

Arthur's Pass tramping

There is a huge range of tramps in Arthur's Pass National Park for you to experience the park's unique diversity. This brochure will help you choose a tramp to suit your experience and ability, and help you plan for the trip ahead.

Remember, prepare for your trip so that it's safe and enjoyable. Your plans should suit your experience and level of fitness. Make sure you are well-equipped with food and clothing, in all seasons – so you are prepared for delays and unexpected events.

Your safety is your responsibility

Make well-informed decisions for you and your party. Choose a trip that suits your skills, fitness level, knowledge, and experience of New Zealand conditions.

Plan to survive

- Do not travel alone – it is safer in a groups.
- Leave your intentions – let someone know before you go.
- Check the latest weather and track conditions – things change quickly.
- Equip yourself well – prepare for the worst with enough food and the right clothing.

Avalanches are a seasonal risk on many tracks

Some high-level tracks and routes in Arthur's Pass are exposed to avalanches in winter and spring. Some passes have year-round snow and ice.

Know how to stay safe from avalanches

Refer to NZ Mountain Safety at www.mountainsafety.org.nz for publications on avalanche safety, and information on avalanche awareness courses provided through the NZ Avalanche Centre: www.avalanche.net.nz.

Let someone know before you go

It is vital to tell someone where you are going before your trip. Leave your details with a trusted contact and also at www.adventuresmart.org.nz. The visitor centre can also rent you a personal locator beacon – highly recommended for your safety, especially if you're tramping alone.

One more thing: always leave your intentions in the hut books as you pass through – this may save your life!

Backcountry huts

Serviced huts have mattresses, water supply, toilets, hand-washing facilities, and heating with fuel available. They may have cooking facilities with fuel and a warden.

Fees: Adult: \$15.00 per night (1 adult Serviced Hut Ticket or 3 adult Standard Hut Tickets); Youth (11-17 years): \$7.50 per night (1 youth Serviced Hut Ticket or 3 youth Standard Hut Tickets); Child/Infant (up to 10 years): Free

Fees to camp at the hut: Adult: \$5.00 per night (1 adult Standard Hut Ticket); Youth: \$2.50 per night (1 youth Standard Hut Ticket); Child/Infant: Free

Standard huts have mattresses, water supply, and toilets. Wood heaters are provided at huts below the bushline.

Fees: Adult: \$5.00 per night (1 adult Standard Hut Ticket); Youth: \$2.50 per night (1 youth Standard Hut Ticket); Child/Infant: Free

Fees to camp at the hut: Free

Basic huts/bivvies are very basic shelters with limited facilities.

Fees: Free

Purchase your hut tickets or 6-month/annual hut passes before you leave, from any DOC office or selected i-SITES.

Further information

For maps, weather forecasts and track condition updates:

Arthur's Pass National Park Visitor Centre

SH73, Arthur's Pass

Phone 03 318 9211

8 am – 5 pm (summer), 8.30 am – 4.30 pm (winter)

arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz

www.doc.govt.nz

Cover: Summit ridge – Avalanche Peak. *Photo: Pete Brady*

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Tramping in Arthur's Pass National Park



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Be aware of these factors when tramping in Arthur's Pass National Park

Weather in Arthur's Pass National Park changes quickly

Sharp falls in temperature, heavy rain, and strong winds can occur any time of the year. Always be prepared to change your plans. In bad weather you risk exposure if above the bushline, and drowning if crossing flooded rivers.

Remember

- Get the latest weather forecast from the Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre on (03) 318 9211 before setting out.
- Be prepared for the worst.
- Carry warm clothing and waterproofs.
- Do not go above the bushline in bad weather.
- Rivers rise very quickly during rain – even if it's far away in the headwaters.

New Zealand Mountain Safety Council

The Council publishes excellent outdoor safety brochures that are also available online:

www.mountainsafety.org.nz. In particular the 21-page multiday tramping booklet is essential reading before setting out.



You must know where and how to cross rivers safely

Unlike the Great Walks and other easy tramps in New Zealand, many tracks and routes in Arthur's Pass do not have bridges.

The chart overleaf shows you which tracks have unbridged river crossings.

Rivers and major side streams rise rapidly after rain. Several trampers have drowned crossing swollen rivers.

Rivers and side streams tend to be higher in spring when snow is melting.

Remember

- Read the route guide and map carefully to see where the major crossings are. Before crossing assess the river's speed, depth, colour, catchment area and run-out. Consider escape routes along your route.
- Know how to choose the best crossing places: don't cross discoloured rivers, surging water, or major rapids; watch out for sounds of rolling stones in the riverbed, or trees and debris being carried along.
- Do not take risks. If a river is flooded, wait it out – better late than dead!

New Zealand Mountain Safety Council

Download the River Safety fact sheet:

www.mountainsafety.org.nz/files/PMPLTS_River_Safety.pdf on

river crossing methods.

Attend a one-day river crossing course organised by an accredited outdoor safety instructor.

Photo: J Coote



You will need route-finding skills

Many of the routes in Arthur's Pass require some route-finding skills. Tracks and routes are not always continuously marked – especially in wide riverbeds and above the bushline, where the landscape changes rapidly due to slips and floods. You will need to find the safest route.



Tramping tracks - - - - -

These are mostly unformed but have track direction markers, poles, or cairns (rock piles). Sometimes you can follow a worn trail.



Routes

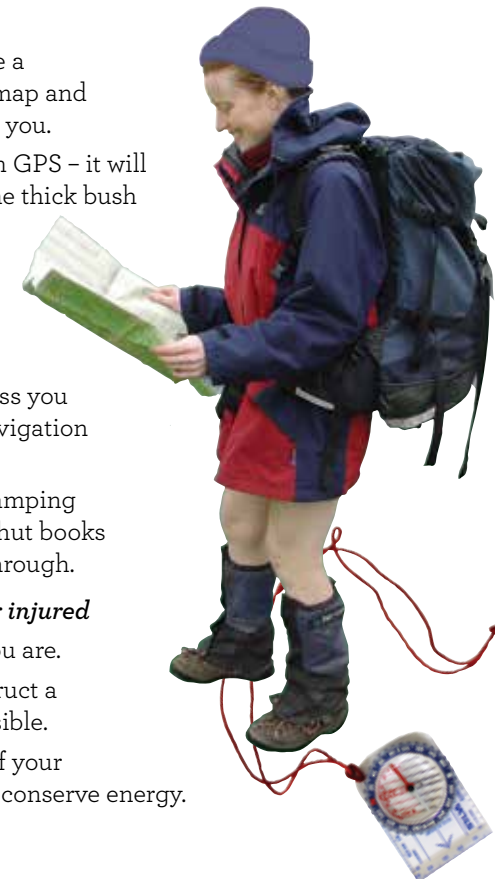
These are unformed and unmarked, and suitable for experienced trampers only.

Remember

- ALWAYS take a topographic map and compass with you.
- Do not rely on GPS – it will not work in the thick bush or confined spaces.
- If visibility is poor, do not go above the bushline unless you have good navigation skills.
- Write your tramping intentions in hut books as you pass through.

If you are lost or injured

- Stay where you are.
- Find or construct a shelter if possible.
- Leave signs of your presence and conserve energy.



Tramping tracks in Arthur's Pass National Park

Arthur's Pass National Park is rugged and mountainous; its backcountry tracks and facilities are not as developed as most other national parks in New Zealand. There are limited options for people with little or no tramping experience as most trips require route-finding and river-crossing skills.

TRIPS FOR TRAMPERS WITH MODERATE EXPERIENCE

3–6 hours each day

Suitable for people with low–moderate tramping experience • Basic route-finding skills needed • Some tramps require river-crossing

Name of route *Route guide available	Time (one-way or loop)	Description	Hut/s	Above bushline	River crossing	Route finding	Avalanche risk
*Carrington Hut	2 days return	Up the braided riverbed of the Waimakariri River to a large hut (4–6 hr).	36 bunks; serviced	No	Yes	Yes	No
*Cass–Lagoon saddles	2–3 day loop Shuttle required	Mostly forest tracks in the Craigieburn Forest Park. Two alpine passes rise above the bushline.	Cass Saddle Hut – 3 bunks; basic Hamilton Hut – 20 bunks; serviced West Harper Hut – 5 bunks (canvas); basic Lagoon Saddle Hut – 2 bunks; basic	No	Yes (side streams)	No	Yes
Hawdon Hut	1–2 days return	Tramping up the braided-river flats (2–3 hr)	20 bunks; serviced	No	Yes	Yes	No
*Casey and Binser saddles	2 day loop	Tracks through forest and open country with two low passes. Plan for fairly long days.	Tent required – Casey Hut burnt down October 2015	No	Yes (side streams)	No	No
Edwards Hut *See 1st section of Edwards-Hawdon valleys via Tarn Col route guide	2 days return	Riverbed travel and bush walks lead to Edwards Hut (5 hr)	16 bunks; serviced	No	Yes	Yes	No
Carroll Hut	1–2 days return	Climb through West Coast podocarp forest and subalpine vegetation to a hut on the Kelly Range (2–3 hr)	10 bunks; standard	Yes	No	No	Yes

TRIPS FOR TRAMPERS WITH MODERATE-HIGH EXPERIENCE

5-8 hours each day

Suitable for well-equipped people with previous backcountry experience • Map-reading and route-finding skills essential • River crossing skills essential

Name of route *Route guide available	Time (one-way or loop)	Description	Hut/s	Above bushline	River crossing	Route finding	Avalanche risk
*Avalanche Peak	1 day return	Choice of two tracks to the summit and return, with option of a round trip. Tramping tracks to bushline, routes above bushline.	Not applicable	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
*Avalanche Peak to Crow Hut	2 days Shuttle required	From the summit of Avalanche Peak, follow a ridge and descend a steep scree slope to Crow Hut. Out via the Waimakariri River flats.	10 bunks; standard	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
*Harper Pass	4-5 days Shuttle required	Historical west-east route over a Southern Alps pass; involves riverbed travel. Walking this from west to east is recommended, as the major river crossings are on the west side.	Kiwi Hut – 8 bunks; standard Locke Stream Hut – 18 bunks; standard Harper Pass Bivvy – 2 bunks; basic Camerons Hut – 4 bunks; basic Hurunui No. 3 Hut – 16 bunks; standard Hope Kiwi Lodge – 20 bunks; serviced Hope Halfway Hut – 6 bunks; basic	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
*Mingha-Deception. Separate route guides for east-to-west and west-to-east.	2-3 days Shuttle required	Cross the Southern Alps main divide at Goat Pass. Long sections of riverbed travel. If only going to Goat Pass Hut and return, the east-to-west route is recommended. West-to-east crossing is mainly for the annual Coast to Coast participants running the route in one day.	Mingha Bivvy – 2 bunks; basic Goat Pass Hut – 20 bunks; serviced Upper Deception Hut – 6 bunks; basic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

TRIPS SUITABLE FOR HIGHLY EXPERIENCED TRAMPERS ONLY

7–10 hours each day

Suitable for well-equipped and experienced backcountry trampers only • Often difficult country – may involve rock scrambling • Many unmarked routes – map-reading and route-finding skills essential • River-crossing skills essential

Name of route *Route guide available	Time (one-way or loop)	Description	Hut/s	Above bushline	River crossing	Route finding	Avalanche risk
*Three Passes	4–5 days Shuttle required	East-west traverse over Southern Alps via Harman, Whitehorn, and Browning passes. Ice axe and crampons required.	Carrington Hut – 36 bunks; serviced Park Morpeth Hut – 6 bunks; CMC hut Harman Hut – 6 bunks; standard Grassy Flat Hut – 10 bunks; standard	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
*Edwards–Hawdon valleys via Tarn Co	2–3 days Shuttle required	Two alpine passes with tarns, steep creekbed travel	Edwards Hut – 16 bunks; serviced Hawdon Hut – 20 bunks; serviced	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
*Harman Pass	3–4 days Shuttle required	Southern Alps crossing with long river valleys to east and west. Many river crossings. Alpine skills necessary.	Carrington Hut – 36 bunks; serviced Julia Hut (new) – 6 bunks; standard Julia Hut (old) – 4 bunks; basic Mid Taipo Hut – 6 bunks; standard Dillon Hut – 10 bunks; standard Dillons Homestead Hut – 10 bunks; basic Carroll Hut – 10 bunks; standard	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
*Minchin Pass	3–4 days Shuttle required	Remote tramping in the east of the National Park, steep creekbed travel	Trust/Poulter Hut – 6 bunks; standard Poulter Hut – 10 bunks; standard Minchin Bivvy – 2 bunks; basic Locke Stream Hut – 18 bunks; standard Kiwi Hut – 6 bunks; basic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
*Edwards–Oteahake	2–3 days Shuttle required	Don't be fooled by the initial easy tramping up the Edwards; it's slow tramping on a very rough route in the Oteahake.	Edwards Hut – 14 bunks; serviced Oteahake Hut – 6 bunks; basic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes