



HEAPHY TRACK

ITINERARY



This delightful hiking route takes you on a traverse through the heart of Kahurangi National Park. This ancient Māori trail is one of New Zealand's "Great Walks" and is a well-formed track stretching 82 kilometres from Golden Bay to the West Coast. Climbing up through ancient beech forests you break out into expansive tussock lands.

With its gorgeous red tussocks, limestone cliffs, caves and twisted forest you could be in a Hobbit film. On the descent to the coast you pass giant gnarled rata trees, broad rivers (via bridges) and finally arrive at the wild nīkau palm-fringed beaches of the West Coast. The scenery and habitat are forever changing and the breathtaking views of rugged mountains all around will make you feel truly immersed in the wilderness. Simple but comfortable huts provide apt accommodation at the end of each day and offer a real "kiwi tramping experience".

LENGTH	6 days
GRADE	C (Up to 6 hrs of physical activity per day)
START	*7:30 - 8:00am, Motueka – pick up from your accommodation
FINISH	Motueka or Nelson (3:00-3:30pm) or Westport by request
DEPARTURES	<p>October 2025: 17 November 2025: 8, 22 December 2025: 16 January 2026: 20 February 2026: 1, 15, 22 March 2026: 11, 26</p> <p>For a group of 4 or more other dates are available on request. Please enquire.</p> <p>*Please note there is a complimentary shuttle available from Nelson to Motueka the day before your trip begins. The shuttle departs: Nelson Visitor Information Centre 3pm or Nelson Airport 3:15pm</p>
PRICE	<p>Adult NZ\$2,280 Adult (single supplement)* NZ\$2,360</p> <p>*A single supplement applies to all individual travelers. 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</p>

ITINERARY

DAY 1 MOTUEKA TO PERRY SADDLE HUT

17km/6 hours walking

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. From the hut there are spectacular views of the distant saw-toothed Douglas Range and the Dragon's Teeth.

DAY 2 PERRY SADDLE HUT TO SAXON HUT

13km/3.5 hours walking

An easy day of flat to undulating walking. First 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 OR LEWIS HUT

26km/7-8 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 LEWIS HUT TO HEAPHY HUT

8km/2.5 hours hiking

After crossing the Heaphy swing bridge, the mixed lowland rainforest flora and the limestone outcrops cannot be rushed. There is little of this forest type left in New Zealand. Follow the river all the way to the mouth, arriving at Heaphy Hut around 1:00pm for a leisurley lunch.



DAY 5 HEAPHY HUT TO KARAMEA

16km/5-6 hours hiking

For the entire day the track hugs the coast and goes in and out of nikau and karaka groves beside pounding surf beaches. There is magnificent scenery all the way, we stop for lunch in Kohaihai at the end of the track before driving for 20 minutes to Karamea. This is where your night's stay is at the Last Resort, Karamea. Enjoy a wonderful evening reflecting over the past five days.

DAY 6 KARAMEA TO MOTUEKA / NELSON

On the morning of day 6, 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 be stopping en-route at Murchison for a light lunch. Arrival time in Nelson will be approx. 3:00 to 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.

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 Goulard 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 Goulard 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 Goulard Downs - Powelliphanta superba. Also the North West Nelson giant weta may possibly be seen.



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.

"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

FOOD

All food including snacks is provided (except for dinner in Karamea on Day 5). 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, beans, 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.



"TRULY AMAZING"

As a large party of older hikers and we decided to treat ourselves to a guided walk on the Heaphy. It was truly amazing and we really appreciated having our healthy and hearty meals prepared for us by our hardworking guides. Everyday was a treasure trove of highlights and the stunning scenery was breathtaking.

~ Don & Maureen - New Zealand

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

ADDITIONAL COSTS

Pack and sleeping bag hire if required, \$50 per item.

The price includes all food, hut passes and transport as well as accommodation including B/B at Last Resort Karamea for one night on day 5 (not including dinner). Excluding Motueka accommodation the night before the hike.

Minimum 2 participants , Maximum 10 participants.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

For bookings four or more months in advance of the departure a 25% deposit can be paid with the remainder due 95 days prior to your trip. For bookings within four months of the departure, full payment is required. NZD\$400 of the deposit is non-refundable but is transferable (see below).

Cancellations

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

Less than six weeks from departure date: No refund, but cancelled bookings can be held in credit for one year to be transferred to another Heaphy Track departure.

Travel Insurance

We highly recommend comprehensive travel insurance.

Notes

This trip is run in conjunction with another operator.

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 not attached to the outside.

ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- Sleeping bag (lightweight bag and liner recommended; huts have bunks and mattresses)
- Backpack (50-65 litres)
- Rainproof pack cover
- Plastic pack liner
- Waterproof raincoat
- 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)

SUGGESTED CLOTHING

- Generally 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 (1 pair)
- T-shirt/short sleeve shirts (1 for walking, 1 dry for hut)
- Warm jersey or sweater (woollen or fleece)
- Underwear (2 or 3 pair)
- Gaiters (not essential)
- Eating utensils

THESE ITEMS CAN BE HIRED ON REQUEST

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