

## RUAPEHU Te HEUHEU and DOME EQUIPMENT SHED

Topo50 Map: BJ34 Mt Ruapehu

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

**How to get to START:** Exit Taupo on SH1 down the lake to Turangi then:

### Option 1

- Follow the Desert Highway (SH1) and turn off right on to SH46 for Rangipo
- Meet SH47 at a T-junction and turn left then turn off SH47 on to SH48 signposted for Whakapapa and the Chateau, or

### Option 2

- In Turangi turn off SH1 on to SH41 on the right and then turn left off SH41 on to SH47. (This is the shorter route but the road can be slippery on frosty days)
- Turn off SH47 on to SH48 signposted for Whakapapa and the Chateau
- Continue up Bruce Road past the Chateau and park at the top near the Ski Village. Plenty of parking (**WP11595masl**) in the summer-time but little in the winter – of course ascending Ruapehu in winter is not really recommended.

**Rough description:** A fairly stiff tramp as there is an ascent of close to 900 metres from the Ski Lift at Knoll Ridge Café (**WP22017masl**). Parking is usually available overlooking Happy Valley. The chairlift is used to get up the first, frustrating few hundred metres as this is all pretty rough walking. From the top of the chair lift the route follows the Skyline Track up on to Pinnacle Ridge. Then it is up Pinnacle Ridge to the crater edge and Te Heuheu is a short distance to the east. It should be noted that the Equipment Shed used to be known as Dome Shelter.

The Summit Plateau is traversed on the northern side until it meets the main Crater Lake Track and this is followed to Dome Shelter. This track is then taken all the way back to the top of the chair lift. There is a whole range of terrain to cross from a rough track, loose sandy gravel, boulders and scoria, solid rock which can be fairly hard scrambling at times. Overall distance is just over 12km but almost 4km of this is done on the chairlift.

**Detail:** This is not a tramp to be undertaken lightly and, unless fairly high skill levels in alpine walking are held and if the plan is to do both Te Heuheu and Dome Shelter in one, an early start and a fit party are both required. The trip up in the chairlift offers fantastic views if the weather is good, this little pleasure trip takes about half an hour and the cost (remember to ask for discounts) covers up and down.

### Up on the ski lift



There is a very clear beaten earth track up this amazing piece of geology but great care must be taken as it is possible to fall off!

The walk up the next part of the ridge is quite heavy going as it is through pretty soft, sandy gravel with the odd boulder but it is not quite like Ngauruhoe as the two steps up and one down does not happen. Everything changes a bit as a small reddish coloured, scoria bluff is arrived at.

From above the Knoll Ridge Café (**WP22017masl**) head slightly to the left (E) and follow the rough road down into the valley where sign boards indicate the upwards route is called the Skyline Walk which is a poled route to the Pinnacle Ridge. This part parallels a ski tow and when the top tower of the tow is reached the route heads eastwards and steeply upwards to get on to the Pinnacles Ridge. The soft gravelly area (**WP32268masl**) just above the uppermost Pinnacle makes a good morning tea stop – and allows a 5-10min jaunt on to the actual Pinnacle.

### Start walking



Eventually the rim of the Summit Plateau (**WP52706masl**) is reached and the cairn on top of Te Heuheu (**WP62734masl**) only takes five minutes from here. The views from Te Heuheu Peak are stunning on a clear day. The route then traverses the Summit Plateau edge on its northern side, sidling Tukino Peak, eventually arriving at the intersection with the main Crater Lake Track (**WP72601masl**). This track continues along the Summit Plateau edge to Dome, where the GNS Dome Equipment Shed is located (**WP82667masl**). This shed has considerable history, mostly tragic. It is important to acknowledge that the shed is not a hut or shelter. Apparently GNS are planning to remove the shed.

### Really start ascending



The tramp route can be seen as the red line above whilst the road access is the blue line, it takes about 90 minutes from Taupo.

### Rough country

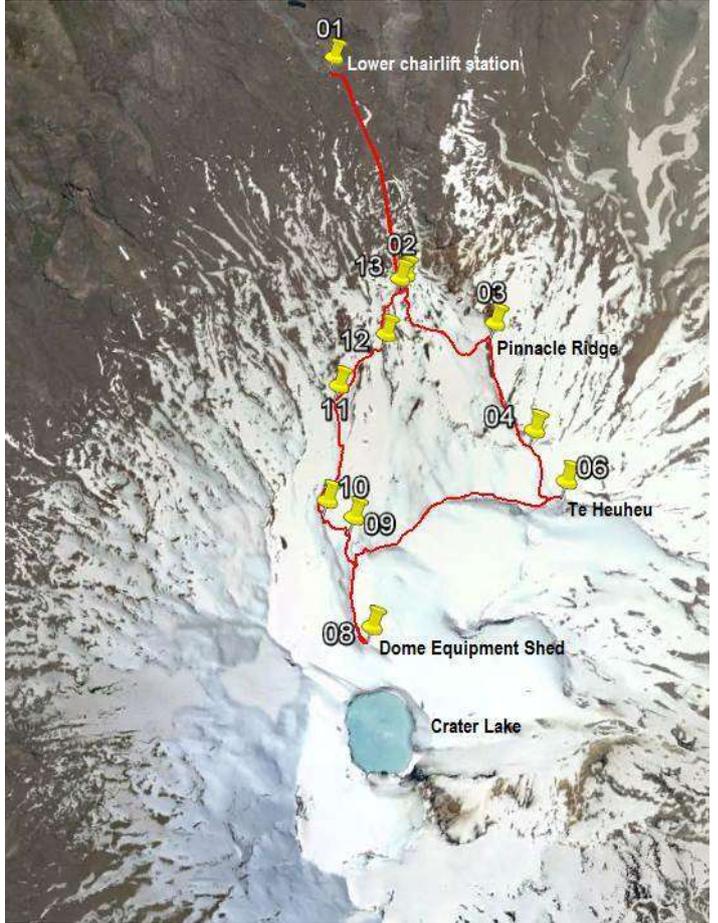
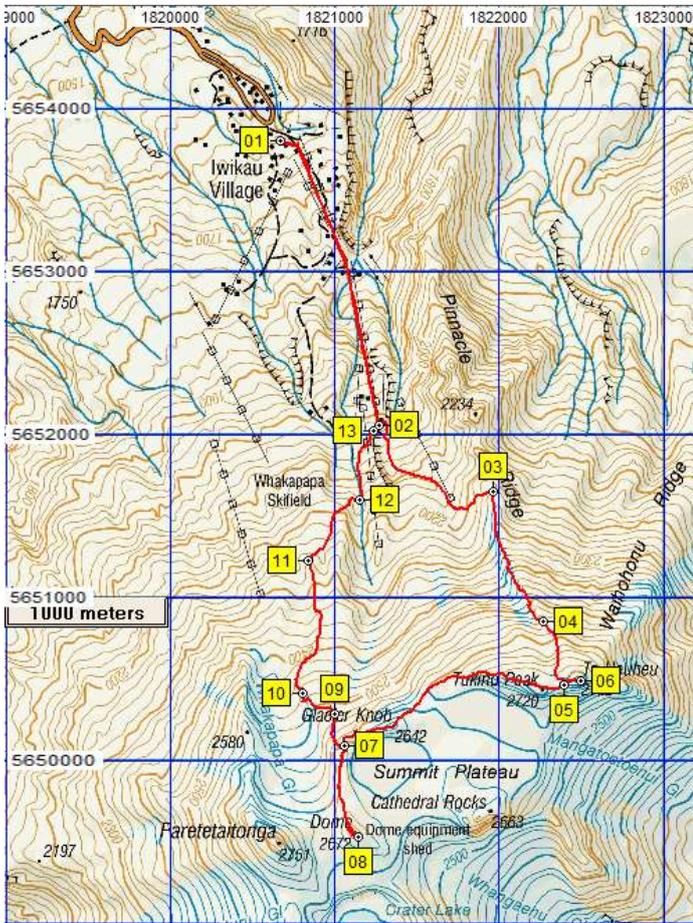


At this mini bluff the easier route is to pass to the west (the right looking up the ridge). This way is marked by a series of cairns and reclaims the ridge at (**WP42549masl**)

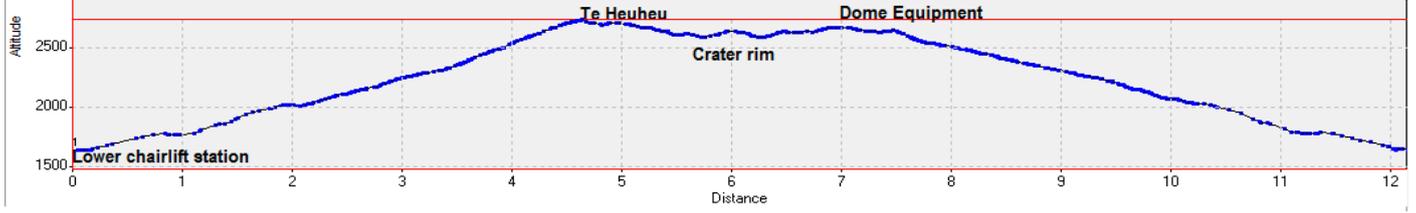
From here the going is easier on the ridge top and flattens out somewhat towards the top. On the right (west side) of this there is often a snow and ice filled valley – looks like the lower reaches of a glacier.

### Looking down Pinnacle Ridge





Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
01	1820668	5653806	1595	Chairlift station after parking at the top of the Bruce Road
02	1821269	5652060	2017	20mins (1.70km), Top of chairlift at Knoll Ridge Cafe, start walking
03	1821961	5651646	2268	50mins (3.11km); Pinnacle ridge, smoko
04	1822267	5650854	2549	1:30mins (4.03km); Pinnacle Ridge, transit to the west above here
05	1822389	5650471	2706	1:50mins (4.5km); Summit Plateau rim ridge, go left E for Te Heuheu
06	1822498	5650491	2734	1:55mins (4.63km) Te Heuheu peak
07	1821055	5650092	2601	2:55min (6.35km); Intersection of Restful Ridge Track and crater rim track
08	1821138	5649533	2667	3:10mins (6.98km); Dome GNS Equipment Shed
09	1820997	5650287	2541	3:30min (7.86km); Matarangi GNS equipment facility, off main track
10	1820796	5650409	2478	3:45min (8.17); Back on main track on edge of bluff on western side
11	1820838	5651230	2292	4:05min (9.09km); Small col, below which track goes east
12	1821151	5651606	2147	4:20min (9.68km); Main creek crossing, go high
13	1821232	5652025	2039	4:35min (10.15km); 590m from Crater rim at end of bulldozed track above Knoll Ridge Cafe



(WP3) looking up ridge to Te Heuheu



On Pinnacle Ridge (WP4)



On Te Heuheu, admiring the views!

The return trip to the top of the chair lift follows the main Crater Lake Track via Restful Ridge. A small diversion is worthwhile to view the new GNS equipment facility at Matarangi (**WP9**<sub>2541masl</sub>). This site will eventually replace that at Dome. The track down Restful Ridge is obscure in places and does not follow an obvious single ridge line and in fact traverses a number of creek beds before arriving at the Knoll Ridge Cafe at the top of the chair lift where restorative coffees can be purchased – but no ice-creams.



From Te Heuheu looking west to Mt Taranaki and Tukino Peak (2720masl) plus sidle track.

Track to Dome Equipment Shed



Crater Lake with Tahurangi (2797masl) in background.



Dome GNS Equipment Shed

Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GPS</b> Garmin GPSmap 60CSx</li> <li>• <b>WP</b> = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit</li> <li>• <b>masl</b> = metres above sea level</li> </ul>	<p><b>Distance and Altitude Data (18/2/2015)</b></p> <table> <tr> <td>Altitude range</td> <td>1139 metres</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chairlift ascent</td> <td>367 metres</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Overall ascent walk</td> <td>717 metres</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Distance walked</td> <td>10.5 km</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total time</td> <td>6 hours</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Walking time</td> <td>4 hours 35 minutes</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>GPS work, detail and pictures from Nick Green February 2015</b></p>	Altitude range	1139 metres	Chairlift ascent	367 metres	Overall ascent walk	717 metres	Distance walked	10.5 km	Total time	6 hours	Walking time	4 hours 35 minutes
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