

Wainui Canyon

v3a4V*

Location

Wainui River, Takaka, Golden Bay

Map

BP25 Motueka

Character

River bed scrambling, with short sections of fun, senic canyon

Approach by Car

Park one car at the Wainui Falls Carpark, Chose between starting at Pigeon Saddle or for enhanced adventure start at Bird Road(see notes at end)

Approach on Foot

From Pigeon Saddle it takes 2 hours to walk to Awapoto Hut, from here it is a heinous bush bash to GR933762, allow 2-3 hours.

Rock

Diorite Granite, excellent short sections of bedrock and long sections of walking/climbing boulder sections.

Water

About 1 cubic meter/second in summer, a few swims up to 50m, The Wainui will become a very dangerous place in a flood

Catchment

20km²

Anchors

1 bolted abseil in the middle section. Wainui falls has not been bolted, plenty of good trees available though. There are a number of small(-5m) jumps in the middle and lower sections that are inconvenient to inspect the landings of due to limited natural anchors. Bolts could provide a safe/efficient alternative.

Gear

50m rope, a drill and a handful of bolts
Full body wetsuit plus a PFD if you want to pioneer some bold slides

Route Description

The total length is 9km, we entered at about the 4km mark, so there is still 5km of unexplored canyon further upstream.

From the 4km mark(GR933762) the first section has a number of straight forward down climbs, a 12m abseil and some small jumps(-5), it opens up into a

long river walk before easing into the next section of canyon which is very tame and quite scenic(GR301767).

As you descend further the features become more interesting and would make for a neat short trip if you could find a way around the difficult access.

There are a few gnarly hydraulic features to avoid by climbing around/jumping. These could become impassable in medium water levels. At the Wainui Falls there is a rough tourist track on the TL at the top of the waterfall that leads to the bottom. The best looking place for bolts looks like the TR of the waterfall up high.

Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	4-5hr
Canyon descent	4hr
Return to Vehicle	20min
Total	9.5h

Flash Flood Danger

The Wainui will become a very dangerous place in a flood with long sections of class 5 water. Avoid if it has rained or is about to rain.

Escapes

Long bush/scrub bash's are the only way out of the valley. Vertical sided sections of the river are short and less committing than the remoteness.

Notes

First descent: Chris Stephenson, Anna Drabble, Kieran Chandler 10/1/15

The upper section of this canyon, accessed from Bird road, starting at point GR925725 looks like an excellent extension to this trip with some steeper sections and plenty of granite bed rock. Best of all there would be less walking and more canyoning.