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Whanganui JOURNEY GUIDE

Duration: 3 or 5 days
Distance: 145km (one way)

Plan and prepare

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
2. Tell someone
3. Be aware of the weather
4. Know your limits
5. Take sufficient supplies

TELL SOMEONE YOUR PLANS

Tell someone you trust your plans and when they should hear from you next. Include the national/international emergency service numbers: 111-Police for points of contact in New Zealand, +64-4-381-2000 for international. Find more information at adventuresmart.org.nz.

Further information and bookings

Visit the Great Walks website or contact your nearest DOC Visitor Centre.

Phone: 0800 NZ GREATWALKS (0800 694 732)
Email: greatwalks@doc.govt.nz

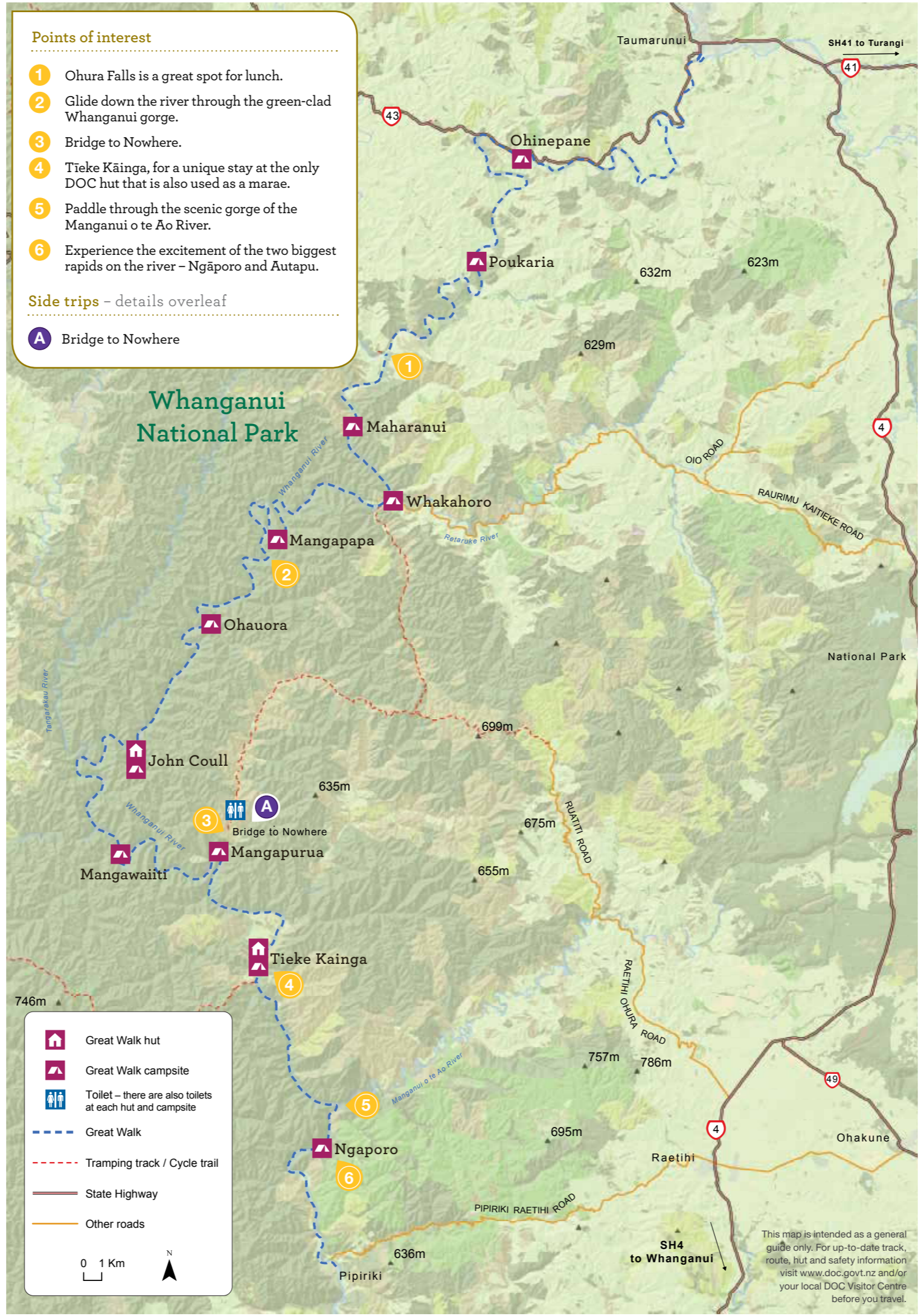
[Book online greatwalks.co.nz](http://greatwalks.co.nz)

Share your experience – facebook.com/greatwalks

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New Zealand Government



Welcome to the Whanganui River Journey, one of nine unforgettable journeys.

Experience the scenic beauty, history and cultural significance of the winding Whanganui River. Choose a 5-day journey by canoe or kayak from Taumarunui to Pipiriki (145 km), or a shorter 3-day journey starting at Whakahoro (87 km), featuring the most scenic stretches of the river through remote hills and valleys.



Plants and wildlife

Short-tail and long-tail bats/pekapeka may be fluttering overhead around John Coull Hut and campsite at dusk. Long-tailed bats are smaller than the short-tailed bat, chestnut brown in colour, have small ears and weigh 8–11 g. They are New Zealand's only native mammal.



Photo: DOC

Eels migrate up streams to find suitable adult habitat in the river. They are secretive, mainly nocturnal, and prefer habitat with plenty of cover. Tuna (the Māori word for eels) are not only historically important to Māori, they are considered a taonga (treasure) species.



Photo: David Kelly

Kererū/wood pigeon are large birds with iridescent green and bronze feathers on their heads and a smart white vest. The noisy beat of their wings is a distinctive sound. They are the only remaining native bird capable of distributing large fruits such as karaka and taraire.



Photo: DOC

Whio/blue duck live only in clean, fast-flowing streams in the forested upper river catchments. Nesting along the riverbanks, they are at high risk of attack from stoats and rats. You might see them on the main stem of Manganui o te Ao River on the last day of your journey.



Photo: Sabine Bernert

Broadleaf-podocarp forest has grown over this land, composed of rātā, rewarewa, rimu, tawa and kāmahī, with beech dominant on the ridge tops. Podocarp forest can be lush with a dense undergrowth of shrubs, ferns and tree ferns. Tree ferns and plants that cling to the steep riverbanks are very distinctive.



Photo: DOC

Land surrounding the river is only about one million years old. Formed of soft sandstone and mudstone (papa) from the ocean-bed, it has been eroded by water to form striking sharp ridges, deep gorges, sheer papa cliffs and waterfalls.



Photo: DOC

Paddling guide

The 145 km river journey from Taumarunui to Pipiriki usually takes 5 days to complete by canoe. A shorter 3-day journey from Whakahoro to Pipiriki is also possible.

The times are approximate and will vary according to your fitness, direction of travel and the weather.

Taumarunui to Whakahoro 2 days, 57 km

Access points are at Ngahuinga (Cherry Grove) in Taumarunui or further downstream at Ohinepane (accessed from River Road SH43).

Travelling the upper reaches of Whanganui River you'll pass through a mix of farmland and native bush. You'll be in for excitement as you shoot down rapids on this section of the river. Camp beside the river at Ohinepane, Poukaria or Maharanui campsites. From here, you get the feeling of venturing into the heart of a rich and rugged landscape.

Whakahoro to John Coull Hut 1 day, 37.5 km

The scenic middle reaches of the river feature numerous waterfalls especially after heavy rain. After Mangapapa Campsite, take a long loop around the Kirikiriroa

peninsula, past the Tarepokiore (whirlpool) rapids, and then the large overhang known as Tamatea's Cave. Please do not enter the cave as it is wāhi tapu (a sacred place). Otaihangā Reach leads you to your overnight stop at John Coull Hut and Campsite.

John Coull Hut to Tīeke Kāinga 1 day, 29 km

On this section, follow the river as it meanders through bush-covered hills, passing the mouths of the Tangarakau and Whangamomona Rivers where they join the Whanganui River. Mangawaiiti Campsite, perched high above the river, is an attractive spot to camp or stop for lunch.

You'll pass Mangapurua Landing, gateway to Mangapurua Valley and the Bridge to Nowhere. Continue your trip downstream to Tīeke Kāinga, one of many old pā on the Whanganui River.

Tīeke Kāinga to Pipiriki 1 day, 21.5 km

You'll pass by the scenic gorge of the Manganui o te Ao River, as it enters the Whanganui River after its journey from the slopes of Mount Ruapehu. Ngaporo and Autapu rapids can provide plenty of excitement and perhaps a cool dip on a hot day. More exotic trees and farmland indicate you are getting close to Pipiriki. Shoot the Paparoa rapids and you will see the boat ramp below Pipiriki Village up ahead.

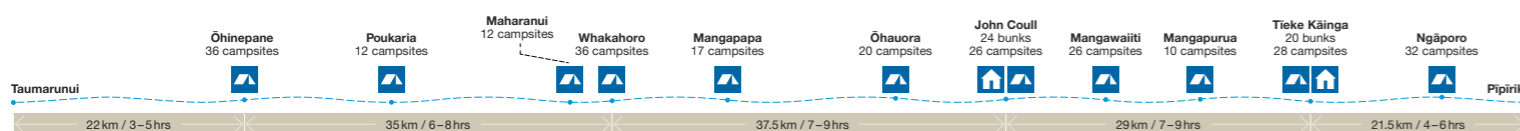
A Side trip – Bridge to Nowhere

40 min one way

At Mangapurua Landing, where the old riverboats used to tie up, hop out of your canoe and take a walk to the Bridge to Nowhere. It's a poignant reminder of the Mangapurua Valley farm settlement, carved out of the bush and then forced off between the two World Wars. Look out for cyclists as the track is also part of the Mountains to Sea Cycle Trail. Please keep the downstream end of the Mangapurua Landing clear except when getting in or out of canoes.



Photo: Herb Christophers



Visiting Tīeke Kāinga

Tīeke Kāinga is the only former pā site that also doubles as a Great Walks Hut. Facilities are jointly managed by Te Whānau o Tīeke and DOC. Visitors may be welcomed onto the marae if Tīeke people are available on that day. Visitors are welcome to use the marae facilities and camping area while observing the general tikanga rules.

General tikanga (protocol) at Tīeke Kāinga

- Visitors may be expected to participate in a pōwhiri if whānau are present at the marae. The process will be explained if necessary.
- The marae ātea (grassy area in front of the marae) must be kept clear when visitors are going through the pōwhiri.
- It is customary to leave a koha (donation) during pōwhiri.
- The whareniui (meeting house on the marae ātea) is for local people only; access into the whareniui is by invitation only.
- All rubbish must be carried out.
- Absolutely **no alcohol** permitted at Tīeke Kāinga.
- Smoking is permitted outside only. Please keep the buildings smoke-free.
- Shoes are not to be worn in the buildings; they should be left neatly on the deck.
- Clothes and washing should be hung on the designated clothes lines near the campground, not on the decks or marae area. Please ask the local people if in doubt.
- Do not sit on tables, kitchen worktops or chilly bins. Do not sit on any surface that would come in contact with food.
- Kitchen facilities are not to be used for personal hygiene eg brushing teeth. Please use the washbasins outside for these purposes.
- Please do not put tents up in the marae ātea, use the designated campsites.
- It is polite to ask for permission from the local people before taking photos at Tīeke Kāinga.
- If in doubt feel free to approach your local hosts.



Photo: 90 Seconds

Track history

Māori cultivated the sheltered terraces, and built elaborate eel weirs along river channels to trap eels and lamprey on their migration up river. Every river bend had a kaitiaki (guardian) which controlled the mauri (life force) of that place. The mana (prestige) of a settlement depended upon the way food supplies and living areas were looked after for the benefit of the hapū (tribe) and visitors.

Te Ātihaunui, a Pāpārangī people, settled the valley from early times. Eventually the river became linked by a series of hapū which were called 'the plaited braids of Hinengakau'.

Europeans missionaries arrived in the 1840s. In 1891 a regular riverboat service began carrying passengers, mail and freight to other European settlers on the river between Whanganui and Taumarunui.



Photo: Herb Christophers

Whanganui River Journey safety

STAYING SAFE ON THE WHANGANUI JOURNEY

On the river – always give way to jet boats.

- ▶ Remember: craft travelling up river give way to craft travelling down river.
- ▶ When a jet boat approaches, canoeists should move to the right. If close to the left, stay there rather than paddle across the path of an approaching boat. To minimise the effect of the wake, turn at right angles to it.
- ▶ Canoeists should stop and even back-paddle to allow jet boats to overtake and get clear as quickly as possible.
- ▶ Jet boats passing canoes travelling in the opposite direction should either wait or move slowly forward until clear of the canoes. Canoeists in this situation should keep paddling forward. Jet boats moving slowly are much less manoeuvrable and canoeists should not expect them to be able to get out of the way quickly.
- ▶ Jet boats in rapids are unable to slow down or stop.

BE PREPARED FOR ALL CONDITIONS

Hypothermia (too cold)

Watch for symptoms: people may shiver, be clumsy, confused, have slurred speech, and deny they have a problem.

Treatment: immediately make or find shelter; get the person into warm, dry clothing, put them into a sleeping bag, give them warm, sweet drinks, monitor them and seek immediate medical help.

REMEMBER

- Emergency communication is available (by DOC radio) only at John Coull Hut and Tīeke Kāinga. The only road access to the river is at Ohinepane, Whakahoro and Pipiriki.
- There is no cellphone coverage at Ohinepane, Whakahoro, Pipiriki or while on the river journey.
- Many sites are of high cultural significance – please respect them.
- Once you are on the river below Whakahoro there is no turning back, and nowhere to buy anything you may have forgotten.
- Camping is permitted only at designated campsites.

Heat exhaustion

This can be serious and is usually caused by physical activity in a hot environment and not drinking enough water.

Prevention: carry and drink water regularly.

Watch for symptoms: headaches, thirst, weakness, dizziness, nausea or vomiting.

Treatment: move to a cool shaded area to rest, remove excess clothing and give water to drink.

Heavy rain and flooding

▶ Weather can change quickly at any time of year on the Whanganui River. Be prepared for rain, cold and windy conditions by taking appropriate gear with you.

▶ Canoeing into the wind can be demanding – allow extra travelling time between stopovers in windy conditions.

▶ Don't canoe the river when water levels are predicted to rise or the river is in flood. If you capsize, you may not be able to get back in or swim to the river's edge.

▶ Always pull your canoe up high on the bank and tie it to something secure. It may not be raining on the river, but rain elsewhere in the large catchment can cause the river to rise several metres overnight.

▶ Check the local weather forecast on metService.com/rural/whanganui.

Take sufficient supplies

▶ You must be self sufficient: be sure you have enough food, clothing, equipment and emergency food for the worst-case scenario.

• No dogs or other animals are permitted.

• No open fires.

• All rubbish must be carried out of the park.

• Boil, filter or treat water if you doubt its purity.

• Use the toilets provided.

• Keep soap and detergents out of waterways.

For detailed safety information and a comprehensive gear list, see greatwalks.co.nz/whanganui.