

# The Tongariro Alpine Crossing



The trek begins at 1100m (3630ft) by heading into the [Mangatepopo Valley](#), with its eroded volcanic terrain, evidence of the glacier that once carved it out, and more recently, lava flows from Mount Ngauruhoe. This gradual climb takes about one to one and a half hours on a track that was significantly improved in January 2013.

From the head of the valley at Soda Springs the track changes to a climb up the valley headwall on the [deviation that was built in 2008](#). As we head up to the saddle between Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe the climb that takes around an hour, and is the greatest single gain of altitude for the day, but the views over the valley make it all worthwhile and the [well designed track](#) makes this truly manageable.



The walk through the very flat [South Crater](#) is easy and leads to the last significant climb for the day. This eirre basin is a whole new world, like another planet.

The track leading up to the Ridge is in a [more natural state](#), and takes between half and three quarters of an hour. This is where good footwear comes into its own, but take your time, it is manageable.

This benched area with the cable is only about 60m long, the rest of the track is much wider! We can help you through this, no problem.





The prize is reaching [Red Crater](#) at 1886m (or 6224ft). The volcanic activity is so real that not only can you see it, but you can feel it and smell it too!

Below, the spectacular [Central Crater](#) sprawls out below, adorned with its three stunning Emerald Lakes, with the amazing Blue Lake beyond.

The views north to Lake Taupo never cease to impress. Your guide will help you master the art of the exhilarating [steep descent](#) to the breathtaking Nga Rotopounamu, or [Emerald Lakes](#).



We move off through Central Crater, and a short climb brings us to Te Wai-whakaata-o-te-Rangihiroa (Blue Lake). This stunning lake mirrors the sky as we skirt along the edge, to begin our descent of the northern side of Tongariro.

A change of altitude and landscape means a change of plant life. This northern side of the mountain reveals the latest chapter in the story of Tongariro, as we descend toward the Ketetahi Hut. See the evidence of the 2012 event as you Guide points out the scars left by the eruption, and talks of the measures introduced to keep walkers safe. The track offers views of the Te Maari Crater from a unique perspective.





The Ketetahi Hut, now reduced in role to a shelter for day walkers since the 2012 Te Maari Eruptions, remains as a "museum piece" and clearly shows evidence of the volcanic projectiles that caused damage on that night, an event that was all over within a few minutes.

Leaving the Ketetahi Hut, the well-formed track descends down through the swaying tussock grass, flax and Manuka before reaching the native forest at the foot of the mountain.

Large trees, ferns, and birdsong surround us on our journey to the valley floor. Your Guide will pass on some of what they know about this dramatic change to the flora and fauna. In no time we will be at the finish and our waiting transport.

