Topo50 Map: BH34Raurimi & BJ34 Mnt Ruapehu

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH1 down the lake to Turangi then you have the choice:

- Follow the Desert Highway (SH1) and turn off right on to SH46 for Rangipo. Meet SH47 at the one and only T-junction and turn left
- Turn off SH47 on to SH48 signposted for Whakapapa and the Chateau, or
- In Turangi turn off SH1 on to SH41 on the right and then turn left off SH41 on to SH47 and proceed as above. This route is shown opposite
- Pass the Chateau on the left and park in the car park (01) on the right which has toilets and is quite safe for vehicles compared to some other car parks. Alternatively park up behind the Chateau at the end of the tar seal (02).

Rough description: A fairly long (19+km), out-and-back walk in the moderate to fit category lasting six to seven hours including breaks which starts and ends at the Chateau in Whakapapa. There is an overall altitude gain and loss of about 480 metres if Upper Tama Lake is reached and the circuit round the lower lake is done.

The first part of this is relatively easy but once past the Wairere Stream bridge the track is less good due to erosion and there is a bit of a grunt uphill from the Lower to Upper lake. If the weather is good a variation on the return can include Taranaki Falls.

Detail: Turn left out of the car park (**01** 1061masl) opposite the Chateau and turn immediately right and go along the road up the side of the Chateau heading NE to the end (**02** 1088masl). At the end of this road ignore the track on your left (you might come back this way) and head for the track that goes straight ahead at the end of the surfaced road and is signed Taranaki Falls.

Proceed on the very good track crossing an open wooden bridge (**03** 1155masl) in about 20 minutes then upwards parallel to the gully which you then cross and go up on to open, flattish area with a view of Ngauruhoe straight ahead.

After 30 odd minutes descend to the Wairere Stream, over the bridge (**04** 1206masl) and uphill again reaching a signpost [**05** 1204masl] indicating the route for the lower path to Whakapapa and Taranaki Falls, a possible diversion on the return. Go straight ahead for Tama Lakes.



GPS: NZTM on WGS84

Lower Tama Lake



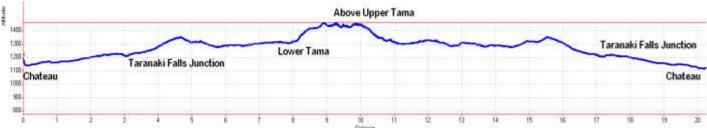
The track continues to gain altitude but the grade is easy as it wanders around through quite badly eroded areas and the track is rather in need of upgrading. A high point with views of Ngauruhoe, Ruapehu and Mount Taranaki (**06** 1285masl) is a good place for smoko after about 1:15 minutes. Thirty or so minutes later there is a wet area with board-walk in places and 10 minutes further on enter and go up a narrow valley heading E (**07** 1271masl) to cross the stream at the top – at this point the path is quite rough.



A signpost (**08** 1306masl) is met at a Y-fork in just under 2 hours with the path to Tama going left (NE) whilst the right fork goes to Waihohonu Hut. Ten minutes NE from this signpost reveals a superb view over the Lower Tama Lake (**09** 1320masl). The track ahead can now be clearly seen heading NE up a slope passing a seat for the weary (**10** 1316masl) before a moderate upslope grunt is tackled. It takes about 30 minutes to ascend this slope which is covered with loose gravel and scoria; then a slight descent leads to a wind-shelter built of rocks overlooking Upper Tama Lake (**11** 1441masl).

After a break, probably lunch, in the lee of the shelter walls head SE and upwards to begin the circuit on the ridge round and down past Lower Tama Lake – care is required on the gravel slopes to begin with as the slope is steep and can often be frozen and slippery. A last high point on the ridge is reached after about 20 minutes from the top (12 1465masl) from where it is an easy descent on quite soft, sandy ground to meet up with the track for Waihohonu (13 1327masl). On the track head right (NW) to soon return to the previously seen signpost (08/14).

From here it takes about an hour back to the next track junction (05 15) from where a variation can be built in by branching right and passing below the Taranaki Falls following the course of the Wairere Stream. After about 45 minutes on this route the Whakapapa to Mangatepopo track is joined (18 1107) and, by going left (SW), the original outwards track is rejoined near 02 just up behind the Chateau. Close to an hour is added by going via Taranaki Falls for a spot of sigh-seeing otherwise the whole tramp can be concluded in about 6 hours,



Upper Tama Lake



The ridge descent

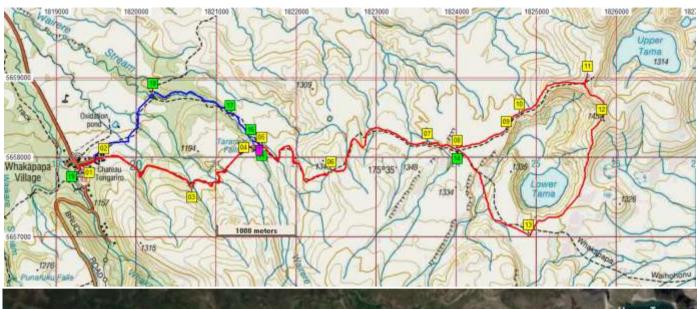


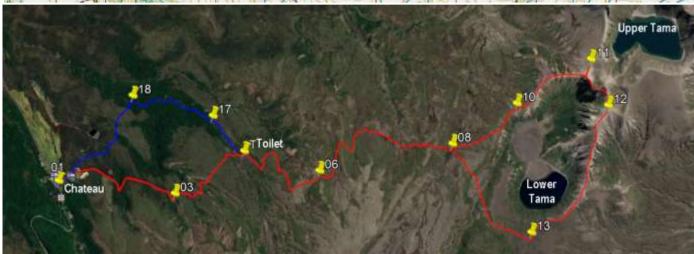
Lower Tama Lake plus the ridge descent below Ngauruhoe



Ngauruhoe and Lower Tama Lake from the south







Name <	Easting	Northing	Alt	Description
01	1819297	5657806	1061	Car park opposite Chateau in Whakapapa
02	1819593	5657994	1088	4min (350metres); End of tar-seal behind Chateau
03	1820697	5657612	1155	23min (1.76km): Open area with wooden bridge
04	1821461	5658126	1206	47min (3.04km); Bridge on Wairere Stream
05	1821563	5658133	1204	50min (3.15km); Track off north for Taranaki Falls and start on new track section to Tama
06	1822429	5657822	1285	1:28min (4.66km); Rejoin old track on ridge with views of Ngauruhoe, Ruapehu and Mount Taranaki
07	1823639	5658180	1271	1:52min (6.48km); Enter and go up narrow V-shaped valley
08	1824009	5658098	1306	1:58min (6.87km); Track junction with NE for Tama and SE for Waihohonu
09	1824620	5658329	1320	2:11min (7.58km); Above Lower Tama Lake
10	1824785	5658553	1317	2:15min (7.89km); Wooden seat on LHS (NW) side of track
11	1825636	5659026	1441	2:38min (9.06km); Above Upper Tama in lee of stone enclosure / pen
12	1825819	5658480	1465	3:20min (9.83km); Last high point before descent off ridge
13	1824905	5657029	1327	3:56min (11.81km); Meet Whakapapa to Waihohonu track
14	1824011	5658101	1305	4:15min (13.35km); Back at track junction with right for Tama and straight for Whakapapa
15	1821564	5658137	1215	5:15min (17.05km); Track junction right (N) for Taranaki Falls, straight for Chateau (20.2km total)
16	1821436	5658226	1190	5:25min (180m); If you go lower track -Steeply down to large round wooden picnic table
17	1821171	5658530	1167	5:40min (630m); If you go lower track - Large bridge over Wairere Stream
18	1820205	5658808	1107	6:05min (1.77km); If you go lower track -Junction with Whakapapa to Mangatepopo track
19	1819310	5657759	1061	5:50min - 6hrs (20.28km);Back at the start without lower track diversion of 3.45km
Т	1821539	5658091	1206	New DoC toilet Sept 2019

Notes:

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