

Queen Charlotte Track



Walking



Mountain Biking

Difficulty

Medium

Length

75 km

Journey Time

3-5 days walking

Region

[Marlborough](#)

Part of Collections

[Te Araroa - New Zealand's Trail](#) , [Te Araroa - South Island](#)

Te Araroa's start point in the South Island is Ship Cove at the Queen Charlotte Track's northern terminus. Te Araroa follows this track for 3-5 days (75km) and ends near the Outward Bound School at Anakiwa.

Most people get to Ship Cove by boat. Several companies operate regular shuttle runs between Picton and various points along the track, including both trailheads. Some operators will transport packs forward each morning to the days-end destination so trampers can walk unencumbered.

It is possible to fly from Wellington to Picton or Port Gore, with a shuttle from Port Gore over the hill to Ship Cove. See 'Getting there' for details.

The entire track is a medium tramping standard. It contains long forested sections with a mix of coastal and ridgeline walking and affords gorgeous views of both Queen Charlotte and Kenepuru Sounds.

There has been a lot of tourism-oriented development along the Queen Charlotte Track and trampers can tailor their tramping to suit. The accommodation available ranges from up-market lodges to campsites, six of these managed by DOC and one, at Mistletoe Bay, by a private trust. If you want to spend the money, there's restaurant food available en route.

The [Department of Conservation brochure](#) [↗](#) available through the link on this page contains more information about walking the track, including details about transport, food and accommodation options, flora, fauna, and an historical account.

A four day tramp on the Queen Charlotte Track might follow this timetable but there's plenty of scope for variation:

- **Ship Cove to the head of Endeavour Inlet - 17km / 5hr**
- **Head of Endeavour Inlet to Bay of Many Coves Campsite - 19km / 6hr**
- **Bay of Many Coves Campsite to Torea Saddle - 15km / 6hr**
- **Torea Saddle to Anakiwa - 20km / 8hr**

The walking time estimates are from the Department of Conservation. Some will find them generous but they're consistent throughout the country so if a trumper is able to walk one section in 4/5th of DOC's walking time estimate, for example, then they're likely to be able to do the same in other sections.

Ship Cove

View the historic site and interpretation panels. The walking begins with a 240m climb to a saddle and lookout before descending to Resolution Bay and Schoolhouse Bay campsite

Resolution Bay

The Resolution Bay Cabins are further along (03 579 9411). The well-graded trail undulates as it leads from Resolution Bay around into Endeavour Inlet passing numerous accommodation businesses along the way.

Beyond the Camp Bay junction the track climbs towards Kenepuru Saddle.

Kenepuru Saddle

The track from the Saddle has some steeper and ridgeline sections. Trampers need their Queen Charlotte Track Land Cooperative (Q.C.T.L.C) pass from here to cross private property track sections.

The Queen Charlotte Track ends here in Anakiwa.

Conditions

Queen Charlotte Track Land Cooperative Pass (\$50 for 5 days) – Private Land

A Queen Charlotte Track Land Cooperative (QCTLC) Pass is required for all QCTLC Land between Kenepuru Saddle, Torea Saddle, Te Mahia Saddle and Anakiwa, whether walking or biking the Queen Charlotte Track.

The QCTLC Pass fee contributes to the sustainability of the track and assists with maintenance, enhancements and access. Please respect the owners' property and do not take vehicles, firearms or dogs on the track. The sections of track on these properties only exist through the goodwill and cooperation of the landowners.

Passes can be purchased on the [QCTLC website](#) and at the Picton I-Site, Blenheim I-site, Nelson DoC, DoC Wellington and Picton water taxis as well as selected accommodation (Furieux Lodge, Endeavour Inlet) and various business near the track (Paper Plus, Picton).

Trail Pass

The Te Araroa Trail Pass covers the use of DOC campsites along Queen Charlotte Track. More details in the Accommodation section

Jetties

Many jetties in the Sounds, such as the Outward Bound New Zealand one at Anakiwa, are privately owned. Boat owners can use them for picking up and dropping off passengers and luggage only.

How to get here

Road or Sea Access Information

Anakiwa, Mistletoe Saddle, Torea Saddle and Kenepuru Saddle are all accessible by road. Anakiwa, Mistletoe Bay, Torea Bay, Camp Bay, Endeavour Inlet, Resolution Bay and Meretoto/Ship Cove can be accessed by sea.

You can walk or ride the track in either direction, but it's best to set from Ship Cove.

If starting from Ship Cove, boat operators are available to carry your pack between accommodation places.

Private transport

Anakiwa, Mistletoe Saddle, Torea Saddle and Kenepuru Saddle are all accessible by road. Anakiwa, Mistletoe Bay, Torea Bay, Camp Bay, Endeavour Inlet, Resolution Bay and Meretoto/Ship Cove can be accessed by sea. Many of the short walks can be enjoyed from these places.

Transport operators

A number of companies offer boat transport to and from points along the track, including Meretoto/Ship Cove. Regular and on-demand bus services link Anakiwa with Picton.

Further information is available from Picton Information Centre, travel companies and accommodation houses.

Transport

Getting there/away - Picton

Te Araroa's northern terminus in the South Island is at Ship Cove, which is accessible only by boat or by air. Picton is the gateway to Ship Cove and is a full service town with a population of around 3000.

- Ferry to/from Wellington, multiple departures daily, Interislander or Bluebridge
- [Pelorus Air](http://www.pelorusair.com) (http://www.pelorusair.com) Fly direct from Wellington to Port Gore, landing on a private airstrip over the hill from Ship Cove. A 20min flight with great views along the way. Contact us for more details - info@pelorusair.com Tel: 027 757 7247
- [Sounds Air](https://www.soundsair.com) (https://www.soundsair.com) - regular flights between Wellington and Picton (Koromiko airport) with shuttle service to/from Picton. Great scenic flight and only 20 mins! NZ only: 0800 505 005. Tel: 03 520 3080. info@soundsair.com
- [Air New Zealand](#)
- [InterCity](#) - P: 03 365 1113
- Rental Cars - multiple options available
- [Private Driver Hire](#) - P: 03 391 0500 (Paul) - can transport to/from all locations Picton-Anakiwa-Pelorus Bridge-Nelson-St Arnaud, priced on enquiry.

Ship Cove








- [Cougar Line Water Taxis](#) - The Waterfront London Quay and Wellington St, Picton (by the town wharves) - P: 03 573 7925
- [Beachcomber Cruises](#) - The Waterfront Cnr London Quay and Wellington St, Picton P: 03 573 6175 or Freephone 0800 62 45 26 - E: office@mailboat.co.nz

Anakiwa

- [Cougar Line Water Taxis](#) - The Waterfront London Quay and Wellington St, Picton (by the town wharves) - P: 03 573 7925 - W:
- [Beachcomber Cruises](#) - The Waterfront Cnr London Quay and Wellington St, Picton P: 03 573 6175 or Freephone 0800 62 45 26 - E: office@mailboat.co.nz
- [Private Driver Hire](#) - P: 03 391 0500 (Paul) - can transport to/from all locations Picton-Anakiwa-Pelorus Bridge-Nelson-St Arnaud, priced on enquiry.

Accommodation

Trail Pass

-  Schoolhouse Bay Campsite - km 1,746.2 - Included in The Trail Pass (Bookings required)
-  Camp Bay Campsite - km 1,768.2 - Included in The Trail Pass (Bookings required)
-  Bay of Many Coves Campsite - km 1,776.8 - Included in The Trail Pass (Bookings required)
-  Black Rock Campsite - km 1,786.3 - Included in The Trail Pass (Bookings required)
-  Cowshed Bay Campsite - km 1,791.3 - Included in The Trail Pass (Bookings required)
-  Mistletoe Bay Campsite - km 1,798.9 - Private \$
-  Davies Bay Campsite - km 1,808 - Included in The Trail Pass (Bookings required)

Other Accommodation / Camping

You can choose to walk (or bike) the track independently, carrying all of your own clothing and equipment, or you can simply carry a day pack and have your main gear (less than 15kg) transported by one of the water taxi companies. The campsites at Bay of Many Coves and Black Rock are not at sea level so these are excluded from the water taxi luggage shuttles - you will need to carry everything you need if you choose to stay at these sites.

The six DOC-managed, 'self-registration' campsites on the track each have toilets and water supply. Some also have cooking shelters and picnic tables. Remember there are no rubbish facilities. Please take your rubbish with you when you leave.








DOC Camp Site Fees

[Update October 2023](#) DOC have implemented a booking system for the campgrounds, this means you can book and pay online before your trip. Alternatively visit the i-SITE in Picton to buy campground tickets.

If you have not booked and paid online you will need to deposit the camp fees (\$10 per night, per adult) for the DOC campsites in the self-registration box at each site or prepay at the Picton i-SITE or the DOC Office in Picton. These fees go toward the upkeep of the camp facilities. Note: The Department of Conservation Backcountry Hut Pass is not valid at Department of Conservation campsites.

The Trail Pass is valid for DOC campsites as listed above

A number of private accommodation providers offer hostel, cabin, motel and hotel lodgings, and tent sites alongside or close to the track. The private tracks that leave the main track to private accommodation are not constructed to the same standard as the Queen Charlotte Track and may be narrow, steep, and slippery when wet. Some private accommodation sites may not be signposted, so make sure you get clear directions when you book.

- Note: No camping is available at Ship Cove.
- DOC Campsite 1. Resolution Bay - Schoolhouse Bay campsite
- The Resolution Bay Cabins (\$70 per person, per night for a little Hut, linen included). Tent sites \$25 per person. Small shop with espresso and snacks. Kayaks, full kitchen and showers included. Bookings essential - Deborah P: 03 579 9411 E: reso@xtra.co.nz W: Resolutionbay.kiwi
- [Furieux Lodge](#)  - Endeavour Inlet, Queen Charlotte Sound - Marlborough Sounds - P: 03 579 8259 - E: info@furieux.co.nz - This historic lodge has hostel and more exclusive accommodation, a restaurant, bar, and a booking office.
- Top of the Inlet accommodation at the head of Endeavour Inlet (near Miner's wharf), at the end of the first day's walk on the Queen Charlotte Track. A single tent site or a one-room cabin available. The cabin has a comfortable queen-sized bed (\$80 per night for two people inc. cooking facilities and linen). Camping for single tent site \$10 per person. Use of cooking facilities, bush shower and composting toilet. Booking essential - Carey P: 027 231 6487 carey.virtue@gmail.com
- Camping available at Top of the Inlet cabins \$10 per person per night. Use of cooking facilities, bush shower and composting toilet
- DOC Campsite 2. Camp Bay campsite
- [Punga Cove Resort](#)  - Endeavour Inlet - P: 03 579 8561 Hostel and more exclusive accommodation options, a restaurant, cafe and bar. E: enquiries@pungacove.co.nz
- DOC Campsite 3. Bay of Many Coves campsite.
- www.ngaherehou.com  1200m off the track, well signposted. Glamping in luxury and comfort. Large yurt (sleeps 4 - \$350 per night inc. organic breakfast) or Summerhouse yurt (sleeps 2 - \$220 per night inc. organic breakfast) Self-catering, BBQ or our delicious pizzas, wood fired hot tub. 40 acres of private bush reserve with stunning views this is an off-the-grid eco experience to treasure. P: 021 0224 1915
- DOC Campsite 4. [DOC's Black Rock Campsite](#)  -
- DOC Campsite 5. [DOC's Cowshed Bay Campsite](#)  - (26 Dec to 8 Feb - \$15 per night)
- [Portage Resort Hotel](#)  - 2923 Kenepuru Rd - P: 0800 762 442 or 03 573 4309 - E: reservations@portage.co.nz - Hostel and more exclusive accommodation, restaurant, cafe, and bar.
- [Mistletoe Bay Eco Village](#)  - Onahau Bay - P: 03 573 4080 or M: 021 131 8283 - E: stay@mistletoebay.co.nz - Camping, hostel, more exclusive accommodation, and a small store.

- DOC Campsite 6. [DOC's Davies Bay Campsite](#)

The Department of Conservation Backcountry Hut Pass is not valid at Department of Conservation [campsites](#). The Trail Pass is valid for these campsites

You must pay for walking the Queen Charlotte Track. Fees are payable to the [Queen Charlotte Track Land Cooperative](#) to use track sections that cross private land. A pass lasting up to 5 consecutive days costs \$50.00. School children are free. [Passes are for sale at numerous outlets, including the Picton i-SITE and Furneaux Lodge](#). This is for access only and does not include camping.

Department of Conservation's Bay of Many Coves Campsite

The track climbs from this campsite to a high point then undulates gently and stays mainly on the ridge.

Department of Conservation's Black Rock Campsite

Beyond this campsite the track remains mainly on the ridge before it descends to Torea Saddle

Torea Saddle. Right for 1km down Torea Road to Portage Bay, from here the track climbs away from the saddle. Further on it descends towards Te Mahia Saddle or a side track to Cowshed Bay campsite

Te Mahia Saddle. Left down to Mistletoe Bay Eco Village where there is accommodation, as listed in extra information. The track continues through the junction as sign-posted.

DOC's Davies Bay Campsite

It is easy walking from the campsite through to the trailhead at Anakiwa.

Picton

Full range of hostel, motel and other accommodation providers including

- [YHA Picton](#) - 34 Auckland Street, Picton P: 03 573 6598 E: picton@yha.co.nz
- [Gateway Motel Picton](#) - 32 High St, Picton - P: 0800 104 104 or 03 573 6398 - E: info@picton-accommodation.co.nz
- [Broadway Motel](#) - 113 High St, Picton - P: 0800 101 919 - E: stay@broadwaymotel.co.nz
- [Atlantis Backpackers](#) - 42 London Quay, Picton - P: 03 573 7390 - E: utopia@atlantishostel.co.nz (ask for the Te Araroa discount!)

Anakiwa

- [Anakiwa Lodge](#) - 9 Lady Cobham Grove, Anakiwa P: 03 574 2115 E: info@anakiwa.co.nz
- [Anakiwa 401](#) - 401 Anakiwa Rd, Marlborough Sounds - P: 03 574 1388 - E: anakiwa401@gmail.com
- [Smiths Farm Holiday Park](#) - 1419 Queen Charlotte Drive, Linkwater - P: 03 574 2806 or 0800 727578 - E: cbfaulls@extra.co.nz (Pickup from Anakiwa available by request)
- Queen Charlotte Tavern - 1162 Queen Charlotte Drive, Linkwater - Accommodation, WiFi, Shower and a place to do your washing! contact Mary Ann on 027 648 6708 or email on maryannsurrIDGE@icloud.com

Food And Supply

Picton

- Fresh Choice Supermarket - Mariners Mall, 100 High St, Picton - P: 03 573 6463. Open 7 days 7:00 am to 9:00 pm. NZ Post counter in store
- [Picton 4 Four Square](#) - 49 High St, Picton - P: 03 573 6443. Open 7:30 am to 9:00 pm until 21 Feb, then 7:30 am to 8:00 pm

Anakiwa

The Green Caravan Café @ Anakiwa 401 has heat'n'eat meals, snacks, hot & cold drinks and ice-creams.

More information

Picton

- [Picton DOC Office](#) - Port Marlborough Building, 14 Auckland St, Picton - P: 03 520 3002 - E: picton@doc.govt.nz
- [Picton i-SITE Visitor Information Centre](#) The Foreshore, Picton P: 03 520 3113 - E: picton@marlboroughnz.com

Before starting Te Araroa either as a through-walker of the whole country or a section walker, [please register on Te Araroa website](#). Please also [visit the website](#) or [download the app](#) for detailed maps, trail alerts and other relevant information.

This track is part of the Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa track database. Herenga ā Nuku has [maps and advice about public access to the outdoors](#).

We encourage you to continue gaining the skills and knowledge required for a safe trip. The NZ Mountain Safety Council has lots of free resources and information you can use. You can access them at www.mountainsafety.org.nz.

We recommend trying these online learning tools:

- [Trip Planning](#)
- [Tramping/field Skills](#)
- [Basic Navigation](#)
- [River Safety](#)

Additionally, check out the range of helpful videos available from the NZ Mountain Safety Council [YouTube channel](#).

