



# Tongariro Alpine Crossing

## Tongariro National Park

### Introduction

The Tongariro Alpine Crossing is an extending trek over steep volcanic terrain. It begins and ends at different points and transport must be arranged. This can be done directly with commercial shuttle operators, through visitor information centres and some accommodation providers around the Park.

Visitors using commercial transport to and from the Tongariro Alpine Crossing must advise the bus driver about any change in your plans.

It is important to have appropriate outdoor clothing, equipment and fitness (see the essential gear list). Theft from and vandalism to cars left at road ends is an increasing problem. Do not leave valuables in vehicles.

It's a steep climb up to the South Crater between Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe. Poles lead across the South Crater to the track's highpoint at Red Crater (1886 m), a still active and steaming vent.

Beyond Red Crater the track passes Emerald Lakes and skirts Te Wai-Whakaata-o-te Rangihiroa (Blue Lake). From here the route descends to Ketetahi Hut and skirts the nearby springs down through native forest to the car park. The total distance is 19.4 km one way.

### Times from Mangatepopo car park

The following times are an approximate guide as everyone walks at a different pace. The time taken on each section of the track will also depend on rest and sightseeing stops.

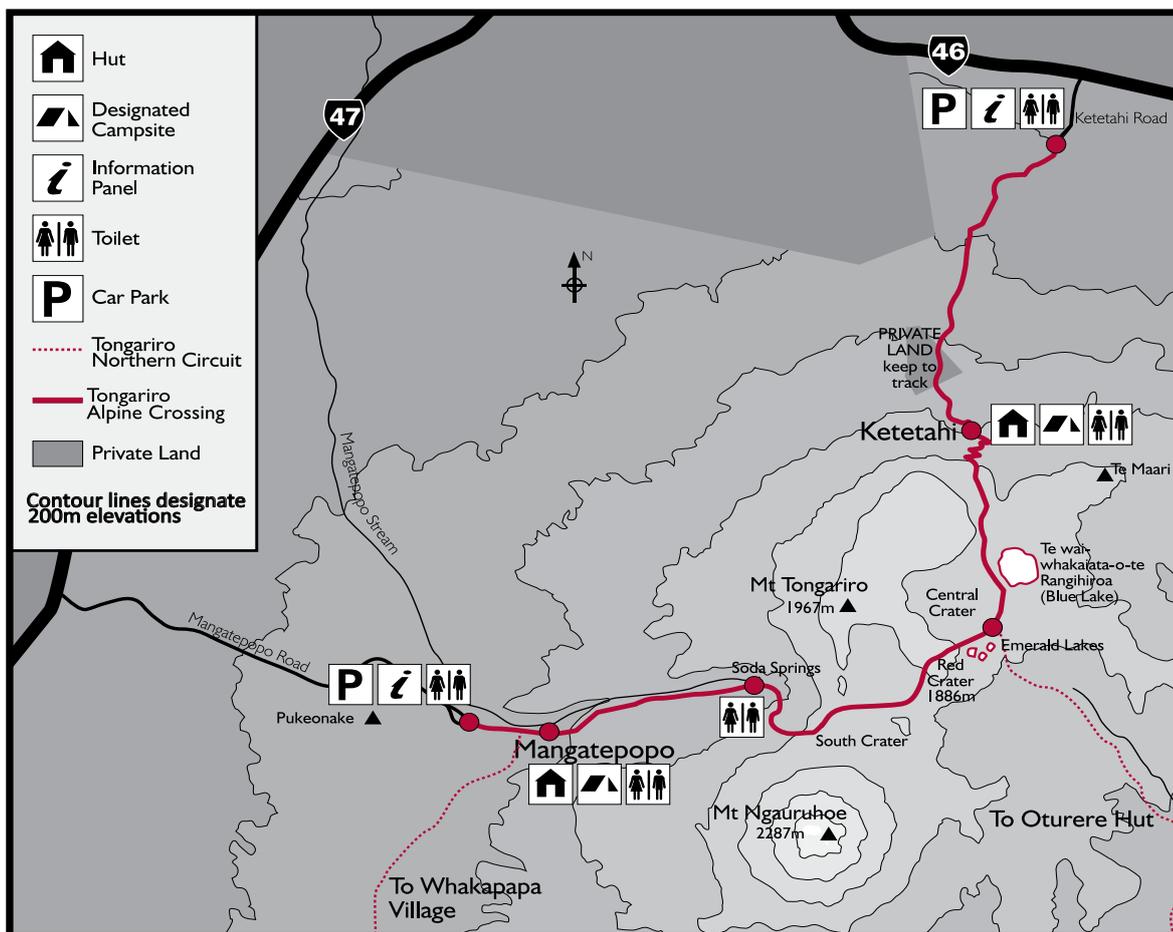
Car park to Soda Springs	1-1½ hours
Soda Springs to South Crater	1 hour
South Crater to Red Crater	1 hour
Red Crater to Emerald Lakes	10 - 20 mins
Emerald Lakes to Ketetahi Hut	1-1½ hours
Ketetahi Hut to Ketetahi car park	1½ - 2 hours

### Track information

The amount of climbing required is minimised if the crossing is begun at the Mangatepopo Valley Road end, off State Highway 47. From there a well-marked track up the Mangatepopo Valley follows a gentle gradient to Soda Springs.



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



Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai

## Ketetahi Springs

The springs are on private land and hiking the Tongariro Alpine Crossing does not convey any right of access to the springs. Please respect this as trespassing through the springs may result in loss of access to this part of the park. Follow the poled route.

## Side trips

### Mt Ngauruhoe (2287 m)

This is not a poled route. From the base of Mt Ngauruhoe at Mangatepopo Saddle, climb directly up to Mt Ngauruhoe's crater. The best way is up the rocky ridge to the left of the scree slopes. The summit area is dangerous and should be avoided if there are signs of increased volcanic activity. Allow 1-1½ hours up (from Saddle) and 30 minutes down.

### Mt Tongariro summit (1967 m)

From Red Crater follow the poled route leading to the summit. Allow 1½ - 2 hours return.

## Be prepared

### What to Bring

- Food and plenty of fluid, especially on hot days.
- Rainproof coat (overtrousers are a good idea too)
- Sturdy boots. *Uneven volcanic terrain can be difficult and tiring to walk on*
- Warm woollen or polypropylene clothing – *cotton clothes don't keep you warm when its wet*
- Woollen hat and gloves or mittens
- Sun protection
- Personal first aid kit
- Map and compass – *important in poor visibility*

### In winter you may also need:

- Ice axe and crampons - *know how to use them.*
- Snow gaiters



Be ready for any conditions.

## You could also consider:

- Avalanche probe/snow shovel
- Avalanche transceiver
- Cellphone for emergencies

## Weather

Tongariro National Park weather can change with alarming speed. You must be prepared for all weather conditions. The weather in the car park can be totally different to what's going on nearly 1000 metres higher and further up the track. Be prepared to change your plans and turn back, especially when visibility is poor and in strong winds. Take care at track junctions, especially in poor visibility. Look for and follow poles marked 'Tongariro Alpine Crossing'.

## Water

There is no drinking water available between Mangatepopo and Ketetahi huts. Water supply at the huts is from rainwater. Conserve water and ensure taps are turned off. We recommend you treat all water in the Park. Water from the upper Mangatepopo Stream, Emerald Lakes and Ketetahi Springs is not suitable for drinking due to high mineral content.

## Huts

If you wish to shelter in huts, please respect overnight users. Leave wet boots and jackets outside the hut.

## Toilets

There are toilets at Mangatepopo and Ketetahi car parks, at both huts and at Soda Springs. Between Soda Springs and Ketetahi Hut there are no toilets and the terrain is open with little cover.

## Rubbish

Take all rubbish out of the park (including cigarette butts).

## For more information

Whakapapa Visitor Centre  
 Private Bag, Mount Ruapehu 3951

Tel: (07) 892 3729  
 Fax: (07) 892 3814  
 Email: whakapapavc@doc.govt.nz

Visit the Department of Conservation website:  
[www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

