

FREE



# ROUTE BURN TRACK



Duration: **2–4 days**  
Distance: **32 km (one way)**



Great Walks season:  
**25 October 2016 –**  
**3 May 2017**

[greatwalks.co.nz](http://greatwalks.co.nz)

Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



# ROUTE BURN TRACK

THE ROUTEBURN Track is the ultimate alpine adventure, taking you through ice-carved valleys and below the majestic peaks of the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana.

A short trip from bustling Queenstown, this Great Walk links Mount Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks in the Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. Weaving through meadows, reflective tarns and alpine gardens, you'll be rewarded with spectacular vistas over vast mountain ranges and valleys.

The Routeburn Track can be walked in either direction. The track is well marked and signposted, but some sections are steep and rough and may be muddy and slippery. Poor weather conditions can make this walk challenging, even in the Great Walks season.

This guide describes a 3-day easy hike for independent, non-guided walkers during the Great Walks season (25 October 2016 – 3 May 2017).



Outside the Great Walks season (May to October) walking conditions are more hazardous – see the safety information.

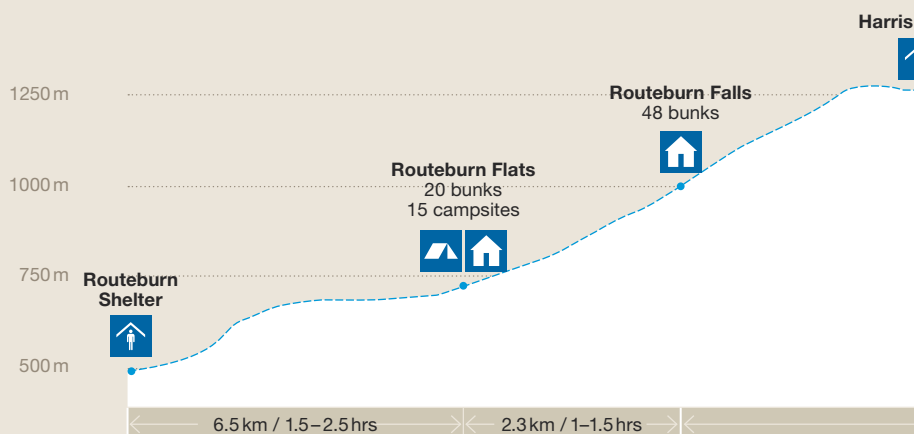


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## ELEVATION PROFILE & TRACK GUIDE



**Day 1: Routeburn Shelter to Routeburn Falls Hut**



### 3 hours – 4 hours, 8.8 km

The track begins at Routeburn Shelter, gently winding alongside the crystal-clear Route Burn (river). After passing Sugarloaf Stream, you'll climb to Bridal Veil Waterfall and continue above the gorge. A swing bridge leads to open grassed flats, and the Routeburn Flats Hut and Campsite. The track climbs steadily through stunning beech forest, providing views of the Humboldt Mountains. End the day at Routeburn Falls Hut, on the edge of the bushline and close to the impressive Routeburn Falls cascade.

COVER: Lake Harris, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz))

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Route Burn, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz))  
Mountain views, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz))  
Lake Mackenzie, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz))

MAIN PHOTO: Key Summit, Shellie Evans ([tikitouringnz.blogspot.co.nz](http://tikitouringnz.blogspot.co.nz))



Saddle



hut



campsite



shelter



car park

Lake Mackenzie  
50 bunks  
9 campsites



Lake Howden  
28 bunks



The Divide



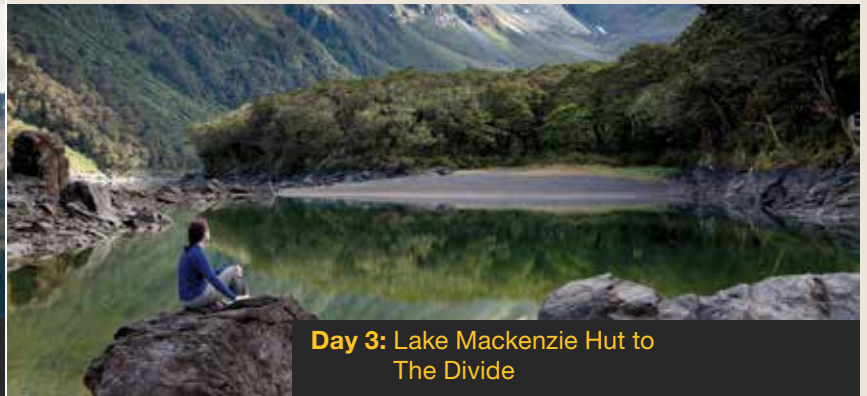
11.3 km / 4.5–6 hrs

8.6 km / 3–4 hrs

3.4 km / 1–1.5 hrs



**Day 2: Routeburn Falls Hut to Lake Mackenzie Hut**



**Day 3: Lake Mackenzie Hut to The Divide**

#### ➤ 4 hours 30 minutes – 6 hours, 11.3 km

On day 2, you'll climb steadily up the valley, through wetlands and tussock-covered flats, before sidling along the bluffs above Lake Harris to reach the highest point on the track at Harris Saddle/Tarahaka Whakatipu (1,255 metres).

The track then descends and traverses along the exposed Hollyford Face, with expansive views over the Darran Mountains. This section of the track is well-known for its impressive array of alpine plants. A steady descent leads to Lake Mackenzie Hut, set beside the enchanting Lake Mackenzie.

#### ➤ 4 hours – 5 hours 30 minutes, 12 km

Leaving Lake Mackenzie Hut the track crosses a small flat before climbing to the bushline. A gradual descent then leads past the 'Orchard', an open grassy area dotted with ribbonwood trees, to the impressive Earland Falls (174 metres). The track continues its descent through beech forest to Lake Howden Hut and on to The Divide. A popular side trip (1 hr 30 min) to Key Summit climbs to an alpine wetland with panoramic views over Fiordland mountains and alpine lakes.







Photo: Kerry Weston

Air New Zealand partners with the Department of Conservation to help bring native birds back to the beautiful Great Walks.

AIR NEW ZEALAND 

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Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)

### Conservation story

1 DOC has teamed up with Air New Zealand, Genesis Energy and the Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust to further support and expand conservation projects on the Routeburn Track, aiming to 'bring back our birds' and turn up the birdsong along the Routeburn. The rare whio/blue duck, **tuke/rock wren** and mohua/yellowhead, which live and breed in the mountainous headwaters of Lake Wakatipu, are a major focus as stoat plagues have hit their numbers hard. Boosted by the partnership, four times the original number of stoat traps have been laid over 40 km in the Route Burn, Rock Burn and Beans Burn areas, ready for the re-introduction of endangered wildlife into these valleys. The benefits of this are that whio are now being seen in the main stem of the Route Burn.

3



Photo: Bernard Spragg

2 Trampers have a choice of four comfortable, well-equipped huts along the track. **Routeburn Falls Hut** is only 3–4 hours from the road end and makes a great overnight trip for families.

3 Bird watchers can feast their eyes on **cheeky kea**, tiny rifleman/tītītipounamu, rare yellowhead/mohua and paradise shelducks, to name just a few.

4 Flower lovers can't miss the largest fuchsia in the world, the **kōtukutuku**, growing up to 12 metres tall. It is especially noticeable between The Divide and Key Summit.

4



Photo: Shellie Evans (tikitouringnz.blogspot.co.nz)

## GETTING THERE

The Routeburn Track is accessed by road from the following locations:

- **Routeburn Shelter:** 30 minutes, 25 km drive along a partially unsealed road from Glenorchy.
- **The Divide:** 1 hour 30 minutes, 85 km from Te Anau.

Please note: the road distance between each end of the track is 325 km, so you'll need to arrange transport at each end.

Refer over page for transport options and services.



## PLACES TO STAY



Photo: John Strother (panafoot.com)

DOC operates 4 huts and 2 campsites along the Routeburn Track, which **must be booked well in advance** during the Great Walks season (25 October 2016 – 3 May 2017) to avoid disappointment.



### Great Walks huts

\$54 per adult per night; 17 years and under free (bookings required).

During the Great Walks season the huts have bunks, mattresses, heating, toilets, basic cooking facilities, solar-powered lighting and cold running water, and a DOC ranger is in residence. The huts do not provide food, cooking utensils, showers or bedding.

Outside the Great Walks season facilities are greatly reduced and there are no wardens. Bookings are not required, huts and campsites are first come, first served and fees are reduced. See the website for details.



### Great Walks campsites

\$18 per adult per night; 17 years and under free (bookings required).

Great Walks campsites offer basic facilities including toilets, sinks and a water supply. Routeburn campsites have picnic tables and cooking shelters. Campers may not use hut facilities.

## Sign me up! What do I do next?



- 1 Start off at [greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn](http://greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn) for more information.



- 2 Book your huts and campsites online or at a DOC Visitor Centre.



- 3 Book your transport to and from the track – operators are listed online and in this brochure.



- 4 Buy your food and **pack your bags** – download the Great Walks packing list and make sure you have everything you need for a 4-day independent unguided walk.



- 5 Read up on **safety** and make sure you're well prepared for your journey and changeable weather at [greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn](http://greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn). Make sure you have left your intentions with a trusted contact at [adventuresmart.org.nz](http://adventuresmart.org.nz).



- 6 Visit the closest **DOC Visitor Centre** (Queenstown or Te Anau) to pick up your **tickets** and official **track guide**, and chat with the friendly staff for the latest weather forecast and track conditions.



- 7 **All set!** Lace up your boots and get hiking. Don't forget to share your experience on [facebook.com/GreatWalks](https://facebook.com/GreatWalks).



## Know before you go

It is **important** to plan your trip thoroughly to ensure you stay safe, and have a great time. Before you go, know the **Outdoor Safety Code** – 5 Simple rules to help you #makeithome

1. **Plan your trip.** Travel times vary greatly in New Zealand, so carefully planning your route is essential. Seek local information about what to take, and allow enough time for the journey. Book accommodation, transport and transfers to the start/end of track early.
2. **Tell someone your plans.** Safety is your responsibility. Leave your intentions – including your trip details and emergency contact information – with a trusted contact. It could save your life if things go wrong. Head to [adventuresmart.org.nz](http://adventuresmart.org.nz) for more information.
3. **Be aware of the weather.** New Zealand weather is very changeable. Plan for the worst, expect the best. Check [metservice.com](http://metservice.com) for the most up to date info.
4. **Know your limits.** Always follow the track markers and signposted tracks. Off-track navigation is not recommended for novice walkers in New Zealand. A good level of fitness is required to walk the track. You can expect to walk up to 7 hours a day depending on your fitness level. If you get into trouble don't make a bad situation worse. Think **STAR** – Stop / Think / Assess / React.
5. **Take sufficient supplies.** With NZ's changeable conditions many hikers are frequently caught out by isolated local conditions. Carry – and expect to use – rain jackets all year round. Take an extra day's supply of food and an emergency shelter. Don't rely on cellphone signal alone for communication. Food and drinks are not available to purchase at Great Walks huts or campsites. Plan to be self-sufficient.

## Routeburn Track safety

The information in this brochure relates to the Routeburn Track in the Great Walks season (25 October 2016 – 3 May 2017).

- This track is not recommended for children under age 10, due to the exposed mountainous environment and often adverse weather conditions. An overnight stay at Routeburn Flats, Routeburn Falls or Lake Howden huts is a suitable family option.
- Fiordland and Mount Aspiring National Parks lie in an area with high rainfall and changeable weather patterns. Cold temperatures, snow, strong winds and heavy rain can occur at any time of the year.
- The Routeburn Track is complex avalanche terrain and the risk of avalanche is present throughout winter and often into December. During the Great Walks season, DOC manages this risk and walkers may be flown (at their cost) over dangerous sections.
- Go to [greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn](http://greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn) 'Know before you go' section for detailed safety information, and 'What to take' section for a comprehensive gear list.

**Remember – your safety is your responsibility**



You are strongly recommended **NOT** to attempt this track between early May and late October (outside the Great Walks season). The winter environment in Fiordland is very cold and wet, with ice, snow and short daylight hours. Avalanche-prone bridges across some major watercourses are removed. DOC does not manage hazards such as flooding or avalanches. Walking the Routeburn Track at this time should **only** be attempted by people who are very well experienced in the New Zealand backcountry and have remote navigation, river crossing and alpine skills. Alpine-specific trip planning based on the Outdoor Safety Code is critical for you and your group safety. The consequences are severe if not correctly managed.

In addition, **facilities are greatly reduced** – including no gas for cooking, a limited water supply, and no rangers or emergency radio facilities. For more information, see 'Outside the Great Walks season' at [greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn](http://greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn).

