

Bald Range camp, Arthur's Pass National Park

The journey to Bald Range comes in two distinct steps. Most of the elevation gain is through native bush, achieved by using the access track to Carroll Hut and Kelly Saddle. From there, the adventure across tussock-covered tops begins in earnest and you need to choose your own route.

The track to Kelly Saddle is a traditional all-out bush climb across slippery roots, peppered with the occasional tall step. After 90min of relentless scrambling, the bushline falls behind and Carroll Hut is reached. Just before arriving at the hut, the track clings to the side of a steep, overgrown slope that meanders its way towards the plateau below Kelly Saddle. The way in which the track winds its way around the mountain is a highlight of this tramp.

The hut provides a central staging point for the Kelly and Bald Ranges and allows an opportunity to take stock, replenish water bottles and rest for the second part of the journey to Bald Range. The next several hours require basic route-finding skills on unmarked terrain. Navigation is mostly possible by sight. If the area is covered in cloud or it is raining, easier and safer options to camp are available by the tarns between Pt1363 and Pt1385 on Kelly Range, or right on Kelly Saddle.

It's best to refill water bottles at the stream behind Kelly Range before setting off as there are no major streams along Bald Range. Water can be sourced from the stagnant tarns, but filtration is strongly recommended.

Follow the track north of Carroll Hut for another 500m before veering off right behind the tarns to traverse the western flank of Kellys Hill, sticking to around the 1170m contour.

Bald Range consists of a series of small peaks that lead towards Rangi Taipo. Your judgement is required to determine which of these minor peaks you want to climb and which are best avoided. Pt1281 is quite exposed and is probably best avoided.

The terrain along the ridgeline varies between being easy underfoot and sprawling with alpine scrub that rolls ankles at every opportunity.

The two tarns at Pt1317 provide a spot to camp for the night that is out of the worst of the wind. Further options to explore towards Rangi Taipo are available from there.

There are stunning sunset views from Pt1317 across a variety of landscapes. To the north-west, Lake Brunner and the Tasman Sea; to the south is Arthur's Pass and sprawling alpine ranges.

Wild File

Access From the car park 4km north of Otira, just north of the Kellys Creek bridge

Grade Moderate-difficult

Time 4-5hr to the two tarns below Pt1317

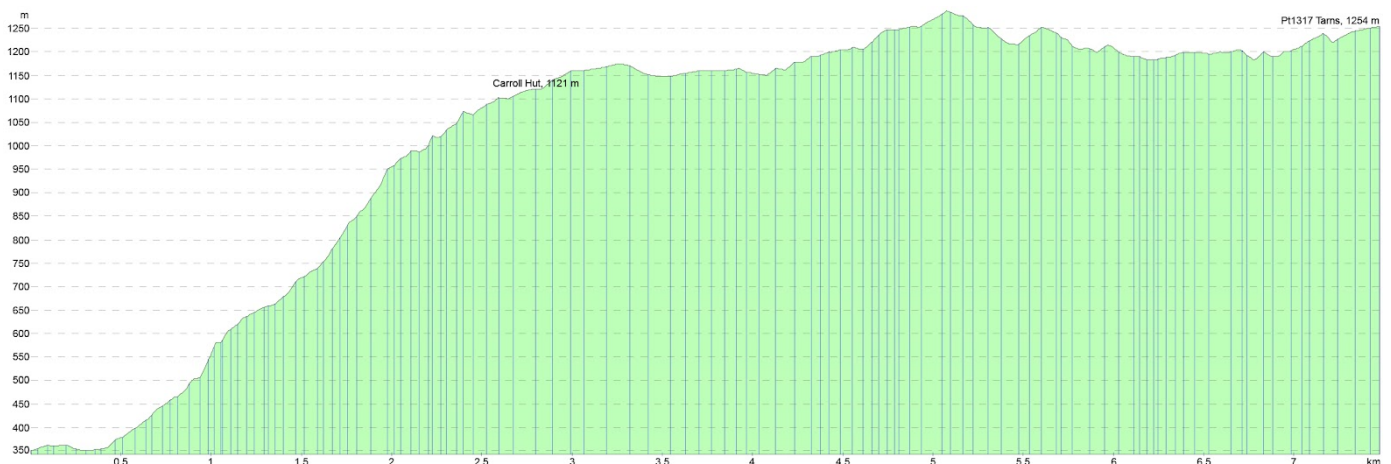
Distance 7.5km to Pt1317 tarns

Total ascent 1158m

Accommodation Carroll Hut (\$5, 10 bunks)

Topo50 map BV20, BU20

Elevation



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