History and culture

Ngatoroirangi, the founding ancestor of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, the local iwi (Māori tribe), ascended the great mountains of the volcanic plateau 30 generations ago. It was then that he named Tongariro and the many features of the surrounding landscape, declaring this area as home for his descendants.

The generosity and foresight of Ngāti Tūwharetoa saw the heart of the mountainous area made sacrosanct in 1887, with the intent that the Crown would stand alongside Ngāti Tūwharetoa to ensure the continued protection of Tongariro. This led to the establishment of the Tongariro National Park in 1894, a first for New Zealand, and fourth in the world.

The continued occupation by Ngāti Tūwharetoa in this environment ensures the cultural, spiritual and environmental values are protected and shared with all those who encounter this dynamic landscape.

Getting there

There is limited parking near the access points to the track. From the beginning of Labour weekend in October to 30 April, parking restrictions will be in place at road ends. Shuttle services run from Whakapapa Village, National Park, Taumarunui, Turangi, Raetihi, Ohakune and Taupo. Plan ahead and book a shuttle with your local i-SITE (Visitor Centre).
Let us help you have a safe adventure

Plan your trip
Make sure you know where you’re going and have looked at a map of the track – consider taking a photo of it. Ensure you have enough time to complete in the daylight. A wrong turn can create an unexpected night out.

Take sufficient supplies
The supplies you need for each hike will vary, but you should always have a waterproof jacket, water, food, hat, head torch and sturdy footwear – consider hiking boots. Cell phone signal is often not available in the outdoors. Place items like phones and maps in a plastic bag to waterproof.

Know your limits
Challenge yourself within your group’s limits. Consider the group’s ability to deal with the changing weather and the physical nature of the hike. Stick to the marked track.

Be aware of the weather
New Zealand’s weather can be highly changeable. Check the forecast – MetService.com – and expect changes throughout the day. Always prepare for wind and rain as it can, and often does, happen suddenly.

Tell someone your plans
Message someone – text, social, email – where you’re going and when you’ll be due back. Make yourself easier to be found if something goes wrong.

Hazards
- **Alpine environment with rapidly changing weather conditions at all times of the year.** It is common to experience strong wind, high rainfall, heavy snowfall and rapid changes in temperature, even in summer.
- **Volcanic risk.** This is an active volcanic area, and eruptions are possible at any time without warning. Know the volcanic risks and what to do in an eruption (see [www.doc.govt.nz/volcanicrisk](http://www.doc.govt.nz/volcanicrisk)). Check the latest volcanic activity information before you go, at the Tongariro National Park Visitor Centre and at [www.geonet.org.nz/volcano](http://www.geonet.org.nz/volcano).
- **Winter snow.** Do not attempt this trip when snow is present unless you are experienced in the backcountry and have an ice axe, crampons and are experienced in avalanche terrain. Visit [www.avalanche.net.nz](http://www.avalanche.net.nz) for updated avalanche forecasts. In winter, the use of a guide is highly recommended.

The alpine lakes and peaks of the mountains are sacred to the local Māori tribe Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro. Respectfully, they ask that peaks are not climbed and waterways are not touched.

For more information visit your local i-SITE, Department of Conservation Visitor Centre, or go to [www.doc.govt.nz/dayhikes](http://www.doc.govt.nz/dayhikes).

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