

## Arete Hut via Bannister, Tararua Forest Park

If you're looking for a round-trip overnighter and you're up for two big days (or three shorter days), Arete Hut is worth the effort. It's a two-bed charmer nestled in some of the Tararuas' highest peaks.

It's easy going from the car park, over the Blue Range to Cow Creek Hut. The journey takes just four hours and from the hut, it's possible to access the tops via Cow Saddle and all the way around to Lancaster (1504m). The return route involves a descent of Pinnacle Spur to Arete Forks Hut and a walk out to the road end.

There are plenty of sections along this route that demand care and concentration. In the course of two days, prepare to be on the move for 25 hours and ascend and descend at least 3500m. While it's hard work along the ridge between Waingawa (1423m) and Arete, the views are worth the effort. Being on some of the highest of the Tararuas' tops, there are expansive vistas in every direction most of the time.

It's roughly 12 hours from the road end to the two-bunk Arete Hut. The hut commands a beautiful panorama, framed to the left by Bannister and to the right by Lancaster, taking in a sea of layered ridges stretching out across the Wairarapa.

From Arete Hut, the first stretch south to Lancaster is easy, but coming down Pinnacle Spur is a steep descent, the steepest section coming directly off Pinnacle itself. Nowhere is it as challenging as the steep sections north of Bannister, although below the bushline, it is relentlessly, toenail-destroyingly steep.

Wade across the Waingawa River to reach Arete Forks Hut after about four hours. The trail from the hut is tough: it is four hours of stream crossings and relentless ups and downs. The track surface contains loose rubble, roots and is sometimes obstructed by big, shattered, storm-felled trees. Keeping to the route demands concentration and delays. By the time you reach Cow Creek Hut (490m), all that remains is a four hour slog over Blue Range and back to your car.

### Wild File

**Access** From the end of Kiriwhakapapa Road

**Grade** Difficult

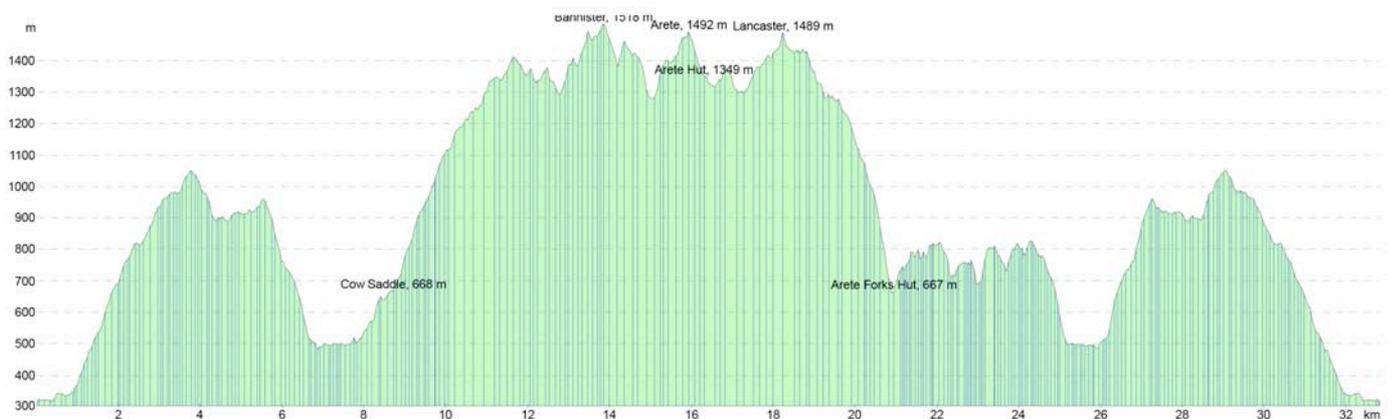
**Time** Kiriwhakapapa car park to Cow Creek Hut, 4hr; Cow Creek Hut to Arete Hut via Bannister and Arete, 8.5hr; Arete Hut to car park via Lancaster and Arete Forks Hut, 13hr

**Distance** 32.8km

**Total ascent** 3987m

**Map** BN34

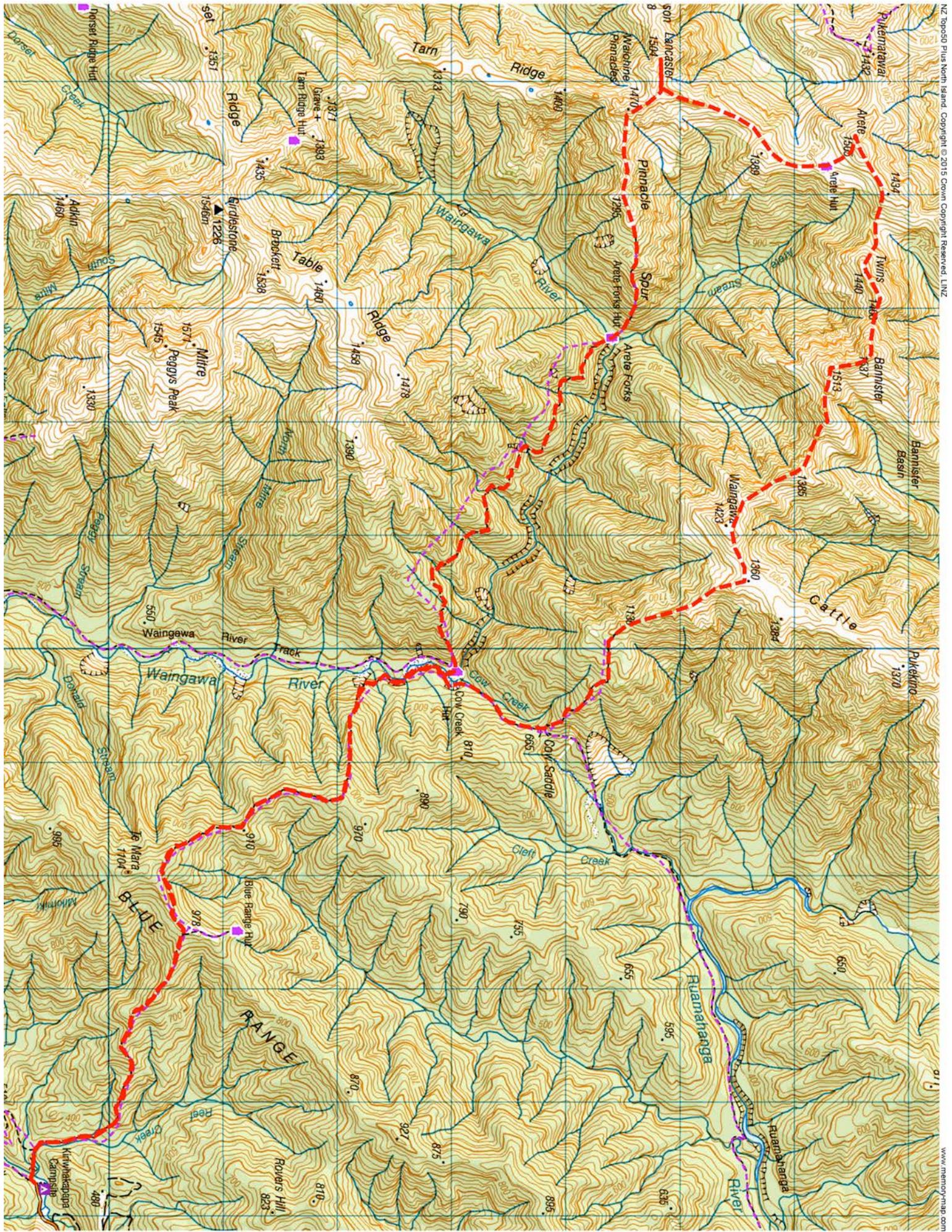
### Elevation Profile



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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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