

ASC Trip Brief - Whakapapa, Ruapehu

Dates: 4 July – 19 July 2026

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More information: <https://www.alpinesports.org.nz/huts/mt-ruapehu/>

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Logistics

Road Travel

Ruapehu driving and parking

Travelling time from Auckland to Whakapapa is usually about 5 hours. Aim to arrive at the mountain car park well before dark so you are not rushed and don't have to navigate getting to the huts in the dark.

Note the mountain is often strict on safety so **only 4WD and 2WD with chains/covers are allowed up under snowy conditions**. Best to hire / borrow chains in Auckland if you have a 2WD. Check manufacturers advice as some modern AWD vehicles may have special requirements.

Check Whakapapa and Bruce Road status before you leave home. NZTA update the status regularly:

- <https://www.journeys.nzta.govt.nz/highway-conditions/manawatu-whanganui/hazards/469126>
- <https://www.whakapapa.com/report>

A good stop about half way is Te Kuiti, there is a cafe called Bosco on the right as you enter town which is a favourite of skiers. There is a little deck out the back to stretch legs. Further on the road is the town of Taumarunui. This would be a good place to get any last minute supplies. There are fuel, clothing and food options in Waimarino / National Park but the choices are limited and a little expensive.

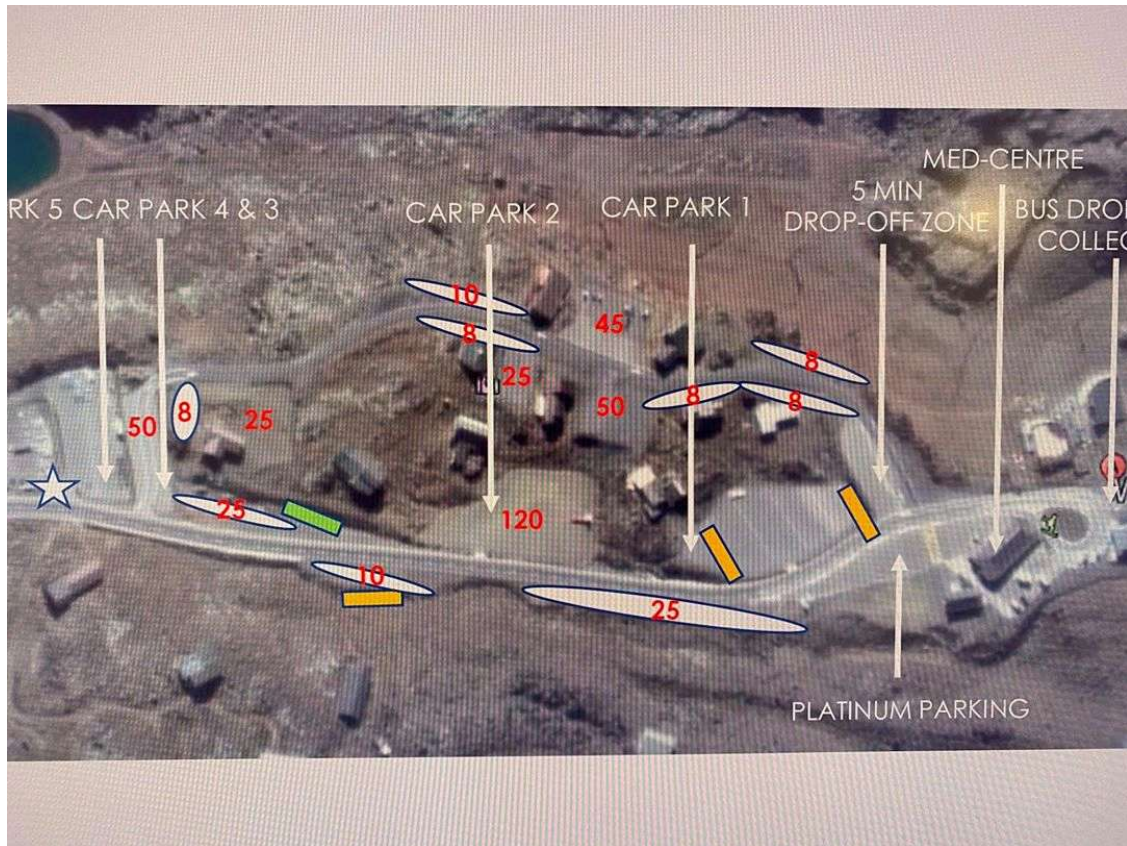
If there are good conditions on the day you are travelling, the car parks may be full and Bruce Road closed. You may need to wait for people to begin leaving and the road to reopen.

If you must/want to wait before heading up the mountain, there is parking just beyond the Tongariro Chateau, the Department of Conservation Centre and/or a great apres ski bar and views of Ngauruhoe from the Alpine Skotel!

This is a good time to get your snow gear on if arriving in bad weather or late at night - much easier than trying to find your gear in the dark at the top while your car fills up with snow!

Once you leave Whakapapa Village (Tongariro Chateau), drive all the way up to the top of Bruce Road. This area is known as Iwikau Village (bottom of the ski lifts). Aim for as close as possible to car park 2 as the closest overnight car park to the ASC hut. This is on the left at the top of the road. Tell

any staff you are going to a club hut. There is also parking along the edge of the road on your right hand side, find a spot and reverse in.



Walking to the hut

It's a moderate 15 minute hike in good weather and daylight, but can be a highly challenging 30 minutes in poor weather, darkness or with cumbersome gear/kids! **Rucksacks style luggage is recommended. Have a head torch and winter clothes/boots readily available in case.**

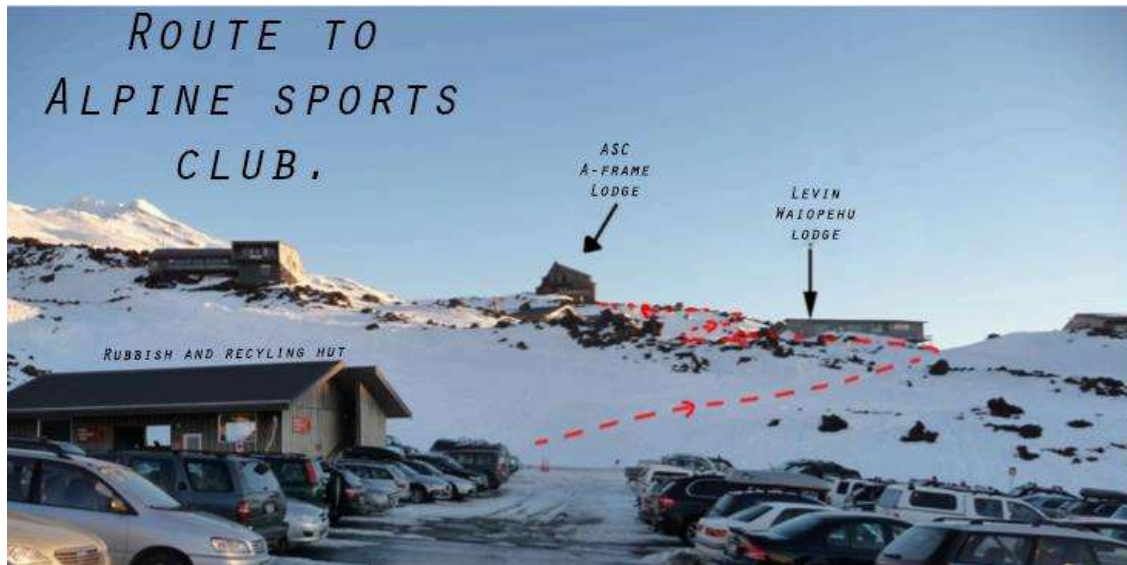
Remember you can make two trips from the car if necessary, so it's not worth overloading yourselves on the way up the path. You may need snow boots, warm clothing, and hats as it will get colder/windier as you go up the hill.

The walk is a winding trail marked by red/white poles. Start at the Rubbish and Recycling Building which is the first building on the right beside the Premier Car Park. Assemble your group here, if it is raining or snowing, you can go up the stairs and shelter out of the weather.

Head behind the building into and across a ravine/gully and up the slope behind, heading along the slope diagonally to the right towards an obvious trail marker.

Looking up the hill you may see a line of trail markers and the obvious A-Frame on the ridge, follow the trail markers up the path and around the corner turning left up to the A-Frame. You will see the flat roofed Ruapehu Hut / Bunkhouse just below it.

Take your time, stop for rests, you are now at 1650 metres above sea level. The walk is as follows :



Advice when you have little ones

If you have little ones, best to make sure you have two free hands and are able to carry them if they get stuck, tired, or just too distracted. A child backpack/carrier is a great idea for smaller children and a couple of poles to be secure in footing or to help when the snow is deep can be invaluable.

Only bring up what is needed for the hut

You can always make multiple trips to the car, so my personal advice is to get small kids up, warm and happy and then go back for bulky items or wait for the next day/weather window. Only take up what you need. Use your car as a locker for skis, boots, boards and collect them on the way to the ski lifts.

Accommodation

Key info

Hut Wardens: Our treasured hut custodians' job is to keep the huts safe, welcoming and operational. They are not expected to clean up after members.

Safety: Fire is a real risk in the lodges. Smoking, fires and candles are absolutely not permitted inside or within 25 metres of either building.

Health: We need to ensure we have good hygiene at the hut. Please make sure that surfaces remain well cleaned. Bring your hand sanitiser, have clean hands when prepping food ideally a face covering if cooking for lots of people. If you are unwell / have symptoms of illness then please stay/go home.

Water: Water is scarce so please limit the length of showers and do not leave taps running. The tap water in the kitchen is drinkable.

A-frame Hut

On arrival, push the door inwards and take off your gear in the lobby. The drying room is directly ahead and ski storage on your left. Sign-in the number of people you have on the clipboard by the ski room door. Bunk rooms and the bathrooms are arranged in a U shape around the foyer/drying room. If you go in the door on the right you will find bunk rooms A-D, through another door and around the

back are Bunks E-H. The other door on the left gives access to the bathrooms and stairs up to the living area and kitchens.

Once upstairs the area is very kid safe, so relax and let them explore - just be careful of hot pots etc in the kitchen area and make sure the sharp knives are in the knife block not the bottom drawer that has the label knives if you have kids.

The Bunkhouse/Ruapehu Hut

On arrival, walk in, take your boots off, there is a drying room straight ahead. Sign in the number of people you have. Turn right for the kitchen and lounge and then through there are the bunk rooms and bathrooms.

Those that are staying at the Ruapehu Hut are welcome/encouraged to hang out and eat at the A-frame for the duration of the weekend – especially for dinners! You will be included on the duty roster accordingly. Please advise if you plan to have breakfast at The Bunkhouse so that we can adjust the roster if need be.

Meals

If you haven't already, please also let the organisers know of any dietary requirements.

Breakfast (0700-0800) and dinner (1900-2000) are typically taken communally, with guests rostered to take turns on the various prep, cooking and clean-up tasks for each meal. Lunches are a BYO/DIY affair.

If you would like dinner on your first night of arrival, please let the hut warden know the number of people in your crew at least 24 hours in advance so you can be added to the dinner forecast. This can be done via phone call or email.

Communal Food

You are requested to bring enough fresh vegetables, eggs and bread to the hut to feed your party for the duration of your stay - these items will be pooled for general use in meal preparation. If you have special bread, coffee, wine or fruit for just your family keep it in your own soft cooler bag out of the way.

Fridge

If you put something in the fridge (very very limited space), write your name and date it in permanent marker. You will find the pens on top of the fridge. If you are leaving behind dips or cheese after your stay for general use, please indicate that it is for general use.

Pantry

In the dining area at either end of the long table you will see a door that leads to the pantries under the eaves, this is a cold area and a good place to leave your personal food items in a soft cooler bag (lunch stuff, nibbles and any special treats).

Chores

Cleanliness and upkeep of the huts is down to all Club members. Try to leave the huts better than you found them. Report any issues to the trip leader or any Committee members.

We all chip in to chores while at the huts. There is a roster to keep the communal areas and equipment clean. We often vacuum daily rather than relying on the deep clean on leaving. Before leaving we plan a deep clean.

Please make sure you wash, rinse and sterilise your own/family cups and plates after using and everyone please clean up after yourself. Before leaving, please vacuum your room, clean surfaces and prop the mattresses up on the bunk edge so they can breathe.

Daily Chores Roster - TBC: The roster is set daily depending on the number of guests on any given day. If you are staying on past Sunday you will be assigned further jobs for your remaining days that you are staying by the hut wardens.

If the huts are less than full capacity, consider closing off some bathrooms, kitchen areas, etc. to limit the cleaning burden on members who stay on.

Gear List

Remember that you are going into an alpine environment which means weather is unpredictable and can get to -20C with a chill factor outside. Please be prepared with appropriate clothing.

- Daypack
- Overnight pack
- Towel
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Hut clothes – bring a range of layers and a good jumper/fleece. Slippers or thick socks.
- Snow clothes - boots (tramping boots, gumboots/wellies), hats, gloves, goggles
- Snow sports gear - sleds, shovels, skis/boards, buckets, etc.
- Warm sleeping bag
- Pillow case
- Bottom sheet - optional
- Ear plugs/eye masks
- Toiletries
- Hair dryer - available, hard-wired into the ladies bathroom
- Lunch food - bread, cold meats, noodles, etc
- Snacks - popcorn, chippies etc for kids to share
- Wine/beer/etc
- Coffee - there is instant, reg tea bags, milo at the hut
- Phone charger
- Books / games / craft gear - some materials and games are available (as an alpine adventure club, we discourage heavy use of devices, but each to their own!)
- Radios - shortwave radios are useful for skiing and liaising between the huts

N.B. there should be some wifi / phone signal at the hut, though it can be intermittent

Activities

Activities will be posted on the notice board in the A-Frame. These are usually planned and led by adult members and/or older children depending on weather, interests and abilities.

Activity Leads may reach out to you if they need a hand to make the days go smoothly. Family names are used so that between parents one can do something while the other is free to watch children.

Please volunteer to run activities or make suggestions for other winter activities you would like to do. It would be helpful if the families involved with running each activity could also bring the associated materials needed. Examples include:

- Snowman building
- Igloo building
- Tobogganing
- Snowshoeing
- Tree / hut decorating
- Matariki crafts
- Baking: Mince pies; mulled wine; gingerbread; etc.
- Table tennis (table available, bring your own bats/balls)
- Movies (projector available, bring own laptop and cables)

Programme - *Indicative, weather permitting!*

Time	Activities	Etc
7 - 8	Breakfast (group)	
9 - 10	Snowman building extravaganza	
10 - 11	Sledding / Skiing	
11 - 12	Christmas Tree / Matariki Star / Generic crafting	
12 - 1	Lunch Time (<i>individual families or as you please</i>)	
1 - 3	Baking / Dance party / Karaoke	
3 - 4	Group photo shoot / outdoor games	
5 - 6	Dinner Prep	
6 - 8	Dinner (group)	
8 - 10	Games / Movie Night	

Activities are flexible and can be swapped out for something else. Let the organisers know if you have other ideas of a winter / indoor activity.

[Optional email note for annual Whakapapa Winter Wanders family trip]

Embrace the wintry wonders of Ruapehu with ASC members - whether it be in celebration of Matariki, Winter Solstice, a nostalgic northern-style 'Christmas' or just the great, white (hopefully!) outdoors!

Come down for some family-friendly fun to experience the wonders of winter with snow play, igloo-building, sledding, snow sports, games, feasts and general communal cozyness. Surrogate 'aunties and uncles' welcome too!

Please read the below information. We have a rough "schedule" for the weekend but we all know that when you throw lots of small people into the mix the "schedule" becomes very flexible.