

Plan and prepare

PAPAROA TRACK



Duration: **3–4 days hiking**
2 days mountain biking



Great Walks season:
All year

Distance: **55.1 km hiking (one way)**
56.2 km mountain biking
(one way)



PIKE29 MEMORIAL TRACK



Duration: **Uphill: 5–6 hr hiking, 3 hr 30 min – 4 hr mountain biking**
Downhill: 3 hr 30 min – 4 hr 30 min hiking, 1–2 hr mountain biking

Distance: **11.6 km (one way)**



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

PAPAROA TRACK

Experience our first purpose-built, shared-use hiking and mountain biking Great Walk in the Paparoa National Park on the West Coast of the South Island.

This Great Walk crosses the Paparoa Range, taking you through alpine tops, limestone karst landscapes and thriving rainforests.

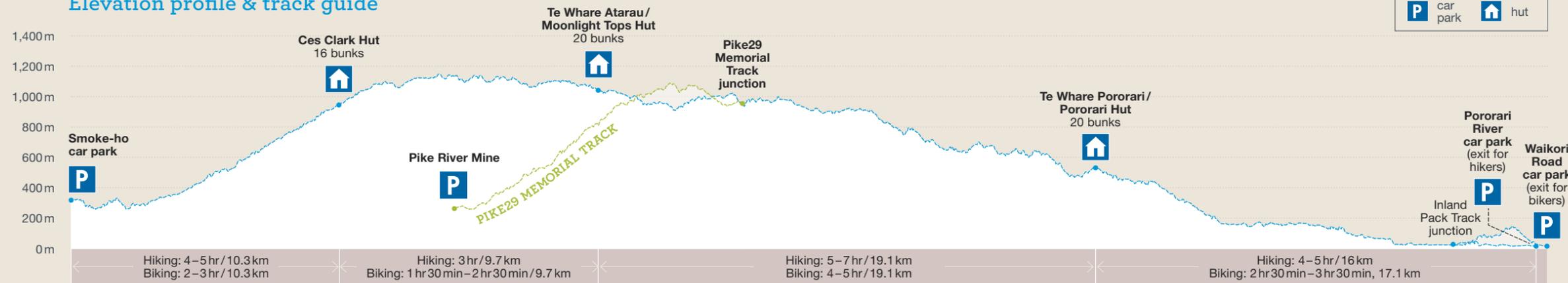
The Pike29 Memorial Track climbs from the site of the former Pike River mine to the junction with the Paparoa Track.

The Paparoa Track provides walking and cycling access through the remote and spectacular wilderness of the Paparoa National Park. The track is challenging in poor weather. You will need a good level of fitness and the right equipment.

The track is well marked and signposted, but some sections are steep and rough, and the track may be muddy. This brochure describes a 3–4 day hike for independent non-guided walkers travelling from Smoke-ho car park to Pororari River car park.

The 4-day hike option spending the first night at Ces Clark Hut is a good alternative for families or those after an easier experience.

Elevation profile & track guide



Day 1 (or 2): Smoke-ho car park to Ces Clark Hut (overnight option), then to Te Whare Atarau/Moonlight Tops Hut

Hiking: 7–8 hr, 20 km
Biking: 3 hr 30 min – 5 hr 30 min, 20 km

The Great Walk begins at its southern end at Smoke-ho car park near Blackball, about a 45-minute drive from Greymouth. Beginning on the historic Croesus Track, with remnants of the area's gold mining history, the track ascends through beech and podocarp forest before reaching Ces Clark Hut.

This part of the track is much rougher than the rest of the Paparoa Track because of its historic nature.

A night at Ces Clark Hut is a great option for those wanting a couple of shorter days or those looking for an easier 4-day hike option.

Beyond the hut you pass through alpine scrub and tussock, and you will be rewarded with expansive views of Grey River/Māwheranui to the east and the Tasman Sea to the west. Te Whare Atarau/Moonlight Tops Hut provides spectacular views.



Day 2: Te Whare Atarau/Moonlight Tops Hut to Te Whare Pororari/ Pororari Hut

Hiking: 5–7 hr, 19.1 km
Biking: 4–5 hr, 19.1 km

On day 2, open tops give way to alpine forest stunted by the harsh environment. Along this section of the track you meet the junction of the Pike ridge with the main Paparoa Range, where the Pike29 Memorial Track to the Pike River mine site begins.

Beyond the junction, the Paparoa Track winds along the top of the escarpment where the landscape is strikingly dramatic with sheer drops and stunning views down the Pike Stream in the east, stretching west to Punakaiki and north-west to Westport.

About halfway to Te Whare Pororari/ Pororari Hut, you descend from the escarpment through ancient podocarp forest under towering cliffs. The track then follows the spine of the Tindale ridge to the hut. As you traverse the ridge, look north to see the Lone Hand, a curious and gnarled outcrop of bedrock on the north side of the Pororari River.



Day 3: Te Whare Pororari/ Pororari Hut to Pororari River car park

Hiking: 4–5 hr, 16 km
Biking: 2 hr 30 min – 3 hr 30 min, 17.1 km

The Paparoa Track descends and follows the upper Pororari River valley, until it joins an old track built to establish settlement in the upper valley. The track sidles along a spectacular gorge and descends through beech forest interspersed with northern rātā. At the junction with the historic Inland Pack Track, hikers and mountain bikers diverge – hikers follow the track beside the Pororari River through the lower gorge; mountain bikers must exit into the Punakaiki River valley, ending at Waikori Road car park. Both pass through lush rainforest with glades of nikau palms.

Duration:
3–4 days hiking
2 days mountain biking
Distance:
55.1 km hiking (one way)
56.2 km mountain biking (one way)

Great Walks season:
All year

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Photo: Stewart Nimmo;
Photo: Jason Blair;
Photo: Shaun Barnett/Black Robin Photography

MAIN AND MIDDLE: Photo: Stewart Nimmo

COVER: Photo: Jason Blair

Ka Manuhiri Tūāraki
To our esteemed visitors

Te Kāhui Whakaeke
From near and afar

Nau mai, Haere mai
Greetings and Welcome

Tauti mai rā
In awe of beauty

He Ara Pounamu
Paparoa

Ko Paparoa kai ruka
Trails of old

Ko Paparoa kai raro
Steeped in richness

Papaki ka Tai o Poutini
Waves glistening like Pounamu

Ka pō, ka ao ka awatea
from darkness, became light,
cometh the day

Tiheī Mauriora
Share the breath of Life

Ka manu a Tāne
Our song of Tāne

He rau aroha
A teardrop of love

He ara Tīpuna
For our Departed

Paparoa te Whenua
Who lie in these Lands

Hei Hā!

*Kāti Waewae,
Poutini Kāi Tahu*

PIKE29 MEMORIAL TRACK

Remembering the Pike 29

The 29 men killed in the Pike River mine disaster will be remembered in a number of ways. At the families' wishes, the mine site and surrounding area has become part of the Paparoa National Park. A track has been constructed from the former mine site to the Paparoa Track. This track has been dedicated to the men and named the Pike29 Memorial Track in their honour.

The Pike29 Memorial Track can be used alongside the Paparoa Track in a range of ways including both day and overnight options.

- Duration:** Pike29 Memorial Track car park to Paparoa Track/Pike29 Memorial Track junction
- Distance:** 11.6 km (one way)
- Uphill:** 5–6 hr hiking
3 hr 30 min – 4 hr mountain biking
- Downhill:** 3 hr 30 min – 4 hr 30 min hiking
1–2 hr mountain biking
- Stop at vent shaft viewpoint:** 3 hr 30 min – 4 hr hiking (one way)
2–3 hr mountain biking (one way)
- Stop at the twin bridges:** 10–15 min hiking (return)

From the junction, the track heads east towards the Grey valley. The ridgetop offers views into Pike valley and the Pike River mine vent shaft to the north, and bush-clad valleys to the south. The vegetation consists of low alpine scrub and dwarf, weather-beaten alpine forest that could have come from a scene from the *Lord of the Rings*. The track then drops down into the Pike valley through virgin podocarp and red beech forest to its terminus at the Pike29 Memorial Track entrance.

Other options include:
Full day or overnight ride:
Smoke-ho car park to Pike29 Memorial Track car park

Duration:
6 hr 30 min – 9 hr 30 min
Distance:
37 km (one way)

Places to stay

There are three Great Walk huts on the Paparoa Track. Most walkers stay at Te Whare Atarau/Moonlight Tops Hut (20 bunks) and Te Whare Pororai/ Pororari Hut (20 bunks), for the standard 2-night, 3-day journey. For the alternative 3-night, 4-day journey, walkers will also stay at Ces Clark Hut (16 bunks). All three huts must be booked in advance. There are no campsites.

Great Walks huts
Visit doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack for prices.

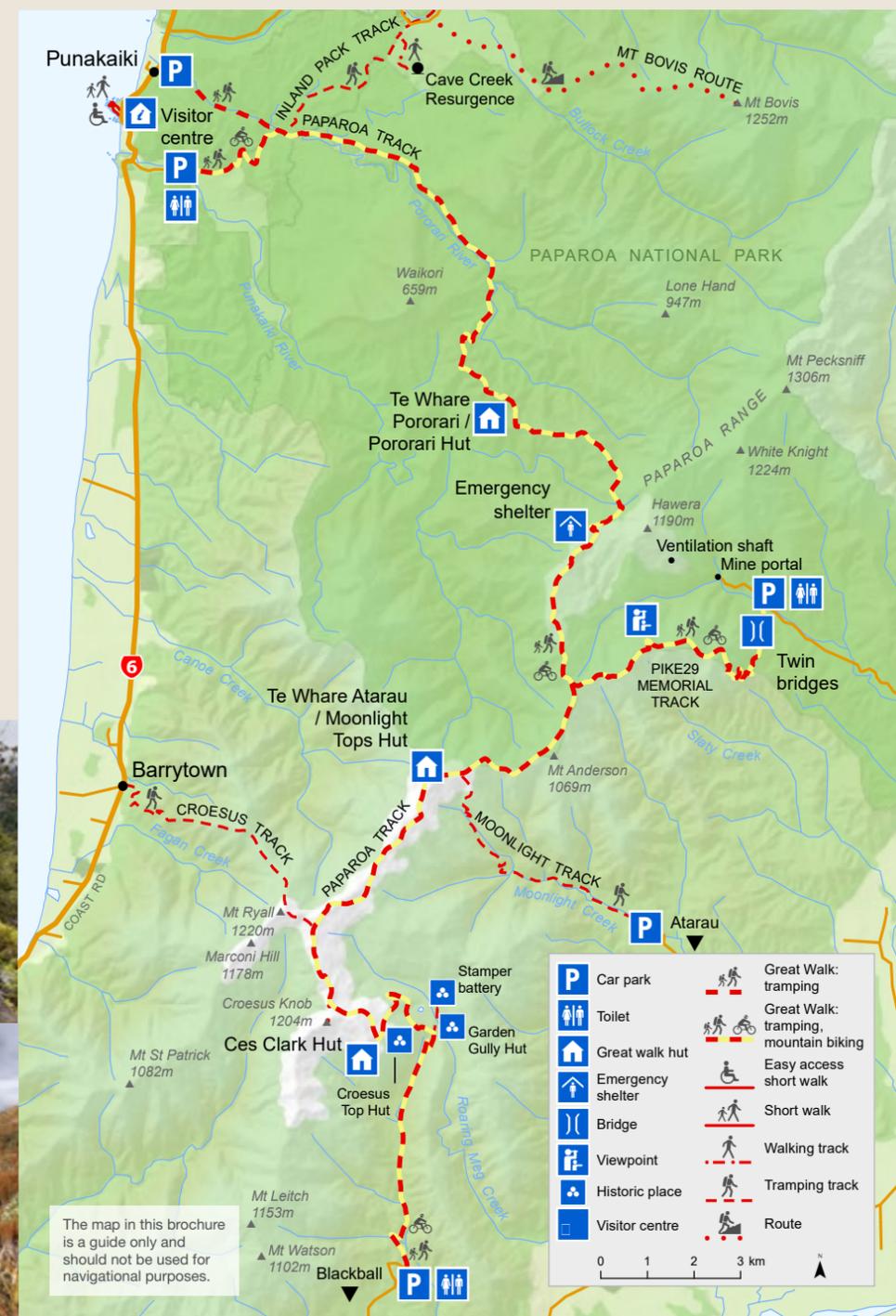
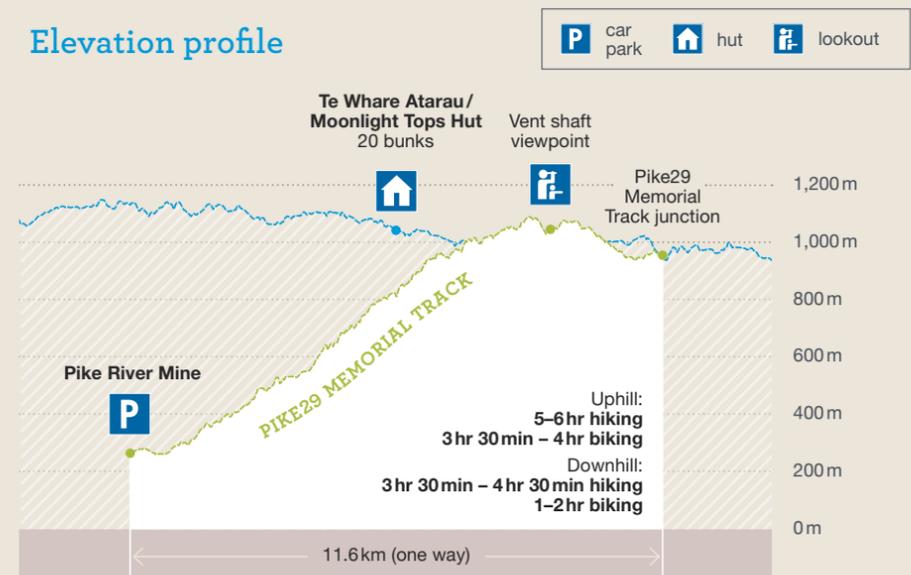


Te Whare Pororai/ Pororari Hut. Photo: Tom Hopkins (DOC)



Te Whare Atarau/ Moonlight Tops Hut. Photo: Mark Neilson

Elevation profile



The map in this brochure is a guide only and should not be used for navigational purposes.

- Car park
- Toilet
- Great walk hut
- Emergency shelter
- Bridge
- Viewpoint
- Historic place
- Visitor centre
- Great Walk: tramping
- Great Walk: tramping, mountain biking
- Easy access short walk
- Short walk
- Walking track
- Tramping track
- Route

Mountain biking



Photo: Jason Blair

The Paparoa Track and Pike29 Memorial Track are shared-use tracks for hikers and mountain bikers. This is the first purpose-built, shared-use Great Walk constructed by the Department of Conservation. You can mountain bike the tracks year-round.

2 days and 1 night mountain biking

Smoke-ho car park to Te Whare Atarau/Moonlight Tops Hut: 20km, 3hr 30min – 5hr 30min

Te Whare Atarau/Moonlight Tops Hut to Waikori Road car park: 36.2km, 6hr 30min – 8hr 30min

The Pike29 Memorial Track is a challenging ride that climbs 880m from the valley floor to the ridgeline where it connects with the Paparoa Track.

Smoke-ho car park to Pike29 Memorial Track car park: 37km, 6hr 30min – 9hr 30min

Can I do it?

The Paparoa Track and Pike29 Memorial Track are tough rides and not to be underestimated – to ride safely you need to be fit, experienced and have good equipment. This should include a well-maintained mountain bike, a comprehensive bike tool kit, quick release chain link, spare tube/fresh patch kit, pump/CO2 pump, cable ties and duct tape. For a list of essential equipment, see mountainsafety.org.nz.

You can expect

A well-formed 56.2 km track maintained to Advanced: Grade 4 mountain biking standard, with numerous swing and suspension bridges.

Plan to spend one night on the track.

You will encounter changeable weather conditions, including extremely cold temperatures, rain, high winds and possibly snow; and track sections that are prone to flooding.

Respect others, respect the rules, respect the track.

Follow the mountain biking rules below:

- You are not permitted to take a mountain bike into any hut or shelter, or onto hut porches.
- Stay on the formed and designated mountain bike tracks.
- Electric bikes are not allowed on the track.
- Bikers must give way to walkers.
- Night riding is prohibited to protect nocturnal wildlife.

You are responsible for:

- Obeying the mountain bikers code. The track is shared with hikers and other bikers – show respect for other users.
- Following signs and other markers that clearly identify where mountain bikes can be ridden and where they are not allowed.



MTB grade: Advanced (Grade 4)

A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and obstacles that are difficult to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track's outside edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.



Air New Zealand partners with the Department of Conservation to bring birdsong back to our Great Walks.



Photo: Tom Hopkins (DOC)



Photo: Stewart Nimmo (nimmophoto.co.nz)



Photo: Stewart Nimmo

- 1 Explore the spectacular **Pororari River Gorge**, with dramatic limestone cliffs, beech forests and glades of subtropical nikau palms.
- 2 Sit back and enjoy **incredible sunsets** over the Tasman Sea from Te Whare Atarau / Moonlight Tops Hut.
- 3 Admire the **stunning waharoa** at the Paparoa Track entrances and exits. These waharoa were carved by a team of Ngāti Waewae carvers, led by Mahana Coulston.



Photo: Lynne Maguire

Conservation story

The Department of Conservation works in partnership with Air New Zealand (DOC's National Partner for Conservation) and the Paparoa Wildlife Trust in the south-east ranges bordering the Paparoa National Park. These partnerships enable a pest-control trapping network to be maintained across 15,000 hectares of land to increase the size of existing populations of threatened native birds. This programme, in conjunction with the 12.5-hectare pest-proof kiwi crèche on the Atarau plains and the Paparoa great spotted kiwi / rooa project, is delivering significant gains for kiwi and many other species. pwt.org.nz

What do I do next?



Start off at doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack for more information.

BOOK

Book your huts online at bookings.doc.govt.nz.



Book your transport to and from the track.



Buy your food and **pack your bags** – go to What to take' on the webpage for a list and make sure you have everything you need for a 3 day independent unguided walk.



Read up on **safety** and make sure you're well prepared for your journey and changeable weather at doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack.



Check the weather, and make sure you've downloaded and printed your **ticket and official track guide**. You can also pick up a track guide and get the latest weather updates from the Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre.



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

For in-depth local knowledge, visit:

Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre

Phone: +64 3 731 1895

Email: paparoavc@doc.govt.nz

doc.govt.nz/great-walks

This information was accurate at the time of printing. For the latest information on DOC's policies and facilities, visit doc.govt.nz.

Published by:

Department of Conservation
PO Box 10420, Wellington 6143, New Zealand

February 2024

Editing and design:

Te Rōpū Ratonga Auaha, Te Papa Atawhai
Creative Services, Department of Conservation

This publication is produced using paper sourced from well-managed, renewable and legally logged forests.

P260397

Getting there

The nearest towns are Blackball, Greymouth and Punakaiki. The track can be accessed by road at:

- **Smoke-ho car park** at the end of Blackball Road, 8km north of Blackball
- **Pororari River Track car park** on SH6, 1.2 km north of the Pancake Rocks at Punakaiki
- **Waikori Road car park** on SH6, 2.4 km south of the Pancake Rocks at Punakaiki
- **Pike29 Memorial Track car park** Turn off from Atarau Road onto Logburn Road 15 km north-east of Blackball, and follow to the end (becomes Pike Valley Road).

0 25 50 km



Safety on the Paparoa Track

- Go to doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack for detailed safety and planning information.
- Weather in the Paparoa National Park is changeable with annual rainfall averaging around 6,000 mm. Heavy rain can occur with little warning. Be prepared for rain, heavy fog, snow and high wind.
- Walkers should come well equipped and prepared for all weather conditions. Check weather.niwa.co.nz/parks for the most up-to-date forecast.
- Bad weather can damage the track significantly. Check doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack or contact the DOC Visitor Centres in Paparoa or DOC office in Greymouth for track conditions and weather warning before your walk.
- The track between Te Whare Pororari / Pororari Hut and Punakaki can become impassable during times of heavy rain.
- If you are hiking or biking in winter, check snow and ice conditions before you leave and allow extra time. Consider changing your trip to another day if needed.

Your safety is your responsibility

Care for Aotearoa



Protect nature

Keep your distance and don't feed kea. Feeding wildlife is harmful to them. Follow any rules restricting fires, vehicles or boats. No dogs or unpermitted drones allowed.



Keep New Zealand clean

Take all rubbish with you. Use toilets where provided. You can find them at all huts.



Be prepared

Stay safe in the outdoors by following the Land Safety Code.

- ▶ Choose the right trip for you.
- ▶ Understand the weather.
- ▶ Pack warm clothes and extra food.
- ▶ Share your plans and take ways to get help.
- ▶ Take care of yourself and each other.



Show respect

Respect others, respect culture. Respect others by keeping common areas in the hut clean and tidy. Minimise noise when others are sleeping. Walkers and mountain bikers share the track. Bikers must give way to walkers. Book and pay for your accommodation to help maintain the track and facilities.



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

