



Whanganui River 2018

Canoe | Mountain Biking | Tramping

whanganuirivercanoes.co.nz



Ben Adam and Rebecca Mead

own and operate

Whanganui River Canoes

from Raetihi Holiday Park

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Location Raetihi Holiday Park

10 Parapara Road

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Welcome

Welcome to the start of your Whanganui River journey. We hope you find all the information you require for any adventure on or around the Whanganui River in this guide.

Whanganui River Canoes is owned and operated by Ben Adam and Rebecca Mead, a vibrant young couple who can't wait to show you their world.

Ben has worked on the Whanganui River as a jet boat driver for eight years. His family own the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge, and Jet Boat Tours. In his spare time, Ben loves hunting in the area, and loves exploring the rugged countryside.

Rebecca has grown up in the area and loves that she is surrounded by so many awesome activities. She ensures that you are welcomed at the Raetihi Holiday Park, and will take care of any bookings and enquiries for you. Ben and Rebecca are raising three children, who love to hear client's tales of the river.

As experienced operators on the river, we are safety audited, and our priority is keeping all of our equipment in fantastic order for our customers. We improve our fleet every year, and buy new canoes at the start of every season.

We can now comfortably have 150 paddlers on the Whanganui River at a time, and have our safety briefing translated into English, German, Chinese and Hebrew!

Over the years we have diversified, and have also purchased Mountain Bikes, we can hire out up to 30 mountain bikes at a time and have plenty of information to offer about the bike tracks in our area.

With accommodation, canoe hire, mountain bike hire, and family with jet boats it is only natural that our Holiday Park has become a place where travellers just call us for every day advice about our area. Feel free to give us a call if you need more information about any adventure in our area, and we will try our best to help!



We are based at the [Raetihi Holiday Park](#), so will meet you there before your trip.

Our trips depart from here before 8am so you have enough time to travel to the river, and get to your first campsite without rushing (if you want to meet us somewhere nearby this can be negotiated).

Raetihi Holiday Park is a great place to stay before or after your trip on the Whanganui River. Raetihi Holiday Park will wow you with breathtaking views of Mount Ruapehu.

If you choose to stay at the Raetihi Holiday Park, you have the option of pitching your tent, or staying in one of our well maintained cabins. Each cabin has one double bed, and up to 5 single bunks. The kitchen and bathroom facilities are communal.

You can trust that your car will be kept securely while you are away.

At the Raetihi Holiday Park we have worked really hard to obtain funding and are currently working on plans for a brand-new amenity building for the 2018/2019 Summer Season!



Canoe 3 – 6 day options

You can choose to do the 3,4, or 5-day trip either freedom hire, or guided. Talk to us about your paddling experience and we can help you choose the most suitable trip.

Tour 1 - Whakahoro to Pipiriki (3-4 days)

This is the most beautiful and scenic part of the river. You will be amazed as you paddle through the center of the Whanganui National Park passing through pristine native bush, deep gorges covered with ferns, caves, and rapids.

Tour 2 - Ohinepane to Pipiriki (4-5 days)

This trip begins approximately 20 km down river from Taumarunui at Ohinepane. It is for those of you who want to see a little bit more of the river. As you paddle down the river you will pass through farmland, slowly making your way deep into the center of the Whanganui National Park. The native bush caves, and deep gorges covered with ferns are breathtaking.

Tour 3 – Cherry Grove to Pipiriki (5-6 days)

Starting in Taumarunui, Cherry Grove is the first departing point on the river. If you are the keen adventurous type with plenty of paddling experience this trip will suit you. This is the longest trip on offer, starting in a shallow, rocky section of the river there are plenty of rapids, rocks and logs for you to paddle around right from the start. As you paddle further down the river you will pass through farmland, making your way deep into the centre of the Whanganui National Park. Your beautiful surroundings, including waterfalls, native bush, caves, and gorges are idyllic.



Canoe hire includes:

- **Canoe and Bailers, the canoes have straps built in to help keep your gear safe**
- **Waterproof Storage Barrels (large 340mm wide 600 mm deep, small 260 mm wide 460 mm deep)**
- **Paddles**
- **Life Jackets**
- **Information about the campsites**
- **Maps of the river**
- **Full instructions on how to navigate the river, River reading/ paddling instructions**
- **A safety Briefing, which is translated into English, Hebrew, Chinese and German**
- **Free Hot coffee before the trip**
- **Free Hot coffee, and afternoon snack when you get back to our base**
- **Free Hot Shower when you get back to our base**
- **Transport to and from the river**
- **Storage for your vehicle while on your trip**
- **Storage for any valuables while on our trip**



Canoe 1 – 2 day options

Option 1

2/3 hour Whanganui River Road Paddle

\$105 per person

Meet us at the Raetihi Holiday Park, where we can talk you through the trip and play you a briefing. We will then drive you 27km down to Pipiriki and give you some paddling instruction before you set off on your way. This section of the river is not part of the National Park, so there are no jet boats around, and you get away from the crowds a little.

Leave the rest of the world behind and experience peace and tranquility as you drift down the river towards Jerusalem. Our shuttle will be waiting to transport you back to Raetihi.

Option 2

Canoe from Whakahoro, stay overnight at John Coull and jet boat to Pipiriki from Bridge to Nowhere

\$225 per person (Plus DoC fees)

We will meet you at the Raetihi Holiday Park, at 8am you will be shuttled to Whakahoro. Our shuttle driver will give you paddle instruction, and send you on your way. You will see the highlights of the majestic Whanganui River with its fern-clad gorges and after a night at John Coull, you will reach Mangapurua Landing – gateway to the famous 'Bridge to Nowhere'. After a walk to the Bridge, and back to the landing you will be met by jet boat and taken back down to Pipiriki where our shuttle driver will be waiting to take you to your car.



Freedom Prices

Tour 1 Whakahoro to Pipiriki Three/four day freedom \$180.00 per person	Tour 2 Ohinepane to Pipiriki Four/five day freedom \$200.00 per person	Tour 3 Cherry Grove to Pipiriki Five/six day freedom \$210.00 per person. We recommend adults do this trip
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Guided Prices

Tour 1 - Whakahoro to Pipiriki Three day guided \$725.00 per person	Tour 2 - Ohinepane to Pipiriki Four day guided \$875.00 per person	Tour 3 - Cherry Grove to Pipiriki Five day guided \$955.00 per person. We recommend adults do this trip
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Our Freedom hire option is great for canoeists or parties seeking a great adventure with complete freedom. It will allow you to experience and view the river at your own pace. We will meet you at Raetihi Holiday Park. You can stay here the night before your trip, or meet us early in the morning.

Guided Trips are excellent for those of you who do not have much paddling experience, with young children, or those who just want to relax and learn about the history surrounding you. You will be safe in the knowledge that while on the river; all you need to do is take in the beauty around you. The guide will tell you tales of the river, cook tasty meals and take you to the best spots to explore along the way. When you reach Pipiriki you will be met by our friendly driver, and taken back to the Rae-tihi Holiday Park.



Equipment hire list

Whanganui River Canoes offers the following items for hire. These items will need to be requested when you make your booking.

Per trip

Two person tents	\$30
Sleeping bags	\$10
Camping stove and gas	\$18
Cooking/eating utensils	\$5
Chilly bins	\$15



Freedom Clients will need to bring

- Pots, pans, and eating utensils
- Dish washing material and tea towels
- Matches or lighter and a gas cooker
- Water bottles
- First aid kit
- Rubbish bags
- Toilet paper
- Torch
- Enough food for an extra day
- Can opener
- Tent

Guided and Freedom Clients will need to bring

- Sleeping bag
- Thermarest
- Dry clothes for night wear
- Woollen hat
- Clothes for canoeing in
- Personal hygiene items
- Sunglasses with a cord attached
- Rain gear
- Sun block
- Insect repellent
- Sensible shoes, a pair for while you are paddling, and one for at your campsites



Food to pack

When packing food for your trip, you need to ensure it is similar to food you would normally eat so you don't get any stomach upsets. We find that some of the easiest dinners to take and to cook are pastas, stir fry's and quick mince dishes. You need to take food that is quick and easy to cook – so you are not sitting at your campsite in the dark waiting for your food.

For lunches we recommend taking bread and rolls with various fillings – or simple cans of spaghetti.

Breakfasts are easy, just some toast – or the usual cereal. If you want to go all out, there is nothing like waking up in the middle of nowhere and having bacon, eggs and hash browns.

Remember to bring things like barley sugars, chocolates and scroggin to snack on and keep your energy up through the day. Although the campsites have water, it would also pay to bring two litres of your own water just in case (discuss this amount before you go as this may vary depending on how dry the area is).

Cooking

Bottled gas and camp stoves are provided in John Coull hut and Tieke Kainga for cooking. Each campsite has a water supply, and shelter for cooking under. You need to take your own portable camping stove and a wok so you do not have to wait for other campers to finish before you can start cooking your meal.



River conditions/hazards

Rapids on the Whanganui River are classed as grade 1 and 2 so are not too hard for beginners.

A lot of rapids have banks where you can pull your canoe across and get back in to the water after the rapid. If you want to go through the rapid however, the safest route is through the 'V'. Remember to paddle – your canoe needs to be faster than the current so you can remain in control.

Boulders just beneath surface are hard to detect so must be looked for. Try to avoid them, when they are just covered, the surface ripples.

Large breaking waves can easily swamp fully loaded canoes. They are often at the end of the rapids, so be well prepared with your bailer to get water out. To avoid the waves, keep to one side of centre.

Snags

New snags can appear at any time, when the river is low there will be plenty of them. You will constantly need to look out for upcoming snags.

Willows are possibly the biggest hazard on the river. Some rapids have strong currents towards the overhanging willow branches. To avoid willows try to go towards the other bank or walk down the shingle. The last rapid, just before Pipiriki is an area to watch out for them. A lot of canoeists trying to avoid the rapid get into trouble as they get stuck in the willows.

Whirlpools are especially bad when the river is flooded, but they can also be around rapids. A whirlpool can turn your boat around, or catch the side and pull it under until you capsize - do not stop paddling until you are well away from them.



Safety on the river

- Always wear a life jacket while on, or near the water.
- Pay close attention when given instruction before going on the river. You may have plenty of paddling experience, but we know the river and its obstacles well.
- Know basic paddle strokes, we will show you them in your instruction.
- The river can rise quickly after rain during the day or night. It doesn't have to rain where you are for the river to rise. It has many tributaries, so if it rains a lot in another district the river will rise.
- Always tie your canoe firmly, as high as you can. Remember driftwood can float too. If you tie your canoe to a piece of driftwood, and the river rises your canoe will not be there in the morning.
- If you feel there is an emergency, there is an emergency radio at John Coull hut. Bridge to Nowhere Lodge has a phone. Bridge to Nowhere Lodge is directly opposite Tieke Kainga.
- There are campsites roughly every 2 hours of paddling. These are marked on your maps, so keep an eye on where you are and how far you have to go.
- In rapids keep your boat straight. You need to paddle faster than the river is going, so you have control.
- While in the rapid you have the right of way. If a jet boat needs to go through; he will wait.

If you hear a jet boat coming, and you are not in a rapid get to the right hand side of the river if you can.

If you are closest to the left, then go to the left. Ensure that the front of your canoe is facing towards the middle of the river so you will not be knocked over by the waves and the wake of the jet boat.



Safety on the river continued

- You want to go straight down the biggest V – shape.
- Always be aware of any oncoming obstacles, if you see a break in the rivers surface, it is an obstacle. Water humping over something or an upside down V- shape means there is an obstacle.
- Avoid the obstacles well before you reach them. If you are unable to – or don't see it in time paddle straight over it so you don't get stuck.
- If you get stuck lean your weight downstream so the water flows under and **not into the boat**
- If your boat does get stuck – or lost, other canoeists will be able to get help at the huts. Camp on the side until we come. Ben does jet boating for Bridge to Nowhere so will know if you are late to the Bridge to Nowhere Landing, or Tieke.
- If you wake up, and the river has risen too high – do not be tempted to get in your canoe, **stay at the camp site** – and wait it out. You should have enough food for an extra day, and we will come and get you.
- Do not panic – stay calm and try to remember what you have been taught. In **Rapids – keep paddling**. If there is danger remember the emergency phones.
- Please Note: There is no cell phone reception on the Whanganui River. We recommend that you keep valuables and electronic equipment safely at home. We cannot be held responsible for any electronic equipment or personal items that are taken on your trip.



DoC Bookings

The Department of Conservation provides a number of huts and campsites along the Whanganui River, at convenient distances. They also maintain walking and mountain biking tracks in the area.

All canoeists on the Whanganui River need to book their campsites/huts through the Department of Conservation before paddling the Whanganui River.

To do this, go to <https://booking.doc.govt.nz/Menu.aspx?sg=WJY>

Campsites cost \$20.00 per person per night, huts cost \$32.00 per person per night. Under 18 year olds do not have to pay, but still have to book their spots. When you enquire with us, we will recommend the best campsites for your group. As you will be in the Outdoors, we recommend taking a tent with you for your own safety.



DoC Campsites

The Whanganui River is classed as one of the great walks of New Zealand and suitable for all ages and skill levels. DoC huts and campsites are situated approximately every two hours along the river and provide fresh water and toilet facilities.

All campsites are maintained by DoC, but it is your responsibility to keep your area clean and tidy.

Ensure that everything you bring on the river, you take off. Each campsite has a shelter for cooking, water, and composting toilets. There is an emergency radio at John Coull hut, and an emergency phone at Bridge to Nowhere Lodge.



The Bridge to Nowhere Lodge and Ramanui Campsite

The Bridge to Nowhere Lodge is owned and operated by Ben's family. Ben's father Joe has owned the lodge for many years.

As a boy his uncle owned the property when it was a farm.

His uncle sold it when Joe was just 16, and he had dreamt of owning it ever since.

As a young man Joe spent many years living in the bush area surrounding the Whanganui River, and on a trip up the river by jet boat saw the lodge was up for sale. After discussion with his partner Mandy, they decided to buy it. They

have spent the years ever since working hard to ensure everyone who stays at the lodge will have a fantastic experience.

The lodge has four rooms with double beds, some of them have single beds also, and there are two bunk rooms. Most rooms have stunning river views. The Bridge to Nowhere Lodge is the only place below Whakahoro that has flushing toilets and warm showers. It also has an emergency phone.

If you pre-book, they can provide dinner, bed, and breakfast if you want a night of relaxation. If you decide to stay over the river at Tieke you are welcome to pop over and enjoy the view at lodge, while having a drink from their fully licensed bar.

Ben and Joe are in their jet boats, driving up and down between Pipiriki and the Bridge to Nowhere every day, so if you have an emergency on the river, need to be jet boated out, or just want to chat to Ben about how your trip is going you are able to.

Ramanui camp site – privately owned

Ramanui campsite is on the same side of the river as the Lodge, and just upstream of it. The campsite is also owned by Ben's family, and is a good alternative to Tieke, if you want to get away from the crowd. The campsite has just had a major update, with coin operated hot showers, and cabins to fit your whole family, this is an awesome place to stay on your last night on the river.

Options at the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge

Self Serve – (you bring own food, sleeping bags and towels)

Dinner, Bed, and Breakfast

Approximate distances between campsites and descriptions

Km Upstream	Km Downstream	Description
234	0	Taumarunui - Cherry Grove This is the first entry point for canoeists on the Whanganui River. A campsite is there if required.
212.5	21.5	Ohinepane Campsite Grove This is the second entry point for canoeists on the Whanganui River. A campsite is there if required.
198.5	35.5	Poukaria Campsite
181	53	Maharanui Campsite Last access to road from Taumarunui.
176	58	Whakahoro Hut and Campsite There is a DoC hut at Whakahoro if you are doing a trip from Cherry Grove or Ohinepane. To get to the hut, you will need to paddle 400 metres up the Retaruke River, pull your canoes well away from the river, and carry your barrels some distance up to the hut.
166	68	Mangapapa Campsite
151	83	Ohauora Campsite - Tamatea's Cave
138.5	95.5	John Coull Hut / Campsite John Coull hut gets pretty busy during the season, it has a hut which has room for up to 26 people to sleep in – but can not be booked – so even if you plan to stay here and Tieke, you will need to bring a tent. If you are lucky while staying here you will see the bats flying above the trees at sunset.
129	105	Mangawaiiti Campsite Our favourite campsite. Hard work to get up to – but even if you just stop here for lunch, it is well worth the effort. The track leading up to the steps is carved out of the cliff face but the view from up top is amazing, and not too many other campers will be there.
120	114	Mangapurua Campsite This site is directly opposite the Mangapurua Landing. Paddle (or swim) across the river, and walk 40 minutes to see the historic Bridge to Nowhere.
110	124	Tieke Kainga and campsite The lower gorge begins. Tieke is a beautiful campsite with a hut and cooking facilities, it is a DoC campsite, but also a Marae. Maori protocols are to be followed while staying here.
98	136	Ngaporo Campsite This is the last campsite on the river before you reach Pipiriki. An excellent place to stay if you wish to do a four day trip from Whakahoro. This campsite is right next to one of the biggest rapids you will experience while on the river.



Why choose Whanganui River Canoes ?

If you have not already chosen to book with Whanganui River Canoes, here are the main reasons you would want to book with us!!

- We can book you in to dinner at a restaurant in Raetihi, or Ohakune the night before your trip or after you get off.
- We offer great group discounts.
- We have jet boat safety back up service – Ben will be there to check up on your progress.
- We can book you in to the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge, or at the Raetihi Holiday Park before or after your trip.
- We also offer shuttles to other adventures around the area (mountain biking and tramping tracks).
- We both have a huge amount of family history on the river (Rebecca's great grandfather was the one of the first to map the Whanganui River, and you will use his maps on your trip).
- Our equipment is top quality.
- We offer a safe place for you to keep your car while on your trip.
- We can look after your valuables for you while you are away.

After your trip you are welcomed at the Holiday Park by an afternoon tea, and you are welcome to a warm shower.



History of the Whanganui River

You may choose to paddle the Whanganui River for a bit of fun with some mates, for a nice family getaway or for a great adventure.

Whatever your reason for going down the river, we think you would appreciate the experience a great deal more if you had a bit of information about the history of the river itself.

(This information is sourced from the Department of Conservation).

Natural History - The Whanganui River Is the longest navigable waterway in New Zealand, and the second longest river in the North Island.

The land that surrounds the river is about one million years old. The land is formed by sandstone and mudstone from the ocean bed. This has been eroded by the water to form sharp ridges, deep gorges, sheer papa cliffs and waterfalls.

A forest of rata, rewarewa, rimu, tawa, and kowhai has grown on this land. There are plenty of tree ferns and plants clinging to the steep riverbanks.

You can often hear native birds such as kereru (native pigeon), tiwaiwaka (fantail), tui, toutouwai (robin), rirotiro (grey warbler), and the miromiro (tomtit). While staying at the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge; Ramanui Campsite, or John Coull Hut you will often hear the call of the kiwi – at John Coull Hut you may also be lucky to see the long-tail native bats flying above the trees.



The Legend of the Whanganui River

The mountains Tongariro and Taranaki both loved the beautiful Mount Pihanga. When they clashed over this love; there was a great battle.

Eventually it was Tongariro that won this battle; wildly upset that he lost his love Taranaki ripped himself from the ground and tore a path through the country.

After the battle the wound in the country was filled with water which sprang from Tongariro. The wound is now known as the Whanganui River and has been surrounded by green forests filled with birdsong.

Maori history and European Settlement on the Whanganui River

The tidal reaches of the river were said to have been first explored by Kupe, who discovered New Zealand. The Maori Chief Tamatea was the first to explore the entire river, and he named many places along the way.

The river valley and tributaries were populated by many Maori in early times. The Maori made many villages along the river and had plenty of food sources. They defended themselves in their fortified 'pa'.

In the 1840's Wanganui was first influenced by Europeans beginning settlements, and missionaries arriving. Missions were established along the river, and the Reverend Richard Taylor helped arbitrate between the Maori and the European with their land problems. The influence on Maori by the missionaries made a huge change in the way the Maori lived. They turned their villages into farms, and began cultivating on a larger scale.



A regular steamer service to Pipiriki began in 1891, in 1903 the steamers then went all the way to Taumaranui. This was a three day trip – the passengers would stay the first night in Pipiriki house, and the second night in a houseboat which was at Ohura (then moved to Retaruke).

The steamers were a great tourist attraction to the area, but they were also used as a mail service and as cartage for farmers. The steamer service ended in 1958 after years of decreasing prices, the abandonment of farms and villages, and the development of roads.

In 1957 Mr. C.W.F Hamilton travelled the length of the river in his new invention, the jet boat. The Rangimarie was the first jet boat in the world licensed to carry passengers and operated on the Whanganui River.

In the time since, the Whanganui River has remained a must do to visitors to New Zealand, and Kiwis alike. Jet boats are now a common sight on the river, with tours running most days during the summer. Large numbers of canoeists eager for an adventure paddle down the Whanganui River, and are stunned by the serenity, and untouched native bush.

Now is your chance to make your own piece of history!



Mountain biking

We offer great shuttle deals to many mountain biking and tramping tracks around the area. We work closely with Bridge to Nowhere Jet Boat Tours and can organize shuttles to the awesome Mangapurua Track, where you can ride to the river, be picked up by jet boat and taken to Phipiriki. In Phipiriki you will be met by our shuttle driver and returned to Raetihi. If you do not have a bike, we can hire a Specialized Pitch Mountain Bike from our base.

Kennett Brothers Special

\$ 145 pp

- Leave your car at the Raetihi Holiday Park, board our shuttle bus which will take you and your bike down through the Ruatiti Valley to the start of your bike ride.
- At the end of your ride meet our jet boat at the Mangapurua Landing and we will jet you back the 30km to Phipiriki.
- Meet the shuttle to take you back up to Raetihi and your cars.

Old Coach Road- \$30.00 pp

The old coach Road is an enjoyable ride steeped with New Zealand history. The track had been completely forgotten until recently. After plenty of research, historians have found why the road was there. After years of hard work the road has been reopened for all to enjoy. As you cycle the track you will come across interactive activities, and information sites which help to fill you in on the recently discovered history.

- Leave your car at the Raetihi Holiday Park, board our shuttle bus which will take you and your bike to Horopito to the start of your bike ride.

Ride through historic bush for about 2.5 -3 hours

- You will meet the shuttle at the end of the track in Ohakune to take you back to Raetihi