

Gillespie Pass Circuit, Mt Aspiring National Park

WILD FILE

Access SH6 to Makarora Village. From here, ford the Makarora River or take the jet boat to the start of the track

Grade Moderate-difficult

Distance 58km

Total ascent

Time 3-4 days

Accommodation Young Hut, 20 bunks; Siberia Hut, 20 bunks

Further information Southern Alps Air offer flights to Siberia Valley. Wilkin River Jets ferry trampers to the start of the track

Description

A jet boat journey saves a potentially awkward crossing of the Makarora River and will leave you at the confluence of the Makarora and Young rivers. The Young Valley is a fairyland of dense native forest and high peaks. The track follows the river's true left, through beech trees dressed in moss and old man's beard, to a swingbridge at the junction of the north and south branches of the Young River. The trail steepens and climbs steadily to the tree line.

Emerging from the last of the sub-alpine brush, a huge grassy plain spreads before you, closed off by a craggy cirque at the head of the valley. After seven hours and 20km, you arrive at the 20-bunk Young Hut.

The track winds its way up the valley sidewall, under the majestic East Face of Mt Awful, amid hanging snowfields and waterfalls up to Gillespie Pass itself. At 1500m, this is the highest point on the track with Mts Alba and Awful dominating the skyline and huge boulders lying scattered along the ridge.

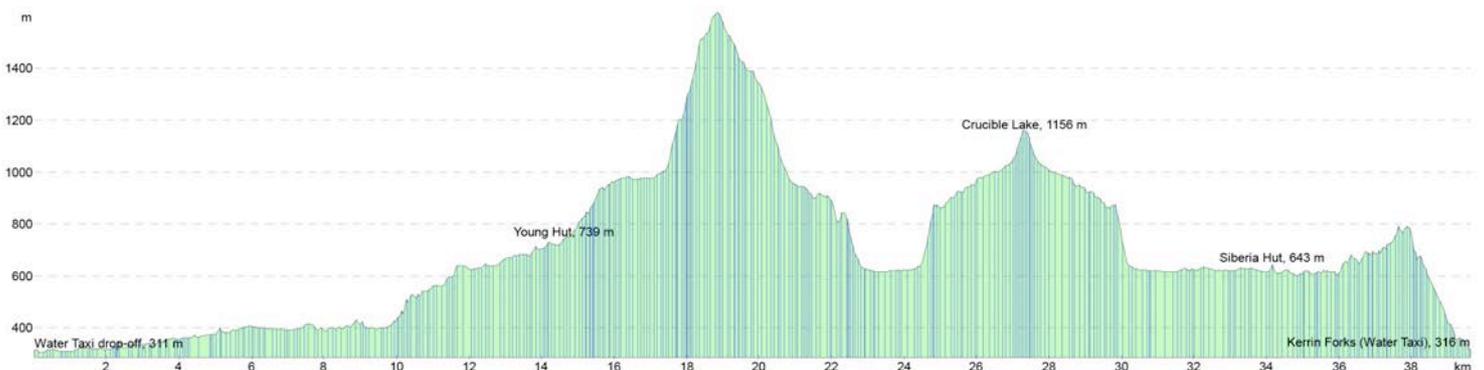
Head down to Siberia Valley. In winter, this place can be waist-deep in snow. Follow the river, with its aquamarine-clear water.

Siberia Hut (20 bunks) is nestled on the edge of the bush, facing north across the wide open valley towards Mt Dreadful, 2020m. A nearby picturesque waterfall splashes down to a perfect swimming hole.

From the hut you can head on a return trip to Crucible Lake. Cross Siberia Valley, then climb steeply through the forest. As you reach the bush line, a view of the valley head and the moraine wall opens before you across a snowgrass flat. Walk through the valley, then scramble up the rocky barricade until you reached the lake. A geological marvel carved by the glaciers, Crucible Lake sits high above the Siberia Valley, nestled under Mt Alba. It's cauldron-like with ice floats covering its surface.

The last day is mostly level ground through open river flats and ancient beech forest. After two hours, at Kerin Forks, you'll reach the confluence of Siberia Stream and Wilkin River, a pre-arranged jet boat can take you back to Makarora or carry on walking down the Wilkin.

Elevation Profile

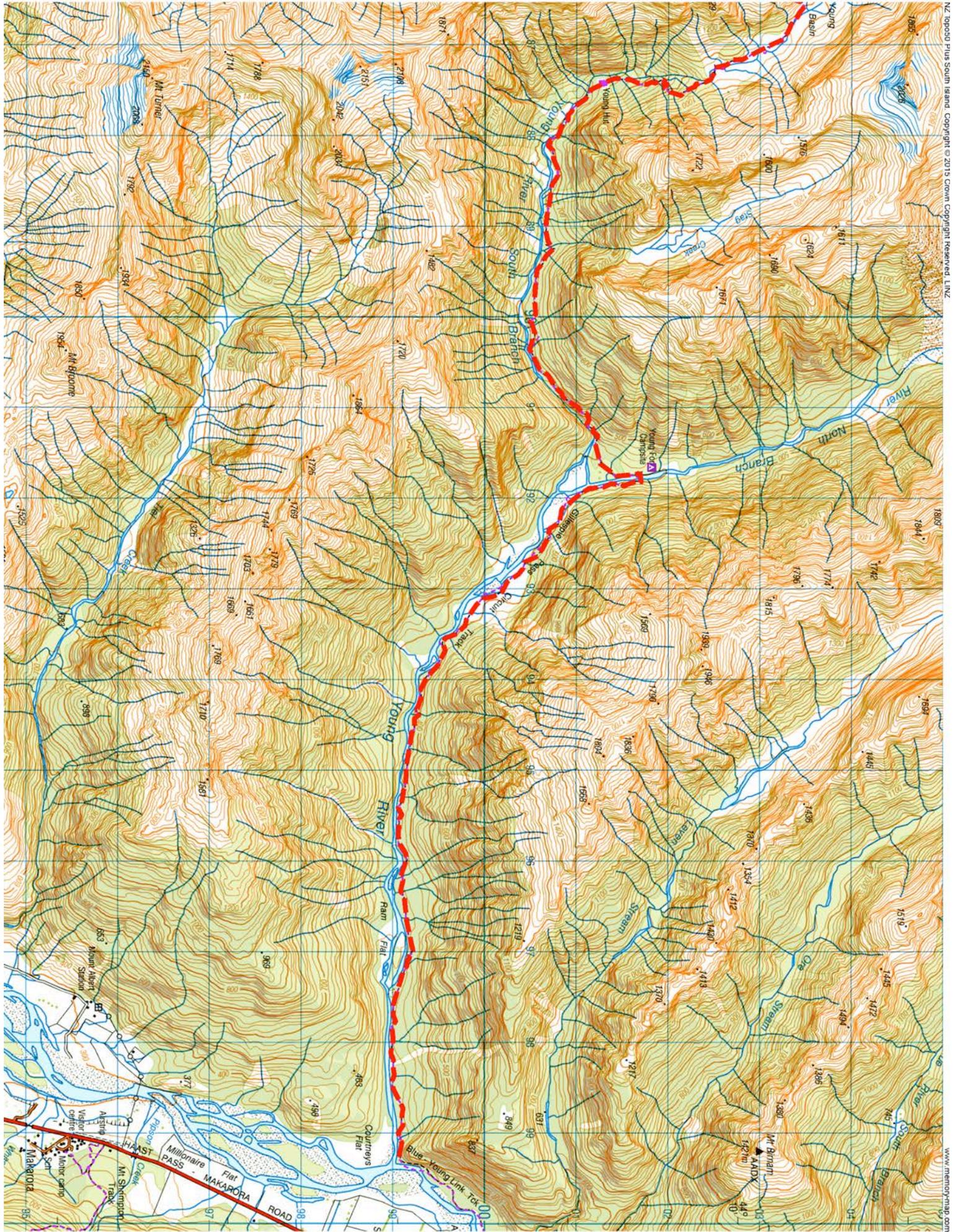


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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, Wilderness Magazine does not take responsibility for any errors in the route. Users should use discretion when planning their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing.

Maps are created with Memory-Map software, version 6. This software shows purple tracks and hut icons as verified routes and huts – meaning they are where they say they are and should be passable. If a purple track is shown on the maps in this document, it is the route from the Memory-Map software. If a red or blue route is shown, it has been drawn by Wilderness.

Gillespie Pass. Map 1



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Gillespie Pass. Map 2

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