



HEAPHY TRACK

ITINERARY



Step into the heart of Kahurangi National Park on the Heaphy Track. Once an ancient Māori trail, it is now one of New Zealand's "Great Walks": a well-formed track stretching from Golden Bay to the Wild West Coast.

With its gorgeous red tussocks, limestone cliffs, caves and twisted forests, you could be in a Hobbit film. On your descent to the coast you'll pass giant gnarled rata trees, broad rivers (via bridges) and finally arrive at the nikau palm-fringed beaches of the West Coast. The scenery and habitat are forever changing and the breathtaking views of mountains all around will make you feel truly immersed in this wilderness.

Simple but comfortable huts provide lovely accommodation at the end of each day and offer a real "kiwi tramping experience".

Kahurangi, which can be translated to "treasured possession" in Māori, lives up to its name. Its wild landscapes and ecological richness are a testament to New Zealand's natural heritage and this trip holds untold opportunities for discovery.

LENGTH	6 days
GRADE	C (Up to 6 hrs of physical activity per day)
START	Motueka 7:30am. *A complimentary shuttle runs from Nelson to Motueka the day before your trip begins. Please request this service if needed. Nelson Visitor Information Centre at 3:00 pm, Nelson Airport at 3:15 pm
FINISH	Motueka or Nelson (3:00-3:30pm)
DEPARTURES	October, 2026: 18 November, 2026: 8, 25 December, 2026: 18 January, 2027: 2, 14 February, 2027: 7, 20 March, 2027: 12, 22 April, 2027: 8 For a group of 4 or more other dates are available on request. Please enquire.
PRICE	1 Jul 2026 - 30 Jun 2027 Adult NZ\$2,490.00 Adult (compulsory single supplement - solo hiker) NZD \$2,575.00 *Accommodation on the track is in shared Department of Conservation (DoC) huts, except for the last night of the tour, where you will have your own room.

ITINERARY

DAY 1 MOTUEKA TO PERRY SADDLE HUT

17 km (10.5 mi), 6 hours hiking

Begin with a two-hour scenic drive from your accommodation in Motueka to the start of the track in the Aorere Valley in Golden Bay. The road takes you over the renowned Takaka Hill, also known as Marble Mountain for its huge outcrops of limestone marble rock. Next, travel down the beautiful Takaka Valley, through the township of the same name, then turn inland to the Aorere Valley. The track commences at Brown River and climbs on a well graded track through lowland then podocarp-beech forest. Reach the highest point on the track (910m) approximately 40 minutes from the destination for the night - Perry Saddle Hut. When the bush peels away, you will be able to see the spectacular vistas from Flanagans Lookout at the highest point of the track and then again from the hut. Numerous bush birds like tui, bellbird, rifleman, tomtit may venture out, curious of visitors. There is also a chance to see two of our native parrots at the hut - the kea and kākā. At night the piercing cries of the great spotted kiwi can be heard.

DAY 2 PERRY SADDLE HUT TO SAXON HUT

13 km (8 mi), 3.5 hours hiking

An easy day of flat to undulating walking. First thing in the morning there is the opportunity for the fitter walker to climb Mount Perry for spectacular views into the Aorere Valley, across the Goulard Downs and out to Tasman Bay (on a clear day Mount Taranaki in the North Island can be seen).

We hike through kamahi-beech-Quintinia forest, then across the rolling tussock grass lands of the Goulard Downs - a peneplain. Stop at the Goulard Downs Hut for lunch, then continue through the Enchanted Forest. This is a limestone remnant with beech forest. Across the Downs, you will walk through more magic forest with *Dracophyllum traversii* and *D. townsonii* track side. Your destination, Saxon Hut, is situated in tussock country.

DAY 3 SAXON HUT TO MACKAY HUT

12 km (7.5 mi), 3.5 hours hiking

The lush forest opens to a distant view of the Heaphy mouth. This day may be done in two sections or an overnight option at Mackay is possible. Check with your guide as to your route.

In the morning you will leave the Goulard Downs, and gently wind your way up and over to the edge of the Mackay Downs, then onto the Mackay Hut for a lunch break. Here you will have glimpses of the Tasman Sea and tomorrow's destination at the Heaphy mouth. If you are overnighing at Mackay, a visit to the 'tops' above the hut is an afternoon option. Expansive and panoramic views around the mountains and out to the Tasman Sea, may be viewed.

If continuing to Lewis Hut today, you encounter a different flora habitat once again, with the banks along the track covered with mosses and a huge diversity of other plants. The geology changes to granite country with wonderful outcrops. You will descend to the Heaphy valley floor. The track winds gradually down through ever changing forest with new species being added constantly, until the first nikau palm appears and the forest takes on a jungle like appearance. The Lewis Hut is situated on the confluence of the Heaphy and Lewis Rivers.



DAY 4 MACKAY TO HEAPHY HUT

21 km (13 mi), 6 hours hiking

Encounter a new flora habitat once again today on the way to Lewis Shelter, with the banks along the track covered with mosses and a huge diversity of other plants. The geology changes to granite country with wonderful outcrops. As the track winds gradually down, we descend to the Heaphy Valley floor, through ever changing forest, look out for the first nikau palms which begin to appear as we approach confluence of the Heaphy and Lewis Rivers.

Stop for lunch at the Lewis Shelter, then cross both rivers to observe rare lowland rainforest flora and the striking limestone outcrops. We follow the river all the way to the mouth, arriving at Heaphy Hut. Keep a look out for some the largest Northern Rātā trees in New Zealand. The huge change in habitats and flora, the greatest change over the whole track occurs today, from the sub-alpine downs to veritable rain forest. The nikau, podocarp and giant northern rata forest will leave you breathless. Along with idyllic river scenes and, in season, the Earina and Winika perching orchids.

Spend the afternoon beach combing the driftwood-strewn shore and/or swimming in the large sandbar protected lagoon or just relaxing with a book before finally arriving at the chance to experience the famous Heaphy sunset.

DAY 5 HEAPHY HUT TO KARAMEA

16 km (10 mi), 5 - 6 hours hiking

For our final day, the track hugs the coast. We hike in and out of nikau and karaka groves beside pounding surf beaches and the best of wild West Coast scenery. Seabirds appear today and include the cormorant, oystercatchers and gulls. We may even see a seal sunning itself on the rocks. Walking down the coastline we also have a chance to see our large native pigeon, the kereru, feasting on one of their favourite foods, the nikau berry. We pass the iconic Scott's Beach and ascend the Kohaihai Bluff before making our way to the carpark, where our driver is waiting for us with our lunch.

After a short drive to Karamea, spend our final night at The Last Resort where you'll enjoy superior studio accommodation. We have a celebratory dinner (own cost) and get to experience real West Coast hospitality. The Last Resort restaurant has excellent regional cuisine, including their famous whitebait patties, a New Zealand native fish. This is a fun night of relaxation and laughter, full of camaraderie after spending five adventurous days together!

DAY 6 KARAMEA TO MOTUEKA / NELSON

This morning, we will leave Karamea in our own transport for the 5 1/2 hour scenic drive to Motueka or Nelson. This route will take you down the northern West Coast to Westport, then through the picturesque Buller Gorge. We will stop en-route at Murchison for a light lunch. Arrival time in Nelson is approximately 3:00pm - 3:30pm, so it is advisable not to book a flight out of Nelson until after 4:30pm in the event of unforeseen circumstances delaying our return.

Any excess luggage left behind in Motueka whilst you are on the track, will be awaiting you at Karamea, where we finish the walk. If you are continuing on down the West Coast after your Heaphy walk, we can drop you off in Westport if desired.



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE C

- Up to 6 hrs of physical activity per day.
- At times carrying a backpack of 5 - 8 kgs.
- Tracks generally in good condition.
- Altitude gains of up to 600m on harder days.
- No hiking experience necessary.
- Reasonable standard of fitness required

The track is well graded and maintained, and all the major rivers and creeks are bridged. Only an average fitness level is therefore required. The walk has been planned so that short days follow the longer ones.

Clients are only expected to carry their own personal gear such as sleeping bag, clothing, etc. Your guides take care of most of the food, cooking gear, and other equipment. The pace will be slow so as to allow ample time for observations, drink stops and snack breaks.



GUIDES AND SAFETY

The guides have great knowledge and experience and are registered with the Department of Conservation. All guides have current First Aid Certificates. Risk management sheets depicting planned route and client information are completed prior to each trip, and left in the Motueka office.

A cell phone is carried on all trips, and where cell phone reception is not within easy reach, a mountain radio and/or emergency locator beacon is carried as well.

FOOD

All food on the hike is provided (except for dinner in Karamea on day 5). We endeavour to use local, fresh ingredients to showcase the region's finest produce, and we offer varied menus from day to day.

The guides carry and cook all the food. Breakfasts include muesli or porridge and toast with condiments. Lunches are sandwiches or wraps with cold meat or tuna and cheese and tomatoes with hummus or chutneys. Dinners are either a meat dish or vegetarian. Vegetarian may be a variation of the meat dishes with veggie sauce, bean dish, tofu, etc. Snacks are also included and they may include bars, chocolate and nuts.

TRANSPORT

A complimentary pickup service is provided from Nelson Visitor Information Centre at 3.00 pm or from the Nelson Airport at 3:15 pm through to Motueka the day before your hike.

ACCOMMODATION

As there are no private huts on the Heaphy Track, you will stay in the large well maintained Department of Conservation (DoC) huts with comfortable bunks, coal ranges and gas cookers. Adequate space is booked in huts for each guided walk. There are seven huts and two shelters to choose from on the track. There are no shower facilities, but during the summer months there are some lovely bathing creeks and rivers plus a lagoon at the Heaphy Mouth. In the cooler months a basin of water can be heated for washing. You will need to stay in Motueka the night before your departure. Please contact us if you would like assistance booking.

NATURE AND WILDLIFE

All five species of *Nothofagus* (Southern Hemisphere beech) are found on the Heaphy Track. Huge podocarps and giant northern ratas are found in the lowland forest. On the Goulund Downs a huge variety of alpine and sub alpine species exists, including *Celmisias* (mountain daisy), *Dracophyllums*, *Gentians*, and *Bulbinellas*. Perching orchids, *Astelias*, mosses and spleenworts drip from the forest giants in the lowlands. Karaka, Nikau and Ngaio are among the many tree species to be found along the coast.

For the bird lover, many of New Zealand's rare and endangered species may be seen or heard on the Heaphy. As with the flora, the habitat diversity also means a large variety of bird life. Among the more common birds which may be seen are robin, tomtit, brown creeper, pigeon, rifleman, bellbird, tui and pipit. Also quite commonly seen are kaka, kakariki, kea and weka. The more rare birds to be seen include fernbird, falcon and blue duck. Moreporks are frequently heard at night. Great spotted kiwis are commonly heard in the evenings across the Goulund Downs and sometimes in the western lowlands. They are rarely seen however. Common coastal sightings include pied and black shags (cormorants), a variety of gulls, oyster catchers and terns.

Before the arrival of humans, especially Europeans, New Zealand was a land virtually without mammals. Introduced species, now regarded as pests, such as deer, goats, possums and stoats may occasionally be seen. On the coast native fur seals may also occasionally be seen.

New Zealand's giant *Powelliphanta* land snails are quite common and are often seen. The largest of all New Zealand species is found on the Goulund Downs - *Powelliphanta superba*. Also the North West Nelson giant weta may possibly be seen.

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

INCLUSIONS AND ADDITIONAL COSTS

The price includes all food, hut passes, transport and accommodation, including room and breakfast at the Last Resort, Karamea for one night on day 5.

What additional costs can I expect on the Heaphy Track? Dinner on the final night in Karamea at the Last Resort is not included. Nor is accommodation in Motueka the night before departure. If required you may hire a sleeping bag or pack hire, NZ\$50 per item.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

For bookings made four or more months prior to the departure date, a 25% deposit is required, with the remainder due 95 days before your trip. For bookings made within four months of the departure date, full payment is required at the time of booking. NZD\$400 of the deposit is non-refundable but may be held in credit for one year to be transferred to another Heaphy Track departure date.

Cancellations

All cancellations must be made in writing, and sent to info@hikingnewzealand.com.

- 60 to 30 days prior to departure date: 25% of the tour price forfeited.
- 30 to 7 days prior to departure date: 50% of the tour price forfeited.
- 7 days prior to departure date: 100% of the tour price forfeited.

If you fail to show up for your booked activity or experience, you will not receive any refund.

Travel Insurance

We highly recommend comprehensive travel insurance.

Notes

This trip is run in conjunction with another operator.

"FANTASTIC HIKING EXPERIENCE"

We had a fantastic hiking experience on the Heaphy. The highlights were many and we were shown conservation projects and had off track experiences we would not have attempted if it wasn't for the encouragement of the guides. The food was great - many thanks for a fun filled adventure of a lifetime!

~ Robyn - Australia

PACKING LIST

Clients are advised that they require all items on the gear list including pack covers, polypros, raincoats and room for a sleeping bag in the pack rather than attached to the outside.

ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- Sleeping bag (lightweight bag and liner recommended; huts have bunks and mattresses)
- Pack (large enough for gear listed below 50-65L).
- Rainproof pack cover
- Plastic pack liner
- Rain coat or waterproof parka
- Sun hat
- Warm hat and gloves
- Socks, woollen or thermal (3 pairs)
- Tramping or hiking boots (good support needed)
- Light shoes for hut: sneakers, sandals or water socks/crocs
- Drink bottle (1 litre)
- Small torch (flashlight) or headlamp and extra batteries
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Personal cleaning and hygiene kit (bio-degradable pack soap)
- Towel (pack towel or small regular towel)
- Clothes pegs x 5
- Cup (for your lunchtime tea or coffee)

SUGGESTED CLOTHING

Avoid cotton in favour of quick-dry synthetics and/or wool

- Tramping or hiking shorts (1 pair)
- Light track pants (e.g. nylon) (1 pair)
- Wet weather 'over trousers'
- Longjohns - (polypropylene or wool) (1 pair)
- T-shirt/short sleeve shirts (1 for walking, 1 dry for hut)
- Warm jersey or sweater (woollen or fleece)
- Wet weather 'over trouser'
- Swim wear
- Underwear (2 or 3 pair)
- Gaiters (not essential)
- Eating utensils
- Camera with extra batteries
- Ear plugs if you are a light sleeper

THESE ITEMS CAN BE HIRED ON REQUEST

- Sleeping Bag with liners (NZ\$50) & Backpack (NZ\$50)