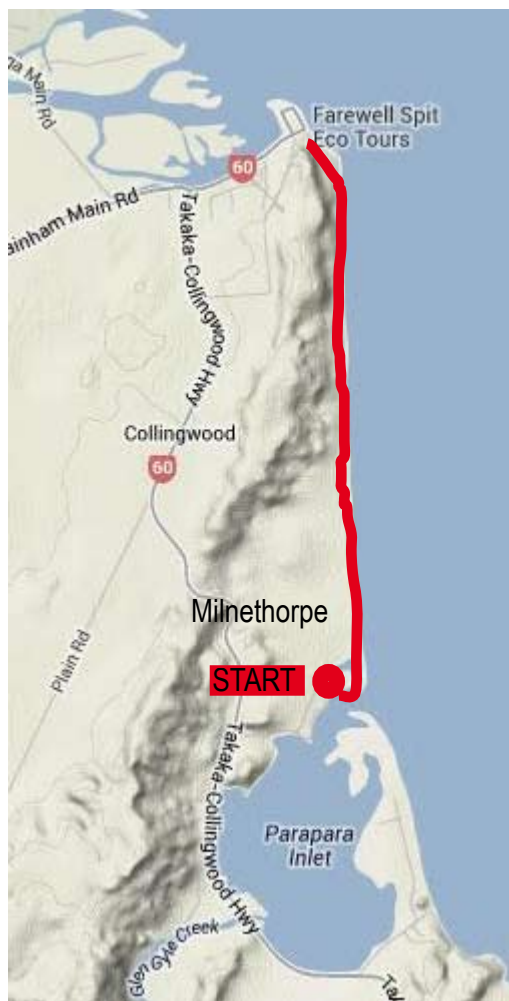
From Highway 60 turn down Milnthorpe Quay Road to Nelson Street then Kendall Street to the carpark beside the old stone causeway.

Golden Bay — the name sounds good, and real estate agents are grateful it did not remain Murderers Bay, which is what Abel Tasman called it. But it does not take much to sell this place, famous for its benign climate, sweeping sands, and as a last refuge for hippies. This walk is an easy and graceful stroll along a small part of this golden bay.

The stone causeway provides an elegant high-tide footway to Milnthorpe Beach, and kids can spend hours playing in the little estuary and soft sands here. Follow the sand shore around to the main beach, which at low tide retreats far out into Golden Bay.

It is easy, flat walking along to Collingwood, an old goldmining town that in 1857 was touted as a future capital of New Zealand. The gold has gone but the cappuccinos remain; after a recharge, head back along the beach to Milnthorpe.





Milnethorp Coastal Park

For an interesting variation on the beach way back, take the Redwood Trail into Milnethorp Park, which plunges you into a rustling dry manuka forest.

Tracks and junctions come thick and fast, but one very pleasant route is Redwood Trail, Rimu Flats, Ian's Incline, Elise's Way (nice by the stream here), then Blackwood Trail to Jimmy's Jungle, and Baas Deviation to Nelson Street and Milnethorp wharf.



Farewell Spit

Space, sand, spit, squalls

Easy tracks to beach

Dunes and sand patterns

Other track options

2 hours return

Dune and farm trails

4 kilometre return

From Collingwood take the Puhanga Road 20 km to Farewell Spit carpark and cafe.

Farewell Spit has a mythic status, deservedly, for it stretches like a long curved kiwi beak from the top of the South Island. It is well worth the tremendous effort needed to get there. There's a visitor centre, cafe, toilets, viewing telescope, information boards and carpark. The cafe is closed in winter. On the hilltop behind the visitor centre you can see Mount Egmont/ Taranaki, 144 km away.

The Farewell Spit and Fossil Point track is a good one. It begins at the carpark and crosses through farmland and dry manuka forest to the outer curve of the spit. There are wind-torn rocks and tidal platforms at Fossil Point, plenty to explore, as well as a good dose of wind.





Cafe: visitor centre at Farewell Spit (summer only)

Wharariki Beach

Unrivalled coastal scenery

Dunes and seals

Working farm and lakes

Good for families, low tide best

2 hours circuit

Beach and farm trails

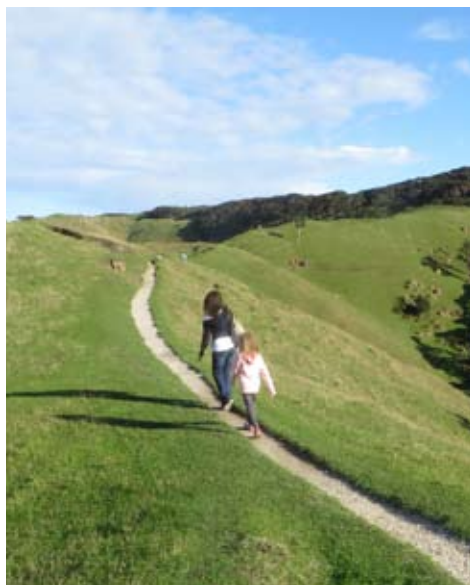
4 kilometre circuit

From Collingwood take the Puponga Road 18 km to Port Puponga, then Wharariki Road 6 km to carpark and toilet.

Wharariki Beach is impressive, with its armada of offshore islands and magic interplay of rocks and dunes. Seal pups occasionally play in the rock pools. Remember this is a working farm park, and care should be taken not to disturb stock. Some walks will be closed for lambing during September–October.

Assuming a low tide, take the easy path from the carpark through the dunes to break out onto the main beach. Cliffs and rock stacks everywhere, and large gleaming expanses of wet sand that shimmer in the morning light.

Wander west along the beach and around more rock stacks and an archway to the well-signposted inland track. This climbs into the farmland, and then picks up the main vehicle track back to the carpark.





Hilltop Walk

This is an excellent one-way crossing, wandering up and down beside the big cliffs with a rare view of the whole extent of Farewell Spit. It is mostly open farmland with some coastal scrub.



Cafe: Archway, at Wharariki carpark (summer only)

MARLBOROUGH & KAIKOURA

The Snout — Picton
Queen Charlotte Walkway
Wakamarina Gold Track



Kaikoura Peninsula
Mount Fyffe
Haumuri Bluff



Red Hills Hut
Wairau Lagoon
Sawcut Gorge



The Snout

Delightful ridge walk

Views of the sounds and ferries

Lookouts and information signs

3 hours return (headland)

Graded bush paths

6 kilometres return (headland)

From Picton drive to Waikawa, and down Sussex Road into Victoria Domain. Mapboard here. A one-way sealed road climbs onto ridge past lookouts 1 km to The Snout carpark.

As you look up Queen Charlotte Sound from Picton wharf, The Snout is the ridge on your right. It points a long finger into the sound, and has several good walking tracks, with particularly impressive views of this labyrinth of waterways.

At the carpark walk past the locked gate along the wide unsealed road till it reaches a saddle and the bush track starts a gentle zig-zag up the hill. The shrub forest is a mix of ake ake, kawakawa (heart shaped leaves), five finger and mahoe, whose leaves turn skeleton-like on the ground.

The track eases into an old bridleway, and sneaks around the high point, with views of the bright waterways and dark silhouetted headlands. After a slight descent you pop out onto a fine lookout overlooking Queen Charlotte. Toilet here.

The actual headland is another 30 minutes further one way, and when you reach the rocky shore you can practically touch the huge white ferries as they glide by like stately dames, making a grand entrance to the ballroom arena of Picton.





Cafe: Seabreeze, in Picton

Queen Charlotte Walkway

Sea views on an open ridge walk

Shelters and lookouts

Popular for mt bikes

3 hours one way

Well marked bush tracks

6 kilometres one way

Off Queen Charlotte Drive at Linkwater, take the the Kenepuru Road to just before Portage, and the Torea Road to the saddle.

The Queen Charlotte Walkway is rapidly becoming one of New Zealand's most popular tracks. It offers almost 55 km of ridge and coastal walking overlooking the glittering turquoise waters and endless peninsulas of the Marlborough Sounds. This walk is a snippet of the overall track, from Portage to Te Mahia, with swinging views on both sides of the ridge. Take plenty of water.

Obviously having transport arranged is useful, or a car swap, or else a mountain-bike hidden at one of the road-ends. The carparking is miserly at Torea Saddle, and non-existent at Te Mahia Saddle, though 300 metres down the road there is a large carpark.

From the stone war memorial the track from Torea Saddle (Portage) is steep, following a bulldozed line that has been softened by manuka forest as it zigzags up the ridge, with extensive views once you get higher.

After this the track settles down into a rolling pattern along the ridge tops. You are about 400 metres above sea level here. It can often be hot and dry, but as you near the peak of Te Mahia the track slips through pockets of bush.

Before you drop down to Te Mahia Saddle there is an excellent viewpoint from Mount Onahau (417 metres, with a picnic table) overlooking the complicated wa-





terways of the sounds. Allow 30 minutes return. A fast bush descent down to the junction with the James Vogel track. This is a pretty bush walk that goes down to Mistletoe Bay, otherwise follow the main track directly down to Te Mahia saddle.



Campsite: Mistletoe Bay is one of the most sheltered harbours in the sounds, camping area and three DOC lodges that can be hired.

Wakamarina Gold Trail

Historic miners' pack-track

Deep beech forest valley

Historic huts

Picnic area at road end

3-4 hours return

Benched pack track

12 kilometres return

The Wakamarina valley is 10 km west of Havelock off Highway 6, and it is 15 km to the road-end, past the Dead Horse Creek ford, and finishing at the Butchers Flat carpark and sheltered picnic area.

The ripe language of the goldminers is evident right from the picnic area — dead Horse Creek, Doom Creek, Devils Creek. Many hopeful nationalities crowded into the Wakamarina in the brief goldrush glory days of 1861. What they left behind were some colourful names and an excellent pack-track that climbs all the way to the top of the Richmond Range.

From the picnic area the route follows a good vehicle track through pine trees some 2 km to the footbridge at Doom Creek. There's a circuit track up Doom Creek for people who want a shorter walk option.

A pleasant miners' pack-track now meanders upvalley, crossing from scrubby slopes into dappled beech forest, and after 4 km reaching Devils Creek Hut, which sits high above the river gorge on an attractive terrace. Just behind the hut is the original Devils Creek hut, built of slab timber and still standing — just.

From Devils Creek Hut you have a couple of interesting options. You can explore the deep river gorge, which is off a side track from the footbridge, or there is also an interesting side-track that negotiates up Devils Creek itself to the ruins of some historic stone huts. Allow 30 minutes return for the latter.





Red Hills Hut

Graded track to tops hut

Beech forest and alpine tussucks

Historic cobb farm buildings

Good for families

4-5 hours return

Graded forest track

8 kilometres return

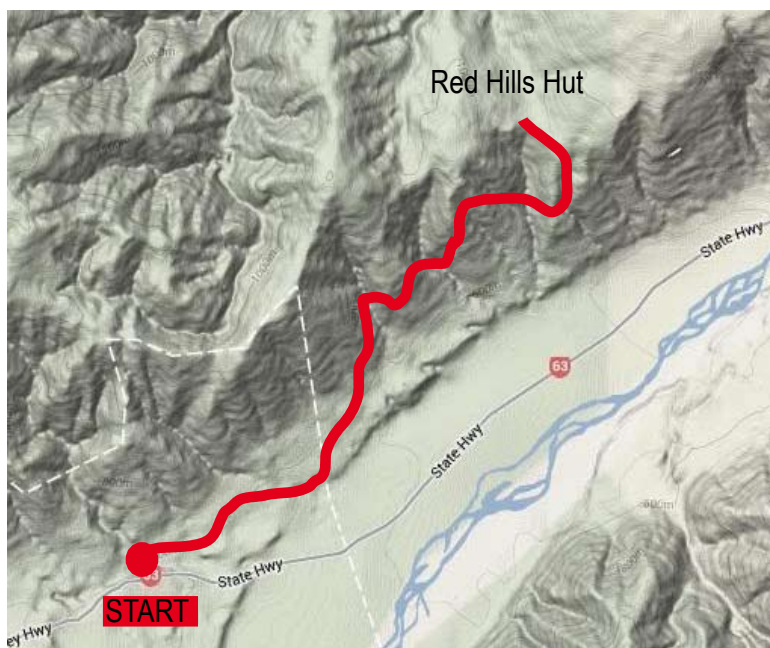
From Highway 63 (10 km east of Lake Rotoiti) a carpark is sign-posted.

A great wee hut on the bush edge, and fine views everywhere. This track is part of the long distance Te Araroa Trail, and is actually an old road from the historic Rainbow Station. Many of the 1860 buildings are built of compressed mud (cobb) and are still standing.

The track ambles through lovely beech forest for a kilometre, then crosses a small stream to emerge behind the old station buildings. Pick up the broad road as it climbs 400 metres, weaving out of bush and scrub gullies. Views are good and you pop out on the ridge at 900 meters altitude with the hut right on top.

It's an extra 300 m climb to the top of the main Red Hills plateau itself, a strange desolate landscape of red rocks and stunted trees. These rocks were once part of the Red Hills in Aspiring National Park, and were dragged north 1000 km by the grinding of the alpine fault.





Wairau Lagoon

Large lagoon and estuary

Historic wreck

Salt flats and glasswort

Many wading birds

2-3 hours circuit

Firm packed earth and boardwalks

7 kilometres circuit

From Blenheim drive 2 km south on Highway 1 to Harding Road, then 1 km to the carpark and information sign (beside the oxidation ponds).

A luminous lagoon and estuary, permeated with textures as intricate as a Persian carpet. Dozens of subtle colours along the sinuous gentle tidal waterways. Over 70 bird species have been recorded at Wairau, including nesting royal spoonbills. So much of the pleasure in this walk is in the morning or late evening light. A low tide is useful but not essential. No water, except of the salty kind.

Shortly after leaving the carpark the track divides, and the right fork crosses side channels and wanders along the fringe of the estuary to opposite Budes Island. After an hour when you reach the beached wreck of the Waverley, 30 metres long and built in 1883. It was scuttled and later pushed by a flood up this side channel, where it provides a sculptural site for roosting shags.

A short side-trail leads to a view of the Wairau bar, and there are information boards that tell the story of the Maori moa-hunter culture that lived in camps around the lagoon. European settlement began on the Wairau bar in 1847, when an inn was built to cater for the coastal trading ships that had access up the Opawa River to 'Beavertown', the terrible name then given to Blenheim. Apparently the early settlement used to flood regularly.

The return trail cuts across the flat marsh meadows, and in late evening the colours in the sedge turn into a rich rug of reds and yellows.





Sawcut Gorge

Narrow gorge and limestone cliffs

Many river crossings

Adventurous and remote

Need fine weather

3-4 hours return

River travel, 15-16 crossings

4 kilometre return

From Highway 1 turn off to the Waima or Ure River, then it is 12 km of winding road to the Blue Mountain station. Please inform the landowners of your presence by signing the logbook.

Sawcut Gorge is a strange feature, 50 metres long, 50 metres high, barely 3 metres across, it looks as if a giant's circular saw simply ran through the limestone. The route up the Waima is short, but has lots of river crossings, great on a hot day, but some people find them awkward. It would be dangerous after rain, for this area floods rapidly in a brutal brown gush.

From the carpark follow the vehicle track down to the Waima River to a good and wide ford. DOC has now marked the route with large orange triangle markers and the route keeps to the shingly river, crossing several times past Blue Mountain Stream.

Gradually the river is squeezed between steep walls, and the huge limestone face of the Waima gorge looms over the river. A well-marked track dodges in and out of big boulders and bluffs past Headache Stream. The top river crossing can be awkward, but a good track continues on the south bank past some splendid totara trees to Isolation Creek.





Around a few bends in Isolation Creek and the Sawcut appears, a thin slit in the band of rock, the opposite walls almost close enough to be touched by outstretched arms. The creek bed is shingle and it is easy to walk up the length of the gorge.

At the other end of the Sawcut, Isolation Creek continues to wind narrowly and impressively (with some waterfalls) between high cliffs for just over 1 km to the top forks and a wide shingle flat, and there is a 6-bunk hut. Add another 2-3 hours return for this extra section, which is well worth doing if you have the time.



Kaikoura Peninsula

Peninsula and tide pools

Seal and gull colonies

Extensive tidal platforms

Low tide useful

2-3 hours circuit

Tidal platforms and farm trails

5 kilometre circuit

From Kaikoura township drive to Point Kean carpark, information boards, and shelter. There are toilets 1 km before the carpark. Also good access to South Bay carpark, toilets and impressive information shelter.

A feature of this walk is that the wildlife is visible, and unavoidable, and at low tide you have to take care not to step on a sleeping seal. There are over 12,000 red-billed gulls (tarapunga) nesting around the peninsula and they can get pesky in spring, with raids on intruders. Shags congregate on offshore rocks, and there are extensive roosting colonies of white-fronted terns. When you include the remarkable tidal platforms (higher since the 2016 earthquake!) and the dazzling white cliffs, it is little wonder the Kaikoura Peninsula walk is a must-do for many travellers.

At Point Kean seals can be sleeping only 30 metres away from the carpark, and at low tide you can wander around the base of the cliffs, exploring small bays and peninsulas on the way to Whalers Bay. There is a shortcut track up onto the clifftop track, but at low tide you can keep following the dramatic shoreline almost to the finger-like Atia Point.

The track crosses the narrow peninsula and follows more extensive tidal platforms (with 'tramlines' running across them) back to South Bay. A track climbs up onto the clifftop and lookout and follows the crumbling cliff edges back to the carpark at Point Kean. Welcome views, and a walk that never gets boring.





Cafe: Beach House, in Kaikoura

Mount Fyffe

4WD track to hut and summit

Big climb of 1000 m

Great alpine views all round

Hut has 8 bunks and woodstove

4-5 hours return

4WD track

9 kilometres return

From Kaikoura township take Ludstone Road 8 km to the junction with Postmans Road, then follow Postmans Road 6 km to the bush carpark, picnic area and toilets.

This is a big sweat of 1000 metres to a hut perched on the summit ridge of Mount Fyffe. The slog is hard but the rewards are majestic views. Up here the Kaikoura Peninsula looks squashed and small, but the Kaikoura mountains are massive, especially when covered with snow.

The walk description is easy. Walk up the road, and keep going until you give up, or get up. Several seats on the way up, and the hut is a little oasis after the slog uphill. The view is spellbinding. For summiters, the vehicle track continues up the barren slopes and rises another 500 metres onto the large beacon on top of Mount Fyffe itself. Add two hours return.





Haumuri Bluff

Remote coast and sea arch

Low tide essential

Old railway ruins

Seals and shags

6-7 hours return

4WD track and beach scrambling

11 kilometres return

From Highway 1 at Oaro, turn off on the south bank of the Oaro River and park in the large area just before the small settlement.

The sea arch at Haumuri Point is a brilliant white outcrop of fretted limestone. It is a boulder scramble, and its further than it looks, and you need a low tide at Haumuri bluff. Haumuri probably means 'wind at your back'.

From the carpark walk through the pretty Oaro settlement to the locked gate. Then cross the railway line and follow the access road beside it. Some derelict rolling stock helps form a melodramatic sea wall here.

Further on there is a disused railway tunnel on the right-hand side, blocked up, and in the small bays there are stands of karaka trees that were probably planted by Maori as a food source. Many of the shallow bays have attractive areas for pausing or picnicking, and interesting tidal platforms to explore.

At the Haumuri railway tunnel (about 4 km from Oaro) a steep track goes down to the beach, and from here on it is rock-hopping along to the bluff. Seals often come ashore here for a midday doze because they mostly feed at night, and even elephant seals have been seen.



The archway was called Te Pupaki, the crab hole, and it is a wild place, with extensive offshore reef platforms. You can climb above the archway onto the bluff itself, and enjoy a panoramic view of this lovely coast.



NELSON LAKES & LEWIS PASS

Lake Rotoiti
Bushline Hut
Kirwans Hill



Lewis Pass Tops
Magdalen Hut
Hope River



Kirwans Hill
Murray Creek Goldfield
Lake Daniells



Lake Rotoiti

Tall beech forest

Rebirth of the dawn chorus

Interpretation signs

Ideal for families

Various options

Bush tracks

From Highway 63 at St Arnaud (which has petrol, store and café), drive to Kerrs Bay picnic and camping area, with shelter and toilets. Murderous sandflies.

DOC has made a commitment in selected places in New Zealand to recreate the dawn chorus, and at St Arnaud they are getting close. Intense predator control on this 'mainland island' has created a wall of sound from bellbirds, robins and kaka. This natural music of the forest has not been heard for a long time on the mainland.

Lake Rotoiti itself is a charming bush-edged lake, with great views towards the big Nelson Lakes mountains. The only downside of this magical spot... well, sit down for awhile, and they will find you!

You have several walk choices. The Bellbird Walk is just 10 minutes round.

The Honeydew Walk is 1 hour, and named after the sweet, almost sickly scent of the honeydew excreted by a scale insect. The bellbirds love this stuff, and they are loud and melodious in appreciation. This walk has excellent interpretation signs all round to explain what DOC is trying to do, and





the beech forest is smothered with a carpet of lush moss. Then there is the longer Loop Track — about 1 hour 30 minutes — and for a big hill climb try the track up onto the St Arnaud Range and Pinnacle Lookout, 3–4 hours return.

Whichever track you choose will go through the heart of the predator-controlled beech forest. Do not touch the traps or bait stations: unless you are a rat.



Campsites: along shores of Lake Rotoiti, shelter, toilets, also at West Bay, shelters, toilets.

Bushline Hut

Healthy hill circuit

Alpine hut and lunch shelter

Dramatic view of Lake Rotoiti

Beech forest and tussock plateau

4-5 hours circuit

Bush tracks and tussock paths

5 kilometre circuit

From Highway 63, 2 km west of St Arnaud, take the West Bay road for 5 km to the Mount Robert carpark, at the end of a steep zigzag.

A walk to remember, and although the steep scree faces of Mount Robert might put you off, the total climb is only 500 metres and the rewards are well worth it — definitely the best views over Lake Rotoiti. Bushline Hut sits on sunny slopes in a particularly privileged position.

The beginning of the tramp is horribly steep. The Pinchgut Trail switches back and forth for 500 metres up through a burnt-off scrub face to reach the bush edge. The views are superb, you have done most of the climbing, and you are above those pesky sandflies.

Only a short distance to the flat summit and the Relax Shelter Hut (seats only) then on to the signposted track junction to Bushline Hut. A downhill stretch past snowpoles on a wide, easy ridge, swinging past the private Kea Hut down to the 12-bunk Bushline Hut. Hard to find a better view to have lunch over.

The track that continues down from the hut is known as Paddys Track, and it snakes lazily through open tussock faces for 300 metres before easing into manuka forest and slipping into Robert Stream. Here the track sidles amiably to just below the carpark.





Kirwans Hill

Big 900 m climb to hilltop hut

Miners pack track

Gold mining history

Tunnel and aerial cableway

7-8 hours return

Graded miners pack track

18 kilometres return

From Reefton take Highway 69 about 11 km north and turn down Boatmans Road 7 km to Caplestone carpark.

A brilliantly graded miners pack track leads up to a hut on a hill, where you can see Mt Cook and a panorama of crinkled bush tops. A big day, but fascinating mining history and huge views. In 1877 Caplestone boasted 7 pubs and 1000 people.

From the carpark a track crosses Boatmans Creek over a swingbridge, then after 1 km goes through a tunnel onto a footbridge back across Boatman's Creek. After this dramatic start the track ambles alongside the creek for 2 km before crossing back over to Topler Creek.

Across the creek (no luxury of a footbridge) the pack track settles into it's rhythm and zig-zags purposely climbs almost 900 m and 8 km to Kirwans Hill. The beech forest changes in altitude from Red Beech to Mountain Beech. The hut sits on a little knob, 12 bunks, woodstove and a stunning view.





The 'Kirwan's Reward' open-cast mine site is worth a look, down a 5 minute signposted side-track, and there are views of the 1898 aerial ropeway. From the hut there is another side-track onto Kirwans Hill itself, 40 minutes first through stunted silver beech, then open tussock tops with a breathtaking panorama of mountains.



Murray Creek Goldfield

Gold miners trails and relics

Beech forest

Silence and history

4-5 hours circuit

Well graded miners tracks

9 kilometres circuit

From Highway 7 at Blacks Point, 1 km from Reefton. There is a museum by the carpark.

Red beech leaves fall and scatter gold colour on tracks that are a hundred years old, worn smooth by the plodding footsteps of the goldminers. The mining relics are crumbling away and might not impress, but the deep forest and tea-coloured streams take you into a long-lost world. It is hard to believe that these silent forests were once an important and noisy industrial landscape.

From the carpark the main Murray Track follows a broad pack-track through luxuriant moss and beech forest for 2 km, passing the junction to the Energetic Mine and the bridges at Cement Town. Not much here now, though gold was mined in the Murray Creek from 1870 to the 1930s.



Not long after this, the main track goes into a broad area of manuka forest at Chandlers Open Coast Coal Mine, then reaches the Waitahu Track junction at a saddle. Keep to the main track as it climbs steadily to the Inglewood junction, then it is only a short side-track past the Painkiller Track junction to the iron remnants of the Inglewood Mine.

Now take the Royal Track, which climbs up to another saddle and the remains of the horse whims. These are circular raised embankments where the poor horses walked round and round pulling coal carts.

Quite quickly afterwards there is the Ajax Mine, a chilling 485 metres deep, then the Ajax Battery, which is the most attractive of the gold ruins. The old track has been closed and the new track follows the ridgeline to the spur, where it zig-zags down very steeply some 400 metres right back to the carpark.



Cafe: Broadway Bakery, in Reefton

Lake Daniells

Cruisey track to bush lake

Large hut

Slot gorge

Bush birds

3-4 hours return

Flat bush track

12 kilometres return

From Highway 7 the Lake Daniells turn-off is 5 km east of Springs Junction at the Marble Hill picnic area. Camping area and toilets.

This is a well-made path through dense beech forest to the lapping shores of the lake — a track anyone can tackle, with plentiful native birdsong and a crisp-cut gorge through the Sluice Box.

From the carpark, the track turns a corner and reaches the footbridge over the well-named Sluice Box, where the Maruia River cuts through hard granite with a rush and flurry. Then the track sidles through groves of red beech, occasionally crossing matagouri river flats before reaching the Pell Stream confluence, where there is a seat.





The track starts to climb gently, and slips from the Alfred River valley into the attractive Frazer Stream, which drains Lake Daniells itself. The red beech changes to silver beech and the stream twists through moss banks, almost silent.

The lake is a surprise — a large, sequestered body of water, tucked under bush hills with a short jetty pointing out into it.

Often you can hear kaka, with their creaky-door call, flapping wildly from one side of the lake to the other. A hut provides a good lunch shelter and the return walk is gentle.



Campsite: Marble Hill reserve at the start of the Lake Daniells Track. Toilets, beech sheltered campsites.

Magdalen Hut

Valley walk to pleasant hut

Beech forest

Tussock river flats

Good mountain views

6-7 hours circuit

Bush tracks and 4WD

16 kilometre circuit

Off Highway 2 at Bolye Riiver, turn into carpark that marks the start of the St James walkway. Shelter and toilets.

Long walk but easy going, and all the facets of mountain country here. Big views, squawking paradise ducks, a cute hut, beech forest dripping with lichen. Some stream crossings and two long swingbridges.

Follow the St James Walkway to a big swingbridge across the Boyle River. From here the track travels through forests and then into wide spacious river flats. You can cut the corner to Magdalen Hut if you don't mind wet feet, otherwise continue upvalley a wee way to the swingbridge across the Boyle River again.

Short walk down stream to the 6 bunk Magdalen hut, which occupies a sunny soothing clearing. There's an alternative trek back.





Follow the old 4WD briefly to the river and wander downstream of the Boyle (no need to cross the river) out onto huge flats, then angle over to the 4WD on the far side.

This is great fast walking, with wonderful views skimming along the south side of the valley, crossing occasional streams, and back down to the Boyle village and carpark.



Hope River

Classic Southern Alps valley walk

Wide tussock flats

Lunch hut and hot spring

Great views all round

4-5 hours return

Bush and tussock track

14 kilometres return

From the Lewis Pass, Highway 7, turn off to the Hope River/Windy Point carpark and shelter. There is an information board here, and a logbook further along the track.

The Southern Alps are the grandest feature in the South Island, stretching from Nelson Lakes to Fiordland, and this walk up the Hope River is typical of the scale of the scenery. The valley is wide, with beech forest cloaking the sides of mountains well over 1500 metres high, particularly majestic with snow on them. On the way there's a wee gorge, and a soft carpet of moss under the bush canopy — plenty of space and plenty of solitude.

From the carpark and shelter follow a short vehicle track past the huts at Windy Point, then down and over a long footbridge suspended across the impressive gorge of the Boyle River. After that the track climbs steadily, some 150 metres up over farmland terraces to the bush edge. Good views downvalley.



You are now meandering along in fine, dense beech forest for most of the way to Hope shelter, staying about 100 metres above the river on a flat bush terrace. Every now and then you get superb views from grassy clearings of the Hope River and the mountains beyond.

The 6-bunk hut stands at the far side of a major matagouri clearing. It is a logical place for lunch — sunny and sheltered — and about 30 metres away there is a dribbling thermal spring, which is disappointing if you are in search of a hot bath. That will have to wait until you get home.



CANTERBURY & FOOTHILLS

Hanmer Springs Mt Isabel
Hanmer Springs Woodland Walk
Mt Grey
Waikari Rock Drawings



Porters Pass Loop
Castle Hill Limestone
Craigieburn Hogsback
Lagoon Saddle & Mt Bruce
Arthurs Pass — village to pass
Avalanche Peak

Woolshed Creek Canyon
Sharplin Falls
Lake Clearwater & Mt Guy
Little Mount Peel



Mt Isabel Hanmer Springs

Alpine tramp

400 metres climb to 1324m peak

Great views and alpine flowers

Snow in winter

2-3 hours return

Tussock route, snow poles

4 kilometres return

From Hanmer Springs take
Jacks Pass Road to Jacks
Pass carpark.

Hanmer Springs is a bustling spa town, a rural service town, and a ski-town in winter. There's a great backdrop of mountains and conifer forest, and a burgeoning number of cafes, motels, restaurants and three mini-golfs. And of course the hot pools.

The Hurunui Information Centre is right beside the Hanmer hot pools, with detailed information boards and pamphlets. There is an extensive network of **mountain bike trails** (some utilising existing walking tracks). See the pamphlet *Hanmer Springs Mountain Bike Tracks* available from the info centre.





The quickest route to Mt Isobel is to drive up to Jacks Pass and follow the tussock and alpine slopes of the main ridge along to the summit.

Great views along this well poled route. However, Mount Isobel is an exposed mountain and in winter is snow covered. This is really a tramping track.

At the summit you look into Molesworth mountain country and well beyond.



Woodland Walk Hanmer Springs

Easy walk in beech and redwoods

Duck ponds and seats

Ideal for small children

Many mt bike trails

40 minute circuit

Forest paths

1 kilometre circuit

Hanmer Springs is off Highway 7, 130 km from Christchurch. The Hurunui Information Centre is right beside the Hanmer hot pools.

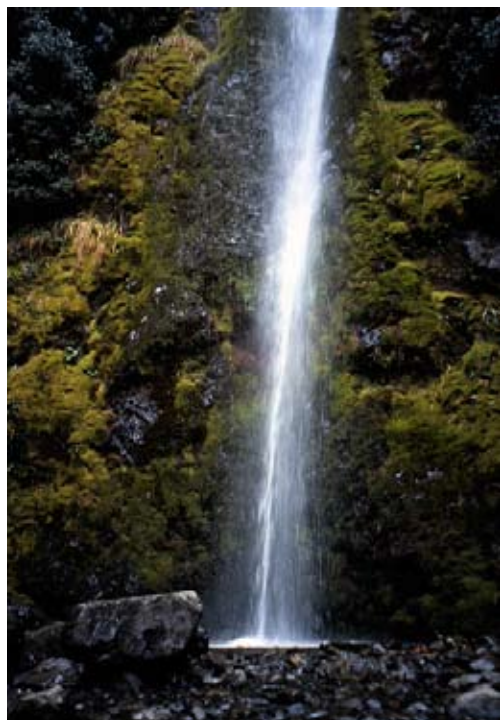
‘Forest’ in Hanmer means either native beech or pine plantations, the two types mix together in sometimes incongruous and sometimes lovely results.

The number of walk permutations are considerable and when you add in the forestry access roads as walk links then you should be able to design any circuit to suit yourself.

The Woodland Walk is a very popular 40 minute return circuit passing two ponds (lots of ducks) a flax wetland and different tree plantings including redwood and douglas fir. Picnic spots and open spaces. An idyll.



Cafe: The Pumphouse, in Hanmer township



Dog Stream Waterfall: To reach the Dog Stream waterfall drive along Jollies Pass Road to Mullans Road, and follow to the end carpark.

A well-graded track through beech forest crosses two bridges. At the first ford the track gets steep, with one more bridge and ford, and several staircases before you reach the 41 m high fall of Dog Stream.

Mt Grey Forest

Mountain trails and views

Beech forest and open tops

Full circuit walk

Short walk options

5-7 hours circuit

Bush tracks and poled tops

8 kilometres return

Access Mt Grey from Amberley via Douglas and Baker Road onto Cramptons Bush Road. A signpost will warn you if logging operations have closed the main access road. Ring Carter Holt Harvey for access info. Easy drive to Lake Janet, and then some 3 km to the picnic area by the Grey River.

The Maori name for Mount Grey is 'Maukatere' or 'floating mountain'. Exotic pine forests ring the mountain but tucked down in the valley of the Grey River is a large area of beech forest, with picnic areas and walking trails. There is also the picturesque Lake Janet on the flanks of the mountain. A satisfying tramp circuit up one spur of Mount Grey and down another. Well marked, but it's a long way, don't underestimate it.

From the Grey River carpark, cross the ford and follow the elegantly graded Mt Grey Track. It sidles mostly in beech forest across two small clear-felled areas up to a lookout junction. A few minutes to the lookout.

The main track continues and crosses a small stream and zig-zags up to an open spur with excellent views, and then winds it's easy way through tussock basins up to the trig and summit of Mt Grey. Splendid views over the plains and into Waipara river and gorge.





Many walkers will find it easier to return the same way, but otherwise follow the poles west on the open spur to the bush line. The Red Beech track takes a while down this pleasant beech spur to get down to the creek, which, with a bit of jumping, you can avoid wet feet.

The track then wanders well above the Grey River for a long way (sometimes more uphill than you'd like!), before depositing you at the picnic area again — a perfect circuit.



Waikari Rock Drawings

Ancient Maori rock drawings
Limestone formations
Farmland and views

2 hour return

Worn grass foot and sheep trails

2 kilometres

From Highway 2 at Waikari township, either park beside the Waikari tearooms/cafe or drive down the Hawarden road 1 km to the signpost.

This is a striking display of Maori rock drawings, the best surviving in Canterbury. This hot, dry limestone country was once forested, and provided seasonal shelter to Maori groups who hunted for birds like kaka, weka and the Maori rat (kiore).

Whichever end you start the walk from, it follows the old railway line 200 metres to a signposted stile. The track then climbs the grasslands beside the fenceline, some 150 metres, with a good hilltop viewpoint over the limestone outcrops.

Continue down the fenceline into the limestone valley, part of the Timpendean farm, which is private property. A few minutes to the obvious rock overhang and the Maori drawings. Wire netting keeps out sticky fingers.

Some of the drawings have been touched up with house paint, and there is a confusing array of overlaying shapes, figures and drawings that are believed to be around 600 years old. What are the drawings for? Doodles? Religious icons? A guidebook for hunters? Graffiti? Marking property or territorial rights? Art? The comic strips of their time? Whatever the artists' intentions, the drawings are enthralling.





Porters Pass Loop

Tussock mountains

Great views

Alpine plants

3-4 hours return

Tussock trails and 4WD

3 kilometres return

Follow Highway 75 towards Porters Pass, and carpark at hairpin bend. Route closed for lambing October/November.

An attractive tussock circuit with rock outcrops, beech copses and great views. Some off-track skills needed to complete the circuit. Starting from the hairpin bend at the bottom of Porters Pass, follow the well poled farm road (past the old Coach Road junction) up a spur to the main Trig M track.

It takes about an hour diversion to go to Trig M, otherwise turn down the track to Starvation Gully. Instead of dropping down to the highway follow along the spur beside an old fenceline. There's a worn trail but no markers.

After 20 minutes you can see the top of the old Coach Road, and you have to do some sidling through open tussock and scrub to get there. Then an easy walk down the historic road (built in 1858-59) to the hairpin carpark. 3-4 hours circuit, but add an hour for Trig M. Route closed for lambing October/November.





Castle Hill Limestone

Amazing limestone formations
Good exploring and bouldering
Ideal for all ages

1-2 hours wandering

Worn grass paths

2 kilometres return

Castle Hill is easily visible from Highway 73 between Christchurch and Arthur's Pass, and the start of the track is from the large carpark just before Castle Hill Station.



Castle Hill is surrounded by an arc of high country mountains, where cirrus cloud swishes across the brilliant blue sky and invariably heralds the famous hot Canterbury nor'wester. Several generations of travellers have been attracted to the limestone formations of Castle Hill; the Maori found seasonal shelter here, and left charred moa bones and rock drawings.

From the carpark follow the worn trail past the matagouri scrub to the base of the cliffs. The size of the stones is deceptive from the road and it is only when you walk among them that their true scale emerges.



Nearly all the rock shapes have an uncanny resemblance to something else: sheep, camels, mushrooms, Easter Island statues, whatever the imagination suggests. Among the main rock labyrinth is an ephemeral tarn, an archway, several holes and curious canyons — eerie, silent and evocative.



Cave Stream: is a short underground tunnel of 360 metres, and is signposted 15 minutes further along the highway from Castle Hill.

You need torches and one experienced person for the cave, but the cave entrance and exit are easy to visit. Picnic areas and toilets

Craigieburn Hogsback

Popular mt bike and walking trail

Open high country

Good views

NZ falcon often seen

2 hours one way

Well benched tussock track

5 kilometres

Castle Hill village is just beyond the limestone outcrop on Highway 73 between Christchurch and Arthur's Pass. Start by the info signs.

The Hogsback is new track in this area, and although designed for mt bikers it is an excellent walking trail as well. The best way to do it is to have a car arranged to pick you up at the other end.

From Castle Hill village carpark follow the easily graded trail as it climbs through the forest and starts to meander into upper tussock basins. great views of the Craigieburn Range. Eventually the track climbs onto the Hogsback itself, then passes through more beech forest and zig-zags steeply down to the Craigieburn ski field road.

Other walk options: several short trails around Castle Hill village, and more walking tracks and mt bike trails at Craigieburn forest itself, another 7 km along the highway at the Broken River ski field road. Popular shelter here and picnic area.



Camping: beech forest beside Broken River stream, toilets and a shelter



Lagoon Saddle & Mt Bruce

Well marked to tussock tops

Beautiful lagoon tarns

Quick side trip to Mt Bruce

Great views all round

4-5 hours return

Poled tramping track

6 kilometres return

Off Highway 73, between Christchurch and Arthur's Pass; turn at the Cora Lynn Wilderness Lodge sign and follow the road to a carpark.

A few minutes from the carpark is a classic old 6-bunker Forest Service hut, and from the hut a good track climbs up through beech forest and straggly pine trees about 300 metres to the open tussock slopes below Mount Bruce.

The poled route sidles along a tussock bench, then it's an easy wander to Lagoon Saddle itself, a perfect parkland intermixture of tarns, cushion plants, beech groves and alpine grasses. A fragile area, please walk lightly.

The track steers past Lagoon Saddle and eases down through the bush to the A-frame lunch shelter. This track continues as part of the Cass-Lagoon track.



Mt Bruce: Well worth a detour up onto Mount Bruce itself, at 1630 metres, and what a view! From the gorge of Bruce Stream, to the graceful greys of the Waimakariri River and on to the mountains of Arthur's Pass.



Arthurs Pass village to pass

Peaceful beech forest and waterfalls

Great alpine views

Alpine tarns and plants

Only one road crossing

2 hours return

Bush tracks

8 kilometres return

Start from Arthurs Pass village
on Highway 73.

This track goes from the village to the pass, passing by Punchbowl Falls, visiting Bridle Veil Falls, crossing the road near Bealey Chasm, and wandering through beech forest to the tarns and tussocks of the alpine pass. Plenty to see and do. At 4 kilometres one way its a good jaunt for families and people passing through with a spare hour or two.

Other walk options: Arthurs is full of possibilities, Punchbowl Falls 1 hour, Bealey valley 2 hours, Temple Basin skifield 2 hours, etc.





Visitor Centre: this has excellent displays and information on Arthurs Pass National Park.

Camping: some tent sites in Arthurs Pass village beside the shelter. Store and petrol in village.



Avalanche Peak

Big mountain, impressive views
Good fitness required, 1000m climb
Interesting circuit
Some rock scrambling skills

5-7 hours return

Tramping track, poled on tops

6 kilometres return

Arthur's Pass is on Highway 73, 155 km from Christchurch. The main track to Avalanche Peak starts 500 metres north of the visitor centre, opposite the Punchbowl Falls track.

It is recommended that you check the weather forecast and log in your intentions at the Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre.

It is a tough day-tramp to the summit of this 1833 m peak, but many people get immense satisfaction from reaching the bushline or the top basin. There are alpine flowers in late spring, and sensational views. You do need clear weather, as cloud will ruin the views and there is some route-finding higher up.

There are two track options, but most people start up the gentler track north of the village and come down the steep track that exits by the visitor centre.

It is a steady climb leading up a rough and ready track through beech forest and mountain scrub, almost 500 metres to the alpine tussocks, with good views along the way.

The track does get a little easier, but still follows the strong spur some 400 metres to the summit (a scramble), although it is well poled and cairned on the way up. Mount Rolleston looks awesome, and you can also peer into the narrow Crow Valley.



The alternative spur down is basically due east of the summit, and again cairned and poled. It is relatively easy travel down to the bush edge, then the track does a steep descent beside a dizzying sequence of waterfalls before reaching the visitor centre and carpark.



Woolshed Creek Canyon

Canyon views and waterfalls

Historic coal mine site

Views of the Southern Alps

Many easier track options

4-5 hours return

Tussock trails and beech paths

7 kilometres return

From the Mt Somers township take the Ashburton Gorge Road (to Erewhon) and after 10 km turn down signposted gravel side-road 3.5 km to the Coalminers Flat picnic area. Information boards and toilets.

From Coalminers Flat the track follows the old jig road to the railway incline. Full four tonne hoppers of coal would plummet down from the mine and by means of a self-acting ropeway pull up the empty hoppers. The Miners Track zig-zags up the jig incline to the bare bleached site of the 1928 Blackburn Coal Mine. A reconstructed mine entrance has been built with a sluice gun.

Follow a well-poled track which sidles in tussock gullies, along the edge of Woolshed Creek canyon, climbing to Trig R, a splendid viewpoint. You can see the 3000 metre Mt Arrowsmith massif and the distant headwaters of the Rangitata River, the mythical land of 'Erewhon' that Samuel Butler made famous.

The poled route nimbly descends past a rocky lookout and drops right down to the gouged and twisted canyon, and to the large trampers hut at the head of Woolshed Creek. A poled track goes from the hut and zig-zags neatly around bluffs to the base of the roaring canyon itself. A worthwhile ten minute side-trip.





Other tracks: many other tracks signposted from Coalminers Flat

Quick stop: historic stone cottage on way to Coalminers Flat is fascinating

Cafe and shop in Mt Somers village



Sharplin Falls

Fine waterfall

Well marked bush tracks

Good family area

1-2 hours return

Beech tracks

2 kilometres return

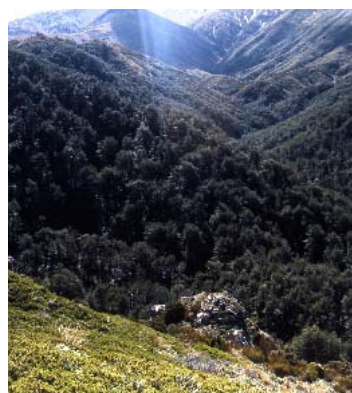
Sharplin Falls is 9 km from Mt Somers town on Highway 72 to Staveley. Small store and cafe here. Then turn inland up Flynn's road 4 km to carpark.

From the shelter and toilet at the carpark, cross the impressive footbridge and follow the track upriver. The track to the falls is well signposted past the Mt Somers walkway junction, and wanders in beech forest beside the river (one brief section of river boulders).

Pass the boulder cascade of the Goldsmith Rapids, then climb along an impressive gantry bolted into the rock face before you finally get to the falls themselves, which roar down a mossy rock-strewn face.



Other walk options: an easy climb to Dukes Knob and good views of Bowyers Stream.





Lake Clearwater & Mt Guy

Unrivalled mountain views

Well poled track

High country landscape

Many other track options

4-5 hours return

Tussock trails

4 kilometres

About 25 km from Mt Somers village up the Ashburton Gorge Road and Hakatere/Potts Road to Lake Clearwater back town.

The Hakatere Conservation Park now has many short and long walks amongst big mountain scenery. Plenty to explore and do here.

Starting from the Lake Clearwater foreshore picnic area, there is a two hour walk or mt bike trail around Lake Clearwater. Mt Guy track also starts here. Walk around the lake and across the footbridge to a stile. A poled track climbs steadily up a spur and you'll disturb many little skinks on the way up. Great views from the wide flat summit, especially of Mt D'Archiac.

Other walk options: a pretty picnic area and short easy walks at Lake Roundabout, and an hours stroll to the old musterers hut by Lake Emma. Also a connecting track between Lake Camp and Lake Emma, two hours one way. There is no poled track to the beautiful Spider Lakes, but there is an access gate and the walking is easy. Further up the Erewhon Road is the magnificent two hour return walk to the top of Mt Sunday, a location used in the Lord of the Rings film trilogy.





Camping: beside Lake Camp, pine trees and toilets

Little Mount Peel

Classic mountain walk

Shelter hut on top

Podocarp bush on lower slopes

Many track options

6-7 hours return

Bush tracks and tussock trails, with boardwalks

6 kilometres return

Turn off Highway 72 and travel 12 km past the Peel Forest Visitor Centre to Blandwood Road, and follow this some 1 km as it turns sharply before a ford. Car-park on left.

This walk climbs up to a high alpine peak, with an eye-opening view of the patchwork plains.

From Blandwood carpark walk up the road some 500 m till the track starts. Take Deer Spur track, which passes the Fern Walk and climbs up through a mixed forest of fuchsia and broadleaf.

The track passes Allan's Track and some southern rata trees (look out for the crimson flowers at Christmas time) then reaches the tarn at 900 metres. There are some massive specimens of spaniard with razor-sharp flowering stalks.

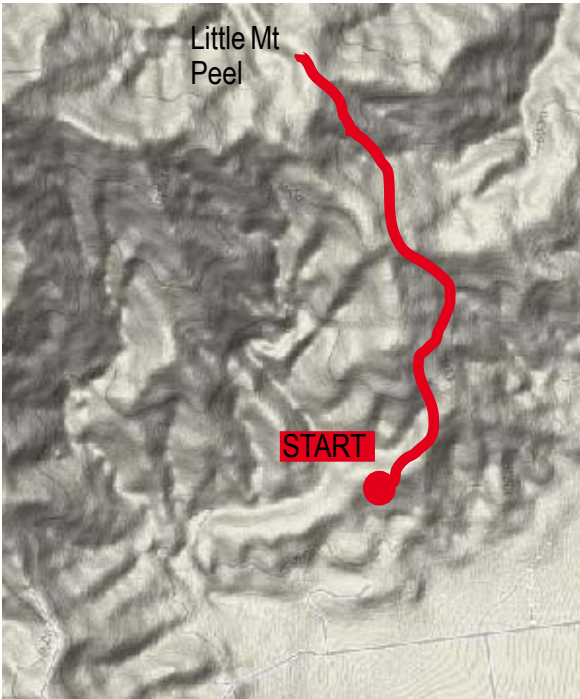
The track winds up the spur onto the tussock, with extensive boardwalks higher up. The last 150 metres is a steeper, muddier climb to the small, sharp top of Little Mount Peel at 1311 metres. There is a beacon on top and a wee shelter 20 metres below (enclosed, with seats and water).

Little Mount Peel is exposed and gets plenty of snow in winter. A day-tramp rather than a walk.



Other walk options: Den-nistoun Bush Walk for the big totara trees (1 hour circuit), Acland Falls (1 hour return) and Kahikatea Walk (1 hour circuit).

Cafe: Verde, in Geraldine



Camping: A pleasant DOC campground with cabins. Tickets and food supplies from Peel Forest store.

CHRISTCHURCH & THE PORT HILLS



Spencer Park & Brooklands
Northshore Coast
Southshore Spit



Godley Head
Quail Island
Cass Bay
Governors Bay Coast



Travis Swamp
The Groynes
Styx Mill
Macleans Island Forest
Riccarton Bush



Bridle Path & Gondola
Mt Vernon Park
Sign of the Kiwi
Coopers Knob
Halswell Quarry

Spencer Park & Brooklands

Surf beach and lagoon walks

Excellent mt biking

Playground and adventure course

Popular family camping

1 hour return

Gravel and forest trails, dune paths

1 kilometre return

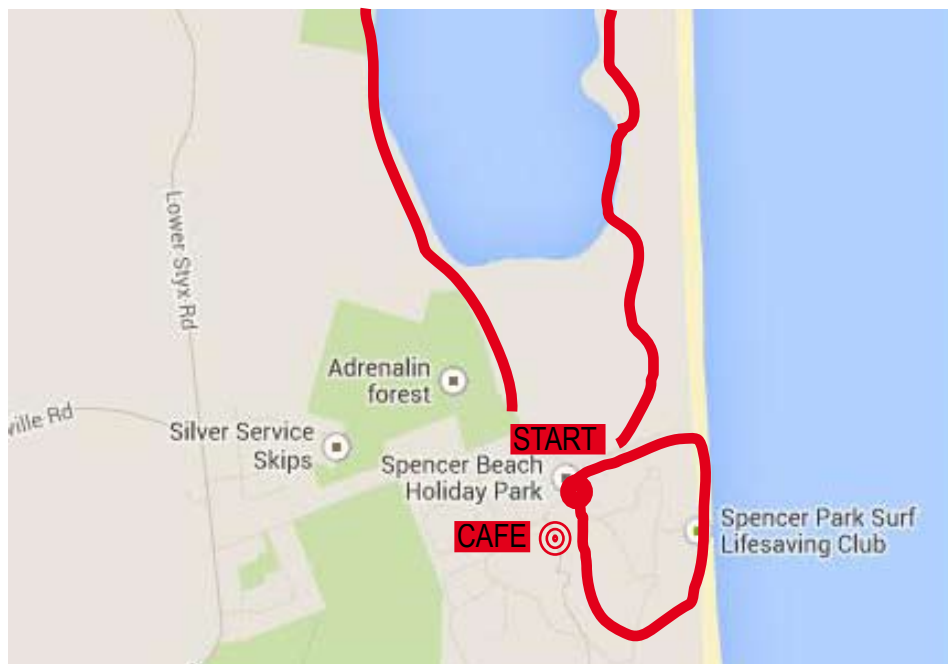
From Christchurch take Marshlands Road to the Lower Styx Road to Spencerville, turn off onto Heyders Road to Spencer Park and Brooklands Lagoon (well signposted). About 16 km from Christchurch.

Spencer Park has everything for the family. Several large picnic areas with barbeques, adventure playground, walks in forest to wetlands and to the beach, fun mt bike trails into Bottle Lake Forest, and of course the broad and wide sandy beach with the surf life-saving club. The campground is well organised and popular in summer, with all facilities, including a small shop. For some Christchurch families Spencer Park becomes a second home over Xmas.

There's a 20 minute Wetland Walk around two ponds and boardwalks, and longer walks into Bottle Lake Forest.

The Brooklands Lagoon is a coastal estuary that has been formed by the Waimakariri and Styx Rivers merging. The Brooklands Bird Hide is an easy stroll along the saltmarsh to a bird hide on a knoll. Excellent outlook over the wading birds.





The track continues all the way to Brooklands motor camp. Bird hide 30-40 mins return, Brooklands 2 hrs one way.

The Waimakariri Walkway is a 3-4 hrs return hike, well signposted and follows dune country on the inside of the spit that separates Brooklands Lagoon from the sea. The track goes to the Waimakariri river mouth and you can walk back along the beach for a varied circuit.



Northshore Coast

Beach walking and sand dunes

Ideal for families

Huge playground Broad Park

Popular dog walkers area

1 hour return

Sandy trails and beach

3 kilometres return

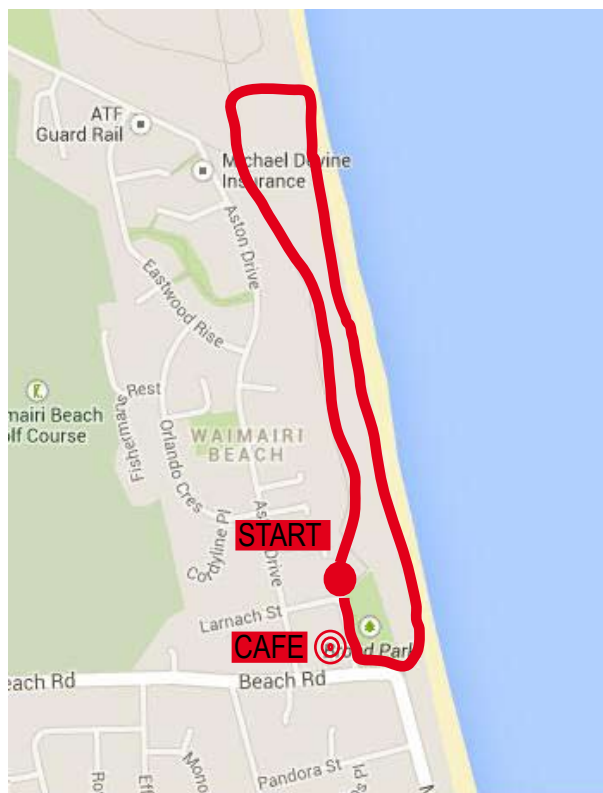
From Christchurch drive to New Brighton pier and turn north along Marine Parade all the way to the Waimairi Surf Club. About 10 km from Christchurch.

An interesting walk along sand dune trails with good views. No roads to cross, so a good walk for families plus a popular cafe opposite Broad Park. The Waimairi Beach Surf Life Saving Club is next door to Broad Park, which is great for combining a walk with a summer swim when the flags are out.

Starting from Broad Park (toilets here) follow the Southern Pegasus Bay Track (shared with mt bikes) through the dunes and pick-up the crest trail as it winds along to a four-way junction opposite Bottle Lake Forest. Return along the beach to the surf club building.



Cafe: Beach, on Broadpark Road (opposite Broad Park)



Southshore Spit

Beach walking

Sand dunes and estuary views

Bird reserve

Dogs on leash

1 hour return

Dune trails and beach walking

1 kilometre return

Drive to New Brighton and continue south along Marine Parade, then Rockinghorse Road to carpark at end of spit, about 13 km from Christchurch central.

The Southshore Spit almost touches Sumner, and is a popular area for joggers and walkers. There are trails across the spit, but people should be aware that many wading and wetland birds use the area as well for roosting and feeding.

From the carpark and car turning area at the end of Rockinghorse Road (great name!) a good track called the Southshore Spit dune loop track leads around the spit to the estuary side. Then take the inland track or the beach, back to the carpark.

For a longer walk, follow the the estuary margin north at low tide. It's mostly light shingle and hard mud, and walk up to Plover Street. There's a seat here, then follow Plover Street across Rockinghorse Road to the pleasant bush reserve and playground. Walk through the bush to the beach and return back to the spit carpark.





Travis Swamp

Large wetland with many birds
Perimeter walk and boardwalks
Lookout platform and bird hides
Information shelter

1 hour circuit

Gravel track and boardwalks

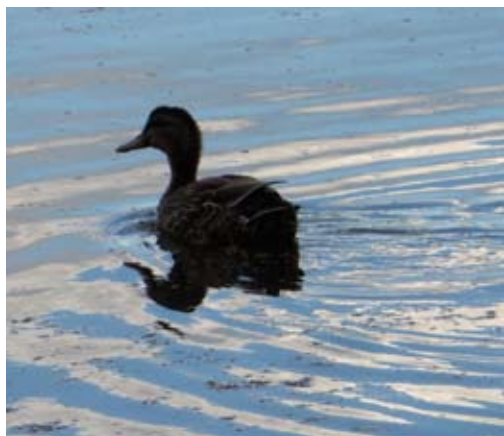
4 kilometre circuit

From Anzac Drive ring road, take Frosts Road to opposite Beach Road, and drive to large carparking area. Signboards and information shelter a minute away.

Travis Swamp is a huge area of ponds and waterways, a local treasure, where over 60 different bird species have been recorded, and more pukeko than you could poke a stick at. The wetland not only survived the enormous earthquake of 2011 but became even wetter!

From the carpark walk to the information shelter which, seems to float in its own pond. It has interpretation panels as well as a short walk to a bird lookout hide. The main perimeter track heads south, crosses a bridge and reaches a junction by Angela's Stream. This section is busy with waterfowl, and large, posh homes from Travis County come close to the track. A peaceful walk to Clarevale Reserve, then the track follows a boardwalk to a birdwatching viewing platform.

Great lookout, then boardwalks continue through to open grass swales with good views. Now the Anne Flanagan Track passes a seat lookout (and carpark off Mairehau Road) before swinging round the northeast corner of Travis wetland to a path that leads back to Beach Road carpark.





The Groynes

Large wetland with many birds

Many easy family walks

Childrens playground & fishing

Picnic areas, toilets, dog park

1 hour circuit

Gravel tracks and boardwalks

2 kilometre return

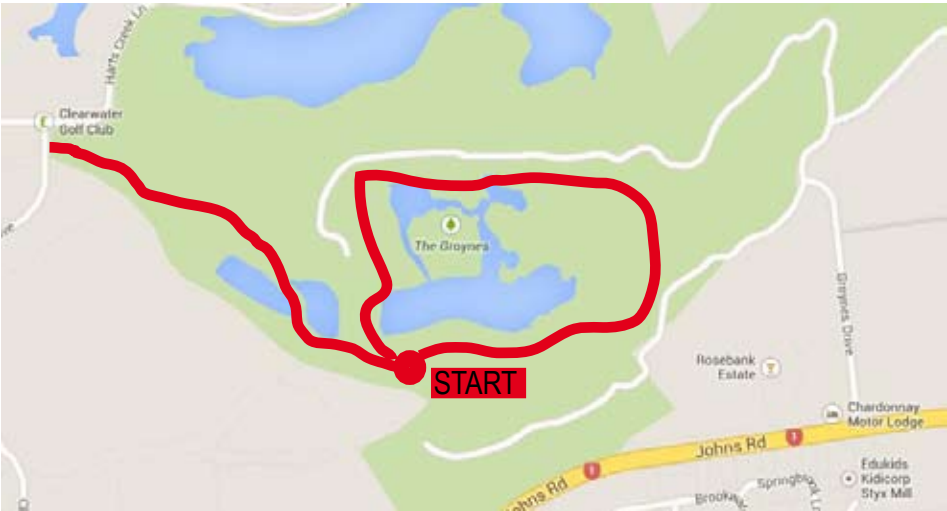
The Groynes and Clearwater Estate are off the main airport by-pass Russley and Johns Road. 7 km from Christchurch.

The Groynes is one of the prettiest and popular wetland areas in Christchurch, 85 hectares in all. The complexity of freshwater lakes, woodland walks and access roads makes it appear open and spacious. A reall chill-out and family space. It is a series of small lakes and channels formed by the Otukaikino Creek, which is the south branch of the Waimakariri River.

Ample room for picnicking, walking, boating, fishing, studying ecology or just feeding the stropky ducks. There is a special wildlife lake area. Plenty of carparking and toilets.

The Otukaikino Walk starts from the carpark and wanders beside the creek to the Clearwater Estate and golf course road. Or there's an easy circuit of the lakes.





Styx Mill Reserve

Open spaces and wetland

Short walks and picnic areas

Full perimeter walk

Dog park

1-2 hours Perimeter Walk return

Gravel paths and grass paths

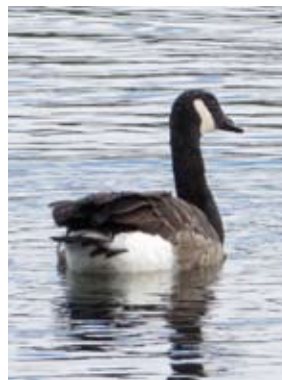
3 kilometres return

From Johns Road take Gardiners Road to Hussey Road carpark (Willowbank signs will help). Also big carpark off Styx Mill Road. About 8 km from Christchurch city.

Wetland ponds have been made alongside the pretty Styx River and are already attracting considerable bird-life. One entrance is currently off Hussey Road, with a picnic area and popular dog park. Another entrance is off Styx Mill Road with carpark and picnic areas.

The Hussey View Walkway is a 30 minute wheelchair circuit path which follows the Styx River. An easy, relaxing stroll. The Panako Walkway leaves the main carpark and crosses a bridge, then follows the riverside to an elegant footbridge to the ponds area. A four-wheel drive track follows alongside the ponds to the Styx Mill Road exit. 30 minute return. There is a short side-track to weed-infested Contemplation Point beside the Styx River.

You can walk around most of the Styx Mill Reserve using the wide track alongside the predator proof fence (which isn't completed yet). Start from Hussey Road, walk along the fence track to Styx Mill Road, then 100 metres up road, and follow the track behind the Recycling Centre to Styx Mill carpark, and back along the Panako Walkway to Hussey carpark through the predator fence access gate. Full Perimeter Track 1-2 hours circuit.





Macleans Island Forest

Pine forest

Great family mt biking

Picnic sites and toilets

Several walking trails

2 hour circuit

Pine forest trail

4 kilometres circuit

Macleans Island is off the airport bypass road (Russley and Johns), and the entrance to Macleans forest is almost opposite Orana Park. Forest closed at dusk. About 15 km from Christchurch city.

The main entrance carpark at Macleans Island Forest has been nicely developed with good car-parks, picnic tables, shade, toilets, and information maps. You can hire bikes and there's a small cafe on summer weekends. There is an excellent one-way and well-marked 10 km mt bikers circuit, plus a 2 km extra river loop, and a short-cut option.

Walkers also have their own a signposted circuit of about 2 hours, but it's deadly dull, and it doesn't even get to view the nearby Waimakariri River. I'm struggling to see why anyone would walk this track, but people definitely are. It's flat, and sheltered from wind and sun, so don't take any notice of me and try it out.



Cafe: small cafe and bike hire in main carpark at weekends



Riccarton Bush

Urban forest

Bush birds in fenced reserve

Historic Deans cottage

Riccarton House and cafe

20 minutes return

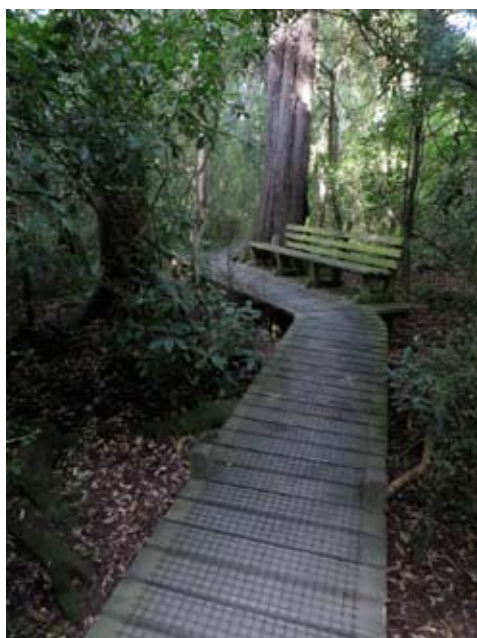
Bush track and boardwalk

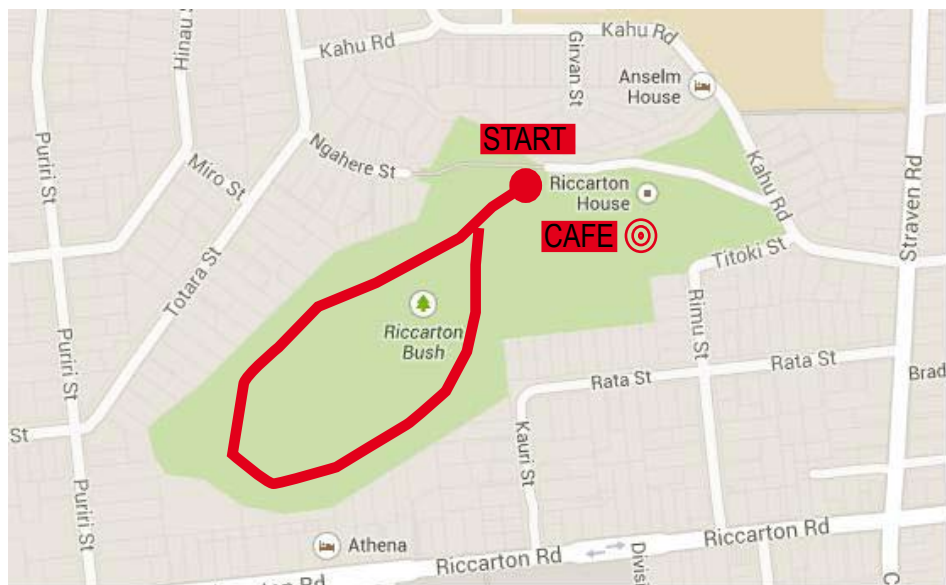
1 kilometre return

From Christchurch city centre it's 5 km to Riccarton House carpark. Idyllic scene by river with large English trees.

Riccarton Bush (often called Deans Bush) now has a predator proof fence to keep birds in, and stoats and possums out. This is a gorgeous remnant of a small forest that existed on the Canterbury Plains when the first English settlers arrived in 1840's. This forest was preserved by the Deans family and Riccarton House was badly damaged by the 2011 Christchurch earthquake but has since been fully restored.

The Avon River winds under huge trees beside the historic Deans cottage, and the forest itself is a short escape walk from the bustle of the city. An elegant and charming place to visit.





Cafe: Riccarton house on weekends, with Farmers Market (Saturday)

Godley Head

Popular beach and wild peninsula

Sea views and cute baches

Historic gun sites and tunnels

Great mountain biking

2-3 hours circuit

Gravel and tussock track

4 kilometre circuit

From Christchurch city centre it's 8 km to Taylors Mistake carpark, with toilets, changing rooms, and cute baches.

Great, expansive views on this lovely peninsula jutting between the sea and Lyttelton Harbour. Walking tracks and mt bike trails everywhere, and several historic sites. Godley is good for families as Taylors Mistake is an excellent sandy beach to start from.

The tracks winds past baches and around headlands with stunning views to Boulder Bay. Then it climbs to the main gun pits of Godley Head, and swings around to the top carpark. Great info signs here. Follow the bluff track (or road) to Breeze Col and descend switchback towards Taylors again.

Alternative start: drive along Summit Road to carpark and info signs. Optional track to tunnel.





Cafe: Underground, Sumner (about five other cafes as well!)

Quail Island

Harbour island and beaches

Historic leprosy hut

Ships graveyard (at low tide)

Island walk circuit

1.15 hour circuit

Gravel track and grass paths

3 kilometres circuit

Bus or drive to Lyttelton, then catch Diamond Harbour and Lyttelton ferry. 12 km from Christchurch.

Sheltered within the Lyttelton harbour Quail Island is a wonderful coastal walk. Arriving by boat is a novel way to start a day and establishes an unhurried frame of mind well suited to the lazy solitude of the island.

It was precisely this solitude that has caused most of Quail Island's interesting history. A leper colony was housed here (a grave can still be seen, and a replica hut), so were Scott's dogs and ponies in transit to Antarctica in 1910. Neither the dogs, ponies or Scott came back. And there is dumping on a grand scale in the ships 'graveyard' on the western side of the island.

The Display Centre has information murals on the islands human history and there is a good swimming beach (at mid to high tide) for the smaller kids, with plenty of shade and grassy picnic areas. Quail Island is currently being replanted in native trees as part of a large revegetation scheme.





Cass Bay & Corsair

Peaceful forested tracks

Pretty coves and lookouts

Historic torpedo boat museum

Family swimming bays

2 hours return

Gravel paths and grass trails

4 kilometres return

Drive to Corsair Bay carpark, or Cass Bay carpark. Well signposted, 12-15 km from Christchurch.

This pretty coastal path starts from Corsair Bay carpark, a popular swimming beach (toilets). The track follows a broad easy path around small headlands and tiny bays with access to the rocky coast in places to Cass Bay. At low tide the volcanic tidal platform is a good place to fossick in.

Beside the childrens playground at Cass bay a benched track continues past several small headlands, then zig-zags sharply uphill to Pony Point lookout picnic area. Seats and tables. Theres a signposted short-cut track to Cass Bay, otherwise return the same way.





Torpedo Boat Museum

From Cass Bay follow the main track through the pine trees to Magazine Bay (which was named after the 1874 explosives bunker) and the fascinating Torpedo Boat museum. Probably New Zealand's smallest museum (open Sat, Sun, Tues, Thurs 1-3 pm) and easily the best.



Governors Bay Coast

Coastal birds and jetty

Scenic shore and bush reserve

Interesting rock formations

Family friendly mt bike road

2 hours return

Old road

5 kilometres return

Various access points. Little car-parking at Governors Bay jetty, a few places at Sandy Bay, not much at Church Lane carpark, but loads of carparking at the attractive Allandale picnic area.

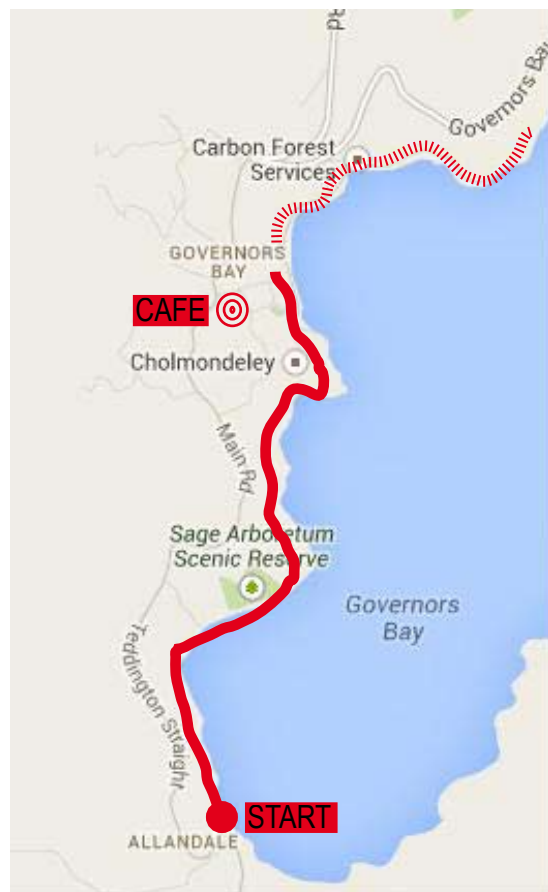
An easy-going shoreline walk, rambling along the old coastal road with views out over Lyttelton Harbour and the rolling peaks of Banks Peninsula. The track is surprisingly private once you leave Allandale carpark, and you get glimpses of houses up on the terraces, including the fine old stone mansion of Otakaikie.

Just past Church Lane there is a short (rather overgrown) 10-minute track through the Sage Reserve, which is mostly kanuka forest. On around the point, the road swings past some swirling rock patterns in the soft cliffs, with oyster catchers and shags picking over the mudflats. Governors Bay has a long, magnificent finger of a jetty (being restored), and the road ends here.



Cafe: She, Governors Bay

Sandy Bay Option: A bush trail fossicks around the edge of Governors Bay, past boat-sheds and backyards to the carpark at Sandy Bay. A benched track passes the old jetty and leads to a secluded bay with baches tucked under the cliffs. The tide platforms are extensive at low tide.



Bridle Path & Gondola

Historic footpath

300 metre climb

Tremendous views

Track option to gondola cafe

2 hours return

Gravel road

3 kilometres return

From Christchurch city it's 7 km to the Bridle Path carpark, just beside the gondola base station. Picnic tables and water fountain.

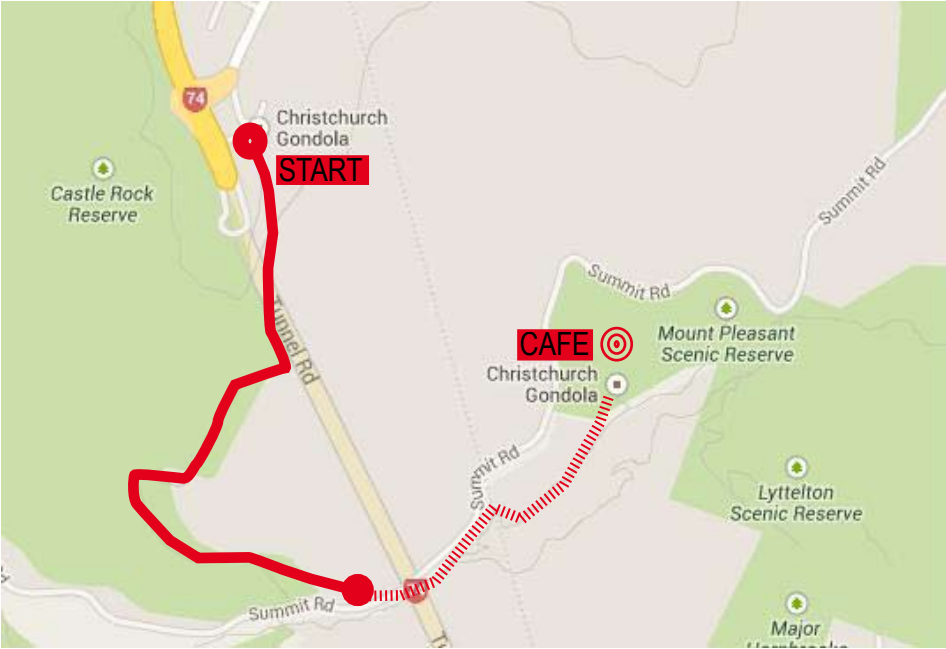


The Bridle Path was surveyed and constructed in a feverish hurry over the Christmas period of 1850–51. The first of the four immigrant ships, arrived on 16 December, and the stone seats on the path are named after each ship.

From the carpark the broad vehicle track climbs steadily up a zigzag. Once you reach the Summit Road there's the historic shelter and memorial to the pioneer women, and great views over Lyttelton and the harbour.

Option 1: A good track follows the ridge 30 minutes up to the gondola which sells coffees and lunches. Option 2: The Bridle Path continues down to Lyttelton 30 minutes, and you can catch a bus through the tunnel back to the gondola carpark.





Cafe: Gondola, top station

Mt Vernon Park

Fine views over city

Many track options

300 metre climb to summit

Meditation kiosks

3-4 hours return

Tussock trails and farm roads

7 kilometre return

Off Centaurus Road and Hillsborough Terrace to large carpark.

From the carpark and mapboard, veer right at an immediate track junction and follow the zigzag track up the hill to the spur, then follow the spur track to a plane table. Good views from here already.

Continue up the spur track to where it joins the farm vehicle road, and settle into a slow, steady plod through tussock downlands up to Summit Road. On the way you can glimpse the isolated pocket of native forest called Dry Bush.

At the Summit Road there is the Lamar wheelchair and pushchair track, a short, tidy circuit with a plane table and seats. The track crosses the Summit Road and continues up to the summit of Mount Vernon itself, with great views everywhere.



Cafe: Fava, on Centaurus Road (by Wilsons Road roundabout) St Martins



Alternative Return Option: a good one is via Rapaki Track and the Valley Track and meditation kiosk back to carpark.



Sign of the Kiwi

Unrivalled views over harbour

Historic tearooms

Bush track and lookouts

Rock outcrops and seats

1.30 hours circuit

Bush tracks and tussock trails

3 kilometre circuit

From Christchurch drive up Dyers Pass Road to Dyers Pass and the carpark beside the Sign of the Kiwi. An excellent lookout.

A short, civilised, circular walk on the Port Hills, which explores bush reserves and outstanding views of Lyttelton Harbour side; and you can end with a cup of tea or an ice-cream in the 1917 stone resthouse.

Start opposite the Sign of the Kiwi and follow 'Mitchells Track'. This bush track sidles through a hillside of dominant mahoe, lancewood and lemonwood (tarata), and some tuneful bellbirds and grey warblers. Great lookouts over the deep blue gash of Lyttelton Harbour. Track wanders past the Smyth seat to the junction with Cedric's Track. Still don't know who Cedric was.

Follow this track gently uphill across tussocks and around to the large Sugar Loaf carpark. 20 minutes to walk up the sealed road to the Sugar Loaf summit and at 496 metres you get superb views. Back down at Sugar Loaf carpark, pick up the other half of Cedric's Track, which lollups down to the Sign of the Kiwi



Cafe: Sign of the Kiwi (if its open), Dyers Pass, on Dyers Pass Road



Coopers Knob

Classic skyline walk

View Mt Cook & Lake Ellesmere

Dramatic rock outcrops

Other track options

2 hours return

Bush tracks and tussock trails, rock scramble to summit

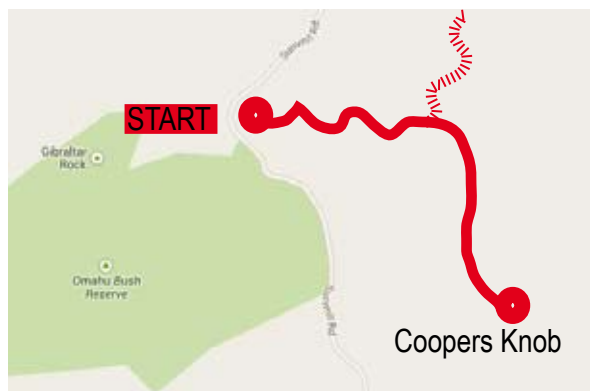
2 kilometres return

From the Summit Road start from the small carpark (and steps) beside Gibraltar Rock, just past Rhodes spring. Toilets and picnic area at the historic Sign of the Bellbird.

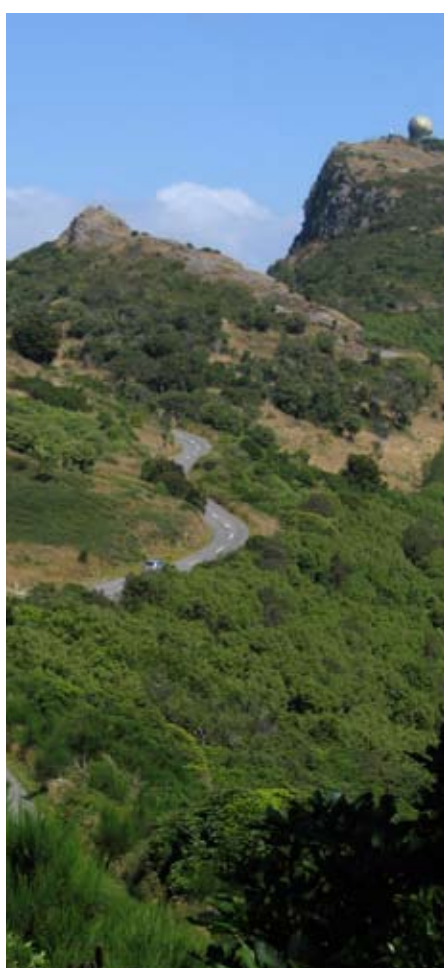
Coopers Knob is the highest hill on the Port Hills (572m), and on a fine day you can see Lake Ellesmere and Kaitorete Spit in the foreground, then the whole panorama of the Southern Alps, including Mount Cook (just to the left of Mount Somers), as well as Mount Arrowsmith and Mount D'Archiac. A bit of a scramble to the top but on a fine day you would not wish to be anywhere else.

Take the steps opposite the carpark, and climb easily through gorse and tussock to the main Crater Rim Walkway. Turn right at the junction and follow the main track to an unmarked side-trail. Keep to the ridge before scrambling up the rocks of Coopers Knob. The easiest way is around the back or south side. Phew!





Other Track Option: if you can arrange transport there's nothing to stop you heading all along the Port Hills on the Crater Rim Walkway to Godley Head! The walkway follows the twist and twine of the volcanic ridge, slipping past rock tors and overlooking bluffs down to the lovely blue-green cleft of Lyttelton



Halswell Quarry

Historic quarry and info signs

Sculptural surprises

Several walk circuits

Picnic areas, tables, toilets

1 hour circuit

Gravel paths and mown strips

2 kilometres return

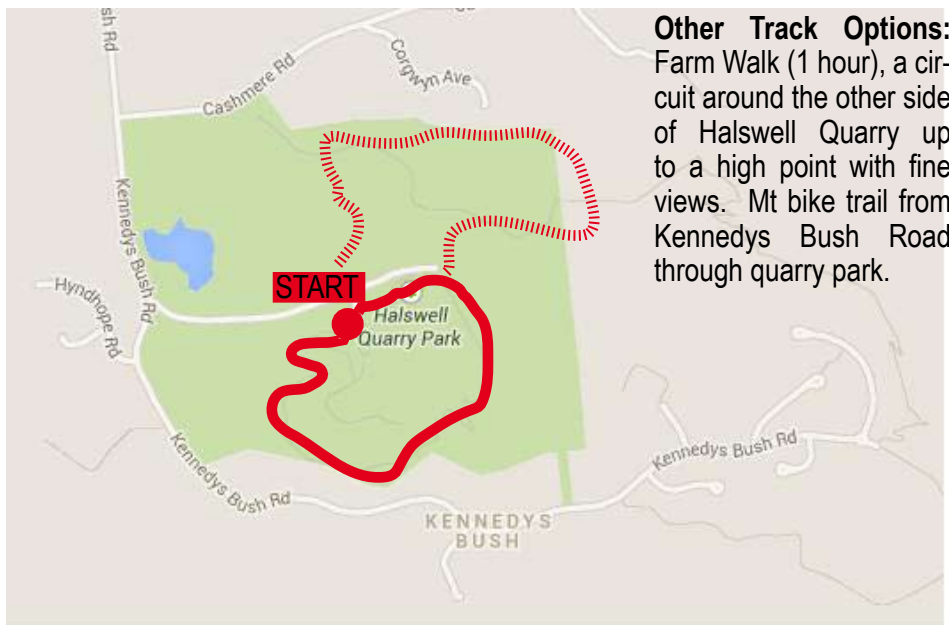
Drive to Halswell and the Akaroa–Sparks Road junction then take Kennedys Bush Road to the signposted turn-off; 10 km from Christchurch city.



This fine park has been formed out of an old council-run quarry and is a unique combination of botanical gardens and historic quarry buildings. A quiet, involving landscape, with sculptures from sister city gardens that are being developed: Seattle, Adelaide, Christchurch (England), Songpa-Gu (Korea), Sansu (China) and Kurashiki (Japan).

The main Rim Track starts from the carpark, goes up past the interesting assemblage of old quarry buildings and gradually follows the outer rim of the quarry. There are lookout points and interesting interpretation panels on the way.

The rock quarry has striking rock patterns, and there are expansive views over to the southern mountains beyond. The down track passes a 10-minute sidetrail up to Kennedys Bush Road, then goes through the shady Findlays picnic area and back to the carpark.



BANKS PENINSULA



Sign of the Packhorse
Summit Crest



Orton Bradley Park, Big Rock
Mount Herbert



Akaroa Town Walk
Hinewai Forest



Kaitorete Spit
Onawe Pa



Orton Bradley Park, Big Rock

English style parkland and stream

Kids play and adventure course

Rhododendron gardens in spring

Many short walks and picnic spots

Big Rock 1-2 hour return

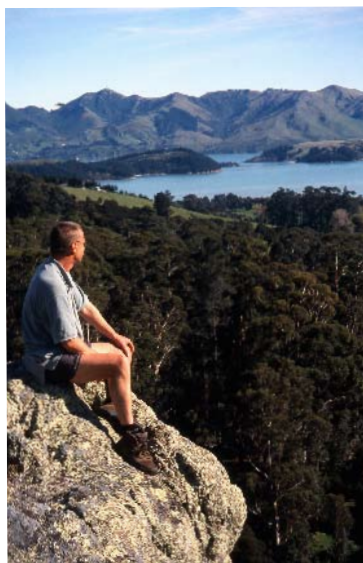
Farm tracks and paths

3 kilometres return

Drive from Christchurch via
Gebbies Pass or Dyers Pass
and Teddington to Charteris
Bay. 30 km from Christchurch.

Orton Bradley is a charming out-of-town destination for walkers, picnickers and families, and combines in it's 653 hectares, a working farm park, historical buildings and many easy and fit walks. There are extensive tree-lined grassy areas for the kids to go berserk in, with an adventure playground as well. Great picnic areas, with tables and toilets. A small charge may be made for entry into Orton Bradley Park.

The featured walk here is to Big Rock but there are many other short walks to choice from. The Cokers Walk and Rhododendron Walk (20 minutes) The Dunalley Walk (20 minutes one way). The Arboretum Walk is a 40 minute return walk that wanders around a shady Redwood grove. Hunter Gully & Magnificent Gully is a 2 hour circuit. The Tableland circuit is 2-3 hours return.





For the Big Rock walk up the main valley track alongside the stream to the well signposted junction, and then walk and scramble around to the top of this impressive rock outcrop.

Another track continues from the Big Rock down through forest to the second footbridge, and you can return down valley, a nice little circuit.



Camp: tent sites on grassy areas with shade beside stream and toilets

Cafe: Godley Cafe, in Diamond Harbour

Mount Herbert

Big walk, 1000 m climb

Highest point of Banks Peninsula

Shelter near top

5-7 hours return

Farm track, 4WD, tussock trail

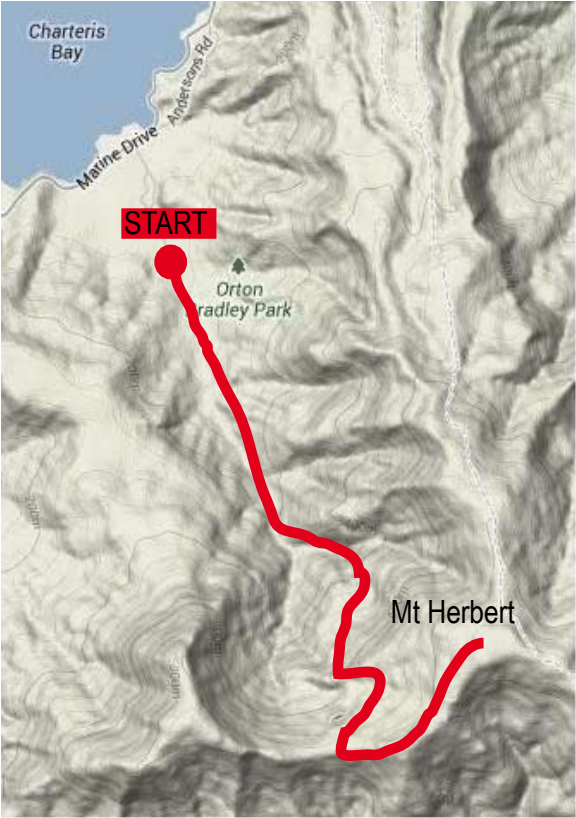
14 kilometre return

Drive from Christchurch via Gebbies Pass or Dyers Pass and Teddington to Charteris Bay. 30 km from Christchurch. minute away.

Mt Herbert or Te Ahu Patiki is a full but worthwhile day, and the track is well marked with signs and poles. Follow the main valley track through Orton Bradley Park as it wanders first up easy valley paths, then climbs sharply through bluffs and ribbonwood groves to a 4WD track into the top basin.

This 4WD track then zig-zags through the gorse up to the saddle and large shelter, and then along to the summit itself at 919 m. Excellent views of Mt Cook, Lake Ellesmere and Kaitorete Spit. Take water.





Camp: tent sites Orton Bradley Park on grassy areas with shade and toilets



Sign of the Packhorse

Historic stone hut

Easy half day climb

Great views

3-4 hours return

Farmtracks and 4WD

6 kilometres return

Access to the Packhorse Hut is off the Christchurch–Akaroa road, Highway 75, into the Kaituna Valley, then off an unsigned short side-road about 7 km along the Kaituna Valley road

The Sign of the Packhorse is perched in a fine romantic situation, alone on the tussock pass that looks from Lyttelton to Kaitorete Spit. It was built in the 1920s, part of a network of hostels'. Early photos show a homely place, with curtains at the windows and flowers on the table.

The track from Kaituna valley is well signposted and poled, and sidles past the farm, following vehicle tracks up a bush-filled valley then climbing onto a big spur. You can hear quite a few native birds, including kingfishers and bellbirds. Kanuka trees are dominant here, with lots of kowhai as well.

After a while the track stops climbing up the spur, and sidles on a farm track past Parkinsons Bush Reserve to the saddle and old stone hut. The hut has bunks and mattresses, a woodstove and a rainwater tank. In summer the water supply cannot be relied upon, unlike the views.





Other walks

The Packhorse sits in the centre of a web of tracks. For the fit, a poled track leads behind Mount Bradley and on to Mount Herbert, the high point of the peninsula. It is shorter, and not difficult, to go directly on to Mount Bradley. Another poled route continues down from the Packhorse Hut, past the Remarkable Dykes (an outcrop of volcanic rock) and then on to Gebbies Pass, 2–3 hours one way.



Summit Crest

Wild and wonderful ridge track

Good mt biking

Bush reserves and tree graveyards

Spectacular views

4-5 hours one way

Farm tracks and 4WD roads

10 kilometres one way

From Little River take the tortuous Western Valley Road up to the Port Levy saddle, a dramatic site. Need to arrange transport to pick you up at other end.

These Banks Peninsula tops are wild, and the crouched shapes of the totara trees give a fair idea of what the weather can be like up here. The three hillside reserves of Mount Fitzgerald, Mount Sinclair and Whatarangi-Totara have surprising sub-alpine plants — like mountain holly and spaniard. Pick a fine day and you will have a fine walk. Also known as the double fenceline track.

From the Port Levy saddle it is 1 km through stands of stunted totara to point KK (738 m), then a brief drop down to Waipuna Saddle and an easy swing around tussock slopes up to Mount Fitzgerald (826 m). The poled route drops down to a saddle then up to Mount Sinclair (841 m), about 3 km. The tree 'graveyards' are both beautiful and ugly at the same time.

There is a big descent from Mount Sinclair to the tiny Whatarangi-Totara Reserve, then the track crosses open grasslands to an unnamed rocky peak (700 m) overlooking Montgomery Park. The track is poled into, and through, Montgomery Park, and this dwarf of a reserve has some giant totara trees.





Cafe: Little River Store, in Little River

Kaitorete Spit

Huge gravel spit with big surf

Agate hunting in gravels

Gemstone museum

1-2 hours wandering

Gravel

1-2 kilometres return

Take Highway 75 to Akaroa and turn-off 2 km to Birdlings Flat car-park. 45 km from Christchurch.

Birdlings Flat is a cluster of baches at the base of the Kaitorete Spit, the huge tongue of land that separates Lake Ellesmere from the Pacific Ocean. Fisherfolk come here for the surf-casting and rock hounds for the gemstones in the beach gravel. You can walk north along the beach past the Lake Forsyth outlet to the magnificent red-rock cliff.

Various semi-precious stones like chalcedony, agate, petrified wood and jasper are deposited at Birdlings Flat. The rock material has been carried from the mountains down rivers like the Rangitata, Ashburton and Hinds, then swept up the Kaitorete Spit by ocean currents.

At Birdlings Flat the spit is aligned east-west which explains why the mid-summer sun sets so magnificently over the sea, and why on a clear winter's day you can look down the spit and see Mount Cook due west (ok, you need binoculars). The Maori called Lake Ellesmere 'Waihora' 'water spread out' and this huge lake is considered one of New Zealand's foremost shore bird and wading bird habitats with over 150 species being recorded here.



Onawe Pa

Historic Maori pa and battleground

Amazing rock formations

Great place for families

Need low tide

1 hour return

Beach and grass trails

2 kilometre return

Drive to Duvauchelle on the Christchurch– Akaroa road, Highway 75, then turn onto an unsealed coastal road for 1 km to the carpark.

Onawe Peninsula dangles like a greenstone pendant in the smooth waters of Akaroa Harbour. It is now a peaceful place, and the quiet lapping tides make it an island at high tide.

But this was no defence for Ngai Tahu Maori who occupied this pa site when Te Rauparaha's warriors approached in 1830. The slaughter was immense, and was followed by a cannibal feast on the beach.

From the carpark a short vehicle track drops down to the pebbly beach. There are striking rock patterns in the tidal rocks. Onawe is connected to the mainland by just a thin, razor-like ridge, which broadens out into a wide and rising grass slope to the beacons summit 100 metres above sea level.

A good trail climbs up to this summit, which is further than it looks, and the outlook is fine. Manuka forest and thick grass now largely obscure the details of the pa site, but nothing can obscure the magnificence of the harbour landscape.





Akaroa Town Walk

Cruisey exploring town trails

Cafes and croissants

Historic sites and old cottages

Bush walks and gardens

1 hour circuit

Footpaths and grass trails

2 kilometre circuit

85 km from Christchurch on Highway 75. There are cafes, a visitor centre, museum, toilets, beach, wharfs and shops in Akaroa. Plenty to do. Good visitor centre in Akaroa.

Akaroa is a charming French-style town. Historic cottages, overflowing with roses and wisteria, down the narrow bylanes of the town. Views are unexpected and everywhere, and to round off the walk there are numerous cafes supplying a quality of café au lait the early settlers could only dream of.

This is just a suggested walk circuit but you can really create your own. On Rue Lavaud, the signposted walks to Stanley Park start near the fire station and bakery corner. The track ambles up from the sea, and crosses Penlington Place and carries onto Watson Street.

Follow this down to Rue Balguerie, then walk up Settlers Hill Road. It is a steep climb, but immediately on the left is a bush track that sidles easily around to the green, secluded site of the old 1842 French cemetery.

You could continue down the road to Pom-pallier Street and Rue Lavaud, or take the pretty bush track down from the cemetery and turn right at the first junction. This leads on a rambling sidle to Libeau Lane, which can be followed down to Rue Grehan and Rue Lavaud.



Hinewai Forest

Best tract of forest on peninsula

Walk from bush to sea-shore

Many track options

Picnic at Otanerito Bay

Great views all round

Excellent bird life

5-6 hour circuit

Bush trails

9 kilometres circuit

From Akaroa take Long Bay Road up to the Summit Road junction (known locally as the Cabstand), then turn down Long Bay Road to the main entrance and carpark. For Otanerito Bay, continue down Long Bay Road all the way to the lower carpark near the Otanerito homestead.

Hinewai Reserve is one of the most extensive walking areas on Banks Peninsula. Almost 12 km of well-marked tracks run through this unique 1000-hectare bush reserve, which is privately owned but open to the public. Regenerating forest runs virtually from sea level to the summit.

The visitor centre has interesting displays on Hinewai Reserve and around the reserve are information boards and pamphlets available at most carparks. First-time visitors to Hinewai should study the maps carefully. Fire is the major threat to this reserve, so no fires, billy boiling or smoking at any time. No dogs allowed.

This route description takes in most of Hinewai but obviously there are many shorter options.

From the visitor centre take West Track along to the Big Kanuka Track and South Track. The attractive Hinewai Falls is worth a look. At Boundary Falls continue down the easy Valley Track past a cascade and a big kahikatea to the Otanerito road. For the beach cross the road and follow the trail beside the stream and farmland to Otanerito Bay. The bay is sandy and sheltered, with big sea-cliffs guarding the entrance, and a sprinkling of private baches around it.

Return to the road again and the carpark. From here it is a solid climb up through the tall kanuka forest of The Stones Track to the junction with Lisburn Track. This track follows up the pleasant Waterfall Gully and sidles round to Lothlorien lookout.

Lisburn Track merges with Broom and Manatu tracks, with good views over upper Hinewai. At the junction with South Track, follow Beech Terrace Track to Tawai Track and West Track, which sidles easily back to the visitor centre.



MACKENZIE & MT COOK



Mount John

Lake Alexandrina

Lake Pukaki Kettle Lake

Hooker Valley

Sealey Tarns

Red Tarns

Ball Hut Road



Ben Ohau Ascent

Mt Sutton

Freehold Creek



Quail Burn Saddle

Clay Cliffs



Mount John

Alpine hill with great views

Cafe on top!

Great for families

Maybe see a chukar (its a bird)

2 hours direct return from summit; 3–4 hours (8 km) for full circuit.

Pine track then tussock trails

3 kilometres return

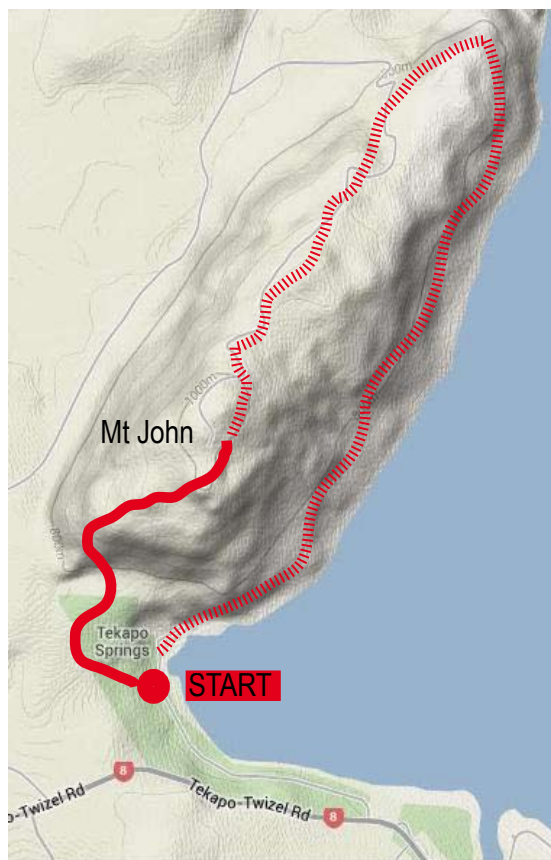
From Lake Tekapo township take the road to the lakeside motor camp and continue to the carpark just before the hot pools and ice-skating rink

Mount John sticks up above the Mackenzie plain acting as a marker post for Lake Tekapo. Perfect panorama from the summit, from Mount Cook to Lake Alexandrina and Lake Tekapo. It's about 250 metres to climb, and there's an astronomical observatory and a café on top! Area now known as a starlight reserve.

From the carpark the track climbs steadily through the dark larch forest and reaches a junction with a loop track that circles the summit. Already the views are good. Mount John summit is at 1031 metres.

Head on up to the summit café for your well deserved treat. Mount John is surprisingly flat on top and Himalayan chukar (introduced as a game bird) are sometimes spotted on the top slopes.





Longer walk option: A longer walk return option, is to continue on the summit loop then take the track north down the long easy spur some 2 km to where it drops sharply down to Lake Tekapo itself.

Staying 50 metres above the lake, the track sidesles around the base of Mount John, back to the skating rink and carpark.



Cafe: Astro, on top of Mt John

Lake Alexandrina

Easy walk on lakeside

Interesting kiwi baches

Crested grebes and fishing

Good picnic spots

1–2 hours one way; 2–3 hours

Anglers and tussock trails

4 kilometre one way

From Highway 8 (6 km south of Lake Tekapo) take the Godley Peaks Road 3 km to a turn-off to the south end of Lake Alexandrina, or 8 km to the middle of the lake and Lake McGregor.

Subtle and silky, Lake Alexandrina sits in an old glacial gouge alongside its much bigger sister. Power boats are not allowed, and the crested grebes patrol the willowy edges in calm, persistent ripples. This is a land that takes many seasons to appreciate, and the colours are harsh: blue-grey waters, yellow shores, black mountains.

From the Lake McGregor baches and road-end, a trail wanders south alongside the lake. However, the best plan is to climb straight up from the carpark about 50 metres to a flat-top hill. A stile crosses the fenceline, whose main purpose seems to be to stop four-wheel-drivers trashing the tussock.





Along here the unmarked trail wanders down to the lakeside again, and the footpath settles into some definition as it rounds the point and goes down to the baches at the south end of the lake. This is another feast of bach architecture, and unless you have had the foresight to organise transport, you will have to wander back the same way.



Camp: tent sites, toilets and information boards at Lake McGregor.

Lake Pukaki Kettle Lake

Views of Pukaki and Mt Cook

Easy family walk

High country landscape

Space and solitude

1 hour return

Tussock trail

2 kilometres return

Just north of the Pukaki slipway, a gravel side-road leads 1 km to the carpark.

This is an interesting 1 hour stroll along tussock terraces with great views of Lake Pukaki and Lake Benmore. A poled track leads from the carpark past ephemeral ponds, crosses two stiles and reaches seats overlooking the dry kettle lake depression.

Superb views all round, and when the nor'wester blows these could be the windiest seats in New Zealand.





Hooker Valley

Famous walk up a dramatic valley

Gorge and two swingbridges

Shelter and Mt Cook lillies

Ice lake at end

3-4 hours return

Tramping track, two swingbridges

8 kilometres return

From Highway 80 turn off just before Mount Cook village and go to the large carpark and camping area under White Horse Hill. Picnic tables, public shelter and toilets.

The Hooker Valley is the perfect frame for Mount Cook, and this short walk is packed with interest and drama. Walkers have been making this mountain pilgrimage for over a hundred years, so you will not be lonely on the track, unless you go early in the morning.

The track passes the original Hermitage site and an alpine memorial, and groves of matagouri with some spectacular *Aciphylla* (or spaniard) plant, with their huge, prickly, flowering stalks. Then the track zigzags down to the first swing bridge across the milky-blue Hooker River. Good views continue upvalley, past the Mueller Glacier terminal lake, and the track cuts along a gorge with a spectacular swing bridge. You can often find native edelweiss in the cliffs here.

After the bridge you turn a slight corner of the valley and get some photogenic views of Mount Cook, and in summer there can be a profusion of Mount Cook lil-





ies (or properly buttercups). Stocking Stream shelter was named for walkers in the nineteenth century who would take off their shoes and stockings here. Toilets and plane table.

After some boardwalks the track crests a slight rise and you reach the ice lake, the terminal lake of the Hooker Glacier. There might be small icebergs drifting in the lake. Mount Cook was named after the explorer Captain James Cook, but to the Maori the peak is Aorangi (or Aoraki to South Island Maori), translated as 'cloud piercer'.

Cafe: The Old Mountaineers, Mt Cook



Sealey Tarns

Superb views and reflections
Steep climb but improved track
Alpine plants

2-3 hours return

Tussock trails and 4WD

3 kilometres return

Drive to the White Horse camping area, and the track starts from near the far toilet block.

From the White Horse carpark follow the track to the junction with the Hermitage Track and continue onto the signposted Sealey Tarns track. This track is steep and uncompromising, and suitable for fitter people. Although it has been recently upgraded it is a steep 400 m climb, zig-zagging past alpine shrubs and gullies.

After a while the track eases off, and sidles across to the tarns. One tarn captures an image of Mt Cook. They also provide the only water on the climb, although you might be wise to carry your own, since people swim in the tarns.



Mueller Hut

This daytramp is a hard, steady slog of 700 m up a steep hill, and this is a summer trip only. Allow 8-9 hours return from carpark. DOC provides a detailed pamphlet *Mueller Hut Route*, well worth getting from the Visitor Centre.

From Sealey Tarns the route eases through tussock basins and rock fields for the next 300 m. Stick to the marked route at all times, the final 50 m climb to the ridgeline is up a loose crumble of rock and scree.

Then it's a short distance along the ridge to the large 30 bunk hut (mt radio) which sits at 1790 m in a tangle of rocky bulges on top of the ridge. The site is magnificent, with striking views of Mt Cook, the toy-like village, and icefalls off Mt Sefton.



Camping: DOC White Horse camping area, toilets, shelter.

Red Tarns

Quiet escape and good views

Forest and alpine plants

Restful tarns

2 hours return

Gravel path then boulder route

2 kilometre return

Start from the public shelter on the Mount Cook village loop road, not far from the shop and beside Governors Bush. Toilets and information panels here.



The Red Tarns are a quiet escape from the tourist hubbub of Mount Cook village — a crystal sprinkling of ponds, like two clear eyes in the stony face of Sebastopol. In summer the waft of flax, turpentine wood and totara berries can be quite heady, and soothing — a meditative refuge.

At the public shelter, signs direct you along a gravelled path beside a bubbling creek, then out of the village to a long footbridge over the Black Birch Stream. The track then starts to climb steeply through the alpine scrub, crossing occasional gullies on its way to the lip of the basin. It is a 500-metre climb to the tarns, where there is a seat and a plane table.



The tarns get their name from the red pondweed that grows in them. On a still, sharp day you get a perfect reflection of Mount Cook.

A rough track continues onto the Sebastopol ridge-line, and cairns lead up to Mount Sebastopol itself at 1468 m. On the ridge it becomes quite a scramble, the trail disappears, and this is a route for experienced trampers with good nerves.

Allow another 2 hours return from the tarns.

Camping: White Horse camping area, toilets, shelter.



Ball Hut Road

Popular mt bike trail

Big mountain country

Shelter at end

Tasman glacier and moraine

5-6 hours return

Gravel road then tramping track

16 kilometre return

From Highway 80 just past Mount Cook airport, turn onto the Tasman Valley Road and drive to the Blue Lakes carpark, shelter and toilets. A chain blocks any further access up the road.

An unusual walk but great for mt bikers. A long bash up a four-wheel-drive road, with steep, rotten hillsides of the Mount Cook range on one side and the huge, grinding rock factory of the Tasman Glacier on the other.

But you are following in the footsteps of history. In February 1882 the Reverend W.S. Green and his Swiss guides Emil Boss and Ulrich Kaufmann slowly trekked along this moraine wall, camping by the streams and searching for a route to the unclimbed peak of Mount Cook. They almost made it too, but for 'a mere matter of detail', a lack of daylight and 10 metres short of the summit.

The Ball Hut road was built in the early 1890s and a climbers' hut (one of several) was established at the far end, with parties in the early part of the twentieth





century having to walk up onto the glacier. The Tasman Glacier retreated and shrank under its mantle of rock, and the moraines' walls crumbled and took away the hut and parts of the road.

The road now peters out into nowhere, some 6 km from Blue Lakes at Husky Flat. Then there is a worn foot trail that threads along the terrace and reaches an unexpected oasis of grass and alpine shrubs beside the small Ball Hut shelter.

About 500 metres further on the moraine wall itself ends at the top of a nasty eroded access valley nick-named 'Garbage Gully' by generations of climbers. But the view is anything but rubbish.



Ben Ohau Ascent

Well marked track to top

Big climb of 1000m up 4WD

Views of four lakes

Off the beaten track, take water

4-5 hours return

4WD and tussock trail

6 kilometres return

From Highway 8 north of Twizel look for 'Glen Lyon Station' signs, and follow the Pukaki and Ohau Canal roads to Lake Ohau. A narrow road twists alongside the lake to a DOC sign.

In Scotland 'ben' means mountain, and Ben Ohau sits beside giants on the edge of the Mackenzie basin. At 1550 metres it's a 1000 metres or so to the top. Suits the dedicated hill-walker. Fit mountain bikers could get 90% up the hill, then walk the last stretch to the summit.

Follow the farm road past an old rabbiters hut, and the rustling beech forest by Gretas Stream. This is the last of the shade, the road then zigzags powerfully up the mountainside spur and up to a small basin. A brief reprieve from climbing then the vehicle track gets steep again as it slices across the face of Ben Ohau to a high saddle.





The unmarked route leaves the road and cuts up the scree and tussock slopes to the high point rocks covered with a curious hairy lichen.. Expect a breeze — ‘O hau’ means wind. But the reward is a view of four lakes — Ohau, Pukaki, and the artificially-made Benmore and Lake Ruataniwha.



Mt Sutton

Big mountain, exposed country
Amazing views and alpine plants
Well off the beaten track

3-4 hours return

Scree route

6 kilometres circuit

From Highway 8 take the Lake Ohau Road 16 km to Ohau Lodge and ski-field road. Gate key available from Ohau Lodge, follow the steep skifield road to top carpark.

This is high alpine country but in fine weather can be enjoyed by most keen walkers and trampers. You need a good topographical map and compass, for it is easy to get lost in the mist up here. Don't go in poor weather!

You need to get a key from Ohau Lodge first, \$5 per vehicle, and sign a permission form. The Ohau Snow Field Road does get rocks on it, and should be treated with respect, but take it slowly and it has wonderful views. Upper skifield buildings and toilets are kept locked.



Cafe: Ohau Lodge



At the top carpark the easiest route to Mt Sutton is to follow the skifield roads under the chairlift into the top basin and walk up to the low point of the ridge. Then turn south and follow the broad easy ridge to Mt Sutton (2007 m). Strange shattered screes all along the ridge and vivid alpine plants somehow survive in this harsh landscape.

From the summit there are superb views of Mt Cook, Lake Dumb-bell, Mt Barth etc. From the ridge you can even spot the tiny Maitland Hut.



Freehold Creek

Easy trails along tussock benches

Peaceful beech forest

Excellent mt biking to Qualiburn

Option of harder track to tops

4-5 hours return

Gravel paths, forest track and alpine route

12 kilometres return

From Highway 8 take the Lake Ohau road to the Parsons Creek carpark. Signposted.

From the carpark at Parsons Creek, follow the well-marked track up through beech forest and through tussock and matagouri terraces to a well-signposted junction with the main track from the Ohau skifield road. This is also a mt bike track now, that goes all the way to the Quailburn.

The track ambles across open landscapes, with Lake Ohau dominating the view, and the Ben Ohau Range across the way. The track crosses the footbridge over Sawyers Creek and follows tussock terraces to the beech forest at Freehold Creek.

Cross a footbridge over the creek, then follow poles uphill in tussock and then through the forest, and onto the sudden fringe of the bushline. If you are game enough, a cairned trail leads quite clearly into the alpine basins to the top forks, with waterfalls gushing down the side-creeks, and well-fed alpine plants in every cranny.

If you are still keen (and within your time budget) it is not that far up to a large, broad saddle, but there is no track up to here. You have strayed into wilderness.





Cafe: Ohau Lodge

Quail Burn Saddle

Historic woolshed and campsite

Beech forest and mistletoe

Easy track to saddle

Good for families

2 hours return

Bush track and tussock trails

3 kilometres return

The Quailburn Road is 4 km north of Omarama. Then drive 16 km (past the Clay Cliffs turn-off) as the road gets narrower, past the A20 cycle trail, and ends beside the historic woolshed.

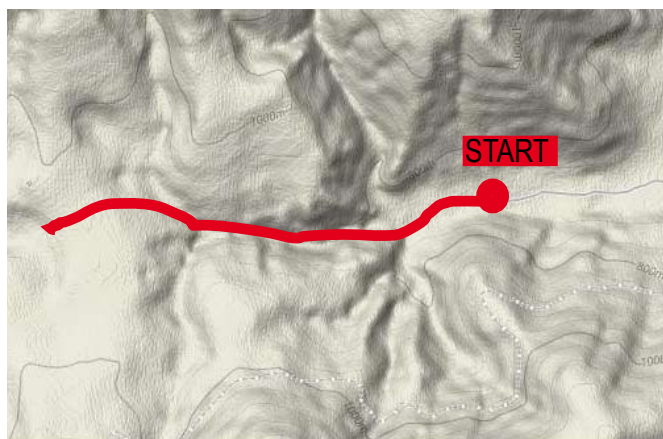
At the end of the Quail Burn road is the old Quail Burn station, including an historic woolshed. DoC has made secure boardwalks into the shed, and provided information boards.

Slightly further up the road (a bit rougher but most cars should make it) is a picnic and camping area by the stream and beech forest. A pleasantly sequestered place on a hot day, and kids will love the stream. There's another old hut on the edge of the forest.

A good track wanders up through the dark grotto of beech forest, water cascades and massive boulders up to a stream fork. Here, a poled track leads up a short spur and out into the tussock country. After a while the poles stop but it is easy walking up onto the broad flat pass. Great views all round.

Camping: beech forest, stream water, toilet, historic buildings at Quail Burn





Longer Walk: to reach the East Ahuriri Hut (built about 1890's) a good topo map is useful but it's a cruisey day-tramp to the hut in lovely open country. From the pass stay at roughly the same height and sidle across several shallow gullies, and climb up onto a side spur until you are overlooking the East Ahuriri River. You should be able to see the old hut by now, so wander down the spur and up the river flats. The hut is on a bit of lean but reeks of character. Not useable to stay in.



Clay Cliffs

Badlands and hoodoos

Strange geologic formations

Interesting for kids

Watch for falling rocks

1 hour return

Farm road then scrambly paths

2 kilometres return

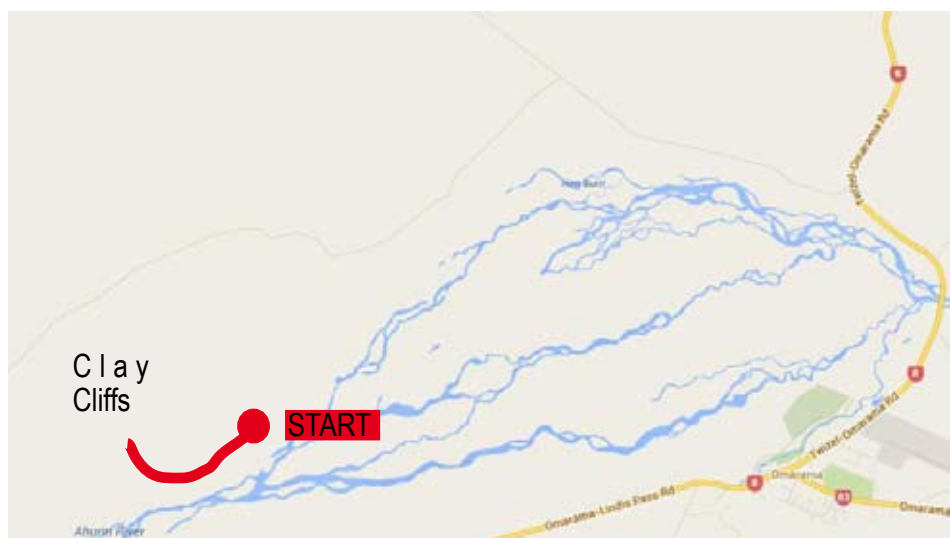
Access is 3 km north of Omarama off Highway 8, turning onto Quailburn Road, then Henburn Road. Currently there's a \$5 per person charge. There's a box here or you pay at the Omarama information centre. The gravel road continues three kilometres to another gate, and onto a '4WD only' sign and carpark beside the clay cliffs.

These cliffs are not really 'clay', and the Maori called them 'Paritea', which means 'white or coloured cliffs'. Erosion of the soft sediments and shingles by water, has left deep ravines, with striking pinnacles wearing little caps of turf.

The cliffs are 30–50 metres high in places, and just crumbling away. Some tracks have been made, but these all get undermined by the constant movement of the rocks.

On a hot, glaring day there is something spooky about the shady silences inside these chasms, with the tinkling sound of pebbles bouncing and falling off the sides, and the unexpected whoosh of pigeons in the air. You often come away with a distinct sense of relief, and there is something unnerving about seeing geological processes in such an accelerated form.





WEST COAST

Heaphy Coast
Oparara Archways
The Ghost Road
Charming Creek
Dennistoun Incline



Croesus Gold Track
Nelson Creek Tunnels
Goldsborough Track
Lake Kaniere Water Race



Cape Foulwind
The Ballroom & Fox River
Punakaiki Blowholes & Te Miko
Motukiekie Coast
Point Elizabeth



Heaphy Coast

Luxuriant forest and wild beaches

Nikau palms

Tea-stained river and lagoon

Remote and restful

2 hours return

Graded pack-track

4 kilometres return

From Karamea it is a 15 km drive to the Kohaihai River and road end. Extensive picnic and camping area, toilets, shelter, phone and lookout track.

This is still an unspoilt coastline. A dark mosaic of hills, covered with sullen clouds, run down to the noisy surf, where abrupt headlands interrupt sweeps of yellow sands. The salt-laden forest has a profusion of plants like karaka, kawakawa, tree daisy, kamahi, kiekie and the icon-like feather-duster outline of the nikau palm. Late evening light can illuminate this landscape as if pouring through stain glass windows.

From the lovely camping area, cross the huge swingbridge over the rich tea-stained Kohaihai River. Then follow the Heaphy Track as it climbs easily to the Kohaihai Saddle, and down to Scotts beach. This is a lovely run of sand leading for 2 kilometres north up the coastline. Beyond here is Big Rock Beach, Koura Beach, and Crayfish Point along this enticing shoreline, but at some stage you have to turn back regretfully and face the slow hill to Kohaihai saddle and the carpark.



Cafe: Last Resort, in Karamea



Campsite: grass and bush sites by Kohaihai River, shelter, toilets

Oparara Archways

Spectacular natural archways

Pristine river and rainforest

Several short walks

Another world

Oparara Arch 50 minutes (2 km) return; Moria or Little Arch 50 mins (2 km) return. Round trip 1 hr 30 mins.

Bush and gravel tracks

From Karamea drive north for 10 km, then turn inland following the signposts for 15 km to the carparks and walking tracks. The road is winding and narrow but in reasonable condition for cars.

The Oparara River has etched a sinuous and sensuous course through a limestone basin, creating three lovely and distinctive arches, two of which can be visited. Rainforest has disguised this geology and gives Oparara its mysterious and forgotten aura.

The drive into the Oparara basin is an adventure in itself, like entering a lost world, and the large carpark has a good information shelter and toilets.

The arches are what people usually come for, and they are impressive. You can walk into the largest, **Oparara**, which is 43 metres high and 219 metres long. The inside is dry and roomy with stalactites and stalagmites. The **Moria or Little Arch** is smaller and prettier and you enter it via an unexpected cave. It is 19 metres high and 43 metres wide.

From Moira Arch a good track crosses the archway (with a look-out) and goes up the Oparara River to the **Mirror Tarn** and back to the carpark. The beech forest and mosses are spectacular. Allow 1.30 minutes round trip beech.





A short drive further there are two small caves to explore. Crazy Paving has a distinctive mud floor, and Box Canyon is a high dry cavern. Take a torch. Blue ducks are found in the Oparara River as well as the large-shelled powelliphanta snail, a nocturnal carnivore that feeds on worms.

A good track now follows the Oparara River down valley and connects to the Fenian cave area, allow 4 hours one way.



The Ghost Road

Old miners gold trail

Deep, beautiful gorge

Miners relics and sunny hut

Mt bike trail

6-7 hours return walk, 2-3 hrs return
mt bike

Bush pack-track

20 kilometres return

7 km north of Hector on Highway 67,
turn down Mokihinui and Seddonville
Road some 7 km. Two carparks,
the larger at 6 km mark (at Burke Ck
ford), the smaller at the road end.

The Ghost Road is an ambitious attempt to turn historic miners tracks through Kahurangi National Park into a long distance mt bike trail through to Lyell.

This section is up the lovely Mokihinui Gorge, and despite the distance, the track has been vastly improved and it's easy-going tramping to Specimen Creek Hut. Already it's a popular mt bike trail.

From the carpark cross the fords and the track quickly settles onto the old miners trail, in places built up with elaborate stone work.

Opposite Rough and Tumble Creek can be seen the remains of an old bridge. This was once the main bridleway to Karamea.

There's glimpses of the Mokihinui gorge all along





the track — turquoise pools and golden sandy beaches — amazing to think all this was going to be dammed and flooded.

'Suicide Slip' has been bridged and so has Specimen Creek. The Specimen Creek hut sits in a sunny position on a terrace on the far side. A great lunch spot.



Charming Creek

Old tramway in a granite gorge

Mining relics and tunnels

Impressive waterfall

Great for families

2-3 hours return

Gravel track and bridges

14 kilometres return

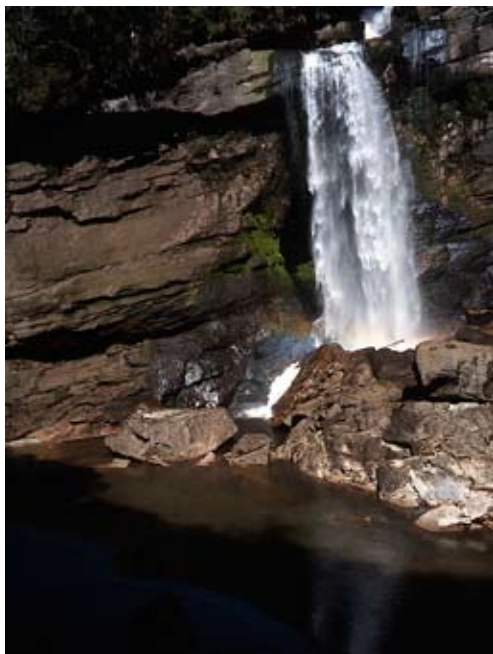
From Westport drive 35 km to Ngakawau. The walkway is signposted just before the river, drive past the Stockton coal cableway 200 metres to the carpark on the right. Don't drive down the walkway itself!

There was never a more apt name for a walk. Charming Creek has tunnels, walk verandahs, waterfalls and many other features all packed in the cramped and gloomy spaces of a gorge, closely overhung with sombre native forest.

Excellent information boards detail the coal-extracting operations in the area. From 'The Bins' terminus you quickly follow the slick dark waters of the Ngakawau River through the S-bend of Irishmans Tunnel (a mistake in alignment), and through another 'tunnel' which is in fact a natural rock arch. The granite gorge is at its narrowest here, as the tramway crosses the long suspension bridge with spectacular views of the Mangatini Falls.

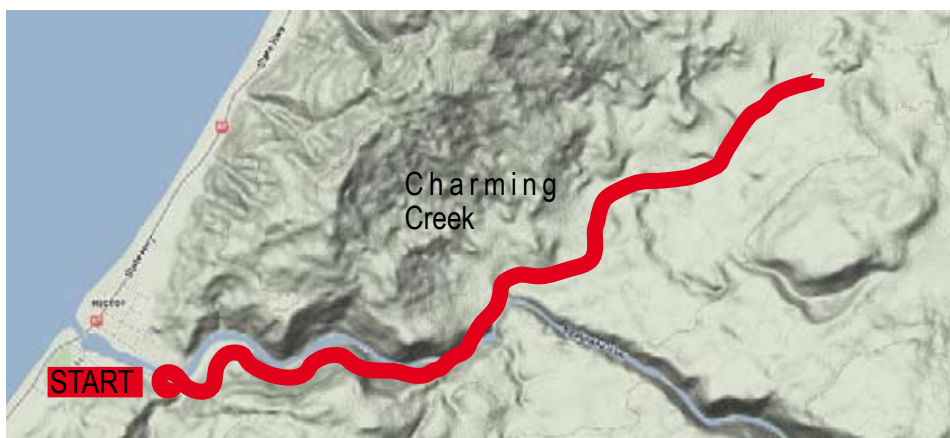
There is another 50-metre-long tunnel, a boardwalked verandah, then the confluence of Charming Creek and Ngakawau River. The river always carries a thin line of foam and creates elaborate swirls and patterns as it joins the Charming.





Just around the next corner is Watsons Mill, where there is a toilet and shelter, and after the bridge a short casual trail goes down to the picnic rocks by the dark tea-stained river. A salubrious spot for lunch.

From here on, the walkway changes character as it leaves the gorge and enters a chewed-over forest of mine debris, relics of the old steam sawmill, a sulphur hole and the Papa Tunnel. If you continue right through, its a good idea to arrange transport at the other end.



Dennistoun Incline

Historic coal incline

Many mining relics

Old bridleway track, 500 m climb

Good views

4-5 hours return

Steep bush track

8 kilometres return

From Westport travel 14 km on Highway 67 to Waimangaroa, then take Conns Creek Road to the carpark. If you continue along Conns Creek Road you reach the historic site at the actual base of Denniston Incline.

The Denniston Incline is the remains of a mighty enterprise, and was built in 1878–79 and operated until 1967. It was proudly considered New Zealand's biggest and best engineering project. Water-operated brakes slowed the coal-laden wagons (in a descent that was 1 in 1.20 over the 548-metre drop) and helped pull up the empty wagons. Once 250 miners and their families lived and worked on this bleak plateau, and ultimately 12 million tons of coal were taken from Denniston.

For the top access, follow the signposted Denniston road as it climbs the 700-metre plateau, then down a side-road to the carpark and lookout over the top of the incline. One Mile Log carpark is on the Denniston road and offers a shorter walk to the top. Obviously if you can arrange transport to drop you off at the top of the incline, the down walk is easier and the walk time halved.

At first the walk climbs through regenerating forest and past the old brickworks site, climbing 2 km up to One Mile Log. After this the forest becomes more sub-



stantial, with tall rimu and red beech. This bridle track was built in 1884 when someone died riding down on the incline wagons.

After two-thirds of the climb there is a short side-track to Middle Brake, where you can get an idea of the uncomfortable steepness of the incline. There is an old viaduct below Middle Brake but it is unsafe to go on; indeed, the incline is generally too steep and insecure to walk on.

On the main track, the last part zigzags up stone steps to the lonely and rusting machinery at the top of the incline. On misty days the place seems haunted, which perhaps it is — haunted by memories.



Other walks: Coalbrookdale Mine (1 hour). A 10 minute drive from the top of Dennistoun to start of this walk.

Cape Foulwind

Large seal colony
Dramatic coast and beach
Wekas at the shelter
Good family outing

1-2 hours one way
Benched gravel track
3 kilometre one way

From Westport it is 12 km down the Cape Foulwind road past Carters Beach to the large carpark, information boards and toilets at Tauranga Bay.

In 1770 Captain Cook called it 'foulwind'. The name has stuck and so have seals, to one of the most publicly accessible seal colonies in New Zealand. Other attractions include the colony of friendly, thieving weka at the carpark, and the glorious golden sweep of Tauranga Bay.

From the carpark an excellent track climbs up onto the headland and leads down to the lookouts over the seal colony. At breeding time the colony is spectacular, with as many as 100–150 pups.

The New Zealand fur seal is found only in New Zealand waters and off the south coast of Australia, and the seals arrive to give birth in November and December.





By March the numbers of pups are at their peak, and a lively lot they are.

From the colony the track is well-graded and follows the cliff-tops with wonderful views past the astrolabe and the lookout. The track sidles around to the lighthouse and on to the northern carpark.

But just before here an unmarked trail leads down to the shore and follows the banking of the old railway line, which was used for moving quarried rock. On stormy days this is a wild piece of shore. Straggler seals often haul ashore here, no doubt trying to get some peace and quiet from the noisy quarrels at seal city.



The Ballroom & Fox River

Huge natural overhang

Deep gorge and one deep ford

Cave entrance and bush

Limestone formations

5-7 hours return

Benched track, river crossings

11 kilometre return

From Highway 6 beside the Fox River take the short side-road to the carpark. There is a toilet at the Ballroom.

This is a deep gorge that cuts into the heart of the karst syncline of Paparoa National Park. You can get a long way into this heartland with only one straight-forward river crossing, but to reach The Ballroom you will get wet knees (at least). This is a wilderness walk, with tall forest, and limestone rocks that have been shaped into sculptures by the emerald river.

This walk is suitable for experienced walkers and trampers. It should not be attempted in wet weather, as river levels can rise quickly and dangerously. Expect several waist deep crossings. Get good weather information from the visitor centre at Punakaiki.

The marked track starts as a stopbank that becomes an old gold-diggers' pack-track, and crosses two low bush spurs via old miners' cuttings. It crosses a dry sidebranch of the Fox River where the granite boulders glitter with quartz, and shortly afterwards reaches the first Fox River ford. (The Fox River Tourist Cave track continues along a benched track, then steeply follows up a creek bed to the entrance of the cave, which can be explored for a short distance. Take a torch.)





For The Ballroom cross the river at this easy point and join the well-benched south bank track that continues most of the way to the Dilemma Creek confluence.

The Fox Gorge is striking, and every twist in the river breaks open new angles of rock and light. At Dilemma Creek the rock walls have formed a sharp prow, splitting the two rivers. The track has now ended, and you have to start fording the Fox River. Some of the fords can be deep but the river is usually slow-moving.

It is about six to eight crossings upstream to the high natural rock shelter called The Ballroom. This is a massive overhang curved over a grassy flat, and you could fit a few houses under here comfortably. There is no record of any ancient balls ever being held here, but it's a lovely idea.



Punakaiki Blowholes

Rugged coastal scenery

Strange rock formations

Blowholes and beaches

Ideal for families

Pancake Rocks 30 minutes circuit;
Truman Track 30 minutes return.
Both 1–2 km return.

Gravel paths

Drive to Punakaiki on Highway 6 (60 km from Westport, 45 km from Greymouth), to the information centre and large carpark. The Truman Track is 2 km north at the signposted carpark.

The Pancake Rocks are weird, limestone rocks layered in elegant towers. Surf surges into the caverns, and with the right sea running can blast up through the blowholes underneath the rocks, creating a memorable short walk.

Opposite the visitor centre, the track starts through coastal bush then dense flax (harakeke) and cautiously circumnavigates a surging sea chamber. There are good information signs at the many lookouts. Shrubs cling to the very edges of the blowholes, which have names like 'Sudden Sound', 'Chimney Pot' and 'Putai' (sea-spray). On a clear day you can see Mount Cook in the far distance, though often the Paparoa coast seems to 'smoke' from the heavy spray of the pluming sea.



Cafe: Punakaiki Gallery, in Punakaiki

Te Miko or Truman Track

Slightly north of the Pancake Rocks, this track plunges down through a coastal jungle of rimu, matai, nikau palms and entanglements of vines like kiekie and supplejack. After the final flax belt you reach an exposed rock shelf above the sea.

The broad tidal platforms are stained with colours, and sea stacks take the brunt of the West Coast surf. Seals haul ashore up and down this coast, and little blue pen-guins nest here. Steps go down to a gorgeous beach, where shallow sea caves have been carved out and glisten with subtle colours of lichen and moss. The sea fairly barrels into this tight little bay, but at low tide it is possible to scramble around the greasy rocks to the next bay. It is an ancient, relentless shore.



Campsite: DOC in Punakaiki

Motukiekie Coast

Sentinel sea stacks

Low-tide exploring, watch for big surf

Wild beaches and coves

1-2 hours return

Beach walking and low-tide scrambling

4 kilometres return

Off Highway 6, just past Greigs settlement at the rest area carpark.

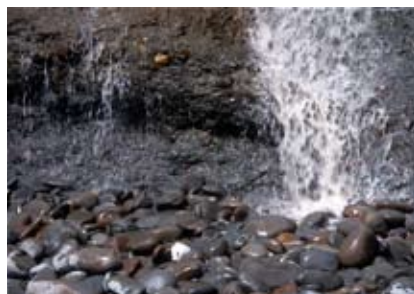
This engaging but rough walk wanders along a cliff-hanging coast, with sea stacks at Motukiekie and wild coves. A low tide is essential, and keep a careful eye on the big surf. Motu means 'island' in Maori, and kiekeie is a rambling vine.

From Greigs wander across the wide exposed sands onto the tidal platforms. Close to Twelve Mile Bluff large conglomerate boulders have tumbled onto the shore, some coloured terracotta and as fine as Roman mosaics.

Motukiekie is a sensational stand of sea stacks, topped by some tenacious plant life that manages to survive on the spume-soaked headland. It's an amazing place, and there are two emergency escape tracks up to the highway if you get stuck — the locals use them.

Only at low tide should you venture further around the corner from Motukiekie, where there is a short sandy beach, and another headland to clamber over where the rocks have slumped. Then a passage across tidal platforms to Ten Mile Creek and a surprise — a large hole in a rock. Local legend says the early goldminers scrambled through it to avoid the high tide.





Point Elizabeth

Coastal scenery and cliffs

Wild surf

Easy walking

1-2 hours one way

Bush track and beach

3 kilometres one way

From Greymouth take the Cobden and North Beach Road 6 km to carpark. Northern carpark is at Rapahoe.

Point Elizabeth is a fine chunk of West Coast beach, spuming and roaring as the big surf pounds away. Easy tramping on old goldminers 1865 track, nikau palms, and some views along the way.

From the carpark the track gradually climbs into the coastal forest and reaches Point Elizabeth, where a side-track leads to a lookout. In the old days steps used to go down the cliff to the beach, but now the track meanders along an old water race on a high bush terrace until it drops down to the Rapahoe carpark.





Croessus Gold Track

Classic pack-track to the tops

Historic sites & stamping battery

Hut with a view

Climb of 900 m

7-8 hours return, 18 km return (Croessus Knob)

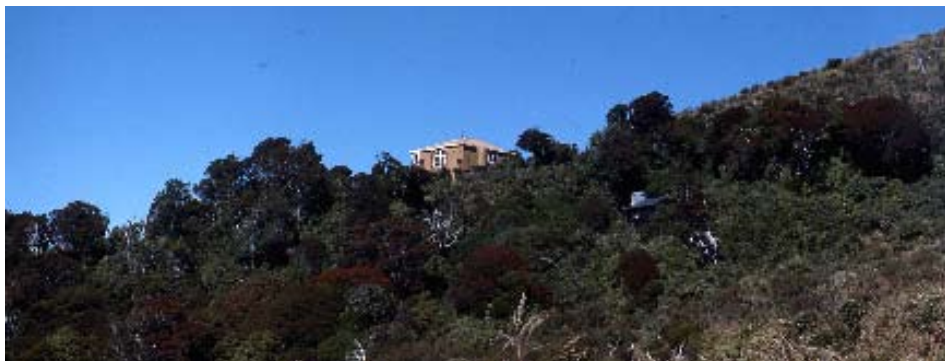
Graded pack track

From Blackball township drive 1 km on Roa Road and turn onto the Blackball road, which winds through forest for 4 km to the Smoke-Ho! carpark. The road is narrow but usually ok for cars.

This walk is a real leg-stretcher, following an historic, perambulating track that never loses interest. Several shorter return walks for people who do not fancy the full workout, but do not be put off by the times. The walk is on an excellent gradient, and if it is a fine day you really have to try for the top — the view of Mount Cook is awesome.

Take the track from the Smoke-Ho! carpark as it passes a logbook and stay on the top track option to the First Hotel site, in a large, grassy clearing. There are good easy grades up to the Second Hotel site (past Perotti's Mill junction), and up past a couple of lazy zigzags to the Garden Gully junction.

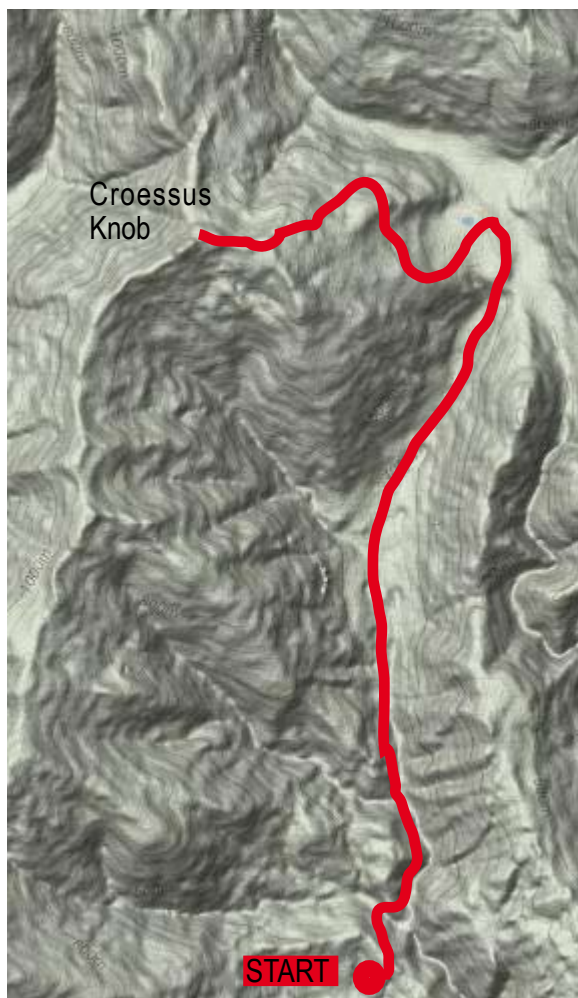




This side-track crosses a saddle down to the old Garden Gully Hut then climbs up a side-creek to arguably the best preserved stamping battery on the coast.

The main Croesus Track zigzags steadily upwards past the old Top Hut, reaching the bush edge at the Ces Clark Memorial Hut. Dedicated to a ranger who died on the track, this was the first mountain hut to be opened by a prime minister.

Out into the tussock basins the views get better, especially if you can manage the final fling up onto Croesus Knob itself. On top is the remains of the aerial cableway for the Croesus Mine, and his proverbial wealth is still not as good as the views.



Nelson Creek Tunnels

Tricks of track and tunnels

Gold mining history

Off the beaten track

Good family area

1 hour circuit

Bush tracks and stream walking

3 kilometre circuit

From Highway 7 just past Nga-
here turn onto the Nelson Creek
Road for 6 km to Nelson Creek.
Carpark and toilets

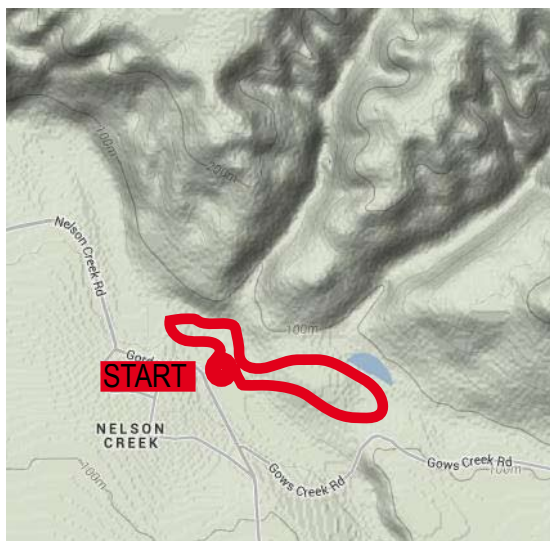
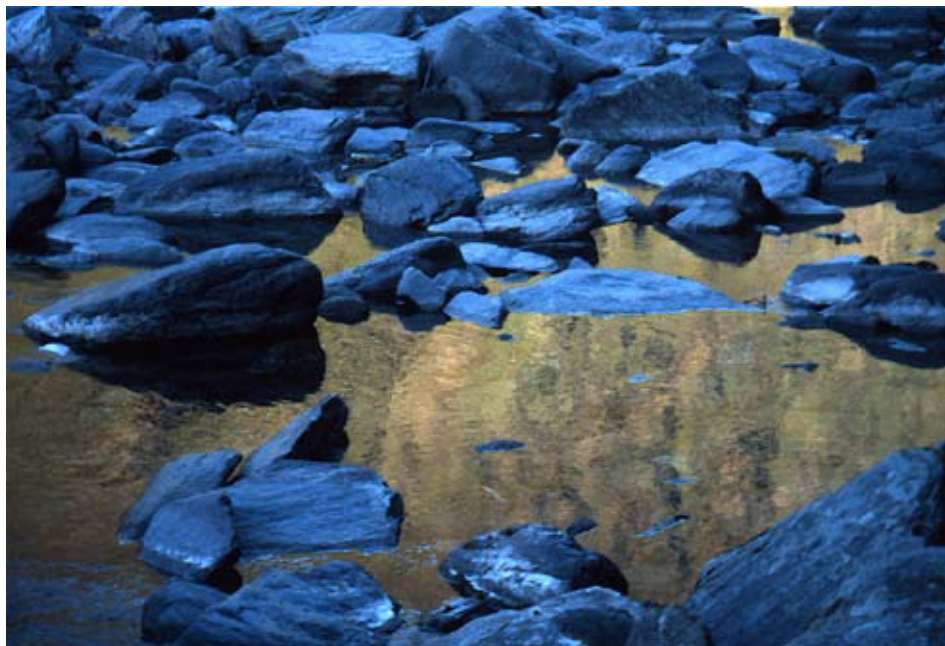
Fascinating landscape of tunnels, tailraces and tailings, created by goldminers in desperate need of water. The miners dug tunnels to gain a healthy pressure of water to attack the goldbearing gravels and trap the heavier gold in riffle boxes, but they also cut tailraces and sludge channels to drain water and the excess tailings away. You can see their hard work and admire their skill.

From the Nelson Creek carpark the track starts spectacularly — through a tunnel. Then over a long suspension bridge and around to the Tailrace Walk, past the turn-off to Colls Dam, Callaghans and the Tunnel Walk.

The Tailrace Walk is a 20-minute circuit around a number of cleverly incised tailraces. Back at the junction with the Tunnel Walk have a look at the beginning of the tunnel. This discharges a small stream into Nelson Creek, and you can walk down it, though you will need a torch. There is a large swimming hole at the Nelson Creek end.

Lastly, go back to the Colls Dam Walk and enjoy this peaceful circuit past Colls Dam then continue round, crossing numerous other tailraces.





Campsite: open grass flats by river at Nelson Creek, toilets

Goldsborough Track

Mossy creeks and tunnels

Pleasant picnic area

Wet feet and river crossings

Many other track options

1–2 hours to tunnels (4 km) re-
turn, complete Goldsborough
track 3–4 hours (7 km) one
way

Bush tracks & river crossings

Turn off Highway 6 at Awatuna
onto the Stafford–Dilmanstown
road and follow 10 km to a large
carpark and picnic area.

The great 1865 goldrush on the West Coast changed the landscape irrevocably. At Goldsborough the land has been completely trashed by generations of goldminers who shifted creeks, stacked pyramids of rocks, and inadvertently created an artistic labyrinth of tunnels. They did things with the pick and shovel we would not attempt with a bulldozer, and the Goldsborough Track is a marvellous testament to their endeavour.

The main track from the carpark follows Shamrock Creek quite closely in bush, then crosses the creek beside a bluestone cliff. Over a low spur there is a side-track back down to Shamrock Creek. There are two tunnels, the first just 100 metres downstream, over smooth boulders in the mossy riverbed. It is a beautiful piece of work, built to eliminate a bend in the river so as to assist the miners in flushing out the tailing debris.





Upstream 5 minutes is an even better tunnel, some 30 metres long. Both tunnels are well-fashioned examples of the gold-diggers' art, with crypt-like arched ceilings in the green, cloistered riverbed.

The Goldsborough Track continues for another 2 hours to Callaghans Road and the Manzoni Claim, with its huge man-made tunnel.

Tunnel Terrace Track

This track starts 5 km before the Goldsborough carpark, on the Stafford–Dilmanstown road. Clearly signposted. The kids will love it, even the small ones. It starts through a water-race tunnel, loops around old stone stacks of tailings past the entrances to other tunnels, and pops out on the road through the clever finale of a tunnel. 15 minutes of frolicking fun.



Campsite: grass clearings by stream at Goldsborough, toilets, shelter

Lake Kaniere Water Race

Goldminers' water race

Lovely lake and picnic area

Easy walking

Arrange transport if one way

2 hours one way

Bush tracks and tussock trails, rock scramble to summit

7 kilometres one way

From Hokitika drive on the Lake Kaniere Road 10 km to the west exit of track and carpark (Kennedys Creek), then continue for 6 km to the eastern start/exit carpark by the control gates.

Lake Kaniere is one of the scenic gems of Westland, serene, secluded, almost completely surrounded by bush, and it has several beautiful walks. There is a lovely picnic area at Sunny Bight. The Kaniere water race was built in 1875 for the Kaniere goldfield, but by 1916 the race was utilised for power supply instead, and it has stayed that way. The fully automated Kaniere power station is one of the smallest in the country and supplies between 100 and 125 houses in Hokitika.

The water race walk is easy going, through bush forest and past tunnels, with the constant sweet accompaniment of the rippling race. From the control gates by Lake Kaniere the first part of the walkway goes through cutover manuka forest with some emerging kamahi.

Freshwater mussels can be seen in the race, and it is a cruisey 3 km to Wards Road. This is a good turn around point. In the next section the race disappears briefly into three tunnels and you get good views of the river below, before reaching Tunnel Hill, where a 2-km tunnel takes the water race through to the power station.

The track picks up an uninteresting bulldozer trail then drops down quickly to a gravel road, which is followed down to the Kennedys Creek carpark.

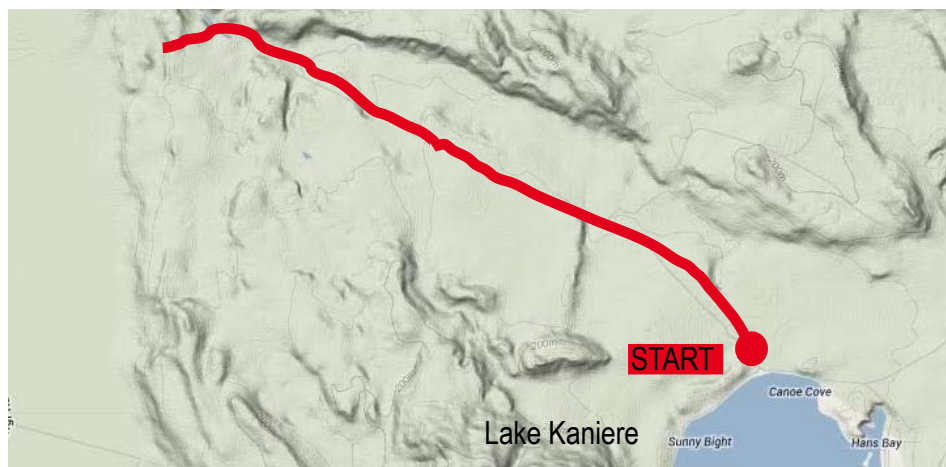
Campsite: spacious DOC camping at Hans Bay beside Lake Kaniere





Other Walks

At the north end of the lake at the Sunny Bight picnic area, there's the 10 minute Kahikatea Walk. 3 km past Hans Bay to Dorothy Falls, a 2 minute stroll to a magnificent gusher. There's a 4-5 hour lakeside track that goes from Sunny Bight all the way to the south end of the lake.



SOUTH WESTLAND

Wanganui Headland
Okarito Coast
Okarito Lagoon (canoe)



Monro Beach
Ship Creek
Hapuka Estuary
Smoothwater & Stafford Circuit



Franz Josef Glacier
Fox Glacier
Lake Matheson
Gillespies Beach
Paringa Cattle Track



Wanganui Headland

Coastal headland

Shearwater colony

Pakihi wetland

Historic pack track

2-3 hours circuit

Bush tracks and beach

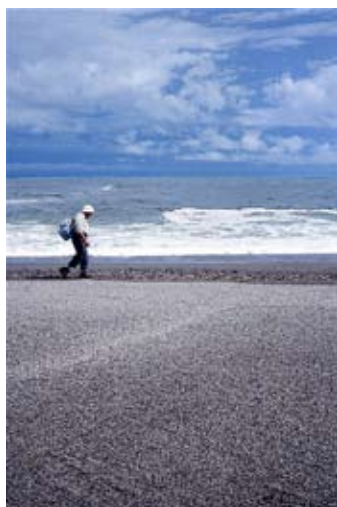
4 kilometres circuit

From Harihari on Highway 6 turn off down Wanganui Flat Road (the walkway is signposted) and drive towards the coast some 20km to the small carpark.

Mount One One is the curious and distinctive morainic outcrop at the mouth of the Wanganui River, locals call it 'The Doughboy'. Massive beach with a big surf rolling in and a return on an historic pack track.

From the carpark the coastal walkway passes several idiosyncratic whitebaiters' baches and crosses a deep black swamp creek before cutting across a scrubby terrace to the base of Mount One One. The steps leading up to the old viewing platform have been removed, so as to protect a sooty shearwater colony.

From One One stroll along the driftwood-strewn beach. At low tide it is quite easy to get around the point, scrambling over some large rocks, but there is a high-tide alternative signposted. The Poerua River is not as large as the Wanganui and in winter river levels can get so low that the sea builds up a permanent gravel bar across the mouth.





The track skirts the river and reaches some more whitebaiters' shanties before turning inland and following the well-laid line of the old pack track as it crosses a low 100m saddle and drops down to the pakihi swamp on the other side, and the carpark.

Okarito Coast

Historic pack-track

Wilderness beach and lagoon

Occasional seals

Lookout towards Mt Cook

3-4 hours circuit

Bush track and beach

6 kilometre circuit

From Highway 6 at 'The Forks' it is 13 km to Okarito to the large carpark. Information post in the wharf shed. Tide tables at the beach noticeboard.

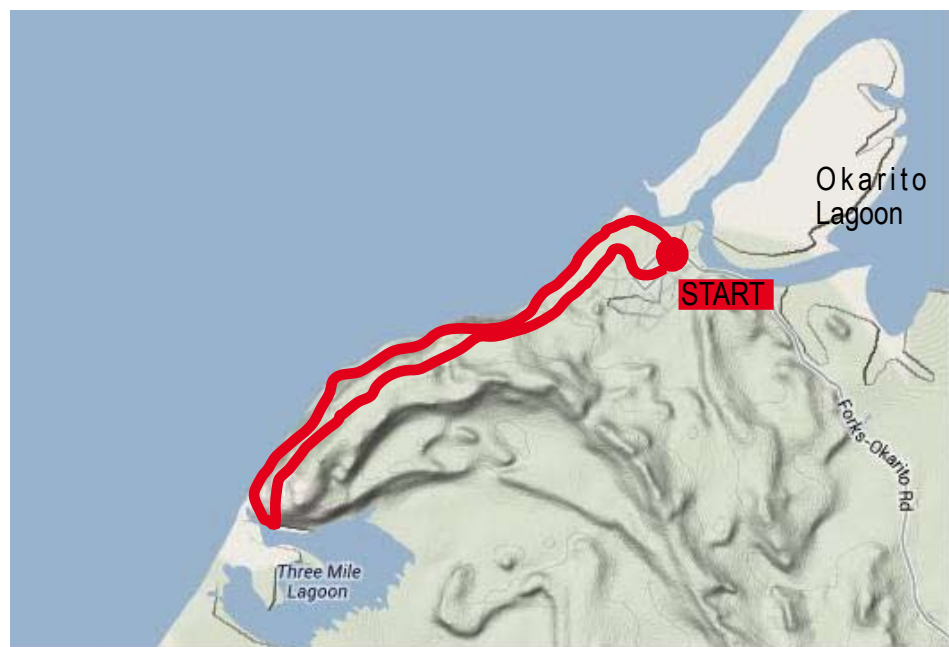
This is a 150-year-old bush pack-track where goldminers walked to the Three Mile Lagoon,. The views of Mount Cook and Tasman across the tea-stained waters are jaw-dropping, and on the beach return there may be sleeping seals on the shoreline.

From the carpark (before the beach carpark) the track swings across a boardwalk over a wetland, then sidles up to the original pack-track. From here it's an easier gradient to a track junction with the Okarito trig. If the day is fine go up to the lookout platform with long horizon filled with the snowy peaks of the Southern Alps.

The main pack-track rolls along to Three Mile Lagoon, sometimes coming close to the cliff edge. It drops sharply to a junction, the left-hand fork going to a long bridge over Three Mile Lagoon. The other fork goes on to the beach. The lagoon entrance is often blocked by a sandbar.

With a low tide the beach walk is easy, and quicker than the pack-track, with not much rock-hopping. Constant surf rolls in on this restless, rollicking coast.





Okarito Lagoon (canoe)

Easy to hire canoes

Serene bush delta

White herons on lagoon

2-3 hours return

Flat water canoeing

8 kilometres return (delta)

From Highway 6 at 'The Forks' it is 13 km to Okarito to the carpark and canoe hire centre. Cafe.

Okarito Lagoon not only offers relatively easy canoeing, but idyllic canoeing. Flat water, superb reflections, mountain views, white herons, deep tea-stained channels. The canoes are easy to hire, they have maps, and guides, but try not to be too ambitious.

For most people the paddle over to the Okarito River delta is enough, and you are rewarded with drifting through a real rainforest with bush birds chortling above. Basically the Amazon without piranha.

Eager people might try and head up the head of the lagoon. It's a lot further than it looks, and the lake is shallow towards the head, and its remarkably easy to find yourself stranded on mudflats if you get the tides wrong.





Franz Josef Glacier

Glacier and big mountains

Schist rock formations

Well marked track

2 hour return

Gravel tracks

5 kilometres return

From Franz Josef village on Highway 6 it is 5km to the glacier car-park, shelter, information signs and toilets. The narrow road can get busy.

Most of the glaciers in New Zealand are well beyond reach. You might spot them glinting in the distance, or pass over them at 30,000 feet while having your plastic lunch and not even realise what those white squidgy things are. But uniquely on the West Coast there are two glaciers you can almost touch – the Fox and the Franz Josef. Some 1400 years ago Franz Josef was part of a large ice sheet but over the last 300 years it has retreated dramatically.

There's a well-marked trail across Waiho riverbed, with occasional bridges across small side-streams. The sheer rock faces are a great playground for waterfalls, especially after a West Coast downpour, and for the hardier types a trip to the glacier in stormy conditions is exhilarating.

The climate can be vigorous in this cold deep valley, so take some warmish clothing and some nibbles. Don't go beyond the roped off area, as blocks of ice on the glacier snout periodically fall off.



Cafe: Blue Ice, in Franz Josef



Fox Glacier

Glacier and ice formations

Keas

Big mountains

1 hour return

Gravel track over river-bed

2 kilometres return

From Highway 6 by the Fox River, follow the signposted glacier road to the carpark. Road often subject to change and closure. There is a walking and mt biking track signposted from the village to carpark.

The glaciers are retreating again, fast. After some interesting advances in the late 1990s the Fox and Franz Josef glaciers are following the centuries-old pattern of shrinkage. The scale of the mountains, the sheer cliffs and the crumbling tongue of the glacier still make for an awesome short walk. And the keas are never in retreat.

The drive in alone is worth the walk, crossing the Fox River floodplain and winding under the severe cliffs of Cone Rock. At the carpark there are usually kea, an alpine parrot, which cock their heads obligingly as the cameras click. Currently, the well-marked track wanders across the riverbed. and edges along the scree slides.





Streams are bridged. You cannot touch the ice, for obvious reasons — it has squashed one or two incautious people — and the glacier tongue is roped off. but you can feel the icy air rolling off the glacier.



Lake Matheson

Reflections around a pristine lake

Beautiful bush

Several lookouts

1-2 hours return

Bush track and boardwalk

2 kilometre return

From Fox Glacier village drive 4 km down the Cook Flat Road, and turn onto Lake Matheson Road 1 km to the carpark, where there are toilets, cafe, and art gallery

In the last century Lake Matheson would have been called a 'beauty spot', and that is still true, as 20 coach tours a day confirm. The backpacker buses try to get in early for the famous 'view of views' and the tranquil waters that giveth off the perfect picture. Cloud has ruined many a fine reflection, but the lake is still pretty and pristine.

The track starts between the groovy café and the art gallery, crosses the Clearwater Stream bridge and goes to the first viewpoint, but you need to go to the head of the lake and climb up to the View of Views platform to get the 'classic' tablemat and calendar view. On the way the rich rainforest is made of tall kahikatea, rimu and matai, with a lush understorey of shrubs and ferns.





A few minutes on from the View of Views there is a side track to Reflection Island, a particularly pretty perch beside the lake. The famous reflections partly result from the brown coloration of the water, which is caused by organic matter leached from the humus on the forest floor.

The main track then moves away from the lake and follows the forest around to farm paddocks with splendidly isolated kahikatea trees.

Cafe: Matheson, by Lake Matheson

Gillespies Beach

Coastal forest and lagoon

Historic tunnel

Wild beach

Gold mining relics

2 hours return

Bush tracks and boardwalk

4 kilometre return

From Fox Glacier (Highway 6) it's 20km to Gillespies Beach, and 11km of this is unsealed. This is a narrow road with many blind corners. Car-park, toilets and signposted walks.

A wild coast with a battering surf and driftwood piled high on the beach – Gillespies has presence. On a fine day the mountains stand above the black swamp lagoon like a mirage and the spume from the surf creates its own mist. Sunsets are very fine. Gillespies got its name from James Edwin Gillespie, who detected payable gold on the beach sands here in 1865. A small town sprang up but it did not last long.

Gold dredges later turned over much of the beach frontage, but apart from a few remnants of metal there's hardly a thing left to mark the glory days – just the cemetery and the proliferation of gorse.

Head north on the inland track and pass the remains of the bucket dredge, slowly slipping into the mire. This track continues to the beach. Along here is the lagoon, with its long trestle bridge with dark tidal waters and impressive views.

Across the bridge the pack track goes through swamp and coastal forest and climbs to a junction, one branch going to the tunnel. The tunnel was cut in the 1890s to avoid the awkward Gillespie Point headland, and you can walk through to a viewing platform.





It is no longer permitted to go north along the beach to Galway Point as it disturbs the seal colony too much. Alternative access north is along the Galway Point track.



Paringa Cattle Track

Historic route over the mountains

Well graded track, 500 m climb

Historic hut

Abundant bird life

7-8 hour return

Bush track

20 kilometres return

Off Highway 6, carpark sign-posted 5 km short of Lake Moeraki.

An historic cattle road, climbing into the high mist and memories of another time. It was once a Maori trail, then a cattle road until the early 1960s, and you can still see an old (renovated) roadman's hut and the totara posts of the old telegraph line. Now it is a splendid walking track, with your only companions the ghosts of roadmen past, and the squawking of kaka.

From the Lake Moeraki end the track is muddy at first then connects onto a good pack-track that sidles through bush over to the big suspension bridge over the Moeraki (or Blue) River. Blowfly Hut sits in a clearing.

From here the excellently graded track starts its slow perambulations up to Maori Saddle hut. The forest is rich in rimu and silver beech and kereru, tomtits, fantails, bellbirds and kaka add sound to a rarely silent forest.

After an hour you reach the narrow Whakapohai Saddle, but the track keeps climbing steadily, meandering past several side-creeks (Thompson, Stormy and finally the Whakapohai itself), then descends to the spacious hut at Maori Saddle. The hut stands in a cleared beech glade and has 12 bunks and a woodstove. It is a cosy place for lunch, especially as rain is not unheard of in this locality, and you have a long, easy romp downhill to look forward to.





Monro Beach

Majestic wilderness beach

Pretty bush walk

Rare penguins

2-3 hours return

Bush track

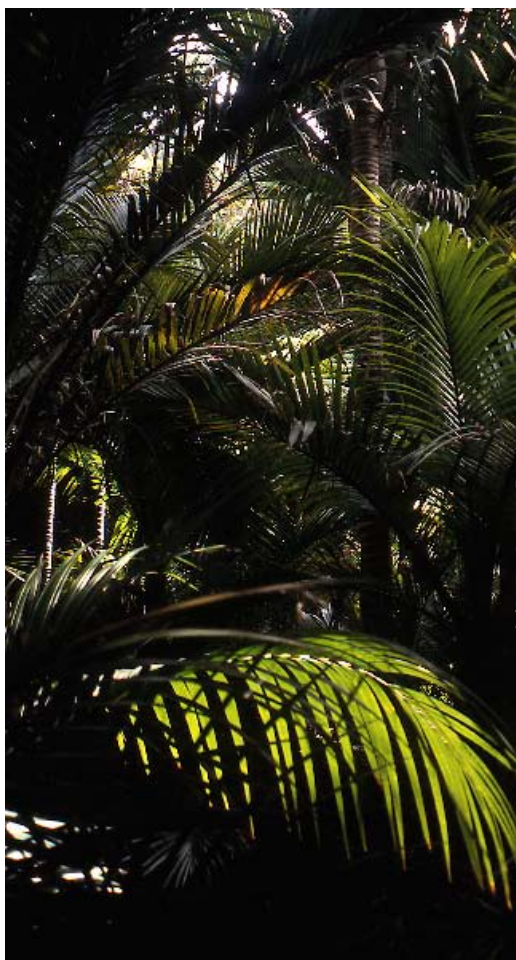
5 kilometres return

Follow Highway 6 to Lake Moeraki Wilderness Lodge and take the short signposted side-road to the carpark and information signs. No dogs.

Monro Track is a fine short walk, well graded, and plunges the visitor into a thick forest of mixed podocarps and coastal plants such as the kiekie vine. The beach is sandy with the usual West Coast sea-rollers making it dangerous for swimming.

A colony of Fiordland Crested Penguins nest in the forest behind the northern part of Munro's beach, and they are one of the world's rarest birds. The word 'penguin' comes from the Welsh 'pen gwyn' or 'white head'.

They nest several hundred feet up thick bush slopes and return to the same place year after year. They lay a clutch of two eggs in about August-September and the young birds are fledged by November-December and ready for an independent life. People are requested not to pass beyond the penguin sign if they see birds on the beach.





Ship Creek

Wild shore

Rare pingao grasses

Lookout tower

Beautiful swamp walk

1 hour return

Gravel paths

1 kilometres return

Drive south from Lake Moeraki another 9 km. Ship Creek is about 10 km north of Haast. with carpark, shelter, toilets and information signs.

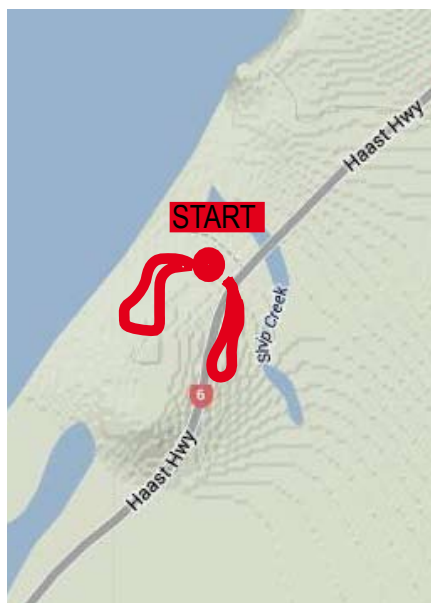
At Ship Creek, a small tidal stream twists down through orange-red pingao topped sand to the plunging sea. Driftwood stands crouched and polished. A lone headland shuts off access north at high tide, and south there is a long beach, so long in fact you can hardly make out where it ends.

In fact it goes all the way to the Arawhata River, and once the settlers used it for taking their cattle up to the markets in Hokitika, via the beach and the Paringa cattle track.

The 'ship' has long been battered into nothingness. It was the stern part of the Schomberg, that sank in Australia in 1855 and drifted right across the Tasman.

In the evenings the sunsets give a brilliant shine to the dark tidal creek, and if it wasn't for the sandflies you'd stay for hours, absorbed in the scenery. The Swamp Walk is utter perfection.





Hapuka Estuary

Kowhai coastal forest

Lagoon views

The story of whitebait

1 hour return

Boardwalks and bush tracks

2 kilometres return

From Haast drive 15km down to Okuru (Haast Motor Camp). The walk and carpark is signposted 50m down a side-road.

Beautiful short lagoon walk that tells the story of whitebait. Whitebait are the young of five species of a native fish genus called galaxiids, of which the most prolific is the inanga. In autumn the female inanga lays eggs in the lower rivers and estuaries and the male releases milt to fertilise them. This milt can cloud the creeks. Most adult inanga then die but the eggs hatch into larvae and catch the big tides out to sea, where they live largely unknown lives. In spring the young fish (or whitebait) migrate back upriver, where the whitebaiter is waiting.

The estuary track wanders through coastal kowhai forest, and common bush birds include bellbirds, wood pigeons, tuis, fantails side by side with estuary-lovers such as oystercatchers, bitterns, pukekos, and pied stilts (poaka).

In the waters there are eels (tuna), flounders (patiki), common bullies, and yellow-eyed mullets (aau). After explaining the whitebait story the track leaves the estuary and wanders into a rich rimu forest with kiekie vine tangled through it, and there's an excellent lookout towards the two Open Bay Islands.





Taumaka and Popotai are two limestone islets that are still a Maori reserve, and were used for muttonbirding and gathering seabirds' eggs. It's an important breeding place for fur seals and Fiordland crested penguins.



Smoothwater & Stafford Circuit

Secluded bays and adventurous coast

Sea-stacks and headland tracks

Tall rainforest and historic pack track

7-9 hours circuit

Bush tracks and beaches

16 kilometres return

From Highway 6 follow the sealed road some 45 km to Jackson Bay. The Smoothwater carpark is 100 m before the information shelter and toilets.

This is a tough but beautiful daytramp, encompassing the best of South Westland: sea-stacks and rock flowers, secluded coves, impressive rainforest, historic pack-track, golden beaches, a trampers hut, a billion sandflies. This is a big day and a **low tide on the coastal route is essential**, as there are several awkward sections. Plan ahead. A tramping circuit rather than a walk.

From the carpark an old pack-track goes over to the Smoothwater River, then turn upriver. Follow the stream till you pick up track markers that lead through wonderful forest along Kakapo Creek. The track then climbs a 100 m to the narrow Stafford Saddle. The bush track gets a bit messy as it heads down the creek and this section can be quite slow to Stafford River.

Now its easy walking downriver a kilometre to the Stafford Hut, with its verandah facing the ocean. A lovely end-of-the-world sort of place.

The coastal route is gorgeous, a view a minute. Good beach travel to Dandys Creek, then some rock scrambling and then a pattern of tidal platforms, sea-stacks, sandy beaches as you negotiate two short headlands. It's important to find the tracks over them.

More tidal platforms after Homminy Cove and the final difficult rock scramble to Smoothwater Bay, a remote and curvaceous curl of sand. Good track up the Smoothwater River, although it is also pleasant splashing upriver anyhow.





COASTAL OTAGO & DUNEDIN

Oamaru Bushy Beach

Moeraki Lighthouse

Shag Point

Mapatouhi Pa



Ross Reservoir

Organ Pipes & Mt Cargill

Flagstaff Summit



Sandfly Bay

Tunnel Beach



Oamaru Bushy Beach

Yellow-eyed & little blue penguins

Bird hide and coastal views

Orange beaches

1 hour return

Graded track to beach

1 kilometre return

From Oamaru take Tyne Street, up to crossroads, and signposted junction to Yellow-eyed penguin colony down Bushy Beach road and carpark. No dogs.

A short track to a bird hide and a lovely beach. The old Graves Walkway that went from Oamaru to Bushy Beach has been closed for some time, due to coastal erosion.

From the carpark one track goes around to a bird hide and views over the coastal cliffs. This overlooks the orange sands of Bushy Beach, where both the little blue and the rare yellow-eyed penguin nest. The best time to watch for penguins is in the morning or late evening as they cross the sands. The birds will not usually come ashore if they see people on the beach.

The main track descends to the beach where ngaio, flax, manuka and matipo provide cover for the breeding penguins. The sands are a lovely golden orange and you can often see fresh penguins trails as they cross the beach to the sea.





Little Blue Penguins

A viewing area for little blue penguins (korara). Seating stands have been set up, and road signs warn of penguins crossing. A charge is made. Every twilight, bands of little blues clamber from the sea up the steep slopes of the wharf area and endearingly shuffle across to their burrows under the cliffs.

From Oamaru take Tyne Street, Arun Street into Waterfront/ Breakwater Road. 1km to carpark and penguin visitor centre.

Cafe: Steam

Moeraki Lighthouse

Penguin peninsula

Pretty coves and tidal crannies

Lighthouse and views

Abundant fresh air

1 hour return

Grass paths and scrambling

1 kilometre return

For Moeraki lighthouse go from Moeraki village on the Lighthouse Road 5 km to the car-park by the lighthouse itself.

The coastline between Oamaru and Dunedin has many surprises, which the average punter who stays on the main highway will never enjoy. Apart from the famous Moeraki boulders, Highway 1 resolutely avoids the interesting sites, so do yourself a favour and turn off to one of these places,

Moeraki is a good choice for a stop. You'll find a pleasant fishing and holiday village, motor-camp and a fish restaurant on the wharf. There are several hidden beaches and many quirky cribs (as Otago people call their baches).

The lighthouse walk is a blast of fresh air, and a low tide is the best time to go. The track descends past a viewing hide to an impressive coastline of rock platforms, sea-cliffs and a surging sea. Cute orange sand coves. The Katiki peninsula will certainly see the cobwebs blown off, because it is rare not to get a breeze along this rugged coast.





Moeraki Boulders

This is well signposted from Highway 1. As you turn off the highway the main road swings around to the Moeraki Boulders cafe and carpark, but there is also a large DOC carpark on the beach straight ahead.

Ten minutes to boulders north on the lovely beach. There are also other boulder rocks south from carpark.

Kaitiki Beach (alongside Highway 1 south of Moeraki) also has many boulder formations for those who want to explore.



Cafe: Fleurs Place, in Moeraki

Shag Point

Tide platforms

Seals and shag colony

Concretions and rock formations

Information signs

1 hour wandering about

Grass paths and tidal rock scrambling

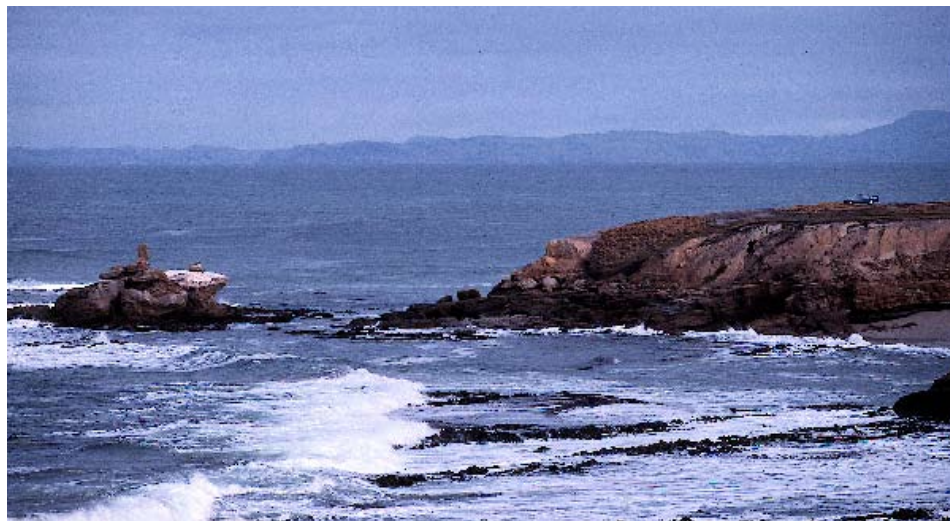
1 kilometre return

From Highway 1 turn down sign-posted road 1 km past interesting cribs to carparks on headland.

Shag Point is a low headland south of Kaitiki Beach. It was once the site of one of Otago's largest coalmines, with half a million tons of coal extracted from undersea coal shafts from the 1860's to the 1980's. They also found a fossil plesiosaur here, a large marine reptile, inside a cretaceous concretion dated to between 65-135 million years old.

Once you start exploring Shag Point the beauty of the place becomes apparent. Massive tidal platforms are exposed at low tide, and shags flap vigorously along the coastal edge. There are pretty sandy coves, and fur seals loll about in lots of unexpected places.

There are several Moeraki-like concretions, but these Kaitiki concretions tend to erode from the inside out, and there are many stages of this process arrayed attractively on the low tide rocks.





Mapatouhi Pa

Wild beach and big cliffs

Historic pa and coast views

Low tide route to Doctors Point

Sea archway

2-3 hours return

Grass track and beach walking

4-5 kilometres return

Purakaunui Bay is signposted from Port Chalmers, but before Purakaunui village turn down Osborne Road 3 km to a car parking area. Doctors Point carpark is reached from Highway 1 at Waitati and 3 km to Michies Crossing.

Once the scene of a famous massacre, Mapatouhi Pa is now a peaceful lookout along a wild and beautiful stretch of Dunedin coastline. A low tide is best, then the kids can explore the sea-arch and wander through to Doctors Point carpark.

A vehicle track cuts through pine forest 1 km to Purakanui Beach, a fine glistening parade of sand. A short track climbs onto the headland pa along a defensive trench onto the flat top with great views.

This attractive pa site was last occupied in the 18th century, and the remains of terraces and trenches are disappearing under the wind-blown grass and cabbage trees. On a soft summers evening it is hard to imagine the harsh lives of the inhabitants. Constantly looking out for enemies. It was a good defensive position,



with ready access to estuaries and tidal creeks, but it obviously was not strong enough.

Tradition suggests that the pa was sacked in winter during an inter-tribal feud. The story goes that the defenders set up dummies beside the pallisade walls so they could retreat to the warmth of fires, and the besiegers realised the ploy and attacked, and overwhelmed the defence. Most of the pa inhabitants were massacred, and in the traditional way, some would have been eaten, and the survivors taken as slaves.

Assuming a low tide, head north on rocks and wide sands through the pretty arch-way and onto Doctors Point and Blueskin Bay. A really fine stretch of shore, but don't get caught out by the returning tide.



Ross Reservoir

Peaceful reservoir sanctuary

Mossy glen and gorge

Historic valve tower

Many track options

1 hour return

Gravelled track

3 kilometres return

From central Dunedin turn off George Street into Malvern Street, then Woodhaugh Road. Alternative access off Rockside Road.

An easy urban walk into a rich, fern-filled gully and up to the serene pond of the Ross Reservoir. This historic dam is one of only two working nineteenth-century dams in the country; the other is also in Otago, in the Eweburn. The Ross dam was built in 1867 of local stone and puddled clay, to supply the rapidly growing city of Dunedin, flushed with gold and hope.

At Woodhaugh Road, where there is reasonable carparking, the track follows the Water of Leith past a boulder trap, then across a footbridge and on up past a quarry over another footbridge to the track junction with Rockside Road. There are some excellent information panels on the way.

The broad track now gets very shady and green as it climbs along the deep, mossy creek with brooding gorge cliffs above you. A last short steep climb up on to the dam and the seldom-rippled reservoir.





There is a circuit track around the lake, and the valve tower is worth a look. What is surprising is that after leaving the bustle of downtown Dunedin the view from the dam is almost completely rural.

Cafe: Everyday Gourmet, George Street, Dunedin.

Organ Pipes & Mt Cargill

Classic hill climb, 270 m

Organ Pipes rock formation

Panorama of Dunedin

Sheltering forest

2-3 hours return

Gravel track

1 kilometre return

From central Dunedin drive into the North-East Valley up North Road, which blends into Norwood Street then Mount Cargill Road, almost to the ridgeline saddle. Pitiful carpark.

Mount Cargill has a central position in Dunedin's geography and psychology, helped no doubt by the massive 104-metre television tower. The mountain can be seen from many parts of the city and the peninsula, and the name — a reference to Captain William Cargill — taps deeply into the city's pioneering past. So it is a 'must do' walk, but it is also a very good walk with fabulous views and includes the Organ Pipes.

From the carpark there are steep steps, then the track settles down as it passes a rock cave before zig-zagging up to the foot of the rock outcrop called the Organ Pipes. Curious yes, but overrated. Large, segmented volcanic chunks are piled below the outcrop and some of these segments have been utilised thriftily to make the steps for the track.

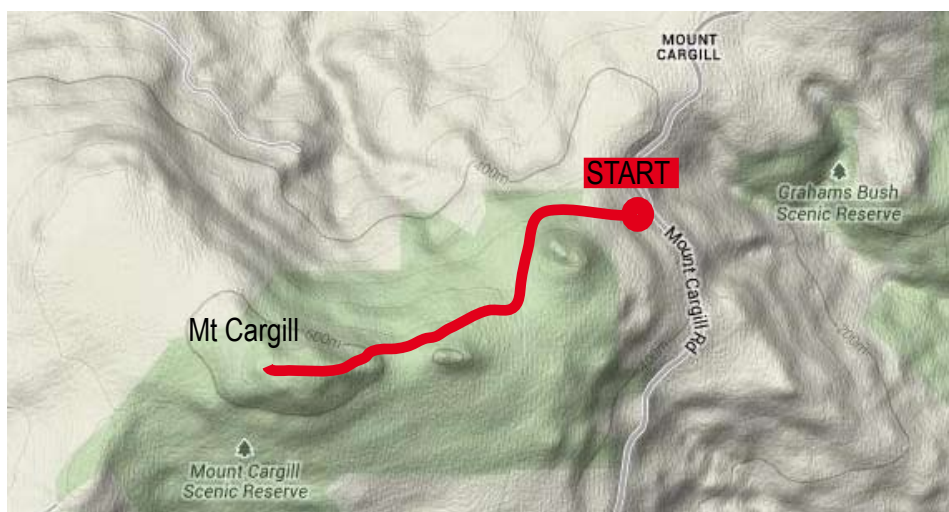




The track is steady from here to a saddle and a side-track to Butters Peak (617 m), with a good view on top. The native scrub is growing well up here and the views are getting less, with emergent totara and tall mountain cedars.

There is a flat section then a junction with the track to Bethunes Gully. The views in the tussock-line are now very good, and the track sidles around the base of Mount Cargill and turns quickly to the summit.

This is not a beautiful place. An ugly assemblage of concrete boxes and unlovely metallic structures, but at the other end of the summit from the tower there is a rock outcrop that makes a fine rest area. On a fair day you need an hour to absorb the view, because practically everything can be seen.



Flagstaff Summit

Easy summit with good views

Open tussock country

Plane table

Good family hike

1 hour circuit

Gravel and tussock track

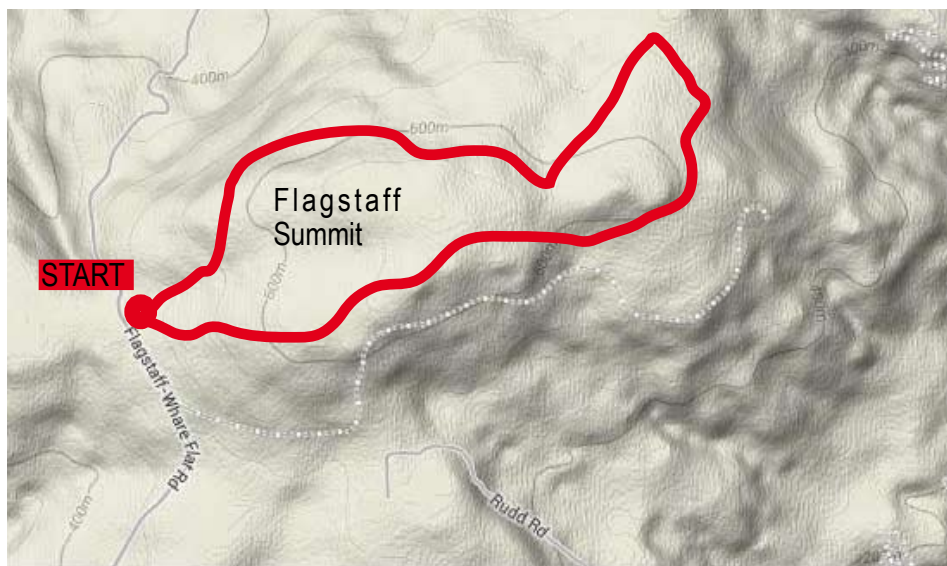
3 kilometre circuit

From Dunedin head up towards the hospital and Halfway Bush to Three Mile Hill Road, and turn off Flagstaff/Whare Flat Road 2 km to the Bullring carpark.

Great, expansive views over Dunedin and Central Otago on this easy mountain walk. Flat tussock country and rock outcrops. It is frequently misty up here so pick a fine day. Graded tracks and well-signposted.

At the carpark take the Flagstaff track as it climbs the hillside in open tussocks and kanuka onto the summit at 667 m. Views as far inland as the Lammermoors and the Rock and Pillar Range. Plane table on top.

Continue north off the summit (a side-track on your left is a short cut to the Firebreak Track) but carry on the main path for good views sidling around the Knoll 640 metres, and this meets the Pineapple Track. Turn left up to the Firebreak Track, and follow this broad easy road back to the Bullring carpark.





Sandfly Bay

Sand dunes and formations

Seal colony

Quick side trip to Mt Bruce

Great views all round

1-2 hours one way

Grass tracks and dunes

4 kilometres one way

About 18 km from Dunedin. Take Highcliff Road on Otago Peninsula (which leads to Larnach's Castle) and follow it to Pukehiki, and Seal Point Road to a carpark. Signposted.

There is a strong sense of welcome as you cross the farmland towards Sandfly Bay. The headlands' two strong arms seem to reach out to you, and the sand and sea glitter. The gravel track drops quickly downhill to a lookout, then you can let yourself go at the top of a huge sandhill, with a glorious romp down to the beach plain.

There is much to see. The wind manufactures small ventifacts, rocks shaped curiously by the abrasion of wind-blown sand, and everywhere the sand is patterned in absorbing and delicate shapes. Sandfly Bay is named after the wind, not the insects.



A small fur-seal colony exists on the far western end of the beach, and there are yellow-eyed penguins. There is an observation hide behind the dunes, though the birds are rarely seen except at dusk and dawn.

Just at this end of the beach a poled route climbs up through the sculptured sand dunes to the scrub line. The obvious route follows a fenceline and a 250-metre climb up to the carpark at Sandymount, and when you look behind, the bay looks sublime.



Tunnel Beach

Sea cliffs, sea stacks and archways

A whimsical tunnel

Great for families

Coastal views, low tide good

1 hour return

Gravel paths and grass trails

2 kilometres return

From Dunedin follow Highway 1 to Green Island, then Brighton Road, and Blackhead Road 3 km to Tunnel Beach Road and carpark. Track closed for lambing August to October.

If you are rich you can afford some eccentricity, and some privacy. Captain Cargill had a tunnel built through this sandstone headland in the 1870s to give his family exclusive access to their own private beach. But now even peasants can get there, and what a place it is — a powerful carved coastline of arches, sea stacks and sandstone cliffs, where the honey rock colours contrast with the wild blue sea.

From the carpark it is a steady downhill to the top of a broad sea arch, and views along the coast to other sea stacks. The tunnel has concrete steps and drops steeply to the surging bay. Swimming is not recommended, but what a beautiful and battered shoreline. The only downside is the 150 metres of climbing needed to regain the carpark.





CENTRAL OTAGO

Mt Buster Diggings
Hogburn Sluicings
St Bathans Blue Lake
Rock & Pillar Summit



Quartz Reef Tailings
Cairnmuir Hill Track
Bannockburn Diggings



Sutton Salt Lake
Ida Burn Gorge
Butchers Dam
Alexandra Dredge Tailings



Mt Buster Diggings

Alpine plateau and tussocks

500 metres climb to plateau

Historic diggings

Mt biking and 4WD access

4-5 hours return

4WD and tussock routes

10 kilometres return

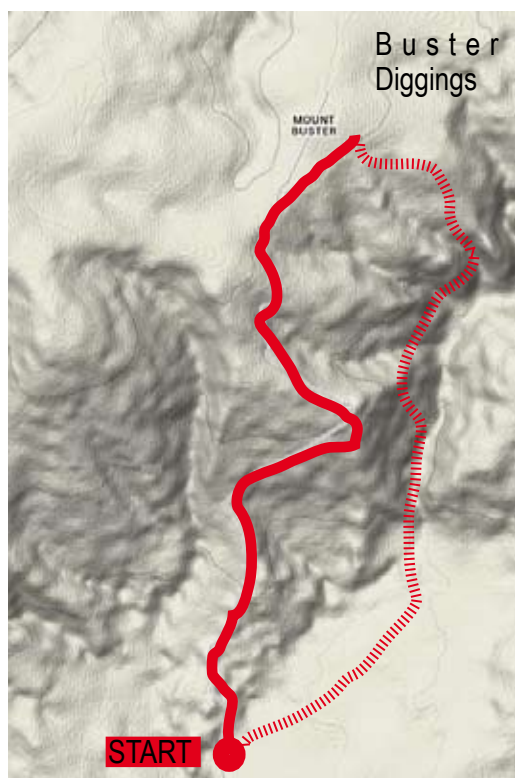
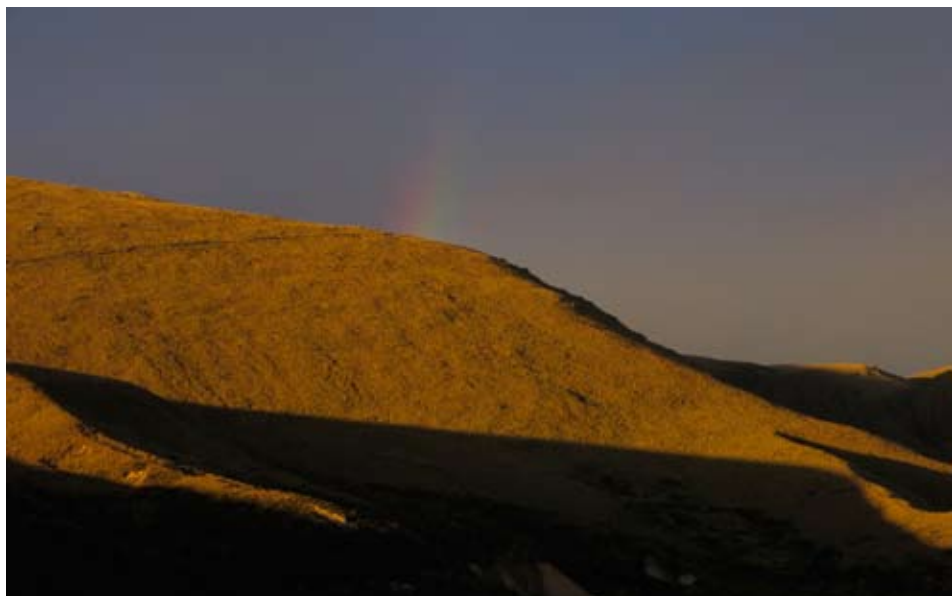
From Naseby take the Dansey Pass Road 1 km to the Mt Buster Road, and follow this about 11 km to the ford and start of 4WD.

The Buster Diggings are up on a plateau at 1200 metres, bleak and beautiful. Strange sculptures left by gold sluicings. A cute hut. Amazing views in a remote place. Access for 4WD is now permanently open.

After the ford the 4WD heads past a locked railway hut (now a private crib) and resolutely starts to climb up the spur, in lazy zig-zags up the face of the mountain and onto the windy tops. Plenty to explore, with gold remnants everywhere.

Old water races wriggle across the plateau and the gold diggers sluicings have left some curious shapes. The 2 bunk hut looks forlorn in the middle of this emptiness. A newish poled track heads down from the hut into the Little Kye Burn back to the carpark, allow 2-3 hours descent.





Hogburn Sluicings

Hogburn gold sluicings and forest
Nostalgic Naseby and cemetery
NZ longest water race and siphon
Plenty to explore for kids

2 hours circuit

Gravel tracks

4 kilometre circuit

Nasbey is 8 km off the Highway 85, about 12 km from Ranfurly. There is a confusion of loggings roads, bridle ways, mt bike tracks in the pine forest, but the water race is a useful reference point if you get lost.

Naseby reeks with nostalgia, '2000 feet above worry level'. Curling capital of New Zealand, charming historic buildings, and the museum is worth seeing. Up the Hogburn gully there is a pleasant picnic area, and a detailed information board of the various tracks.

The Mount Ida Water Race remains one of the most remarkable efforts of the gold-digging days, and as an example of pick and shovel precision engineering that is impressive. It is now over 120 years old, 123 kilometres long, and the water stills flows chilly and steady.

The One Tree Hill Historical Walk starts 50 metres above the Hogburn sign from the picnic area, and climbs and crosses the Mt Ida Water Race, and winds through the 'badlands' sluicings back to the amateur gold panning area in the Hogburn, 1 hour return.





Better still continue onto the Mining Claim area, where a small amphitheatre of sluicings contains quite a few iron remnants of the gold days, including pipes and a sluice gun.

This track continues briefly and meets a side-track to the Mt Ida Water Race, and you can return along the race vehicle track (past the siphon) to the Hogburn — about 2 hours return.

Cafe: Black Forest, in Naseby

St Bathans Blue Lake

Brilliant blue lake

Gold sluicings and info boards

Historic hotel

1-2 hours circuit

Gravel tracks

2 kilometre circuit, other tracks around lake and linking to camping domain.

St Bathans is off Highway 85 at Becks, 15 km on a sealed road to township. Large carpark and picnic area beside Blue Lake.

St Bathans is in it's own time-warp. This is an easy gravel track overlooking the sparkling blue lake, which is actually a man-made hole dug by the gold-diggers and later filled with water. Great info signs and lots of ruined debris from the hey-day of the 1860's gold rush.

The Vulcan Hotel opposite the Blue Lake is a popular lunch spot and with a shady beer garden.





Camping: St Bathans Domain

Rock & Pillar Summit

Big alpine tramp, 1000 m climb

Open tops and two huts

Alpine wetlands and flowers

Need a fine day

7-9 hours return

Poled tussock trails, 4WD tracks

11 kilometres return

Off Highway 87, about 5 km north of Middlemarch, a short road leads to a carpark near an old stone building.

A huge day, but rewarding views along the mighty Rock and Pillar Range with its alpine wetlands, strange tors, and blistering summer days. Two huts for lunching and resting, and fascinating history panels in Big Hut detailing the crazy ski days of the 1930's. You need good weather. Navigating in the fog up on the Rock and Pillar is difficult without compass, map or Gps on your iphone. Dont even think about it. This daywalk suits very fit trampers.

From the carpark follow the poled track as it sets about the hill, gradually leaving the fencelines behind, and remorselessly climbing to the top plateau of 1300 metres. There's a short side across a basin to Top Hut, with the old ruined stone ski hut next door. The history panels are well worth browsing, before setting off (no

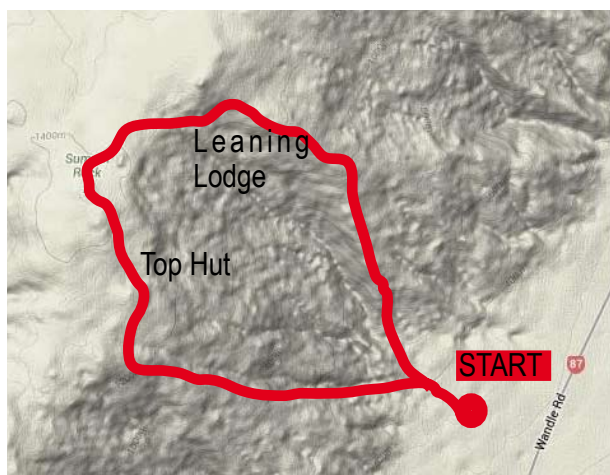




track) up to the summit rock itself, 1450 metres.

Stupendous views. Rock tors dot the landscape like Easter Island statues . Wander north over the plateau until the new Leaning Lodge comes into view, 100 metres lower than the ridge. Follow the 4WD or shortcut down to this new 10-bunk hut.

Downhill take the 4WD track as it zig-zags down the hillside (spot the small refuge hut?) and at the 1050 metre contour, you need to pick up the fenceline as it heads straight back down to the old stone building. The last section is across private farmland.



Sutton Salt Lake

Inland salty pond

Sliver of skinks

Tussock downlands

Rock tors

1-2 hour circuit

Tussock trails

3 kilometres circuit

From Highway 87, turn down Kidds Road and travel 2 km to the sign-posted carpark.

You cannot equivocate with a place like 'Central'; either it satisfies the soul or it repels you. Here, even the sky has its own peculiarities, with vast cauliflower cumulus building over the Rock and Pillar Range.

The salt lake is peculiar, as far away from the sea as you can get, yet rainwater runs over these arid rocks and brings out tiny traces of salt that over years have accumulated and encouraged the odd situation of salt-tolerant coastline plants fringing the lake.

The track is circular, threading through a tussock plain and schist rock outcrops that every now and again hold a shiver of light where a skink had been basking. The occasional falcon flicks high above, and if the lake has water in it (sometimes





it dries up) there will always be a pair of paradise ducks. The lake soothes this desperately dry land, and if it is hot, you will probably want to quench your thirst...



Ida Burn Gorge

Historic railway line and tunnels

Great mt biking

Tussock open lands

Rock tors

3-4 hours return

Old railway line

12 kilometres return

From Highway 85 at Lauder a signpost and a short road lead to a picnic area, passing a toilet on the way.

Old railway lines make excellent walking tracks, and the Central Otago Rail Trail is one of the best. Once the railway closed the line was developed for mountain bikers and it is doubtful that you will want to walk the whole of it, but this is one of the best bits. Lauder's claim to fame is that it has the (officially) coldest recorded temperature in New Zealand — -25° Celsius.

The start of the rail trail is well-signposted, just past the gun club, and it is about 1 km to the Manuherikia River bridge. This is a fine iron bridge is 110 metres long, with an information panel detailing its history. A further 3 km to the Ida Burn gorge and the first tunnel.





A torch is useful, as the tunnel has a kink in it where both ends are hidden, and you literally cannot see your hand in front of your face. You have to use it as a guide against the wall. The second tunnel is 1 km further on, and straighter, and then it is a short distance to the Auripo viaduct, at 37 metres, the highest on the entire rail trail — quietly spectacular.

Where the gorge ends there are views over the flat, soothing land. The lenticular rocks seem to mimic the saucer-like clouds, and this is a good meditative location in which to admire a land that has no equal in New Zealand.



Butchers Dam

Wild lands and wild thymes

Rock tors and crisp skies

Historic dam and hut

Beautiful lake

2-3 hours circuit

Gravel tracks and tussock trails

3 kilometre circuit

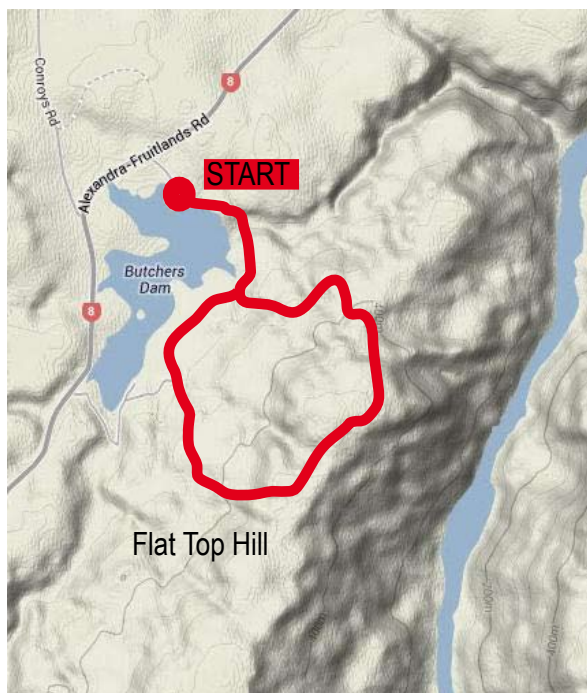
Off Highway 8, 5 kilometres south of Alexandra. Large carpark and information signs.

This track gives you quick, easy access to a typical Central Otago landscape. There is a superb 1 hour circuit track with excellent information panels on the geology, flora and fauna and gold history of this fascinating area. All around you there are expansive landscapes of rock and tussock.

From the carpark, cross the attractive dam (now well fenced) with it's permanent rainbow lurking below it. Beyond the stone hut, the main track quickly divides and a circuit can be followed through old gold workings.

It is surprising how much human history there is in such a compact area. Botanically, Flat Top Hill is interesting (which is why DoC owns it). There are 180 native vascular plants and several rarities, including a native forget-me-not. If you are lucky, you might see and hear the endemic New Zealand falcon, and Harrier hawks are often scouring the tussocks for prey.





Beyond the main trail, there is a longer poled circuit which leads up into a strange landscape of rock tors that have an almost human-like quality; faces sometimes seems to peep out, or eyes seem to stare. These are the ghosts of shepherds and gold-diggers who moved through here — their hopes soon turned to stone in Otago's blighting weather.



Alexandra Dredge Tailings

Huge dredge tailings

Circuit trail and info panels

Historic remnants

Take water and camera

2 hours circuit

Gravel and vehicle track

4 kilometre circuit

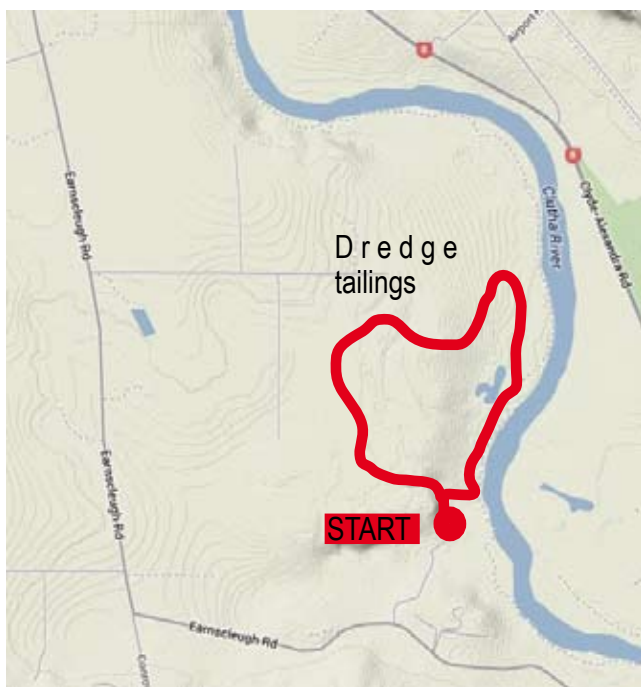
From Alexandra cross the Clutha bridge to Earnscleugh Road, then Marshall Road to the carpark.

A desert within a desert. Hot, dry, grey humps of dredge tailings are not everyone's cup of tea, but this landscape is unique, and surprisingly beautiful. Go in the late afternoon or evening when the Otago light bathes the tailings in surreal shadows.

Not always well marked, the track explores the strange humped landscape, with lookouts and old machinery and dredge ponds along the way. Mini mountains of rubble everywhere you look, dotted with occasional trees that have managed to lodge on the shifting gravels. A strange hour or two.



Cafe: Courthouse Cafe, in Alexandra



Quartz Reef Tailings

Historic gold-mining site

Weird herring-bone tailings

Views over Lake Dunstan

Easy short stop

1 hour return

Gravel track

2 kilometres return

From Cromwell head to Taras on Highway 8 some 4 km to small carpark. Easy to miss.

The Quartz Reef tailings (also known as the Northburn tailings) were created by necessity into a giant work of art. Neatly stacking rocks to stop them collapsing into the gold working, the 1860's diggers area have created striking patterns, all the more remarkable when you realise the well-organised discipline required to make the system work, and that every rock was shifted by hand. A little gem.





Cafe: Cider House, in Cromwell

Cairnmuir Hill Track

Big landscape and wild country

Historic musterers stone hut

Great views of Lake Dunstan

600 metre climb, carry water

4-5 hours return (hut)

4WD track

12 kilometres return (hut)

From Cromwell go to Bannockburn bridge, then immediately onto Cairnmuir Road to the carpark.

A great climb following an historic gold miners track from Cromwell to Clyde. Suits fit and keen walkers, but the rewards are tremendous views and a classic musterers hut.

From the carpark start the slog up the road, as it climbs a massive spur into the Cairnmuir Mountains. 500 metres to a small saddle. Keep to the main ridge track at the junction, then there's another knob to climb over at 795 metres, and another hill up to a road junction.

Take the obvious track down to the basin and the beautiful historic hut, a surprisingly large musterers or boundary hut built about the 1860's. This is the only water source on the track.

If you want to have a crack at Cairnmuir Hill itself, keep going up the 4WD with some 300 metres of climbing, sidling Mt Jackson to the final summit. Add another two hours return.





Cafe: Grain and Seed, in Cromwell



Bannockburn Diggings

Badlands gold sluicings

Tunnels, shafts, paved water races

Sun-dried brick huts

Interesting circuit

2-3 hours circuit

Old road

5 kilometres return

From Cromwell take the Bannockburn Road 5 km across the Kawarau, and turn into Fenton Road 2 km to the carpark. Gold workings are on private land and closed between August to October for lambing.

The Bannockburn sluicings are a tortured landscape, the river terraces quite literally eaten out into canyons and cliffs by the desperation of the gold miners. After the initial flurry of activity from 1862-1865, a little community established itself and settled in to win the deeper gold that lay under the old river terraces.

At first they tunnelled, trying to intercept the gold bearing layers, and hauling out the pay dirt in trucks on rails. By the 1870's sluicing was in full swing, but because of the large operations involved Bannockburn was a company field, and men worked for wages. By 1900 the diggings were in decline, and what is left now is a stark and strangely beautiful landscape.





The track initially goes up through canyons and crumbling cliffs of the sluice claims, the pillars that remain are often at the corners of claims. After a lookout over the diggings the track climbs up and crosses the water race, passes the dam and reaches Stewart Town, a ruined village of sun-dried brick buildings and old orchard trees, that have become so ingrown and twisted they look like matagouri. The track returns back via some of the impressive paved tail races.



CATLINS & SOUTHLAND

Nugget Point
Cannibal Bay



Jacks Blowhole
Picnic Point
Slope Point & Waipapa Lighthouse

Estuary Circuit
Foveaux Walkway



Nugget Point

Rock islets and cliffs

Fur seals and Hooker's sealions

Coastal views and lighthouse

Tidal platforms and kelp

30 minutes return

Gravel tracks

1 kilometre return

From Highway 92 turn off at Romahapa (16km south of Balclutha) and drive to Kaka Point, then follow the coast road past Willsher Bay to Roaring Bay and Nugget Point carpark.

Nugget Point is a finger-like promontory that ends in wind-battered islets. The isolation enabled wildlife to stay relatively undisturbed, for this is the only place in New Zealand where elephant seals breed, and is a known haul-ashore point for Hooker's sealions and breeding place for fur seals and yellow-eyed penguins.

The short walk from the carpark goes up to a lookout, then onto a picnic area (which was the old carpark) and follows a narrow path to the lighthouse and viewing platform. The sooty shearwater or muttonbird (titi) colonies are one of the largest on the mainland. Many of the islets have Maori names: Te Anau Putu, 'the islet with the sea cave'; Pae Koua, 'perch of the shag'; Makanui, 'seals'; and Porokaua, 'the furthest stack'. Up to 60 fur seal pups are born here each year in a





colony of up to 500 seals, and the seals have made tracks all over the rock jumble on the platform.

At Roaring Bay there is a viewing hide overlooking a small breeding colony of yellow-eyed penguins. At low tide you can walk to the small southern headland which has a pretty double sea-arch drilled through it. There's a chance you might spot Hooker's sealions basking on the stones which loll about in the kelp and tidal platforms around the headland.



Cannibal Bay

Coastal beaches and sandhills

Moa-hunter sites

Tidal platforms

Hooker's sealions

2 hours return

Dune tracks

4 kilometres return

2 km north of Owaka on Highway 92 turn onto the signposted Cannibal Bay road for 9 km to the small carpark and picnic area by the beach.

Cannibal Bay and Surat Bay are two wide sandy beaches separated by sand dunes and a headland called False Islet. Surat got its unusual name from the French ship that was wrecked here in 1874, and Cannibal Bay goes back to the time when the Maori occupied sites among the sand dunes, and there is evidence of moa-hunting.

Cannibal Bay is the smaller and prettier, with a fascinating tidal platform at the east end at low tide. The rocks have been etched into 'railway tracks', long straight layers of sandstone that were tilted and later exposed, with the harder types of

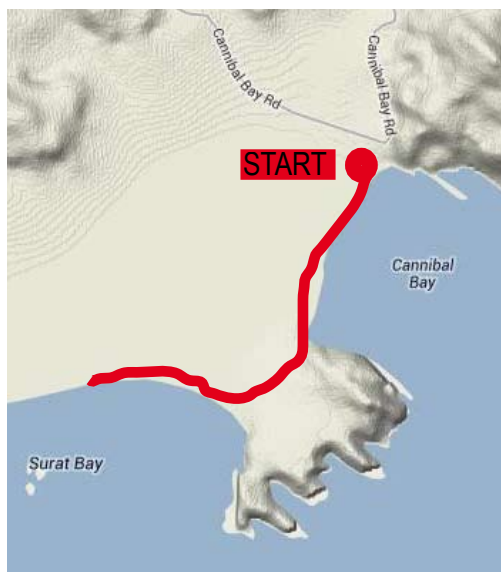




sandstone standing proud. Bull kelp has attached itself firmly to the rocks by means of its rock-like yellow foot (or 'holdfast') and the usual oystercatchers and gulls hover around the rocks.

At the south end of Cannibal Bay a signposted track leads through the extensive sand dune area across the base of False Islet and reaches the south end of the lovely Surat Beach, 3 km or so of yellow sand.

On both Cannibal Bay and Surat Bay there is certainly a chance of seeing bull Hooker sealions, particularly during spring, where they like to gather and bask on the warm sands or in the dunes behind. On hot days they often flick sand over their black bodies and could be mistaken for a large lump of driftwood.



Jacks Blowhole

Impressive blowhole

Good track and cliff views

Fuchsia forest

Sandy beach at Jacks Bay

1 hour return

Gravel and farm tracks

1 kilometre one way

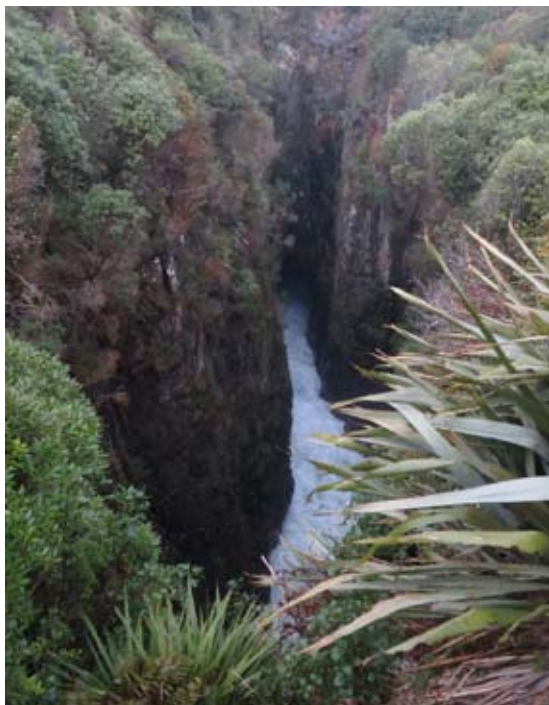
From Owaka follow the signs to Jacks Bay across the bridge over the Catlins Lake (really an estuary). 5 km to wide sandy bay backed by many cribs.

A short impressive walk, with cliff views and a surging blowhole. Jacks Bay is a lovely sweep of sand.

At Jacks Bay carpark, hop over the stile and follow the good track alongside fuchsia forest to a double stile. Cliff views here.

The track climbs up the cliffline then down to the blowhole, which is fenced off. A track goes around the blowhole to a viewing platform.

The hole is 55 metres deep and 200 metres from the sea edge itself, and the sea boils through the chasm.





Picnic Point

Estuary exploration, low tide best

Tidal platforms and sea birds

Sandy beach

Interesting for kids

1 hour return

Bush track and beaches

2 kilometres return

From Highway 82 at Papatowai store drive through the bach backstreets down to the foreshore and picnic area. A children's play area up the road a wee way.

The Catlins is a coastline that demands exploration, and a quick drive through-misses the magic of the place entirely. At Papatowai the Tahakopa River swings out into the bay and has manufactured a small, brilliant estuary at Picnic Point. Papatowai store sells everything including most foods, good wine, takeaways and petrol.

If its a low-tide from the beach carpark wander out onto the sands of the estuary and head south. After less than 1 km is a seat commemorating local landscape painter Edna Robinson. There are some excellent tidal platforms here. From the seat a lovely bush track leads back to Cross Street and Papatowai.





There is also a track to Kings Rock. It sidles through bush for a while then reaches farmland, and marker poles lead you across to the sea edge.

The outlook is magnificent and you have a grandstand view of the surfers, who get towed out to this famous surf break by jet skis.

Camp: The DOC camp at Papatowai is easy to miss, right behind the store. Sheltered and peaceful.

Slope Point & Waipapa

Severe southern coastline

Dunes and quicksands

Historic gold dredge and cemetery

Useful to have low tide

2-3 hours one way

4WD and beach sands

10 kilometres one way

From Highway 92 take the Waipapa Road 4 km to carpark and toilets. For Slope Point, continue on Highway 92 10 km to Slope Point Road, then 7 km past Slope Point carpark, to end of road.

A raw and restless coastline, with a wild beach and stark pieces of human history — a cemetery built for a shipwreck, the bucket chain of an old gold dredge, a solitary lighthouse. Slope Point is the southernmost point of the South Island and gets blasted by winds that often have bits of Antarctica in them.

At the Slope Point road end (and four-wheel-drive sign) follow the sandy road through gorse out to Waipapa Stream. There is quicksand here, which lies in a narrow margin of 1–2 metres alongside both sides of the stream. If in doubt walk upstream on the dune banks and cross higher up. Just past Waipapa Stream is the remains of a gold dredge, tucked behind the main sand dunes. All that is left is the restored bucket chain.

Waipapa Beach stretches some 4 km to Lake Brunton, which may also have soft sand or quicksand by its outlet. When Lake Brunton is full and breaks out to the



sea, the outlet becomes impassable. About 1 km further there is a lower part of the sand dunes, and if you cross to this area you should find the Tararua Acre.

This cemetery was built to hold most of the 131 victims from the SS *Tararua*, which hit Otara Reef off Waipapa Point in 1881. It is a bleak, lonely scene matched by the loneliness of the little wooden Waipapa lighthouse, 2 km further along the beach. This was built in 1884 because of the terrible tragedy.



Other Walks – Slope Point

A short walk across farmland to the southernmost point of the South Island. 30 minutes return.



Estuary Circuit

Wetland and waders

Historic replica locomotive

Good for mt bikes

Excellent information boards.

1-2 hour circuit

Gravel tracks and boardwalk

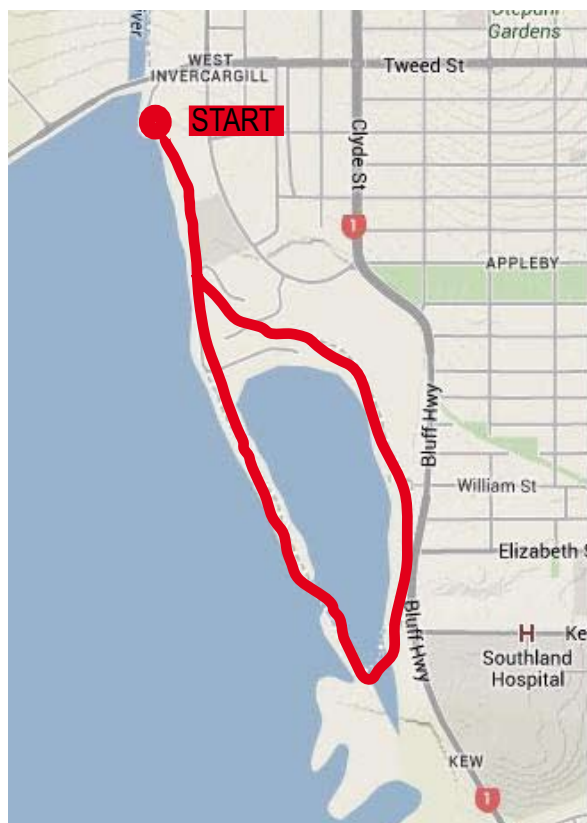
4 kilometres circuit

From Invercargill drive down Tweed Street to the Stead Street bridge, and turn into the carpark and scout hall at Steads historic wharf beside the New River estuary.

This is a charming walk combining estuary views, wading birds, and insights into Invercargill's fascinating history. Spend a few minutes reading up about the replica steam train that originally ran on wooden rails, and the replica cutter, that once served this busy wharf. There has been a massive re-vegetation of this once derelict area.

From the carpark the broad track wanders along the estuary edge 15 minutes or so to a track junction. Continue along the seaside embankment with occasional info signs that tell you this was once a popular bathing site.





Cross the footbridge over the tidal inlet and you reach another track junction, and useful shelter when the sou'westerly blows. Turn onto the Roger Sutton boardwalk, that zig-zags amiably across the inlet. Plenty of wading birds here, with large populations of black swans.

Where the boardwalk ends there is a link with a car-park and road, but the main track edges around the inlet with a good lookout seat at the end. The trail finishes by climbing up onto another carparking area (with seats) and the track meets the original trail and completes the loop.

Foveaux Walkway

Coastal views to Rakiura

Podocarp forest

Old gun emplacements

End of Highway 1

3-4 hours circuit

Gravel tracks

5 kilometre circuit

Drive from Invercargill to Bluff township, through to the Stirling Point carpark, world signposts, an impressive chain sculpture and the termination of Highway 1.

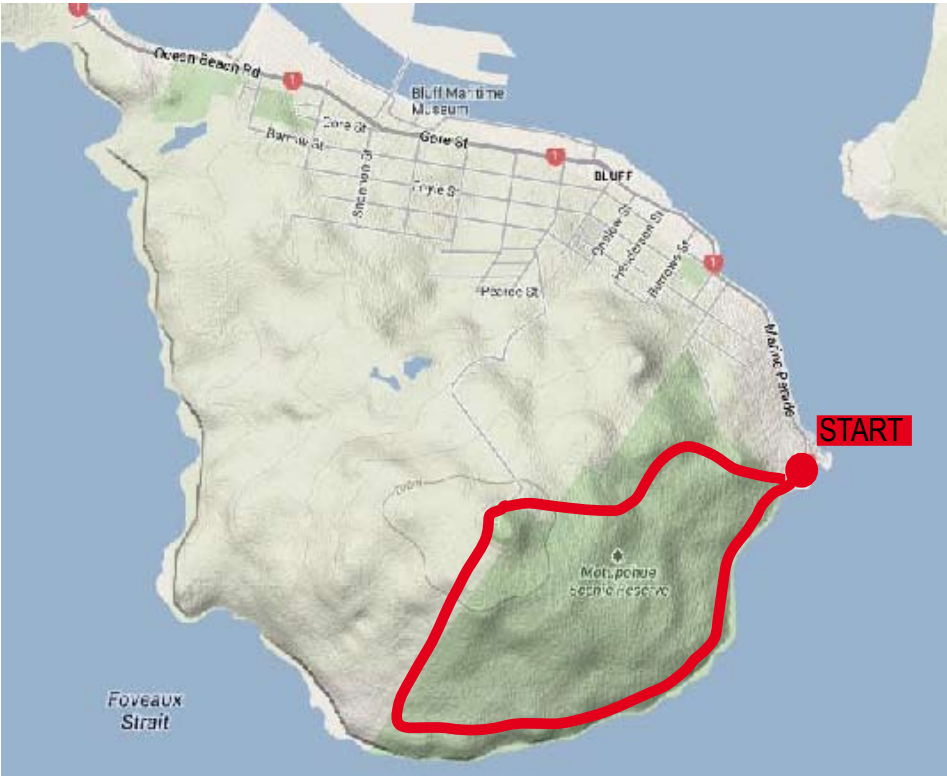
This is a blast at Bluff. It is a rare day without wind on this track, something to do with the gale-force personality of Foveaux Strait. The trees get bent, and the sea thrashes along the coast. In compensation there are brilliant light bursts along the squally horizon, and a pretty healthy forest with bellbirds and fantails enjoying the bracing climate.

From Stirling Point the track follows through coastal forest, past good information signs. Beyond the Glory Track junction, the track turns the corner to the Foveaux Memorial and the Millenium Track.

This track climbs steeply through bush up to Motupuhoe, or The Bluff, at 265metres. Great views from the lookout. The dark shape of Rakiura or Stewart Island is omnipresent, and squalls blur the horizon.



For the downhill section, take the Topuni Track 20 minutes or so down to the Glory Track junction, then go past the old Second World War gun site back down to Stirling Point. A really fine coastal circuit.



WANAKA & QUEENSTOWN

Matukituki Valley
Rob Roy Glacier
Lake Diamond
Roys Peak



Sawpit Gully
Queenstown Hill
Ben Lomond
Moke Lake to Arthurs Point
Sam Summers Hut



Lake Alta
Scheelite Mines
Invincible Mine
Chinamans Bluff
Routeburn Falls



Matukituki Valley

Inspiring valley walk and mt biking

Big mountains and glacier views

Historic huts

Beech forest and grass flats

3-4 hours return

Valley and bush tracks

14 kilometres return

From Wanaka drive up the Matukituki Road 55 km to the Raspberry Creek carpark. Many fords and ditches on the last 8 km of road, some of which can become impassable after rain.

The Matukituki Valley road is an adventure in itself, and gets heavily rutted or slick after rain. The major ford is at Niger Stream, by Mount Aspiring station, and if you do not like the look of this then it might be wise to turn back. Beyond here there are four or five more fords before the road ends at the Raspberry Creek carpark and shelter. Heavy rain can make any of these fords dodgy. As they say, half the fun is getting there.

The compensations for tackling the Matukituki River road are obvious. This is one of the finest mountain valleys in New Zealand. Sharp slabs of mountains bracket either side of the valley, with snowfields suspended in the hanging basins. Waterfalls cut down the valley walls, and the sheer scale of the mountain scenery makes your neck ache.





The walking is easy. This is also a popular mt bike trail.

From the carpark a good track crosses gorgeous valley flats and under waterfalls as it wanders up the Matukituki Valley.

About two hours past Cascade Hut (which is always kept locked) and another 30 minutes onto Aspiring Hut.

Aspiring Hut was built in 1949, with a tremendous view of Mt Aspiring itself. The hut has good historical information panels on the early history of the valley. Wardens hut, day shelter and campsite.



Rob Roy Glacier

Adventurous fit walk

Ice and spectacle

Alpine flowers in spring

Awkward slips to cross

3-4 hours return

Gravel track and boardwalks

10 kilometre return

From Wanaka drive up the Matukituki Road 55 km to the Raspberry Creek carpark. Many fords and ditches on the last 8 km of road, some of which can become impassable after rain.

The Rob Roy track leads to a glacier and rock cirque, accessible and awesome. A 400 metre climb, but you can climb as high as you want. There are several awkward slips, which will probably not improve, and will freak out some people.

From the large carpark (shelter) the track skirts the riverbank to a long swing bridge across the Matukituki River. There is a short section sidling through bush to a seat and lookout over the valley. The track now climbs steadily up beside the Rob Roy gorge, and the track has to cross several slips where the track has disappeared and people have improvised trails across the wet mud and gravel slopes.





Another seat marks the halfway point, then the track climbs less steeply, sliding past ribbonwood groves on old slips, and eventually up an old streambed of the creek into the alpine zone.

It is not much further to a lookout with information panels — but really the view is language enough.



Lake Diamond

Mountain trails and views

Beech forest and open tops

Full circuit walk

Short walk options

2-3 hours return

Tussock trails

4 kilometres return

From Wanaka, about 16 km on the Mount Aspiring road to a roadside carpark and signposts. This track is closed during the winter months, June, July and August. Toilet at Lake Diamond.

A rewarding shortish walk, from a secluded lake to hot tussock tops. It is almost a 400-metre climb to the high point, with a panorama of views over Lake Wanaka and arguably the best view of Mount Aspiring you will ever see.

Walk up the road to Lake Diamond, which is attractively fringed by willows and raupo. There's a track around the lake, but otherwise follow the steep track under rock slabs to the lake lookout. Just past here the track divides, and a map sign-board shows how the tracks follow a figure-of-eight pattern through the tussocks.

Keep to the outer curves as the track climbs up through various rock bluffs, passing the link track, and then (and this is the best bit) sidling around the side of the tussock platforms to expose a stunning view of Mount Aspiring.





Then there is just a short walk up to the high point of Rocky Mount at 775 metres, and Lake Diamond glitters a long way below. Enjoy lunch on top for with all the hard work behind you, for easy trails descend past the nonchalant sheep back to the lake lookout and carpark.



Roys Peak

1200 metre ascent

Mountain and lake views

Tussocks and alpine plants

6-8 hours return

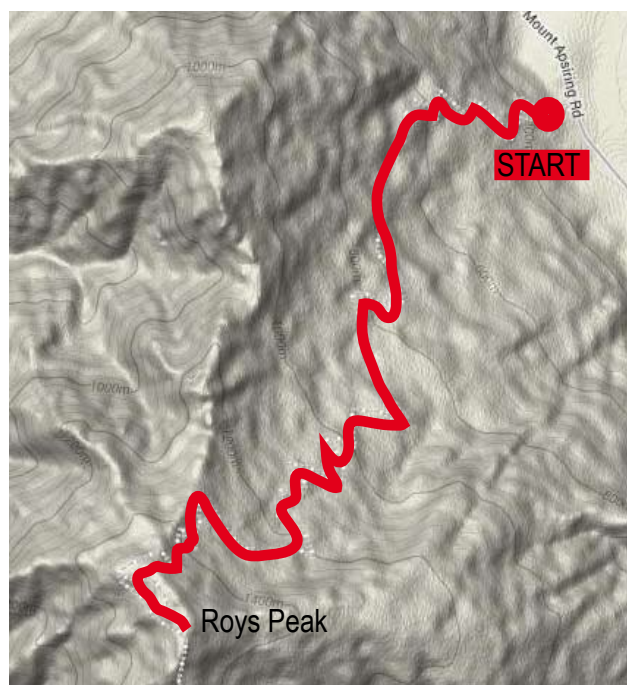
4WD

6 kilometres return

Carpark and access 5 km north of Wanaka on the Glendhu Road.

One hell of a climb! Not for the faint hearted, so pick a fine day and carry plenty of water and food. Views are amazing through the high blue haze. Recently there have been access issues on Roys Peak, and even a walkers charge.

No real route description needed, follow the 4WD and keep going up, and up, endlessly zig-zagging through alpine basins. Roys Peak is 1578 metres and it feels like it. Many walkers find the downhill as testing as the uphill, as their knees are bugged by then.





Sawpit Gully

Historic water races

Pack-tracks and ruined stone hut

Tussock basins

River groge

2-3 hours circuit

Gravel track and tussock paths

6 kilometres circuit

Arrowtown is 20 km from Queens-town via the Arthurs Point road, or via Lake Hayes. The town bustles with activity. The track to Sawpit Gully starts by the Chinese settlement carpark and information sign.

This is a walk steeped in gold history, as complex as the numerous water races that were constructed by the diggers of the 1860s. These gold-diggers made the track you walk on, supped grog in the ruined stone hut you rest by, and broke their bodies looking for the gold that you will more capture in your photograph of the glorious evening light.

From the carpark, cross the small pretty Bush Creek and follow the pipeline upriver past a multitude of four-wheel-drive tracks. There are steps over the pipeline, and the track wanders through maple and pine forest to a junction. From here it climbs steadily out of the scrub and winds through a gully onto German Hill or Eichardts Flat. Wide-ranging views at the signposted junction of the Big Hill pack track.

The Sawpit Gully track continues past a ruined stone hut, then sidles down the creek to the lovely Arrow River gorge. The track cuts around schist bluffs, and passes the monument to William Fox as it returns to the Arrowtown carpark.

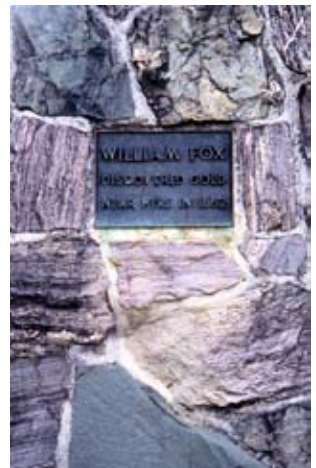




The Miners Trail

This track offers a longer walk back to Arrowtown. It starts from the footbridge, just upriver from where the Sawpit Gully track arrives at the gorge. Then it climbs steeply into, over and out of New Chums Creek, and picks up an old water-race for a while.

The track climbs onto a broad ridge, and follows this with good views for 1 km. Then a short track drops down to meet Tobins Track and this broad easy road descends to Arrowtown. Miners Trail add another 1-2 hours (3 km) for this longer loop.



Cafe: Postmasters Residence, in Arrowtown

Queenstown Hill

Steady hill to great views

A solitary sculpture

Ideal for all ages

Good information panels

2 hours return

Gravel tracks

3 kilometres return

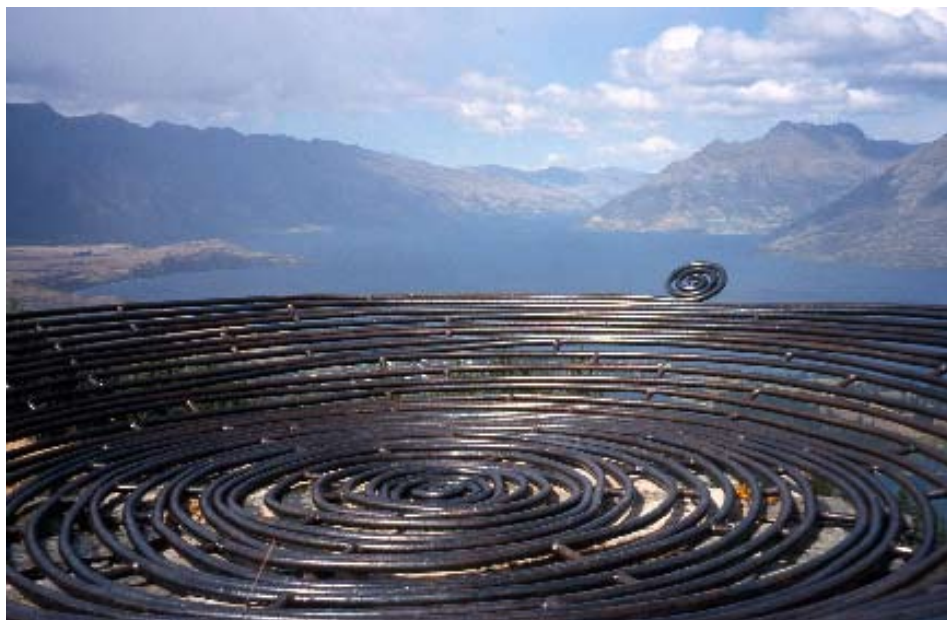
Access is easiest (that is, highest) off Belfast Terrace which can be reached via Edinburgh Drive or Dublin Street. There is a carpark and information signs.

Queenstown Hill is a large, flattish, dome-like peak on the eastern side of the town. There is an excellent walk up it, plus a 'time walk', a glorified name for a sequence of information panels. The views anywhere above the treeline are tremendous, and this track is much less busy than Ben Lomond.

The walk is signposted and follows a four-wheel-drive track through pine forest up to a stylish wrought-iron gate. The information panels start here, and tell the history of Queenstown from early Maori to the present day.

At the first track junction turn right if you want to keep to the sequence of panels.





There is a belt of dark pine forest of Douglas fir, then a rock lookout, then the track breaks out of the pine trees and into the broad tussock country up to a dainty tarn and track junction. There is an alternative track back from the tarn

On the left is a big metal sculpture, like a Maori kete called 'the basket of dreams', and a soothing view. For the high point, at 841 m, continue past the tarn for about 20 minutes to the summit rock cairn. A breathing space above the hustle and bustle of Queenstown.



Cafe: Mediterranean Market, in Queenstown

Ben Lomond

Classic peak behind Queenstown

Open high country and views

Gondola access

1300 metre climb

4-5 hours return (on gondola)

Tussock paths and rock trails

8 kilometre return

Most people will take the gondola and the track is well signposted. If you want to save the cost of the gondola, follow the access road from Lomond Crescent where a foot track links with the main Ben Lomond track.

A classic hill walk to a 1748-metre peak behind Queenstown. Open tussock country and a final heart-pumper to the rocky summit. It should be treated as a full day tramp in fine weather. Take plenty of water.

Once you can tear yourself away from the coffee shop at the gondola complex, there is a signposted track that (somewhat surprisingly) sidles down across the hill. Through the pines it meets the historic pack-track, which went across to Moke Creek and the Moonlight goldfields in the 1860s.

As you climb there are excellent views of Ben Lomond, and the track climbs steadily onwards to the main saddle at 1316 metres. The saddle is a good turnaround place for those who do not fancy the last climb.

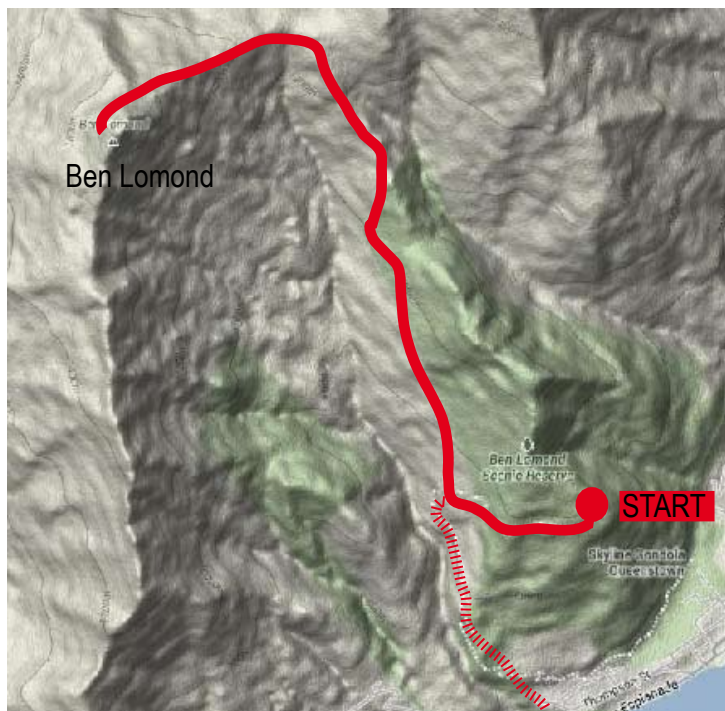




The foot trail to Ben Lomond is well worn, and negotiates around rock outcrops and tussock faces some 500 metres to the summit. There are no particularly steep parts, and it is easier and quicker than it looks from the saddle. An all-round vista of course. You have well and truly earned your cappuccino on the return.

Alternative descent

From the gondola junction go back down through the attractive beech forest and historic sites of One Mile Creek track.



Cafe: top of gondola

Moke Lake to Arthurs Point

Dramatic walk in the mountains
Historic settlement and gold ruins
Great mt bike ride
Need to arrange transport

4-5 hours one way
4WD and pack-track
10 kilometres one way

Moke Lake is 5 km west of Queenstown, and 6 km to carpark and lakeside picnic area.

Walking on the high terraces between the Moke Creek and the Shotover River give superlative views. Old huts and historic school, and a pack-track down to Arthurs Point. You need to arrange transport.

From Moke Lake a good 4WD road gradually climbs above Moke Creek with wonderful views around each corner. It drops 100 metres to MaConnachie Creek, then climbs 100 metres again to the historic huts at Seffertown. Nip down to have



a look at the school site, otherwise stay high and the road eventually peters out and the pack-track starts.

This beautifully constructed historic track swings high over the Shotover River gorge, and the schist rock gleams after rain. Dramatic rock bluffs below and above before reaching the suburb of Arthurs Point.



Campsite: open grass sites beside Moke Lake, toilets

Lake Alta

Crystal alpine tarn

Circ of mountains

Alpine plants and lichens

Good place for families

1-2 hours return

Gravel trails

2 kilometres return

From Queenstown drive to Frankton and then down Highway 6 to the turn off to the Remarkables Ski Field and Rastus Recreation Reserve (9 km).

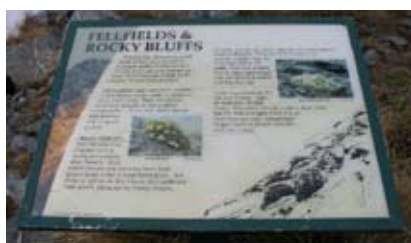
There are few places in New Zealand where you can drive with such ease to such a magnificent setting. At the carpark there are impressive views of, the rival ski-field of Coronet Peak, and double-peaked Mount Earnslaw 2830 m (on the left) and Mount Aspiring 3033 (on the right).

The ski road is kept open in summer and climbs to just over 1500 m to the facilities base. Although a wide and well graded road, washouts and slips can occur, and downhill traffic traditionally gives way to uphill. There is a public toilet (open in summer), information signs in the outside foyer of the base, and an intentions book beside the ski-patrol rooms.

From the carpark take the access road beside the ski patrol room, as it curls around the back of the base and climbs into the basin. Ignore the first road on the right, but take the second after about 500 m. Footprints and the occasional yellow marker poles lead the way.



This road curves around to the top of the tow, and the nature trail starts here. There's a good worn track, and DOC usually replaces the info signs by early December. Before December there will still be patches of snow on the track, and the lake might well be frozen.



The track wanders up through rocks to a viewpoint that overlooks the unblinking eye-blue of the lake, trapped in a circ of splintered mountains. Double Cone is 2307 metres high but you are standing at an altitude of 1800 m, so the view does take your breath away.

Sam Summers Hut

Old-timers stone hut

Beech forest and stream gorge

Views of Lake Dispute

Interesting family circuit

2-3 hours circuit

Graded bush tracks

5 kilometres circuit

About 11 km west of Queenstown on the Glenorchy Road. The carpark is on the left side, and the track crosses the busy highway.

Tucked behind Queenstown is an old stone hut, now renovated and quite charming. Old sluicings and open-cast mine site, and an easy circuit that everyone can manage.

The well graded track wanders alongside Twelve Mile Creek as it slices through a mini-gorge. After a footbridge there's a brief climb to the grassy site of the old open-cast mine. Very shortly, Sam Summers hut is reached, a fascinating gold miners site with relics scattered all about.

The track crosses a little gorge then climbs up through the beech forest to a saddle junction with the track to Lake Dispute, then shortly a good view of the lake itself. Easy travel along the ridge as the track descends back to the footbridge and carpark.





Scheelite Mines

High alpine circuit and views

Many interesting huts and artefacts

Superb info panels

Interesting family circuit

2-3 hours circuit

4WD and tussock paths

8 kilometres circuit

2 km south of Glenorchy is the Whakanui or Scheelite mines carpark. Shelter and info panels.

Scheelite is a mineral used for hardening the tungsten tips on military shells. Everytime New Zealand went to war the scheelite mines opened, and over 100 years left this complex network of tracks, tunnels, and old huts scattered across the mountainside. The fact that the views are stupendous is just a bonus.

From the carpark the track winds up onto the mine road and the scheelite battery site, still beautifully preserved, as well as the mine managers house. The 4WD then gradually climbs into the top alpine basin, passing tunnels, old mine ruins and the junction with the track down to the Buckler Burn, and onto the Mt McIntosh scheelite area.

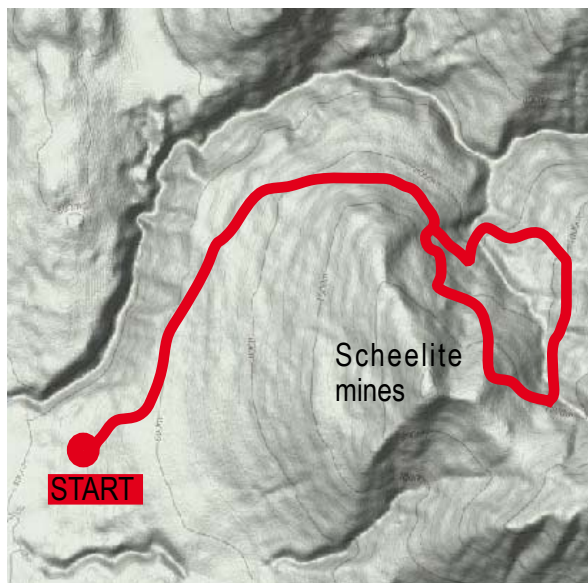
Keep to the main track as it climbs up the Bonnie Hut, the roof tied down with rocks. Take the right-hand track up to Boozers Hut, a hut relocated here and restored to look like an original scheelite miners hut. Keep climbing to the Bonnie





Jean mine site, and historic museum with old trucks and mining equipment rusting in the dazzling sunshine.

An old pack track sidles from Bonnie Jean across the basin and meets a 4WD that zig-zags back down to Bonnie Hut, and completes the circuit. Extraordinary living history.



Cafe: Glenorchy, in Glenorchy

Invincible Mine

Views of the Mt Earnslaw

Historic gold mine

Beech forest

500 metres climb

3-4 hours return

Bush 4WD and track

3 kilometres return

From Glenorchy take Glenorchy/Paradise Road, and then the Rees Valley Road some 15 km to the sign. One biggish ford to cross, lousy parking.

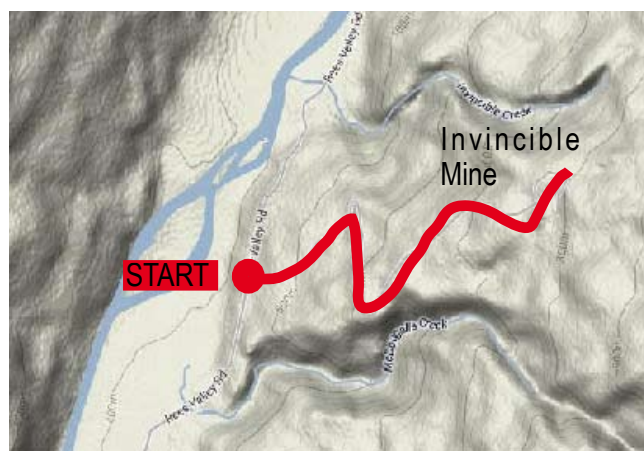
The Invincible Mine has one of the best views anywhere. It looks down on the clean crystal waters of the Rees River, and across to the ramparts of snow underneath Mount Earnslaw.

Follow the track past the ruined tin hut and into the beech forest. The track was built in the 1880s so that heavy machinery could be hauled up to the mine, so it is a good easy surface. About halfway up there are the few remains of an old hut, then quite a few zigzags to the mine site.





Berdans were revolving metal drums with heavy weights in them that ground the ore down, but the most notable things about this site (apart from the raw silence and solitude) are the mullock heaps, or tailings. The Invincible was a going concern by 1882, with ten stamps in the battery driven by an overshot waterwheel. Yields were good, and in 1884 another company processed the tailings, building a 679-metre chute to the valley floor. The material was sent down to a circular buddle for refining. By 1887, however, the quartz reef was 'lost'. The old brochure struck this little epitaph:



'Several other syndicates have tried to work the mine — notably in 1902, 1912 and 1922 — but all efforts to strike the reef came to nothing. In the long run it may be said that it was the reef which remained invincible'. And the view.

Chinamans Bluff

Big mountain spaces

Rare yellowheads

Rock bivvies

Rich ferns and mosses

2-3 hours return

Bush track and open flats

4 kilometres return

From Glenorchy take the Glenorchy-Paradise Road, and once over the Rees River bridge, keep on Paradise Road. This road is unsealed for about 16 km, with about six fords to the shelter and toilets beside the Dart River.

The striated faces of Mt Earnslaw loom over the carpark, whilst on the far side of the Dart River peaks like Mt Nox and Mt Chaos stab into the clear air. In strong winds mini-tornados can skittle about the dusty gravel beds of the Dart River, and any cold southerly change can bring fresh snow to sprinkle on the mountains like icing sugar.

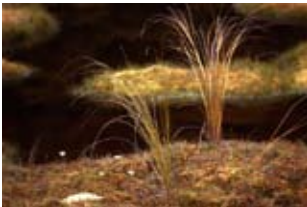
From the carpark cross the footbridge and follow the well-graded track along the edge of the rock bluffs. There is a luxuriant growth of fern species along this section of the track, kept in perfect condition by the runnels of water draining from the rocks. Once across a gantry, the track leaves the beech forest and turns onto a wide grassy flat beside the Dart River. It's like a door opening, with stunning



mountains views into the Beans Burn valley.

A short walk across the flats and on the fringe of beech forest some informal trails lead up to two secretive rock bivouacs. Will you see a rare mohua or yellowhead? Both male and female have bold yellow heads, and are gregarious, foraging in the canopy.

Beyond the rock bivouacs, the track winds up the Dart valley through beech and river flats as part of the five-day Rees-Dart circuit. It's certainly pleasant continuing for another hour, time to absorb the sheer scale of this mountain country.



Routeburn Falls

Unrivalled mountain views

Beautifully graded track

Waterfalls and beech forest

Alpine views

6-7 hours return

Bush track and open flats

14 kilometres return

From Glenorchy follow the mostly unsealed road to the Routeburn carpark and shelter.

The Routeburn Track is a famous three day hike across the mountains, but the Routeburn Falls Hut is relatively easy to visit in a day tramp. Magnificent beech forest on the way, expansive river flats, and two huts on the way. A great day out.

Cross the long bridge over the Routeburn and the track marches like a garden path upriver and into the top flats. Another bridge and 2 km onto Routeburn Flats Hut. After a good rest, pick up the main track as it climbs 300 metres under steep bluffs and waterfalls around to the dramatically sited Routeburn Falls Hut.

If you have the time its worth climbing another 15 minutes to reach the top alpine basin and look towards Harris Saddle and the mountains of Fiordland.





Campsite: DOC Sylvan Flats, beech forest beside Routeburn River.

FIORDLAND & RAKIURA

Mavora Lakes

Luxmore Hut

Shallow Lake



Green Lake

Blue Cliffs Beach



Key Summit

Marian Cascade & Lake Marian

Hidden Falls

Gertrude Saddle

The Chasm & Bowen Falls



Ackers Point

Maori Beach

Ulva Island

Rakiura Circuit

Mavora Lakes

High country lakes

Beech forest & bush birds

Wide tussock valleys.

Good camping, snow in winter

3-4 hours circuit

Bush track and road

8 kilometres circuit

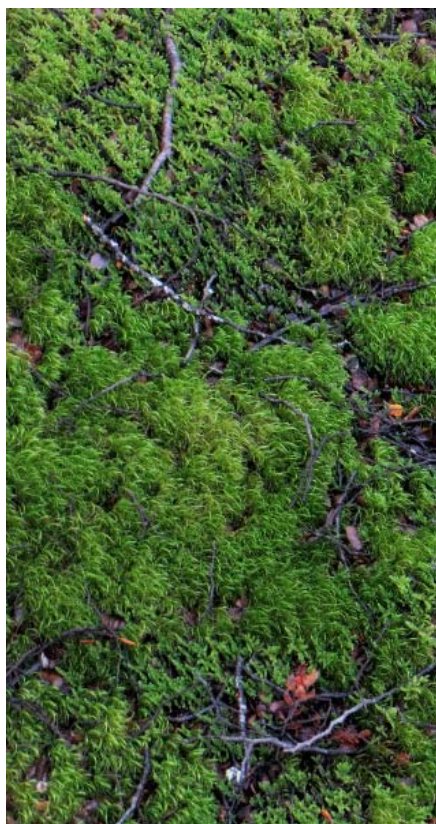
From Highway 94 follow the unsealed road for 40 km to the South Mavora Lake. Picnic areas, toilets and barbecue sites at both the South and North Mavora lakes.

Mavora Lakes is the sort of place Kiwi families go to, and the campsite is popular in high summer. But for 11 months of the year the Mararoa Valley is quiet and forgotten, and in midwinter the beech trees around the lakes are beautiful under layers of deepening frost.

The best and gentlest walk is around South Mavora Lake. Cross the long swing-bridge at the foot of the South Mavora Lake and wander in the lakeside beech forest. Healthy variety of bush birds, including the rifleman, parakeet, yellow-breasted tomtit and the ever-inquisitive robin. Common throughout the beech forest is the mistletoe, and the flower is a brilliant red before Christmas.

The track crosses an open area of tussock then heads back into the forest and around to a deep green pool in the river outlet from the North Mavora. Here, another swingbridge takes you back to the road, which you can follow back to your car.





Campsite: DOC, open grass and beech forest beside North Mavora Lake

Luxmore Hut

Big climb to a big hut

Tussock downlands and lake views

Lakeside beech forest

7-8 hours return

Well graded bush track

18 kilometre return

From Te Anau take the Manapouri Road for 5 km, turning off to the signposted Control Gates.

This track is a garden path, climbing from the glistening Lake Te Anau to the undulating tussock hills around Luxmore Hut. Despite the 1000-metre climb, and the altitude (1200 metres above sea level), the quality of the track enables many people to visit this alpine region in a day return. The views of the lake and the remote Murchison Mountains are certainly worth the effort.

Note: you can get water taxis and pick-ups from Te Anau to Brod Bay, saving an hours walk each way.

Cross the Control Gates and follow the gentle lakeside track as it wanders through tall red beech forest. Occasional footbridges as you pass the Dock Bay picnic and camping area and go on to Brod Bay beach and shelter. This is a sparkling little bay, spoilt by the hungry sandflies.

Now the climbing starts, in gentle, lazy zigzags up the thick-forested hillsides. Not many views, but about two-thirds of the way up you reach a limestone bluff, with some fossils in the rock.

It is a wonderful moment when you burst out onto the rolling downlands, and the slopes are gentle as the track follows boardwalks and turns another kilometre to





the palatial Luxmore Hut. With 60 bunks it is rather a wart on the landscape, but there are fine views from the verandah. A good place for lunch before the long lollipop downhill.



Shallow Bay

Beech forest and idyllic lake
Sphagnum moss swamps
Cosy hut
Good walk for families

3-4 hours return

Gravel path

8 kilometres return

On the road between Te Anau and Manapouri townships drive about 12 km south of Te Anau to the Rainbow Reach carpark and footbridge. This is also one end of the Kepler Track.

Manapouri with its inlets, scattered bush islands and rain-filled mists, has a degree of enchantment about it. This track wanders past kettle lakes and moss swamps, through some beautiful red beech forest to a lakeside hut.

From Rainbow Reach carpark the track (which is the main Kepler Track) crosses the swing-bridge and follows the Waiau River around Balloon Loop, a side channel of the Waiau.

The track crosses the Forest Burn and climbs slightly to an attractive sphagnum moss swamp and lake, which is a piece of dragonfly heaven. The lake is called a 'kettle lake', and was formed when a large block of ice from a glacier was isolated and trapped on the glacial moraine.

After the moss swamp the track reaches a signposted junction, and the Shallow Bay track drops down to the lake-side and follows along the gravel beach to the battered and well used six bunk hut. The rippling vistas across the lake soothe the senses.

Cafe: Sandfly, in Te Anau





Key Summit

Views over three valleys

Wetland mosses and tarns

Fiordland mountain panorama

Beech forest and waterfalls

3-4 hours return

Graded gravel track

5 kilometres return

From Te Anau drive 55 km on Highway 94 to the start of the Routeburn Track at the Divide Saddle. Shelter, toilets and carpark.

A dainty sprinkling of tarns on this alpine wetland, which overlooks three great valleys — the Hollyford, the Greenstone and the Eglinton. Maori came here on war parties and carrying greenstone, early settlers were looking for cattle country, and goldminers were looking for gold. Now it's walkers and tourists who make the trek up to Key Summit, and admire the rugged panorama.

From The Divide carpark the well-graded track (which is also the start of the Routeburn Track) climbs up through silver beech forest with several streams to cross, bubbling over pretty waterfalls. An hour of gradual climb to the turn-off to Key Summit itself, a crossroads on a busy summer's day, with walkers and trampers stopping for a breather and a gossip.

From the junction the track climbs up through open slopes of flax and tussocks and there is an easy circuit, with plastic information sheets that you can pick up then deposit on the way down.



The main track reaches a boardwalk around a beautiful tarn with bog cushions, mosses, and the alpine sundew. A plane table helps you identify a panorama of mountain scenery that is breathtaking.



Campsite: several DOC campsites up the Milford Highway

Marian Cascade & Lake Marian

Dashing cascade and waterfalls

Profuse moss and lichens

Forest up to an alpine lake

Fiordland cirque

3-4 hours return (Lake Marian)

Boardwalks then steep bush track

6 kilometres return

From Highway 94 to Milford Sound, turn off 4 km down the Hollyford Road.

The cascades are a nosiy, bubbling, frenzied collision of waters, quite in contrast to Lake Marian. This an alpine lake lies in a deep trench, hemmed in by granite walls, and not much other sound to diminish the serious silence.

From the carpark, cross the swing bridge over the Hollyford River and follow the well-gravelled track as it wanders through rainforest where the moss literally drips from the trees. After 15 minutes the track hops up on cantilevered boardwalks and verandahs bolted into the rock face, and overlooks the mossy boulders choking Marian Creek, with the water seething underneath. A fine and popular lookout.

It is much less popular to carry on to Lake Marian, and the track gets rougher as it climbs away from the creek. It crosses fern gullies, where there may be a bit of scrambling, and climbs almost 400 metres from the Hollyford road to the lake outlet.

There is a sheltered grass clearing on top of the rock-fall that shuts the lake in, and a short track down to the lakeside itself.

After heavy rainfall you cannot get near the fore-shore, but usually the lake level is low enough to walk around. Rocks provide a back-rest for lunch, and you are almost above sandfly level. It is like another world.





Hidden Falls

Dense rainforest along riverside

31 metre waterfall

Historic pack track

Lunch hut

4-5 hours return

Graded bush track

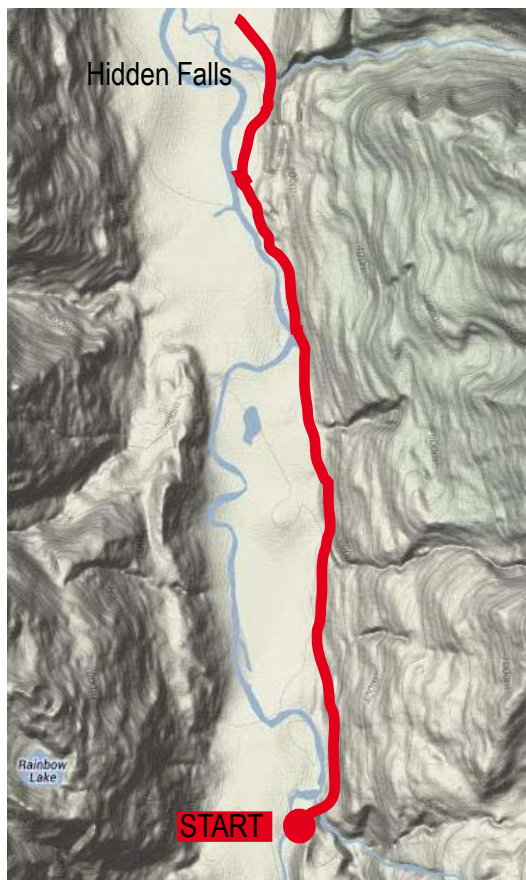
16 kilometre return

From Highway 94, 90km from Te Anau, turn down Hollyford Road 15 km to the carpark. Shop, museum, campground and cabins at the Hollyford Motor Camp.

The beauty of this walk is its easy grade. Meander along an historic pack and cattle track through dense rainforest whilst admiring the jostling mass of punga and shrubs as they fight for a place in the sun. There are muted tree-absorbed sounds of bush birds such as wood pigeons, bellbirds and fantails, and the urban world seems a long way away.

From the carpark the track plunges immediately into tall podocarp rainforest and leaves the Hollyford River as it cuts inland past a verandah bolted into the rock that overlooks a quiet backwater. Swingbridges over Eel Creek and Swamp Creek, then meets the river again with a second gantry overhanging the slick dark waters of the river.





Five minutes further on there is the first decent break in the bush canopy, with excellent views up to the splintered peaks of the Darran Mountains. The track sidles along the riverside for another hour to Hidden Falls swingbridge and a glorious view of the thundering 31 metre falls.

There is a large hut a short distance away on the other side of the creek, and big grassy flats afford some previously well-screened views.

Mounts Madeleine and Tutoko loom large over the valley and it is surprising to realise that you are barely 100m above sea level.

Campsite: Hollyford Motor Camp has cabins and tent sites on the Hollyford Road

Gertrude Saddle

Alpine tramp

Pristine valley and flowers

Granite walls and remote lake

Steep climb, wires two sections

6-7 hours return

Worn tussock trail and rock scramble

6 kilometre return

From Highway 94, turn off down the short gravel road to Homer Hut.

In Fiordland the valleys are so deeply incised the Maori called it 'the tattooed land'. In Gertrude Valley the glaciers carve painfully deep, with severe granite on every side, except for the goat path that climbs up to the saddle. You need calm, clear weather to get to Gertrude Saddle itself, suited to experienced trampers.

From the Homer Hut carpark, take the signposted trail as it winds through boulders and crosses the (usually) dry stream bed once, then trots along the west bank. You can move quickly through the beech forest and into open tussock with large boulders that sometimes attract rock wrens.

The sheer walls of the Gertrude Valley are awesome as the well-defined trail reaches the top forks. The trail still sticks to the west bank, and climbs vigorously and crosses the Gertrude stream before sidling around towards the head of the valley.





Just before Black Lake there is a short, steep section on rock and wire, (sounds worse than it is). The cable is well-secured by DoC. The lake has a magical mirror effect on a good day.

Another thick cable has been bolted up the smooth rock slabs above Black Lake, but on a dry day the steep rock gives a good grip. At the top of the cable, sidle across easier slabs, then scramble up through the cairned rock piles onto the low point that is Gertrude Saddle. Stupendous views. A remarkable place.



The Chasm & Bowen Falls

Deep slot gorge

Dramatic waterfalls

Homer Tunnel and granite walls

Milford Sound

Chasm 20 minutes return, Bowen
Falls 20 minutes return

Gravel tracks

1 kilometre return

From Te Anau drive 110km to the
signposted Chasm Walk, then
10km to Milford Sound to carpark
and walk to the visitor centre and
start of the Bowen Falls Track.

These two short walks illustrate the power of Fiordland. The road is almost a wilderness experience in itself, with towering slabs of black mountains, heavy rainforest and the dark, difficult hole of the Homer Tunnel. On both walks you can expect to see buses lined up in ranks at the Chasm and by the Milford Visitor Centre.

Most of the buses are on a tight schedule, so day-trippers normally 'do' the Chasm in the morning, drive to Milford Sound, go on a boat trip, and then possibly make a quick trip to Bowen Falls in the afternoon. Milford can be strangely deserted by 5 pm. If you head to Milford Sound in the afternoon you will certainly encounter buses going the opposite way in the close confines of the Homer Tunnel.



The Chasm

A short circuit track around a deep defile where the Cleddau River has ransacked its way through the diorite and in the process created some fantastic and improbable shapes in this most unyielding of rocks. The boardwalk crosses a natural bridge of boulders at one point, and many of the rocks are potholed (moulin) by the relentless pressure of water churning pebbles like small grindstones. After a downpour (not uncommon in these parts) the chasm is like an excited and roaring beast.

Bowen Falls

Bowen Falls is spectacular and the walk is signposted by the visitor centre and follows a boardwalk to the bouldery bank of the 160m falls. It's worth scrambling downriver to the seashore at low tide (note the small cemetery) to get good views up and down Milford Sound.



Green Lake

Peaceful lakes

Tussock clearings and wetlands

Dense beech forest

Off the beaten track

4-5 hours return

Bush tracks

11 kilometres return

Off the Blackmount Road (between Manapouri and Tuatapere) turn down the Borland Road 11 km to Borland Lodge, then 20 km over saddle to Borland Biv carpark

Remote, serene lake with a hut beside it. Beech forest dripping with shaggy lichens and open tussock flats that get swampy after rain. A quiet location, well away from it all. The Borland access road is not for the faint hearted and is often closed with a locked gate at Borland Lodge. Check with DOC Fiordland NP for opening and closing times first.

At the carpark and little biv plunge into the beech forest and the track quickly reaches a large tussock pasture. Wetland plants and paradise ducks. Follow the orange poles back into the bush over a low saddle, then down to the second tussock clearing. An easy stroll through more forest to a junction, and it's about ten minutes side-trip to look at Island Lake.

Otherwise, 200 metres of climbing over a bush spur and down to tranquil Green Lake. The large comfortable hut is on the far side, and has a great view from the verandah.





Blue Cliffs Beach

Remote Fiordland coast

Old-time baches

Driftwood covered shore

Mean sandflies

3-4 hours return (to Track Burn hut)

Bush track then beach

12 kilometres return

From Tuatapere township turn onto the Papatotara Coast Road, and drive 14 km to the Rowallan Burn to reach Blue Cliffs Beach Road. Drive 4 km up onto the terrace to the large carpark and signboards.

It feels a bit like the end of the world on the Blue Cliffs beach, and it practically is. There is only Rakiura Island between you and Antarctica. The sea has been gnawing away at the beach for a long time, and quite successfully, for parts of the old road have been swallowed up, leaving the shore even more wild and remote. A low tide is much better for walking.

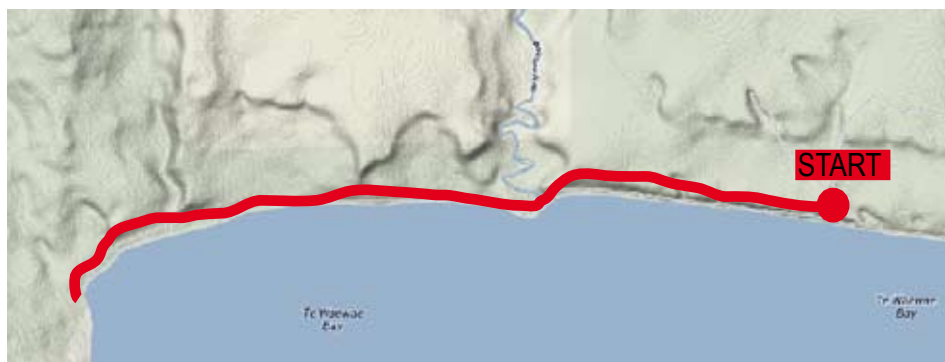
Initially the well constructed track stays on the high terrace, before dropping down to a long footbridge over the Waikoau River. There are several old fisherman cribs on this small spit, and some of them look as if they had been washed up by the tide itself.





At low tide it's much more enjoyable on the beach. Driftwood has been twisted into sculptures, and the golden sands have dark channels where the occasional side-creek runs down through the coastal forest.

After an hour you reach the Hump Burn, and cross via another footbridge, and by following the road briefly for ten minutes you reach a private bach, with an outside verandah. You'd stop and linger, if it wasn't for the murderous sandflies.



Ackers Point

Lighthouse peninsula

Sooty shearwater colony

Historic stone cottage

Coves and views

1-2 hours return

Sealed road and bush track

6 kilometres return

Ferry from Bluff, or plane from Invercargill airport gets you to Rakiura and Halfmoon Bay, the only township on the island. All services including groceries, cafes and DOC visitor centre.

Halfmoon Bay is a beautiful languid settlement, softly tucked into the bush hill-sides. Most of New Zealand's best bush birds are perched about the houses as if they own the place, which is probably half-right. Not too many cars, with only 25 km of roads, and electricity has quietened the generators.

From the settlement foreshore, follow the coastal road around the south edge of Halfmoon Bay as it wanders in and out of small bays. In one eucalyptus grove there is a loud colony of kaka, and it is quite likely you will see individual birds up close as they tear at the tree bark for grubs. Tui and kereru (wood pigeons) are equally abundant.

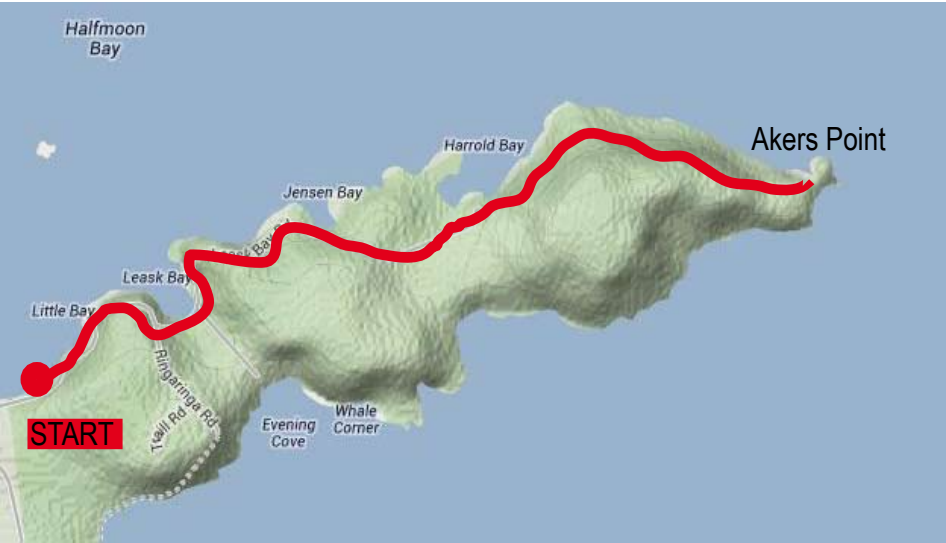
The coastal road climbs up and ends at a stile and signpost, after which an excellent gravel track continues, sidling past William Ackers stone cottage. The cottage, built in 1834, is worth the short detour.

The main track cuts around Fishermans Point (good seat here) then out to the lighthouse at Ackers Point, where there are information boards about the little blue penguins and sooty shearwaters, which return to their burrows here at dusk. The views towards Bluff are sometimes sharp, sometimes hazy.





Cafe: Kiwi French, in Half Moon Bay



Maori Beach

Coastal bridle path to a bonny bay

Coves and inlets

Good family area

Historic sawmill site

2-3 hours return

Bush tracks and beaches

6 kilometres return

From Halfmoon Bay walk or taxi to Horseshoe Bay and Lee Bay car-park, 5 km.

Rakiura or 'land of the glowing skies' is the poetic Maori description for this wilderness island. The skies have a soft, elusive light, constantly changing as rain squalls drift across the low, thickly forested island. This walk along an old bridle path takes you out of the settlement of Halfmoon Bay into a wilderness of beaches and light.

The track to Maori Beach starts through the Anchor sculpture and is well graded, though occasionally muddy, as it was once the main land route to the sawmill settlement at Maori Beach. Birdlife is usually vocal, with bellbirds, wood pigeons, chattering parakeets and kaka.

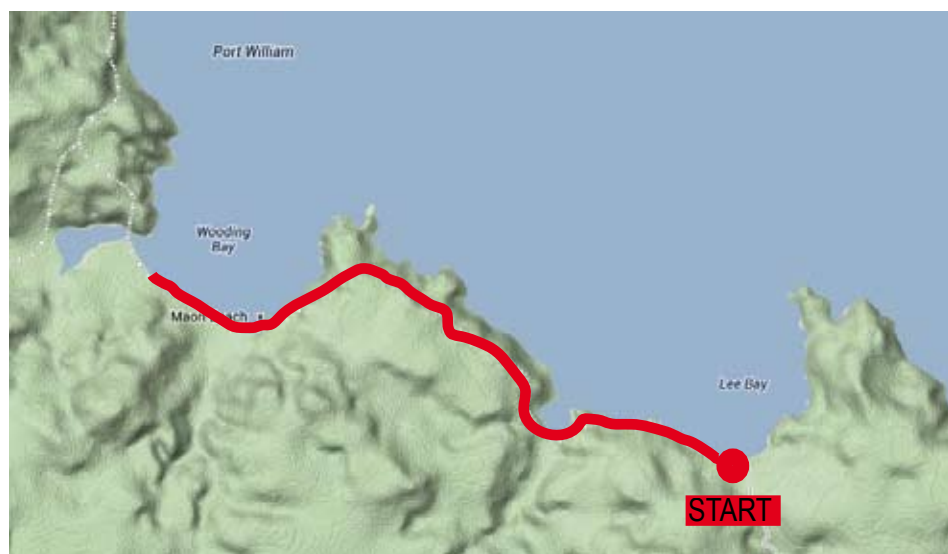
After a kilometre southern rata is particularly evident around the pretty Little River





estuary. There is a footbridge, but at low tide the track skirts the sand. Upstream from the bridge there is a pleasant picnic area and a toilet.

Now the track climbs steeply, and there are glimpses of the bouldery coastline as it wanders across the headland at Peters Point and drops abruptly to Maori Beach. At a lower tide you can cross directly to the beach, but there is a muddy hightide alternative track. Maori Beach is golden and elegant between its bushy headlands. Behind the beach a massive boiler remains from the days of the saw-mill.



Ulva Island

Water taxi to forested island

Abundant and rare birds

Beaches coastal view

Pattersons Inlet

2-3 hours return

Bush tracks

3 kilometre circuit

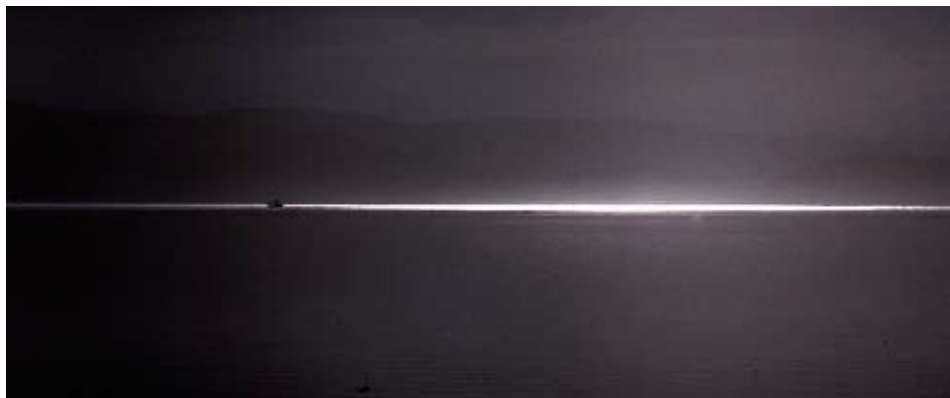
Check at the DOC information office for water taxi times and prices. Information panels, toilets and shelter on the island.

In the middle of the moody, atmospheric, inland sea of Paterson Inlet, Ulva Island has been turned into a sanctuary for birds and plants. Predators like rats and stoats have been eliminated from the island, and when the sudden Stewart Island squalls break and illuminate the forest in gold, you feel that this is a suitable place for a refuge.

The water taxi drops you at the wharf, and past the information signs you can wander at will on the tracks. Dense podocarps go down to the water's edge and mingle with bright strips of sand. The birds flourish and sing at this lonely outpost, as they might have sung thousands of years before and the birds take absolutely no notice of you.

Baby bellbirds chase their mum for food, brown creepers doing exactly what their name suggests, kaka hacking away at the old tree bark. Tui, parakeets, fantails, all are here, sometimes even a kakapo, so for those few people who make this long journey down to the near conclusion of New Zealand, the rewards are immense.





Rakiura Circuit

Big day and great circuit

Coastal and beach views

Podocarp bush and inlets

Several historic sites

8-10 hours circuit

Bush tracks and boardwalk

25 kilometres circuit

Ferry from Bluff, or plane from Invercargill airport gets you to Rakiura and Halfmoon Bay, the only township on the island. All services including groceries, cafes and DOC visitor centre.

The Rakiura Track is advertised as a relaxed three day walk, but can be hiked in a day for fit trampers. Start early and you'll enjoy rainforest, bird life, tranquil backwaters, coastal views and lovely beaches.

Walk or take a taxi to Lee Bay, 5 km from Halfmoon Bay. Impressive chain sculpture and the track to Maori Beach is well-graded as it was once the main land route to the sawmill settlement. At low tide you can cross directly to the beach, which is a curve of golden sand. An old boiler broods in the bush.

The track from Maori Beach does a 150 metres climb to the North Arm junction. The section of track up to the 300 m bush saddle to North Arm has been heavily boardwalked. A lookout on the saddle gives great views of Paterson Inlet.

More boardwalks on the short descent to North Arm hut. The main track continues over several headlands before dropping down to Sawdust Bay, the site of a sawmill 1914-1918. A sheltered campsite here, with toilet and small shelter. At low tide you can walk out a long way into the bay.





The track dips over a bush saddle and skirts Prices Inlet with occasional coastal views, until it drops down into the head of Kaipipi Bay and crosses the inlet over an elegant boardwalk. A small side-track goes down to a tiny peninsula in the bay which is a great lunch spot.

From hereon you are following an old road constructed to give access to the Kaipipi Bay sawmills, which employed over 100 people in the 1860's. Its quick travel and soon reaches the road-end, and an easy stroll back to Halfmoon Bay.

