

Alex Knob, Westland Tai Poutini National Park

The track to Alex Knob is 2km along the glacier access road, just south of the township, where its beginning is shared with the Lake Wombat Track. It's a well-maintained path lined with many exquisite ferns which leads hikers through the lush forest. After approximately 1km, a sign points to the beginning of the Alex Knob path on the left.

Immediately, it changes from a walking track to a tramping track. The gradient steepens, the track width becomes tighter and underfoot it becomes much rougher. For the next 90-minutes, the track charges upwards through and past native podocarps like rata and kamahi. At times, hikers may find they have to use a bit of upper body strength to pull themselves over fallen trees and large boulders. Exposed tree roots usually offer reliable hand and foot holds. This steep and challenging zigzagging section is the most demanding.

Eventually, a small clearing in the trees appears. Rata Lookout provides the first glimpse of Franz Josef Glacier and the valley below. Christmas Lookout is another hour's walk but at a slightly more gentle gradient. Like Rata Lookout, this spot provides some spectacular views of the glacier.

The final hour of the hike switches back and forth through the subalpine forest before reaching the bushline.

From here, the track heads up through tussock to the 1303m summit.

Return down the same track, it will be a bit quicker and easier but there will still be a few sections that require time and caution.

Wild file

Access The track begins 2km along the glacier access road

Grade Difficult

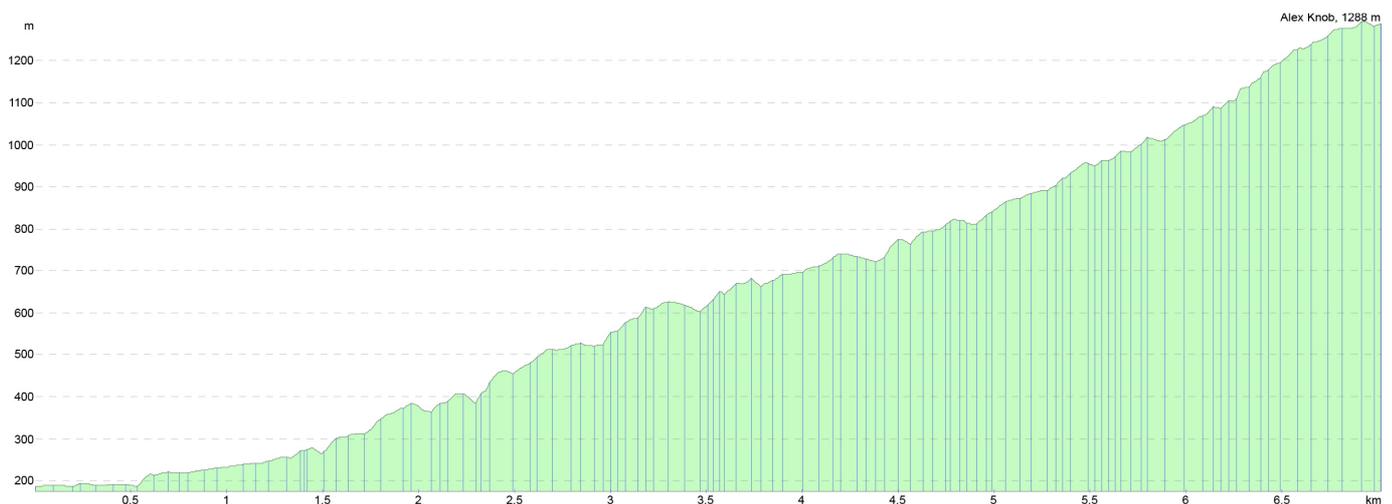
Time 4hr to the summit

Distance 7.1km to Alex Knob summit

Total ascent 1246m

Topo map BX15

Elevation Profile



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