

Makarora to Glenorchy

Outline :

- > Makarora
- > Gillespie Pass
- > Wilkin River
- > Rabbit Pass
- > Junction Flat
- > Matukituki East Branch
- > Cameron Flat
- > Matukituki West Branch
- > Cascade Saddle
- > Rees Saddle
- > Glenorchy

Estimated Time : 12-14 days
(including rest and wait days)

Day 1 : Total Delta 400m, no descent

Start from the Blue Pools parking lot 8km north of Makarora on the Blue-Young link track. Follow it down to Courtneys Flat and go up the Young river. At the forks go up the north branch for 1km cross on the bridge and go down the southern branch. After 5km arrive at the Young Hut.

Young Hut – Serviced DoC Hut

Day 2 : Total Delta 880m, Maximum Single 880m (Gillespie Pass)

Continue on the track to climb to the bushline then cross the then small Young River. Follow the river through alpine flats to the Young Bassin. Fill-up all water bottles at this point. The climb starts on the left 1km after the bridge. It is very steep (620m over 2 km), take time! Follow the poled route up to the 1629m point then go down slowly towards the Gillespie stream. Rejoin the track around the bushline at 1100m high. After joining the Siberia stream follow it southwards until coming to Siberia Hut.

Siberia Hut – Serviced DoC Hut

Day 3 : Total Delta 600m, Maximum Single 150m

Continue down the Siberia stream following the true-left side with the track. Climb through bush before descending to Kerin Forks. Cross the Wilkin River to the Kerin Forks Hut and continue up the Wilkin River following the track west of the hut. Find Top Forks Hut 15km from Kerin Forks.

Kerin Forks Hut – Standard DoC Hut

Top Forks Hut – Standard DoC Hut

Day 4 : Total Delta 1000m, Maximum Single 800m (Waterfall top)

At the back of Top Forks Hut find the track westwards. Follow it up through the bush for 3km up to the bushline. Here it becomes a poled route. Climb the last 100m slowly through an alpine valley whilst following the young Wilkin River. Arrive at Waterfall Flat and the Waterfall Face.

!! Dangerous section !! Be cautious !!

The route climbs up on the right side of the two waterfalls, about 150 to 200m away. First go over easy slopes to the right then over bluffs. Cross left over the steepest slopes to reach the top. Come to another high alpine valley

Follow it with the first signs of the Wilkin river and keep Pearson Saddle on the right. Climb the last 100m to Rabbit Pass and enjoy the view! Keep to the left along the mountains and take care with the ridge on the right (400m drop atleast). Climb another 200m this way before coming to an accessible passage down the cliff.

!! Dangerous section !! Be cautious !!

The first 30 to 60m can be very slippery after rain and should not be taken lightly. Use a rope for stabilization if necessary! Hand and footwork necessary.

Continue down the steep route to the valley floor 600m lower. Walk down the valley for 5km to come to Ruth Flat for the night. A rock bivvy is available half down the flats on the true-left at the bushline.

Day 5 : Total Delta 350m, Maximum Single 350m

Catch up with the Matukituki track on the true-left of the river at the lowest side of Ruth Flat. Climb up as the valley gets narrower and then go down to Junction Flat and cross the Matukituki and Kitchener rivers with the 3-wire bridges available there. Continue on the track on the true-right side towards Cameron Flat 7km further on the track.

!! Organize a food drop at Cameron Flat !!

Day 6 : Total Delta 100m

Follow the Western branch of the Matukituki. Cross once to the true-right side to catch-up with the 4WD track that leads to Raspberry Creek hut 4km further. Pass along Cascade Hut 6km further and stop at Aspiring Hut after another 2km. Aspiring Hut – Serviced DoC Hut

Day 7 : Total Delta 1400m, Maximum Single 1300m

Behind Aspiring Hut get on the Cascade Saddle Track. This is a very long and steep climb. Follow the track, then the route for 3km to get to the 1800m point. Get down to the alpine flats and cross the stream in their midst. Turn full north to Heads Leap and the actual Cascade Saddle. Descend towards the Dart Glacier staying high enough and away from the terminal face. Once on the valley floor follow the Dart river on its true-left side to Dart-Hut 7km down the valley.

Dart-Hut – Serviced DoC Hut

Day 8 : Total Delta 500m, Maximum Single 400m (Rees Saddle)

Follow the Rees-Dart track southwards slowly climbing to Rees Saddle. One river-crossing with bridge is required at about half-way. Turn west into the Rees Valley and cross the river at Shelter Rock Hut.

Shelter Rock Hut – Standard DoC Hut

Day 9 : Total Delta NONE

Follow the track down to Muddy Creek where transport has to be arranged.

Alternative : Camp and walk to Glenorchy the next day.