

RANGIPO HUT

260 Series Map: Ruapehu, T20

Topo50 Map: BJ34 Ruapehu & BJ35 Waiouru

How to get to START: The route to the start can be traced opposite down SH1 from Taupo through Turangi and then down Desert Road.

Exit the Desert Highway as shown opposite turning right on to the **Tukino Access Road** shown as the pink line – taking note of the signs at the start about 2 wheel drive vehicles. The drive from Taupo takes about 1:30 minutes covering just over 100km

Follow the gravel road and take notice of the signs posted denoting as Army territory. The road is pretty well marked with poles, does weave around a little bit watch out for some minor puddles to rather large stretches of wet flooded areas.

The **2 wheel-drive car park** is reached in 15 minutes and a further 20 minutes is required to reach the repeater station with twin masts. Park near the masts (**RH01** 1419masl) or even at the start of the Round-the-Mountain track (**RH02** 1425masl)

Rough description: A moderate in-and-out tramp covering 12km in 4-5 hours including refreshment breaks that takes you to the Rangipo Hut passing through the area of the previous Lahar flows. There are a few areas where care has to be exercised since in the summer the ground is rough with ankle turning opportunities and, in wintertime, some of the slopes could be icy. There is an overall altitude gain of over 1,000m over the 12km. A few climbs are a bit steep and tricky, due to rough surfaces and loose gravel.

Detail: The Tukino Access Road leads to the Tukino Alpine Village which previously was a ski centre; you will see some of the huts or lodges from the Round-the-Mountain track as the walk proceeds. Due to “not the best skiing conditions or access” the area has now been taken over for use for Outward Bound or outdoor skills and training for youngsters. From the suggested car park (**RH01** 1419masl) walk up the road from radio masts heading in a WSW direction for 5 minutes to where the “Round-the-Mountain” track crosses the road (**RH02** 1425masl) and turn left off the road on to the well sign-posted track heading off in a SE direction.

Study of the map shows the present track does not always follow the line of the track as mapped and it does “wobble” about a little bit but basically heads SSW crossing a few minor stream lines on the way and is pretty well marked with poles. Within half an hour the first of the larger stream (**RH03** 1400masl) lines is crossed and the track follows then runs parallel to a minor, sandy stream bed to climb up on to the next crest or ridge. The well poled track can be seen a fair distance ahead most of the time as it winds its way up and down through the various stream lines. After about 1 hour 10 minutes the footing gets a bit rougher and loose whilst the slope down into one of the tributaries of the Whangaehu is steeper than previously. Once cresting the far side of this valley the first of the “Lahar” warning signs (**RH04** 1464masl) is encountered – this sign may be out of date now but it is a good historical marker. A few minutes later there is a second sign with a good view of the Lahar gully (Whangaehu River valley) and the refurbished bridge which was badly damaged during the Lahar outburst – the bridge (**RH05** 1451masl) being reached within about 1 hour 30 minutes of leaving the car park.

Once over the bridge, which can be tricky if there are high winds since there are no side “stays” helping reduce swinging, turn hard right upstream in a narrow rocky channel which is steep in places. Then pass through the “rock wall” sitting on the minor rise and down through the next channel and up a sandy gravelly slope to pass the “hazard board” (**RH06** 1476masl) on the south side of the Whangaehu River. The track then swings to the Se then SW and is pretty steep but this ascent only takes around 10 minutes with more or less level ground being reached (**RH08** 1538masl) before swinging round to the SSE and heading straight for Rangipo Hut (**RH10** 1561masl) which is reached in about 2:30 minutes.

This hut is quite exposed and can be difficult to reach in bad winter weather but offers about 20 bunks, wood burning stove, internal sink (no water supply) plus external sink with water supply and, of course, a modern toilet just above the hut. For the return just retrace the inwards route unless some cross-country, off-track walking is planned when the route described in the tramp “Rangipo Hut Loop” can be followed. This variant passes very close to the Army Area and care must be taken not to stray into the military area before joining the Tukino Access Road a few kilometres from the Desert Road.

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

Access



Swing Bridge



Whangaehu River



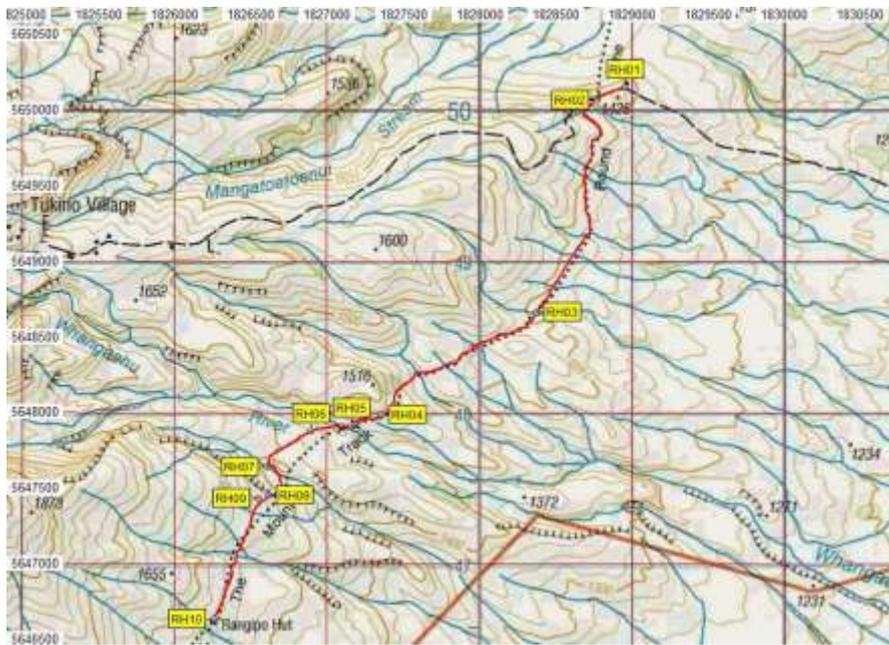
Wonderful rock formations



Rangipo Hut



Map and Google Earth



From : 26-Nov-14 09:09:05
To : 26-Nov-14 14:30:31

Time taken : 5:21:25
Total Distance : 10.880 Km
GPS Distance 12.05km
Minimum Speed : 0.004 KPH
Maximum Speed : 6.023 KPH
Average Speed : 2.031 KPH

Minimum Altitude : 1367 Meters
Maximum Altitude : 1566 Meters
Total ascent 1170 metres



Waypoints – NZ Grid

N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
RH01	1828955	5650154	1419	Park below radio masts and just before Round-the-Mountain track
RH02	1828772	5650065	1425	5min (200m); junction with Round-the-Mountain track on Tukino Access Road wsw from masts
RH03	1828378	5648663	1400	30min (1.9km); into first sizeable gully on the Round-the-Mountain track (RMT)
RH04	1827358	5647985	1464	1:05min (3.2km); First Lahar warning notice
RH05	1827167	5647915	1451	1:30min (3.5km); middle of Rangipo swing bridge then upstream in rock gully
RH06	1826896	5647875	1476	1:42min (3.8km); at top of sandy, gravelly ascent and past "hazard" board
RH07	1826607	5647641	1488	1:50min (4.2km); sandy then rocky descent to stream and left to pick up new track alignment
RH08	1826623	5647453	1538	2:00min (4.5km); on more level track after steepish ascent
RH09	1826550	5647431	1552	2:06min;(4.6km); SSE alignment heading straight for Rangipo Hut
RH10	1826258	5646637	1561	2:30min (5.5km); Rangipo Hut

Notes:

- **GPS** = Garmin GPSMap 62sc
- **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- **masl** = metres above sea level