



MEDIA RELEASE

Mt Ruapehu soars into summer – guests to enjoy Sky Waka gondola and dining experiences, from Friday 3 December.

Mt Ruapehu, 2 December 2022:

After a month-long hiatus, following the close of the winter season, the Mt Ruapehu team is excited to be reloading the Sky Waka gondola cabins and opening the Knoll Ridge Chalet doors to summer 2021 / 2022, this Friday, 3 December.

The Mt Ruapehu summer offering, which is open from tomorrow through to 1 May 2022, includes the Sky Waka gondola sightseeing experience and dining experiences at the award-winning Knoll Ridge Chalet. Short walks, varying from just 15 minutes to up to four hours, from both the base of the Sky Waka gondola and from the Knoll Ridge Chalet, also give guests the opportunity to explore the unique volcanic terrain, on foot.

The Sky Waka gondola, New Zealand's premier gondola experience, transports guests 1.8km up and through the North Island's most rugged and spectacular landscape, to an altitude of 2020m above sea level. Floor to ceiling views on the return Sky Waka gondola journey, capture the unique, volcanic terrain, and panoramas out to neighbouring mountains, Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe.

At 2020m, guests are welcomed to the architecturally awarded, Knoll Ridge Chalet. Dining experiences include an extensive buffet lunch at the Knoll Ridge Chalet's Pinnacles restaurant, and a café style offering. The buffet lunch comprises a variety of dishes, locally sourced where possible, from antipasti to main-style, slow roasted and poached, meat and seafood, to a dessert station, and decadent cheese board.

In the month of December, the buffet lunch will take on a Christmas theme, fit with turkey, glazed ham, pavlova, and Christmas pudding. The Christmas buffet will be available everyday through December, excluding Christmas Day itself, between 11am – 2pm. Booking is recommended, and operations are weather dependent (in terms of Sky Waka operation to ascent to the Knoll Ridge Chalet).

After a tricky winter season and some uncertainty around Covid-19 and dates, the team is really pleased to be looking forward to Summer 2021 / 2022. Steve Manunui, Whakapapa Ski Area Manager, says the team are ready and excited. "As kiwis begin to plan ahead for summer, we know they will be looking for memorable moments that make the most of the sun and the unique natural experiences that our country has to offer. We look forward to welcoming guests back to the maunga, where just a few hours from home, they can access remote mountain adventures and our awesome dining experiences."

Vaccine certificates will be required to access all facilities, in line with the government's move to the Covid-19 Protection Framework, and the introduction of the My Vaccine Pass.

Just three hours from Hamilton, four from Wellington and five hours from Auckland, getting far away, exploring unique volcanic terrain, and dining at New Zealand's highest restaurant, is closer than you think.



About the Sky Waka gondola

Situated within the UNESCO dual world heritage Tongariro National Park, the Sky Waka travels 1.8kms through one of the North Island's most rugged and spectacular landscapes on Whakapapa, Mt Ruapehu.

The Sky Waka is one of New Zealand's most unique gondola experiences. On a return trip (one ride up, one ride down), journey through the clouds, over waterfalls, and ancient lava flows, up to 2020m above sea level. The Mt Ruapehu scenery is majestic, with views to neighbouring volcanoes, Mt Ngauruhoe and Mt Tongariro.

The Knoll Ridge Chalet, the highest dining experience in New Zealand, is an architecturally awarded, two-story eatery, which in summer caters both an extensive buffet dining experience, and a café style offering. The large, laminated pine structure, perched on the edge of the mountain, sits amongst a breath-taking setting, with views out to the Pinnacles, Ngā Tohu, range.

Mt Ruapehu Summer Pricing and Hours

The summer season at Mt Ruapehu will operate from 3 December 2021 – 1 May 2022.

The Sky Waka gondola will run daily, 10am – 4pm. Adults can travel on a return trip on the Sky Waka gondola for \$39, and youth (aged 5 – 17 years) for \$19. Seniors (over 65 years) and students are discounted at \$25 for the return trip.

The Pinnacles restaurant and buffet lunch will operate daily, 11am – 2pm. Adults can dine at the buffet for \$25, and youth (aged 5-17 years) for \$19. Bookings are recommended.

A coffee corner will be open from 10am – 3pm each day, and an expanded café experience over peak periods from 10am – 3:30pm.

Note: both the Sky Waka gondola and therefore Knoll Ridge Chalet dining experiences will open weather dependent. It is recommended that guests check the Mt Ruapehu / Whakapapa report page to check whether both experiences are running.

<https://www.mtruapehu.com/whakapapa/report>

Covid-19 Vaccine Certificate Requirement

RAL will introduce vaccine requirements at all its facilities, both on and off mountain, from 3 December 2021, for the duration of its summer period through to 1 May 2022. This decision aligns with the government's move to the Covid-19 protection framework, and the introduction of the My Vaccine Pass. All guests of Mt Ruapehu, aged 12 years and over, will be required to use the My Vaccine Pass to enter our hospitality and retail offerings on mountain, and including our Taupō retail store, and to access the Sky Waka gondola. This decision has been made to help minimise the risk of Covid-19 spreading in our community, and to keep everyone, including our staff, safe. Putting this requirement in place also means that we can maintain our levels of service to the best of our ability, at any traffic light level. An announcement regarding our winter offering will be made in due course.



Check www.mtruapehu.com for further information and latest updates

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