

Pouakai Circuit

Egmont National Park



Pouakai Circuit

The Circuit is a Backcountry Adventurers tramping track which can be completed in two or three days.



Ahukawakawa Swamp.
Photo: R Henderson.

It traverses lowland rain forest, sub alpine and alpine vegetation zones, and crosses the unique Ahukawakawa Swamp and the headwaters of the Stony (Hangatahua) River. On clear days the track offers trampers stunning views of Mt Taranaki and the surrounding countryside.

- To tramp this track safely you need to: be able to read a map, carry the correct equipment, have average fitness and be able to traverse steep slopes, rough ground and muddy areas. Get up to date track information from the North Egmont Visitor Centre.

Access Points

North Egmont Visitor Centre, Egmont Road.

Access is via the Holly Hut Track

Kaiauai Car Park.

Access is via the Kaiauai Track leaving the carpark area, 2kms below the visitor centre on Egmont Road.

Mangorei Road.

Access is from the carpark at the top of the Mangorei Road, off SH3, south of New Plymouth.

Dover Track

Access is from Carrington Road opposite Dover Road.

Further Information

For more information about the Pouakai Circuit contact;

North Egmont Visitor Centre
Phone: (06) 756 0990
Email: egmontvc@doc.govt.nz

Weather

Weather on Mt Taranaki is very changeable and difficult to predict. Contact the Met Service (0900-99906) for the latest forecast before setting out. Carry enough clothing and equipment to ensure you are prepared to cope with any type of weather.

Warning: Rivers and streams are not always bridged and some of these tributaries can flood at any time of year.

Before you go tramping please tell someone responsible where you are going and your estimated time of arrival back.

North Egmont Visitor Centre to Holly Hut

Time: 3 - 4 hours

From the Visitor Centre walk 2 minutes up the road to the Camphouse. From here the Holly Hut track steadily climbs through montane forest and subalpine scrub to the junction of the Around the Mountain Circuit, from where the track turns right.

The turmoil of centuries of volcanic activity is apparent as soon as you pass beneath the towering columns of the Dieffenbach Cliffs and cross the active erosion scar of the Boomerang Slip. The water runs red near here where manganese oxide oozes from the earth into the Kokowai Stream.

There are some excellent scenic views over the Ahukawakawa swamp and the upper slopes of Mt Taranaki as the track gradually descends to the turnoff to Holly Hut (32 bunks). The unbridged streams just prior to the hut can be impassable after heavy rainfall.

Holly Hut is named after the New Zealand holly bush growing profusely in the area. A campsite was formed here in the 1860s and 1870s and was used by parties crossing the Pouakai range from New Plymouth before climbing the mountain. The lighting in this hut is run by solar energy.

A 30 minute side trip from the hut along the Bells Falls Track will take you to the towering 31m high falls. Rising above this track is the curved lava vent known as The Dome.



Protect plants and animals

Remove rubbish

Bury toilet waste

Keep streams and lakes clean

Take care with fire

Camp carefully

Keep to the track

Consider others

Respect our cultural heritage

Enjoy your visit

Toitu te whenua
(Leave the land undisturbed)



Essential Gear List

- Waterproof raincoat and over trousers
- Warm woollen or fibre pile clothing
- Spare dry socks
- Strong tramping boots
- Food and drink (enough for the duration plus extra for emergencies)
- First aid kit
- Sunscreen and sunglasses
- Sunhat and a warm hat
- Sleeping bag
- Portable fuel stove
- Hut tickets or annual hut pass
- Map and compass (and know how to use them).
- Personal Locator Beacon (PLB)

Consider carrying

- Putties (gaiters)
- Cellphone and/or mountain radio
- Tent and bed roll in the summer months

During winter and snow conditions you will need an ice axe and crampons (and know how to use them) and snow gaiters and goggles. You might want to consider carrying an avalanche transceiver, probe and snow shovel.

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468
Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies
For fire and search and rescue call 111

Holly Hut to Pouakai Hut

Time 2 - 3 hours

From Holly Hut the Pouakai Circuit crosses the Ahukawakawa Swamp - an area so fragile that a single footprint remains visible for years. Many of the plants found here have special adaptations to the acidic soils and very low temperatures. The swamp forms the headwaters of the Stony River (Hangatahua).

After crossing this river the track ascends the ridge, through subalpine and mountain cedar to reach the Pouakai Track. A 1 hr 30 min detour (return) from here will take you uphill to the Pouakai Trig where good views of both the mountain and coastline can be seen on a fine day.

The Pouakai Track continues on to the Mangorei Track junction. A short descent down the Mangorei Track takes you to the 16 bunk Pouakai Hut.

The Mangorei track is a good exit from the circuit if weather conditions are bad.

Warning

This map is not suitable for navigation. For greater detail refer to Infomap 273 - 09 and the Topo50 map series.

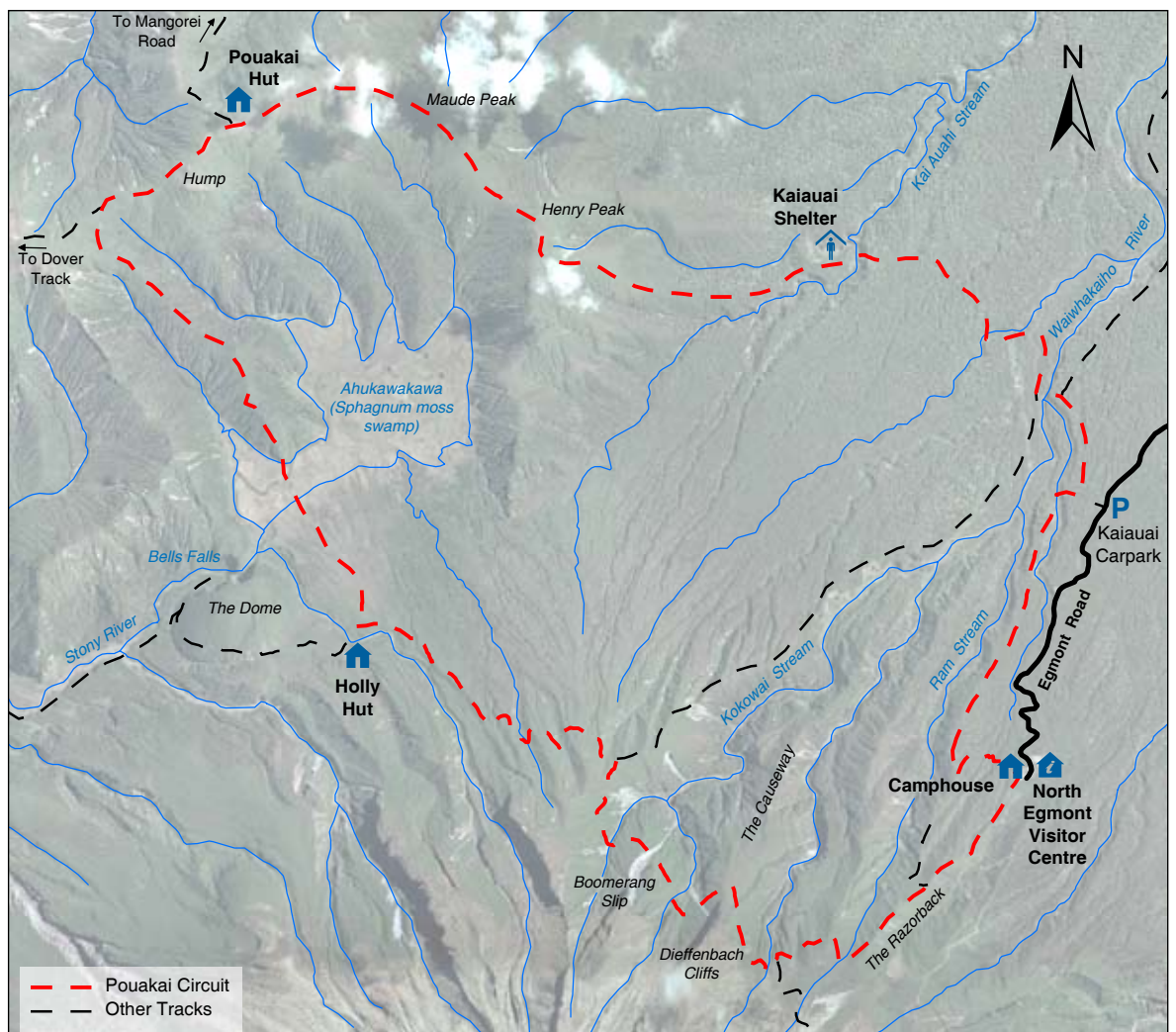


Diagram only, not to scale

Pouakai Hut to North Egmont Visitor Centre

Time: 5 - 7hrs

From Pouakai Hut return uphill to the track junction. Here the track traverses open tussock lands and passes the alpine tarns (ponds) before passing through subalpine forest to Maude Peak.

The track climbs to Henry Peak then descends the scarred spur to the older lower forests on the Kaiuauai Track.

A shelter on the true left bank of the Kaiuauai Stream is a good spot to wait for floodwaters to drop before attempting a crossing of the river. Several streams along this track can rise quickly after rainfall and care is needed. This section of track is rugged and often muddy.

After crossing the swingbridge over the Waiwhakaiho River the track ascends to the junction with the Ram Track. From here you can take the shorter track to Kaiuauai car park and walk up Egmont Road to return to the North Egmont Visitor Centre, or follow the longer route up the Ram Track to the Visitor Centre.