

# Tramping in New Zealand

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**Tramping**, known elsewhere as backpacking, rambling, hill walking or bushwalking, is a popular activity in New Zealand.

Tramping is defined as a recreational activity involving walking over rough country. Trampers often carry a backpack and wet-weather gear, and may also carry equipment for cooking and sleeping.<sup>[1]</sup>

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A trampler crossing a swingbridge over the Huxley River in the South Island of New Zealand.

## History

Alpine climbing has been a recreational activity from the early days of European settlement, and possibly earlier. From the 1950s tracks, huts and bridges were built in the forested areas of New Zealand to support hunters culling introduced deer species which had become a threat to the biodiversity of New Zealand. As tramping became popular these facilities were increasingly used by trampers. In later years tramping has become popular for both local and foreign tourists.

Tramping clubs were formed in many towns, cities and universities with regular trips being organised. The clubs sometimes own a bus to transport club members to the tracks.

## Tramping tracks

A network of tramping tracks has been developed throughout New Zealand of varying lengths and difficulties. A small number of tramping tracks cross private land either in part or in full. All of the major tramping tracks are on public land that is administered by the Department of Conservation.

Among the best-known tracks are the nine Great Walks and the ultra-long-distance Te Araroa.

## Huts

There is a network of more than 950 backcountry huts throughout New Zealand operated by the Department of Conservation (DOC) on public land.<sup>[2]</sup> Some areas have privately owned huts on public land used for commercial tourism operations. The majority of the huts were built by the now defunct New Zealand Forest Service for deer culling operations. Other huts were built by alpine clubs, schools, and ski clubs. Some of the buildings on public

land that are readily accessible by vehicle, are generally "baches" or "cribs" built by private individuals when control of the use of public land was less stringent. These baches are not made available to the public. Some public huts are associated with a local club and volunteers from clubs will perform much of the maintenance on these huts. In the Tararua Forest Park north of Wellington huts are managed in a partnership between DOC and various lower North Island clubs. In the eastern Southern Alps near Christchurch some huts are managed solely by the Canterbury Mountaineering Club and they rely on fees from these huts to help pay the cost of maintenance.

Amongst experienced trampers there is a strong culture of looking after huts. The phrase "hut etiquette" encompasses looking after any hut that is used and showing consideration for other hut users. Most huts on the conservation estate are open to the public and the state of a hut depends on the care by those who use it.

## Environmental care code

This environmental care code promoted by the Department of Conservation contains a 10-point checklist of things that can be done in the outdoors to help minimise impact:<sup>[3]</sup>

1	Protect plants and animals	Treat New Zealand's forests and birds with care and respect. They are unique and often rare.
2	Remove rubbish	Litter is unattractive, harmful to wildlife and can increase vermin and disease. Plan your visits to reduce rubbish, and carry out what you carry in.
3	Bury toilet waste	In areas without toilet facilities, bury your toilet waste in a shallow hole well away from waterways, tracks, campsites and huts.
4	Keep streams and lakes clean	When cleaning and washing, take the water and wash well away from the water source. Because soaps and detergents are harmful to water-life, drain used water into the soil to allow it to be filtered. If you suspect the water may be contaminated, either boil it for at least 3 minutes, or filter it, or chemically treat it.
5	Take care with fires	Portable fuel stoves are less harmful to the environment and are more efficient than fires. If you do use a fire, keep it small, use only dead wood and make sure it is out by dousing it with water and checking the ashes before leaving.
6	Camp carefully	When camping, leave no trace of your visit.
7	Keep to the track	By keeping to the track, where one exists, you lessen the chance of damaging fragile plants.
8	Consider others	People visit the back country and rural areas for many reasons. Be considerate of other visitors who also have a right to enjoy the natural environment.
9	Respect our cultural heritage	Many places in New Zealand have a spiritual and historical significance. Treat these places with consideration and respect.
10	Enjoy your visit	Enjoy your outdoor experience. Take a last look before leaving an area; will the next visitor know that you have been there?
Take nothing but pictures – leave nothing but footsteps		
<i>Toitu te whenua</i> (leave the land undisturbed)		

## See also

- National parks of New Zealand
- Forest parks of New Zealand

- Regional parks of New Zealand
- Protected areas of New Zealand
- Conservation in New Zealand
- Camping in New Zealand

## References

1. Orsman, H. W. (1999). *The Dictionary of New Zealand English*. Auckland: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-558347-7.
2. "Backcountry hut information". Department of Conservation. Retrieved 2008-09-09.
3. Environmental care code (<http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/plan-and-prepare/care-codes/nz-environmental-care-code/>) - Department of Conservation

## Further reading

- Barnett, Shaun; Brown, Rob; Spearpoint, Geoff (2012). *Shelter from the storm: the story of New Zealand's backcountry huts*. Nelson, N.Z: Craig Potton Publishing. ISBN 9781877517709.
- Barnett, Shaun; Maclean, Chris (2014). *Tramping: A New Zealand History*. Nelson, N.Z: Craig Potton Publishing. ISBN 9781927213230.

## External links

- Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (<http://www.fmc.org.nz/>) - an umbrella lobby group representing outdoors organisations
- Bushcraft New Zealand (<http://www.bushcraft.org.nz/>) - Information about enjoying the New Zealand outdoors
- New Zealand Trumper (<http://www.tramper.co.nz/>) - tramping related information.
- Tramping (<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/tramping>) - Te Ara the Encyclopedia of New Zealand
- Tramping in New Zealand



Wikimedia Commons has media related to ***Hiking in New Zealand***.



Wikivoyage has a travel guide for ***Tramping in New Zealand***.



Look up ***tramping*** in Wiktionary, the free dictionary.

([https://www.dmoz.org/Regional/Oceania/New\\_Zealand/Recreation\\_and\\_Sports/Tramping\\_and\\_Walking/](https://www.dmoz.org/Regional/Oceania/New_Zealand/Recreation_and_Sports/Tramping_and_Walking/)) at DMOZ

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