

WAIHAHA HUT via WAIHAHA RIVER

Topo50 Map: BG34 Piropiro & BG35 Tihoi

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START - Exit Taupo on SH1 North.

- Near the top of the hill go left to **Poihipi Road**
- Follow the road then left to **Whangamata Road** following the signs for Kinloch
- Do **NOT turn** left for Kinloch but go straight ahead till you reach a T-junction
- At the T-junction to **SH32** turn left and proceed for about 10km
- 2km south of the junction to Waihaha Road cross bridge on the Waihaha River
- Immediately on crossing the bridge turn left into the **Scenic Reserve Car Park**

From the car park walk back to the main road and cross, taking great care as this is a dangerous very fast road, then walk back up over the bridge where you will find access to the **Waihaha Track** on the left.

Rough description: A fairly hard, long (25+km) 7–8 hour out and back trip from SH32 parallel to the Waihaha River to 45-60 minutes beyond the Waihaha Hut on the Hauhungaroa track. There is a bit of climbing involved – about 500 metres (GPS) gain / loss, the path is good in most parts, with a few recent tweaks for bikes and passes many fishing spots.

The trip in seems to take longer than the return but this is mainly due to the fact that everyone stops to check or identify the luxurious vegetation and check out the promising looking fishing spots. Less ambitious trampers can turn round at any point but most make it to the Waihaha Hut. Take note that it is 10km to the hut not 9 as stated on the DoC sign

Detail: On leaving the Waihaha Scenic Reserve car park (**WP1477 masl**) turn right, northwards, on SH32 over the Waihaha River bridge then immediately turn left (**WP2474 masl**) on to the track. The track goes NW for about 10 minutes then there is a bend which follows the course of the river and you head WSW and start ascending. You are now in an attractive V-shaped valley, then there are some steps down and a track on the left leads to a good trout fishing spot. After 40 minutes cross a swing bridge (**WP5483 masl**) over the Mangatu Stream then ascend some zig-zags.

The track is less good and it is a longish ascent which reaches a “look-out” rock (**WP7551 masl**) on the right hand side with views of Ruapehu. The track then improves as it continues up along a ridge still in the forest basically heading in a westerly direction

View from WP08 spur track



Pass a small branch path on the left, this soon re-joins and gives access to other views, then an undulating descent starts (**WP9581 masl**) and what used to be open, grassy clearing (**WP10541masl**) is reached. This “clearing” is now populated by 2m high scrubby bush. A short, out-and-back diversion from here is worth doing as it leads to a spot where good drinking water can be obtained. A small track, indistinct in places, goes off right (NNW) leading through the wide grassy meadow area, passes through a well-used camp site, goes downhill then swings round to the right into forest and uphill.

A small cliff with a water dripping off the mosses into a small pool is the target (**WPH20 546masl**). Back on the main track a slightly muddy section is encountered about 20 minutes beyond **WP10** where there are views of the river, some rapids and a large “ponded” river section just before another open grassy area, which suggests itself as a campsite (**WP12 528 masl**) but be aware that high river flow / floods can sweep through here.

In another 5 minutes the route ascends out of bush into beech then mature broadleaf forest. In a total time around of 2:30 minutes there is an open area with an indistinct junction (**WP14 565masl**) with the left branch leading to a view point above the river gorge and where the river virtually goes under-ground (**WP15556 masl**). There are one or two other very small tracks heading steeply downhill, southwards and most give some view of the river gorge and circular pools scoured in limestone.

Continuing on the main path in a north westerly direction an “enchanted”, mossy forest with Rimu and other forest giants is reached in just under 3 hours then the path heads south west and the Waihaha Hut is reached in plus or minus 3 hours (**WP22 577 masl**) – all depending on age, speed and whether the views or study of the vegetation slows progress.

The Waihaha Hut is in a very pleasant spot and is neat and tidy inside with a wood-burner for comfort – some wood is stored at the door with more behind the hut. There are clear sign posts all around the hut indicating where the various paths go and there is a good dipping, if not swimming, area directly below the hut. The return path is the one you came on and is inscribed Western Bays Road and there are just over 10km to cover back to the main road where the tramp started. From the hut the route northwards is described in the tramp “*Waihora via Waihaha*” whilst the route westwards can be followed a long way but details have been recorded for only another 3km – these details are shown in the waypoints with the map.

To continue from the Hut head south then westwards on the Hauhungaroa Route which follows close to the peaceful looking river through very pleasant forest on a fairly good, level track. The only slight effort being an incised, eroded stream crossing



- Road access is the blue line
- Tramp is the red line

Cold July outing



Waihaha hut



(WP23^{591masl}) followed soon after by a short steep ascent up a bank to a well-nigh perfect picnic spot. Within about 3:30 minutes a small meadow (WP24^{610masl}) with a stone-surrounded fire-place is reached – this looks like a fairly nice camping spot. The going gets slightly more difficult from here due to recent windfalls within an incised stream crossing (WP25^{604masl}).



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1833312	5713062	477	Waihaha Scenic Reserve car park on E side of SH32
02	1833304	5713130	474	3min (0.2km); left off SH32 just north of bridge over Waihaha
03	1832835	5713541	476	15min (1km); bend in path parallel to river; start ascending
04	1832121	5713397	490	25min (1.8km); in V-shaped valley with steps down then trout track on LHS
05	1831721	5713338	483	31min (2.3km); swing bridge then right and up zig-zags
06	1831380	5713517	527	41min (2.6km); longish ascent on less good track
07	1831320	5713507	551	45min (2.8km); look-out rock with Ruapehu views then along ridge
08	1831214	5713443	571	50min (2.9km); small branch path to open area on left, runs parallel and rejoins
09	1830876	5713480	581	55min (3.3km); start long undulating descent on ridge
10	1829723	5713536	541	1:12min (4.6km); what was an open area with scrubby bush 2m high in places
11	1828491	5713478	528	1:30min (5.9km); close to river on muddy section then river views, rapids and pond
12	1828237	5713329	528	1:34min (6.3km); open grassy area, fisherman's campsite prone to flooding?
13	1827820	5713449	542	1:41min (6.7km); ascending and passing from bush to beech then mature native forest
14	1827410	5713303	565	1:45min (7.3km); more open, out of forest and T-junction left to views of rock pools and gorge
15	1827424	5713273	561	1:50min (7.4km); flat rocky view point of river and circular pools 3 - 4min down rough track
16	1827448	5713281	556	1:52min (7.5km); view point above gorge where river goes underground 1min S off main track
17	1827360	5713217	573	1:53min (7.6km); small indistinct track heading S towards river
18	1827374	5713211	568	1:54min (7.55km); good view of rock pools and river down very small track 50m S of main track
19	1827219	5713377	573	1:55min (7.65km); small indistinct track heading S down to river
20	1827027	5714076	569	2:07min (8.52km); enchanted forest with Rimu and other huge native trees
21	1826200	5713864	587	2:34min (9km); DoC Toilet at edge of Waihaha clearing
22	1826182	5713867	577	2:35min (9.1km); Waihaha Hut with paths to west and north on Hauhungaroa track
23	1825262	5713548	591	3:05min (10.40km); stream crossing with eroded lower slopes
24	1824418	5713050	610	3:25min (11.59km); meadow, suitable lunch spot and camp site with stones for fire
25	1824330	5712955	604	3:30min (11.73km); steep, eroded lower slope to stream partially blocked with windfall
H2O	1829900	5713702	551	Good water supply point below low cliff, 10min diversion from clearing



Notes:	• GPS GPSmap 60CSx	<i>Updated July 2018</i>
	• WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit	
	• masl = metres above sea level	