Whanganui River Journey, one of ten unforgettable journeys.

Experience the scenic beauty, history and cultural significance of the winding Whanganui River. Choose a 3-day journey by canoe or kayak from Taumarunui to Pipiriki (545 km), or a shorter 3-day journey starting at Whakahoro (88 km), featuring the most scenic stretches of the river through remote hills and valleys.

**Plants and wildlife**

**Eels** migrate up streams to find suitable adult habitat in the river. They are secretive, mainly nocturnal, and prefer habitat with plenty of cover. Tuna (the Māori word for eels) are not only historically important to Māori; they are considered a taonga (treasure) species.

**Wood pigeon/kererū** are large birds with iridescent green and bronze feathers on their heads and a smart white vest. The noisy beat of their wings is a distinctive sound. They are the only remaining native bird capable of distributing large fruits such as karaka and tararā.

**Blue duck/whio** live only in clean, fast-flowing streams in the forested upper river catchments. Nesting along the riverbanks, they are at high risk of attack from stoats and rats. You might see them on the main stem of Manganuioteao River on the last day of your journey.

**Broadleaf-podocarp forest** has grown over this land, composed of rātā, rewarewa, rimu, tawa and kāmahi, with beech dominant on the ridge tops. Podocarp forest can be lush with a dense undergrowth of shrubs, ferns and tree ferns. Tree ferns and plants that cling to the steep riverbanks are very distinctive.

**Short-tailed and long-tailed bats/pekapeka** may be fluttering overhead around John Coull Hut and Campsite at dusk. Long-tailed bats are smaller than the short-tailed bat, chestnut brown in colour, have small ears and weigh 8–11 g. They are New Zealand’s only native mammal.

**Land surrounding the river** is only about one million years old. Formed of soft sandstone and mudstone (papa) from the ocean-bed, it has been eroded by water to form striking sharp ridges, deep gorges, sheer papa cliffs and waterfalls.

**Side trip** – details overleaf

Bridge to Nowhere

**Points of interest**

1. Ohura Falls is a great spot for lunch.
2. Glide down the river through the green-clad Whanganui gorge.
3. Bridge to Nowhere.
4. Tīeke Kāinga, for a unique stay at the only DOC hut that is also used as a marae.
5. Paddle through the scenic gorge of the Manganuioteao River.
6. Experience the excitement of the two biggest rapids on the river – Ngāporo and Autapu.

**Tell someone your plans**

Tell someone you trust your plans and when they should hear from you. Include the national/international emergency service numbers: 111-Police for points of contact in New Zealand, +64-4-381-2000 for international. Find more information at mountainsafety.org.nz

**Further information and booking**

Visit the Great Walks website or contact your nearest DOC Visitor Centre:

Ruapehu i-SITE Visitor Information Centre
54 Clyde Street, Ohakune 4625
Phone: +64 6 385 8427
Email: Ohakune-VC@doc.govt.nz

**Book online greatwalks.co.nz**

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Paddling guide

The 145 km river journey from Taumarunui to Pipiriki usually takes 5 days to complete by canoe. A shorter 3-day journey from Whakahoro to Pipiriki is also possible.

The times are approximate and will vary according to your fitness, direction of travel and the weather.

Taumarunui to Whakahoro

2 days, 57 km
Access points are at Ngahuia (Cherry Grove) in Taumarunui or further downstream at Ohinepane (accessed from River Road SH43).

Travelling the upper reaches of Whanganui River you’ll pass through a mix of farmland and native bush. You’ll be in for excitement as you shoot down rapids on the Whanganui River. Mangawaiiti Campsite, perched high above the river, is an attractive spot to camp for lunch. You’ll pass Mangapurua Landing, gateway to Mangapurua and the Bridge to Nowhere. Continue your trip downstream to Tīeke Kāinga, one of many old pā on the Whanganui River.

Tīeke Kāinga to Pipiriki

1 day, 21.5 km
You’ll pass by the scenic gorge of the Mangamahoe River, as it enters the Whanganui River after its journey from the slopes of Mount Ruapehu. Ngahoro and Autapu rapids can provide plenty of excitement and perhaps a cool dip on a hot day. More exotic trees and farmland indicate you are getting close to Pipiriki. Stop the Paparoa rapids and you will see the boat ramp below Pipiriki Village up ahead.

Whanganui River Journey safety

STAYING SAFE ON THE WHANGANUI JOURNEY

On the river – always give way to jet boats.
> Riverboats: craft travelling up river give way to craft travelling down river.
> When a jet boat approaches, canoeists should move to the right. If close to the left, stay there rather than paddle across the path of an approaching boat. To minimise the effect of the wake, turn at right angles to it.
> Canoeists should stop and even back-paddle to allow jet boats to move around and get past as quickly as possible.
> Jet boats passing canoeists travelling in the opposite direction should either wait or move slowly forward until clear of the canoe.
> Canoeists in this situation should keep paddling forward. Jet boats moving slowly are much less manoeuvrable and canoeists should not expect them to be able to get out of the way quickly.
> Jet boats in rapids are unable to slow down or stop.

BE PREPARED FOR ALL CONDITIONS

Hypothermia (too cold)

Watch for symptoms: headaches, thirst, weakness, dizziness, nausea or vomiting.

Treatment: move the person to a cool shaded area to rest, remove excess clothing and give water to drink.

Heat exhaustion

This can be serious and is usually caused by physical activity in a hot environment and not drinking enough water.

Prevention: carry and drink water regularly.

Watch for symptoms: headaches, thirst, weakness, dizziness, nausea or vomiting.

Treatment: move the person to a cool shaded area to rest, remove excess clothing and give water to drink.

Hypertension

Watch for symptoms: people may shiver, be clumsy, confused, have slurred speech, and deny they have a problem.

Treatment: immediately make or find shelter; get the person into warm, dry clothing; put them into a sleeping bag; give them warm, sweet drinks; monitor them and seek immediate medical help.

General tikanga (protocol) at Tīeke Kāinga

Visiting Tīeke Kāinga

Tīeke Kāinga is the only former pā site that also doubles as a Great Walks Hut. Facilities are jointly managed by Te Whānau o Tīeke and DOC. Visitors may be welcomed onto the marae. Tīeke people are available on that day. Visitors are welcome to use the marae facilities and camping area while observing the general tikanga rules.

- Visitors may be expected to participate in a pōwhiri if Whānau are present at the marae. The process will be explained if necessary.
- The marae ātea (grassy area in front of the marae) must be kept clear when visitors are going through the pōwhiri.
- It is customary to leave a koha (donation) during pōwhiri.
- The wharenui (meeting house on the marae ātea) is for local people only; access into the wharenui is by invitation only.
- All rubbish must be carried out.
- Absolutely no alcohol permitted at Tīeke Kāinga.
- Smoking is permitted outside only. Please keep the buildings smoke free.
- Showers are not to be used in the buildings; they should be left neatly on the deck.
- Clothes and washing should be hung on the designated clothes lines near the campground, not on the decks or marae area. Please ask the local people if in doubt.
- Do not sit on tables, kitchen worktops or chilly bins. Do not sit on any surface that would come in contact with food.
- Kitchen facilities are not to be used for personal hygiene eg brushing teeth. Please use the washbasins outside for these purposes.
- Do not just walk in; ask for permission from the local people before taking photos at Tīeke Kāinga.
- In doubt feel free to approach your local hosts.
- Keep soap and detergents out of waterways. For detailed safety information and a comprehensive gear list, see greatwalks.co.nz/whanganui.

REMEMBER

- Emergency communication is available by DOC radio only at John Coull Hut and Tīeke Kāinga. The only road access to the river is at Ohinepane, Whakahoro and Pipiriki.
- There is no cellphone coverage at Ohinepane, Whakahoro, Pipiriki or while on the river journey.
- Many sites are of high cultural significance – please respect them.
- Once you are on the river below Whakahoro there is no turning back, and nowhere to buy anything you may have forgotten.
- Camping is permitted only at designated campsites.
- No dogs or other animals are permitted.
- No hunting.
- No open fires.
- All rubbish must be carried out of the park.
- Boil, filter or treat water if you doubt its purity.
- Use the toilets provided.
- Keep soap and detergents out of waterways.