

BANKS PENINSULA TRACK TWO DAY WALK

Introduction

The Banks Peninsula Track is one of the most spectacular two day walks in NZ. Easy to organise, it combines hill and coastal walking at their best, making this a great option for a short break for those who like to spend much of their day tramping.

A high level of fitness is required as the 35 kms includes a lot of hill walking, and the Track climbs from sea level to over 600m twice, and features rugged exposed headlands. It can be done with a very light pack by taking advantage of the 'Bush Cafe' on night one, and the trampers' shop at Stony Bay on night two.

All facilities are available to you, whether you are staying the night or just passing by, and a separate 'bath under the stars' is reserved for you at Stony Bay so you can soak any tired limbs and feet to your hearts content.

The two day track is limited to just 4 walkers per day, but single groups of up to 6 may be accommodated by contacting us direct.

TRACK ROUTE

Overview

After your first nights' stay at Onuku Farm Trampers' Hut, the Banks Peninsula Track climbs up and over the crater rim surrounding Akaroa Harbour. From there it descends through native forest to the Pacific Coast and penguin colony at Flea Bay. The Track then follows the dramatic coastline, via clifftops and bays including the Seal Cave and shelter before reaching Stony Bay for your second night's stay. Your second days walking continues around the coast visiting tranquil Sleepy Cove before reaching the sandy beach of Otanerito. From there you turn inland and ascend once more through both the regenerating and ancient forest of Hinewai Reserve before cresting the crater rim at Purple Peak saddle and descending to Akaroa. The Track route is wonderfully diverse, passing through lush native bush and beech forest, with waterfalls and birdsong, and crossing open pasture with stunning panoramic views.

Section 1

You quickly gain height after passing the Onuku farm buildings following the grass farm road to the abandoned site of Paradise Farm. Continue up through open pasture with stunning views of Akaroa Inner Harbour until finally reaching Trig GG, the highest point on the walk. From here on clear days there are views over to the Southern Alps. Soon after there is a walkers' shelter, before you cross over the crater rim. A brief road section starts the descent into Flea Bay, you turn off at Mortlock's Mistake, following the stream through conservation reserves with red beech and regrowth hardwood forest, and a series of four waterfalls, (access behind the veil of the last one) before emerging into the grazed land of the valley floor. In the last 20 minutes you pass Nikau palms at their southernmost limit. The cottage for your lunch stop is just 200m from the beach and Pohatu marine reserve.

Section 2

The Track leaves Flea Bay by climbing to just 150 metres altitude and then traversing along the eastern side of the bay above Pohatu marine reserve, giving good views, with seats provided for dolphin and penguin viewing. The narrow track continues on through the DOC penguin sanctuary area and rounds the tip of the headland before reaching the gully above Island Nook. From here it follows the dramatic clifftop route to the iron oxide stained cliffs of Redcliffe Point before dropping down to the 'Gull and Shag' shelter built against the rock wall. You cross a stream here, near the Seal Cave, a reliable haunt of fur seals, often swimming and playing with their young amongst the rocks or curled up asleep in the cave. The track climbs steeply after this to the ridge (with great views to Pompeys Pillar to the north), and then follows round the coast before a steep descent brings you down onto the beach. You cross the small creek and walk a hundred yards up the valley to the Stony Bay cottages where you will spend your second night.

Section 3

From Stony Bay you climb briefly through regenerating coastal forest (penguin sanctuary) before heading out to Blowhole Point (where in favourable conditions the sea whooshes up through a small hole in the rock shelf). You then swing inland again past rock-walled Blind Bay, up a bushy gully, and out to the southern headland of Sleepy Bay with its spectacular view of the Sea Arch (now sea spike after the earthquake). Sheltered Sleepy Bay is in delightful contrast, its high bush-girt waterfall is just a couple of minutes off the main track. You cross one more spur, passing the site where Ngai Tahu warriors fought a decisive battle with Ngati Mamoe some 300 years ago, before joining the broad farm track down to Otanerito beach.

Section 4

The first kilometre from Otanerito beach is through farmland alongside the creek, but for most of the way upvalley the route traverses Hinewai Reserve through extensive regenerating native forest and some mature old-growth beech forest. The gradient is gentle at first, following the lower reaches of Narbey Stream, with short sidetracks leading to waterfalls. The second half of the ascent is steeper but under shady forest canopies. Eventually you emerge into a parkland of native trees and pasture at Brocherries Flat, before making the last short climb to Purple Peak saddle, 590m above sea level. Akaroa Harbour spreads out below you like a satellite image. For the energetic, a 40 minute steep side track leads to the even loftier viewpoint of Taraterehu, or Stony Bay Peak, 806m. From the saddle the track descends quite steeply through grassy farmland gullied with native bush and surrounded by spacious views in all directions, finally entering town by Mt Vernon Lodge and Rue Balguerrie.

ACCOMMODATION

Overview

On the two day walk you stay overnight at Onuku Farm Trampers' Hut and the Stony Bay cottages. You are welcome to visit and use the facilities provided at Flea Bay cottage and Otanerito Beach House as you pass through.

All the accommodations have fully equipped kitchens, comfortable bedrooms and bathrooms with flush toilets and hot showers.

There is no 'official' hosting at the accommodations on the Banks Peninsula Track. Each hut is owned and run by different families with a high degree of independence as to how they operate. Our intention from the outset was to try and provide walkers with everything they needed for an enjoyable stay and to remain as much in the background as possible, with our contact being at the personal level rather than in the pre-arranged 'tourist' format. In many cases you will not see anyone, but we are usually around and if you need anything or wish to ask questions, please come to the farmhouse and find us!

Onuku Farm Trampers' Hut

This first night for all walkers is in two purpose built lodges with panoramic views over Akaroa Harbour. The smaller chalet, for two day walkers, has a kitchen/dining room and 2 bedrooms. Or you may choose, for fun, to sleep in one of the double bed 'stargazers' where you can lie in your bed and see the stars. Toilets and shower are shared with the four day walkers

Flea Bay Cottage

This charming 160 yr old pioneer cottage is a midday stop on the two day walk and is set just 200m back from the safe swimming beach with verandah views of the bay and Pohatu marine reserve. Electric stove, hot water, shower. Log burner, flush toilets. The cottage is sited within the boundaries of the largest mainland colony of Little Penguin in NZ.

Stony Bay Cottage

At the mid-point of your walk, the second night for two day walkers is amongst a delightful collection of self-contained colonial style cottages. The 2 day walk cottage is one roomed with a cottage garden, wood stove, barbeque, double mattress in the loft, gas cooking, candles for lighting, and your own 'bath under the stars'. Toilets and hot shower are shared with 2 day walkers. A full range of shop supplies are available at Stony Bay.

Otanerito Beach House

A comfortable rest stop for two day walkers after your first two hours walking. Set in a delightful 'out of control' organic garden, abundant with both exotic and native plants, the house is just fifty yards from a safe, sandy beach with good swimming in calm seas and great boogie boarding when the surf is up. Kitchen in house and outside toilet/shower block. Free coffee, tea, sugar.... and a good selection of books, magazines. Otanerito Beach Trampers' Shop also has a full range of supplies.

FOOD AND DRINK

The Track is Self - catering, with the following options, which are all payable by cash.

On your first evening at Onuku, a ten minute walk from the hut takes you to the 'Bush Cafe' which offers a 'Homecooked Dinner with Dessert' for \$25. Chris and Aya operate this for Banks Peninsula Track walkers from 1st October to 31st March. Pre-bookings are essential, payment by cash. Phone 021 520 164

During your first days walking, as you pass through Flea Bay there are Drinks and Chocolate available at the Cottage.

On your second evening at Stony Bay and as you pass Otanerito the following day, there are Trampers' shops.

These two shops are well stocked and open to walkers whenever they arrive. They are restocked daily, and provide sufficient choice and quantity to cater for individuals or groups. Expect to pay prices roughly similar to a remote country dairy.

Trampers' shops supply list.

As well as a good supply of Cold drinks, stocks include Cereals, Milk, Bread, Butter, Bacon, Eggs, Coffee, Tea, Sugar, Chocolate, Biscuits, Fresh vegetables, Soup, Tinned fish, Cheese, Fresh fruit, tins fruit, tinned tomatoes, Noodles, Pasta, Potatoes, Sausages, Steaks, Mince, and Ice Cream.

PACK CARTAGE OPTIONS

Pack cartage is available on the first section of the Track, from Onuku to Flea Bay, in conjunction with the four day pack cartage service.

A standard charge of \$10 per pack is subject to a minimum daily fee, as detailed below.

Section 1. Onuku Farm to Flea Bay. 1 - 9 packs \$90. 9+ packs, \$10 per pack.

Payment by cash. Arrival of packs at Flea Bay is by 2.00pm. Please note this may involve you waiting here for their arrival before continuing to Stony Bay (3-4 hrs).

Pack cartage is available as a more limited option on the last of the four sections of Track, depending on the requirements of the four day walkers.

If you wish to add your pack to their service this is generally available if you arrive at Otanerito before midday, for a reduced fee of \$5 per pack, and merely requires an indication of intent at the bus pick-up. Please note - you will not necessarily know before you reach Otanerito whether this is available.

If you wish to guarantee a pack cartage service from Otanerito to Akaroa, this requires you to register your intention at the bus pick-up. The cost for this guaranteed service is \$60, but if it does not require a special trip will only be charged at \$5 per pack!

Payment is by cash at Otanerito in both cases.

Arrival of packs, by 1.00pm. Fee includes storage until 5.00pm, Akaroa Information Centre.

Additional luggage can be stored during your walk for \$5.00 at Akaroa Information Centre.

KAYAKING OPTION

The Banks Peninsula Track runs alongside Pohatu Marine Reserve. Shireen Helps offers a special discount to Track walkers on her kayaking trips at Flea Bay/Pohatu Marine Reserve.

The most usual kayaking departures are in the morning so the option for two day walkers is fairly limited, although may still be possible. Be aware that you still have a fairly strenuous track section to walk after your kayaking trip should you get to Flea Bay when it is still available.

This trip can be mind blowing in the right sea conditions. Please note - kayaking is subject to sea conditions. Kayak hire is open when at least the sheltered bay can be kayaked.

FREE CAR PARKING

Complimentary car parking is available for walkers at the Banks Peninsula Track car park at Mt Vernon Lodge, one kilometre up Rue Balguerie from the bus departure point at Akaroa Information Centre. Allow 30 mins for parking and walk to Info Centre. Tip. Drop off passengers and backpacks at the Info Centre before driving up to Mt Vernon.

FREE BUS TO START

Our Banks Peninsula Track bus leaves Akaroa Info Centre at 5.45pm for the short trip to Onuku Farm Trampers' Hut. A short orientation talk precedes bus departure and you are issued with your informative guide booklet which includes maps. Please note - there is a 10 minute walk from road end to hut.

WHAT YOU NEED

Essential.

Backpack.

Boots.

Clothing including adequate outdoor clothing for all weather.

Personal necessities (toiletries, medicines).

Towel.

Cash for shop and pack cartage payments (& Bush Cafe).

Sleeping bag.

Recommended.

Torch, light indoor footwear, water bottle, swimwear, daypack (if using pack cartage), camera. Food.

You need to start the two day track with food for your first night (option of Bushcafe instead) and first walking day, although drinks and chocolate are available as you pass through Flea Bay. For your second night and following day, food and refreshments are available from two small shops at Stony Bay and Otanerito Beach.

Please note most of the track is outside cell phone range.

What's provided.

All the huts contain clean, fully equipped kitchens, including fridges, gas or electric stoves, pots, pans, plates, cups, cutlery, t-towels, tin openers, etc... so you do not need any of these. The huts contain covered mattresses, pillows and clean pillowcases.

You will need a sleeping bag to sleep in. Sleeping bags can be hired for \$30 per trip. Bags are washed at Akaroa Laundry between each hire. Hire should be arranged in advance (preferably by e-mail).

PRICES

Current season price.

\$163 until 23rd April.

\$143 last four days 24th - 27th April.

\$123 standby (walk within 5 days of booking)

BOOKINGS

To make a booking, first check our availability guide and choose an available booking date for your number and package. You only need to have the start date available (this includes the other days/nights on either package). From there either continue with online booking, or send an e-mail enquiry to our office through the contact us page.

Bookings are secured by a 10% deposit (non-refundable) with the balance payable 90 days before walking. For online bookings, the balance will be automatically debited from your card. For e-mail or phone bookings, you will be contacted prior to payment date.

NB. Your booking start date is the date of your 5.45pm bus pick-up. You start walking the day after. This means you need two days following your start night. For example, a Monday night start will mean you stay Tuesday night at Stony Bay and reach Akaroa around 3.00pm on Wednesday.

REFUND POLICY

A 90% refund will be made when at least 28 days notice is given.

A 50% refund will be made when at least 7 days notice is given, otherwise payment is forfeited.

Cancelled bookings may be refilled.

Standby bookings are non refundable.

TWO DAY WALK ITINERARY

5.45 pm pickup at Akaroa Information Centre - this is on your booking start date. Bus transport to Onuku Trampers' Hut. Ten minute walk from bus drop-off point to hut.

First night. Onuku Trampers' Hut. Meal option at Bush Cafe. See Food and Drink. First day morning. Onuku to Flea Bay. 4-6 hrs walking. Pack cartage from Onuku to Flea Bay is an option

Lunch stop. Flea Bay Cottage. Drinks and Chocolate available.

First day afternoon. Flea Bay to Stony Bay. 2-4 hrs walking.

Second night. Stony Bay Cottages. Full Trampers' shop supplies available.

Second day morning. Stony Bay to Otanerito. 2-3 hrs walking.

Morning/lunch stop. Otanerito House. Full Trampers' shop available.

Second day afternoon. Otanerito to Akaroa. 3-5 hrs walking.

Pack cartage is a possible option on this section (see Pack cartage).

Arrive Akaroa - mid afternoon.