

St Arnaud Range Track, Nelson Lakes National Park

If you have only one day to get a taste of the big skies and endless peaks of Nelson Lakes National Park, this out-and-back trip to the tops of the St Arnaud Range is a must.

Setting out from the picturesque Lake Rotoiti campground next to St Arnaud village, the track passes through a lush forest canopy, steadily climbing through red beech, broadleaf, and putaputawēta.

While the grade is relatively moderate, it's a long upward journey through the forest before the track affords any views of the valley below.

The beech trees become gradually shorter the higher you go, and the first glimpse of the lake below reveals how much height you've gained. Emerging from the treeline, the track sidles up to Parachute Rocks (1400m), named for a parachute-shaped gravel scree located to the north. The rocks provide stunning views of the lake and valley below.

The track climbs another 200m to the crest of the St Arnaud Range, through tussock and some crumbling scree. The views from the tops are breathtaking, with Robert Ridge and the rest of Nelson Lakes to the south, the Wairau Valley and Raglan Range to the east, Mt Richmond Forest Park to the north, and Kahurangi National Park to the west.

Several small tarns dot the eastern slopes of the range before it drops sharply to the Wairau River.

The ridgeline track carries on for another few hundred metres and is narrow in places. It could provide some boulder-climbing for adventurous souls.

It's a quick but knee-challenging descent back to the lakeside parking lot, with Lake Rotoiti providing the perfect footbath after a sweaty but satisfying jaunt up and down the range.

Wild File

Access From Lake Rotoiti campground in St Arnaud

Grade Easy-moderate

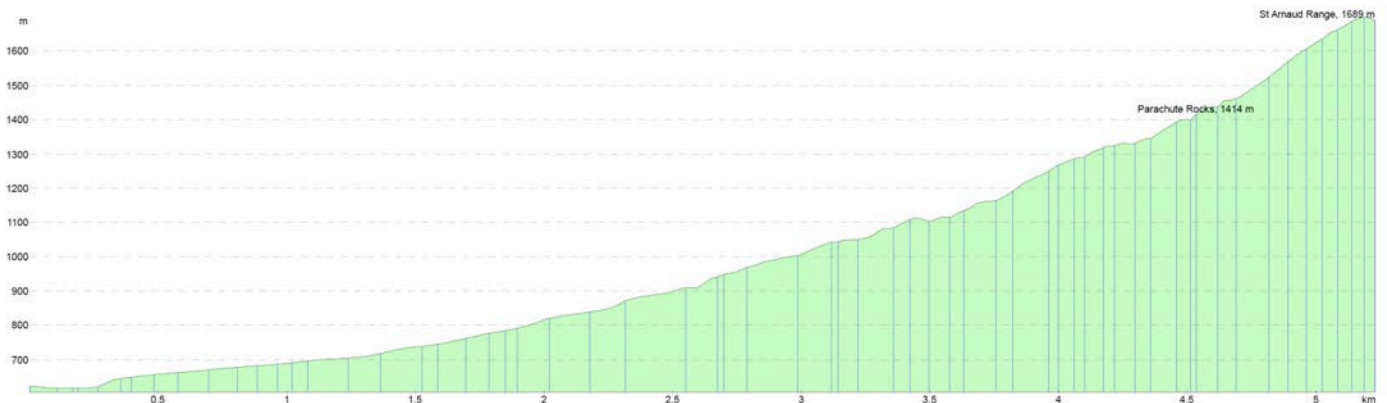
Time 5hr return

Distance 10.46km return

Total ascent 1081m

Map BR25

Elevation Profile



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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, *Wilderness* does not accept responsibility for any errors. Users should plan their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing. The GPX file associated with this route has been drawn using Memory-Map software, version 6. Use discretion when following the route, especially when no track is marked on the map. The GPX file in these cases are a 'best guess' of the route only. Users should use a combination of GPS, visual observations, maps and compass to find the best possible route. Memory Map shows purple tracks and hut icons as verified routes and huts. Red or blue routes are those drawn by Wilderness.

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