

Introduction

Deep in the heart of the Marlborough Sounds, South Island, New Zealand, the spectacular Queen Charlotte Track stretches from the legendary Meretoto/Ship Cove to Anakiwa, home of Outward Bound New Zealand's school. The track crosses both private and public land and offers unsurpassed views of the Queen Charlotte/Tōtaranui and Kenepuru sounds. The track is a unique partnership between the Department of Conservation (DOC), Marlborough District Council and private landowners (see the Private land fees section).

The 73.5-kilometre track is wide and benched and is suitable for both walkers and mountain bike riders, taking 3 to 5 days to complete walking, or 2 to 3 days mountain biking. Walking boots or a mountain bike and a good level of fitness are required.

Much of the track's charm is its relative ease of access, which allows visitors to walk or bike the track in sections. Road and boat transport services are available from Picton. You can also arrange for your gear to be transported between overnight stops by one of the boat operators. There are many places to stay along the way, either in private accommodation or in DOC campsites.

The Queen Charlotte Track is the Marlborough Sounds section of Te Araroa — The Long Pathway, a hiking trail the length of New Zealand, from Cape Reinga to Bluff. For more information on Te Araroa go to www.teararoa.org.nz.

The track is also one of New Zealand's Great Rides as part of Nga Haerenga The New Zealand Cycle Trail. For more information go to www.nzcycletrail.com.

Eatwell's Lookout. Photo: MarlboroughNZ.com - @BareKiwi



Getting there

Picton is the best place to access the track from. Anakiwa and Mistletoe Bay are accessible by road. Endeavour Inlet, Resolution Bay and Meretoto/Ship Cove can only be accessed by sea. Many short walks can be enjoyed from these places. Please check if roads are open and their condition before leaving.

Transport operators

A number of companies offer boat transport to and from points along the track, including Meretoto/Ship Cove and Anakiwa.

Further information is available from the Picton i-SITE.

For more information about the Queen Charlotte Track, visit www.doc.govt.nz or contact:

Picton i-SITE

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Phone: (03) 520 3113
Email: picton@marlboroughnz.com

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Cover photo: MarlboroughNZ.com - @BareKiwi

Published by:
Department of Conservation
Waitohi/Picton Office
P O Box 161, Picton 7250
New Zealand

May 2023

Editing and design:
DOC Picton,
Port Marlborough Building
14 Auckland Street, Picton

Megan Boreham - Eyecatcher Designs
www.eyecatcher.co.nz

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New Zealand Government



1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable ground
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimise the effects of fire
6. Respect wildlife and farm animals
7. Be considerate of others

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

EYEC2023

MARLBOROUGH

Queen Charlotte Track

| Marlborough Sounds



 Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Accommodation/camping

There are six DOC-managed, 'self-registration' campsites on the track, each with toilets and water supply. There are no cooking facilities at the campsites; you need to carry your own cooker. Avoid disposing of food scraps around the campsites as this causes visible pollution and attracts pest animals. Remember there are no rubbish facilities: please take your rubbish out with you.

Please check the DOC website for fees and how to pay or speak to the Picton i-SITE.


Toilets

- Always use toilets, where provided, to avoid polluting waterways and bush margins. If you need to, go at least 50 m (100 steps) off the track or away from any waterway and bury your waste and toilet paper.
- Never put rubbish or food down the toilets.
- After you have used it, close the toilet lid and the door.
- Carry hand-sanitiser for personal hygiene.

A number of private accommodation providers offer hostel, cabin, motel and hotel lodgings, and tent sites. The private tracks that leave the main track to private accommodation are not constructed to the same standard as the Queen Charlotte Track and may be narrow, steep, and slippery when wet. Some private accommodation sites may not be signposted, so make sure you get clear directions when you book.

Queen Charlotte Track. Photo: MarlboroughNZ.com



	Cooking shelter	Approximate altitude above sea level	Approximate number of tent sites	Water taxi stop	Time/distance from main track
Schoolhouse Bay	No	5 m	15	Yes	0 (on the track)
Camp Bay	Yes	5 m	20	Yes	0 (on the track)
Bay of Many Coves	Yes	305 m	10	No	0 (on the track)
Black Rock	Yes	260 m	10	No	0 (on the track)
Cowshed Bay	Yes	5 m	30	No	10min/1km
Umungata (Davies Bay)	Yes	1 m	25	No	2min/100m

Visit [DOC website](#) for pricing.

Private land fees

Sections of the track cross private land. Track users are required to have a Queen Charlotte Track Land Cooperative (Q.C.T.L.C.) Pass for all Q.C.T.L.C. private land between Kenepuru Saddle, Torea Saddle, TeMahia Saddle and Bottle Bay. The pass fee contributes to track maintenance, enhancement and access.

For more information on the pass contact the Q.C.T.L.C. qctlc@yahoo.co.nz or www.qctlc.com.

Please respect the owners' property and do not use vehicles or take firearms or dogs on the track.

Pass fees:

Passes can be purchased via the Q.C.T.L.C app available on apple and Andriod or via the website or in person at local i-SITEs and some businesses near the track.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE TRACK

Share your experience

complete our survey and help us improve your trail experience.



Mountain biking

Mountain biking is a great alternative to walking the Queen Charlotte Track. Biking is permitted all year except for the section between Meretoto/



Ship Cove and Kenepuru Saddle, which is closed to bikes from 1 December to 28 February each year. Allow 2 to 3 days to ride the entire track, but sections make good day rides, particularly between Meretoto/Ship Cove and Kenepuru Saddle (27 km) and Mistletoe Bay and Anakiwa (12.5 km).

Queen Charlotte Track is graded as 60% intermediate/grade 3, 30% advanced/grade 4 and 10% expert/grade 5 mountain biking. Most riders will find some sections of the track easier to walk. If you are moderately fit and experienced at mountain biking, the track is very rideable, albeit steep and challenging in certain sections, especially when it is slippery and muddy after rain. Less experienced riders may prefer to avoid the ridge-top sections of the central part of the track by riding along Kenepuru Road between Kenepuru Saddle, Portage or Te Mahia




There are no facilities along the way for repairing bikes; please make sure you have adequate tools and equipment and are competent to complete your own repairs.

Visit www.nzcycletrail.com for more information about mountain biking the Queen Charlotte Track.

Approximate biking times:

- Meretoto/Ship Cove to Camp Bay: 30 km, 5 hr
- Camp Bay to Torea Saddle: 23 km, 5 hr
- Torea Saddle to Anakiwa: 20.5 km, 4 hr.

Mountain bike track grades:

-  **Intermediate/Grade 3:** Steep slopes and/or avoidable obstacles possibly on narrow track and/or with poor traction. There may be exposure at the track's outside edge.
-  **Advanced/Grade 4:** A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and obstacles that are difficult to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track's outside edge.
-  **Expert/Grade 5:** Technically challenging. Giant climbs, narrow track and numerous hazards including dangerous drop-offs, sharp corners and difficult obstacles. Expect walking and possibly bike carrying.

Walking the track

It is best to start the track from Meretoto/Ship Cove. You can arrange with the boat operators to have your pack carried between your accommodation stops. The track is graded as an easier tramping track and walking times mentioned below lean towards a person with a slow walking speed.



Grade: Easier tramping track

- Moderate day or multi-day tramping/hiking.
- Track is generally well formed, may be steep, rough or muddy.
- Suitable for people with moderate fitness. Limited backcountry (remote areas) experience required.
- Track has signs, poles or markers. Major stream and river crossings are bridged.
- Light tramping/hiking boots required.

Meretoto/Ship Cove to Endeavour Inlet: 7 hr, 18.5 km

There is no road to Meretoto/Ship Cove so you will need to arrange boat transport to start your walk there. Camping is not permitted at Meretoto/Ship Cove but there are toilet facilities. Take some time to explore this historic reserve known for some of the earliest encounters between Māori and Europeans including Captain James Cook. The track climbs away from the beach, passing through a largely unmodified forest, where the high canopy is complemented by a diverse understorey of shrubs and small trees. On the ridges higher up, beech trees dominate. After 50 minutes walking, you will reach a lookout point at a saddle where you will enjoy good views of both the inner and outer Queen Charlotte Sound/Tōtaranui. Beyond the saddle, the track drops into Resolution Bay, where there is a DOC campsite at Schoolhouse Bay and further along, private cabin accommodation. From Resolution Bay the track follows a well-graded old bridle path over a ridge and into Endeavour Inlet. It winds downward and follows the shoreline to the head of the inlet, where interpretation signs recall the antimony mining era. Private accommodation is available along the way (go to www.qctrack.co.nz for options).

Endeavour Inlet to Camp Bay: 4 hr, 11.5 km

From Endeavour Inlet the track stays near the shoreline and wanders through regenerating forest rich in small birds. It rounds Big Bay to Camp Bay where there is a DOC campsite and, a little further on, private accommodation. It is possible to bypass Camp Bay by using a direct track to Kenepuru Saddle.

Camp Bay to Torea Saddle: 8 hr, 23 km (via Bay of Many Coves and Black Rock campsites)

The track passes through private land in this section. Make sure you have your Q.C.T.L.C. Pass (see Private land fees section overleaf for more information).

This is the longest and most arduous section of the journey. However, from the top of the ridge you will be well rewarded with magnificent panoramas of the Sounds. Climb out of Camp Bay to Kenepuru Saddle and follow the ridge separating Queen Charlotte Sound from Kenepuru Sound. Above Bay of Many Coves and Kumutoto Bay are two DOC campsites, each with water (limited supply in summer months), toilets and a cooking shelter. Eventually the track descends to Torea Saddle between Portage and Torea Bay. There is a DOC campsite at Cowshed Bay and private accommodation in Portage.

Torea Saddle to Mistletoe Bay: 4 hr, 8 km (via Davies Bay campsite)

The track passes through private land in this section. Make sure you have your Q.C.T.L.C. Pass (see Private land fees section overleaf for more information).

This part of the journey also follows the ridgeline. Here gorse and mānuka are prolific, sheltering shrubs and trees that will one day shade the way. A side walk leads to a lookout just before the descent to Te Mahia Saddle begins. At Mistletoe Bay there are cabins and campsites. To book, contact Mistletoe Bay Eco Village (phone 03 573 5048 or go to www.mistletoebay.co.nz). There is also private accommodation at Te Mahia Bay.

Mistletoe Bay to Anakiwa: 4 hr, 12.5 km (via Davies Bay campsite)

Beginning on the road above Mistletoe Bay, this section follows old bridle paths high above the water. The track rounds an obvious point and descends to the DOC Davies Bay campsite at Umungata Bay (Davies Bay). The final hour's walking is on an easy path through mature beech forest to Anakiwa. At Anakiwa there is a car park, shelter, toilet, near the track end, and a jetty. Here you can catch a boat to Picton (see Getting there) or stay in nearby accommodation (go to www.qctrack.co.nz for options).

Your safety is your responsibility

You are responsible for your decisions about the risks you take and for any others under your care and responsibility. You are responsible for providing the skills, competence and equipment you require to safely complete the track. Below are some of the main hazards you may encounter.

Getting lost

Have a map / mapping app and know how to use it.

- tell a trusted person your plans and when to raise the alarm if you haven't returned.

Weather

Remember it is a coastal environment, which can change quickly, so be prepared for extreme heat as well as rain, cold and windy conditions and muddy track.

Hygiene

Carry your own hand sanitiser and/or soap for personal hygiene.



Fire

- We encourage the use of gas cookers. No fires are permitted in campsites or along the track.
- During periods of extreme drought and high fire risk, the track may be closed.



Water – all water must be boiled to make it safe to drink, including from the taps in DOC campsites.

- Always carry drinking water, especially between Kenepuru and Te Mahia Saddles.
 - Use water sparingly, some supplies may be empty during dry seasons.
- Use soaps and detergents away from water.

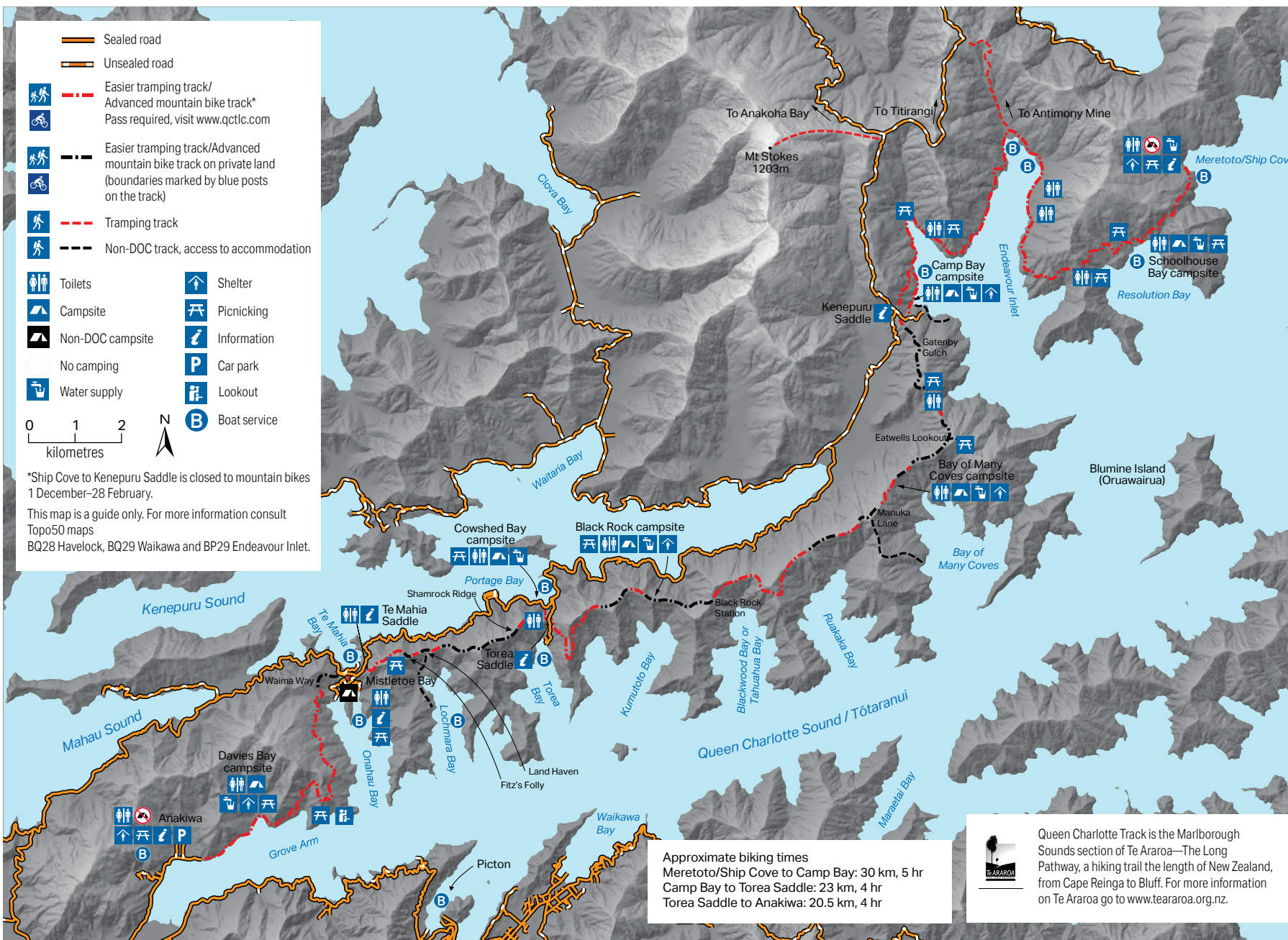


Wasps

Wasps are common in late summer and autumn, particularly on beech trees. Carry antihistamines if you are allergic to their stings.

Pigs and goats

You may encounter a wild pig or goat along the track – they will usually take fright and disappear quickly into the bush. These pests are responsible for the disturbed ground and chewed plants along the track. You may also encounter hunters with dogs and/or firearms looking for these pest animals.



Short walks

With such good access by road and/or sea, most sections of the track can be used for day walks. There are also several short side-trips along the way.

- At Meretoto/Ship Cove, you can take the Waterfall Track to a small waterfall in the forest (30 minutes return).
- At the head of Endeavour Inlet the Antimony Tramping Track leads up to a saddle and passes through an area that was extensively mined for antimony in the late 1880s (up to 2 hours return).
- In Mistletoe Bay, the James Vogel Nature Track allows you to explore the forest behind the picnic and camping area (45 minutes return). The Peninsula Walk explores the peninsula between Mistletoe and Waterfall bays (30 minutes return).