

Have Nothing To Do? Then Go Nowhere!

Next time you're planning annual leave, tell the boss you want a week off in April to join the annual Yakity Yak Club's Whanganui River trip. (incorporating side trip to the Bridge to Nowhere).

Upfront, it has to be said that this very popular 6-day trip would not be the success it is, without the preparation, personal commitment and unrelenting enthusiasm of Chef de Mission Pete Townend. (No Pete, as Editor in Charge you are not allowed to edit that out!). By his own admission, Pete claims the trip gets easier to organise each year but continues to succeed in the "full bellies, lots of laughter and spice of life" promised in his trip briefing.

As the Whanganui River is a great place for learning and playing, the trip is an ideal club event for both novice and more advanced paddler. Additionally there's all that scenery, the DOC camps and a magnificent piece of historical engineering, literally in the middle of nowhere.

Pushing the boundaries of your comfort zone you will be rewarded with improved self confidence and experience in paddling rapids. Oh sure you could easily set yourself up with a local tour company who throw a vessel at you that somewhat resembles a kayak, leave you to your own devices with only a map as your guide, or take the jet boat if you're into speed. Neither compare to the opportunities and camaraderie you will get with this large well organised group.

There's no shortage of local knowledge from those club members who have made their way down the river before. You can glean information from packing and weight logistics (I say that as I recall one trip leader loading rocks into his kayak for balance and another stuffing scorched almonds so far up the nose of the kayak it took ½ an hour of hilarity to retrieve them), to kayak performance, paddle technique, river currents, eddies, v's and pressure waves, and Maori protocol.

This trip is not for you if you are on a serious diet. You will not go

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Trips and excursions are available through out the year with the Yakity Yak Club.

Check out some of the trips coming up!

Visit Moko in Whakatane, paddle to Motuihe Island, see the seals in the Abel Tasman, explore Waikaremoana, paddle the Mokau River. There's even an expedition to Stewart Island or Milford Sound (Still in the planning stages).

There's something for everyone.



hungry. Pete T has the menus down pat and even organises "high tea" in the middle of nowhere. Once settled on a beach for lunch or into camp at night expect much, much more than a "Backcountry Dried Pack" meal. Resist going to bed early - for those that hang out late chocolate is the reward!

You will have to rough it in a tent, (we were lucky with the weather god(ess) being kind to us). You will get wet. You may fall in. You will smell. In fact you will become increasingly paranoid about your smell. While you can do without luxuries pack a few pairs of spare undies – never underestimate the thrill and comfort of clean dry undies against your derriere after a wet day paddling!

You will have to chip in. Help unload the canoes carrying communal food and cooking equipment. Jump into stirring, flipping, smashing, mixing, pouring and serving around the camp kitchen. The trip cost (which is great value for money), does not include Sherpas! Pete only has so many hands and nor should trip leaders be expected do all the work. Your contribution is essential to make the trip an enjoyable success for everyone.

The final day sees you entering wider canyons and subsequent introduction to some of the more challenging rapids. You will, on that day, be well ready for the "big rapid". Spillages and sinkages aside (nearly everyone loves, and nobody forgets the last rapid. We were wet but the sun was shining. What more could you ask for?

Contribution from Red Pod Team Member #4 River Trip 2010.

Yakity Yak Club Today

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