

*Plan and prepare*

# ROUTEBURN TRACK



Duration: 2–4 days  
Distance: 33.1 km (one way)



Great Walks season:  
1 November – 30 April



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



**Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

# ROUTE BURN TRACK

The Routeburn Track is the ultimate alpine adventure, taking you through ice-carved valleys and below the majestic peaks of the Southern Alps/ Kā Tiritiri o te Moana.

A short trip from bustling Queenstown, this Great Walk links Mount Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks in Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. Weaving through meadows, reflective tarns and alpine gardens, you'll be rewarded with spectacular vistas over vast mountain ranges and valleys.

The Routeburn Track can be hiked in either direction. The track is well marked and signposted, but some sections are steep and rough and may be muddy and slippery. Poor weather conditions can make this walk challenging, even in the Great Walks season.

This brochure describes a 3-day hike for independent, non-guided walkers during the Great Walks season (1 November – 30 April).



Outside the Great Walks season (May to October) walking conditions are more hazardous – see the safety information.

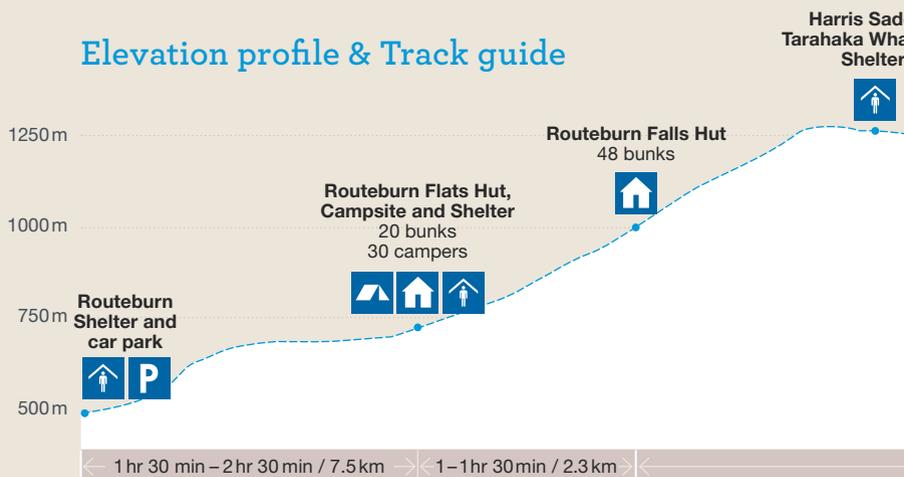


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## Elevation profile & Track guide



**Day 1: Routeburn Shelter to Routeburn Falls Hut**



### 3–4 hours, 9.8 km

The track begins at Routeburn Shelter, gently winding alongside the crystal-clear Route Burn (river). After passing Sugarloaf Stream, you'll climb to Bridal Veil Waterfall and continue above the gorge. A swing bridge leads to open grassed flats, and the Routeburn Flats Hut and Campsite. The track then climbs steadily through stunning beech forest, providing views of the Humboldt Mountains. End the day at Routeburn Falls Hut, on the edge of the bushline and close to the impressive Routeburn Falls cascade.



COVER: Lake Harris, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz))

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Routeburn Track, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz)); mountain views, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz)); Lake Mackenzie, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz))

MAIN PHOTO: Key Summit, Shellie Evans ([tikitouringnz.blogspot.co.nz](http://tikitouringnz.blogspot.co.nz))

 hut
  campsite
  shelter and toilet
  car park

**Lake Mackenzie Hut, Campsite and Shelter**  
50 bunks  
18 campers







**The Divide Shelter and car park**




4 hr 30 min – 6 hr / 11.3 km

4 – 5 hr 30min / 12 km



**Day 2: Routeburn Falls Hut to Lake Mackenzie Hut**



**Day 3: Lake Mackenzie Hut to The Divide**

**4 hours 30 minutes – 6 hours, 11.3 km**

On day 2, you'll climb steadily up the valley, through wetlands and tussock-covered flats, before sidling along the bluffs above Lake Harris to reach the highest point on the track at Harris Saddle/Tarahaka Whakatipu (1,255 metres).

The track then descends and traverses along the exposed Hollyford Face, with expansive views over the Darran Mountains. This section of the track is well-known for its impressive array of alpine plants. A steady descent leads to Lake Mackenzie Hut, set beside the enchanting Lake Mackenzie.

**4 hours – 5 hours 30 minutes, 12 km**

Leaving Lake Mackenzie Hut, the track crosses a small flat before climbing to the bushline. A gradual descent then leads past the 'Orchard', an open grassy area dotted with ribbonwood trees, to the impressive Earland Falls (174 metres). The track continues its descent through beech forest and on to The Divide. A popular side trip (1 hr 30 min) to Key Summit climbs to an alpine wetland with panoramic views over Fiordland mountains and alpine lakes.

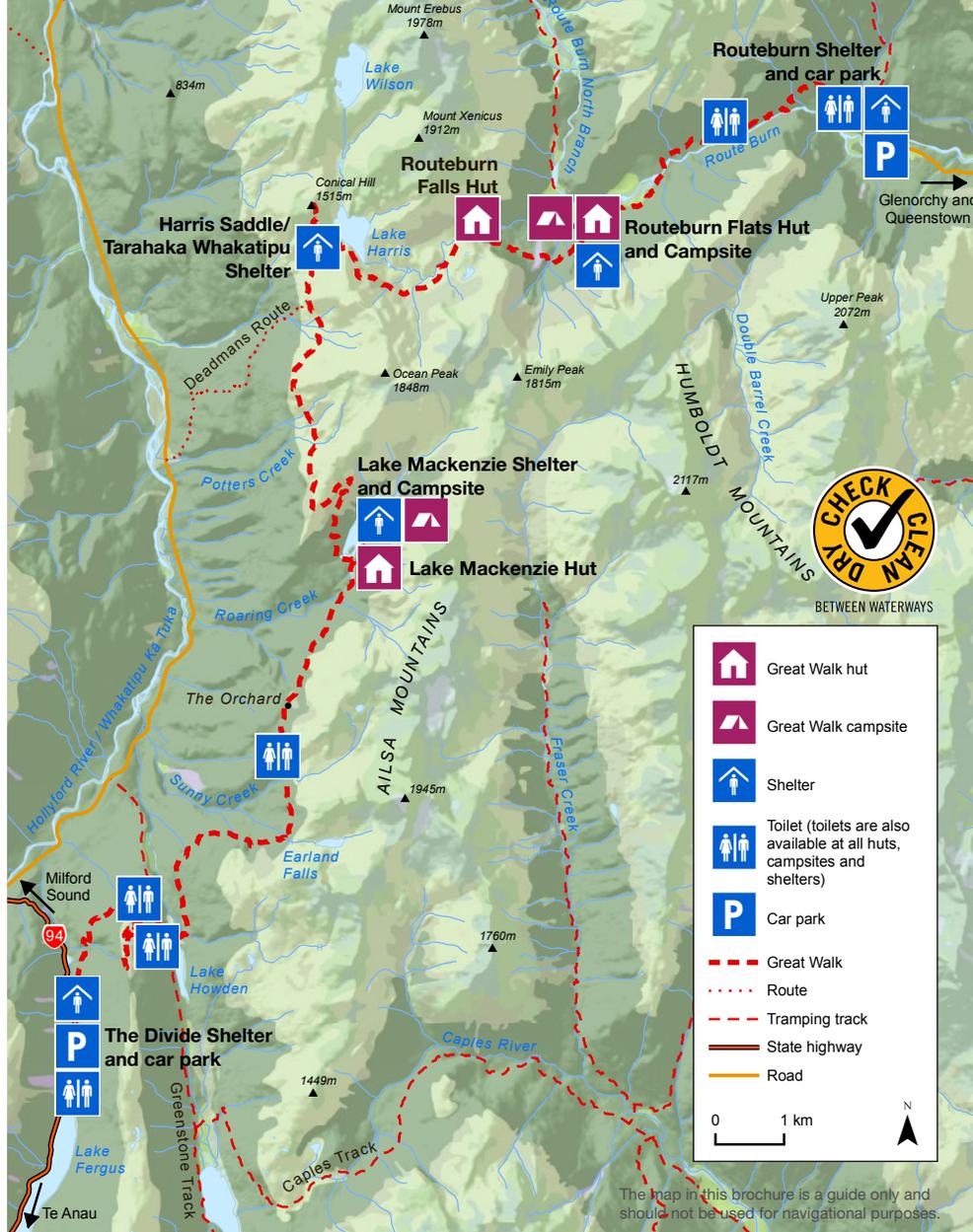


## Getting there

The Routeburn Track is accessed by road from the following locations:

- **Routeburn Shelter:** 30 minutes, 25 km drive along a partially unsealed road from Glenorchy.
- **The Divide Shelter:** 1 hour 30 minutes, 85 km from Te Anau.

Please note: the road distance between each end of the track is 325 km, so you'll need to arrange transport at each end.



## Places to stay

DOC operates 3 huts and 2 campsites along the Routeburn Track, which **must be booked well in advance** during the Great Walks season (1 November – 30 April) to avoid disappointment.



Photo: John Strother (panafoot.com)



### Great Walks huts

Visit [www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack) for prices.

During the Great Walks season the huts have bunks, mattresses, heating, toilets, basic cooking facilities, solar-powered lighting and cold running water. A DOC ranger is in residence. The huts do not provide food, cooking utensils, showers or bedding.

Outside the Great Walks season facilities are greatly reduced and there are no DOC rangers. Booking is not required, huts and campsites are first come, first served and fees are reduced. See the DOC website for details.



### Great Walks campsites

Visit [www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack) for prices.

Great Walks campsites offer basic facilities including toilets, sinks and a water supply. Routeburn campsites have picnic tables and cooking shelters. Campers may not use hut facilities.



Photo: Sabine Bernert

Air New Zealand partners with the Department of Conservation to bring birdsong back to our Great Walks.



2

Photo: Daniel Pletzsch, www.flickr.com/photos/pie4dan, CC BY-NC 2.0

### Conservation story

1 DOC has teamed up with our National Partner for Conservation, Air New Zealand, along with Genesis and the Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust to support and expand conservation projects on the Routeburn Track, aiming to 'bring back our birds'. Boosted by the partnerships, the number of stoat traps has been quadrupled across more than 40 km of the track. These traps protect vulnerable birds like the **yellowhead/mohua**, **rock wren/tuke** and **rare blue duck/whio**. Thanks to the increased trapping, whio, rock wren and mohua are now being seen - if you're lucky you might spot one.



3

Photo: Bernard Spragg



4

Photo: Shellie Evans (tikitouringnz.blogspot.co.nz)



5

Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)

- 2 Trampers have a choice of three comfortable, well-equipped huts along the track. **Routeburn Flats Hut** is an 3-hour walk from the Routeburn Shelter and makes a great overnight trip for families, with a big grassy area and swimming hole close by. People of all ages will enjoy the world-class view.
- 3 Bird watchers can feast their eyes on **cheeky kea**, tiny rifleman/tititipounamu, mohua and paradise shelducks, to name just a few.
- 4 Flower lovers can't miss the largest fuchsia in the world, the **kōtukutuku**, growing up to 12 metres tall. It is especially noticeable between The Divide and Key Summit.
- 5 Get close to one of Fiordland's most impressive waterfalls, **Earland Falls** (174 m). If you're lucky, you might see a rainbow at its base.

## What do I do next?



Start off at [www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack) for more information.

BOOK

Book your huts and campsites online at [bookings.doc.govt.nz](http://bookings.doc.govt.nz).



Book your transport to and from the track.



Buy your food and **pack your bags** – go to 'What to take' on the webpage for a list and make sure you have everything you need for a 4-day independent unguided walk.



Read up on **safety** and make sure you're well prepared for your journey and changeable weather at [www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack).



Visit the closest **DOC Visitor Centre** (Queenstown or Te Anau) to pick up your **tickets and official track guide**, and chat with the friendly staff for the latest weather forecast and track conditions.



**All set!** Lace up your boots and get hiking. Don't forget to share your experience on [facebook.com/docgovt.nz](https://www.facebook.com/docgovt.nz).

For in-depth local knowledge, visit either the **Queenstown or Fiordland National Park Visitor Centres:**

Queenstown Visitor Centre

Phone: +64 3 442 7935

Email: [queenstownvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:queenstownvc@doc.govt.nz)

Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre

Phone: +64 3 249 7924

Email: [greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz](mailto:greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz)

[www.doc.govt.nz/great-walks](http://www.doc.govt.nz/great-walks)

This information was accurate at the time of printing. For the latest information on DOC's policies and facilities, visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).

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Routeburn Flats. Photo: David S. Lee

## Safety on the Routeburn Track

- Go to [www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack) for detailed safety and planning information.
  - The alpine sections of the track between Routeburn Falls Hut and Lake Mackenzie Hut are not recommended for children under the age of 10.
  - Fiordland and Mount Aspiring National Parks are in an area with high rainfall and changeable weather. Cold temperatures, snow, strong winds and heavy rain can happen at any time of the year. Walkers should come well equipped and prepared for all weather conditions. Check [weather.niwa.co.nz/parks](http://weather.niwa.co.nz/parks) for the most up-to-date forecast.
- The Routeburn Track has complex avalanche terrain, and the risk of avalanche can extend into summer. Check with the DOC Visitor Centre in Queenstown or Te Anau for track conditions and weather warnings before your walk.
- There are steep drop-offs along sections of the whole Routeburn Track. Mind your step and supervise children.

### Your safety is your responsibility

 You are strongly recommended **NOT to attempt this track** between early May and late October (outside the Great Walks season). The winter environment in Fiordland and Mt Aspiring National Park is very cold and wet, with ice, snow, avalanches and short daylight hours.

DOC is unable to manage any hazards outside the Great Walks season. Bridges are removed, as floods and avalanches occur on these tracks during winter.

To attempt the track in winter conditions, you need to be very experienced in backcountry winter navigation, have river crossing expertise and appropriate alpine skills and equipment. **Hut facilities are greatly reduced** – with no cooking gas, a limited water supply and no hut wardens or emergency hut radios.

For more information, see 'Outside the Great Walks season' at [www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/routeburntrack).

## Care for the Routeburn Track



### Protect nature

Keep your distance and don't feed kea. Feeding wildlife is harmful to them. Follow any rules restricting fires, vehicles or boats. No dogs or unpermitted drones allowed.



### Keep New Zealand clean

Take all rubbish with you. Use toilets where provided. You can find them at all huts, campsites and shelters.



### Be prepared

Stay safe in the outdoors by following the Land Safety Code.

- ▶ Choose the right trip for you.
- ▶ Understand the weather.
- ▶ Pack warm clothes and extra food.
- ▶ Share your plans and take ways to get help.
- ▶ Take care of yourself and each other.



### Show respect

Respect others, respect culture. Respect others by keeping common areas in the hut and around the campsites clean and tidy. Minimise noise when others are sleeping. Book and pay for your accommodation to help maintain the track and facilities.



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Te Papa Atawhai

