

TARAWERA TRAIL

Topo50 Map: BF37 Waiotapu & BF38 Kaingaroa Forest

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH1 North

- At Wairakei follow SH 5 to Rotorua
- Enter Rotorua and at roundabout follow SH30 towards Whakatane
- At traffic lights go right on SH30 to Whakatane
- Next roundabout turn right uphill on Tarawera Rd past Redwoods entrance
- Follow Tarawera Rd and turn right to Tarawera Landing
- On the landing head right and park (**01305masl**)
- The track starts at the south end of the carpark on the lake edge

Rough description: Driving time is just over one hour to reach the start. A moderately hard tramp through native forest on the south side of Lake Tarawera from Tarawera Landing on Punaromia Beach to Hotwater Beach in Te Rata Bay. A lot of ascending and, as can be seen in the profile, the hard work is at the southern end. The target of the tramp was to get to Hotwater Beach then come back in style using the local Water Taxi. The preferred way is to taxi in and walk out as this prevents any hanging about or racing to the end to meet the taxi. This description is the walk in, taxi out done in 2013 and the opposite direction was done in 2018.

Detail: The first few hundred metres of this tramp is on wide, tourist grade track which leaves from the extreme SW corner of the car park. Within minutes a large box-like bridge (**02305masl**) is crossed over the Wairoa Stream – the box is in fact a fish trap. From here there is an anti-clockwise loop through a root infested muddy area with gorse and blackberry to get round and below the bluffs on the SE shore of the lake.

Within ten minutes a T-junction (**03306masl**) is reached where the route turns to the left or NE close in below the bluffs on a track following the contour in an area dominated by tree ferns. Right possibly goes to the new carpark mentioned later. The shore line is quite closely followed for about 2km when some slopes start to appear (**04308masl**) after crossing a mini-stream line. A rather flat promontory mainly with Kanuka – Karikaria Point – is crossed (**05309masl**) where a mapped stream was never seen.



Access route in red with car park as TR01 in yellow



Car park at Punaromia Beach



Fish trap box bridge



Ferny forest

Soon after this a small track junction is passed (**TR06305masl**) with a few steps seen on the branch which leads to a DoC toilet and presumably the hot pools which were heard about but are not advertised in any way. Immediately after this there is a longish ascent whilst the track remains quite close to the lake edge. A notable feature is located in a stream line on the right – a huge boulder - (**07311masl**) and past here the shoreline strip below the bluffs is extremely narrow and obviously suffers from landslips. Repair work has included installation of a set of stairs down slope (**08325masl**), heavy buttresses and new track plus bridges. The colluvial nature of the area is hinted at when from the old track a bridge can be seen below where the stream emerges from underground (**09315masl**). From this revamped area there is a bit of a grunt upwards to a minor crest (**10314masl**) followed by a section of rolling terrain leading to gentle slopes and easy walking again round past Te Poroku Point.

At around 5km distance a long steady ascent starts in ferny /Kanuka forest and parallels the stream line in the bottom of which there appears to be an old track visible at times. The track turns to the south (**11380masl**) at the top of this ascent then swings to the SW after about a kilometre to yet another uphill section where, at the top, there are views of Lake Rotomohana (**12390masl**). It is slightly bothersome that in this quite remote location there are no track signs at all but the views do allow location to be clearly established as a long winding descent happens. A wide wooden bridge (**13368masl**) is crossed then it is back into the Manuka on more winding track after passing an unmarked DoC toilet off to the right. In 2018 the bridge was closed off with a marked detour through the stream line –wallaby seen in the clearing.



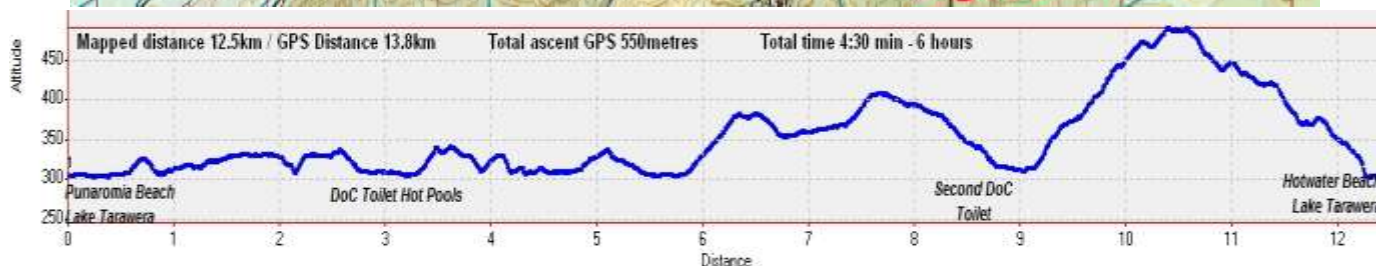
Lake view



Narrow and eroded



Glimpse of the lake



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1895598	5765849	305	Car park on Tarawera Landing on the edge of Lake Tarawera at Punaomia Beach
02	1895523	5765687	305	5min (250m); Fish trap box bridge over Wairoa Stream on edge of Lake Tarawera
03	1895497	5765536	306	10min (400m); Turn left at T-junction along below bluffs in fern forest
04	1896736	5765186	308	38min (2.2km); Cross stream then steeper slopes start
05	1897361	5764895	309	51min (3km); Virtually flat area with Kanuka and mapped stream not even seen
06	1897524	5764762	305	55min (3.2km); Junction off right to steps and DoC toilet, hot pools? Straight to start long ascent
07	1897876	5764277	311	1:19min (3.9km); Huge boulder upslope in stream line
08	1897957	5764072	325	1:23min (4.1km); Top of steps in "built-up" area below bluffs. Old slip
09	1897971	5764068	315	1:25 (4.2km); Old track above new bridge over stream emerging from underground
10	1897950	5763963	314	1:27min (4.3km); Minor top after longish uphill then down and easy walking below bluffs
11	1899472	5763360	380	2:04min (6.3km); Long steady uphill parallel to stream line with old track in the bottom at times.
12	1898866	5762612	390	2:24min (7.5km); Lake views from ferny forest then winding track downhill to south
13	1898923	5762048	368	2:38min (8.4km); Wide wood bridge then back into Kanuka and DoC toilet off to the RHS
14	1899253	5761881	312	2:48min (9km); Y-junction, go right then upwards below bluffs for views at top of long slope
15	1899293	5761866	311	2:50min (9.1km); Bend in track with views ahead after very long grunt up then on to narrow ridge
16	1900004	5761610	458	3:15min (10km); Steep downhill on very narrow heavily eroded pumice ridges
17	1899743	5761271	468	3:54min (10.7km); View of Lake Tarawera below to the NE
18	1900927	5761352	322	4:22min (12.2km); Start of steps down towards lake
19	1900906	5761378	304	4:27min (12.3km); Lake Tarawera with left for Hotwater Beach. Right to Rapatu Bay and monument
20	1900769	5761405	300	4:34min (12.5km); First picnic area on Hotwater Beach 300m short of DoC campsite

A tributary of the main Wairua Stream is crossed after a bit of descending and immediately there is a minor (14³¹²masl) unmarked Y-fork; go right as the left can only go towards the lake and possibly the Lake Tarawera Reserve which is shown on the map. Going to the right heads below some quite high bluffs and the track then ascends to the SE where views ahead can be obtained and some of the ascent is on a narrow ridge. The ascending on narrow ridges continues for quite some time but eventually the high point is passed and the track starts heading down (16⁴⁵⁸masl) on very narrow, heavily eroded pumice ridges –take care not to step off the track as it is a long fall if you do. For the next half hour there is relatively easy walking but no signs of progress are visible as all views are blocked whilst the track maintains altitude through this highly erodible area but eventually a glimpse of Lake Tarawera is offered (17⁴⁶⁸masl) via a stream line flowing to the NE. A gentle descent to the E now covers about 2km until a set of steps (18²⁰⁴masl) is reached indicating the start of the descent to the lake. The edge of Lake Tarawera is reached within minutes (19³⁰⁴masl) after four and a half to six hours. Five or six minutes walking to the left (NW) reaches the first of the picnic tables on Hot-water Beach (20³⁰⁰masl) a few hundred metres short of the DoC campsite.



Hotwater Beach



Campsite

The DoC campsite is rather pleasant being very sheltered, has ample toilets and a sheltered bench for cooking and this has a water supply. On this occasion the water taxi was used to get back to the start and the trip is delightful as the boat is good and the taxi-driver very well informed of the locations and history. The Tarawera Trail can now be accessed from further back from the new, well signposted car park with full facilities on Tarawera road but this section has not been checked out.



Taxi



Tarawera from water taxi



- Notes:
- **GPS** Garmin GPSmap 62sc
 - **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
 - **masl** = metres above sea level
 - **Water taxi** 07 362 8080