

THE HAGGIS CRUNCHER

Top050 Map: BJ34 Mnt Ruapehu

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH1 down the lake to Turangi then there is a choice:

- Follow the Desert Highway (SH1) and turn off right on to SH46 for Rangipo. Left to SH47 at the one and only T-junction (*Advised on frosty mornings*)
- Turn off SH47 on to SH48 signposted for Whakapapa, or
- In Turangi turn off SH1 right to SH41 then left to SH47 and proceed as above. This route is shown opposite
- Pass the Chateau on the left and park in the car park on the right which has toilets and is quite safe for vehicles compared to some other car parks.

Rough description: A fairly strenuous circular walk in the moderate plus category lasting up to five or six hours including breaks. It starts and ends at the Chateau (011135masl) in Whakapapa and can be lengthened or shortened at will. Three routes can be followed and they are presented in the walk "Whakapapa Ridge and Silica Rapids". The present walk describes the most adventurous and scenically rewarding outing. The route goes up the Whakapapa ridge to the NE of the Whakapapanui Stream. The stream is crossed, the ridge line followed to overlook Happy Valley ski area then back down to the Bruce Road after crossing the Waipuna Stream. From here it is 30min walk down the road with the option is to slip off on to the track (161258masl) for Silica Rapids and get back to Whakapapa via the Silica and Golden Rapids

Detail: Turn right out of the car park opposite the Chateau then cross the road and turn up behind the public toilets a few metres uphill from the Information Centre. The start is on a neat gravel track (touristic) and just within the bush line but within 10 minutes there are open views (021210masl). Further up the track degrades a bit with some large, anti-hobbit sized steps just before a semi-round (031242masl) table. At this point there would appear to be two options so take the vague track that goes to the right and soon the tussock area is entered. Within 45 minutes the edge of the gentle crest is reached (041317 masl) just before a small cairn from where there are good views up and down the valley. After this there is a gently descending wet eroded area where moisture can be seen seeping out from under the vegetated area uphill on the left hand side.

Continue walking more or less parallel to this eroded edge till about 45-50 minutes have elapsed when it is necessary to veer to the right towards the Whakapapanui Stream – a small cairn has been constructed at this point. After 15 minutes of sidling more or less to the SE there is a largish rock just at the start of the final descent to the stream, the last part of this descent is on loose material so watch the footing. The stream is now crossed (061261masl) but this is quite easy though damp, if not wet, feet will ensue. Once over the main stream cross a tributary which comes in on the left and go downstream for about 10 minutes. The first real fun of the day now happens with a hefty a struggle up a steep slope through very dense, rather unfriendly bush. A small, three stone cairn can be located marking the start of this ascent which does roughly follow a stream line which is eroded and gullied at times.

On the NS ridge



Above Happy Valley



One very noticeable point in the gully is a large Y-fork (081369masl) where the branch to the right is usually less slippery than the left. After a pretty good grunt upwards the going eases and a minor crest reached (091395masl) in about 2:10 – 2:30min when the vegetated area is left behind and the surface becomes rocky.

By going uphill to the SE a ridge which basically runs NS is reached (101545masl) and direction changes to SSE. Walking up the ridge is a good work-out plus a bit of scrambling can be had. There are very obvious castellated rocky outcrops on the crest line and it takes only twenty to thirty minutes to reach the first and most obvious of these outcrops (111647masl). Once on the higher parts of the ridge care has to be taken as there are very serious bluffs on the E to SE side above Happy Valley, but the views are stunning especially from the last outcrop (121700masl). On approaching this last outcrop it is possible to go around it on either the left or the right but a good sense of balance and no fear of heights are required.

From here it is virtually all downhill as the ridge parallel to the Waipuna Stream is followed NW then NNW – the descent to the lower parts of the ridge takes about 45 minutes. Do not be tempted to head straight towards to Bruce Road as this would involve some very large bluffs on the edge of the stream line on the left. Near the bottom of the ridge there is a gully across the route then a slight ascent back on to the ridge till a large raised area of vegetation is seen (131368masl) on the right hand side – at this point turn to the left (W) and select which gully you wish to descend – whichever is chosen does end up in very dense, high, virtually impenetrable, scratchy vegetation before the valley floor is reached – then it is boggy. Head for and cross a small bridge (141251masl) before ascending to Bruce Road (151286masl) on a very steep, loose eroding slope.



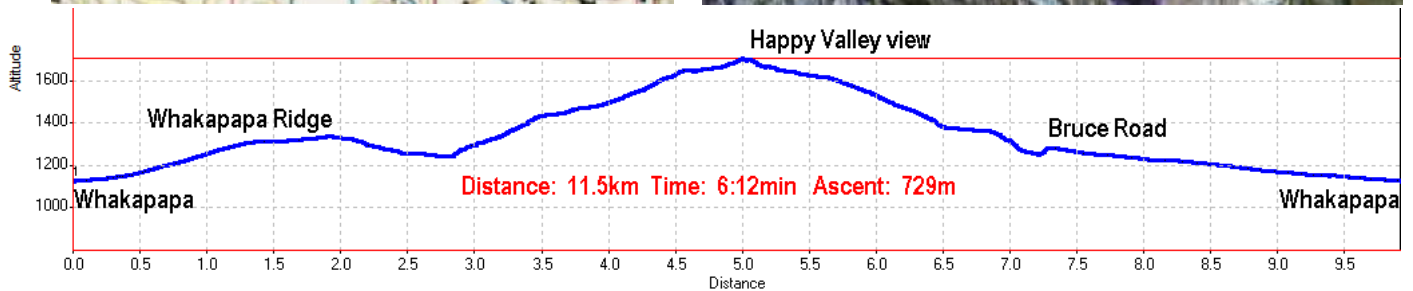
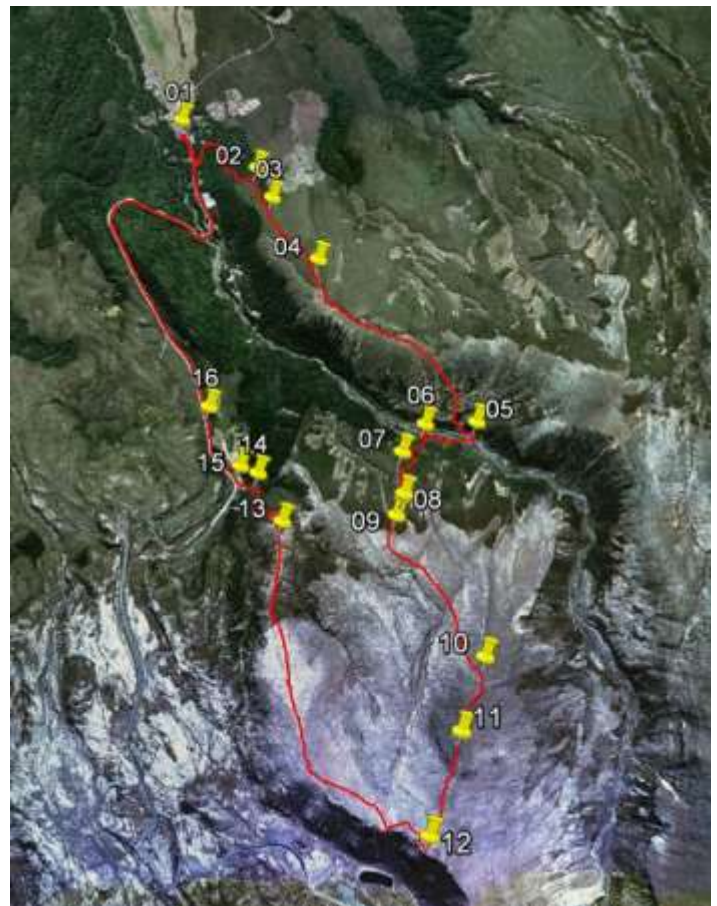
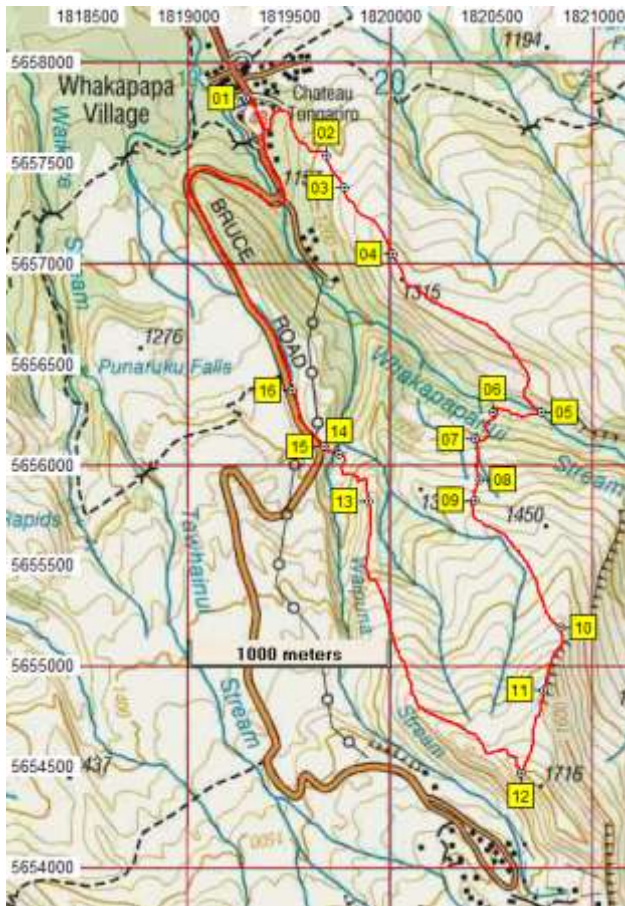
Access in BLUE and tramp route in RED

River crossing



High up the gully





Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1819283	5657823	1135	Car park opposite Chateau in Whakapapa
02	1819683	5657539	1210	20min (700m); Out of trees into open with views of Bruce Road and Chateau
03	1819769	5657377	1242	28min (900m); Picnic table on poor track with anti-hobbit steps. Branch to the right
04	1820014	5657047	1317	40min (1.4km); Edge of crest with views up and down valley and just before wet eroded zone
05	1820746	5656263	1261	1:11min (2.5km); Stream crossing then back downstream to cross tributary stream from the left
06	1820508	5656262	1256	1:50min (2.9km); Small gully in the stream line with small stone pile on RHS as marker
07	1820414	5656130	1314	2:05min (2.5km); Back in stream line after in and out a few times
08	1820443	5655929	1369	2:17min (3.3km); Y-fork in gully - go right as left option slippery
09	1820418	5655827	1395	2:27min (3.4km); On the ridge, left for Happy Valley view and right for Chateau
10	1820842	5655190	1545	3hrs (4.2km); On to NS ridge heading due south
11	1820760	5654883	1647	3:45min (4.6km); First high point on ridge then heading SSW to other high points
12	1820645	5654468	1700	4hrs (5km); Overlooking Happy Valley on rocky high point then NW to descend ridge
13	1819893	5655821	1368	5hrs (6.8km); Near end of ridge at flat topped vegetated mound on RHS - descend to left in gullies
14	1819748	5656057	1251	5:26min (7.2km); Small footbridge then steeply up for Bruce Road. Lunch on the slope.
15	1819670	5656090	1286	5:44min (7.3km); Edge of Bruce Road heading downhill to NW
16	1819516	5656371	1258	5-6min down Bruce Road, Silica Rapids track on left (1hour plus) or 25min on the road back

From here it is about 30 minutes back down the road to Whakapapa but a better alternative is to slip off left on to the Silica Rapids track (161258masl). Despite what the notice says it takes only 30 minutes to reach Silica Rapids, another 35 minutes to Golden Rapids and about 1:30 minutes total to get back to the car park in Whakapapa (011135masl). This part of the walk is not described. In all some 10-11km are walked with about 730metres of ascent and descent within an altitude variation of just over 560metres requiring 5-6:30min including refreshment breaks

