

Walking and hiking in Rotorua

Bay of Plenty

RotoruaNZ.com



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

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Cover photo: Walkers enjoying Redwoods walk. *Photo: Adrian Hodge*

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*Nau mai, haere
mai ki te rohe o
Te Waiāriki*

*Welcome to the
Rotorua Lakes
area.*



Introduction

Rotorua is a paradise for walkers and hikers. With some of the world's most spectacular scenery, you are sure to find the track, trail or walkway that's right for you.

Rotorua is also a great place for a getaway. Stay a while to enjoy the raft of attractions and experiences on offer for everyone from adventure-seekers to those just looking to chill out. Make sure you check out our world-class mountain bike trails, 18 lakes, geothermal hot spots, and experience Māori culture.

Rotorua is one of New Zealand's most diverse, exciting and accessible holiday destinations, just a 2 hour 30 minute drive from Auckland. For more information on New Zealand's coolest hot spot visit RotoruaNZ.com.



Visitor information

Rotorua's main i-SITE is the place to go for information on attractions, accommodation, rental cars, buses, events and much more. The team is ready to help with information and bookings. Best of all, there are no service fees.

A specialised Department of Conservation (DOC) counter provides visitor information on Great Walks, local walks and hikes, campsites and other attractions managed by DOC. Hut passes and topographic maps are available for sale. A DOC staff member assists with enquiries on a part-time basis.

Open every day except Christmas Day from 8.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Rotorua Visitor Centre & i-SITE

1167 Fenton Street, Rotorua

www.rotorua.co.nz

Phone: +64 7 348 5179 Email: info@rotoruaNZ.com



Alternatively, visitor information is available from the Redwoods I-Site & Visitor Information Centre, Long Mile Road, Rotorua.

Phone: +64 7 350 0110

Email: redwoodsvisitorcentre@rotorualc.nz

For further information on DOC and more information on the region, see the DOC website: www.doc.govt.nz/rotorua or email rotorua@doc.govt.nz.

Keeping you and the environment safe

If you think there is a hazard in a conservation area, call the nearest DOC office or phone the DOC HOTline.



Fire and other emergencies

If you see a fire dial 111.

Rotorua Lakes Harbour Master: +64 7 921 3375

Rotorua Coastguard: +64 7 348 9022

Geothermal hazards

The geothermal landscape is extremely fragile and potentially dangerous. Hazards include thin-crust surfaces, hot geothermal gases and fluids, and high concentrations of carbon dioxide and sulphur gases. Clouds of steam can cause temporary loss of visibility.

For your own safety:

- Only visit managed sites that have formed access/tracks.
- Stay on formed tracks.
- Keep children under close supervision at all times.

In the interests of the environment:

- Do not pick plants.
- Do not throw anything onto geothermal features.

Stay safe in the water

When bathing in geothermal water, check the temperature before entering and keep your head above the water at all times because of the risk of contracting the fatal disease amoebic meningitis, which is caused by a microbe that lives in hot pools. Amoebic meningitis can be picked up through the nose if a person puts their head under water in a geothermal pool.

Do not put your head under the water for any reason. Never jump, dive, splash or duck in the pool as this forces water up the nose.

Aquatic pests

The Rotorua Lakes are currently free of most pest fish (koi carp, catfish, rudd and tench) and didymo.

Aquatic pests are a threat to the natural and recreational values of our waterways. They can spread when small weed fragments or fish eggs attach to equipment or footwear. See the inside back cover for more information.



- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimise the effects of fire
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others



Information for walkers and hikers

The Rotorua Lakes area is a recreation hub with plenty to see and do. The closeness of the local forests, lakes and rivers to the city provide numerous recreational opportunities right on your doorstep. Whether it be walking, mountain biking, water sports, adventure activities, sightseeing, fishing, hunting or camping – the Rotorua Lakes area has it all.

Track classifications



Short walk

Well formed tracks that take up to an hour (return) of easy walking. Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Some may cater for people with mobility difficulties. All watercourses are bridged.



Walking track

An extended walk that takes from a few minutes to a full day return. Suitable for relatively inexperienced people with a low level of backcountry skill. All watercourses are bridged.



Tramping track

Marked tramping track that generally follows the lie of the land and is commonly not formed. May be a multi-day or backcountry track taking less than a day. Suitable for fit, experienced and adequately equipped people. Key river crossings are bridged.



Route

Generally unformed, lightly cut route catering for the most experienced of backcountry visitors. Suitable for fit, experienced and adequately equipped people with good backcountry navigation skills.



Mountain bike track

These vary from easy family rides to adrenalin-pumping technical tracks. Details on mountain bike trails around Rotorua can be found in *10 great Rotorua rides*, available online at www.doc.govt.nz/bop-brochures.



Dual-use track

Walking and mountain biking are both available on dual-use tracks. Bikers please stay in control of your bikes at all times and give way to walkers.

Please note: Only follow orange triangle track markers; other colours (e.g. pink or purple) are for land management purposes. Please keep off all these tracks and do not interfere with the markers.

Essential gear

You need to be well prepared, especially on longer day trips. Ensure you have sturdy, comfortable boots, warm clothing (e.g. polypropylene), a good raincoat, first-aid kit, food and drink, a hat and sunscreen.

Plan and prepare

Your safety is your responsibility. Before you go, know the **Outdoor Safety Code** – 5 simple rules to help you stay safe:

1. Plan your trip
2. Tell someone
3. Be aware of the weather
4. Know your limits
5. Take sufficient supplies

Leave your trip details with a trusted contact. For more information see www.adventuresmart.org.nz.



Stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests.

To prevent the spread of freshwater pests such as didymo, lake weeds and pest fish, always Check, Clean, Dry all footwear, vehicles, boats, fishing equipment and other items before entering, and when moving between, lakes, rivers and streams.

For more information and cleaning guidelines go to www.biosecurity.govt.nz/didymo or www.doc.govt.nz/stophespread



BETWEEN WATERWAYS

Camping

There are a number of camping areas in Rotorua including fantastic lakeside campsites.

Motorhomes and campervans are permitted at certain campsites and 24-hour wastewater dumping facilities are located at the Rotorua Wastewater Treatment Plant.

For full information visit the Rotorua i-SITE or pick up a copy of *10 great Rotorua campsites*, also available at www.doc.govt.nz/bop-brochures

Hunting

Hunting is allowed on DOC-managed land by permit only. Permits and basic maps are available online: www.doc.govt.nz/hunting.

A maximum of two dogs per hunter is permitted in those reserves covered by the open hunting permit. Dogs must be kept under control and their handler must have a valid hunting permit for that area. Where dogs are used solely for deer or pig hunting, it is recommended they are trained to avoid native birds and have a current kiwi/bird aversion certificate.

Hunting is not permitted within 100 metres of any Rotorua DOC campsites or any DOC-maintained tracks.

Kiwi aversion training is strongly recommended for all hunting dogs.

The Rotorua Lakes area covers approximately 35,000 ha of public land made up of relatively small reserves bordered mostly by farmland, pine forest or lakes. The land has largely been formed through geothermal activity and this is still very apparent and active in several reserves.

Fishing

With an extensive track network and lakeside campsites, there is easy access to numerous trout fishing locations. Fishing licences and information are available from most fishing shops and other locations in the area.

Further information is available at www.fishandgame.org.nz

Restrictions

A number of activities are restricted in scenic reserves and most other conservation areas. Unless otherwise stated, the following are not permitted at all sites listed in this booklet:

- Domestic animals (including horses)
- Driving off-road (4WDs, quads or motorbikes)
- Fires
- Removal of plants and animals
- Hunting without a permit
- Camping outside of designated campsites.

Dog exercise areas

Dogs are not permitted in any reserve unless it has been set aside for dog exercise purposes. For more information, contact Rotorua Lakes Council: phone +64 7 348 4199 or visit their website www.rdc.govt.nz.

Maps

The maps in this booklet are suitable for planning purposes and navigating short walks only. For more detail see the NZ Topo50 series maps (BE36, BE37, BE38, BF37, and BF38). These maps are stocked by outdoors stores and bookshops and at the DOC counter at the i-SITE.

 Parking	 Geothermal feature
 Boat ramp	 Fishing
 Campsite	 Hunting
 Toilets	 Mountain biking
 BBQ and picnic facilities	 Dogs permitted
 Cooking shelter	 Dogs on leash
 Information	 Horse riding
 Lookout	 Jetty
 Historic site	 Rafting/kayaking

For the whole family ...

Key for maps in this booklet

Close to the city

- Suitable for all ages and fitness levels, enjoy an easy walk to the source of Hamurana Springs through magnificent redwood trees with interpretation panels along the way – **page 16**
- Combine a play in the park and a paddle with BBQ lunch at Hamurana lakefront. BBQs maintained by Rotorua District Council and free to use – **map on page 17**

New Zealand birds a plenty

- Make an early start to hear the dawn chorus of kōkako at the Kaharoa Conservation Area – **page 39**

Extend your day ...

Marvel at the exotic redwood trees in Whakarewarewa Forest – **page 13**

Magnificent water

- Take in the spectacular Okere and Tutea Falls as you walk the Okere Falls Track – **page 17**



Waiotapu. Photo:
Pete Corson.

- Marvel at the force of the mighty Kaituna River and catch a glimpse of recreational kayakers at the site of one of the first hydroelectric power stations built in New Zealand – **page 18**
- Stop at Otauirā wetland, in Waikawau/Hannahs Bay on Lake Rotorua, for an insight into the important function of wetlands. Enjoy a playground adventure for children, swim in the lake and a picnic lunch

Geothermal action

Catch a water taxi over to Hot Water Beach and enjoy a swim in natural thermal pools – **page 35**

Be mesmerised by New Zealand's largest mud pool at Waiotapu (20 minutes drive from Rotorua) – **page 22**

Extend your day ...

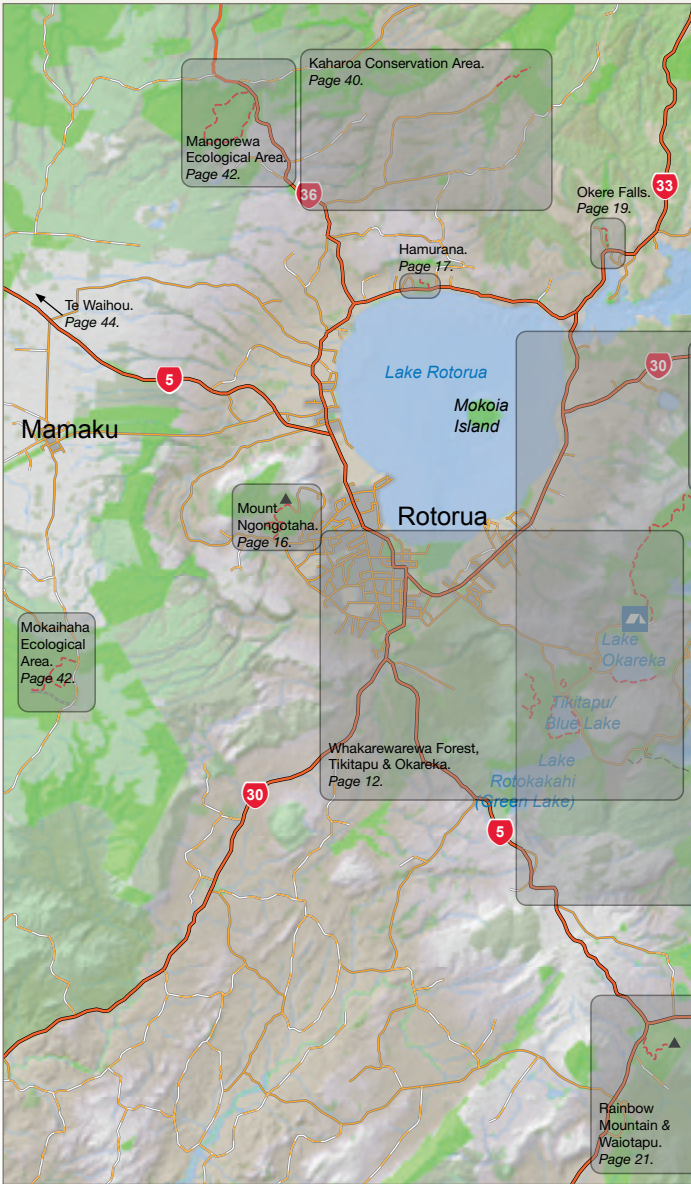
Enjoy a swim at Te Ranga (Kerosene Creek). Turn left into Old Waiotapu Road from SH5.

Native Ōkātina

- Take your pick from a number of short walks passing crater lakes, waterfalls and information on native plants life in the area – **page 26**
- Lunch on the shores of beautiful Lake Ōkātina – **page 26**

Extend your day ...

Take in the Eastern Ōkātina Walkway to Kaiwaka Bay for a swim and sunbathe – **page 30**



Legend

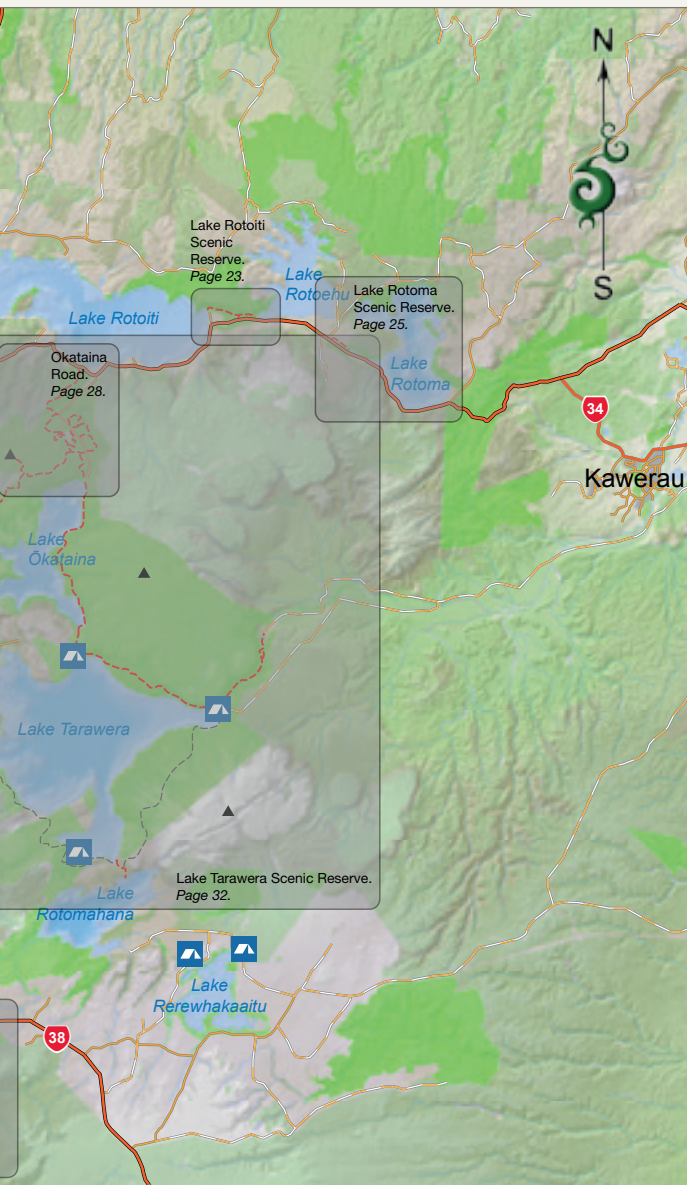
 Campsite

 Track

 Highway

 Sealed road

 Metalled road



Tracks and reserves

Lake Tikitapu Scenic Reserve

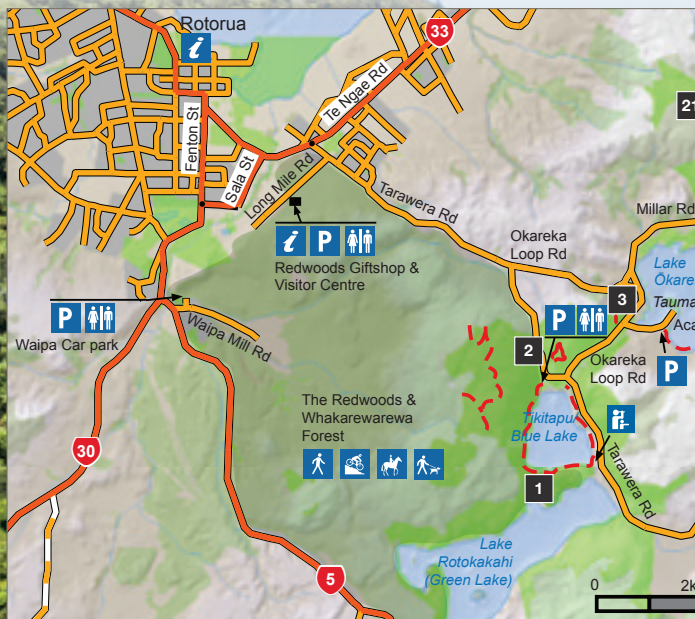
Tikitapu/Blue Lake is very popular with water skiers, swimmers and boaties. An easy walking track circles the lake and features beautiful beaches, native bush and the exotic conifers of Whakarewarewa Forest.

Native mistletoe is present in the reserve. Mistletoe is a semi-parasitic plant that grows on certain host trees and shrubs, drawing nutrients and water from its host. Of the nine different species in New Zealand, two are found in this reserve: *Tupeia antarctica* and *Ileostylus micranthus*, both green misletoes.

Getting there

Tikitapu/Blue Lake is 9 km south-east of Rotorua, via Te Ngae Road then a right turn at the roundabout into Tarawera Road.

Whakarewarewa Forest, Tikitapu Scenic Reserve and Lake Ōkareka



1 Blue Lake Track



1 hour 30 minutes for the circuit, 5.5 km

Going in a clockwise direction, the track begins at the north-east end of the lake. Head along the shore and follow the roadside section south, watching for oncoming traffic. About a third of the way along, the track enters the bush, following the lake until coming to a secluded beach at the southern end. Head up the stairs to the car park and take a right to continue around the lake. The track continues at this elevation heading north through Whakarewarewa Forest. The track slowly descends through native bush to the lake level and exits at the north-eastern side of the beach.

For longer excursions into the Redwoods and Whakarewarewa Forest, contact the Redwoods I-Site & Visitor Information Centre on Long Mile Road, off Tarawera Road, phone +64 7 350 0110 or see www.redwoods.co.nz.



Tikitapu/Blue Lake. Photo: Mark Smith

2 Tikitapu Nature Walk



30 minutes for the circuit

An easy, well-formed track through beautiful native bush. Plant identification labels and story panels give detailed information about the reserve. The walk starts from a grassed area on the left (eastern side) of Tarawera Road, just before Tikitapu/Blue Lake.

Lake Ōkareka

Like Tikitapu/Blue Lake, Lake Ōkareka is also popular with water skiers, swimmers and boaties and has the added feature of two campsites.

Getting there

Lake Ōkareka is 9 km south-east of Rotorua. From Te Ngae Road, turn right at the roundabout into Tarawera Road. Once at Tikitapu/Blue Lake, take a left into Okareka Loop Rd until you reach the lake. Then turn right into Acacia road, 500 m to the start of the Lake Okareka Walkway. At the end of Acacia Road is Taumaihi Point. There is a small 100 m walk leading to a secluded reserve that is perfect for a picnic on a sunny day.

3 Okareka Mistletoe Walk



10 minutes return

A well-formed track with information panels on the native mistletoe and the restoration project undertaken by the local community. Track starts on Okareka Loop Rd, opposite the fire station at Lake Okareka township.

4 Lake Okareka Walkway



1 hour 30 minutes one way, 2.5 km

The walkway starts from a lakeside reserve on Acacia Road, where a parking area is provided. Managed by the local community and Rotorua District Council, this track is a fantastic



Lake Okareka Walkway.
Photo: Mark Smith

complement to a number of other short walks in the area. The wetlands near the beginning of the walkway are home to a wide range of aquatic birds. A 'hide' has been constructed to take advantage of the outstanding birdwatching opportunities. The walkway and composting toilets are pushchair- and wheelchair-accessible as far as Silver Beach, a distance of about 2 km return. The track ends at the outlet which flows to Lake Tarawera. Return the same way you came.

Mount Ngongotaha Scenic Reserve

Mount Ngongotaha is a volcanic dome 757 m above sea level that overlooks the city of Rotorua. Mount Ngongotaha is an iconic peak for Ngāti Whakaeu, who believe it was once home to patupaiarehe (fairies). Māori legend recalls how the patupaiarehe provided Ihenga (grandson of the great Pacific explorer Tamatekapu) with a calabash of water to quench his thirst. Ihenga afterwards combined the words ngongo (to drink) and taha (a calabash) to give rise to the name Ngongotaha.

Getting there

The track to the summit of Ngongotaha starts from Violet Bonnington Reserve, located at the Rotorua end of Paradise Valley Road. Rotorua City Ride Eke-Taone bus route 7 (Mitchell Downs via Clayton Road) provides transport to and from Pukuatua Street in Rotorua to the corner of Clayton and Pukehangi Roads. The track entrance is about 10 minutes walk up Paradise Valley Road.

5 Jubilee Track



1 hour one way, 2.4 km

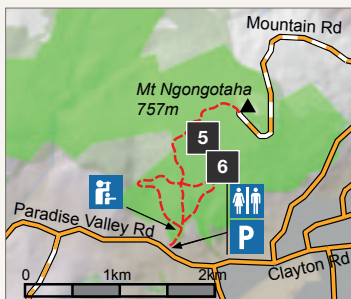
This track was cut on Jubilee Day, January 29 1890, marking 50 years since Captain Hobson arrived at Waitangi. The first part of the walk follows an easy grade through unlogged native bush and features a large rātā tree next to a viewing platform. Once you reach the original Jubilee Track, the going gets moderately steep until near the summit. From Mountain Road, it is a short walk to the summit. **Note:** There is no view from the summit due to tall vegetation.

6 Ngongotaha Nature Loop



1 hour loop, 2.5 km

The first part of the walk follows an easy grade through unlogged native bush. It also features a large rātā tree with a viewing platform. Past this is a signposted intersection where the Nature Loop Track begins. The walk is a circular loop with gentle grades and even surfaces. After 1.3 km the Nature Loop crosses the Jubilee Track. It continues on, looping back onto the Jubilee Track after a further 1.2 km.



Mount Ngongotaha

Hamurana Springs Recreation Reserve

Hamurana is famous for its beautiful, crystal-clear, freshwater springs. The water, once above ground, flows into Lake Rotorua. Part of the Hamurana Springs Recreation Reserve was once a pā site to Ngāti Rangiwewehi, who are managers of the reserve and know the area as Kaikatahuna. The waters of the springs are a wildlife sanctuary and play host to many bird species, including pāpango/scaup and the endangered weweia/dabchick. The springs are a major source of the water supply for the Hamurana and Ngongotaha areas.

Getting there

Hamurana is 15-20 minutes drive north-east of Rotorua and 7 km past Ngongotaha. The entrance to the walking track is on the left, just past the golf course.

7 Hamurana Springs Track



15 minutes to the springs one way, 800 m

This track is suitable for all ages and fitness levels. It's an easy, streamside walk through a redwood grove with beautiful views throughout and extensive interpretation along the way. The Ynys Fraser Walkway provides an alternate route to the head of the springs. You can see the source of the crystal-clear water from a viewing platform just before you make a choice

to either return on the same track or cross the footbridges, walking along the gravel track to the car park to make a circuit. Dogs must be kept on a lead.



Hamurana Springs Track

Okere Falls Scenic Reserve

In Okere Falls Scenic Reserve, the Kaituna River cascades between narrow, steep ravines before it enters the tranquil waters of the Trout Pool and then continues its journey to the coast at Maketu.

Okere River, an 11 km section of the Kaituna River, has significant cultural and spiritual value for Māori. Ngāti Pikiao are the traditional guardians of the river, though for centuries battles were fought to gain access to the river's rich resources. Today, Ngāti Pikiao continue their kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of the river through the Lake Rotoiti Scenic Reserve Board, and manage Okere Falls Scenic Reserve with DOC.

While the Okere River has been highly valued by the people of the area for centuries, more recently it has gained in popularity for its recreation and adventure tourism opportunities. With world-class white water in an amazing native bush-clad gorge, it has now become a Mecca for white water rafting, kayaking and river sledging. With stunning scenery and thrilling rapids, including a 7 m waterfall, the Kaituna River is a local gem.

Getting there

Okere Falls Scenic Reserve is 21 km north of Rotorua, on SH33 (towards Tauranga). Turn left into Trout Pool Road and continue for about 250 m.



30 minutes one way, 1.2 km

This is a well-formed bush walk with scenic lookouts over the Kaituna River and its spectacular waterfalls. There are numerous information panels along the track interpreting both the human and the natural landscape. The spectacular force of the Kaituna River can be viewed via a flight of steps beside the main car park. The 20 m of track from the car park to the hydroelectric power station viewpoint is wheelchair accessible.

Caution

- Do not swim in the river as it has dangerously strong currents and waterfalls.
- The steps to the power station are very steep and can be slippery. Supervise children as the steps descend to a barrier overlooking the fast-flowing river.

Points of interest

The hydroelectric power station at Okere Falls, the fourth in New Zealand, was built in 1899 and began operating in May 1901. Demand for electricity soon exceeded supply so, in 1907–08, an additional dam was built to feed another 100 kW turbine. The power station became obsolete in the 1930s and, as part of the conservation management of this historic site, one of the turbines was hauled up the riverbank in 1995 and given preservation treatment. This turbine is on view beside the track.

Hinemoa's Steps (named after a well-known local Māori woman) were cut out of the rock face beside the waterfall in 1907. They lead to Tutea Caves and the thundering falls. Some sources suggest that women and children may have hidden in the caves in times of war, making the treacherous descent by rope. Today, the only occupants are cave wētā.



Okere Falls Track



Left image: With stunning scenery and thrilling rapids, including a 7 m waterfall, the Kaituna is an amazing local gem.
Photo: River Rats Raft & Kayak

Rainbow Mountain Scenic Reserve

Rainbow Mountain's Māori name is Maungakakamea (mountain of coloured earth). It is easily recognised by its coloured slopes and its unusual rounded knob on the top, known as Tihi-o-Rua (the owl's perch).

While the mountain has volcanic origins and in places is still visibly smouldering, it has cooled in recent years. Consequently the native plants are slowly regenerating.

Rainbow Mountain has significant botanical and scientific importance because of its complex plant associations, some rare and unique to geothermal areas. On the other side of the highway, a variety of waterfowl are found on Lake Ngahewa and Ngaweha Wetland. Birds such as tūī, korimako/bellbird, tauhou/waxeye and kōtare/kingfisher abound in the surrounding bush.

Maungakakamea and the Waiotapu areas are both significant to the local iwi Ngāti Tuhourangi and Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa.

Rainbow Mountain has become more accessible since the opening of Te Ara Ahi – Thermal by Bike which forms part of New Zealand's national cycle trail.

Caution



This is an active geothermal area. See page 2 for more information on geothermal hazards.

Adjacent to Rainbow Mountain Scenic Reserve sits Te Ranga (Kerosene Creek), a natural geothermal creek popular with locals for bathing. Don't leave valuables in your vehicle.

Getting there

Rainbow Mountain lies 26 km south-east of Rotorua, beside SH5 (Rotorua-Taupo highway). Approaching from Rotorua, the car park for the walking tracks is situated just past the turnoff for SH38, on the left side of the road.

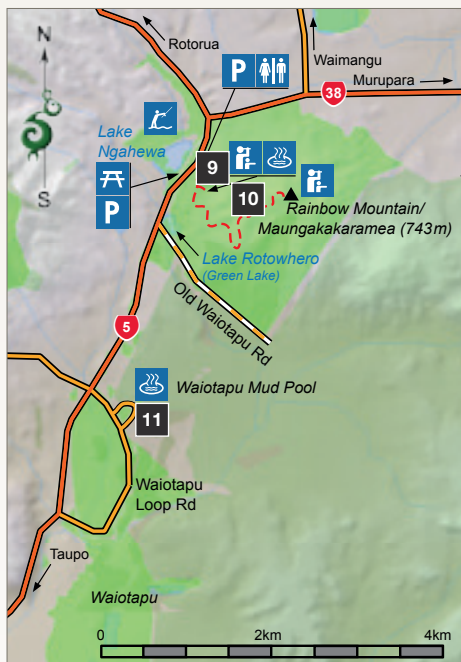
For Te Ranga (Kerosene Creek), turn into Old Waiotapu Road from SH5.

To access Rainbow Mountain by bike, join the Te Ara Ahi – Thermal by Bike cycle trail from Princes Gate Hotel, Rotorua City. See the map on page 21.



Rainbow Mountain view.
Photo: Mark Smith

Rainbow Mountain



9 Crater Lakes Walk



15 minutes one way, 1 km

Great views over two crater lakes that are set against a backdrop of bare brown, orange and red steaming cliffs, and an array of geothermal vegetation. Access is from the car park.

10 Summit Track



1 hour 30 minutes to the summit one way, 2.5 km

After taking in the sights of the two crater lakes, continue north and uphill through regenerating native bush and past the bare, steaming ridges. There are regular opportunities to view the surrounding countryside, but to get the complete 360-degree panorama, you need to continue up to the summit for one of the best views in the area.

The summit is about 1 hour 30 minutes from the crater lakes. There is a forest fire lookout tower at the top, so watch out for vehicles in the last 10 minutes to the top. From the summit you can see Mt Tarawera; lakes Tarawera, Rotomahana and Rerewhakaaitu to the north; Paeroa Range to the west; Te Urewera Ranges and Kaimanawa Forest to the east; and Mt Tauhara, Lake Taupo (Taupomoana) and the volcanic peaks of Tongariro National Park to the south.



Getting there

Waiotapu Mud Pool is located 27 km south of Rotorua (20 minutes drive) off SH5. Turn left into Waiotapu Loop Road, opposite Waikite Road, and drive for 2 km until you reach Waiotapu mud pool.

The Waiotapu geothermal field covers about 18 km² that borders the Rotorua-Taupo main highway 27 km south of Rotorua. Steam and gases rising through the pool create bursting bubbles of mud. Waiotapu occupies the site of what was formerly the largest mud volcano in New Zealand. The original cone, present until 1925, is now eroded and vigorously active water and mud fill the pool.

The 100 m track from the car park to the pool is made up of boardwalks and an elevated viewing platform. It is suitable for all fitness levels and is wheelchair accessible.

Caution



The geothermal landscape is extremely fragile, and is also a potentially dangerous environment. Visitors must keep to the tracks and stay behind barriers.

Mountain Bike
ROTORUA

**BIKE HIRE
& TOURS**

0800 MTB ROTORUA



mtbrotorua.co nz

Lake Rotoiti Scenic Reserve

Lake Rotoiti/Te Roto kite ā Ihenga i ariki ai Kahu is connected to Lake Rotorua through the Ohau Channel and drains into the Kaituna River. Lake Rotoehu to the east is a secluded lake with limited vehicle access.

12 Hinehopu/Hongi's Track



1 hour 30 minutes one way, 2.2 km

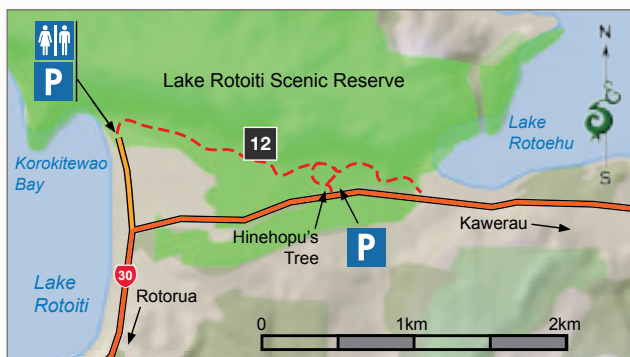
The track that runs through the area has two namesakes: Hinehopu and Hongi. Hinehopu was the name of the Māori chieftainess who lived in the area around 1620.

The name Hongi refers to the famous Ngāpuhi warrior who hauled his canoes from Lake Rotoehu to Lake Rotoiti in 1823 in order to perform a surprise raid on the Arawa people on Mokoia Island, Lake Rotorua. This area is under the administration of the Rotoiti Scenic Reserve Board and is managed with DOC.

The track is a pleasant walk through native forest with important historic and cultural value. There is a beautiful beach at Korokitewao Bay (Lake Rotoiti) for swimming and picnicking.

The track runs from Korokitewao Bay (Lake Rotoiti) to Te Pōhue Bay (Lake Rotoehu), through a forest of rimu, tawa, pukatea and rewarewa. Along the way you can take a short loop walk to the sacred matai on SH30, or carry on to Lake Rotoehu (a further 15 minutes).

Hinehopu/Hongi's Track





HOT TIP

Rotorua is one of New Zealand's homes for action and adventure. Whether it's learning to fly, bungee or jet boat, facing your fears on the white water, rolling down a hill in a giant sphere, lugging down a mountain or playing in the mud in an off-roader; Rotorua is sure to get your heart racing.

Getting there

Hinehopu/Hongi's Track is 20 km north-east of Rotorua off SH30. The track journeys through the Lake Rotoiti and Hinehopu Scenic Reserves. It can be accessed from either Lake Rotoiti or Lake Rotoehu (see map).

Points of interest

Hinehopu's Tree (the sacred mataī or 'wishing tree') is passed along this track and is also accessible from SH30. It is said that as a child, Hinehopu was hidden under the mataī by her mother to protect her from possible enemies. Later she met her husband Pikiao II under the tree and it became sacred to their union.



Lake Rotoma Scenic Reserve

The crystal-clear waters of Lake Rotomā provide good recreation opportunities, including fishing and boating. The adjacent Whakarewa and Te Onewhero Lagoons (north-east end of the lake) are home to a wide variety of birds, including dabchick, spotless crane and scaup.

Getting there

The main access is off SH30, beside Te Matahī Lagoon area.

13 Rotoma Bridle Track



20 minutes one way, 1 km

The track is situated about 40 km north-east of Rotorua beside SH30. The most suitable parking is on Manawahe Road near the junction with SH30.

This old bridle track passes through a magnificent stand of native bush, with towering rimu and tawa and an understory of leafy hīnau, pukatea, ferns and kohekohe. The track runs parallel to SH30, from Manawahe Road to Whangaroa Bay on Lake Rotomā.

Lake Rotomā



Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve

The name Ōkātaina is a shortened form of its original (and official) name Te Moana i kātaina ā Te Rangitakaroro (the lake where Te Rangitakaroro laughed). Chief Te Rangitakaroro and his warriors were resting when one warrior referred to the lake as an ocean. This was seen as a great joke and the group's laughter echoed around the lake.

The Lake Ōkātaina area was an important link in pre-European routes – canoes were carried from Tarawera to Ōkātaina and from Ōkātaina to Rotoiti. Lake Okataina Road follows one of these ancient routes.

The lake lies on the western margin of the Haroharo Caldera, a large basin formed by catastrophic ground collapse during past eruptions. The last massive eruption, 64,000 years ago, left a hole in the ground 24 km wide and more than 1 km deep. This basin has since been largely filled in by smaller eruptions. The lake was once an arm of Lake Tarawera until a lava dome formed on the southern margin of Lake Ōkātaina about 7,000 years ago, cutting the larger lake in two.

Changing lake levels were the reason Ngāti Tarāwhai moved away from the area before 1900. Ngāti Tarāwhai, a hapū (sub-tribe) of Te Arawa, is the principal iwi (tribe) associated with the Ōkātaina district.

On 29 January 1921, Ngāti Tarāwhai gifted the shore of Lake Ōkātaina to the Crown. One of the conditions was that a Ngāti Tarāwhai committee should administer the reserve. Today that responsibility rests with the Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve Board and DOC undertakes day-to-day management of the reserve.

Getting there

The lake and the shorter walks are accessed from Lake Okataina Road. Turn off SH30 (Rotorua/Whakatane Highway) at Te Ruato Bay, 22 km north-east of Rotorua.

Walks from Lake Okataina Road

The Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve has numerous shorter walks quite close to each other. These can easily be linked together to make up 1–3 hours of walking. See the map on page 28 to see how the tracks, listed below, connect. The tracks can be walked as loops, if you walk back along Lake Okataina Road.

14 Rongomai Track



40 minutes one way, 1.7 km

A section of the Western Okataina Walkway (see page 29) between Patotara and the Outdoor Education Centre.

15 Ngahopua Track (Twin Lakes Track)



50 minutes for the circuit, 2 km

Starts immediately opposite the side road to the Outdoor Education Centre, on Lake Okataina Road.

The track takes you 100 m above the twin volcanic crater lakes of Rotongata and Rotoatua, which formed about 3,500 years ago and support a variety of interesting birdlife including scaup and dabchick.

16 Anaha Track



60 minutes one way, 2.3 km

Starts about 100 m south of the Outdoor Education Centre, off Lake Okataina Road, and finishes 1.2 km further down the road. The track, named after Anaha Te Rahui (a master carver in the Rotorua District), passes through old logging sites.

17 Kepa Track



10 minutes one way, 425 m

Starts from Lake Okataina Road, 100 m south of the Outdoor Education Centre. This track was named after Kepa Ehau, who was largely responsible for the scenic reserve status of the area. It takes walkers through clearings where evidence of past logging activity remains. The track finishes at Lake Okataina Rd, approximately 500 m south of the starting point.

18 Te Auheke Track (or Cascades Track)



40 minutes for the circuit, 1.5 km

Starts at the back of the field behind the Outdoor Education Centre. The track passes a sheer cliff face which is covered with moss and ferns. At night, thousands of glow worms can be seen. The picturesque Cascade Falls (around 10 m high) pour water over and around many rock protrusions and inspired the track's name: Te Auheke means 'tumbling water'.

19 Tarawhai Track



50 minutes for the circuit, 1.3 km

Starts 50 m down the side road leading to the Education Centre. A wide variety of native trees line this nature trail, including rimu, pukatea and tawa. Many are identified by name plates, making for an interesting and informative walk. A 5 m² fenced-off area beside the southern end of this track illustrates the effects of introduced browsing animals (notably wallabies) on the native vegetation.

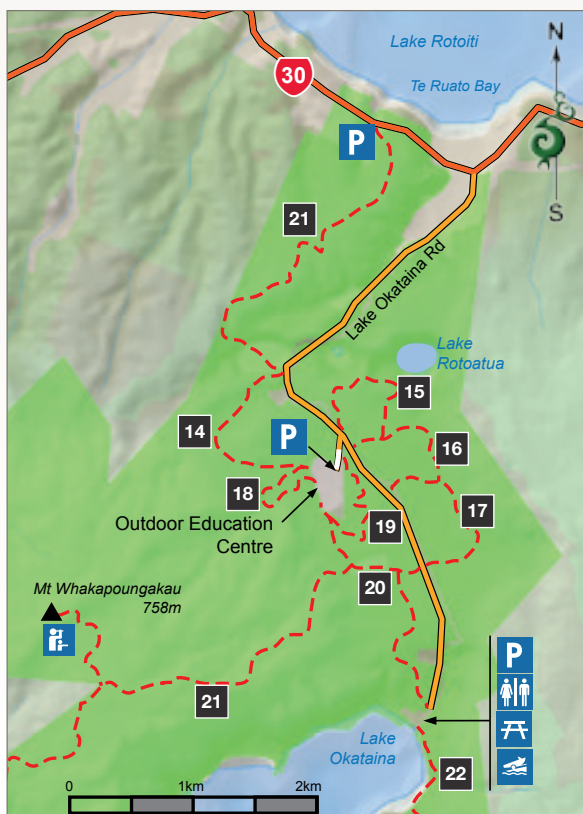
20 Waipungapunga Track



20 minutes one way

This easy bush track proves an alternative entry/exit point to the Western Okataina Walkway (page 21).

Okataina—shorter walks



Longer walks in Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve

21

Western Okataina Walkway and mountain biking track



Te Ruato Bay (Lake Rotoiti) to Millar Road
(near Lake Ōkareka)

7 hours one way, 22.5 km

The Western Okataina Walkway can be walked in its entirety in either direction from Te Ruato Bay, Lake Rotoiti (SH30, 21 km from Rotorua) or from Millar Road, Lake Ōkareka (11 km from Rotorua), or it can be joined from the Outdoor Education Centre on Lake Okataina Road. It is described here from Te Ruato Bay.

After leaving the car park at Lake Rotoiti, you'll climb steeply for 15 minutes to the top of a ridge, where there are good views of Lake Rotoiti. The track then continues along an old disused forestry road. The descent to Patotara Crater is on the right, 30 minutes in. Once out of the crater you can turn left to emerge on to Lake Okataina Road or branch right along the Rongomai Track to the Outdoor Education Centre.

A further 5-minute walk brings you to the Tarawhai Track, which loops back to the Outdoor Education Centre (see previous page). Back on the Western Okataina Walkway, a junction gives you a choice of the Waipungapunga Track on the left (leading down to Lake Okataina Road and Lake Ōkataina) or continuing down the Western Okataina Walkway on the right. This track is steep in places, and the surface may be rough and uneven, but the view from Whakapoungakau Trig (2 hours uphill from this junction and then via a 20-minute detour from the main track) is well worth the effort. The summit affords amazing views out over Lake Ōkataina, Rotorua, Rotoiti and all the way to the coast on a sunny day.

The Western Okataina Walkway continues from the Whakapoungakau Trig on to Millar Road.

Western Okataina Walkway track breakdown

Te Ruato Bay to Outdoor Centre	2 hr
Outdoor Centre to Whakapoungakau Junction.	2 hr
Whakapoungakau Trig Track (return)	40 min
Whakapoungakau Junction to Millar Road	3 hr
Total walking time of the Western Okataina Walkway	7 hours 40 min

22 Eastern Okataina Walkway



Lake Ōkataina car park (Tauranganui Bay)
to Humphries Bay (Lake Tarawera)

3 hours one way, 10.5 km

Starting from Lake Ōkataina car park, the track heads south, passing Te Koutu Point and a large natural amphitheatre named the Soundshell, formed by volcanic rock cliffs. The track continues meandering through native bush, offering splendid lake views. There are several options to branch off the track and head down to the lake at Te Koutu, Kaiwaka Bay and Ōtangimoana Bay. From Ōtangimoana Bay, the track climbs away from Lake Ōkataina overland and then descends into Humphries Bay on Lake Tarawera. Walkers then have the choice of returning the same way or continuing for 3 hours to Tarawera Outlet along the Northern Tarawera Track. See map on page 32.

Eastern Okataina Walkway track breakdown

Lake Ōkataina car park to Soundshell	10 min
Soundshell to Kaiwaka Bay	40 min
Kaiwaka Bay to Ōtangimoana Bay	1 hr 50 min
Ōtangimoana Bay to Humphries Bay	20 min

**Total walking time of the
Eastern Okataina Walkway**

3 hours

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Lake Tarawera Scenic Reserve

The lands and waters around Tarawera are of special significance to Tuhourangi, Ngāti Rangitihi, and Ngāti Hinemihi who lived in the area for many generations. The landscape around Tarawera was shaped by the 1886 Tarawera eruption, which raised the level of the lake by 12 m and devastated the surrounding environment, resulting in a significant loss of life and displacing the people of the land. The lake drains eastward along the Tarawera River, surging through the spectacular Tarawera Falls and onward to the coast. There is a trout-spawning sanctuary at Tarawera Outlet at the start of the Tarawera River, where trout enjoy clean, clear, free-flowing water. The sanctuary protects the spawning beds from disturbance by anglers, swimmers and boats. A few kilometres below the sanctuary, the Tarawera River disappears underground and then emerges again to tumble over the famous Tarawera Falls.

Lake Tarawera Scenic Reserve is home to the spectacular Hot Water Beach Campsite – popular with visitors and locals who can enjoy a hot soak in natural geothermal waters. The newly opened Tarawera Trail has enabled foot access to the campsite, previously only accessible by boat.



Hot Water Beach.

Getting there by car

Access to Tarawera Outlet and Tarawera Falls on the eastern arm of the lake is from Kawerau (off SH30 between Rotorua and Whakatane) via private forestry roads that require permits (\$5 from the Kawerau Information Centre). The forest gate is closed after dark. The forest road may be closed in summer when fire risk is extreme.

Kawerau Information Centre, Plunket St, Kawerau

Phone: +64 7 323 6300 Email: kawerauinfo@xtra.co.nz

www.kaweraudc.govt.nz

The southern shores of the lake are traversed by the Tarawera Trail. Access is via Tarawera Road and it is about 15 km from Rotorua to Te Wairoa car park at the start of the trail.

Getting there by boat

A number of operators run either boat or helicopter transport around the Rotorua Lakes area, creating a variety of options for connecting trails around Lakes Tarawera and Ōkātina or getting to and from campsites (Hot Water Beach, Tarawera Outlet and Humphries Bay). For details of approved operators, check out the Lake Tarawera Scenic Reserve section of the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz.

Lakes Tarawera, Ōkātina, Ōkareka and Tikitapu/Blue Lake





Camping around Lake Tarawera

Lake Tarawera Outlet Campsite

Tent sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis and cannot be pre-booked. 50 tent sites are available.



Hot Water Beach Campsite

Visitors wishing to camp at Hot Water Beach campsite must book a campsite and pay the total fee before arrival.

Bookings are made through Whakarewarewa Village Charitable Trust, manager of the campsite.

Phone: +64 7 349 3463 ext. 101

17 Tyron Street, Whakarewarewa Village, Rotorua.

www.whakarewarewa.com



Walks and tracks around Tarawera

23 Tarawera Trail



5–6 hours one way, 15 km

Once devastated by the 1886 Tarawera eruption, the Tarawera Trail represents a return of the people to their land and the birthplace of tourism in New Zealand. It is hoped to eventually form part of a world-class multi-day track around Lake Tarawera. The trail is a partnership between DOC and several Māori Land Trusts.

Stage One of the Tarawera Trail from Te Wairoa (near the Buried Village) to Hot Water Beach at Te Rātā Bay opened in 2013.

The track begins at Te Wairoa car park, off Tarawera Road, with opening views of beautiful Lake Tarawera. Follow the lakeside trail through Kōtukutuku Bay and, 5 km along the trail, stop at Hawaiki Bay to enjoy lake access and a picnic area with toilet facilities.

The track continues with intermittent climbs, through lakeside bushland into Te Hīnau Bay, passing over Twin Streams cold springs. After an uphill climb to reach the Rotomahana lookout point, descend into Te Rātā Bay to enjoy a soak at Hot Water Beach, but be careful – localised patches of sand are very hot.

Getting there

The most direct route from Rotorua to the Te Wairoa car park is along Tarawera Road (off Te Ngae Road). It is around 15 km from Rotorua to the car park, where the trail begins.

Water taxis are available to shuttle passengers to and from Hot Water Beach and the Tarawera Landing site, but must be pre-booked. Te Wairoa car park is roughly 2 km along a sealed road from the landing site.

Caution: Hot Water Beach is a naturally occurring geothermal area and localised patches of sand and water are very hot.

See the map on page 36.

24 Northern Tarawera Track



Tarawera Outlet to Humphries Bay

3 hours one way, 6 km

This area was extensively altered by the 1886 Tarawera eruption, but the landscape is slowly regenerating.

Cross the bridge at Tarawera Outlet and take the left-hand track at the junction. The track passes a jetty a short distance from the outlet and progresses westward. It then climbs inland and descends into Humphries Bay, a pleasant picnic and camping area. Trampers can then take the Eastern Ōkātina Walkway north to access Ōtāngimoana Bay on Lake Ōkātina (approximately 20 minutes one way) or carry on for a further 2 hours and 40 minutes to complete the walkway at Lake Ōkātina car park (Tauranganui Bay).

HOT TIP

Rotorua's thermal attractions are the perfect places to keep cosy and warm or alleviate sore muscles after a day of walking and hiking. Visit one of our amazing spas or hot pools – there's no better place to unwind than Rotorua, New Zealand's coolest hot spot.



2 hours one way, 5 km

The track begins at the Tarawera Outlet. Cross the bridge and take the right-hand track at the junction. The track meanders through native bush, largely following the river which disappears underground at various sites. This section of track is amazingly picturesque, with crystal clear waters where pōhutukawa and rātā trees cling determinedly to rocky outcrops deposited in the violence of the Mt Tarawera eruption. Closer to the falls, the track divides into a main route following the river and a smaller shortcut. Both rejoin after a brief distance. The track then zigzags down a steep escarpment to a viewing area at the base of the spectacular Tarawera Falls.

The Waterfall Road car park is a short 20-minute walk past the Tarawera Falls.

Caution

Supervise children closely at all times because of the steep cliffs beside the track above the falls and the fast-flowing river. Caution is also advised for those wishing to swim in the river beside this track because of underwater currents. There is a popular swimming spot approximately 1 hour 30 minutes from the outlet, at a wider and a shallower stretch of the river where the water runs more gently.

26 Tarawera Falls Track



20 minutes one way, 700 m

The water at Tarawera Falls surges out of fissures in a large rock cliff face surrounded by native bush. The cliff is, in fact, the end of an ancient lava flow. The plant life seen here today has developed since the 1886 Tarawera eruption. An unusual feature is the range of hybrids that have evolved from closely related species pōhutukawa and northern rātā.

From the Waterfall Road car park follow the track that heads upstream along the Tarawera River. Cross the bridge and continue upstream to the falls viewing area. Backtrack to the car park or continue along the walking track to Tarawera Outlet (about 2 hours).



Tarawera Falls.



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Lake Rotomahana Wildlife Refuge

Lake Rotomahana was internationally acclaimed for the Pink and White Terraces, regarded as the eighth wonder of the world, but destroyed in the Tarawera eruption of 1886. Steaming cliffs and silica terraces still remain as a feature of this lake. The lake and surrounding edges are a wildlife refuge for many types of waterfowl. The lake is closed to powerboats in May to give the birds sanctuary during the gamebird hunting season. Many rare ferns and orchids are found in the thermal areas.

Getting there

Lake Rotomahana is 26 km south-east of Rotorua. Most visitors access the lake through Waimangu Volcanic Valley off SH5 (entry fees apply). Self-guided walks and launch trips are available. All enquiries to Waimangu Volcanic Valley, Waimangu Road, Rotorua, phone +64 7 366 6137 or see their website: www.waimangu.co.nz.

Warning



There are numerous hot water springs around the lake edge and the ground is often hot and unstable. For this reason you are strongly advised not to walk on the lake edge.

27 Isthmus Track



20 minutes one way, 1.2 km

The area is dominated by majestic Mt Tarawera. The track links Lakes Tarawera and Rotomahana and is an integral part of the Waimangu 'Round Trip'. **Note:** The steaming cliffs are not visible from this track. The land around the Isthmus Track is private land and the track is provided for public access between the lakes. Please respect this and remain on the track at all times.

The Waimangu Round Trip



A full-day trip from Rotorua to Waimangu, then down the thermal valley. Take the launch across Lake Rotomahana and walk across the isthmus (strip of land) to Lake Tarawera where another launch delivers you to Tarawera Landing. Contact Waimangu Volcanic Valley for more information.

Kaharoa Conservation Area

Kaharoa Conservation Area and the adjoining Onaia Ecological Area are renowned for kōkako. Unique to New Zealand, kōkako were once common in lowland forest throughout the country but today are endangered and occur only in the North Island. Fewer than 1,400 remain.

Kōkako are one of our most beautiful song birds, with an amazing repertoire of clicks, buzzes and mews. Although kōkako are not particularly good at flying, their short, rounded wings and powerful legs enable them to leap, run and glide through the trees in search of insects, fruit and leaves.

Ngāti Rangiwhewehi and Tapuika lived in this area and also used areas in the forest as stopping points on travelling routes. There are several pā sites within the Kaharoa forest.

Since European colonisation, kōkako populations have decreased dramatically. This is mainly due to introduced predators such as possums and rats preying on their eggs and nestlings, and competing for food. Over the past few years, efforts by the Kaharoa Kokako Trust, DOC, and Bay of Plenty Regional Council have increased kōkako numbers and improved the health of the forest.

Getting there

Kaharoa Conservation Area is about 36 km north of Rotorua. Access is via Hamurana Road, then Tauranga Direct Road (SH36). From there, turn right into Kaharoa Road and then left into Kapukapu Road (see map on page 40). Near the end of Kapukapu Road there is a car park and interpretation kiosk on the Kaharoa Conservation Area. The Kaharoa Kokako Track entrance is a short 15-minute walk further along the road. **Note:** Very limited parking is available at the track entrance so park at the interpretation kiosk before making your way to the track entrance.



Kaharoa Kokako Trust

The Kaharoa Kokako Trust was established in 1997 by local residents to ensure the long term protection and survival of the endangered kōkako in the Kaharoa Forest. As a result of the Trust's work, Kaharoa is now home to one of the largest and most significant kōkako populations.

Kōkako.

Photo: Tamsin Ward-Smith

www.kokako.org.nz

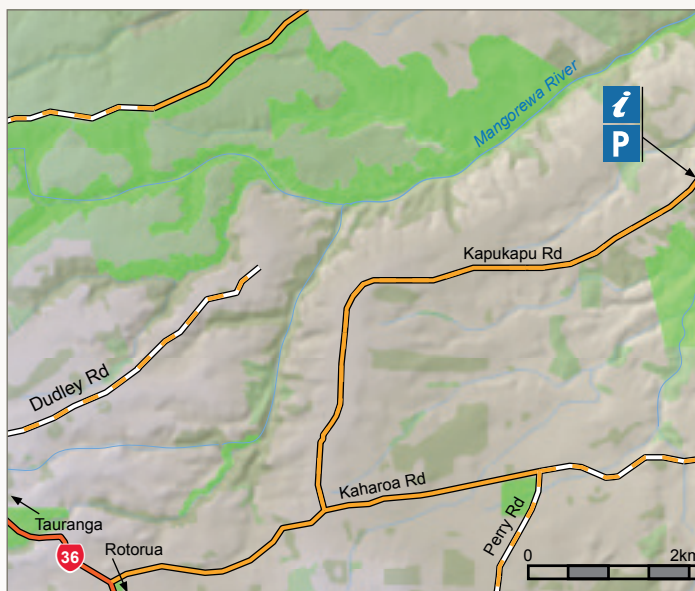


45 minutes one way, 1.2 km

This track offers a great opportunity to hear the kōkako's dawn chorus. Several kōkako territories are within close range and there is a chance you may even see them hopping or gliding around high in the canopy.

From the car park, the track meanders its way down through some beautiful forest to Onaia Stream. This is a tranquil and secluded spot, ideal for a picnic or breakfast stop after listening to the dawn chorus.

Kokako Track



Mangorewa Ecological Area

Tauranga Direct Road has an interesting history. It was formed in 1869 as part of a central North Island military road that linked Napier, Taupo, Rotorua and Tauranga. The Rotorua-Tauranga section took 10 hours by coach, and a watering trough in the car park at Mangorewa remains as a sign of those times. This area was also occupied by Tapuika and the streams and forests were sources of food and places of sanctuary and shelter. This area also has an unusual forest ecology, with beech trees growing further north and at lower altitude than usual.

Getting there

The Mangorewa Ecological Area is 20 km north of Rotorua on the western side of Tauranga Direct Road (SH36). Coming from Rotorua, the car park is on the left just before the bridge at the bottom of the gorge area, next to the exit from Mangorewa Stream. The track entrance is 500 m north of the car park on the left. Carefully cross the road, walking north (against the traffic) and cross the second bridge. 100 m up the hill, carefully cross the road again to find the track entrance immediately behind the sign for the Mangorewa Ecological Area.

29 Mangorewa Track



5 hours 30 minutes circuit, 9 km



Recommended for **experienced trampers only** due to the dense forest, stream crossings and sparse track markers.

From the track entrance the track leads directly to the Ohaupara Stream. The track crosses the stream several times before climbing to a ridge. Take the left fork and descend for an hour to a small stream. A 1-hour climb will take you to an open area, and a further 30 minutes to Mangorewa Stream.

From there, you can return the way you came or walk down the Mangorewa Stream (3 hours to the car park). **This route is passable only when the river level is low and is suitable only for experienced trampers wearing tramping boots.** Take extreme care as the rocks are slippery, and there are numerous deep potholes to avoid.

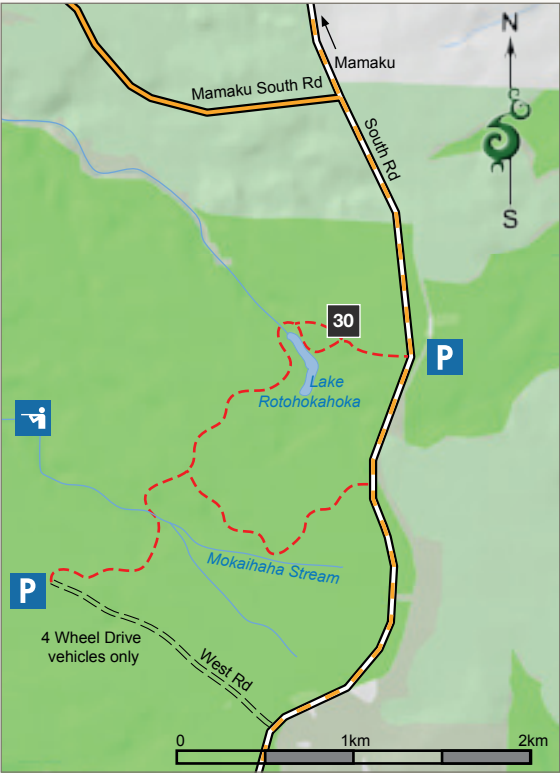
Leave the riverbed via the right bank just before the road bridge. A small track exits the stream to the car park.

Tip: Putting an old pair of woollen tramping socks over your tramping boots provides a better grip on the slippery wet rocks. Make sure you disinfect the socks after use to prevent the spread of aquatic pests.

Mangorewa Track



Mōkaihaha



Mokaihaha Ecological Area

Rich in Māori history, Mokaihaha Ecological Area contains several trails once used by Māori on their way to Rotorua from the Waikato. It is also very important for conservation as it is host to the largest surviving block of the once extensive native forests that covered the Mamaku Plateau. Podocarp trees, such as rimu, miro and mataī, are plentiful, and the forest floor is thick with healthy new seedlings. Birdlife includes tūī, kererū, bellbirds and fantails. Kākā (native parrots) occasionally delight walkers with their appearance, and the endangered kōkako may be heard in the dawn chorus. Short-tailed bats are also present.

Getting there

Mokaihaha Ecological Area is on the Mamaku Plateau, 9.6 km south-east of Mamaku township. From Rotorua, take SH5 for 1 km. Turn left up Dansey Road to Mamaku, then turn left into South Road by Mamaku School. Rotohokahoka Track starts 9.6 km down this road. The track finishes on West Road, which is suitable only for 4WD drive vehicles.

30 Rotohokahoka Track



2 hours from the car park to West Road

2 hours 30 minutes for the circuit
(not via West Road), 4 km

The track from the South Road car park leads to Lake Rotohokahoka (20 minutes). Ten minutes walk from the car park the track divides: both tracks lead down to the lake and connect up again. The main track then continues past the lake towards West Road. Along this section of track you can take a signposted side track off to your left, which, after 30 minutes, will bring you back out on to South Road about 15 minutes walk from the South Road car park.



Te Waihou

The Waihou River is fed by many tributary streams in the Mamaku Ranges. Water from the Mamaku Plateau can take more than 100 years to seep through underground aquifers, making the water of Blue Spring a distinct blue colour. The water flows at a remarkable 42 m³/min. This spring and the surrounding area is of special significance to Ngāti Raukawa. The spring water supplies the local town of Putaruru with no treatment necessary, and is also the main source for bottled water sold around New Zealand. The track is administered on DOC's behalf by South Waikato District Council.

Getting there

From Rotorua, drive west towards Tirau on SH5. Take the Putaruru turn-off on your left into Whites Road (SH28). Then a left into Leslie Road and the car park is 3.8 km to the south-east. There is also a car park at the north-western end of the track on Whites Road.



31 Te Waihou Walkway



1 hour 30 minutes one way, 5 km

Generally an easy walk, though there is a section of wooden steps to climb and stiles to go over. Boardwalks take you through wetland areas. An additional 500 m loop track allows access to the northern bank via two footbridges and offers stunning views over the river. The walk goes through areas of restoration and regeneration of wetland and native plantings, and crosses rolling pastoral land beside the river. The river's mood changes several times as you progress along the walkway, from clear and tranquil in the wider sections, to white and noisy in the gorge area. Small waterfalls, set amongst native bush, add to the excitement. There is good fishing in the area as trout are plentiful. There are a number of information panels along the walkway explaining heritage sites.

Caution

Hazards such as electric fences and livestock may be encountered on this walkway. The return journey is back along the same track to the same car park.

Te Waihou Walkway



Sustainable Tourism Charter

The Rotorua Sustainable Tourism Charter is a group of tourism operators committed to continual improvement in these areas:

- ✓ Supporting our community
- ✓ Acknowledging our community's multi-cultural values
- ✓ Protecting and enhancing our natural environment
- ✓ Efficient use of all available resources
- ✓ Statutory compliance
- ✓ A safe, enjoyable and informative experience for visitors

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Department of
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Te Papa Atawhai



The Canopy Conservation Trust is a partnership between Rotorua Canopy Tours and the Department of Conservation.

We are committed to creating a pest-free environment in the Dansey Road Scenic Reserve.

Our goal is to provide a safe haven amongst the trees for our native species.



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