

Mt Ruapehu Crater Lake via Mangaturuturu Ridge, Tongariro National Park

Perched at 2600m, Mt Ruapehu's crater lake is the focal point of any hike to the summit area. Accessible year-round, it comes alive in winter when pristine white snow blankets the surrounding peaks and vast Summit Plateau.

The easiest route to the summit is via Whakapapa Ski Field, consisting of a fairly strenuous two-hour hike from the top of the Waterfall Express chairlift. But for a more adventurous multi-day challenge, and a glimpse to one of New Zealand's darkest days, consider taking the Round-the-Mountain Track anti-clockwise from Bruce Road. As the track begins a descent to Lake Surprise, head east up the easy unmarked ridge, above Mangaturuturu River. There are good camp spots on the ridge or next to the river.

At 2000m, at the base of the Mangaturuturu Glacier, you'll pass the site of one of this country's worst aviation disasters. On October 23, 1948, a Lockheed Electra named *Kaka* struck the mountain, killing all 13 on board and initiating a massive search and rescue operation. Pieces of metal are still visible, but the majority of the wreckage has flowed down the valley.

Attaching crampons and continuing onto the Mangaturuturu Glacier, you'll reach the col next to Crater Lake and this stunning campsite.

The sunsets silhouetting Mt Taranaki are spectacular from this vantage point, and when darkness falls, it's a star-gazer's paradise.

Wild File

Access Mangaturuturu Ridge, from the Round The Mountain Track accessed either from Bruce Road or Ohakune Mountain Road

Grade Moderate-Difficult

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Time Brice Road to Mangaturuturu Ridge, 6hr; Ridge to Crater Lake, 5-7hr

Distance 14.6km

Total ascent 1787m

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Elevation Profile



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