

WAIHORA via WAIHAHA day walk

Topo50 Map: BG34 Piropiro & BG35 Tihoi

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo on **SH1** North.
- Near top of the hill out of Taupo, left into **Poihipi Road**
- Follow the road out past the Wairakei Forest then turn left into **Whangamata Road**, signed for Kinloch
- Do **NOT** turn left at the next sign for Kinloch but go straight ahead till you reach a T-junction
- At the T-junction to **SH32** (Western Bay Road) turn left and go for about 10km – be careful, this is a fast road
- About 2km south of the junction to Waihaha Road cross a bridge over the **Waihaha River**. Immediately on crossing the bridge turn left into the Waihaha **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 over the bridge to access the **Waihaha Track** on the left.

Rough description: A fairly strenuous 6 - 7 hour A to B tramp from SH32 parallel to the Waihaha River to the Waihaha Hut (9.7km) then a hard loop of 14km to the Waihaha Road end.

There is next to no climbing involved on the first part– only 250 metres over 10km, the path is very good in most parts and passes many idyllic fishing spots in a very scenic valley. The second part involves about 400m of gain in about 4km so a fair amount of grunting is done on this less well defined track. DOC have (May 2008) cleared back much of the vegetation and there are ample orange track markers. The last few kilometers out are on motorable track but this seems endless when the legs are tired.

Detail: On leaving the Waihaha Scenic Reserve car park (**WP1472 masl**) turn right, northwards, on SH32 over the Waihaha River bridge then immediately turn left 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 heads WSW and starts ascending. Then there is a V-shaped valley and at about 20 minutes walk time there are some steps down and a track on the left leads to a good trout fishing spot. Cross a swing bridge (**WP2486 masl**) over the Mangatu Stream after about 30 minutes then ascend by some zig-zags.

From here the track is less good and there is a longish ascent with a “look-out” rock on the right (**WP3559masl**) with views of Ruapehu and the valley just walked up; then continue up along a ridge still in the forest basically in a westerly direction.

Waihaha hut

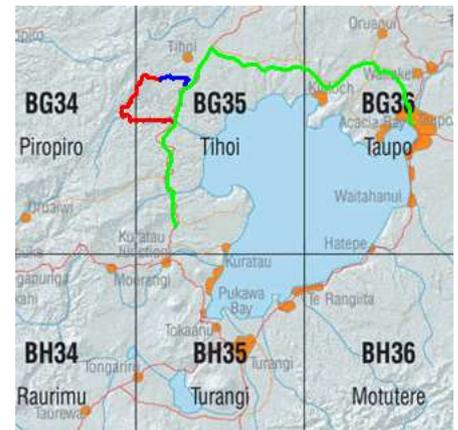


An undulating descent starts just short of the hut and an open, grassy area (**WP4548masl**) is reached in about 1:05 total walking. A slightly muddy section of path is now encountered with views of the river then some rapids and a large “ponded” river section just before another open grassy area, which suggests itself as a campsite (**WP5530masl**).

In another 5 minutes the track comes out of bush into beech then mature broadleaf forest. In a total time of 1:45 minutes there is an open area with a minor T-junction with the left branch leading to a view point above the river gorge and where the river goes under-ground (**WP6556 masl**).

Continuing on the main path in a north westerly direction an “enchanted”, mossy forest with Rimu trees is reached in just over 2 hours then the path heads south west and the Waihaha Hut is reached in a bit under 2:30 minutes (**WP7589masl**) – or a bit less if the views and vegetation study do not slow down progress.

The Waihaha Hut is in a very pleasant spot and is relatively new with an ample coal supply for heating. There are clear sign posts all around the hut indicating where the various paths go – for Waihaha go just west of North. From here on the tramp really changes from almost-tourist type path to real back-country track and bush-bashing – but the track is well indicated with orange markers. From the hut the track heads basically north running parallel with the stream in pretty lush forest with many mature trees and ample birdlife. A stream line is crossed in a deeply incised valley (**WP8607masl**) and 20 minutes later the route turns to the right (**WP9629masl**) under a large fallen tree – the small track going left is a hunter’s track – lying in a small valley, then it is upwards and into rolling terrain. After a fair upwards grunt there is a bit of easier walking as the ridge top is reached (**WP10678masl**) but then there are several steep, gnarly-rooted slippery slopes to ascend and descend – care is needed. There is a particularly tricky slope at about 3:30 minutes and there is a river to cross (**WP11560masl**) at the bottom of this – wet feet are guaranteed.



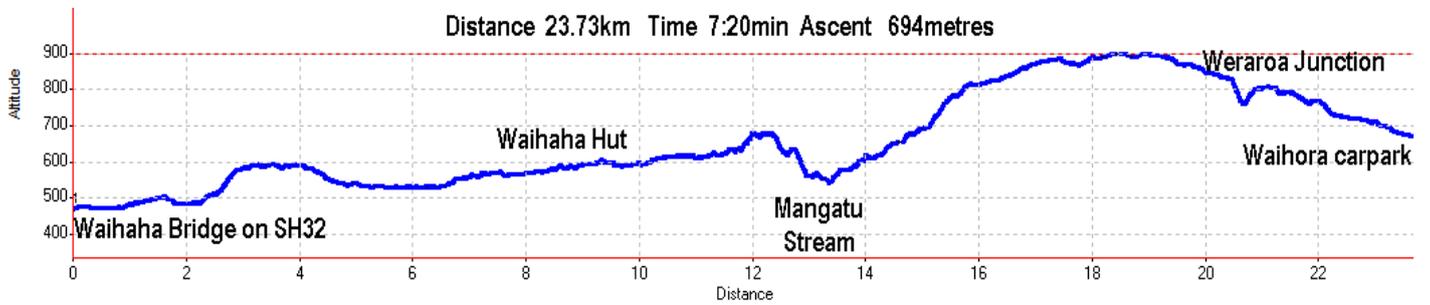
Road access from Taupo is the **GREEN** line
Waihaha exit road the **BLUE** line
Tramp route is the **RED** line

View from the look-out rock



The Mangatu crossing





Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1833330	5713059	472	Waihaha Reserve car park on SH32
02	1831722	5713347	486	34min (2.21km); Swing bridge
03	1831321	5713515	559	47min (2.78km); View rock just off path the the RHS (N)
04	1829725	5713527	548	1:12min (4.58km); First of the clearings
05	1828306	5713367	530	1:34min (6.18km); Open area - good campsite, close to river
06	1827448	5713281	556	1:49min (7.25km); View point above gorge where river goes underground
07	1826197	5713864	589	2:30min (9.77km); Waihaha Hut
08	1825932	5714755	607	2:59min (11.01km); Stream crossing in deeply incised valley
09	1826094	5715330	629	3:09min (11.66km); Distinct turn to the right under large fallen tree
10	1826344	5715369	678	3:17min (11.97km); On ridge after stiff grunt up - many birds in area
11	1826901	5715563	560	3:42min (12.85km); Mid Mangatu Stream (crossing) after tricky, root infested descent
12	1826918	5715626	577	4:22min (13.43km); Post lunch - at rope on very steep ascent
13	1827211	5715933	674	4:45min (14.70km); More level walking after big grunt upslope
14	1828731	5719171	891	6:20min (19.34km); T-junction with straight to Weraroa Trig and right for Waihora
15	1829367	5719947	761	6:45min (20.63km); Stream crossing after very steep descent then re-ascent
16	1831345	5719280	681	7:23min (23.44km); Overgrown, motorable track joining from the left
17	1831513	5719175	673	7:20min (23.73km); Waihora car park

The ascent of the day is tackled immediately after the crossing and this is the one where there was once a rope to assist – that rope (**WP12** 577masl) was well past its sell-by date in mid 2008! However, by sidling to the left of the marked trail the ascent is just steep and not really daunting. From here on the feature being looked for is mud – when the mud is hit then the junction for Waihora and Weraroa Trig is not far away. This T-junction is reached after some 6 hours (**WP14** 891masl) and by going right here it is less than one and a half hours to the end of the track.

Roughly 30 minutes from the junction there is a wicked descent followed by quite a hard re-ascent to get across a stream (**WP15** 761masl). After this the track opens up and is wide enough for vehicular traffic and tracks of quad bikes can be spotted. This section of track seems to go on for a very long time but when the slippery red clays are reached take comfort that the car park on the Waihora Road is not too far away. An overgrown branch of the track joins (**WP16** 681masl) the main track at about 7:20 minutes walking and this is a matter of minutes from the end. From the car park (**WP17** 673masl), which can be accessed by virtually any type of vehicle, it is only 10 – 15 minutes of good gravel road back to SH32.

The rope remnant



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