

ONAI A GORGE

260 Series Map: U15 Ngongotaha

Topo50 Maps: BH37 Rotorua

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH1 then follow SH5 to Rotorua. On approaching Rotorua follow SH5 for Hamilton until Ngongotaha is reached. After passing through Ngongotaha take the 4th road on the left (SH36) signposted Tauranga (Tauranga Direct Road). Then turn to the right on Kaharoa Road for Rotongata and keep going until No 1019 is reached – this is an obvious house and has a notice board proclaiming “Winston Fleming’s Kiwi Outback”.

Rough description: This is a fairly hard guided tramp which starts on Winston’s farm then gets down into the Onaia Valley and Gorge and follows this, basically to the NE, for five kilometres. There is no track but lots of stream-bed walking – luckily there is little flow in dry periods – plus some hefty bush-bashing to get round tricky spots. The vegetation is lush, scenery is amazing with very high bluffs on either side and it is quite testing in places. There is only one grunty ascent when the bluff is ascended at the top of the Gorge to get back up on top. Winston is a very good guide and really knows the area as the farm was set up by his father back in 1935.

Detail: It takes about 90 minutes to drive from Taupo to 1019 Kaharoa Road (**WP01328masl**) where Winston offers a warm welcome and a history of the farm which his father cut out of the bush in the mid-1930s, stories about cattle suffering from the lack of cobalt in the area and the bull on the farm which has a name for jumping fences etc. The first kilometre is all within the farm and passes through several gates whilst heading basically NW over the rolling to hilly paddocks until a view of the valley is obtained (**WP2301masl**).

This is a working farm



Now heading downhill the treeline is reached (**WP03281masl**) then it is steeply down into the valley to meet the first, slightly tricky stream crossing in very thick vegetation with many Lancewood – in fact it looks like a Lancewood nursery. Now it is on to a small confluence (**WP04260masl**) with a shadowy rock.

Just after this a “twisted” tree is passed – Winston tied a knot in this tree years ago and it survived – and soon the valley bottom is filled with moss covered boulders, but these are not slippery though care has to be taken not to fall over or off them. The valley is narrow and often the towering bluffs can be seen and some of the bluffs are covered in Rata (**WP06253masl**). A few of the side streams join the main stream as water chutes and one of those is passed after about 2hours (**WP07235masl**).

Huge shadowy rock



A few sections of the actual stream line cannot be walked over due to pools or big rocks and the route keeps making forays on to the banks and often the feet get tied up in supplejack (**WP08234masl**) so full attention has to be paid to what is happening. The valley widens a bit after around 4km (2:30min) and the wide, virtually flat green vegetated bottom is very easy walking and quite delightful.

There is a high bluff and the valley narrows again with a flattish camping area under the bluff (**WP09226masl**) and there are stories about gold panning in the area. Soon after this there is the delight of walking on a formed track as the Kaharoa Kokato Track (**WP10223masl**) comes in from the left. However this easy going section is short-lived as a move to the right (E) is made back into the bottom of the valley (**WP11212masl**) to look at the “grunt” of the day – ascending the bluff. The uphill grind is a bit steep and tricky as the surface is generally a bit soft and loose but it only takes 20min to get up on to the ridge (**WP12292masl**).

Lush vegetation



Flat valley bottom



Uphill grind



Once on the ridge it is easy going, over a barbed wire fence and into the open and left on an old road (**WP13291masl**) to soon do a loop back and on to a gravel road. Twenty minutes later it is on to a narrower dirt track (**WP14267masl**) which offers easy walking. Next there is turn to the right (**WP15297masl**) then a bend to the right on the dirt road followed by a short off-track excursion to the “bum” tree (**WP17310masl**). From here it is another kilometre down the track to meet (**WP18306masl**) the gravelled Kaharoa Road which soon becomes tar sealed and it is 1.5km back down the road to the start point.

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

Access



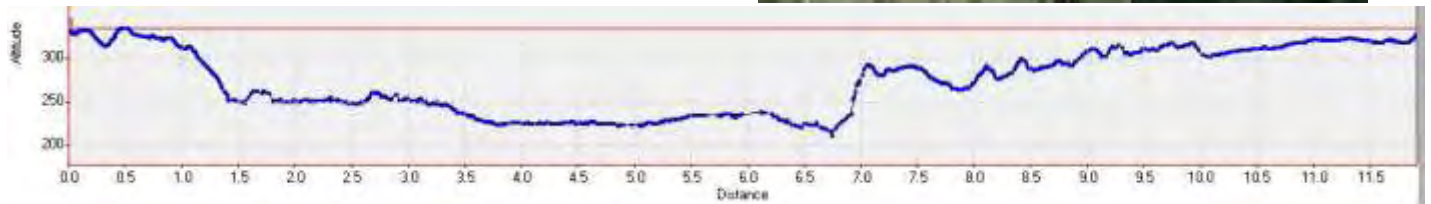
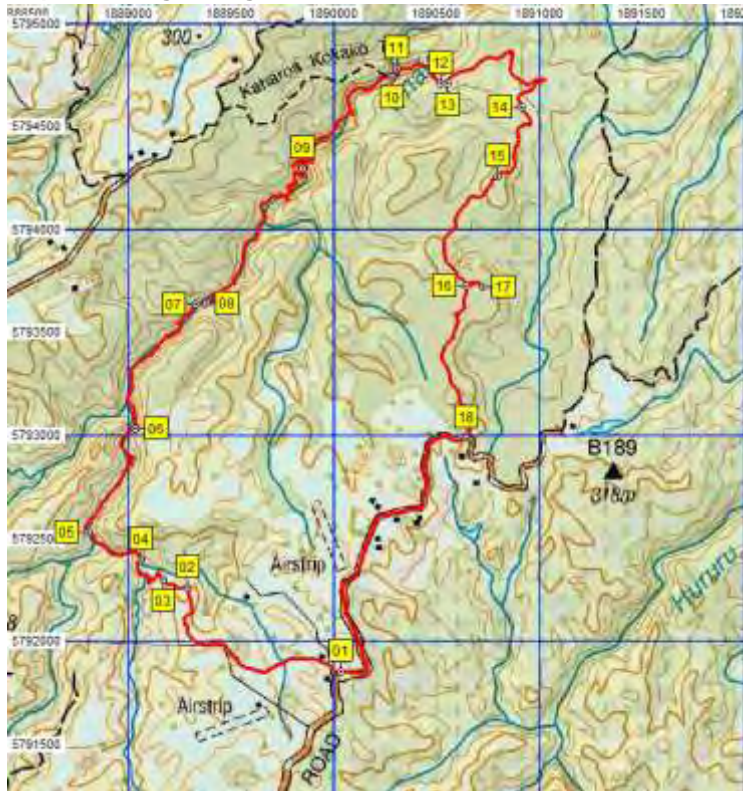
High viz guide



Twisted tree



Map and Google Image with GPS data



Waypoints - NZ Grid

Na...	Eastings	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
01	2800227	6353554	328	Start at 1019 Kaaharoa Road - Winston Flemings Kiwi Outback
02	2799479	6353966	301	1.1km (21min); Overlook the gorge after rolling, hilly grazing land
03	2799362	6354004	281	1.3km (27min); Treeline then steeply down to tricky stream crossing. Many Lancewood, thick veg
04	2799251	6354100	260	1.6km (52min); Small confluence near upstanding rocks - morning tea & on to knotted tree
05	2799001	6354239	251	2km (1:14min); Area with many large mossy boulders - not slippery
06	2799227	6354736	253	2.7km (1:36min); Bluff on LHS (West) with Rata
07	2799520	6355341	235	3.5km (2:10min); On true right bank opposite water-chute on true left bank
08	2799573	6355345	234	3.6km (2:17min); Suplejack area then rocky valley bottom
09	2800044	6356001	226	4.8km (2:58min); Overhang with campsite below
10	2800479	6356445	223	6.6km (4:02min); Meet Kaharoa Kokako track on the left
11	2800502	6356484	212	6.7km (4:08min); Start steep, grunty ascent up on the true right bank
12	2800718	6356412	292	7km (4:30min); On the ridge top
13	2800749	6356415	291	7.1km (4:39min); Emerge in to the open and on to old road, going left
14	2801104	6356293	267	8km (5:00hrs); Narrower dirt track, easy walking
15	2800993	6355956	297	8.4km (5:08min); Right at track junction then right again at bend to old dirt road
16	2800834	6355430	302	9.1km (5:20min); Left off good dirt road
17	2800920	6355425	310	9.3km (5:34min); the bum tree
18	2800833	6354690	306	10.2km (5:51min); Meet metalled road and go right, soon becomes tar seal

NZTM

Eastings	Northing
1890038	5791851
1889289	5792262
1889172	5792300
1889061	5792396
1888809	5792535
1889035	5793032
1889327	5793638
1889380	5793642
1889851	5794300
1890286	5794745
1890308	5794783
1890525	5794711
1890556	5794715
1890911	5794593
1890801	5794256
1890643	5793729
1890728	5793724
1890643	5792988

Campsite in overhang



GPS Data

From : 23-Oct-13 09:12:06
 To : 23-Oct-13 15:25:12

Time taken : 6:13:05
 Total Distance : 11.923 Km
GPS Distance : 14.26km
 Minimum Speed : 0.015 KPH
 Maximum Speed : 13.385 KPH
 Average Speed : 1.917 KPH

Minimum Altitude : 212 Meters
 Maximum Altitude : 335 Meters

The bum tree



Notes:

- **GPS** Garmin GPSmap 60CSx
- **masl** = metres above sea level