



St James Walkway

Time: 5 days

Grade – easy tramping track

Best season – summer and autumn

Introduction

Located partly within Lewis Pass National Reserve and meandering through St James Station pastoral lease and Lake Sumner Forest Park, the St James Walkway combines diverse scenery, wildlife and vegetation.

The walkway is suitable for both beginners and experienced trampers, while for family groups, the descent into Cannibal Gorge provides an invigorating shorter walk along a well-formed, boardwalked track.

The St James was the first walkway to be established in a subalpine area. It is well signposted and marked, including stretches of open farm land where cairns and markers indicate the route. About 66 km long, it is designed to take five days, allowing walkers to enjoy the scenery at a leisurely pace.

The walkway is not difficult but the climate can be extreme. It should not be attempted during winter months unless you are an experienced trumper.



Boyle Flats and hut



Accommodation

Track amenities include five main huts. Overnight use is \$10 per adult per night. Hut tickets should be bought from DOC offices before starting the track.

All five huts on the walkway contain:

- bunks for 14 people
- wood stoves, firewood, drying racks
- intentions book and walkway map.

Please sign the intentions books. These give information about the number of people using the walkway and hut accommodation, and serve as a safety precaution.

Note: During the summer it is recommended that you carry a tent as accommodation within the huts is limited and available on a first come basis.

If using a gas cooker, ensure you use it in a well ventilated area.

Distance

Entry to the walkway is from either the top of Lewis Pass just off the car park and picnic area, or at Boyle Village from SH 7, Lewis Pass Road.

Distance from main centres:

Christchurch	190 km
Nelson	224 km
Picton	296 km
Greymouth	145 km

Public transport

Southern Link (K Bus) (03 358 8355) provides transport between Christchurch and Nelson via Lewis Pass Road (Highway 7). East West Coaches provide a service between Christchurch and Westport (0800 142 622). Timetables are available from bus companies, or Hanmer Springs i-SITE. Trampers should aim to arrive at the shelters at least a half hour before the scheduled times which are approximate. It is up to trampers to signal the bus drivers. (Note: time-tables are always subject to change).

Take care visiting natural areas

New Zealand's mountain ranges offer a wide variety of recreational opportunities amid beautiful scenery. However, they also offer extremes of weather. Sudden wind changes can result in a rapid deterioration of the weather, and hazards include extreme cold, flooded rivers and avalanches.

While the St James is not a difficult walk, its location in a subalpine area with erratic weather conditions necessitates safety precautions.

Trampers should be well equipped, especially during winter months. For those with little or no experience, familiarisation with the Mountain Safety Council's pamphlets *Bushcraft* and *A Guide to Understanding Mountain Weather* is recommended.

Outlined below are the main considerations for a walk through the area.

Travel with a group: Never travel alone. In the event of an accident, there is a better chance of prompt help. Four is a safe minimum.

Advise your intentions: Inform friends or relatives of your intended route and completion date for the walk. Also sign the record books in both the Boyle and Lewis Pass shelters and huts. If you are overdue, search and rescue action can be taken promptly and effectively.

Map: You will require Topographic Map 260 series: M31 and M32. These detail the route including the location of huts. The map in this pamphlet is a general guide to the route and is not a substitute for a topographical map.

Clothing and footwear: Be prepared for the worst—bad weather is a possibility regardless of season. Carry warm clothing and include waterproof parka and over-trousers. Sturdy, comfortable boots are essential, as is a good pack and a sleeping bag with waterproof cover. On half-day trips strong shoes and a parka are minimal equipment.

Note: All parties should be self-sufficient in case of an accident or huts being full.

First aid kit: Carry a small first aid kit. The *Bushcraft* manual details what to take, together with other items to carry.

Weather forecast: Get a forecast by phoning 0900 999 26 for the Canterbury High Country weather before you start.

Car parking

Car parking is available at both entrances, but the Boyle area is more secure.

The area is subject to vandalism.

Boyle Outdoor Education Lodge offers secure parking and a drop-off service, as well as shuttles to the top of the pass. **Please book in advance by phone (03) 315-7082.**

If you have your own transport it is advisable to begin the walk from the top end of Lewis Pass and finish at the car park near Boyle Village.

You can use the bus service to travel back up to the Lewis Pass end.

Further information

Topo maps, hut tickets and further information can be obtained from:

Department of Conservation
Waimakariri Area Office
15 Albert Street
Rangiora
Ph 03 313 0820
waimakariri@doc.govt.nz

Hanmer Springs i-SITE
Hanmer Springs
ph 03 315 7128, fax 03 315 7154
info@alpinepacifictourism.co.nz

Reefton i-SITE
Broadway
Reefton
ph 03 732 8391

For further information about recreation activities and conservation visit:
www.doc.govt.nz



Published by
Department of Conservation
Canterbury Conservancy
Private Bag 4715
Christchurch
2008
New Zealand Government



On the walkway

The St James Walkway is managed and maintained by DOC. Please report any damage to huts or bridges as soon as possible.

Particularly relevant to the St James Walkway are:

- all wildlife, plants and natural features are protected
- dogs and firearms are prohibited
- carry out all your rubbish
- no unauthorised vehicles are allowed on the walkway

Specific to the pastoral runs

- Keep to the walkway route, as you are crossing private land.
- Leave stock alone. Stock has the right of way. If a muster is taking place, comply with the request of the musterer. This might mean waiting to allow the drive to pass, or a detour to avoid problems.
- Use the stiles where the walkway crosses fences.
- No fires except in fireplaces provided. Take extreme care and make certain it is properly out when you leave.



Anne River Hut



St James Walkway



CANTERBURY



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



- Protect plants and animals
- Remove rubbish
- Bury toilet waste
- Keep streams and lakes clean
- Take care with fires
- Camp carefully
- Keep to the track
- Respect our cultural heritage
- Enjoy your visit
- Toitu te whenua (Leave the land undisturbed)

	Serviced hut—bunks or sleeping platforms with mattresses. Heating, water supply, toilet and hand-washing facilities. 2 hut tickets per adult per night.
	Standard hut—bunks or sleeping platforms with mattresses. Toilet and water supply. 1 hut ticket per adult per night.
	Basic hut—basic shelter with limited facilities and services. Free

Walking the track

This description covers the walk beginning at Lewis Pass picnic area and ending at Boyle Shelter.

The walking times are average for a reasonably fit and experienced adult trampler.

Note: True right and left banks of rivers are determined when facing downstream.

Day 1

Lewis Pass entrance to Cannibal Gorge Hut

7 km – 3 hours 30 minutes and

Ada Pass Hut 10 km – 5 hours

The track leaves the picnic area on Tarn Nature Walk across a natural open bog.

It then enters the bush, descending in a steep zig-zag into Cannibal Gorge on Maruia River.

A swing bridge crosses Cannibal Gorge to the true right bank. From here it is about 6 km to Cannibal Gorge Hut. Past the hut the track follows an easy grade alongside Maruia River, through beech forest and open alpine fields (prone to avalanches) to Ada Pass Hut (3 km – 1 hour 30 min).

Day 2

Ada Pass Hut to Christopher Hut 10.5 km – 4 hours 30 minutes (Through St James Station).

From the hut, the track leads through bush over Ada Pass into Ada Valley. Beech forest gradually gives way to open areas of tussock with tongues of mountain beech.

Orange triangles at the clearing edge indicate the start of the track through bush areas, following the true right bank of Ada River.

At the junction of the Ada and Christopher Rivers, the track passes an historic hut. Christopher Hut is 10–15 minutes walk from this point, close to the edge of the bush, about 350 m from Ada River.

Day 3

Christopher Hut to Anne River Hut 15 km – 5 hours (Through St James Station)

From Christopher Hut the route goes down the valley along the true right bank of the Ada River to where open flats converge with the river and toe of the hill, about 1½ km above the Ada Homestead. The track eventually joins a vehicle track for some distance to the Henry / Waiau Valley convergence. From here it passes through matagouri thickets and some open rolling and swampy ground and rejoins the vehicle track (up till now the track is on the true left bank of Henry River).

After crossing a suspension bridge over Henry River the track follows close to the true right bank, rejoining the vehicle track through to the footbridge near Anne River Hut.

Day 4

Anne River Hut to Boyle Flat Hut 15 km – 7 hours

Passes through St James Station and part of Lake Sumner Forest Park.

Ada Pass Hut



The track follows the true left bank of Anne River (on the same side as the hut) for about 2 km, then a footbridge gives access to the true right. The track continues up and over Anne Saddle into Boyle Valley. Orange pole markers indicate the route over Boyle Flats. The true left bank is followed to a suspension bridge over Boyle River, 100 m from Boyle Flat Hut.

Day 5

Boyle Flat Hut to Boyle Village 14.5 km – 5 hours 30 minutes

After recrossing the footbridge to join the walkway route on the true left bank, follow markers to the start of the track through the gorge.

A suspension bridge crosses Boyle River, then the track follows the true right bank to another suspension bridge. A vehicle track is joined and followed down the valley to the shelter and car park at State Highway 7 (Lewis Pass Road), by Boyle Village.

St James history

St James Station is one of the last of the big stations in the South Island. The station dates back to 1892 when a range of smaller runs were amalgamated into a single holding known as St James.

In the late 1800s, during the years of New Zealand's wool boom, the property's sheep numbers peaked at close to 40,000. However, crippling snowfall has always been the blight of the high country and sheep numbers declined over the years. In 1927 James Stevenson purchased the property and his family continue to run it today. In the 1940s the family decided to reduce the sheep numbers and graze more cattle. The station's homebred horses, which were once used to pull Christchurch's trams, are still bred today. A sale of the horses is held on the station every second year and they are sought after for hunting, show-jumping and eventing.