

Top Christchurch Walk: Bowenvale Valley

Starting on the city's edge, this valley gives easy access to tracks leading through bush and tussock lands on to the hilltops and Victoria Park.

From the car park at the end of Bowenvale Avenue, off Centaurus Road, walk up the four-wheel-drive track that gently climbs along the Bowenvale Stream. This section of track is multi-purpose and used by mountainbikers, so be prepared to share the track.

Just over 1km up the track, a walking trail climbs off to the west, up through pine and native vegetation to Victoria Park, where there is a playground, picnic areas, shelters, toilets and awesome views. There is also a dog park at Victoria Park, which is a popular spot to let the dog off the lead while enjoying the sweeping views over the city to the alps and coastline.

Alternatively, you can carry on up Bowenvale Valley, past the mountainbike tracks, and either walk through the secluded head of the valley and up on to Summit Road, or head east off the main track to climb up on the Summit Road near Scott Reserve.

If you enjoy walking the hills, there are several voluntary projects to help maintain the tracks. Restoration plantings in the streams and some of the gullies are re-establishing native vegetation and bringing wildlife back to the hills. Go to the council's website, ccc.govt.nz and search for volunteer events. The Summit Road Society provides contacts for local track work.

Time: 1-2 hours

Distance: 3km

Starting Point: End of Bowenvale Avenue.

Difficulty: Medium

Highlights: Close to City tussock grasslands, access to Victoria Park.



City views from the Bowenvale Valley.
Photo: Rebecca Bijl