

ST JAMES Cycle Trail



St James Cycle Trail, Canterbury
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MALING PASS CAR PARK to ST JAMES HOMESTEAD

1-2 days | 64km

Take in the best of the high country on this scenically stunning trail that explores the iconic St James Station, near the alpine spa village of Hanmer Springs.

This 64km trail is an enthralling and challenging journey covering a mix of riding grades through beautiful and diverse scenery, including soaring mountain peaks, crystal-clear

streams, high-country lakes, alpine meadows, sub-alpine beech forest and expansive grassy river flats. It's a true mountain-biking experience to be proud of, and one you will never forget.

In spring, the alpine meadows are in full bloom, while from summer through to mid-autumn riders can experience rich contrasting colours on long evenings, with the chance to see the famous St James wild horses.

Established in 1862, the St James Station was one of the largest cattle and sheep farms in New Zealand, before being purchased by the New Zealand Government in 2008 to form the St James Conservation Area. The St James Trail was the first of the Great Rides to open, and it now presents a unique way to explore this alpine area.

If you don't have time to ride the full trail, the Homestead Run is a 15km family-friendly loop ride that starts from the end of the St James Cycle Trail at St James Homestead.

look out for...

Thermal indulgence

Hanmer Springs is the country's very own alpine sanctuary, more Swiss Alps than Southern Alps, so it's no surprise that its leading attraction is the world-class Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa. Fit for unwinding and indulging, the pools

come in a range of temperatures and expressions: there are soaking pools, rock pools, mineral pools, sulphur pools, private pools, AquaTherapy pools and more – depending on your mood and need, you will be well catered for. For the kids, there's an AquaPlay area (for children under 10) and a SuperBowl waterslide.

Ride Hanmer Forest

For further biking action, the 25km purpose-built Hanmer Forest network is home to an extensive network of mountain biking and walking tracks suitable for the beginner through to the expert. The forest contains a mix of exotic tree species.

TRAIL INFO



TRAIL GRADES:

MALING PASS CAR PARK TO WAIAU 4WD ROAD END GRADE 3 (INTERMEDIATE)

WAIAU 4WD ROAD END TO SADDLE SPUR BRIDGE GRADE 3 (INTERMEDIATE)

SADDLE SPUR BRIDGE TO SCOTTIES HUT GRADE 4 (ADVANCED)

SCOTTIES HUT TO ST JAMES HOMESTEAD GRADE 2-3 (EASY TO INTERMEDIATE)

HOMESTEAD RUN GRADE 2 (EASY)

MOBILE PHONE COVERAGE: There is no mobile phone coverage beyond Jacks Pass.

DRINKING WATER: It's accessible at many points along the trail, but it's recommended that you boil, filter or treat your water. Avoid taking water from the lakes due to the waterfowl.



riding the trail



► MALING CAR PARK TO WAIAU 4WD ROAD END, 12KM

From the car park, the trail follows the 4WD track. Gently gaining altitude at first, the trail soon steadily climbs towards Maling Pass, the high point of the trail (1308m). From the pass, the trail descends steeply through alpine meadows and mountain beech forest into the Waiau Valley, crossing bubbling

streams along the way. Once on the valley floor, the trail levels out and follows the true-left side of the river to the road end. **Note:** The descent from Maling Pass is steep and the surface loose – control your speed and take special care when negotiating the numerous drainage ditches that cross the track.

► WAIAU 4WD ROAD END TO SADDLE SPUR BRIDGE, 15.5KM

The first third of this section is a purpose-built cycle track. From the road end, the trail traverses the hillside on the left of the Waiau River, before emerging onto the wide river terraces at the junction with the Lake Guyon track. The 10min detour to this picturesque lake is well worth the time and effort.

► HOMESTEAD RUN, 15KM

From the St James Homestead, ride up the beautiful Peters Valley to Peters Pass where a great picnic spot overlooks Waterfall Stream. Follow the trail until it intersects with the Edwards Valley 4WD track. Head east (right) down the 4WD track to connect with Tophouse Rd, then ride 3km down the valley to the homestead.

"This is a real tourism asset and I have no doubt it will draw thousands of cyclists a year. The landscape is stunning."

Former Minister of Conservation,
Kate Wilkinson

The trail then follows old stock and farm tracks that meander down the Waiau Valley over the grassy river flats, passing by Little Lake and Muddy Lakes before arriving at the spectacular Saddle Spur Bridge.

► SADDLE SPUR BRIDGE TO SCOTTIES HUT, 14.5KM

This is the most challenging section on the trail, with rocky and uneven parts and hard climbs, tricky descents and a giant matagouri forest to negotiate. Once over Saddle Spur Bridge, the trail climbs over the demanding Saddle Spur to reach Pool Hut. The trail then crosses the McArthur Bridge before climbing steeply to Charlie's Saddle. After a winding descent, the trail crosses the Edwards River Bridge to arrive at Scotties Hut.

Note: Sections of the trail after Saddle Spur and after McArthur Bridge are very narrow and pass steep drop-offs. We recommended you walk these sections.

► SCOTTIES HUT TO ST JAMES HOMESTEAD, 17KM

Follow the 4WD track up the Edwards Valley. The trail is mostly easy going, interrupted by short stretches of rocky riverbed and unbridged streams. The climb up to Peters Pass is the last big effort on the trail – here the trail leaves the 4WD track, taking an easy downhill run through the beautiful Peters Valley to the St James Homestead and the end of the trail. At the homestead there are numerous protected historic farm buildings dating back to the 1880s that give a glimpse into the past glories of this high-country station. The woolshed in particular deserves exploring.