



LOWER MARGARET BURN

Canyon

V5a5III ★★ ★

Location	Dart Valley, Otago
Character	Spectacular, Super deep, glacial fed, more of a cave than a canyon.
Time	Time to Daleys Flat hut: 4.5-6 hrs Canyon Approach from Hut: 30-40 min Canyon descent: 1.5-2 hrs Return to Hut: 15-30 min Total from Hut: 2.5-3.5 hrs
Map & Coordinates	Topo map: Lake Williamson Car park: https://maps.app.goo.gl/wcG3rJVc1UicRrEb9 Canyon start: -44.537541, 168.37801 https://www.topomap.co.nz/NZTopoMap?v=2&ll=-44.537541,168.377924&z=15&pin=1
Highest Waterfall	20m
Suggested Gear	1 x 65m rope, 1x 65m Pull Cord, Floating bag, head torches, Anchor materials.
Canyon Distance	200m horizontal, 40m vertical
Rock	Schist
Flow	High volume. 10.4km ² glacial fed catchment.
Anchors	Natural anchors & single bolt
Flood & Escapes	High flood risk. Water increases during the day due to glacial melting. No escapes.
Approach by Car	Drive out to the end of Glenorchy-Paradise Road. Here there is a DOC car park with toilets. From Paradise onwards the road is gravel and you must cross several fords. The road and fords are suitable for a 2WD car in good weather conditions.
Approach on Foot	From the carpark, walk the Dart valley track to Daleys Flat Hut. This is around 16 km and takes around 4.5 - 6 hrs. Daleys Flat Hut makes for a great base to complete MB (Margaret Burn) and its smaller neighbour Abruzzi.



After dropping overnight gear at the hut head upstream along the track until reaching the MB swing bridge. Cross the bridge and follow the Dart River upstream to its junction with MB. Here you can check the water levels. In the afternoon the water level is most likely going to be too high and you may need to wait until the morning (reference photos below for water levels). From the bottom of MB follow the spur next to the canyon on the RL. You will reach a tributary that you will need to cross about 50m upstream of its junction with MB. It's very easy to walk over the top of MB without realising, be careful of multiple deep holes in the forest floor leading down to the bottom of the canyon. Where the canyon opens up and the creek is again visible, you will find a tree RL with a sling to abseil down. (65m) Alternatively you could cross MB to RR and potentially enter the creek

scrambling/abseiling down the boulder field before the canyon, saving the need to take long ropes.

Canyon Route Description

It is recommended to do this canyon first thing in the morning or during a dry and cold period. We began the canyon at first light while the water levels were at their lowest. We spent 4 days based at Daleys Flat and by 1pm every day the canyon was flooding due to the melting of the glacier upstream.

Start by abseiling 65m down from a tree to the start of the canyon.

The second abseil is from a single bolt anchor in the centre of the canyon down near the waterfall. The flow is extremely high, It is recommended to use a floating anchor guided rappel to overcome the first drop. Once the first person is down, on the RL there are 2x 8mm holes to place 2x Petzl Pulse removable anchors which can be used to then set a guided rappel for the rest of the party.

From here you enter the darkness of MB. Head torches required. The rest of the canyon is horizontal walking, swimming, floating down to where it emerges out into the light. It can be difficult to walk down the creek in places due to the high flow knocking you over. At the end of the canyon where it opens up, you need to exit the pool RR before a narrow log sieve.

First Descent Leo Tregret, Leo Garnache, Maddy Garnache, Reto Bubendorf, 1/3/2024

Topo Author Leo Tregret, 10/10/2024

6:30am Passable Water level.



1pm same day, deadly.



