

Rolleston River bush track – rail bridge

Time: 1 – 2 hours

A marked route through the bush starts on the true right. Boulder-hop downstream for 200 metres. Look for the big cairn on the skyline. Climb a small side scree to get to the start of the track. After about an hour the track stops at a wide rocky side creek. Drop down this about 90 vertical metres to the Rolleston River.

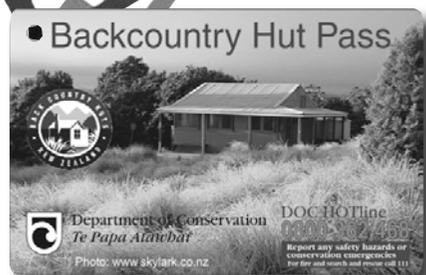
Continue in the riverbed keeping to the true right and using brief sections of track if necessary, to bypass large boulders. Before the rail bridge, the river flows hard under the bluffs on the true right. Cross to the true left and walk to the road beside the rail bridge. Otira can be reached in about an hour from here.

Hut fees

Please purchase tickets before using the huts.

	Bunks	
Anti Crow Hut	6	Standard
Carrington Hut	36	Serviced
Waimakariri Falls Hut	6	Basic

Serviced – 3 tickets per person/night
Standard – 1 ticket per person/night
Basic – Free



Further information

For information, hut tickets, intentions cards, maps, weather forecasts and track condition updates:

Arthur's Pass National Park Visitor Centre
Main Road, Arthur's Pass
Phone 03 318 9211

8.00 am – 5.00 pm (summer),
8.30 am – 4.30 pm (winter)

arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz

Suggestions for corrections or improvements should be emailed to: recreation@doc.govt.nz



- Protect plants and animals
- Remove rubbish
- Bury toilet waste
- Keep streams and lakes clean
- Take care with fires
- Camp carefully
- Keep to the track
- Consider others
- Respect our cultural heritage
- Enjoy your visit
- Toitu te whenua (Leave the land undisturbed)



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For fire and search and rescue call 111

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Waimakariri Col

Route guide 2

ARTHUR'S PASS NATIONAL PARK



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

General information

Time: 2 – 3 days (shuttle required)

Grade: Unmarked route

Experience: Suitable for well-equipped and experienced back-country trampers only. Alpine experience and equipment essential.

Best season: Summer and autumn. Extreme avalanche danger in winter and early spring.

NZTopo50: Otira BV20 (NZMS260: Otira K33, Wilberforce K34)

Hazards: Flooded rivers, rock fall and avalanche.

Safety: Safety is your responsibility. This route guide must be read in conjunction with *Tramping in Arthur's Pass National Park*, a free brochure with important safety information.

Note: true left and true right refer to the side of the valley or river when facing and looking downstream.

Introduction

The unmarked route over Waimakariri Col to Rolleston River is a rugged two- to three-day alpine tramp. The upper Waimakariri valley and the Rolleston valley are rugged and involve steep, bouldery descents and steep sidling through scrub, scree and across avalanche chutes.

As there is snow year-round on Waimakariri Col, an ice axe, crampons and alpine skills are essential.



This unmarked route passes through several known avalanche paths and Waimakariri Falls Hut lies within three potential avalanche paths. During heavy snow conditions, we advise visitors not to travel this route unless sufficiently equipped and experienced to assess the conditions and choose a safe path through avalanche terrain. Do not use Waimakariri Falls hut during times of heavy snow loading.

You can reach Waimakariri Falls Hut in an easy day trip from Carrington Hut. The area around Waimakariri Falls Hut has spectacular waterfalls, rock faces and superb views. In summer, alpine flowers bloom in the basins. Because of avalanche danger, it is not a suitable trip for winter or early spring.



Getting there

The trip starts at State Highway 73 on the true right of the Waimakariri, just south of the road bridge over the Waimakariri River (about 10 km east of Arthur's Pass village).

SH73 – Carrington Hut

Time: 4 – 5 hours

See *Arthur's Pass National Park Route Guide 1*.

Carrington Hut – Waimakariri Falls Hut

Time: 3 – 5 hours

From Carrington Hut, head to White River. Look carefully for a suitable place to cross this cold, swift, glacier-fed river. A track through the beech forest begins near the confluence of White River and Waimakariri River. The track, on the true right, is marked intermittently with several sections in the riverbed or on river terraces. After an hour's walk from Carrington Hut, the valley opens into splendid subalpine scrub and alpine herbfield. Here Campbell Creek tumbles down to join Waimakariri River. The western flanks of Mt Rolleston/Kaimatau can be seen ahead.

In the upper reaches of the Waimakariri past Campbell Creek, travel is more difficult and the boulders bigger. As the river veers east, either stay on the true right or cross the river and cut the corner to avoid rock fall and small bluffs.

Just before Waimakariri Falls, the unmarked route leaves the river. Though you cannot see Waimakariri Falls from the main route, the gorge where the waterfall is hidden is obvious. As you approach the falls, watch for the markers and poles marking the track on the true right of the Waimakariri. The track begins where the river sweeps onto a small bluff (the start of the gorge), and you can no longer follow the riverbed. The first few steps of the track are very steep. Five minutes climbing steeply through scrub will provide you with a good view of the falls.

Fifteen minutes from the riverbed the track crosses an open rocky creek. It is easy to lose the track so look for cairns.

As the track approaches the second falls it veers left through large boulders. Either ford the river or cross the swingbridge above the falls and scramble up a short tussock slope to the tarns by the hut. The six-bunk Waimakariri Falls Hut is situated above a gorge overlooking the river.

Waimakariri Falls – Waimakariri Col

Time: 2 – 3 hours

The best route to Rolleston River does not cross Waimakariri Col, but crosses the main divide higher and further to the northwest. The actual crossing point under Mt Armstrong cannot be seen from Waimakariri Falls Hut.

From Waimakariri Falls Hut you can see a ravine and two lines of bluffs to its left. Travel up the true left to the ravine in the middle of the valley and cross the Waimakariri River below the ravine. Go up the scree between the two bluffs. This will take you above the lower bluffs. Sidle to the right to get around the upper bluffs. The low point in the ridge where you cross is between Point 1845 and Mt Armstrong. Make your own way through bluffs to this point well to the northwest of Waimakariri Col.

Waimakariri Col – Rolleston River

Time: 3 – 4 hours

From the ridge, travel down the stream draining the small glacier on the slopes of Mt Armstrong. The gully running parallel to the stream develops into a steep chute and should not be entered. Leave the stream where it begins to level out in the basin below.

Rolleston River has a series of steep gorges and waterfalls. The route follows high above the true left of the river; sidle to the left well above Rolleston River. Near the bottom of the basin is a knob with a cairn on top. Sidle down to this knob.

From the knob follow a worn trail down its ridge, through rocky outcrops. Stay high and do not drop onto the flattish tussocky terrace below. Instead, cross the first scree slope you come to. In a few minutes you will come to a small side stream. Cross it high to avoid waterfalls lower down.

From the side stream sidle for two hours, descending slowly with the fall of the river. The route to the bush-line track sidles constantly across extremely steep scree, tussock and scrub. If there is snow around, be aware of the possibility of avalanches. At the northern end of this long face you must drop down to the marked route by Rolleston River. Descend when you reach the last scree slope before a ridge of scrub-covered bluffs. Descend to the bottom left-hand corner of the final scree and scramble down to the riverbed.