

Carrington Hut route guide

Arthur's Pass National Park



Note that the footbridge marked on some maps below Barker Hut also no longer exists. A plaque and old rock anchors indicate the bridge's original location. Travel upstream about 50 metres to a very steep gully descending to the stream below. Cross the stream and then follow rock cairns to Barker Hut.

Waimakariri Falls Hut

Time: 6–10 hours return

Walk to Waimakariri Falls Hut (6 bunks) through dramatic alpine scenery. It takes 3–5 hours to walk from Carrington Hut to Waimakariri Falls Hut. This is a Canterbury Mountaineering Club hut – for fees and payment, visit cmc.net.nz.

The upper beech forest edge and beginning of the alpine zone are only 1 hour from Carrington Hut. The waterfalls, tussocks and alpine plants you can see there are well worth a visit.



This route passes through several known avalanche paths. Do not attempt it during heavy snow conditions unless you are sufficiently equipped and have the experience to assess the snow conditions and choose a safe path through avalanche terrain.

Waimakariri Falls Hut is sited in three potential avalanche paths. Do not use this hut when there is heavy snow loading.

The marked route from Carrington Hut crosses the White River just above its confluence with the Waimakariri River, and then continues in and out of the bush edge to the open alpine flats below Campbell Creek. If the Waimakariri River is running high, this route cannot be safely followed.

Beyond Campbell Creek, cross the Waimakariri River to its true left and then cross back above the area of very loose rock scree. The route continues beside the river, climbing steeply out of it shortly before the 50-metre-high Waimakariri Falls. Follow the poled and rock-cairned route to Waimakariri Falls Hut.

Further information:

Arthur's Pass National Park Visitor Centre

104 West Coast Road, Arthur's Pass 7654
8.30 am – 4.30 pm daily

PHONE: 03 318 9211

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doc.govt.nz

Care for Aotearoa



Protect nature

Keep your distance and don't feed wildlife. Follow any rules restricting dogs, fires, drones or vehicles.



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.



Keep NZ clean

Use toilets where provided. Take all rubbish with you.



Show respect

Respect others, respect culture.



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



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Cover photo: Looking up the Waimakariri River. *Photo: DOC*

This information was accurate at the time of printing. For the latest information on DOC's policies and facilities, visit doc.govt.nz.

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**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

**0800 DOC HOT
362 468**

**For safety hazards and
conservation emergencies**

F274769



Huts

Carrington and Anti Crow Huts need to be booked in advance – visit doc.govt.nz/hut-bookings.

All other huts in this area operate on a first come, first served basis. Purchase hut tickets before you leave from any Department of Conservation (DOC) visitor centre, selected isites and outdoor stores, or visit doc.govt.nz/backcountry-hut-pass.



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Summary



Time: 2 days return.

Grade: Expert route.

Best season: All year.

Experience: Unformed route suitable only for people with high-level backcountry (remote area), navigation and survival skills and experience. River crossing skills essential.

Required maps: NZTopo50: BV20 Otira.

Hazards: Flooded rivers, and avalanches above Carrington Hut.

Note: Greenlaw Hut and some track sections marked on various maps no longer exist. The Clough Cableway shown on the NZTopo50 map has been removed. 'True left' and 'true right' refer to the side of the valley or river when facing and looking downstream.

Safety: This route guide must be read in conjunction with *Tramping in Arthur's Pass National Park*, a free brochure with important safety information, and New Zealand's Land Safety Code. Before setting out, check the latest track conditions and avalanche advisory with the Arthur's Pass National Park Visitor Centre.

A good base for exploring the upper Waimakariri

Two potential routes lead up the Waimakariri valley to a comfortable hut situated below the park's highest peaks. Rivers and major side streams can rise quickly and become dangerous. Ensure that you have the latest weather information and are confident in reading rivers and know how to cross them. There are two options to reach Carrington Hut, depending on whether the river is high or low (see below). However, even the high river track still requires two crossings of the Waimakariri River to reach the hut.

Getting there

The trip starts at State Highway 73 (SH73) either on the true right of the Waimakariri River, just south of the road bridge over the river (about 10 kilometres east of Arthur's Pass village), or from the end of the road to Klondyke Corner on the true left of the Waimakariri in low river flows.

SH73 to Carrington Hut

Time: 4–6 hours one way



Several unbridged rivers and side streams need to be crossed along this route. These can rise quickly and become dangerous during and after heavy rain. If you are unsure about any of the crossings, camp or return to the nearest hut until the water level has dropped.

When the Waimakariri River is low

A 2-kilometre-long gravel road leads to the Waimakariri riverbed from the western side of Klondyke Corner. The quickest way to Carrington Hut is to head straight up the Waimakariri valley from this point, cutting corners and crossing the river where necessary. Aim for the lower edges of Turkey Flat. From there, either continue up the riverbed or pick up the track behind Anti Crow Hut or at Anti Crow River.

If you prefer to continue up the riverbed, head towards the high embankment of the Anti Crow River fan, climbing through a rubble-filled gully to its top, head north into more open ground, and then west, crossing the Anti Crow River before dropping down another steep embankment to the Waimakariri River. Cross to the true left of the Waimakariri River and continue upstream for 1.4 kilometres towards the two jutting headlands. Re-cross the Waimakariri River back to its true right and continue towards Greenlaw Creek, picking up the poled track in the river flats beyond. Follow the marked track to Carrington Hut.

When the Waimakariri River is difficult to cross



This route now requires a crossing of the Waimakariri River above the Anti Crow River area and therefore may not be possible when the rivers are high.

Leave SH73 on the true right of the Waimakariri River, immediately south of the road bridge over the river. A well-marked track (known as O'Malley Track) passes above bluffs to Turkey Flat by Jordan Stream. From here, follow pole markers across the flats, staying high to avoid the thorny native matagouri shrubs lower down. Once past the flats, follow the bush edge to Anti Crow Hut (standard, 6 bunks). A 400-metre section of track leading to the hut from the end of the flats can be used when the river has pushed into the bluff here. Note that the Jordan Stream and Anti Crow River can be dangerous to cross after very heavy rain.

Continue along the track behind Anti Crow Hut through beech forest. The track crosses a small stream near the foundations of the original Anti Crow Hut. When you reach the Anti Crow River, look for a safe place to cross. This can be an extremely dangerous crossing if the river is running high.

The hard rocky knolls you cross are called *roche moutonnée* (or sheepback). Thousands of years ago, when glaciers covered this area, the moving ice sculpted these outcrops of hard rock. The track drops down to the Waimakariri riverbed. The Waimakariri River has changed course here, cutting off access to both ends of the next track section. Find a safe place to cross the river and do not attempt if the water is high. Continue following the true left of the river upstream for about 900 metres, looking for another safe crossing to re-join the track in the river flats before Greenlaw Creek, past the bluffs. Follow the track, crossing Greenlaw Creek and Harper Creek - both are dangerous crossings when they are high. The track beyond Harper Creek is well marked.

As you get closer to Carrington Hut, keep an eye out for the serrated top of Carrington Peak. Just before the White River joins the Waimakariri River, a short section of marked track leads to Carrington Hut, marked by a large rock cairn and orange marker.

Carrington Hut (serviced, 36 bunks) has a radio that is monitored by Arthur's Pass National Park Visitor Centre from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm, 7 days a week. There is a wood stove for heating but you will need your own cooker and utensils.

Day trips from Carrington Hut

Note: The Clough Cableway beyond Carrington Hut has been removed.

White River (Barker Hut)

Time: 8–10 hours return

A trip up the White River is an interesting but challenging day walk from Carrington Hut. Barker Hut (10 bunks) is in an alpine basin high up in the head of the White valley. It has no heating and is owned and managed by the Canterbury Mountaineering Club - for fees and payment, visit cmc.net.nz.

It takes 4–5 hours to walk from Carrington Hut to Barker Hut. The route along the river constantly changes because of active rock slides; the first 1.5 kilometres of the track marked on some maps beyond Kilmarnock Falls has been destroyed. A cairned route leaves the river at a large cubic rock to rejoin the remaining vague track high above the river. The route eventually drops back down to the White River before the Cahill Glacier stream, following numerous rock cairns and climbing onto old glacial moraines.



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