

## MAUNGATAUTARI

Topo50 Map: BE34 Kihikihi

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

**How to get to START:** As this is well outside the Taupo area the first step is to head North on SH1 towards Rotorua then:

- Stay on SH1 at Wairakei by going left 12 minutes
- Pass Kinleith Mill in 45 minutes then through Tokoroa Town
- Pass though Putaruru on SH1 in about 1 hour
- Through Tirau in 1:10 minutes then
- Left into Maungatautari Road (14km to Maungatautari) in 1:25 min
- Right following Maungatautari Road in 1:30 minutes
- Right again 4 minutes later still on Maungatautari Road and
- Left following signs for Maungatautari Scenic Reserve in about 1:40min and soon see the fence and park in small car park (**WP01**) at end of Hicks Road

The drive from Taupo takes about 1:45 minutes and the return trip via Arapuni and Old Taupo Road to Tokoroa slightly less. On the map on the right the outward and return road trips are shown in red whilst the tramp line is shown in blue, with the tramp being done from Hicks Road in the north to emerge on Tari Road on the south side of the mountain.



The drive **RED** line from Taupo takes about 1:45 mins whilst tramp is **BLUE** line

The Maungatautari Scenic Reserve, a forested volcanic cone, was established to restore the local native ecology. There is a 47km mammalian-pest-proof fence surrounding 3,400 hectares of mature native forest. The restoration process involves eradication of all mammalian pests within the fenced area and the re-introduction of a variety of threatened native species many of which have been extinct in the area for the past century.

**Rough description:** Distance-wise this is not a long walk but the terrain makes it moderately demanding for most trampers and a fair amount of tramping skill is involved. This is an A to B walk a van mover is required to ensure you have transport waiting at the end and there is little chance of getting lost on this well marked track.

The distance is only about 10 kilometres but the terrain is very hilly with a great deal of unrelenting ascending and descending. Most of this is NOT on manicured tracks but involves steep root infested slopes, narrow rocky ridges as well as normal back-country type tracks.

Altitude varies from 247masl at the start (**01**<sub>247masl</sub>) to just over 800masl at the summit trig point (**09**<sub>806masl</sub>) but, at a rough estimate, there are over 850 metres of ascent. However, there is an escape route for the weary since at about 7km distance (**19**<sub>651masl</sub>) the route crosses a new, gently sloping, wide, gravel track which takes about an hour to get through to the end (**27**<sub>332masl</sub>) – some 20 to 30 minutes quicker than the old, rough track as described in this tramp.

**Detail:** There is a very clearly marked track leaving the car park (**01**<sub>247masl</sub>) at the north end of Hicks Road. This goes uphill to cross a stile into a grassy meadow within 2 – 3 minutes (**02**<sub>267masl</sub>). There are several large tree stumps fenced off on the left as you climb up through this meadow then within 13 – 14 minutes there is an electric fence but there is a stile (**03**<sub>343masl</sub>) and sometimes an open gate into the next meadow. From here the large fence round the reserve can be seen and within minutes you can enter the outer fenced area through the “safety-lock” cage. This is a large cage with spring-loaded doors at either end and only one door will open at a time to ensure no animal can get through. Once through the fence the first grunt of the day awaits and that is a ten minute drag up the gravel road that parallels the fence to a minor crest (**04**<sub>412masl</sub>).

### Fence and gate



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### Open and level

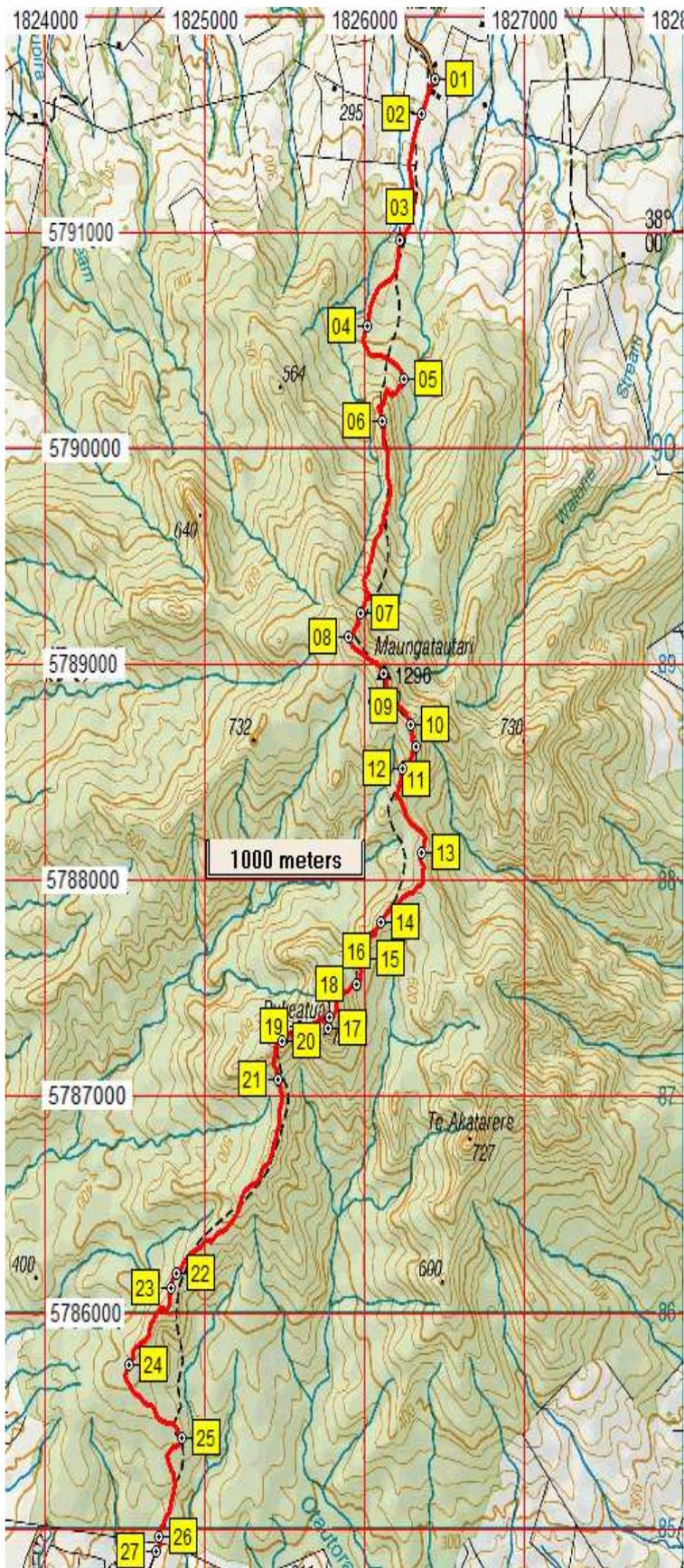


Continue along the fence line road through undulating to rolling forested terrain and within about 30 minutes there is a small sign-posted track (**05**<sub>435masl</sub>) branching off right to the summit – the next grunt commences but this is on rough, root infested back-country track. In the next 15 minutes or so you will climb 120 metres to reach a spot suitable for a rest and refreshment break – a small clearing with a seat on a minor crest (**06**<sub>553masl</sub>). The next section is quite long and is a traverse basically southwards on a narrow ridge with some tricky footwork in places due to roots and eroded, anti-hobbit sized steps and the odd patch of mud. Go left at a small Y-junction (**08**<sub>796masl</sub>) sign-posted “peak” on to a muddy rough bit of track which soon becomes a boardwalk and the crest with trig-point (**09**<sub>806masl</sub>) is reached in overall time of 1:50 min.

### Back country track



For the next 20 – 30 minutes you stay above 700 metres as you plod up and down ascending and descending slopes which can be quite wicked at times but at about 2:10 minutes there is a bit of a view (**11**<sub>777masl</sub>) from the ridge top and at 2:20 minutes there are some noticeably larger trees (**12**<sub>708masl</sub>) after a particularly testing descent. The terrain is then rolling rather than hilly and just short of 3 hours the ridge trends SW (**14**<sub>673masl</sub>) before descending to a small saddle before yet another rather steep ascent (**15**<sub>619masl</sub>).



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1826436	5791714	247	Car park at N end of Hicks Road with very clear access track from the top right
02	1826356	5791550	267	3min (240m); gravel track to stile into sloping, grassy meadow with large tree stumps on LHS
03	1826223	5790968	343	13min (845m); over stile then enter Kiwi area through safety gate and steeply uphill
04	1826016	5790566	412	23min (1.34km); minor crest after fair grunt up parallel to Kiwi fence then undulating to rolling
05	1826248	5790324	435	30min (1.75km); branch right on to mountain/summit track and commence a rooty grunt uphill
06	1826111	5790128	553	45min (2.12km); tea break in small clearing on crest with seat after rather steep ascent
07	1825973	5789240	748	1:35min (3.2km); upper end of long, steep root infested slightly tricky ridge
08	1825904	5789130	796	1:45min (3.34km); left at Y-junction with "peak" signed left on to rough track then boardwalk
09	1826124	5788959	806	1:50min (3.62km); end of boardwalk just short of Trig point
10	1826288	5788718	798	2:05min (3.93km); minor crest after tricky, messy ascent then steep tricky, rooty descent
11	1826320	5788622	777	2:10min (4.08km); on ridge top with some view out of the forest
12	1826234	5788519	708	2:20min (4.24km); more or less level with some big trees after wicked descent
13	1826360	5788129	663	2:40min (4.76km); start ascending again in rolling, forest terrain
14	1826098	5787810	673	2:55min (5.28km); SW along ridge then descend
15	1826008	5787635	619	3:05min (5.5km); on small saddle before commencing fairly steep ascent
16	1825955	5787516	668	3:30min (5.73km); continue steep ascent post 15 min lunch break
17	1825773	5787315	760	3:55min (6.2km); five minute diversion up steep, rocky in places ridge for view of Arapuni Lake
18	1825785	5787365	741	4hours (6.28km); back on track at broken track sign and above very steep, tricky rocky descent
19	1825591	5787324	651	4:15min (6.51km); meet and cross new wide, gravel exit track (escape route for the weary)
20	1825486	5787258	710	4:20min (6.66km); very steep, rocky tricky narrow ridge (not for faint hearted)
21	1825461	5787084	610	4:30min (6.91km); slope easing and nice stroll through superb forest
22	1824825	5786182	461	5:05min (8.16km); parallel to new gravel track then, in one minute, hit the track
23	1824791	5786118	463	5:10min (8.25km); left on to "old" track at Y-junction from new gravel track
24	1824533	5785762	436	5:15min (8.72km); merge with the new gravel track, then another track joins from the right
25	1824856	5785419	372	5:25min (9.3km); back on to gravel road and parallel to Kiwi fence
26	1824712	5784963	336	5:30min (9.84km); safety gate out of the reserve area
27	1824700	5784899	332	5:33min (9.91km); car park at N end of Tari Road north of Pukeatua

### View point for Arapuni

Just short of 4 hours a small branch (18741masl) path left gives a short, 5 minute diversion up a rocky ridge to give superb views (17760masl) out over Arapuni.

The trickiest descent of the day starts after this diversion and takes about 15 minutes and cannot be hurried as there are some fair drops down the rocks to be scrambled over / down but at the bottom of this the "escape route" is crossed – a wide, sign-posted, manicured gravel path (19651masl) that takes about one hour to reach the end of the track.



### Heroes route



The real heroes will, however, decide to go straight ahead on the old track but please note that this route is not recommended for the faint-hearted as the figure on the left indicates – it is a very narrow and quite steep ridge (20710masl). After this ridge is surmounted the slope does start to ease and the tramp becomes a nice stroll through great forest (21610masl) and by about 5 hours the track parallels then joins the new gravel track for a few minutes then goes off bush again at a Y-fork (23463masl).

You once again merge with the gravel track (24436masl) at around 5:15 minutes and the track meets the fence (25372masl) plus parallel road 15 minutes later. Turning right when you meet the road leads you to the exit gate (26336masl) and then the car park (27332masl) in less than 10 minutes having done the whole walk in something like five and a half hours. The return route from Tari Road firstly follows the signs for Putaruru, turns right to cross the Arapuni Dam, passes through Arapuni then picks up the "Old Taupo Road" and finally turns left onto SH32 which joins SH1 in Tokoroa.

### Notes:

- **GPS** = Garmin GPSMap 60CSx
- **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- **masl** = metres above sea level