

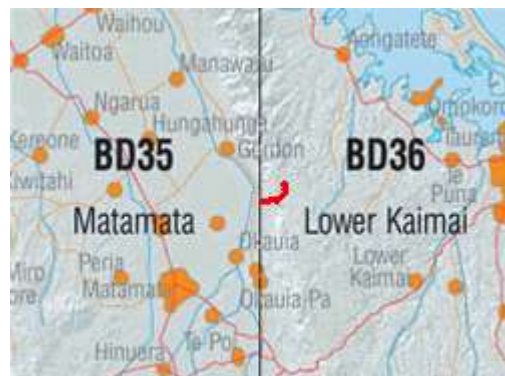
## WAIRERE FALLS

Topo50 Map: BD36 Lower Kaimai

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 through Putaruru on SH1 in about 1 hour
- Go right on to SH28 in 1:05 minutes
- Right at T-junction to SH5 for Rotorua in 1:10 minutes
- Left on to SH48 two minutes later
- Right on SH28 for Tauranga in 1:20 minutes
- Five minutes later left on SH29 then take the right fork for Matamata
- Two minutes later go right on Old Te Aroha Road
- Left at T-junction on to Old Te Aroha Road in 1:40 minutes
- See sign "Falls 1km" on right in 1:50 minutes
- Right on to Goodwin Road on bend at 1:52 minutes



Wairere Falls car park in 1:54 minutes (Refer waypoint WP01 on the maps)

**Rough Description:** As indicated above it takes about 2 hours to drive from Taupo to the car park (**WF1 79masl**) at the end of Goodwin Road; all times are taken from Taupo Police Station on the Domain. The walk is best described as easy to moderate with an almost non-stop, unrelenting climb from the word go in the car park till the crest (**WF8 415masl**) above the top of the Wairere waterfall is reached. Most of the path is well groomed and not overly steep and there are several sections of steps and ladders, with platforms, large rocks and boardwalks. Once at the top the terrain is a well-nigh level plain with a tranquil river and superb views of farmland to the west. The walk can be continued eastwards from the top of the falls as indicated on the map. The descent can be made "exciting" if the old Maori Trail down is followed – not recommended for the wary or unfit.

The walk to the platform above the main waterfall (**WP9 410masl**) takes 1:30 minutes including refreshment stops whilst just over another hour reaches the second fall (**WP12 429masl**) giving an outward walk of 2 hours 40 minutes.

This involves 6.1km distance plus 405metres ascent. The return walk can be done in 1 hour 40 minutes meaning that overall time is short of 5 hours with total distance of just over 12km – plus elevation.

**Detail:** First of all it should be stated that the track alignment as shown on the current 50,000 scale map is not quite correct and the GPS trace shown will be more accurate. The forest is so thick that the path could not have been easily seen and mapped from the APs (aerial photographs) and the highly sensitive GPS unit used on this tramp does get good signals even in forest.

From the car park (**WP1 79masl**) the first few hundred metres of path is gently sloping but soon after the bridge over the Wairere Stream (**WP2 111masl**) slopes increase rapidly as progress is made through the dense broad-leaf forest. After 15 minutes there is a slightly open area next to a fenced paddock; after this the serious ascending begins and a notice board indicates the junction (**WP3 150masl**) to the Old Maori trail going off very steeply upwards on the right – this route is not recommended. By this time the valley which the path follows is quite narrow with very steep sides. Within 30 minutes there is a large bridge (**WP4 184masl**) then some wooden steps, sections of boardwalk plus some large rocks forming a natural staircase upwards – nothing too steep or difficult if taken at the correct pace.

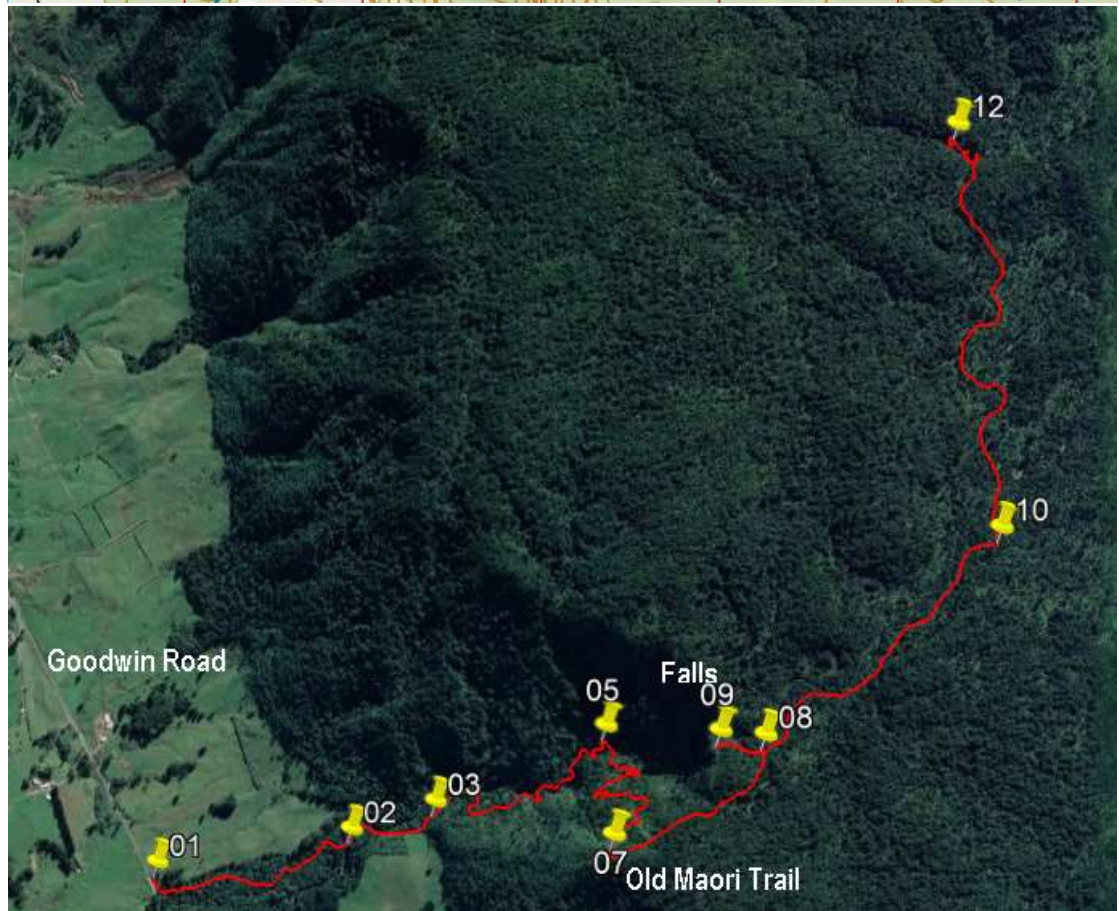
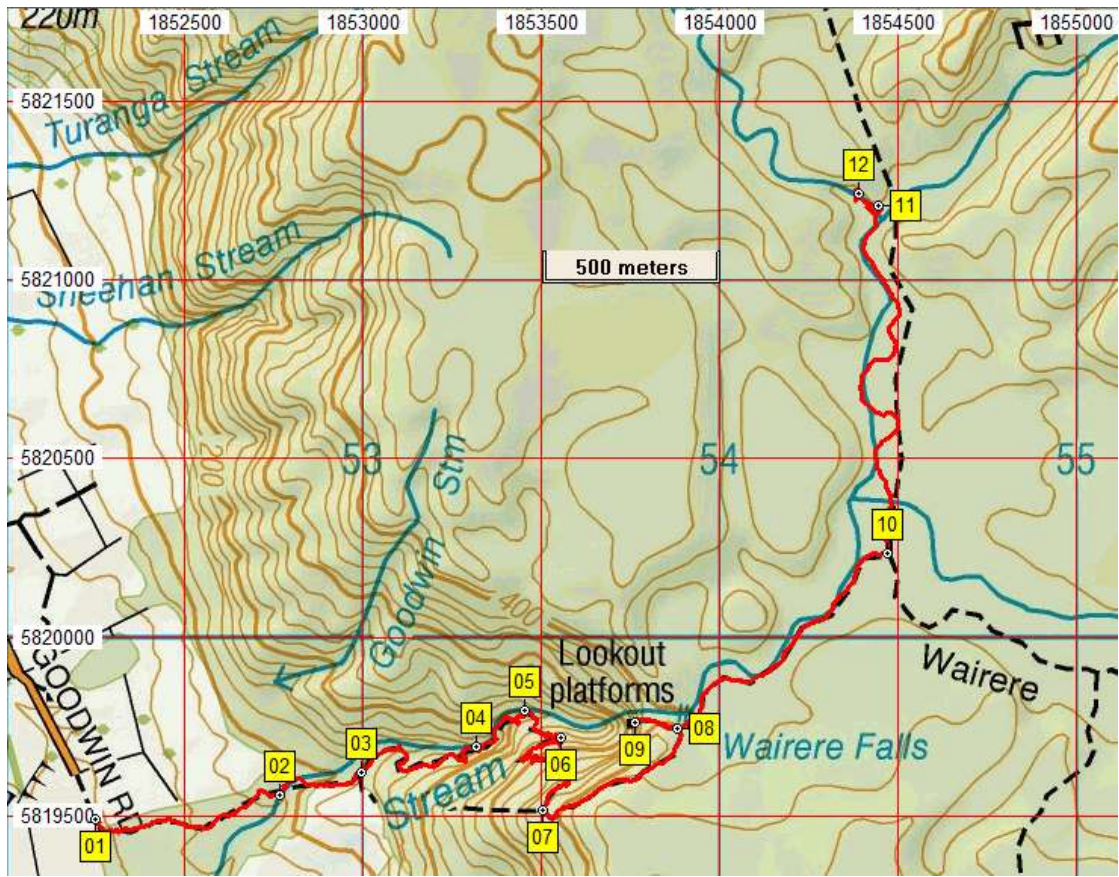
Soon, within another 5 minutes, there is a very large wooden staircase (**WP5 226masl**) but the steps are well chosen for size and ascending is relatively easy if taken at a sensible rate. Without this staircase it would not be possible to get up the slopes here except by using technical climbing skills and equipment. Another 5 minutes upwards reaches a small path off to the left with a notice indicating the look-out one minute away (**WP6 285masl**). There is a large platform here with seats etc offering views of the falls plus a good place for morning tea. About 15 minutes above the lookout there is a notice indicating the top of the Old Maori Trail (**WP7 409masl**) referred to earlier. Less than 5 minutes above this feature the slope eases and the virtually level plateau area is reached with an idyllic looking, slow flowing stream (**WP8 415masl**) which feeds the Wairere Falls off to the left. By going minutes left parallel to the stream the platform (**WP9 410masl**) above the Wairere Falls is reached.

After viewing the falls and vista back track to where you met the river then, if an extension to the tramp is wanted, turn left on the non-manicured track. Within about 20 minutes there is a Y-fork with a small notice (**WP10 421masl**) so turn left and follow the "North" track. This path is less well maintained and there are muddy sections but it is virtually flat and is all within superb broadleaf forest. There are several small bridges over the numerous streams or mini-gullies and after about 30 minutes there is one bridge with a length of wire which is partially wrapped in insulating tape (**WP11 426masl**). Turn off the track here and head left but do not cross the stream; within 10 minutes there is a small clearing offering a place for a lunch stop (**WP12 429masl**) plus a view of yet another waterfall.

This section of path, noted as the North Trail, was described as being the old Maori, Missionary and Settler trail on an old notice that was seen partially buried in the surrounding vegetation. From the upper waterfall the walk back down to the car park takes about 1 hour 40 minutes, but there is a variation if desired. On the descent it is possible to take a short cut by using the Old Maori Trail from **WP7** down to **WP3**. However this route is not recommended unless you are very sure footed, plus have strong hands and arms, since the path is not maintained and use of trees and vegetation is often the only safe way of descending some of the slippery slopes. A longer, A to B walk can be made to the Wairere Falls by starting at the end of Te Tuhi Road and using the Te Tuhi track to reach the top of the falls then descending by the above described route.

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1852250	5819490	79.0	Car park at end of Goodwin Road
02	1852767	5819558	111	15min (666m); Mid bridge in good broadleaf forest
03	1852994	5819621	150	22min (965m); Left at Y-fork for main path, right is Old Maori Trail
04	1853316	5819693	184	32min (1.51km); Large bridge, then steps, boardwalk and rocks in very steep sided valley
05	1853451	5819794	226	38min (1.78km); Halfway up very high wooden staircase
06	1853555	5819717	285	54min (2.09km); Notice for look-out off left with platform in 1 minute
07	1853505	5819517	409	1:18min (2.71km); Notice for top of old Maori Trail on Right
08	1853881	5819746	415	1:30min (3.25km); On crest at edge of the Wairere Stream
09	1853762	5819763	410	1:38min (3.42km); Platform above Wairere Falls
10	1854468	5820233	421	2:14min (4.45km); Y-fork with notice, follow North path
11	1854442	5821211	426	2:39min (5.67km); Go left off track at small footbridge with "taped wire" for waterfall
12	1854387	5821242	429	2:49min (5.87km); Lunch spot overlooked by small waterfall







View from platform above falls



Lookout platform with rocks and trees



Wairere Falls from lookout



Wairere Stream above falls



Notes:

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