

TONGARIRO ALPINE CROSSING

Tongariro National Park
CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND

Day
Hikes



7–8 hr, 19.4 km one way



High level of fitness required

Change in elevation: +/- 1,196 m



Steep and undulating



Track surface is generally well formed, some sections may be steep, rough or muddy.



Restrictions

No dogs, bikes or drones



Be prepared – ensure you take:

- plenty of drinking water – water along the track is not suitable for drinking
- sturdy footwear such as hiking boots
- a waterproof/windproof jacket and pants, hat and gloves, sunscreen, and wear warm, layered clothing
- mobile phone, torch, spare batteries and toilet paper.

PHOTOS

LEFT: Graeme Murray

ABOVE (L-R):
Graeme Murray;
Jimmy Johnson
Jimmy Johnson
Peter Langlands

OVER PAGE:
Graeme Murray



TREK ACROSS a volcanic alpine landscape of dramatic contrasts – steaming vents, glacial valleys, old lava flows, alpine vegetation and vivid crater lakes.

Tongariro National Park is a UNESCO dual World Heritage Area and in 1993 was the first in the world to receive cultural World Heritage status.



New Zealand Government

About this track

This challenging trip begins at 1,120 m, climbs the Mangatepōpō valley to the saddle between Mount Tongariro and Mount Ngauruhoe, through South Crater before climbing again to Red Crater, the highest point on the crossing at 1,886 m.

You will then descend on a volcanic rock scree track to the vivid Emerald Lakes, known as Ngā Rotopounamu (greenstone-hued lakes). After passing Blue Lake, also known as Te Wai Whakaata o Te Rangihiroa (Rangihiroa's mirror), the track sidles around the northern slope of Tongariro, then descends in a zigzag track past Ketetahi Shelter and down to the road end at 760 m.

Be prepared for a long and challenging day out.

History and culture

Ngatoroirangi, the founding ancestor of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, the local iwi (Māori tribe), ascended the great mountains of the volcanic plateau 30 generations ago. It was then that he named Tongariro and the many features of the surrounding landscape, declaring this area as home for his descendants.

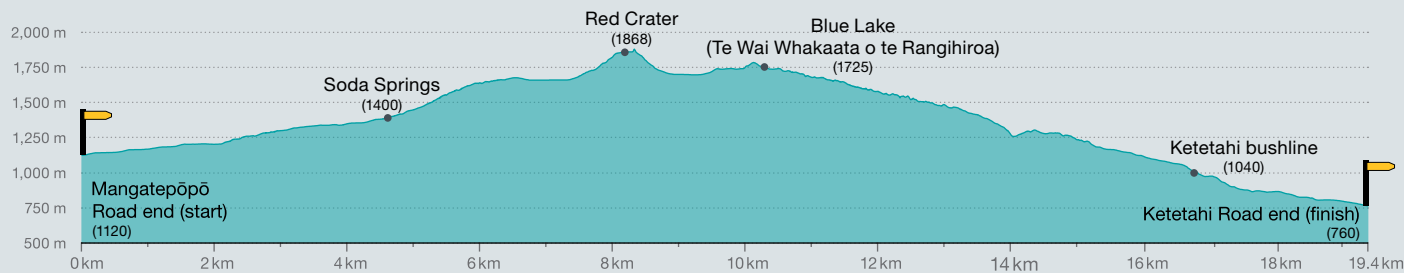
The generosity and foresight of Ngāti Tūwharetoa saw the heart of the mountainous area made sacrosanct in 1887, with the intent that the Crown would stand alongside Ngāti Tūwharetoa to ensure the continued protection of Tongariro. This led to the establishment of the Tongariro National Park in 1894, a first for New Zealand, and fourth in the world.

The continued occupation by Ngāti Tūwharetoa in this environment ensures the cultural, spiritual and environmental values are protected and shared with all those who encounter this dynamic landscape.

Getting there

There is **limited parking** near the access points to the track. From the beginning of Labour weekend in October to 30 April, parking restrictions will be in place at road ends. Shuttle services run from Whakapapa Village, National Park, Taumarunui, Turangi, Raetihi, Ohakune and Taupo. Plan ahead and book a shuttle with your local i-SITE (Visitor Centre).

Tongariro Alpine Crossing elevation



The alpine lakes and peaks of the mountains are sacred to the local Māori tribe Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro. Respectfully, they ask that peaks are not climbed and waterways are not touched.



For more information visit your local i-SITE, Department of Conservation Visitor Centre, or go to www.doc.govt.nz/dayhikes.

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OUTDOOR SAFETY
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Plan your trip

Make sure you know where you're going and have looked at a map of the track – consider taking a photo of it. Ensure you have enough time to complete in the daylight. A wrong turn can create an unexpected night out.



Tell someone your plans

Message someone – text, social, email – where you're going and when you'll be due back. Make yourself easier to be found if something goes wrong.



Be aware of the weather

New Zealand's weather can be highly changeable. Check the forecast – MetService.com – and expect changes throughout the day. Always prepare for wind and rain as it can, and often does, happen suddenly.



Know your limits

Challenge yourself within your group's limits. Consider the group's ability to deal with the changing weather and the physical nature of the hike. Stick to the marked track.



Take sufficient supplies

The supplies you need for each hike will vary, but you should always have a waterproof jacket, water, food, hat, head torch and sturdy footwear – consider hiking boots. Cell phone signal is often not available in the outdoors. Place items like phones and maps in a plastic bag to waterproof.

MOUNTAINSAFETY.ORG.NZ

Hazards



Alpine environment with rapidly changing weather conditions at all times of the year. It is common to experience strong wind, high rainfall, heavy snowfall and rapid changes in temperature, even in summer.



Volcanic risk. This is an active volcanic area, and eruptions are possible at any time without warning. Know the volcanic risks and what to do in an eruption (see www.doc.govt.nz/volcanicrisk). Check the latest volcanic activity information before you go, at the Tongariro National Park Visitor Centre and at www.geonet.org.nz/volcano.



Winter snow. Do not attempt this trip when snow is present unless you are experienced in the backcountry and have an ice axe, crampons and are experienced in avalanche terrain. Visit www.avalanche.net.nz for updated avalanche forecasts. In winter, the use of a guide is highly recommended.