

Plan and prepare

RAKIURA TRACK



Duration: **3 days**
Distance: **32.1 km (loop)**



Great Walks season:
All year



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

RAKIURA TRACK

Escape on an island adventure, and exchange the hustle and bustle of the mainland for the tranquility of the Rakiura Track.

Located in Rakiura National Park on Stewart Island/Rakiura, this is a leisurely hike suitable for anyone with a moderate level of fitness. Relax and unwind in the peaceful surroundings, with the bush, birds and beach at your side.

At night, you'll enjoy world-class star-gazing. Stewart Island/Rakiura is the world's fifth International Dark Sky Sanctuary. If you're lucky, you might get to see the night sky glow red and green with the aurora australis/southern lights.

During the winter months, the island's weather is cool yet settled, making the Rakiura Track a great winter escape. This is a journey that links the past with the present – Stewart Island/Rakiura is steeped in history.

The Rakiura Track is a circular track and can be hiked in either direction. The track is well marked and signposted, but some sections may be steep and rough and muddy. This brochure describes a 3-day hike starting from Lee Bay for independent, non-guided walkers.



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Elevation profile & track guide



Day 1: Lee Bay Road end to Port William Hut



➤ 3–4 hours, 8.1 km

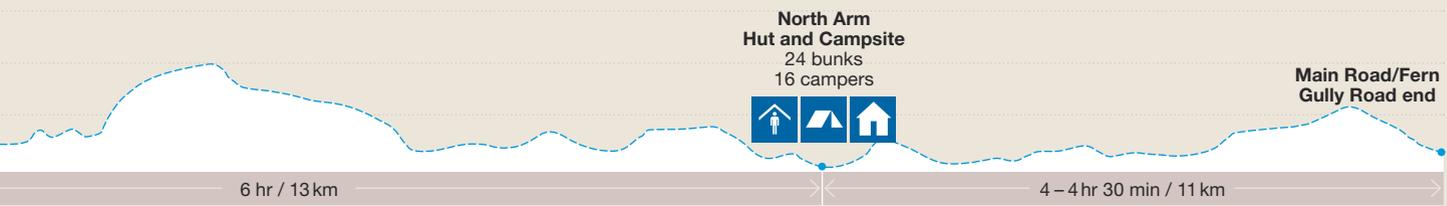
Start your island adventure by stepping through the chain link sculpture commissioned to commemorate the forming of the Rakiura National Park. Enjoy stunning coastal views as the track makes its way from Lee Bay to picturesque Little River. Rounding the tip of Peters Point brings you to Maori Beach. From here, it is a sweeping beach walk to the swing bridge, before climbing up the forested ridge and dropping down to Magnetic Beach and Port William Hut.



COVER: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Rainbow, Jeremy Pearce;
track junction, Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz);
Gallons Sawmill site, Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)

MAIN PHOTO: Maori Beach, Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)



Day 2: Port William Hut to North Arm Hut

↗ 6 hours, 13 km

Say farewell to the east coast as you make your way through beautiful regenerating podocarp forest, as well as lush and dense virgin forest. Take a breather at the log haulers: massive machines that were used to drag forest giants from the depths of the gullies. The track descends to North Arm, an important food gathering (mahinga kai) site for early Māori, on the shore of Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera.



Day 3: North Arm Hut to Fern Gully Road end

↗ 4 hours – 4 hours 30 minutes, 11 km

A moderate and undulating hike takes you through kāmahi and rimu trees with stunning vistas across the inlet. The track then follows the coast down to secluded bays and is interspersed with historic mill sites. Sawdust Bay has tidal mudflats, making it a great spot to watch wading birds feeding at low tide. Then it is on to Kaipipi Bay, where a small grassy knoll on the water's edge provides views across the sheltered waterway. The track ends at the Main Road/Fern Gully Road end. From here it is 2 km to Oban.



-  Great Walk hut
-  Great Walk campsite
-  Shelter
-  Visitor Centre
-  Toilet (toilets are also available at all huts and campsites)
-  Great Walk
-  Tramping track
-  Walking track
-  Road

0 500 m

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The map in this brochure is a guide only and should not be used for navigational purposes.

Places to stay

DOC operates 2 huts and 3 Great Walks campsites along the Rakiura Track, which **must be booked in advance all year round**.

Note: Fires are not permitted, except in the designated stoves inside huts.



Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)

Great Walks huts

Visit www.doc.govt.nz/rakiuratrack for prices.

The huts have cold running water, bunks, mattresses, heating and toilets. A DOC ranger may be present. These huts **do not provide** cooking facilities, cooking utensils, a gas supply, linen or showers.

Campers are not permitted to use hut facilities.

Great Walks campsites

Visit www.doc.govt.nz/rakiuratrack for prices.

The campsites offer basic facilities including a water supply, toilets, sinks and cooking shelters. Great Walks campsites can only be accessed on foot.



Photo: Sabine Bernert

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



2

Photo: Jeremy Pearce



3

Photo: Jake Osborne



4

Photo: Di Morris



5

Photo: Eamonn Ganley

- 1 When walking the track you might be lucky enough to hear the **Rakiura tokoeka/kiwi** calling or see its footprints, and occasionally catch a glimpse of the iconic bird in its natural environment.
- 2 Immerse yourself in the **history**, from early Māori settlement sites around Maori Beach and Port William/Potirepo to sawmilling relics along the track, dating from 1861 to the 1930s.
- 3 Take a short water taxi ride from Oban to Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara. This predator-free island is home to many rare and endangered birds and species. It is a regular haul-out for the world's rarest seals, the **New Zealand sea lion/rāpoka** or **whakahao**.
- 4 Wander through beautiful native forests. The Rakiura Track takes you through rimu and kāmahī forest with a rich diversity of tree ferns, ground ferns, perching orchids, **clematis/puawānanga**, and southern rātā.
- 5 Be greeted by a cacophony of birdsong. The Rakiura Track hosts a multitude of native birds, including Buller's mollymawks/toroa, little penguins/kororā, tū, parakeets/kākāriki, and **New Zealand pigeons/kererū**.

What do I do next?



Start off at www.doc.govt.nz/rakiuratrack for more information.



Book your huts and campsites online at bookings.doc.govt.nz.



Book your transport to and from Stewart Island/Rakiura and 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 3-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/rakiuratrack.



Visit the closest **DOC Visitor Centre** (Rakiura National Park Visitor Centre, Oban) to pick up your **ticket 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/docgovtnz](https://www.facebook.com/docgovtnz).

For in-depth local knowledge, visit:

Rakiura National Park
Visitor Centre

Phone: +64 3 219 0009

Email: stewartisland@doc.govt.nz

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.

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Getting there

The Rakiura Track can be hiked in either direction. The track has two entry points:

- The official entrance to Rakiura National Park at **Lee Bay**, 5 km from Oban.
- The **Fern Gully Road end**, 2 km beyond the Rakiura National Park Visitor Centre, on Main Road in Oban.

Many people walk the track as a circuit, starting from Oban. Allow about 1 hr–1 hr 30 min to walk to Lee Bay from Oban, and 20–30 min from the Fern Gully Road end to Oban. Alternatively, you can arrange transport to/from the track from Oban.

To get to Oban, the only township on Stewart Island/Rakiura, you can take a 20-minute flight from Invercargill or a 1-hour ferry trip across Foveaux Strait from the southern port of Bluff. If you are flying, check that all the equipment you plan to take (including cooking equipment) is permitted on the aeroplane.

In Oban you'll find accommodation, supplies, equipment hire and transport.



Safety on the Rakiura Track

- Go to www.doc.govt.nz/rakiuratrack for detailed safety and planning information.
- Weather in the Rakiura National Park can change with little warning. Walkers should come well equipped and prepared for all weather conditions. Check weather.niwa.co.nz/parks for the most up-to-date forecast.
- Bad weather can damage the track significantly. Check www.doc.govt.nz/rakiuratrack or contact the DOC Visitor Centre in Rakiura National Park for track conditions and weather warnings before your walk.
- The track is often muddy – wear sturdy footwear and carry spare socks. Gaiters and tramping poles are recommended.

Your safety is your responsibility

Care for the Rakiura Track



Protect nature

Keep your distance and don't feed wildlife. 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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