

Annette Plateau via Mueller Hut, Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park

Little wonder Mueller Hut is the most popular hut in Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park: the views, particularly at dawn and dusk, are fabulous and the route into this alpine environment is straightforward and well-maintained. Fewer people know about the possibilities beyond Mueller Hut. Just 4km and 400m of ascent to the south is Annette Plateau. Compared to the route to Mueller Hut, the travel here is more demanding, requiring crampons and an axe, or skinned skies as you traverse around the base of Mt Ollivier, 1933m, and Kitchener, 2042m. Awareness of avalanche risk is essential, but in good conditions, the route is not technical.

Beyond Kitchener, ascend a moderately steep glaciated section leading to the plateau, which is covered in a flat, wide expanse of permanent snow and glacier ice. Crevasse risk here is low due to the wide flat nature of the terrain. Just keep away from the steeper sections.

From the plateau is a panorama of some of the greatest mountain terrain in New Zealand, including the Main Divide and Aoraki/Mt Cook. There are spectacular views of the icefalls running off Mt Sefton and other peaks, which are frequently in motion as avalanches let loose from above. The rewards of a little exploration are yet more lovely views of the Burnett Mountains to the east. Perhaps the best view of all is from the top of Mt Annette, 2235m, an easy climb on the eastern edge of the plateau.

If the weather is good, camping at night on the plateau is the cherry on the cake. Sunset and sunrise are fabulous, and, if you can brave the cold, a look skyward about midnight will have you gasping at the silver spray painting of the Milky Way.

Wild File

Access From Aoraki/Mt Cook Village

Grade Moderate-Difficult

Time Road end to Mueller Hut, 3-4hr; Hut to Annette Plateau, 3-4hr

Distance 7.6km

Total ascent 1537m

Accommodation Mueller Hut (28 bunks, \$36)

Map BX15

Elevation Profile



