

Track categories



Easy access short walk

- ▶ Easy walking for up to an hour
- ▶ Track is well formed, with even surface
- ▶ Few or no steps or slopes
- ▶ Suitable for people of all abilities and fitness
- ▶ Stream and river crossings are bridged
- ▶ Walking shoes required



Short walk

- ▶ Easy walking for up to an hour
- ▶ Track is well formed, with even surface
- ▶ There may be steps or slopes
- ▶ Suitable for people of most abilities and fitness
- ▶ Stream and river crossings are bridged
- ▶ Walking shoes required



Walking track

- ▶ Easy to moderate walking from a few minutes to a day
- ▶ Track is mostly well formed, some sections may be steep, rough or muddy
- ▶ Suitable for people with low to moderate fitness and abilities
- ▶ Clearly signposted. Stream and river crossings are bridged
- ▶ Walking shoes or light tramping/hiking boots required



Tramping track

- ▶ Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking
- ▶ Track is mostly unformed with steep, rough or muddy sections
- ▶ Suitable for people with good fitness.
- ▶ Moderate to high-level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills, required



Check, Clean, Dry

Stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests. Remember to Check, Clean, Dry all items before entering, and when moving between, waterways.

Further information

Haast Awarua Field Centre/ Haast Visitor Centre

Haast junction, corner State Highway 6 and Jackson Bay Road
PO Box 50, Haast 7844
Ph: 03 750 0809, Fax: 03 750 0832
Open 7 days
haastvc@doc.govt.nz

South Westland Weheka Area Office

Main Road, Fox Glacier
PO Box 9, Fox Glacier
Ph: 03 751 0807, Fax: 03 751 0858
Open Monday-Friday
southwestlandao@doc.govt.nz

Westland Tai Poutini

National Park Visitor Centre
13 State Highway 6, Franz Josef Waiau
PO Box 14, Franz Josef Glacier 7856
Ph: 03 752 0796, Fax: 03 752 0797
Open 7 days
westlandnpvc@doc.govt.nz

West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy Office

10 Sewell Street, Hokitika
Private Bag 701, Hokitika
Ph: 03 756 9100, Fax: 03 756 9195
Open Monday-Friday
westcoast@doc.govt.nz

You can get brochures, maps, hunting permits, hut tickets and general information at any of these offices.

www.doc.govt.nz

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Photo Andris Apse

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 Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Short walks and activities in the Haast area



About

The Haast region stretches from Knights Point in the north to Cascade valley in the south and inland to the forest-lined Haast Pass. It is famous for its dramatic coastline – the sweeping curves of beaches, the rugged cliff tops and the striking rock formations of Knights Point, to the west of Lake Moeraki.

Here you can travel through a series of unspoiled natural environments, often in a continuous sequence: from the sea and ancient sand dunes past a series of lakes and dense forest, to the dramatic backdrop of the Southern Alps/ Kā Tiritiri o te Moana, a mountain chain that divides east from west. This is a region so wild, remote and relatively undisturbed that Haast was not linked by road to the rest of the West Coast until 1965.

Wildlife abounds. In spring you may see Fiordland crested penguins/tawaki at Monro Beach, north of Knights Point. Forest birds include the threatened kākā (a large native parrot), kiwi (Haast tokoeka) and kārearea/ New Zealand falcon.

At the extreme southern end of the West Coast road lies the Cascade valley. Close to the road end is Cascade viewpoint, looking out to Cascade Plateau and the Red Hills Range. This glacier-carved landscape lacks the forest that dominates elsewhere. Its stark barrenness is a result of concentrations of naturally occurring minerals that inhibit plant growth. An abundance of iron gives the rocks a red colour and the hills their name.

The superb and diverse features found in the region were recognised nationally with the creation of Mount Aspiring National Park in 1964 and internationally with the establishment of the Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area in 1991. World Heritage status ranks this part of New Zealand as one of the world's most special natural landscapes.

The main route through Haast, State Highway 6, is a heritage highway. Many walks and scenic attractions are accessed directly from the highway.

In the past

The Haast environment has continually challenged and inspired the people who live in the region as well as visitors to the area.

Māori first settled here at least 800 years ago. The sea, coast and navigable rivers provided the main access points. Māori settlement and activity was centred round gathering, carving and trading precious pounamu, also known as greenstone or jade.

Europeans first attempted to settle at Jackson Bay/Okahu during the 1870s. The pioneers' endeavours to 'tame' the landscape were largely unsuccessful, but their efforts left a tradition of tough, resilient and independent South Westland residents.



Lake Ellery Track. Photo: Ioan Baker

Care for the environment

Dogs and other domestic animals are not permitted in national parks or reserves in New Zealand.

All native plants, wildlife, natural features and historic sites are strictly protected. Take rubbish away and do not light fires, except where facilities are provided at designated camping sites.

Your safety is your responsibility

Check the forecast and carry the right gear.

West Coast weather and track conditions can change dramatically and very quickly. Call at the Department of Conservation offices or visitor centres to check on current track conditions. Strong shoes or boots are recommended for anyone planning a walk of more than a few minutes. Be prepared for rain at any time of the year.

For longer walks, pack a small first aid kit and take some food and drink. Insect repellent is recommended to ward off sandflies and mosquitoes.

Let someone know before you go

Visit www.adventuresmart.org.nz to learn more about how to adventure safely in the outdoors and to log your outdoor intentions with your trusted contact.

Te Wāhipounamu –
South West New Zealand
World Heritage Area



South West New Zealand is one of the great wilderness areas of the southern hemisphere. Known to Māori as Te Wāhipounamu (the place of greenstone), the South West New Zealand World Heritage Area incorporates Aoraki/Mount Cook, Westland Tai Poutini, Fiordland and Mount Aspiring national parks, covering 2.6 million ha.

World Heritage is a global concept that identifies natural and cultural sites of world significance – places so special that protecting them is of concern for all people.

Some of the best examples of animals and plants once found on the ancient supercontinent Gondwana live in the Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area.

Note: All walking times are average times and do not include resting or viewing stops.

Walks north of the Haast River

To Blue River (Blow Fly) Hut

Part of the historic Haast to Paringa Cattle Track

Time: 2–3 hr return / 8 km return

The hut, one of the few surviving examples of a roadman's hut, is on an old track completed in 1884 to give better access to and from Haast. Users included farmers driving their cattle to the sale yards at Whataroa, 270 km to the north. The 'Blow Fly' in the name comes from the cattle-droving days when the accumulated cattle dung attracted flies in summer.

The Moeraki Valley Track junction is about 15 min before the hut. Follow the main track past the junction, cross the Moeraki River swing bridge and turn left at the Māori Saddle Hut junction sign. Directly below the hut are some deep blue pools in the Moeraki River.

See the Haast to Paringa Cattle Track guide for further information on the three-day tramp.

Monro Beach Walk

Time: 1 hr 20 min return / 4.7 km return

An easy walk through luxuriant coastal forest to the remote Monro Beach just north of Knights Point. In spring, you may see tawaki/Fiordland crested penguins in the surf and on the beach. Take care not to disturb these rare birds.

Kahikatea Swamp Forest Walk

(at Ship Creek Tauparikaka)

Time: 20 min return / 800 m return

A gentle walk following the slow-flowing Ship Creek Tauparikaka. A creek-side viewpoint allows easy observation of the forest plants and wildlife. The track loops through an area of dense swamp forest where you can see stunning specimens of New Zealand's tallest tree, the kahikatea (white pine).

Dune Lake Walk (at Ship Creek Tauparikaka)

Time: 30 min loop / 1 km loop

The first part of this walk, along the sand dunes, is an easy-access short walk. The track then becomes 'short walk' grade and winds through dense coastal forest stunted by wind. The walk opens out to provide magnificent photo opportunities from platforms that overlook the dune lake and the sweep of the coastline south west to Jackson Head.

Haast Pass highway walks

Roaring Billy Falls Walk

Time: 25 min return / 1 km return

An easy walk along a fern-lined track, passing some fine examples of miro (brown pine), mataī (black pine) and silver tawhai/beechness (also known as tawai) trees. The broad gravel bed of the Haast River contrasts with the jumble of huge boulders, which the aptly named Roaring Billy cascades over.

Pleasant Flat

Time: 5 min return / 200 m return

Picnic shelter and viewpoint.

A 5-min walk through beech forest with excellent views of Mount Hooker. You can camp overnight here. There is a shelter and a toilet but no other facilities, so you need to be fully self-sufficient.

Thunder Creek Falls Walk

Time: 5 min return / 200 m return

A short walk, suitable for wheelchairs, to a view of impressive 28-metre-high falls. Like all waterfalls in the Haast valley, these are at their best after rainfall.

Fantail Falls Walk

Time: 5 min return / 200 m return

Another easy short walk to the attractive fan-shaped falls. Note the reduced size of the Haast River here compared with its volume at the Roaring Billy Falls.

Jackson Bay/Okahu walks

Hapuka Estuary Walk

Time: 20 min loop walk / 1 km

A walk into the intertidal zone. Panels along the walk explain the ecology of the estuary and the story of whitebait, the rich birdlife and seals. This area offers some fantastic photo opportunities, especially in spring when the kōwhai is in flower and tūi, korimako/bellbird and kererū (native pigeon) abound. A viewing platform looks out to the Open Bay Islands of Taumaka and Popotai. This walk is signposted from the Jackson Bay Road.

Lake Ellery Track

Time: 1–2 hr return / 3 km return

A pleasant walk through beech forest to a glacier-formed lake. The track meanders alongside the Ellery Stream, which can be boated.

Access: Turn off the main road (Haast–Jackson Bay Road) on to the Jackson River Road, south of the Arawhata bridge. The track start is 3 km along this sealed road.

Smoothwater Bay Track

Time: 3–4 hr return / 9.4 km return

This track offers a variety of terrain. For the first 45 min, it follows an old pioneers' track until you reach the clear-flowing Smoothwater River. The track can get muddy in places as it follows the true right of the river out to the coast, but the reward is the beauty and solitude of Smoothwater Bay. Sturdy footwear recommended.

Note: The Stafford Bay Route (4 hr one way) turns off the Smoothwater Bay track after 45 min. There is a separate route guide for the Stafford Bay trip.

Wharekai – Te Kou Walk

Time: 40 min return / 1.6 km return

Walk from the sheltered Jackson Bay through the wildlife refuge to the rocky shore at Ocean Beach. Panels provide information about tidal pools and the life of the rocky shore. You may see kekeno/New Zealand fur seals along this walk. Ensure you leave shellfish untouched for others to see.



Other things to do and see

Jackson Bay Shelter

You will find panels here on the nature and history of Jackson Bay/Okahu.

Ollivier grave

Claude Ollivier's grave on the foreshore of Jackson Bay, near the start of the Wharekai-Te Kou Walk, dates from 1862 and is the earliest recorded European gravesite on the West Coast.

Arawhata Pioneer Cemetery

Situated between Neils Beach and Jackson Bay, this is the burial site for some of the first European settlers to come to Jackson Bay as part of an unsuccessful settlement programme in 1875. The forest has reclaimed most graves, with only about 13 sites still discernible. The story of the failed Arawhata settlement is one of hardship, premature death and unrealised dreams.

Cascade viewpoint

Situated about 3 km past Martyr Saddle, on a hill overlooking the mighty Cascade River, this roadside lookout provides excellent views of the Cascade valley and the Red Hills Range. Panels here provide information on wilderness stories, past glaciers and highly mineralised rocks. The road is narrow and unsealed.



Knights Point viewpoint

A compulsory stopping place for panoramic views of the wild coastline, rainforest and ocean. You may see seals in the distance at Arnott Point. There is information here on the landforms, early travellers, the sea and marine mammals.

Edge of Wilderness

A 20-min film - available for viewing at the Haast Visitor Centre. The title aptly sums up the Haast experience: captured on film is the magnificence of the landscape and wildlife of the Haast area, from raging waters of a river in flood to the exuberance of the birdsong chorus at daybreak.

Tramping tracks

If you are interested in more than just a short walk, information on longer tramping tracks in the area is available from the Haast Visitor Centre.

Camping

There are Department of Conservation standard overnight camping areas at Lake Paringa and Pleasant Flat. Book online at booking.doc.govt.nz or pay your camp fees into the honesty boxes situated at the campsites. Commercial campgrounds are available at Haast.



leave no trace
NEW ZEALAND

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimise the effects of fire
Check before you light a fire - a ban may be in place
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others