

Skyline Track, Wanaka

The track begins from Roy's Peak car park, which has been known to be full before 10am in peak season, so an early start is advised (there is a smaller, quieter car park on the Cardrona Valley roadside where the track can be walked in reverse).

A steep and winding 4WD trail zigzags relentlessly through farmland – supporting plenty of farm animals – before eventually reaching the tussock tops. The tough ascent is consistently rewarded by the surrounding breathtaking views of Lake Wanaka, however, this view remains unchanged for a couple of hours of climbing. When the ridgetop is reached, the spectacular landscape of Lake Wanaka, its islands and the rolling mountains of Mt Aspiring National Park open up, including Tititea/Mt Aspiring itself. At this point, a drop-down toilet can be accessed, tactically placed near the famous viewpoint. This location is the prime spot due to its photogenic perspective. However, there are plenty of quieter viewpoints en route to the summit of Roys Peak. The track climbs steadily to the radio tower at 1578m, showcasing the Southern Alps and the majority of the tallest peaks in Mt Aspiring National Park.

The Skyline Track continues along the ridge just before the summit, leaving the majority of people (if not all) behind. The ridgeline is relatively straightforward with just a few rocky sections with steep drop-offs that require care. These sections can become icy even outside the winter months.

The highest point of the track is at Mt Alpha (1630m) where stunning 360-degree vistas of the surrounding landscape are revealed. It's hard to believe that just an hour earlier, at Roys Peak, there is usually an abundance of excited hikers marvelling at the view, yet most decide to go no further. Despite Mt Alpha being the larger of the two summits, the peace and tranquillity here feels unprecedented in comparison to Roys Peak.

The descent into tussock terrain begins from here. The initially steep gradient eases slightly and the trail becomes a gradually descending 4WD track through farmland. Once the signposted junction is reached in the saddle below Pt979, the route, marked by poles, heads to the right to join the Spotts Creek Track through the remaining rolling hills before reaching Spotts Creek.

It's then alongside the creek before turning towards the car park on Cardrona Valley Road where a car shuttle is required to return you to the track start.

Wild File

Access Roys Peak Track car park, Wanaka-Mount Aspiring Road

Grade Moderate

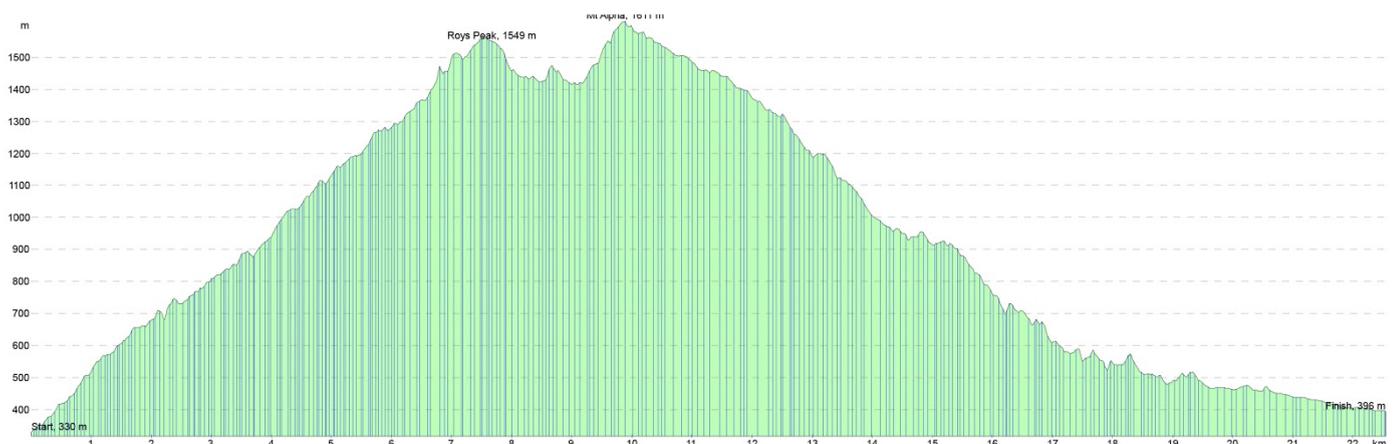
Time 8-11hr

Distance 23km

Total ascent 1970m

Topo50 map CB12

Elevation Profile



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