

Great
Walks
—

Plan and prepare

KEPLER TRACK



Duration: 3–4 days
Distance: 60 km (loop)



Great Walks season:
23 October 2018 – 30 April 2019



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

New Zealand Government

KEPLER TRACK

FROM THE beech-forested shorelines of lakes Te Anau and Manapouri, to tussock-covered ridgelines and spectacular alpine vistas, the Kepler Track is an incredible wilderness adventure above the clouds.

Forming a loop track from Te Anau, it's a fantastic opportunity to experience the most accessible of Fiordland's Great Walks in Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area.

The Kepler Track is circular and can be walked in either direction. The track is well marked and signposted, but some sections are steep and rough and may be muddy and slippery. Poor weather conditions can make this walk challenging, even in the Great Walks season.

This brochure describes a 4-day hike for independent, non-guided walkers during the Great Walks season (23 October 2018 – 30 April 2019).



Outside the Great Walks season (May to October) walking conditions are more hazardous – see the safety information.

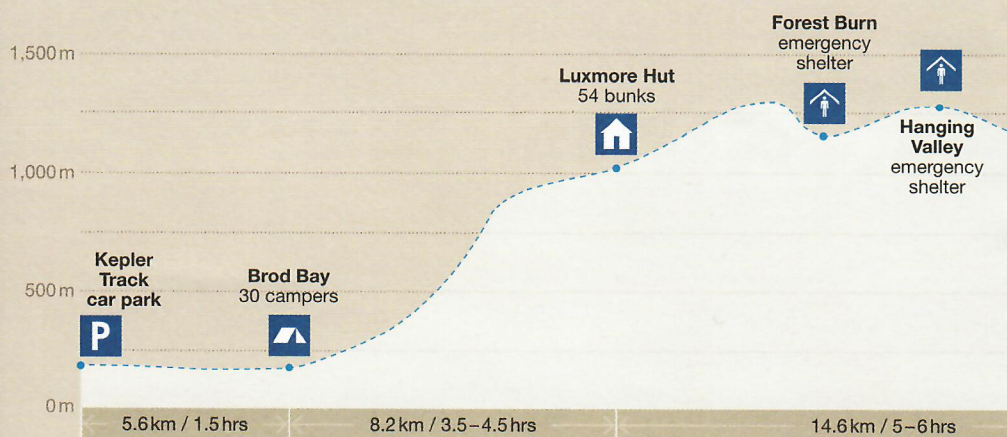


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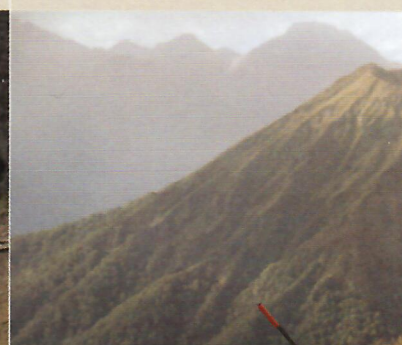


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ELEVATION PROFILE & TRACK GUIDE



Day 1: Kepler Track car park to Luxmore Hut



Day 2: Luxmore Hut to Iris Burn Hut

5–6 hours, 13.8 km

Your journey begins with a stroll through the beech forest along the shore of Lake Te Anau, the largest body of fresh water in Australasia, to Brod Bay. A challenging climb under impressive limestone bluffs takes you above the bushline to panoramic views of the Te Anau basin and surrounding mountains. Luxmore Hut is a 45 min walk from the bushline.

5–6 hours, 14.6 km

Start your day on top of the world. From the hut, you'll climb to a ridge just below Mount Luxmore. In good weather there are stunning views across the south fiord of Lake Te Anau to the Murchison Mountains. A welcoming sight after a day on the tops, Iris Burn Hut is situated in a large tussock clearing.



COVER: Descending from Hanging Valley Shelter, John Strother (www.panafoot.com)

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Day 1 & 2 photos, Daniel Deans; Day 3, Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz); Day 4 Kepler Wetland, DOC

MAIN PHOTO: View from Luxmore, Tyler Ray Photography (tylermilesray.com)



hut



campsite



shelter



car park

Iris Burn Hut
50 bunks
30 campers



**Rocky Point
Shelter**



Moturau Hut
40 bunks



**Rainbow Reach
car park**



**Kepler Track
car park**



16.2 km / 5–6 hrs

6 km / 1.5–2 hrs

9.5 km / 2.5–3.5 hrs



Day 3: Iris Burn Hut to Moturau Hut

➤ 5–6 hours, 16.2 km

Experience ever-changing scenery as the track takes you over a low saddle, then down past a large slip caused by heavy rain to Rocky Point. You'll then wind through a gorge and lowland beech and podocarp forest, before reaching the shore of beautiful Lake Manapouri. The beach-side Moturau Hut has stunning views of the lake.



Day 4: Moturau Hut to the Kepler Track car park

➤ 4 hours – 5 hours 30 minutes, 15.5 km

The last day is easy walking across a unique and fragile wetland. The track then follows the Waiau River terrace to the swing bridge at Rainbow Reach. You can leave the track here and catch a shuttle bus to Te Anau, or continue alongside the Waiau River to the Kepler Track car park.





GETTING THERE

You can access the track from the:

- **Kepler Track car park:** 5 km drive from Te Anau township.
- **Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre:** 50 minutes walk along the lake front to the entrance of the track.
- **Rainbow Reach car park:** 12 km drive from Te Anau.

Shuttle buses provide a daily service to the entry and exit points on the track during the Great Walks season. A scheduled boat service also offers transport to Brod Bay.



PLACES TO STAY

DOC operates 3 huts and 2 campsites along the Kepler Track, which **must be booked in advance** during the Great Walks season (23 October 2018 – 30 April 2019) to avoid disappointment.



Great Walks huts

New Zealand rate

\$65 per adult per night; 17 years and under free (booking required).

International rate

\$130 per person per night for all ages (booking required).

During the Great Walks season the huts have bunks, mattresses, heating, toilets, basic cooking facilities, solar-powered lighting, and cold running water. A DOC ranger is in residence. The huts do not provide food, cooking utensils or showers.

Outside the Great Walks season, facilities are greatly reduced and there are no DOC rangers. Booking is not required, huts and campsites are first come, first served and fees are reduced. See the website for details.



Great Walks campsites

New Zealand rate

\$20 per adult per night; 17 years and under free (booking required).

International rate

\$40 per person per night for all ages (booking required).

Great Walks campsites offer basic facilities including toilets, sinks and a water supply. Some also have picnic tables and cooking shelters.



Photo: John Strother (panafoot.com)



Photo: Andrew Walmsley
(andrewwalmsleyphotography.com)



Photo: stokedforsaturday.com



Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)



Photo: Michelle Crounley



Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)



Photo: Andrew Maloney

- 1 Watch out for the cheeky **kea** – the world's only alpine parrot, found in the South Island high country and known for its inquisitive nature.
- 2 Explore the fascinating **Luxmore Caves**, a 10-minute walk from Luxmore Hut.
- 3 A 20-minute walk from Iris Burn Hut leads to the isolated **Iris Burn Falls**, perfect for a refreshing dip after the day's walk.

Conservation story

- 4 Students from Fiordland's five centres of learning are helping restore the unique environment of the Kepler Track and bring back its birdsong in the award-winning community conservation education-based '**Kids Restore the Kepler**' project. With funding from major sponsor Kids Restore NZ, Community Trust of Southland and Distinction Hotels NZ, the project is led by the Fiordland Conservation Trust in partnership with DOC and the learning centres. kidsrestorethekepler.co.nz

- 5 **Tussockland** is a spectacular feature of the alpine areas of the Kepler Track, providing a flowing foreground to the expansive views.
- 6 Watch for the **New Zealand falcon/kārearea**, one of New Zealand's most spectacular birds.

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?



Start off at **greatwalks.co.nz/kepler** for more information.



Book your huts and campsites online at **bookings.doc.govt.nz**.



Book your transport to and from the track.



Buy your food and **pack your bags** – download the Great Walks packing list and make sure you have everything you need for a 4-day independent unguided walk.



Read up on **safety** and make sure you're well prepared for your journey and changeable weather at **greatwalks.co.nz/kepler**.



Visit the closest **DOC Visitor Centre** (Te Anau) to pick up your **tickets** and official **track guide**, and chat with the friendly staff for the latest weather forecast and track conditions.



All set! Lace up your boots and get hiking. Don't forget to share your experience on **facebook.com/GreatWalks**.

For in-depth local knowledge, visit:

Fiordland National Park
Visitor Centre
Phone: +64 3 249 7924
Email: greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz
greatwalks.co.nz

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Know before you go

It is **important** to plan your trip thoroughly to ensure you stay safe, and have a great time. Before you go, know the **Outdoor Safety Code** – 5 Simple rules to help you #makeithome.

1. **Plan your trip.** Travel times vary greatly in New Zealand, so carefully planning your route is essential. Seek local information about what to take, and allow enough time for the journey. Book accommodation, transport and transfers to the start/end of track early.
2. **Tell someone your plans.** Safety is your responsibility. Leave your intentions – including your trip details and emergency contact information – with a trusted contact. It could save your life if things go wrong. Head to **mountainsafety.org.nz** for more information.
3. **Be aware of the weather.** New Zealand weather is very changeable. Plan for the worst, expect the best. Check **metservice.com** for the most up to date info.
4. **Know your limits.** Always follow the track markers and signposted tracks. Off-track navigation is not recommended for novice walkers in New Zealand. A good level of fitness is required to walk the track. You can expect to walk up to 7 hours a day depending on your fitness level. If you get into trouble don't make a bad situation worse. Think **STAR** – Stop / Think / Assess / React.
5. **Take sufficient supplies.** With NZ's changeable conditions many hikers are frequently caught out by isolated local conditions. Carry – and expect to use – rain jackets all year round. Take an extra day's supply of food and an emergency shelter. Don't rely on cellphone signal alone for communication. Food and drinks are not available to purchase at Great Walks huts or campsites. Plan to be self-sufficient.

Kepler Track safety

The information in this brochure relates to the Kepler Track in the Great Walks season (23 October 2018 to 30 April 2019).

- This track is not recommended for children under the age of 10, due to the exposed mountainous environment and often adverse weather conditions. An overnight stay at Moturau Hut is a more suitable option for the whole family.
- Fiordland National Park is in an area with high rainfall and changeable weather patterns. Cold temperatures, snow, strong winds and heavy rain can occur at any time of year.
- The Kepler Track has complex avalanche terrain and the risk of avalanche can extend into December. During the Great Walks season, DOC manages this risk to a low level and may close the alpine section of the track between Luxmore Hut and Iris Burn Hut if avalanche conditions exist.
- Go to **greatwalks.co.nz/kepler** 'Know before you go' section for detailed safety information, and 'What to take' section for a comprehensive gear list.

Remember – your safety is your responsibility



You are strongly recommended **NOT** to attempt this track between early May and late October (outside the Great Walks season). The winter environment in Fiordland is very cold and wet, with ice, snow and short daylight hours. Avalanche-prone bridges across some major watercourses are removed. DOC does not manage hazards such as flooding or avalanches. Walking the Kepler Track at this time should **only** be attempted by people who are very experienced in the New Zealand backcountry and have navigation, river crossing and alpine skills. Alpine-specific trip planning is critical for you and your group safety. The consequences are severe if not correctly managed.

In addition, **facilities are greatly reduced** – including no gas for cooking, a limited water supply, and no rangers or emergency radio facilities. For more information, see 'Outside the Great Walks season' at **greatwalks.co.nz/kepler**.