TONGARIRO NORTHERN CIRCUIT

Duration: 3–4 days
Distance: 43 km (loop)

Great Walks season:
21 October 2016–30 April 2017

greatwalks.co.nz

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai
Day 1: Whakapapa Village to Mangatepopo Hut
3–5 hours, 8.5 km
Your journey begins by making your way across the eroded plains of the Tongariro volcanic complex, a series of explosion craters and volcanic cones and peaks. Venturing through a landscape carved out by ancient lava flows and stream beds, you’ll be dwarfed by the massive cone of Mount Ngauruhoe on your right (which you may recognise as Mount Doom from The Lord of the Rings). For the final hour the track leads you around Pukekaikore, one of Tongariro’s older steam vents, before reaching Mangatepopo Hut.

Day 2: Mangatepopo Hut to Oturere Hut
5 hours, 12.8km
You join the popular Tongariro Alpine Crossing on the second day, crossing remnants of lava flows and climbing steeply up the Devil’s Staircase to the expansive Red Crater. Here you’ll be dazzled by the aptly named Emerald Lakes, and a (30-minute return) side trip will take you to the equally amazing Blue Lake. These lakes are tapu or sacred to iwi. Please do not touch the water. Descending into Oturere valley, you’ll pass through a landscape of other-worldly lava forms before reaching Oturere Hut.
Day 3:
Oturere Hut to Waihohonu Hut

3 hours, 7.5 km

On day 3 the circuit continues through this unique environment. After crossing stream valleys and open gravel fields, the track gradually sidles around the foothills of Ngauruhoe, before descending into a beech-forested valley and crossing a branch of the Waihohonu Stream. A steep climb takes you to the top of the ridge where you’ll spot tonight’s stay at Waihohonu Hut.

Day 4:
Waihohonu Hut to Whakapapa Village

5 hours, 14.3 km

You’ll begin your final day following the Waihohonu Stream as you head west towards Tama Saddle, cradled by the towering Mount Ngauruhoe on your right and Mount Ruapehu on your left. On reaching the Tama saddle, a detour will take you to the beautiful Tama Lakes – empty craters now filled with azure blue water. From here, you’ll pass the tumbling Taranaki Falls before returning to your starting point at Whakapapa Village.

Tongariro, shrouded in alpine mists, its gnarled and battle-scarred majesty reaching to the sky. Ancient stories of epic bygone battles, thunder and lightning relive the time when the Great Mountains fought for the hand of the beautiful Pihanga. Tongariro emerged victorious. A story of love and devotion that has spanned millennia, from before the ancient mists of time, from a time where the mountains ruled upon the land.

This is the world of Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro. These are the stories of Ngāti Tūwharetoa and, more importantly, these are memories of our mountains, of our Gods and of our tribal history and identity. They are carried on each mountain breath, every facet of the landscape reflects this epic past, each shadow holds a story, each breeze carries the whispers of yesterday. Tongariro the spring of passion, Tongariro the devoted lover, Tongariro the source of life-giving waters, Tongariro the Warrior Mountain, Tongariro the soul of Tūwharetoa.

We the Tangata Whenua – The People of the Land – welcome you to our world. It is a world of reciprocity and respect, of guardianship and devotion, of stunning landscapes and epic stories, of deep reverence and spirituality. May the guardians of our mountains keep you safe, may the memory of this experience lie warm in your hearts forever.

Ko Ngāti Tūwharetoa te Iwi
Ngāti Tūwharetoa is the tribe

Ko Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro te Hapū
Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro is the sub-tribe

Te Ngahe Waniakau
(on behalf of Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro)
1. **Side trip to Tama Lakes** (1,314 m)
   From the junction: 20 min return to Lower Tama; 1 hr 30 min return to Upper Tama. Two in-filled explosion craters are named after Tamatea, the high chief of the Tākitimu Canoe, who explored the area six centuries ago. Lower Tama’s volcanic debris is slowly washing in and filling the crater. The Upper Tama lake is reputed to be very deep.
   **Beware of strong crosswinds on the ridgelines up to the Upper Tama Lake lookout.**

2. **Look for the New Zealand falcon/kārearea**, capable of flying at speeds over 230 km/hr and catching prey up to 6 times their body weight.

3. **Brush up on your botanical knowledge** – the plants in the area vary considerably: alpine herbs, tussocks, flaxes, low-growing shrubs, dense beech forests and, during summer, a diverse range of beautiful and unique alpine flowers.

4. **Take in Taranaki Falls**. Tumbling over the edge of a large lava flow that erupted from Ruapehu 15,000 years ago, the falls plunge 20 metres into a boulder-ringed pool.

5. **Drop into the historic Waihohonu Hut**, the oldest existing mountain hut in New Zealand. It was the first hut built in Tongariro National Park in 1904, and the base for the first recreational skiing. It was in active use for over 60 years.
GETTING THERE

The Tongariro Northern Circuit can be accessed from the following locations:

→ Whakapapa Village (SH48)
→ Mangatepopo Road (SH47)
→ Ketetahi Road (SH47)
→ Desert Road (SH1, 35 km south of Turangi)

Refer over page for transport options and services.

PLACES TO STAY

DOC operates 3 huts with campsites nearby along the Tongariro Northern Circuit, which must be booked in advance during the Great Walks season (21 October 2016 – 30 April 2017). Whakapapa Holiday Park is a Serviced campsite. See www.doc.govt.nz/campsites for details.

Great Walks huts
$32 per adult per night; 17 years and under free (bookings required).

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

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
$14 per adult per night; 17 years and under free (bookings required).

The campsites offer basic facilities including toilets, sinks and a water supply. Some also have picnic tables and cooking shelters. Campers may use hut facilities, though not the beds.

Sign me up! What do I do next?

1. Start off at greatwalks.co.nz/tongariro 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/tongariro. Make sure you have left your intentions with a trusted contact at adventuresmart.org.nz.
6. Check the weather, and make sure you’ve downloaded and printed your ticket and official track guide. You can also get a track guide and the latest weather updates from the Tongariro National Park Visitor Centre.
7. All set! Lace up your boots and get hiking. Don’t forget to share your experience on facebook.com/GreatWalks.
Canoe Safaris is the most experienced operator on the Whanganui River - running Guided tours and Canoe Hire since 1987. The best food and guides on the river, and accommodation available at our Ohakune base.

www.canoesafaris.co.nz  0800 272335

Step into New Zealand’s Heart...
Lake Waikaremoana, Tongariro, Coromandel

www.WalkingLegends.co.nz / 0800 9255 69

1 to 12 day guided hikes in style & comfort with small packs. Lodge or hut based. Request a free brochure:

www.chateau.co.nz  0800 242 832

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK, NEW ZEALAND

Chateau Tongariro High Tea & Elegant Accommodation with Surrounding Park Views.
Visit www.chateau.co.nz for rates and information.

Great Walkers deserve great hostels

YHA National Park, YHA Ohakune and YHA Taupo
Affordable comfortable accommodation pre and post Great Walk

www.humpridgetrack.co.nz  0800 HUMP RIDGE (486774)

BOOK NOW: Packages from Basic Tramping at $175 to Guided Walking at $1645

www.humpridgetrack.co.nz  e walk@humpridgetrack.co.nz

Canoe Safaris is the most experienced operator on the Whanganui River - running Guided tours and Canoe Hire since 1987. The best food and guides on the river, and accommodation available at our Ohakune base.

www.canoesafaris.co.nz

More wilderness ...less people

3-DAY LOOP TRACK

Book a guided tour with Adrift
0800 462374  adriftnz.co.nz  E: info@adriftnz.co.nz
@adriftoutdoors #adrifttongariro @adrifttongariro

TONGARIRO ALPINE CROSSING AND RUapeHU CRATER CLIMB

WHANGANUI RIVER CANOE TOURS

BIKE THE OLD COACH ROAD

yha.co.nz  0800 278 299

www.chateau.co.nz  0800 242 832

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK, NEW ZEALAND

Chateau Tongariro High Tea & Elegant Accommodation with Surrounding Park Views.
Visit www.chateau.co.nz for rates and information.

Step into New Zealand’s Heart...
Lake Waikaremoana, Tongariro, Coromandel

www.WalkingLegends.co.nz / 0800 9255 69

1 to 12 day guided hikes in style & comfort with small packs. Lodge or hut based. Request a free brochure:

www.chateau.co.nz  0800 242 832

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK, NEW ZEALAND

Chateau Tongariro High Tea & Elegant Accommodation with Surrounding Park Views.
Visit www.chateau.co.nz for rates and information.

Great Walkers deserve great hostels

YHA National Park, YHA Ohakune and YHA Taupo
Affordable comfortable accommodation pre and post Great Walk

www.humpridgetrack.co.nz  0800 HUMP RIDGE (486774)

BOOK NOW: Packages from Basic Tramping at $175 to Guided Walking at $1645

www.humpridgetrack.co.nz  e walk@humpridgetrack.co.nz

Canoe Safaris is the most experienced operator on the Whanganui River - running Guided tours and Canoe Hire since 1987. The best food and guides on the river, and accommodation available at our Ohakune base.

www.canoesafaris.co.nz

More wilderness ...less people

3-DAY LOOP TRACK

Book a guided tour with Adrift
0800 462374  adriftnz.co.nz  E: info@adriftnz.co.nz
@adriftoutdoors #adrifttongariro @adrifttongariro

TONGARIRO ALPINE CROSSING AND RUapeHU CRATER CLIMB

WHANGANUI RIVER CANOE TOURS

BIKE THE OLD COACH ROAD

yha.co.nz  0800 278 299

www.chateau.co.nz  0800 242 832

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK, NEW ZEALAND

Chateau Tongariro High Tea & Elegant Accommodation with Surrounding Park Views.
Visit www.chateau.co.nz for rates and information.

Step into New Zealand’s Heart...
Lake Waikaremoana, Tongariro, Coromandel

www.WalkingLegends.co.nz / 0800 9255 69

1 to 12 day guided hikes in style & comfort with small packs. Lodge or hut based. Request a free brochure:
Explore your gateway to Tongariro National Park. Our Village covers all budgets of Accommodation, Transport, Track Information, Cafés, Adventure Activities. www.nationalpark.co.nz

Where next...

Get Lost! in the best possible way, with Ruapehu Adventure Hub

Plan your Ruapehu adventure the easy way: let us do it for you! We can arrange transport, accommodation, mountain bike and canoe hire, and everything else you need to make your experience fun, safe and memorable.

Book or enquire today: 0800 40 88 88

ruapehuadventurehub.co.nz • 10 Parapara Road, Raetihi
**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 #makethome.

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 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 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 6 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.

**Remember – your safety is your responsibility**

---

**Tongariro Northern Circuit safety**

The information in this brochure relates to the Tongariro Northern Circuit Track in the Great Walks season (21 October 2016 – 30 April 2017).

- This track is not recommended for children under age 10, due to the exposed mountainous environment and often adverse weather conditions.
- The Tongariro Northern Circuit is considered challenging terrain – most of it is open, exposed and on uneven track surfaces.
- The weather can change suddenly, from warm and sunny to cold and wet with strong winds of over 60 km/hr that can close the track. Dress warmly as wind-chill danger is worse at these times.
- From Red Crater to Te Maari craters is an Active Volcanic Hazard Zone. There is still an increased volcanic risk following the eruption of the Te Maari Crater (near Ketetahi Shelter) in 2012. Eruptions are possible without warning. Please pay attention to signs.
- You are strongly recommended NOT to attempt this track between early May and late October (outside the Great Walks season). The winter environment in Tongariro National Park 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 Tongariro Northern Circuit 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/tongariro.