

Last corrected: September 2019

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

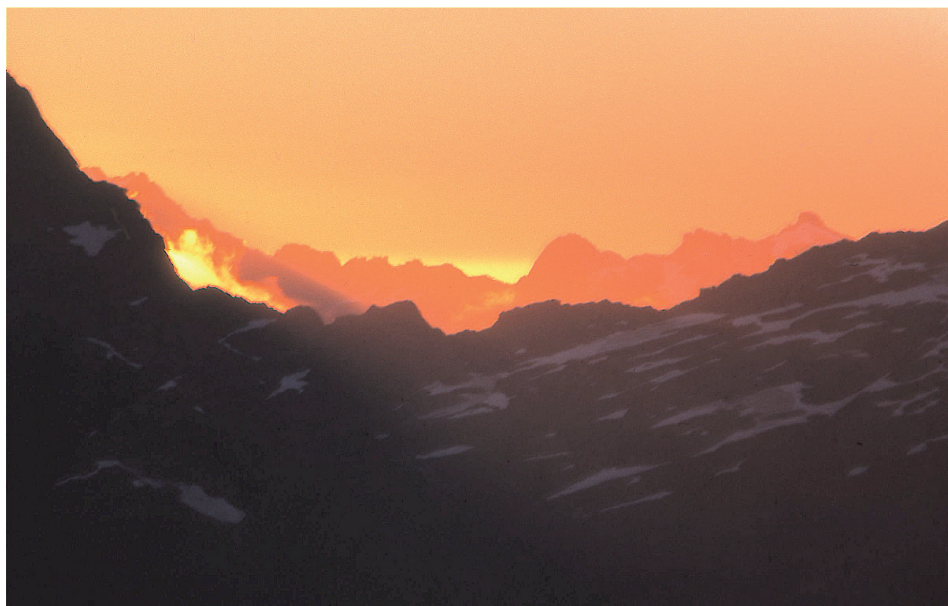
10 kilometre return

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 grove

2-3 hours circuit

Gravel track and tussock paths

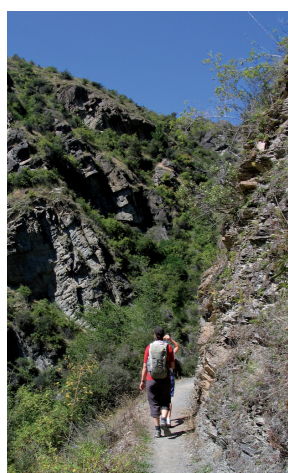
6 kilometres circuit

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.



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.

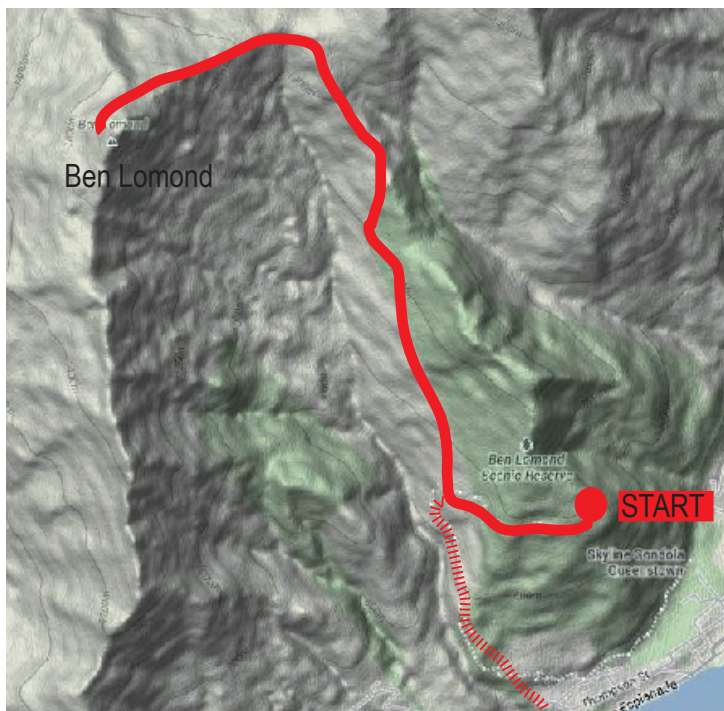




The foot trail to Ben Lomond is well worn, and negotiates around rock outcrops and tussock faces some 500 metres to the summit. There are no particularly steep parts, and it is easier and quicker than it looks from the saddle. An all-round vista of course. You have well and truly earned your cappuccino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

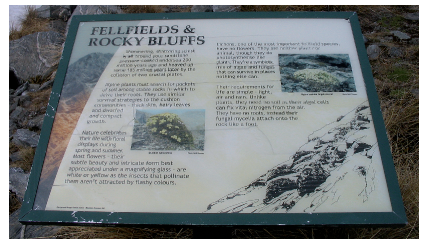
There are few places in New Zealand where you can drive with such ease to such a magnificent setting. At the carpark there are impressive views of, the rival ski-field of Coronet Peak, and double-peaked Mount Earnslaw 2830 m (on the left) and Mount Aspiring 3033 (on the right).

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

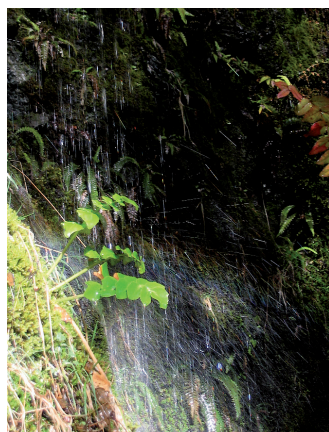
About 11 km west of Queenstown on the Glenorchy Road. The carpark is on the left side, and the track crosses the busy highway.

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. Evertime New Zealand went to war the scheelite mines opened, and over 100 years left this complex network of tracks, tunnels, and old huts scattred 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.

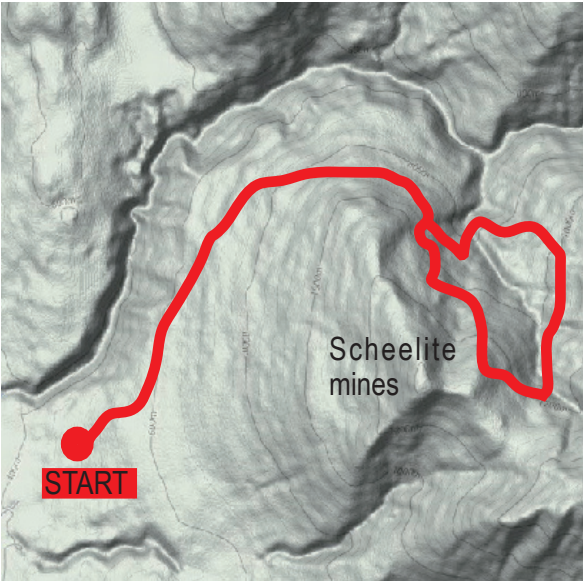
Keep to the main track as it climbs up the Bonnie Hut, the roof tied down with rocks. Take the right-hand track up to Boozers Hut, a hut relocated here and restored to look like an original scheelite miners hut. Keep climbing to the Bonnie





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.

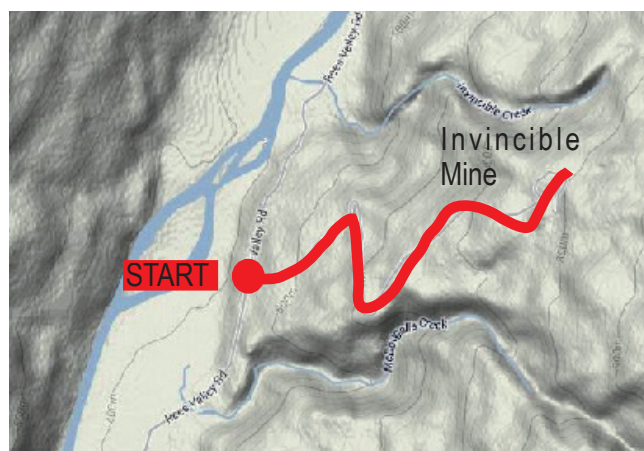
The Invincible Mine has one of the best views anywhere. It looks down on the clean crystal waters of the Rees River, and across to the ramparts of snow underneath Mount Earnslaw.

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.

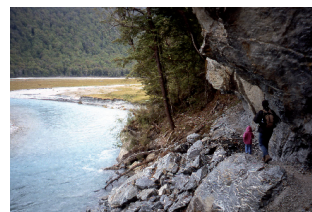
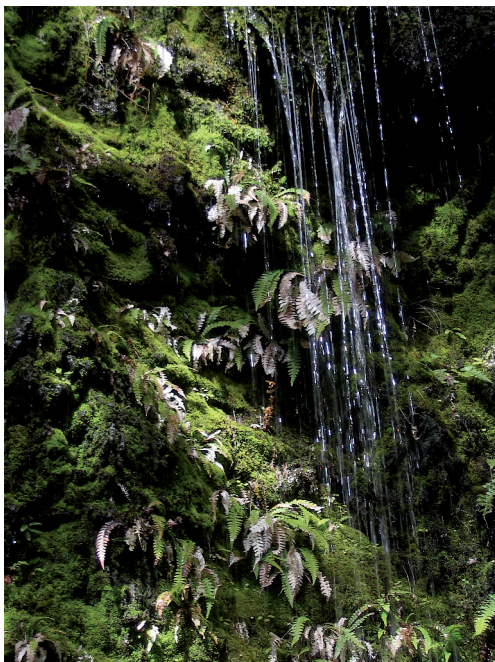
From the carpark cross the footbridge and follow the well-graded track along the edge of the rock bluffs. There is a luxuriant growth of fern species along this section of the track, kept in perfect condition by the runnels of water draining from the rocks. Once across a gantry, the track leaves the 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

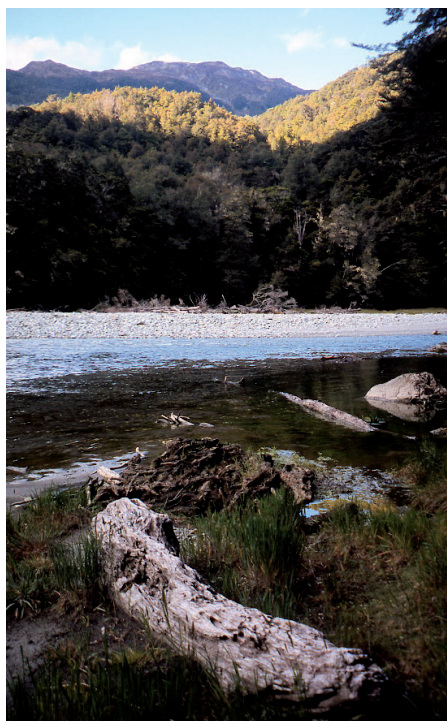
From Glenorchy follow the mostly unsealed road to the Routeburn carpark and shelter.

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.