

# Tongariro Alpine Crossing

## Tongariro National Park

### Introduction

The Tongariro Alpine Crossing is an extending trek over steep volcanic terrain. It begins and ends at different points and transport must be arranged. This can be done directly with commercial shuttle operators or through Visitor Information Centres. Transport operators are responsible for picking up all people whom they have delivered to the start of the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. You must ensure that they are told about any change in your plans.

It is important to have appropriate outdoor clothing, equipment and fitness (see the essential gear list). Although Mangatepopo and Ketetahi car parks are reasonably safe from theft and vandalism, lock your car and do not leave valuables in view.

Before leaving, it is wise to check the Department of Conservation website regarding volcanic hazards (<http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/national-parks/tongariro/plan-and-prepare/volcanic-risk-in-tongariro-national-park/>), which provides information on the current risk and what to do in the event of an eruption.

### Track Information

The amount of climbing required is minimised if the Crossing is begun at the Mangatepopo Valley Road end, off State Highway 47. This is the preferred route, as those people walking from Ketetahi when the Crossing is busy can hinder the main flow of traffic. From there, a well-marked track up the Mangatepopo Valley follows gentle gradient to Soda Springs. It's a steep climb up to the Mangatepopo Saddle, between Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe. Poles lead across the South Crater to the track's high point at Red Crater (1,886m), a still active and steaming vent. Beyond Red Crater, the track passes Emerald Lakes and skirts Te Wai-Whakaata-o-te Rangihiroa (Blue Lake). From here the route descends to Ketetahi Shelter (emergency use only) down through native forest to the carpark. The total distance is approximately 19 km one way.



- Protect plants and animals
- Remove rubbish
- Keep streams and lakes clean
- Camp carefully
- Keep to the track
- Consider others
- Respect our cultural heritage
- Enjoy your visit

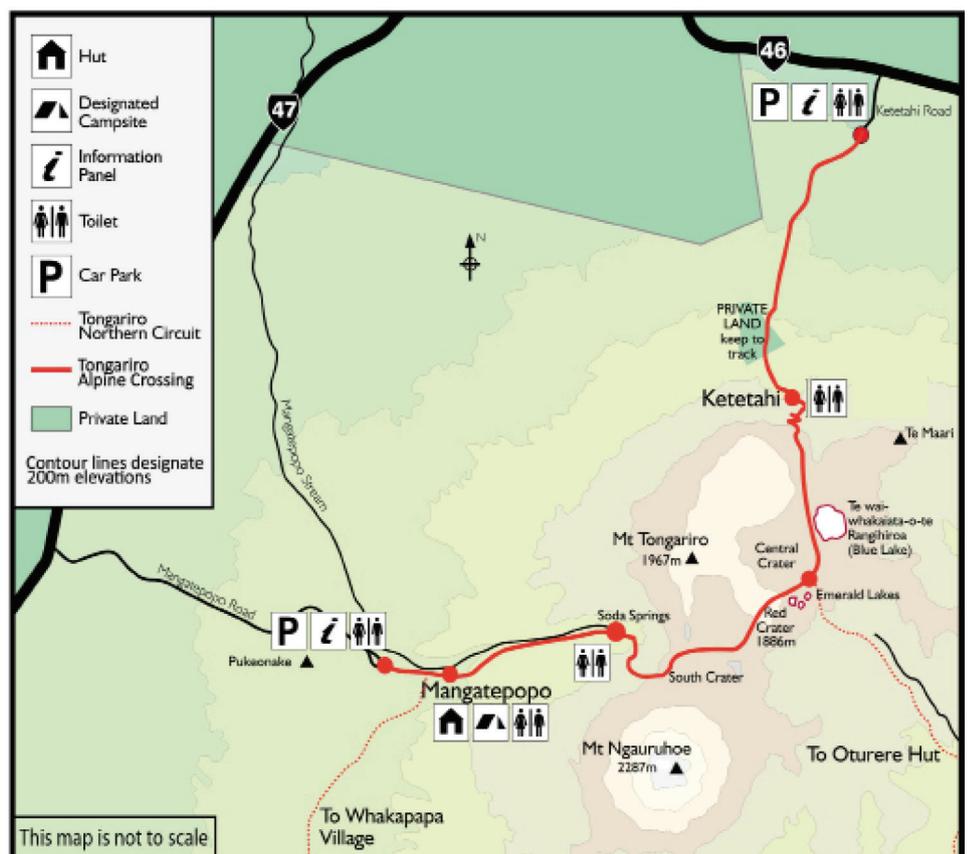
*Toitu te whenua  
(leave the land undisturbed)*



For more information visit:

[www.nationalpark.co.nz](http://www.nationalpark.co.nz)

[www.tongariroalpinecrossing.org.nz](http://www.tongariroalpinecrossing.org.nz)



## Times from Mangatepopo Carpark

The following times are an approximate guide, as everyone walks at a different pace. The time taken on each section of the track will also depend on rest and sightseeing stops.

Carpark to Soda Springs	1 - 1.5 hours
Soda Springs to South Crater	40 mins - 1 hour
South Crater to Red Crater	1 hour
Red Crater to Emerald Lakes	10 - 20 mins
Emerald Lake to Ketetahi Shelter	1 - 1.5 hours
Ketetahi Shelter to Ketetahi carpark	2 hours

## Side Trips

### Mt Ngauruhoe (2,287m)

You need good fitness to climb Ngauruhoe - the volcano is steep, and the surface is mainly loose rock and stones (scree). The summit climb is not marked or formed.

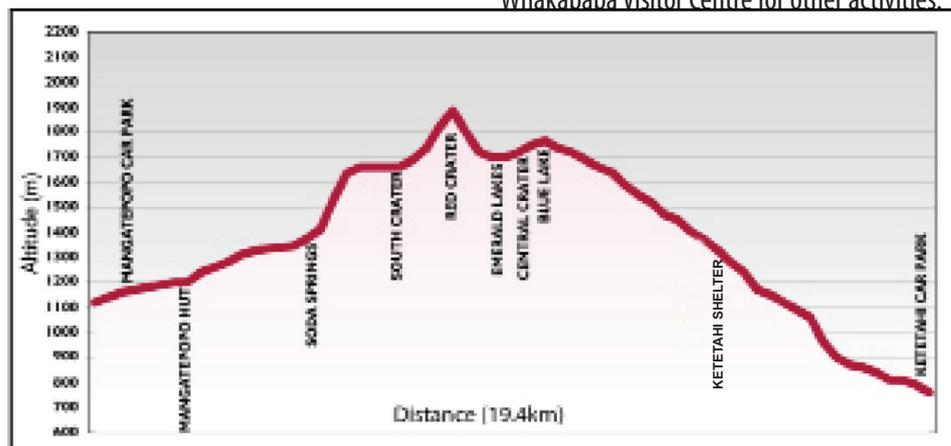
This is not a poled route. From the base of Mt Ngauruhoe at Mangatepopo Saddle, climb directly up to Mt Ngauruhoe's crater. The best way is up the rocky ridge to the left of the scree slopes. The summit area is dangerous and should be avoided if there are signs of increased volcanic activity. Allow additional time to the 5-6 hours for the round trip if attempting Ngauruhoe Summit.

### Mt Tongariro Summit (1,967m)

From Red Crater, follow the poled route leading to the summit. Allow 1.5-2 hours return.

## What to Bring

- Food and plenty of fluid, especially on hot days (2 litres/person).
- Rainproof coat (overtrousers are a good idea, too).
- Sturdy boots. Uneven volcanic terrain can be difficult and tiring to walk on.



- Warm woollen or polypropylene clothing - cotton clothes don't keep you warm when its wet.
- Woollen hat and gloves or mittens.
- Sun protection, including sun glasses (even in winter).
- Personal First Aid kit.

### In winter, you may also need:

- Experience in alpine conditions above the snow line is essential and may require the use of ice axe and crampons - know how to use them.
- Snow gaiters.

### You could also consider:

- Avalanche probe/snow shovel.
- Avalanche transceiver.
- Cellphone coverage is intermittent. However, you should regularly check your signal along the trail in case of emergency.

## Weather

Tongariro National Park weather can change with alarming speed. You must be prepared for all weather conditions. The weather in the carpark can be totally different to what's going on nearly 1,000 metres higher and further up the track. Be prepared to change your plans and turn back, especially when visibility is poor and in strong winds. If visibility is poor, stay where you are and wait until you can see the pole markers again. Then proceed.

Take care at track junctions, especially in poor visibility. Look for and follow poles marked "Tongariro Alpine Crossing".

## Alternative Activities

Low altitude outdoor activities are available as an alternative to the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Please contact your reception desk or Whakapana Visitor Centre for other activities.



*Be ready for any conditions*

## Water

We recommend that you take drinking water with you as water from the upper Mangatepopo Stream, Emerald Lakes and Ketetahi Springs is not suitable for drinking, due to a high mineral content.

Water supply at the huts is from rainwater. Conserve water and ensure taps are turned off.

## Huts

If you wish to shelter in huts, please respect overnight users. Leave wet boots and jackets outside the hut.

## Toilets

There are toilets at Mangatepopo (hut and carpark), Ketetahi (shelter and carpark) and at Soda Springs. Between Soda Springs and Ketetahi shelter, there are no toilets and the terrain is open with little cover.

## Rubbish

Take all rubbish out of the Park (including cigarette butts).

### For more information

Whakapana Visitor Centre, State Highway 49,  
Mt Ruapehu 4691

Tel: 07 892 3729

Fax: 07 892 3814

Email: [tongarirovc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:tongarirovc@doc.govt.nz)

Visit the Department of Conservation website  
[www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)