Discover Arthur's Pass

A guide to Arthur's Pass National Park and village
Welcome to Arthur’s Pass

The grandeur of this vast and austere mountain and river landscape has instilled awe in those who gaze upon it, from the first Māori explorers to modern escapees from city life.

This once remote area, hidden in the heart of the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o Te Moana, was the South Island’s first national park, and is now easily reached from both Canterbury and the West Coast.

Not only is Arthur’s Pass a key link between east and west, but it is also known for its immense natural beauty, and rare flora and fauna. The Park provides both a sanctuary for plant and bird life, and a place for both mental and physical recreation. Since becoming a National Park in 1929, Arthur’s Pass has gained a worldwide reputation for alpine recreation, as well as for its stunning natural history.
**Arthur’s Pass village**

After beginning as a road-construction camp, the village then grew to provide services for travellers on that road. While not a coaching stop itself, Arthur’s Pass provided fresh horses for weary travellers undertaking the two–three day trek from coast to coast. One of the original horse-drawn Cobb & Co coaches can be seen at the Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre.

Later the village became a workers’ camp during construction of the Otira railway tunnel between 1907 and 1923. Many of these early cottages are now holiday homes and provide today’s visitors with a warm fire, soft bed and mind-blowing views in the morning.

Travelling, whether passing through, or staying to explore our national park, is still the main drawcard for Arthur’s Pass village. Stop awhile to refresh yourself. Be it a cup of tea or meal, a tour of the visitor centre, a short walk or even an overnight tramp—there’s something for everyone at Arthur’s Pass.

**Arthur’s Pass is a journey**

Arthur’s Pass links the east and west coasts. But the journey is more than just getting from coast to coast over ‘the Pass’ by either road or rail.

It’s also a journey in time from before humans to the first Māori inhabitants, to the next wave of immigrants, this time from Europe. It’s about the impact these people had on this land, the demise and even extinction of some unique species, and the slow recovery of others—thanks to the caring locals.

**The historic east–west journey**

Human history revolves around the journey between the coasts and over the Alps. The Dobson Memorial on the Arthur’s Pass summit commemorates the European discovery of this route by Arthur Dudley Dobson in 1864. However the pass had long been used by Ngāi Tahu and they played a vital role in informing the European explorers of its existence.

**First foot traffic**

The usual routes of Ngāi Tahu through these mountains to the pounamu (greenstone) lands of Tai Poutini (Westland) were through the mountain passes at the head of the Hurunui and Rakaia rivers.

Arthur’s Pass was used for fast east–west crossings, but seldom favoured for the return journey because of the steep and difficult conditions on the west side and the limited food resources between the pass and the coastal villages.
Paving the road with gold

Following European settlement of Canterbury in the 1840s, the discovery of gold on the West Coast in 1864 made the construction of an east-west road an urgent priority. A road over the pass was formed and opened for coach traffic in 1866.

Few signs remain of the original coach road through Arthur’s Pass. The Old Coach Road Walk (see page 32) follows a section of it, and some old rock-walling can still be seen there. Jacks Hut, a road worker’s hut on the Arthur’s Pass Walking Track is a reminder of the days when roadmen laboured hard with pick and shovel to keep the road open for horse-drawn and later motorised traffic.

The rail link through the alps

Midland Railway constructed railways from the east and west coasts from 1886. The railhead reached the Main Divide from the west at Otira in 1900 and from the east at Arthur’s Pass in 1915. Worker camps were set up in each village to bore the 8.5-km tunnel through the mountains. The first shot was fired in 1908 and when the tunnels from Otira and Arthur’s Pass met in 1918, they were out by just 30 mm. The tunnel opened for rail traffic in 1923. From the Punchbowl car park a short walk takes you to a site directly above the tunnel where, if you time it right, you can feel the trains passing beneath you.

Otira viaduct

The latest east-west development was the Otira Viaduct, opened in 1999. This impressive engineering feat soars above the steep gorge and tight zig-zags of the old road. Call into the viaduct lookout at ‘Deaths Corner’ to see the old and new roads and learn of their history.

Kea—our mischievous mountain parrot—will no doubt be waiting at this lookout to check out you and your car. Cute and friendly as they are, don’t feed them unless you really want to make them sick or even kill them—in which case you could well be prosecuted for intentionally harming protected wildlife.
Prior to 1864
The Bealey-Otira valleys are used by Māori.

1864 March
Arthur Dobson and his brother Edward go over the Bealey-Otira Pass from the Waimakariri side. The Pass was named after Arthur Dobson.

1865
A tent camp is set up for surveyors and construction of the road to the West Coast goldfields.

1866
First coach over Arthur’s Pass from Christchurch to Hokitika by L G Cole and Co, who used the name Cobb and Co. The start of a passenger and mail service. Overland telegraph line constructed over Arthur’s Pass.

1895
Heavy snow prevents coaches crossing Arthur’s Pass for three months

1901
72,000 hectares around Arthur’s Pass and Otira is reserved for national park purposes.

1908
Construction of the Arthur’s Pass to Otira rail tunnel starts. Tunnel workers’ huts are built.

1912
About 300 people live in Arthur’s Pass village, mostly associated with constructing the railway tunnel.

1915
Rail head reaches Arthur’s Pass from Christchurch.

1923
Otira tunnel completed. First trains run coast to coast. The Otira–Arthur’s Pass horse-drawn coach service, the last in the country stops. Many of the tunnel workers’ huts are dismantled; others are sold for holiday homes.

1924
Day train excursions to Arthur’s Pass make the area more popular and accessible.

1925
Canterbury Mountaineering Club is formed and makes first climbs of peaks, creates maps and builds huts.

1926
Arthur’s Pass hostel opens, now the Outdoor Education Centre. It was run by Guy and Grace Butler.

1927
Skiing is first tried at Arthur’s Pass on the lawn at the hostel.

1928
Oscar Coberger settles in Arthur’s Pass. Skiing becomes popular.

1929
Arthur’s Pass is gazetted as a National Park. A severe earthquake rocks Arthur’s Pass on March 9.

1937
Power pylon towers built over the Pass.

1956
Chapel opens. Arthur’s Pass YHA Hostel opens, largely due to the efforts of Cora Wilding.

1959
Visitor Information Centre opens as New Zealand’s first national park museum.

The Arthur’s Pass Historic Walk takes you to eleven photographic panels around the village’s historic landmarks. The background information for each of these stopping points is fully detailed in the next section from page 45.
Dynamic landscape

The Southern Alps are the result of active movement between the converging Indo-Australian and Pacific tectonic plates, constantly undergoing rapid uplift and erosion.

Although there has been at least 18 km of uplift in the last two million years, continuous erosion means that the mountains do not exceed 2,500 metres in the Arthur’s Pass region. You can see erosion for yourself in the shattered rocks of the upper slopes and ridges, the long scree slopes, and the landslides. You can also see it in the vast amounts of gravel in the wide riverbeds destined, in time, to be washed out to the plains and seas on both the eastern and western sides of the South Island. These wide ‘braided’ riverbeds with many channels are found in only a few places in the world.

The predominant rock at Arthur’s Pass is a grey sandstone known as greywacke. Visitors to the high rocky ridges will also see bands of argillite, a crumbly dark siltstone, referred to by climbers (without affection) as ‘weetbix’.

The greatest sculpting agents on the landscape are long gone. These were the ice-age glaciers that filled the valleys almost to the top ridges. The site of Arthur’s Pass village was once submerged under at least half a kilometre of ice.

The glaciers left steep-sided U-shaped valleys that can often be seen, despite subsequent erosion. You can also see the truncated ends of mountain ridges on any of the walks in the Arthur’s Pass area. The Devils Punchbowl Falls drop down from a glacial ‘hanging valley’ (left). Hummocky moraines from a recent ice advance are visible on the Dobson Nature Walk.

Today the Arthur’s Pass area still has a number of small glaciers on the higher peaks.

Changeable weather—four seasons in one day

For visitors used to continental climates, the weather in the New Zealand mountains can be confusing. Even a beautiful summer’s day can end with snow flurries and it pays to understand the weather patterns at Arthur’s Pass.

The mighty Southern Alps clearly define the weather between the island’s west and east coasts. In spring/summer prevailing north-west winds drag moisture-laden air off the Tasman Sea. As it rises over the mountains, heavy rain falls on the western side of the alps. Once over the mountains, the air forms the typical hot dry nor’west winds that the Canterbury Plains are renowned for over summer.

North-west winds bring the heaviest rainfalls and, if they occur in winter, can bring extreme snowfalls. Arthur’s Pass usually receives three or four heavy snowfalls a year, with snow remaining above the bush line during the winter months. Snowfalls sometimes affect the road over winter and you may need snow chains to cross the alpine passes.

Arthur’s Pass receives most of its four metres of rain per year during north-west rainfalls. Few places in the world have such a pronounced ‘rain shadow’ effect. Bealey village, just 15 km east of the mountain pass, receives less than half this amount of rain.

When the wind blows from the east, Christchurch is often enveloped in a dreary mantle of grey sky and drizzle, while Arthur’s Pass and the West Coast bask in sunshine.

The weather will make a big difference to your visit to Arthur’s Pass. Check weather forecasts and take these into account when planning your visit. Weather forecasts are available 24 hours a day by phoning the Department of Conservation’s Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre phone (03) 318 9211, from local newspapers, or from www.metservice.com. Staff at the visitor centre are happy to help you plan your visit to make the most of whatever the weather brings!
**Striking plant contrasts from east to west**

A trip to Arthur’s Pass is not complete without journeying to the pass itself, three km further west and 200 m higher. Here you will find marvellous views of the mountains from an alpine meadow. Another surprise is the noticeable difference in the forest between the east and west sides of the pass.

**What created these differences?**

Glaciers carved out the landscape you see today, destroying the previous forest cover. After the ice melted, the forest slowly re-colonised. On the east side of the pass, today’s forests are almost entirely dominated by the mountain beech/tawhiauriki (right). But on the West Coast, beech never re-colonised and instead podocarp conifers, rātā and kāmahi forests, which were more easily dispersed by wind and birds, comprise a much more diverse forest. Occasional patches of beech forest on the roadside confirm it is slowly making inroads from the east.

**From the west . . .**

You will notice how the West Coast forests are lush and dense in contrast with the open forests further east. These are temperate rain forests, with forest vines and epiphytes, and ground thick with ferns and mosses, all thriving in the high rainfall. Look out for the display of red-flowering southern rātā (right) in the Otira Gorge in late summer. The Cockayne Nature Walk is a good place to view this forest.

The summit of Arthur’s Pass is the only place in New Zealand where a major highway passes through subalpine shrubland. In fact, the timberline here is at a surprisingly low altitude compared with forests in the northern hemisphere. Like the forests to the west, the very high rainfall makes for a lush alpine environment. Take a closer look from the Dobson Nature Walk—a self-guided booklet, introducing you to this zone, is available from the Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre.

In the true alpine zone, plants making a home here have adapted in special ways to cope with temperature extremes, strong winds, steep and unstable terrain, poor soils and months-long snow cover. This zone is most safely reached using the Temple Basin or Otira Valley tracks.

. . . **to the east**

The drier eastern side provides the ideal environment for mountain beech which clothes the hills as you travel towards Christchurch. It forms a near monoculture as the rainfall declines. The influence of people on the landscape becomes more evident as forest is replaced by fire-induced shrub and grassland. Here, the hills and river flats are covered by native tussocks and exotic grasses dotted with thorny grey matagouri shrubs.

The wide gravel riverbeds, such as the Waimakariri, sustain rapidly-colonising small herbs, cushion plants, mosses and lichens, which are always vulnerable to the next large flood.
Southern beech: a beginner’s guide

On almost all of the forested walks in the Arthur’s Pass area you will be walking under a canopy of mountain beech/tawhairauriki. This is the predominant tree in the eastern valleys of Arthur’s Pass (including around Arthur’s Pass village) and is one of four New Zealand beech species.

Two other New Zealand beech species are found in the region: red beech/tawhairaunui and silver beech/tawhai. Red beech may be seen in places by the highway in the Otira valley.

The New Zealand beeches belong to the group of southern beeches (Nothofagus) which are also found in Australia, South America, New Caledonia and New Guinea. They also once grew in Antarctica. Their closest northern hemisphere relatives are beeches, oaks and chestnuts.

Mountain beech often forms almost pure stands, excluding nearly all other trees. This is best seen in drier areas (for example on the Bealey Spur Track and Craigieburn Forest tracks), where these forests usually have a very open understorey with few shrubs.

Birds at Arthur’s Pass

Inquisitive kea

Kea are a parrot found only in the mountains of the South Island. They nest in holes and rock crevices in the beech forest, usually near the bush line—making their eggs and chicks vulnerable to introduced stoats and rats. However, they forage far and wide in the mountains and valleys, even to the West Coast in the winter months.

Kea are extraordinarily intelligent, inquisitive and resourceful—qualities that both delight and exasperate human visitors. Watch your food and belongings when kea are around!

**Do not feed kea.** This disrupts their natural feeding patterns, habituates kea to humans and encourages them to taste and eat other foreign things like rubber, plastic and lead which could kill them. Under the Wildlife Act 1956, any person convicted of intentionally killing protected wildlife can be fined up to $100,000 or face six months imprisonment.

Elusive kiwi

Arthur’s Pass village is the only tourism centre in New Zealand within a great spotted kiwi/roroa habitat. You are highly unlikely to see one, but you may hear their calls at night as they often forage in the forest near the village.

Kiwi share many characteristics with mammals. They have whiskers and hair-like feathers and acute senses of smell, touch and hearing. Unique among birds, their nostrils are at the end of their beaks.
Birds commonly seen and heard around Arthur’s Pass

- Fantails/pīwakawaka will often twitter and dart around walkers, hawking insects disturbed by human passage.
- Tomtits/miromiro, distinctively black with a white or yellowish breast, are often seen perched on low branches, waiting for insect prey.
- The melodious call of the bellbird/korimako often precedes a sighting of these dark green birds. They are primarily nectar feeders.
- You might not see them, but you are likely to hear the continuous high pitched warble of the grey warbler/riroriro.
- Riflemen/tītītipounamu are the smallest bird in New Zealand and can be seen probing the bark of trees or insects.

Common introduced birds like chaffinches, blackbirds, song thrushes, finches and redpolls will be seen in the forest and around the village.

Rare native birds in the Arthur’s Pass area

- The blue duck/whio (right) inhabits upper river valleys. They are seen in pairs, sometimes standing on river boulders. Their presence is often given away by the male’s shrill whistle.
- Parakeets/kākāriki (centre) can sometimes be heard chattering high in the beech forest canopy. Of particular note is the critically endangered orange-fronted parakeet, which is found only here and in the Hurunui valley further north.
- The yellowhead/mohua is a delightful and noisy forest bird. It is now rare due to predation by stoats and rats, and in the Arthur’s Pass area, is found only in a single valley.
- The rock wren/pīwauwau (right) is New Zealand’s only truly alpine bird, spending all of its life above the timberline. Along with the rifleman, they are the only surviving members of the ancient family of New Zealand wrens. It can occasionally be seen above the bush line and in the Otira valley. A small bird, it is recognisable by its distinctive bobbing up and down motion when perching.

Pick up the brochure Bird watching in Arthur’s Pass National Park for more details.
Impact of introduced pests . . .

New Zealand was once a land with no mammals except for two species of bat, and prolific bird-life. Consequently our native birds did not evolve to deal with mammalian predators; some became ground-nesting and even lost the ability to fly.

When humans arrived, they introduced many mammals, either accidentally or deliberately. Some introduced mammals have had a catastrophic effect on New Zealand’s native animals, with many becoming extinct or very rare.

The most devastating introduced mammal predators are rats, stoats, ferrets, possums and cats. All of these are present in the Arthur’s Pass area.

Maintaining the diversity of Arthur’s Pass bird life relies on controlling these introduced pests. Arthur’s Pass Wildlife Trust is a voluntary programme run by the tiny local community. This group undertakes intensive stoat and possum trapping and species monitoring, particularly the great spotted kiwi/roroa, blue duck/whio and kea.

Arthur’s Pass Wildlife Trust needs your help

The trust was established in 2010 as a community-driven initiative to encourage and promote the conservation and enhancement of the flora and fauna within Arthur’s Pass National Park.

Your generous donation will greatly assist our work.

Send to the trust— PO Box 51010, Arthur’s Pass 7654 or deposit —Arthur’s Pass Wildlife Trust, a/c 02-0800-0842003-000, BNZ Christchurch

for more information email secretary@apwt.org.nz

. . . and weeds

Some introduced plants have moved beyond gardens and fields and are now serious weeds, aggressively invading natural habitats and excluding native plants.

Clearing riverbed invaders—lupins

It is an expensive job keeping plant invaders at bay—particularly those that seed prolifically and whose seed disperses across great distances.

At Arthur’s Pass, the most noticeable weeds are lupins and broom, which are spreading on to the open gravel riverbeds on the eastern side of Arthur’s Pass. They may have pretty flowers, but they also exclude native plants and nesting birds from these areas and destroy the dynamics of braided rivers.

Wildings on the march

As you journey from the east to Arthur’s Pass, you’ll note a sea of pine tree saplings marching across the hill slopes around Craigieburn Forest Park. These wilding pines are the result of forest research in the late 1950s with the aim to stabilise soil in the eroding headwater catchments.

These northern-hemisphere conifers established remarkably well considering the challenging terrain and climate. One species in particular, contorta pine, flourished with light wind-borne seeds (thousands in a tree’s lifetime) spread easily by the strong north-west winds.

Now a serious problem, these invasive wildings have the potential to change the unique landscape, ecology and native habitats of the Waimakariri Basin forever.

WELRA (Waimakariri Ecological and Landscape Restoration Alliance) was established in 2008, with representatives and volunteers from central and local government, land owners, community and environmental groups. Its focus is to control the spread of wilding pines, with funding from a range of agencies and assistance from volunteers.
Activities

What to do at Arthur’s Pass

Get the best of every season

Choosing the right walk/tramp

Map

Short walks/walking tracks/short tramps

In the village

Millennium Walk
Arthur’s Pass Historic Walk
Devils Punchbowl Walking Track

West Coast side of the village

Arthur’s Pass Walking Track
Bealey Valley Walking Track
Dobson Nature Walk
Lake Misery Walking Track
Temple Basin Tramping Track
Otira Valley Track
Cockayne Nature Walk

East coast side of the village

Old Coach Road Walk
O’Malleys Track to Turkey Flat
Bealey Spur Track

Full-day tramps and routes

Carroll Hut
Avalanche Peak
Cons Track
Mt Aicken Track

Overnight tramps and routes

Hawdon Hut
Carrington Hut
Hamilton Hut
Edwards Hut
Casey Hut
Goat Pass Hut

Other activities

Skiing/snowboarding
Mountaineering
Mountain biking
Hunting

Short walks/places to visit

off the Great Alpine Highway (Highway 73)

Arthur’s Pass Historic Walk guide

Where to stay

Camping
Other accommodation/services

Useful information

What to do at Arthur’s Pass

There’s a wide range of things to see and do at Arthur’s Pass. Even if you’re not into walking or the weather’s just not up to it, there’s plenty to see in the village and close by.

**Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre** is open every day except Christmas day. See the static and interactive displays about the natural, cultural and historic features of Arthur’s Pass. For small children there’s Kea Corner and older children can become ‘Kiwi Rangers’ through a self-guided discovery booklet about Arthur’s Pass National Park. When the Kiwi Ranger booklet is completed they are presented with a badge for Arthur’s Pass and can collect similar badges at some other national parks.

Check out the historic sites along the Great Alpine Highway. Must-sees are the Chapel of the Snows, the viaduct lookout at Deaths Corner and the Otira Gorge rock-shelter lookout.

Or just enjoy the friendly hospitality of this remote alpine village and meet the interesting people who choose to live here.

Get the best of every season

Whatever season you visit Arthur’s Pass, there’s something unique and special to see.

**Spring (September, October, and November)**

- Warmer weather and lengthening days provide great opportunities for photos of snow-capped peaks with the melting snow and spring rains producing spectacular waterfalls. Some of the alpine flowers will be starting to bloom towards the end of spring.
- Rare wrybills/ngutu pare (the only bird in the world with a bent beak) begin nesting on the Waimakariri river bed.
- Arthur’s Pass is still a fairly quiet time of year for tourist numbers if you’re looking for a retreat. Depending on the year, spring skiing may be an option as well as ice climbing in September. Early November marks the start of the high-country fishing season.
Summer (December, January, February) ..............................

- The most likely time of year for sunshine and dry weather!
- This is the best time for viewing alpine flowers: Dobson Nature Walk and the upper Otira valley showcase some of the best of these. Towards the end of summer, rātā will be starting to flower in the Otira Gorge.
- Main mountaineering season runs from December to February and the routes and tracks are well used. In February the annual Speights Coast to Coast multisport race and Avalanche Peak Challenge take place.
- There’s also fantastic fishing in the high-country lakes and rivers.
- The visitor centre runs a summer programme around late December/early January with guided walks, films, talks and children’s activities.

Autumn (March, April, May) ......................................................

- This is one of the nicest times to visit with settled weather, cooler days, and fewer crowds.
- Deer hunting becomes very popular around Easter with ‘the Roar’ and the high-country lakes and rivers remain open for fishing until late April.
- Stop in on the way from Canterbury to the Wild Foods weekend in Hokitika (March).

Winter (June, July, August) .......................................................

- Winter conditions are likely on all peaks—ice axe, crampons and alpine experience are required on many routes. But there are still good opportunities for beech-forest and lower-altitude walks.
- Mainline Steam (www.mainlinesteam.co.nz) run about a dozen steam-train trips from Christchurch for rail enthusiasts or those just wanting to get out of the city for the day.
- Ski at Temple Basin, or on any of the four skifields between Arthur’s Pass and Springfield.
- The ice-climbing season starts in August.
- Lakes Pearson and Lyndon reopen for winter fishing and there is chamois hunting around the park
- This is best time of year for hearing the great spotted kiwi/roroa calling at night around the township.

Choosing the right walk/tramp

How long do you want to walk for?
Short walks range from one to three hours return and can be comfortably walked in sensible shoes.
You will need at least three hours for a return trip to the bush line on any of the mountain walks and need good walking boots/shoes.
Day walks with decent boots will take you to the summit of some of the close mountains or along river valleys.
Overnight tramps/routes require additional skills and equipment and are covered separately.

What is the weather like?
If it is raining, stormy or there is low cloud around the mountains, select a walk that stays below the bush line.
Above the bush line there will probably be no views and conditions will be unpleasant at best and dangerous at worst. Bad weather usually comes from the west or north-west, in which case consider a walk further east (e.g. Bealey Spur, Craigieburn or Kura Tāwhiti/Castle Hill) where conditions are often drier. In good weather remember to take a sun hat, sunglasses and sun-block.
The weather can change quickly at Arthur’s Pass. For the latest weather conditions visit the visitor centre.
Do you have the right skills and experience?
Arthur’s Pass has a wide range of walks that can be done in a day. While some walks are relatively easy, traversing scenic valley floors, others involve steep climbs to the bush line and above.
All walks, except the Arthur’s Pass Historic Walk, involve rough and uneven ground. Refer to the track grades on next page to choose a walk that suits your level of fitness and experience in New Zealand conditions.

Do you have adequate equipment?
Do not proceed above the bush line on to the open tops unless you have sturdy footwear, a waterproof parka and spare warm clothing including warm headwear and gloves.
If you plan to visit the open tops you must have a compass and map and know how to use them. Conditions can change rapidly and you may need these for navigation if visibility deteriorates unexpectedly.
In winter conditions, any walks above the bush line may involve snow and ice travel and you will need appropriate climbing equipment and experience.
Always let someone know where you have gone and when you expect to get back.

Talk grades
Choose the type of track that matches your skills, fitness and the experience you want—be realistic.

Safety is your responsibility.

Easy access short walk
- Easy walking for up to an hour.
- Track is well formed, with an even surface.
- Few or no steps or slopes.
- Suitable for people of all abilities and fitness.
- Stream and river crossings are bridged.
- Walking shoes required.

Short walk
- Easy walking for up to an hour.
- Track is well formed, with an even surface.
- There may be steps or slopes.
- Suitable for people of most abilities and fitness.
- Stream and river crossings are bridged.
- Walking shoes required.

Walking track
- Easy to moderate walking from a few minutes to a day.
- Track is mostly well formed, some sections may be steep, rough or muddy.
- Suitable for people with low to moderate fitness and abilities.
- Clearly signposted. Stream and river crossings are bridged.
- Walking shoes or light tramping/hiking boots required.

Tramping track
- Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking.
- Track is mostly unformed with steep, rough or muddy sections.
- Suitable for people with good fitness. Moderate to high-level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills required.
- Track has markers, poles or rock cairns.
- Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.
- Tramping/hiking boots required.
Short walks, walking tracks and short tramps

In the village

Millennium Walk
Walking time—10 minutes, (40 metres)
Starting at the visitor centre, this short walk, suitable for prams, takes you over a little stone bridge where you can see Avalanche Creek Waterfall. From here you can continue along the path to a viewing platform closer to the waterfall, but this section is steep and may be unsuitable for prams.

Arthur’s Pass Historic Walk
Walking time—1 hour 30 minutes full round trip, or just do part of it
This leisurely, easy walk takes you around Arthur’s Pass village to various historic sites. At each site photographs show you how the village used to look in the early 1900s. See page 45 for a detailed description.

Devils Punchbowl Walking Track
Walking time—30 minutes (1 km)
The top of this spectacular 131-metre fall can be seen from the main road, (see photo page 25) but a walk up to the base of the waterfall is well worth doing at any time of the year.
From Punchbowl car park (signposted off the highway), a footbridge crosses the Bealey River. The next bridge, over Devils Punchbowl Creek, has a good view of the waterfall. From here, a series of steps climb 150 vertical metres to a viewing platform at the base of this spectacular waterfall. Return the same way.

West Coast side of the village

Arthur’s Pass Walking Track
Walking time—1 hour 20 minutes one way (3.4 km)
This new walk linking a series of tracks now provides the chance to walk from Arthur’s Pass village to view the Dobson Memorial at Arthur’s Pass summit. The walk presents the best of Arthur’s Pass with diverse alpine vegetation, waterfalls, wetlands and rich history, interspersed with stunning views of the mountains. The track gradient is generally gentle, with some steep steps either side of Bridal Veil Creek.
Start at the Punchbowl, Bealey Chasm (Jacks Hut) or Temple Basin car parks to walk all or part of the track and return the same way.
From Punchbowl car park it’s a 20-minute walk to the Bridal Veil Falls lookout (right) through subalpine mountain-beech forest and Dracophyllum to a small clearing with a picnic table, good views of the falls, surrounding peaks and Arthur’s Pass village. Note the intense red leaves of the Dr Seuss-like Dracophyllum in spring/summer.
After crossing Bridal Veil Creek, the track travels through alpine shrublands and wetlands before reaching Jacks Hut—a restored roadman’s cottage. At Jacks Hut cross SH 73 to Bealey Chasm car park and follow the track through old-growth mountain beech—a
good place for bird watching.

The track joins onto the Dobson Nature Walk. At the track intersection, turn right to follow the track to the road which is crossed to reach the Temple Basin car park, or turn left to follow the Dobson Nature Walk for 10 minutes to the track end. At the end of the track you can see Dobson Memorial on the opposite side of the road. The obelisk memorial (right) commemorates Arthur Dudley Dobson, the surveyor who gave the modern name to Arthur’s Pass. This is the highest point on the road before it drops to the West Coast.

The Lake Misery Track, linking Dobson Nature Walk with Otira Valley Track starts here, or you can return to Temple Basin car park or Arthur’s Pass Walking Track. It is not safe to cross the highway from this point or to walk along the road.

**Bealey Valley Track**

*Walking times*

5 minutes to Bealey Chasm (300 metres),
25 minutes to track end (1.2 km).

From the car park opposite Jacks Hut, the track follows a short section of the Arthur’s Pass Walking Track before branching off to cross Bealey Chasm—a narrow channel where the river cascades over huge boulders.

For stunning views of Mt Rolleston/Kaimatau, continue on for a couple of minutes, climbing a hill to a snowgrass clearing. The track re-enters the beech forest and ends when you reach the Bealey River. This track is subject to avalanche hazard in winter past this point; please heed the warning signs.

**Dobson Nature Walk**

*Walking time—15 minutes (750 metres)*

The track starts at the Temple Basin car park. After approx. 200 m, cross the road and follow the track as it leads you in a semi-circle through a rich variety of subalpine and alpine plants, including herbs, tussocks, shrubs and flowers and the Mt Cook buttercup *Ranunculus lyallii* (right). The alpine flowers are in bloom from November to February.

There are a few interpretation points along the walk and seats along the way with good views of the surrounding mountains. An excellent self-guided booklet about the different native plants and their habitats is available from the Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre.

The track finishes opposite the Dobson Memorial on the other side of the road. Lake Misery Track leading to the Otira Valley Track starts here. You can either return the same way to the car park, or walk further.

**Lake Misery Track**

*Walking time—20 minutes (1 km)*

This link track turns off the Dobson Nature Walk to take you through to the Otira Valley Track when Lake Misery is low (when the lake is high the board walk is under water!). Walk through tall red tussock to the Otira Valley Track, which you can either walk up to the footbridge, or down to the car park on SH 73.
**Temple Basin**
(to day-shelter and ski facilities)

*Walking time—3 hours return (1.2 km, climbing 500 vertical metres)*

A nature photographer’s dream. This track starts from above the bush line at the Temple Basin car park, five km north of Arthur’s Pass village. It zig-zags steeply up the hill to an open tussock basin and the ski-club buildings. On a clear day you get magnificent views of Mt Rolleston/Kaimatau across the valley.

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**Otira Valley Track**
(to footbridge)

*Walking time—45 minutes to footbridge*

This relatively easy-graded track follows up a deep alpine valley on the northern side of Mt Rolleston/Kaimatau. The track starts at a car park just north of the Arthur’s Pass summit. It climbs over an old glacial moraine, then follows the contour through subalpine scrub and tussock to the Otira River footbridge. On a good day this is an awesome walk to view the summer alpine flowers.

The track finishes at the footbridge. Travel past this point requires map-reading and route-finding skills and is for experienced alpine trampers and mountaineers only.

*This track is subject to avalanche hazard in winter; please heed the warning signs.*

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**Cockayne Nature Walk**

*Walking time—30 minutes return (800 metres)*

This rough loop track winds through the diverse podocarp broadleaf forest of the West Coast. The track starts from the car park at the end of the side road, just on the west side of the Kellys Creek State Highway 73 bridge, 17 km west of Arthur’s Pass. It climbs up over a small hill and comes out near State Highway 73 with a short track leading back to the car park. The track is named after Dr Leonard Cockayne, a renowned botanist who provided the original inspiration to create Arthur’s Pass National Park.
East coast side of the village

Old Coach Road Walk

Walking time—30 minutes return (1.1 km)

This pleasant forest walk starts and finishes near Greyneys Shelter, six km east of Arthur’s Pass village. It follows a gently-graded section of the century-old coach road and leads back to the shelter on a more recent track.

The coach road was cut into the hillside to avoid the Bealey riverbed, which is prone to floods. You can still see sections of old rock-walling along one part of the track. It is suitable for all-terrain baby buggies. At the northern end of the track there is a rope handrail. You can use it for guidance, so shut your eyes and use your other senses as you move through the forest.

O’Malleys Track

Walking time—45 minutes to Turkey Flat (2 km)

This is the first section of an overnight route up the Waimakariri River. The car-park entrance is on a sharp bend at the Christchurch end of the long one-way Bealey Bridge across the Waimakariri River, 10 km east from Arthur’s Pass.

The track sidles through mountain-beech forest along slopes above the river. After 45 minutes you drop down to your destination, a large open area dotted with scrubby matagouri. This is known as Turkey Flat, a huge fan of alluvium disgorged from Jordan Stream, a side-stream of the Waimakariri River.

The track continues further up the Waimakariri valley for overnight tramps and routes.

Bealey Spur Track

Walking time—2 hours 30 mins (6 km)

This walk has stunning views in fine weather. It is often a good choice when north-westerly winds are bringing rain to Arthur’s Pass—being further east, it is drier in these conditions. The track appeals to many walkers because it is more gradual than most of the alpine tracks around Arthur’s Pass village, and it does not climb above the bush line. It is well marked and is suitable for reasonably fit people who are well equipped.

The track starts from the car park off State Highway 73, just past the Bealey Hotel, 14 km south of Arthur’s Pass village. From the car park walk up the road (Cloudesley Road) to the track start at the top.

The track climbs gently up the spur, through mountain-beech forest. In summer look out for red-flowering mistletoe/pirirangi (right) near the start of the track. At one point the track comes close to a cliff with a dramatic view down to Bruce Stream—take care with children. Higher up, the track passes through tussock grasslands and subalpine scrub and passes near several tarns. There are expansive views of the Waimakariri River valley and surrounding mountains.

The track ends at an historic hut, used by musterers in the days when this area was used for summer grazing for sheep. Bealey Spur Hut is a basic (free) six-bunk hut.
Full-day tramps and routes

Track grades
Choose the type of track that matches your skills, fitness and the experience you want—be realistic. **Safety is your responsibility.**

**Tramping track**
- Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking.
- Track is mostly unformed with steep, rough or muddy sections.
- Suitable for people with good fitness. Moderate to high-level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills required.
- Track has markers, poles or rock cairns.
- Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.
- Tramping/hiking boots required

**Route**
- Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking.
- Track unformed and natural, rough, muddy or very steep.
- Suitable for people with above-average fitness. High-level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills required.
- Complete self-sufficiency required.
- Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.
- Sturdy tramping/hiking boots required.

Longer tramps/hikes take you into some of the finest scenery and best viewpoints from the village. If you are up to it, they give you a real appreciation of the wilderness nature of the South Island mountains.

The remote experience comes with certain risks; the tracks above the bush line or into valley heads are usually rough underfoot. In some places there is no track at all and you must follow route markers. Some routes are unmarked because of the ever-changing nature of the terrain due to slips and floods and you must be a skilled navigator and able to read the terrain to safely traverse these areas.

**On all tracks**
- Tell someone where you are going. You can use the computer at the visitor centre during opening hours to log your intentions through the Adventuresmart website.
- Take warm clothing and raincoat, sunhat and sunscreen, something to eat and drink, and strong footwear. Do not wear jeans. Boots are recommended footwear. Remember that mountain weather can change quickly, so you need to be equipped for all weather conditions. **See also pages 21–22.**

**Walking above the bush line**
- Take a map and route guide—available from the Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre. A compass is recommended in the event of poor visibility.
- Check the weather forecast before you go.
- Walking above the bush line (the upper edge of the forest) is recommended only in good weather conditions as you need good visibility to find your way. Above the bush line you are very exposed to the severity of the mountain weather.
- Avalanche Peak is the only mountain climb which is marked above the bush line; it has poles marking the route to the summit. On all other mountains, routes above the bush line are not marked and are recommended for experienced alpine trampers or mountaineers only.
- When snow covers the ground, routes will be less obvious and there may also be a danger of avalanches and ice—mountaineering equipment is recommended and you will need to have the skills to assess avalanche risk.
Carroll Hut

*Walking time—3 hours*

This track starts at Kellys Creek, three km north of Otira village. It is a steep climb through rātā/kāmahi forest and subalpine scrub. This leads on to tussock grasslands surrounding the hut on Kelly Range. On fine days there are good views from the saddle behind the hut, looking down the Taramakau River to the West Coast. Carroll Hut is standard 10 bunk hut (1 hut ticket/night).

Avalanche Peak

*Tramping track to bush line, marked routes above bush line*

*Tramping times. To bushline—1 hour 30 min, to summit—3–4 hours*

Many people have enjoyed this mountain-top trip offering panoramic views of the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana. However, some have met with tragedy because they did not realise the possible dangers of this route. This is an extremely steep and rocky journey to the top of an 1833-metre peak. The climb is 1,100 m vertical from the village (over just 2.5 km horizontal), and on a fine day, you will be rewarded with grand views of the surrounding peaks, particularly Mt Rolleston/Kaimatau and the Crow Glacier on its southern face. This is a very popular day tramp as it is the only peak in Arthur’s Pass that is marked by a poled route to the summit.

There are two tracks to the summit, Scotts Track and Avalanche Peak Track, both of which start from Arthur’s Pass village.

If you wish to climb to the bush line only, Scotts Track is the best local track for views, particularly of Mt Rolleston/Kaimatau, the highest peak near Arthur’s Pass village. You also get an excellent view of Punchbowl Falls 10 minutes up from the start of the track.

Each track takes 1 hour 30 minutes to the bush line. They then become poled routes up tussock ridges. Markers on Scotts Track are orange and the markers for Avalanche Peak Track, yellow. The routes meet a short distance below the summit, making a round trip possible, but only in fine weather and with good track conditions. *Take care beyond the junction on the final narrow ridge to the summit.*

If you are venturing above the bush line carry warm, waterproof clothing. You should not proceed further if the weather is bad or visibility is poor. Caution is needed in snow—this mountain is aptly named. In winter this track is subject to avalanche hazard and you must carry mountaineering equipment and know how to use it.

Be sure to take the map and route guide available from the Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre. The route guide contains important safety information.

Cons Track

*Walking time—2 hours 30 min to bush line*

*Steep and difficult!* This track follows a steep crested ridge from the north side of Punchbowl Creek to the bush line.

Mt Aicken Track

*Walking time—3 hours 30 min to bush line*

This track begins from the Punchbowl car park. The turnoff is signposted 15 minutes up the Devils Punchbowl Walking Track. The track passes an old pipeline that fed an electricity generator used during the rail tunnel construction, then climbs steeply to the bush line.
Overnight tramps and routes

There’s an extensive network of 13 routes in Arthur’s Pass National Park, ranging from 2–5 days up river valleys and over mountain passes. Often travelling above the bush line and requiring route-finding and river-crossing skills, these routes are for experienced trampers only.

However, the beginning sections of some of the routes up river valleys to the first huts and back are suitable for moderately fit and experienced trampers.

The following options provide a 3–6 hour walk to a hut for an overnight stay and back.

See the Tramping in Arthur’s Pass National Park brochure to find out more and you must get the latest information from the visitor centre staff or the DOC website before setting out on any of these routes. As these tracks follow river valleys note that river and weather conditions can change daily.

Hut grades
Serviced hut—bunks or sleeping platforms with mattresses. Heating, water supply, toilet and hand-washing facilities. 2 hut tickets per adult per night.
Standard hut—bunks or sleeping platforms with mattresses, toilet and water supply. 1 hut ticket per adult per night.
Basic hut—basic shelter with limited facilities and services. Free.

Before your trip—purchase a Backcountry Hut Pass or Backcountry Hut Tickets from a DOC visitor centre.

Hawdon Hut (Route guide 8)
3 hours
The track to Hawdon Hut begins at the Hawdon Shelter, accessed from Mt White Road. The track follows the Hawdon River for about 9 km to the Hawdon Hut with numerous river crossings—do not attempt if flows are high or rain is forecast. Hawdon Hut is a 20-bunk serviced hut (3 hut tickets/night).

Carrington Hut (Route guide 1)
5 hours
This track begins at the Bealey Bridge and follows the Waimakariri River for 14 km to its head-waters at the base of the Southern Alps. There are some deep river crossings—do not attempt if flows are high or rain is forecast. Carrington Hut is the largest serviced hut in the park with 36 bunks (3 hut tickets/night).
Hamilton Hut (Route guide 12)
6–7 hours
The track to Hamilton Hut is accessed from the car park off SH 73 by Cass and follows the Cass River. After crossing Cass Saddle (1326 m) the track follows Hamilton Creek to the hut at the confluence of the Harper River. **There are some river crossings along this 12-km track, do not attempt if flows are high or rain is forecast. This track is also subject to avalanche hazard in winter.**
Hamilton Hut is a 20-bunk serviced hut (3 hut tickets/night).

Edwards Hut (Route guide 8)
4–5 hours
A 7-km tramp up the Edwards River takes you to Edwards Hut, situated at the base of a U-shaped glacial valley. **Multiple river crossings are required—do not attempt if flows are high or rain is forecast.**
Edwards Hut is a 14-bunk serviced hut (3 hut tickets/night).

Casey Hut (Route guide 10)
7–8 hours
The 12-km track begins at Andrews Shelter, traversing Andrews Stream and over Casey Saddle (777 m). **Minor stream crossings are involved—do not attempt if heavy rain is forecast.**
Casey Hut is a 16-bunk serviced hut (3 hut tickets/night).

Goat Pass Hut (Route guide 6)
5 hours
This hut is located at 1070 m on the Main Divide after an 8-km tramp along the Mingha River. **Multiple river crossings are required—do not attempt if flows are high or rain is forecast. This track is also subject to avalanche hazard in winter.**
Goat Pass Hut is a 20-bunk standard hut (1 hut ticket/night).

Other activities

Skiing/snowboarding
In true pioneering spirit, skiing at Arthur’s Pass village dates back to 1927 and today there are now five ski fields all within an hour’s drive from the village. These fields provide skiers and snowboarders with a variety of challenges and terrains.

Four of these ski fields are club operated, and the largest, Porters, is a commercial ski field providing a wide range of services, tows, lessons etc. While Temple Basin, Cheeseman, Broken River and Craigieburn ski fields are all club operated, they are all fully open to the public. The friendly club atmosphere welcomes visitors anytime. You can hire equipment at Cheeseman and Temple Basin, and all have food and drink for sale. Find out more from the visitors centre or visit www.snow.co.nz for more information.

Mountaineering
The mountain ranges of the Arthur’s Pass region have provided a climbing escape close to the main centres of Christchurch and Greymouth since 1891. Within the national park the terrain varies from low hills capable of being climbed by almost anybody of modest fitness and experience, to heavily glaciated peaks and steep face-routes all of which require a mountaineering skills developed through time and experience.
Visit www.softrock.co.nz for more information.

Mountain biking
Mountain biking is not generally permitted in any of the national parks, but following a trial to determine the impact of mountain biking on the tracks and other user expectations, Arthur’s Pass Poulter valley (right) has now been opened up for mountain biking.

For full information on these and other routes, get the route guides available free on the DOC website, or for sale in the Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre. Before undertaking any route call into the visitor centre to get the latest track and weather updates.
Access is from Mt White Road and the first 13-km section of the track is Intermediate grade, across river terraces and fans to reach the park boundary. From the park boundary fence, it is an Easy grade 8-km ride along an old 4WD track through bush to Casey Hut (serviced 16-bunk hut, 3 hut ticket/night). Poulter Hut (standard 10-bunk hut, 1 hut ticket/night) is 6 km further on and marks the end of the mountain-biking access in the national park. For full details see Route guide 10a—Poulter valley mountain biking.

The nearby Craigieburn Forest Park is a mountain-biking mecca. For more information see the brochure Mountain biking in Canterbury available from the visitor centre or free on the DOC website.

### Hunting

Arthur’s Pass National Park is open for recreational hunting of large game year-round. Pigs, red deer and chamois are present in low to moderate numbers and populations can be quite localised. Only centre-fire rifles are permitted and spotlighting is prohibited.

You will need a hunting permit—available on-line via the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz, or through the Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre. Both the visitor centre and website have further details about access and areas excluded from hunting.

### Dogs

Dogs are not permitted (on a lead or otherwise) in any national park. Arthur’s Pass village is not part of the park boundary so you may walk your dog on a lead along the village roads. Please clean up after your dog.

### Short walks and places to visit off the Great Alpine Highway (SH73)

#### Kura Tāwhiti/Castle Hill Conservation Area

These large limestone formations, up to 30 m high, can be seen from the highway. However, their size is best appreciated up close by walking 10–15 minutes along the easy entry track. A network of unmarked but worn tracks can then be followed around the formations. This area is a world-renowned rock-climbing site and you are likely to see climbers pitting their skill against the rocks. Take care if you climb any of the formations, particularly in wet weather.

This place has special significance to the first occupants, Waitaha, and through many generations to present day Ngāi Tahu, the tribe who share joint management of this area with the Department of Conservation. Find out more in the brochure Kura Tāwhiti, available from local Department of Conservation visitor centres.

#### Cave Stream Scenic Reserve

For more information on this area and going through the cave, refer to the brochure Cave Stream Scenic Reserve. The limestone formations nearby were the setting for the filming of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe.

#### Craigieburn Forest Park

There are several walks in the mountain-beech forest on the lower slopes of the Craigieburn Range. This area is often dry when north-westerly conditions are bringing rain to Arthur’s Pass. The best walk is to the superb viewpoint on the summit of Helicopter Hill.

#### Lake Pearson/Moana Rua

Lying in a glacially-eroded valley, 607 m above sea level, this hourglass-shaped high-country lake is extremely popular for fishing, kayaking, bird watching and camping. A very picturesque site to break your journey.

#### Avoca Homestead

The historic Avoca Homestead was built in 1906 and has undergone extensive renovation to preserve its heritage value. Access is via Craigieburn Road (turn off SH73 near Cass). There are six railway crossings along the 25-km stretch with no warnings of oncoming trains. There are also numerous gates across the road. Leave all gates as you find them. The road is 2WD to within a 30-minute walk to the homestead, and 4WD access is possible to within a kilometre. The homestead is reached after crossing Broken River. **Access might not be possible when the river is high.**

You can stay at the restored homestead. It is a standard 6-bunk hut (one hut ticket/night).
Arthur’s Pass Historic Walk

The walk was originally developed to interpret the story of the village using historical photographs. This booklet also notes some obvious natural features you will encounter on the way. As you walk to plaque 1, you are skirting mountain-beech/tawhairauriki forest, which cloaks this entire valley up to the bush line. Refer to page 12 for more on the New Zealand beeches.

1. Glasgow Bridge

The main road once crossed Avalanche Creek here. The old bridge can be seen on the plaque photo. The numerous buildings shown, which were associated with the railway and tunnel construction, have been demolished. The foundations of the original bridge are still in place next to Glasgow Bridge, named after Melville James Pitt Glasgow, a mountaineer who was involved with the building of the Arthur’s Pass Chapel of the Snows. Visitors are welcome to enter the interdenominational chapel.

Just after the bridge, a short detour to the left leads to a platform overlooking a waterfall on Avalanche Creek. The waterfall is often floodlit at night. Notice how the gap in the beech-forest canopy and the humidity from the falls and stream allow a variety of streamside shrubs, ferns and mosses to thrive here.

2. Brake’s store

Jack Brake was the first storekeeper in Arthur’s Pass during the busy tunnel construction days. The YHA hostel now occupies the original site of Brake’s store. The store catered for most of the day-to-day needs of the tunnellers, their families and the travelling public. Meat, groceries, hardware, medicines, coal, firearms, clothing and postage stamps were among the goods sold.

In 1942 Brake moved across to the site of the present-day store and tearooms, originally a five-roomed railway engineer’s house. Jack Brake’s son Brian achieved international fame as a photographer.

3. Coberger’s shop

Oscar A Coberger came to Arthur’s Pass in 1928 as an alpine guide. He established an alpine sports depot in this building and provided equipment and service to
4. Tunnellers’ cottages main street  
   Bealey Flat 1910

Tunnellers’ huts dating from 1908 still remain on both sides of the main road. These originally unlined dwellings were sold at the completion of the tunnel in 1923 and are now privately owned as holiday cottages. The large building on the left-hand side of the plaque photo is the old schoolhouse, used during the tunnelling days.

It is interesting to note the different names the village has been called over the years—Camping Flat, McLean’s Town, Bealey Flat, as well as Arthur’s Pass.

The walk to plaque 5 takes you through the car park for the Devils Punchbowl Falls. Before you enter the beech forest 100 m further on, look around you for clues to the valley’s glacial past. Notice how the falls plunge out of a hanging valley, and how the forested fronts of the ridges are truncated and smoothed out.

5. Bealey Swingbridge

The Arthur’s Pass area has been popular with sightseers and visitors for a long time. The most popular walk is to the Devils Punchbowl Falls (131 m). The present bridge is the most recent of several used to take visitors to the falls. Floods in the Bealey River have carried earlier bridges away. In 1962 the floodwaters washed away a cottage at the back of the Chalet Restaurant.

The increasing use of Arthur’s Pass, especially at the time of the first train excursions around 1924, coincided with damage to the native vegetation by enthusiastic plant gatherers. Botanist Leonard Cockayne led a campaign to set aside land around Arthur’s Pass for National Park purposes in 1901. Concerned people pressured the government to further protect and reserve the land. In 1929, 48,600 hectares (120,000 acres) were gazetted as national park. Progressive additions have been made and the park now covers 114,839 hectares (283,652 acres).

6. Punchbowl power-station site

This is the site of the power house which was built in 1909 to generate electricity for the construction of the rail tunnel. Power was needed for lighting, ventilation, air compressors, and for pumping water out of the tunnel.

The concrete foundations were for generators driven by Pelton wheels. The water to drive the wheels was piped from the top of Devils Punchbowl Falls through tunnels and penstocks down the steep hill next to the falls. Part of the pipe line and tunnel can still be seen 20 minutes up Mt Aicken Track. The power house was removed in 1929.

7. Avalanche Creek and main road  
   Arthur’s Pass 1917

An interesting comparison can be made between the main road in 1917 and today. The road level has been raised and most of the tunnel workers’ huts removed, but some, on the right-hand side, remain.

Part of the large building on the left-hand side was originally a dining hall for unmarried tunnel and railway workers. Guy Butler bought it and enlarged it by adding part of the old Otira Schoolhouse before opening it as a guest house in 1923. In 1969 the building was developed as an Outdoor Education centre for use by school groups.

8. Arthur’s Pass to Otira rail tunnel

The tunnel is 8.5 km long and is on a gradient down to Otira of 1 in 33, a fall of 278 m. It was drilled from both sides, the first shot being fired from the Otira end in 1908. When the two headings met in 1918, the alignment and levels were accurate to within 3 cm. World War I, contract problems, high labour turnover and harsh weather conditions meant that the tunnel did not open for rail traffic until 1923.

The turntable nearby was built to replace the original one near the engine shed. It had to be long enough to take the large Kb-class steam locomotives. These

trampers, climbers and skiers for about 50 years. This building is now home to the Wobbly Kea café.

Oscar brought with him from Germany an enthusiasm for skiing, at a time when many visitors to Arthur’s Pass were taking up the sport.

In 1929 the Christchurch Ski Club (now Temple Basin Ski Club) was formed. Development of Temple Basin commenced in 1933 with the building of a hut. A ski tow, one of the first in New Zealand, was installed in 1948.
were, in their day, the most powerful locomotives in New Zealand.

9. Arthur Pass Railway Station

The first railway station complete with refreshments and dining rooms was constructed in Arthur’s Pass when the line reached here from Springfield in 1915. The present station was built in 1966 to replace the previous one which burnt down. Steam trains were replaced by diesel locomotives in the late 1960s.

Two brass plaques at the station were among those placed by the Institute of Professional Engineers of New Zealand to mark 150 years of New Zealand engineering. They commemorate the construction of the Midland Line and the drilling of the Otira Tunnel. An historical mural inside the waiting room, depicting attractions along the highway, should not be missed.

The railway yards were built up with spoil excavated from the tunnel. The subway floor is on the original level of the yards.

10. Arthur’s Pass to Otira coaching link

Before the advent of the railway, the 274 km horse-drawn coach journey from Christchurch to Hokitika took 36 hours, including an overnight stop at Bealey. As the railway advanced eastward and westward, coaches transported passengers between the rail-heads, over Arthur’s Pass, until the tunnel was opened in 1923. This trip was exhilarating, sometimes dangerous, and the weather was often miserable.

The Cobb and Co-type mail coaches were licensed to carry up to 17 passengers. On steep sections of the road, passengers were asked to assist the horses by getting out of the coach and walking. The average working life of a horse on this section of road was 18 months. Accounts of accidents are common but there were remarkably few fatal incidents during the 57 years that the coaches linked Canterbury and Westland. You can see one of the original coaches at the Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre.

On the knob just to the south of this plaque are the remains of one of the concrete ‘monuments’ from which surveying for the tunnel was done.

11. Warden of the Snows

Appointed to Arthur’s Pass in 1950 as one of the first full-time professional rangers in the country, Ray Cleland set new standards in conservation and recreation.

Ray made the park more accessible and enjoyable for visitors, creating the Bridal Veil Track, and building six back-country huts. He was instrumental in the development of the 48-bunk youth hostel and the Chapel of the Snows.

He shared his passion for nature with the park visitors, creating an alpine garden and giving evening talks.

In 1958 he became supervisor of all national parks—a leader whose influence is still felt today.

Ray’s rock has been resurrected in Arthur’s Pass to acknowledge his contribution to the management of our national parks.
Where to stay

Camping sites:

**Avalanche Creek Shelter campsite**
This standard camping site is just off the main road in the Arthur's Pass village, almost directly opposite the visitor centre.
**Facilities:** shelter with seats and tables, cold running water, toilets, and 10 tent sites.
**Fees:** $6.00 adult/night, $3.00 child/night (5–17 years), under 5 free

**Greynes Shelter campsite**
The basic campsite and shelter are next to the car park. Explore the century-old coach road and other tracks in the park leading through lush forest to waterfalls.
**Facilities:** basic shelter, toilet, picnic table, water from stream, 10 tent sites
**Fees:** free
**Location:** SH 73, 6 km from Arthur's Pass village (Christchurch side)

**Klondyke Corner campsite**
This large open basic campsite is near the junction of the Bealey and Waimakariri rivers. Very popular in the summer and part of the annual Coast to Coast event in February.
**Facilities:** basic shelter, toilet, picnic table, water from stream, 30 tent sites
**Fees:** free
**Location:** Klondyke Corner, SH 73, 8 km from Arthur's Pass village (Christchurch side)

**Hawdon Shelter campsite**
A basic campsite in the lower reaches of the Hawdon valley on the grassy flats. There are walks from here along the Hawdon River.
**Facilities:** basic shelter, toilet, picnic table, water from stream, 20 tent sites
**Fees:** free
**Location:** Mt White Road, turn off SH 73. Camping site is 24 km south of Arthur's Pass village

**Andrews Shelter campsite**
In the south-eastern corner of the national park, this basic campsite is a popular starting point for trampers heading to Casey Hut.
**Facilities:** basic shelter, toilet, picnic table, water from stream, 20 tent sites
**Fees:** free
**Location:** Off SH 73, 5 km along Mount White Road

**Lake Pearson (Moana Rua) campsite**
This basic campsite is on the shores of an idyllic high-country lake in the Waimakariri Basin. This is a good base for bird watching, fishing or photography.
**Facilities:** toilet, picnic table, water from stream, 20 tent sites
**Fees:** free
**Location:** SH 73, 35 km south of Arthur's Pass village

**Craigieburn Shelter campsite**
This standard camping site is set in Craigieburn Forest Park's panoramic landscape of beech forest, tussock grasslands and rugged mountains.
**Facilities:** basic shelter, toilet, picnic table, water from stream, 20 tent sites
**Fees:** $6.00 adult/night, $3.00 child/night (5–17 years), under 5 free
**Location:** Turn off SH 73 at signpost, between Castle Hill Village and Lake Pearson/Moana Rua.

Other accommodation/services:

**Arthurs Chalet**
Hotel, restaurant and bar at the north end of the village. Enjoy the friendly atmosphere with great beer and food. Couples Double, Twin or Triple rooms with private bathroom. Includes free light breakfast and Wi-Fi for guests.
www.arthurspass.co.nz or freephone: 0800 676 884.

**Arthur’s Pass Alpine Motel**
Arthur’s Pass Alpine Motel is situated in the village. Our warm cosy cabins (some with fires) sleep 2–5 people. Restaurants and walking tracks are minutes from your door. Meet some cheeky kea and listen to the kiwi call at night. See our advertisement page 56
Arthur’s Pass Outdoor Education Centre (APOEC)
Excellence in outdoor education for children and young adults located in the heart of Arthur’s Pass National Park.
Rates: available on application. Bookings and enquiries: manager@apoec.org.nz  ph 03 318 9249, fax 03 318 9269 www.apoec.org.nz

Arthur’s Pass Village B&B Homestay

Bealey Hotel
Accommodation for everyone with five family cabins (1 with lounge), three studio cabins, a two-room cabin & eight rooms in Moa Lodge. The restaurant and bar, also with stunning views, provide the complete get-away experience. Ph 03 318 9277  www.bealeyhotel.co.nz bealeyhotel@xtra.co.nz  See our advertisement page 57

Grasmere Lodge
Luxury lodge accommodation based around the 150-year-old homestead. Fourteen fully-serviced guest suites spread throughout the estate paired with gourmet dining culminate in a comprehensive package with many activities available. Ph 03 318 407  retreat@grasmere.co.nz  www.grasmere.co.nz

Mountain House, Arthur’s Pass YHA
Twenty years of local experience. Providing an accommodation range including camping, dorm beds, private rooms and self-contained cottages. Logistical support, car storage, lockers and a trampers shuttle also available. Ph 03 318 9258  www.trampers.co.nz See our advertisement page 55

Snowgrass Cabin
Snowgrass is a warm, cozy, fully self-contained unit, sleeping four people. Tariff is $95.00 per night per two people. $10.00 each extra person. Explore the outdoor activities in the surrounding national park and countryside, or chill out and relax at the local cafes and bars. Ph 03 318 9238
Meals & supplies

Arthur’s Pass Café and Store
www.ArthursPassCafe.co.nz
See our advertisement page 56

The Wobbly Kea
The Wobbly Kea is a cafe/bar in the heart of town, serving meals all day from breakfast to dinner. Hours are 8 am till late, seven days a week, great coffee and homemade cakes and sweets, fully licensed bar . . . big screen for the game, and New Zealand’s only mountain lion. Ph 03 318 9101 See our advertisement page 58

Transport

KiwiRail – TranzAlpine
Discover New Zealand’s most stunning scenery on your way to Arthur’s Pass aboard the TranzAlpine. Leaving daily from Christchurch to Greymouth, arriving at Arthur’s Pass around 10.40 am. Returning from Greymouth to Christchurch leaves Arthur’s Pass just before 4.00 pm. www.tranzscenic.co.nz or call 0800 TRAINS (872 467).
See our advertisement page 59

Events

Avalanche Peak Challenge
The Shoe Clinic Avalanche Peak Challenge is a true mountain run in every sense. With razor-backed ridges, snow-capped peaks and huge scree slopes, the 25 k run or tramp across the northern tip of the Southern Alps is a challenge not to be missed. Ph 027 293 8309
www.avalanchepeak.co.nz  chris.cox@xtra.co.nz
See our advertisement page 59
Great food and friendly hosts in the heart of the Southern Alps. Geoff and Renée welcome you to share their home in the village of Arthur’s Pass, surrounded by the forest and peaks of Arthur’s Pass National Park. Very cosy, with comfortable beds and big fluffy towels.

Contact:
Renée Habluetzel & Geoff Keey
P: 03 318 9183
M: 021 394 776
E: contact@arthurspass.org.nz
www.arthurspass.org.nz
The Wobbly Kea

- cafe/bar in the heart of town
- meals all day from breakfast to dinner.
- hours—8 am till late, seven days a week
- great coffee and homemade cakes and sweets
- fully licensed bar...a big screen for the game and New Zealand’s only mountain lion!

Ph 03 318 9101

Becoming a Kiwi Ranger

It’s a fun and interactive way to get to know our special places!

Cultural g“x“k“q“epr“g

www.doc.govt.nz
www.kiwiranger.org.nz

Become a Kiwi Ranger

Avalanche Peak Challenge!

Run in February every year—first Saturday after the Coast to Coast event

A challenge not to be missed. The 25-km route takes runners and trampers over the 1833-m high Avalanche Peak for a truly spectacular mountain experience.

www.avalanchepeak.co.nz
E: chris.cox@xtra.co.nz
P: 027 293 8309

New Zealand by train. Simply stunning.

Discover some of New Zealand’s most stunning scenery and visit the South’s highest settlement, Arthur’s Pass, aboard the TranzAlpine.

BOOK NOW at tranzscenic.co.nz
or call 0800 TRAINS (872 467)
Further reading about Arthur’s Pass

Arthur’s Pass to Mount Cook: a tramping guide
Sven Brabyn
Brabyn Pub., 2004

A trapper’s guide to New Zealand’s national parks
Robbie Burton and Maggie Atkinson.
Reed, 2002

Dobson Nature Walk: the natural history of an alpine pass
Colin Burrows
Department of Conservation, 2006

Arthur’s Pass: a climbing guide to Arthur’s Pass National Park: also including the Black, Craigieburn and Torlesse Ranges
Graeme Kates
New Zealand Alpine Club, 2004

Day walks of Canterbury & Kaikoura
Mark Pickering
Reed, 2004

On the Trans-Alpine trail: a travel guide to State Highway 73 and the Midland Railway
Geoffrey B. Churchman
Transpress New Zealand, 2004

Useful websites
www.doc.govt.nz
Arthur’s Pass webscape: www.arthurspass.com
Arthur’s Pass mountaineering conditions:
www.softrock.co.nz
Arthur’s Pass Rescue and Emergency Services:
www.apres.co.nz

Information centres

Arthur’s Pass Visitor Centre
SH 73
Arthur’s Pass village
arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz
(03) 318 9211
Open every day except Christmas Day
Summer hours: 8.00 am–5.00 pm
Winter hours: 8.30 am–4.30 pm

Department of Conservation
Waimakariri Area Office
32 River Road
Rangiora
waimakariri@doc.govt.nz
(03) 313 0820

Christchurch Visitor Centre
31 Nga Mahi Road
Sockburn
Christchurch
christchurchvc@doc.govt.nz
(03) 341 9113

Springfield Visitor Information Buro
Springfield,
Canterbury
info@springfieldinformation.co.nz
(03) 318 4000

Greymouth i-SITE
Cnr Herbert & Mackay St
Greymouth
greymouth@i-site.org
(03) 768 5101

Westland i-SITE
(Hokitika)
36 Weld Street
Hokitika
hokitika@i-site.org
(03) 755 6166

Protect plants
and animals

Remove rubbish
Bury toilet waste

Keep streams
and lakes clean
Camp carefully

Consider others
Respect our
cultural heritage
Enjoy your visit

Toitu te whenua
(Leave the land undisturbed)