



## 21 tips to make your Routeburn experience an outstanding one...

**We have compiled this list from our own experiences, customer comments and New Zealand Outdoor Safety Information. Tell us what you think, and of course if you would like a little help to plan your trip - we want it to be outstanding!**



1. Pack light. Weigh up the benefits of everything you take. You don't need your entire toilet bag – just take the essentials, it's only two nights! Choose small amounts of toothpaste, soap etc. Don't pack too much, because you have to carry it for 32km's and over a mountain pass.



2. Always protect your gear from getting wet, ideally use a plastic heavy duty pack liner inside your pack. Pack covers can be handy, but not as good as pack liners if it rains a lot – no harm in having both, and a spare plastic bag can be used to carry extra rubbish or wet gear if required.

3. Take appropriate clothing for rain, hail or shine (or snow!). Your favourite cotton hoodie and jeans are NOT a good choice of clothing. If they get wet they will not keep you warm, but instead be really heavy to carry. Take polyprop, or woollen thermal underclothing and warm outer layers with a waterproof layer on the outside. A quality, waterproof rain coat/jacket to keep you dryer for longer – NOT a cheap plastic poncho from the dollar shop that is likely to rip as you put it on! (pictured to the right) You get what you pay for.



4. Consider using walking poles. They help to navigate between the rocks on the track, and spread the weight of your pack, helping your legs. Also, very handy for tip #6.
5. Check the weather forecast and be prepared for the outdoors with gear, food and clothing. Take some extra food and a waterproof jacket. But don't postpone your trip due to a little bit of rain in the forecast - whether it eventuates or not, it's just as much about the new experiences and bonds you share with friends and family as fine weather.



6. Wind some 'fix anything MacGyver styles' duct tape around your drink bottle or walking pole – just in case you need it. You never know when this may be handy – also means you don't need to carry a whole roll (refer to #1).



7. Think about how much you want to have something on or under your feet at the hut. You can choose to take some hut shoes with you. However, these are not essential but a luxury, and once again it depends on how much you want to carry. A light pair of jandals (or thongs, flip-flops etc) can be a great, lightweight addition.
8. One for the ladies – Take a small face cloth and boil some hot water in the morning to heat it for a refreshing wake up. Half the experience of our backcountry DOC huts is roughing it for a couple of days – but this is luxurious if you are really missing your hot morning shower.



9. You can drink the water in fast flowing rivers and streams on the Routeburn Track at your own risk.

There are DOC signs in each of the huts to say: In general the water is fine to drink, however it is not tested and if you want to be 100% certain, you should boil it for 5 minutes or treat it.

Unfortunately these days we live in a world of pointing the finger. I personally drink the water from the local rivers if it is fast flowing as it is delicious, cold and pretty much as pure as you can get (also I don't have to carry a heavy drink bottle – once again, refer #1). However I cannot guarantee this water is 100% free from bugs etc and it is your choice to drink it or not. NB. There is no water tap at the Harris Saddle Shelter and only small tarns (mountain lakes) accessible if you need water. Carry water with you up/over the saddle if required or drink from the streams on either side.

10. Wear worn in hiking boots (rather than track shoes, sneakers, sandals etc) with quality woollen socks and take a blister kit. Your feet will thank you. As soon as you feel a hot spot starting (that scratchy, rubbing feeling) on your heel or anywhere in your boots, stop IMMEDIATELY and take steps to remedy it. It is really important you don't wait until you stop, or just put up with it as it will get worse, until you are hobbling along the track and not enjoying life at all.



11. Take some fruit drink mix you can add water too if required. This is high in sugar and helpful if you need a good 'pick me up'. Also, try mixing it with hot water if the weather is a little wet/cold. This is an extra energy boost, and warms your insides at the same time.

12. Tell someone your plans. For your own safety ensure there is someone you trust to raise the alarm if you don't check in with them when you planned to after your walk. It is important you do actually check in when you return as well! **You** are responsible for your own safety and in the NZ bush/mountains the weather can change quickly. Be sensible and if you are going off the track, take further safety equipment.



13. Take some light-weight entertainment for the evenings. Perhaps a deck of cards, some pen and paper etc. If you take a couple of crayons, you could actually use them as an emergency (or just colourful) candle if required too!

14. Ensure the food you take doesn't include a high volume of water. This makes your pack heavy. Again refer to #1. Food/drink is often the heaviest part of what you take with you. If you don't know what type of food to take, ask us for some ideas.

15. There is no mobile phone coverage or wireless internet available on the track, or at either car park. Ensure you have all the information and supplies you need prior to heading to the start of the track as you will only find a shelter area, toilets and a little track information at the car park.



16. Get to the hut early if you want to choose where you are sleeping. As the huts fill, beds are selected by walkers on a first in, first served basis. Arrange your sleeping bag and equipment when you arrive and select your mattress. This also helps later on as well, if other people have gone to bed earlier then you – you won't be causing endless rustling in the dark while others are trying to sleep.



17. Take a head torch. There are some solar lights in the huts, but not everywhere. This will come in very handy for the 2am toilet dash or if you forgot to get your sleeping bag arranged as suggested in tip #16 and are doing it late at night. Also required if you want to take a short walk at night.



18. Prepare your walking fitness and take time to enjoy the side tracks. The Routeburn track is 32kms long, and the shortest of the Great Walks of New Zealand. There are side tracks you can take on each day which will take you to the top of nearby mountains or up the valleys further. Consider the weather, your hiking fitness and what you want to get out of this walk. Plan to spend extra time on the track if required. At the end of the day – walking in the outdoors is what you are there for, isn't it? Most days, the views from Key Summit and Conical Peak are unreal.



19. Have your transport planned well in advance. This is the number one issue for most people. There is a 5 hour drive between each Routeburn Track car park. You don't want an overbearing trip memory of sitting wet and cold on a bus for a few hours. The main transport options are scheduled shuttles or car relocation. Choose the best option to suit your needs depending on perhaps how much time you have, your travel plans and how many in your group.

20. Leave no trace – help us look after our beautiful country and take all your rubbish with you. Like the age old saying 'take only photos and leave only footprints'. Choose foods that have less packaging and waste associated; prepare food before you start to avoid the extra waste to carry. There are no rubbish facilities at the huts or on the tracks. **You must take out what you take in.**



21. Last but not least - You MUST be prepared for sand flies. These are tiny black flying insects which are abundant in Fiordland/wilderness areas. Take some repellent (natural options are available) or prepare to cover up so these guys won't ruin your trip. If you get bitten, try your best not to scratch and it will go away – however this is easier said than done and a battle of will power. They say rubbing soap on the bites is also good to stop the itching.

**If you have any questions about planning the Routeburn Track, accommodation or transport options please don't hesitate to visit [easyhike.co.nz](http://easyhike.co.nz) or contact Bobbie at [info@easyhike.co.nz](mailto:info@easyhike.co.nz).**

**Enjoy No Hassle Adventuring!**

