

1887

(DOC, n.d.[d])

Printed from: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/central-north-island/places/tongariro/>

Fascinating facts about Tongariro National Park

Tongariro was the first national park in New Zealand and the fourth in the world. It was the first in the world to be gifted by a country's indigenous people.

On this page:

- [From yesterday to today](#)
- [Mountain summits](#)
- [Backcountry huts and hiking trails](#)
- [Dual World Heritage](#)
- [Ski fields](#)

From yesterday to today

Tongariro was the first national park formed in New Zealand, and the fourth in the world. It was the first national park in the world to be gifted by a country's indigenous people, on 23 September 1887.

When established the original size of Tongariro National Park was 2,640 hectares. It has gradually increased to its present size of 79,596 hectares.

Today, approximately one million people visit Tongariro National Park each year. Despite the popular ski fields on Mount Ruapehu, there are more visitors in summer than winter due to the excellent hiking opportunities.

The park's central location means it is easy to access from both Auckland and Wellington and other locations in the North Island.

Mountain summits

Tongariro National Park is centered around three active volcanoes:

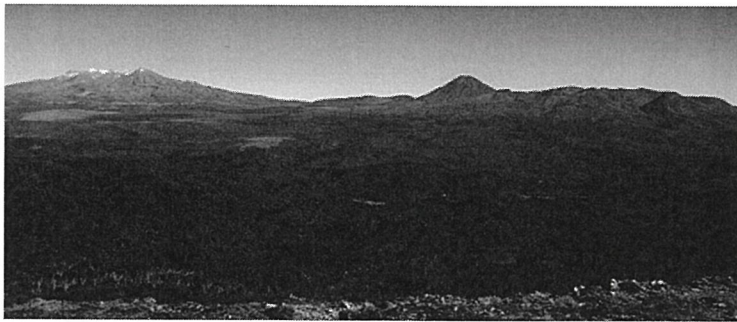
- Tongariro 1967 m
- Ngauruhoe 2287 m
- Ruapehu 2797 m

• Ruapehu has several peaks:

- Tahurangi 2797 m (the summit and highest point in the North Island)
- Paretaitonga 2751 m
- Te Heuheu 2732 m
- Girdlestone 2658 m
- Mitre 2591 m



Traditionally Ngauruhoe has erupted at least every nine years. At the time of writing the last eruption was in 1975.



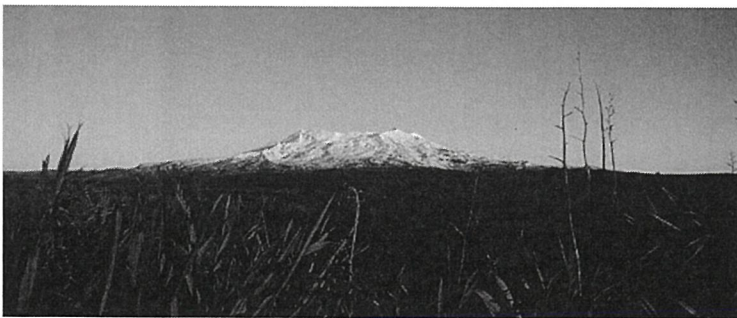
View of the volcanoes from the Kaimanawa ranges

Volcanic eruptions

- The Te Maari craters on the northern slopes of Mount Tongariro erupted on 6 August 2012 and 21 November 2012
- Traditionally Ngauruhoe has erupted at least every nine years, although the last eruption was in 1975
- Mount Tongariro's active Red Crater last emitted ash in 1926
- Mount Ruapehu's last eruption was 25 September 2007. Prior to that there were large eruptions in 1995 and in 1996

Mount Ruapehu

- Mount Ruapehu's eight named glaciers are the only ones in the North Island. The summit region has a permanent cover of snow and ice.
- The volcanic vent in the top of the mountain contains a warm, acidic crater lake. The lake passes through regular warming and cooling cycles, which may result in small eruptions of ash and steam.
- Mount Ruapehu is the highest point in the North Island and, like Tongariro, its history began before the last ice age.
- More than 60 eruptions from the Ruapehu crater have been recorded since 1945.
- During the 1995 and 1996 eruptions, the Crater Lake disappeared completely, then refilled over several years.



Mount Ruapehu

Backcountry huts and hiking tracks

There are eight serviced backcountry huts along two multi-day circuit hiking tracks. It is a fantastic experience going on an overnight hiking trip.

The **Tongariro Northern Circuit** - one of New Zealand's Great Walks

1360 m
 Hut - 1190 m
 120 m (on both circuits)

Circuit

3rd

Round the Mountain Track (Ruapehu)

- Rangipo Hut - 1600 m
- Mangaehuehu Hut - 1300 m
- Blyth Hut - 1400 m
- Mangaturuturu Hut - 1250 m
- Whakapapiti Hut - 1260 m

Round the Mountain Track**Dual World Heritage**

- In 1990 Tongariro National Park was declared a World Heritage site, in recognition of its outstanding natural characteristics.
- In 1993 the Park was also granted Cultural World Heritage status under revised criteria (spiritual (intangible) cultural association), in recognition of its cultural significance and history.

World Heritage in Tongariro National Park**Ski fields**

- Mount Ruapehu has the only commercial ski fields in the North Island, making the mountain a popular place to visit for snow sports.
- The two large ski fields are Whakapapa on the north-western slopes, and Turoa on the south-western side. Both are managed by Ruapehu Alpine Lifts.
- Tukino is a small club-run ski field on the south-eastern side.
- There is on-mountain accommodation at Whakapapa ski field, in 47 private lodges owned by skiing and hiking clubs. The lodges make up Iwikau Village, named after one of the earlier Tuwharetoa chiefs. There are a further five club lodges in Whakapapa Village.
- The first club lodge was built by Ruapehu Ski Club in 1923.
- There is also on-mountain lodge accommodation at Tukino.

Find out more about skiing on Mount Ruapehu at the [Ruapehu Alpine Lifts website](#) and the [Tukino skifield website](#)



Blyth Hut and Ruapehu



Whakapapa ski field

Printed from: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/central-north-island/places/tongariro-national-park/about-tongariro-national-park/history-and-culture/>

History and culture

Find out about the relationship Maori have with the park.

Ko Tongariro te maunga *Tongariro is the mountain*

Ko Taupo te moana *Taupo is the lake*

Ko Ngāti Tuwharetoa te iwi *Ngāti Tuwharetoa is the tribe*

Ko te Heuheu te tangata *te Heuheu is the man / Chief*

Ngatoroirangi, the eponymous ancestor of Ngāti Tuwharetoa ascended the great mountains of the Central Plateau over 30 generations ago. It was then that he named Tongariro and the many features of the surrounding landscape, declaring this area as home for his descendants. It is from these beginnings that Ngāti Tuwharetoa maintains the inherent responsibility to protect the mountainous area for which they belong.

1880-1890s

The Crown sought to establish a national park around Tongariro maunga (mountain). In 1887, the generosity and foresight of the Ngāti Tuwharetoa people saw the heart of the mountainous area being declared sacrosanct by the Ariki (Chief), Horonuku te Heuheu Tukino IV, enacting a tuku (act of customary lore) of the three volcanic peaks to protect and preserve the mountains for Ngāti Tuwharetoa, other iwi (tribes) and all New Zealanders. The intention of the tuku was to enter into a partnership with the Crown, at the time Queen Victoria of England, to ensure the continued protection of Tongariro.

In 1894, Tongariro National Park was established - the first for Aotearoa (New Zealand), and fourth in the world. Legal ownership of the sacred mountain peaks increased significantly from the original 2,640 hectare tuku into a 25,000 hectare land block vested solely in the Crown. This act by the Crown began a process whereby the authority of Ngāti Tuwharetoa over their involvement, guardianship and protection of their taonga (treasured heritage) in the Tongariro National Park has been greatly reduced.

1993

In 1993, Tongariro National Park became the first area to be inscribed on the World Heritage List under the revised criteria describing cultural landscapes - the first in the world to be inscribed with Dual World Heritage classification, and by a country's indigenous people.

Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro

The mountains at the heart of the park have cultural and spiritual significance to Ngāti Tuwharetoa and symbolise the spiritual links between this community and their environment. Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro is the guardian hapū (sub-tribe) of Ngāti Tuwharetoa as the hau kāinga (true people of the homeland) for the Tongariro territory. Their continued existence in this environment ensures the cultural, spiritual and environmental values are protected and shared with all those that encounter this dynamic landscape.

The park has active volcanoes, a diverse range of ecosystems and some remarkable landscapes - each deeply enriched with stories of the hau kāinga and the significance to their people.