

TAMA LAKES CIRCUIT

260 Series Map: Ruapehu, T20, T19, S20 and S19

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 (**TL01**) 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 (**TL02**).

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 the Taranaki Falls.

Detail: Turn left out of the car park (**TL01** 1061masl) opposite the Chateau and turn immediately right and go along the road up the side of the Chateau heading NE to the end (**TL02** 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 (**TL03** 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 (**TL04** 1206masl) and uphill again reaching a signpost [**TL05** 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.

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 (**TL06** 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 (**TL07** 1271masl) to cross the stream at the top – at this point the path is quite rough.

Ruapehu behind the Tama Lakes Waihohonu junction



A signpost (**TL08** 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 (**TL09** 1320masl). The track ahead can now be clearly seen heading NE up a slope passing a seat for the weary (**TL10** 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 (**TL11** 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 (**TL12** 1465masl) from where it is an easy descent on quite soft, sandy ground to meet up with the track for Waihohonu (**TL13** 1327masl). On the track head right (NW) to soon return to the previously seen signpost (**TL08/14**).

From here it takes about an hour back to the next track junction (**TL05 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 (**TL18** 1107) and, by going left (SW), the original outwards track is rejoined near **TL02** 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,

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

Access & location



Lower Tama Lake



Upper Tama Lake



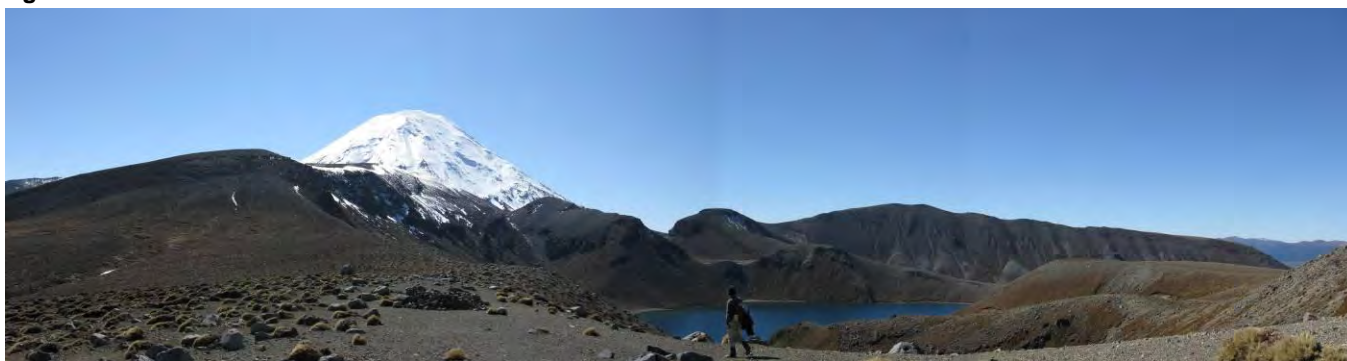
The ridge descent



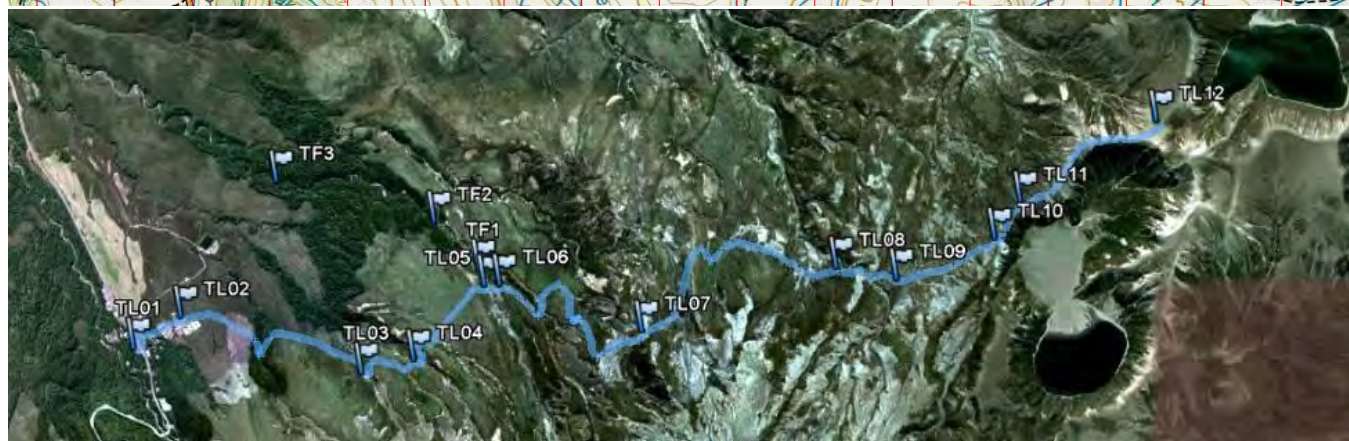
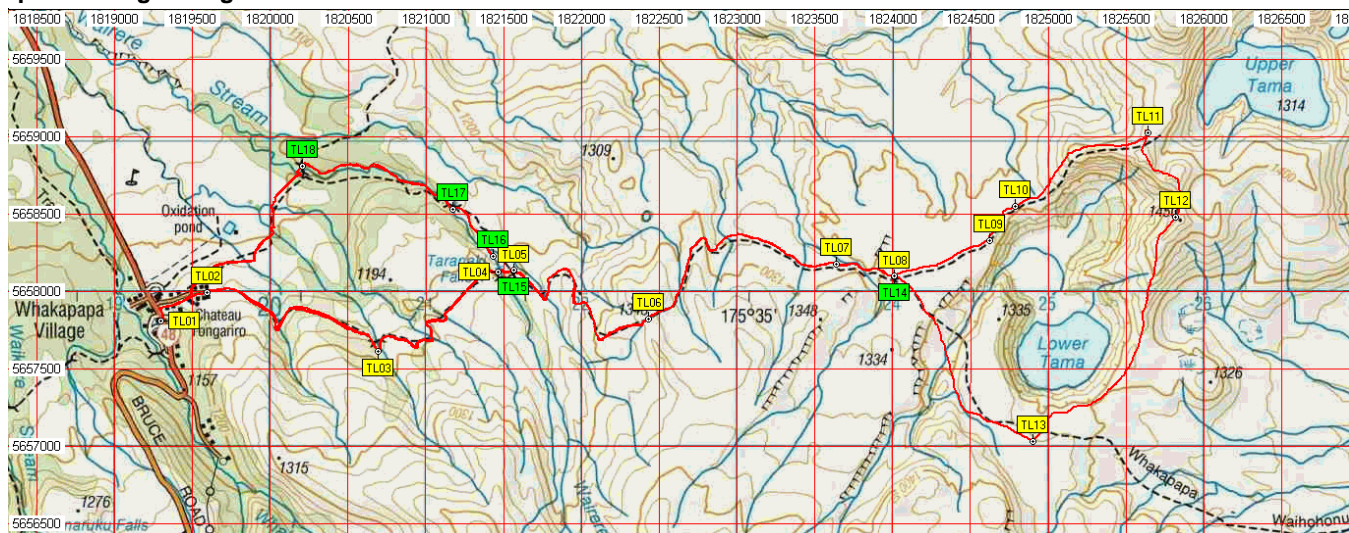
Lower Tama Lake plus the ridge descent below Ngauruhoe



Ngauruhoe and Lower Tama Lake from the south



Map and Google Image with GPS data



Waypoints – NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
TL01	2729362	6219465	1061	Car park opposite Chateau in Whakapapa
TL02	2729658	6219653	1088	End of tar-seal behind Chateau
TL03	2730761	6219271	1155	20 min: Open area with wooden bridge
TL04	2731526	6219784	1206	35min: Bridge on Wairere Stream
TL05	2731627	6219791	1204	40min: Track off north for Taranaki Falls
TL06	2732493	6219479	1285	1:15min: Ridge with views of Ngauruhoe, Ruapehu and Mount Taranaki
TL07	2733702	6219836	1271	1:40min: Enter and go up narrow V-shaped valley
TL08	2734072	6219754	1306	1:50min: Track junction with NE for Tama and SE for Waihohonu
TL09	2734683	6219985	1320	2:05min: Above Lower Tama Lake
TL10	2734848	6220209	1317	2:10min: Wooden seat on LHS (NW) side of track
TL11	2735699	6220680	1441	2:30min: Above Upper Tama in lee of stone enclosure / pen
TL12	2735881	6220135	1465	3:20min: Last high point before descent off ridge
TL13	2734967	6218685	1327	3:45min: Meet Whakapapa to Waihohonu track
TL14	2734074	6219757	1305	4:15min: Back at track junction with right for Tama and straight for Whakapapa
TL15	2731629	6219794	1215	5:20min: Back at track junction with right (N) for Taranaki Falls and straight for Chateau
TL16	2731500	6219883	1190	5:25min: Steeply down to large round wooden picnic table
TL17	2731236	6220188	1167	5:40min: Large bridge over Wairere Stream
TL18	2730270	6220466	1107	6:05min: Junction with Whakapapa to Mangatepopo track

NZTM

Easting	Northing
1819286	5657536
1819582	5657724
1820686	5657342
1821450	5657856
1821552	5657863
1822418	5657552
1823627	5657909
1823998	5657828
1824609	5658059
1824774	5658283
1825625	5658755
1825808	5658210
1824894	5656759
1823999	5657831
1821553	5657866
1821425	5657955
1821160	5658259
1820194	5658538



Notes:

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

From : 09-Sep-09 08:49:33
To : 09-Sep-09 14:55:51

Time taken : 6:06:17
Total Distance : 19.256 Km

Minimum Speed : -0.013 KPH
Maximum Speed : 8.553 KPH
Average Speed : 3.154 KPH

Minimum Altitude : 985 Meters
Maximum Altitude : 1466 Meters