

TAURANGA TAUPO WATERFALL

260 Series Maps: Tongariro, T19 and Kaimanawa, U19

Topo50 Map: BH36 Motutere

How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo southwards on SH1
- In 30 – 35 minutes enter Tauranga Taupo on SH1
- At 38km (35min) from Taupo Police Station go left on to Kiko Road
- At 39km (37min) leave sealed road and proceed on gravel
- At 52km (50–52 min) bear right still on Kiko Road
- At 54km (55min) left on to loop with Kaimanawa sign
- At 55km (57–60min) park in car park with DoC toilet

Total time 55min to one hour driving on pretty rough gravel road for 20km

All times and distances from Taupo Police Station on Tongariro Domain

The alignment of Kiko Road can be seen opposite as the red line running south-eastwards from near Te Rangiita on SH1. The location of the tramp lies between the end of the red line and the mapped Tauranga Taupo River.

Rough description: A tramp which is not too demanding physically but which does have a few sections requiring a fair amount of nerve and skill in descending and ascending rather steep, tricky slopes.

The whole walk normally takes about 5 - 6 hours including stops for lunch and morning tea. Different routes in and out add to the variation and make up for the lack of views on this forest walk.

Inwards is through very dense forest and starts on a good track which meanders in and out of the valleys of this dissected area. The return trip can be made longer by using the quad-bike track but this has much less slope involved as most of the track is wide and pretty gentle and is, or has been, used for quad bike access. The highest point on this 12 km tramp is in the car park and there is an overall altitude variation of 264m within the walk with an overall altitude gain of 1032 metres, recorded by GPS.

Detail: As in the directions above leave Taupo heading south on SH 1 and soon after Te Rangiita enter Tauranga Taupo and at 38km from the Taupo Police station on the Domain turn left into Kiko Road. This road very quickly becomes unpaved and care must be taken as there can be a lot of loose gravel on the surface and speed needs to be kept down especially as there are long straight stretches and the temptation to go fast presents itself. Kiko Road is well signposted and easy to follow.

After 20km of this gravelly road is a small Y-junction with an obvious sign showing that you are in the Kaimanawa Forest, go left on this loop to enter the car park which is on the left side of the road (**TTW01** 764masl). Total time from Taupo is about one hour.

From the carpark follow the signed Loop Track which sets off more or less south then meanders about in and out of minor stream lines but heading south east till you cross a wooden bridge (**TTW02** 739masl) after about 7-10 minutes. This is all through quite deeply dissected terrain with very heavy forest cover with some red markers on the trail. At about 25 minutes there is a poorly defined branch trail off left (**TTW03** 739masl) with the only sign being some nails sticking in an L-shaped tree on the right hand side of the track, from this point on the track is real back-country standard.

Fifteen minutes or so further on care and attention is required as there is a steep, rather wet descent (**TTW04** 688masl) to a stream crossing (**TTW05** 676masl). The ascent up the slope on the other side of this metre-wide stream is not clearly marked in places so look for signs of previous trampers. One of the first "giants of the forest" is reached in 1:20 min (**TTW06** 722masl). After a total walking time of about 1:50 min a T-junction is arrived at and is situated below another forest giant "Peter's Tree" (**TTW07** 691masl) – remember this tree as this is where the loop path is taken on the return trip; as you pass look behind Peter's Tree for the green markers – the most obvious is a green poly bag tied to the bushes. From Peter's tree the ridge to the ESE is followed for about 500metres when you slip off left (**TTW08** 684masl) to start descending then turn hard left minutes later downhill (**TTW09** 660masl) then slipping into a small gully (**TTW10** 624masl) with odd tricky sections. In about 2:20 min the waterfall can be heard and then seen (**TTW11** 561masl) with magnificent views from a gap where a tree has been felled or fallen out. At this point course is changed to ENE off the ridge – the final descent has begun. The going starts to get slightly technical or difficult at the head of a gully and care must be taken from here on and all footholds and handholds checked.

However, even the less supple and those with artificial joints can get down here though slight assistance may have to be offered at times. The descent to the river edge (**TTW12** 528masl) takes around 20 minutes, or did on the day as the odd minor deviation was tried and recent windfalls have not helped the situation. This is the area where the long awaited promised DOC path will have to include a ladder, steps or an extension to the path to get into the river bed upstream of the actual waterfall. The waterfall cannot really be seen at all on the final descent and to get a good view, once down, would mean scrambling up the rocky edges of the fall or getting wet by walking or swimming out into the pool below the falls. A good picnic area exists on the gravel beside the pool below the falls. Time to arrive here is 2:45 to 3 hours.

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

Access



Kiko Road access in red and tramp route in yellow



The waterfall

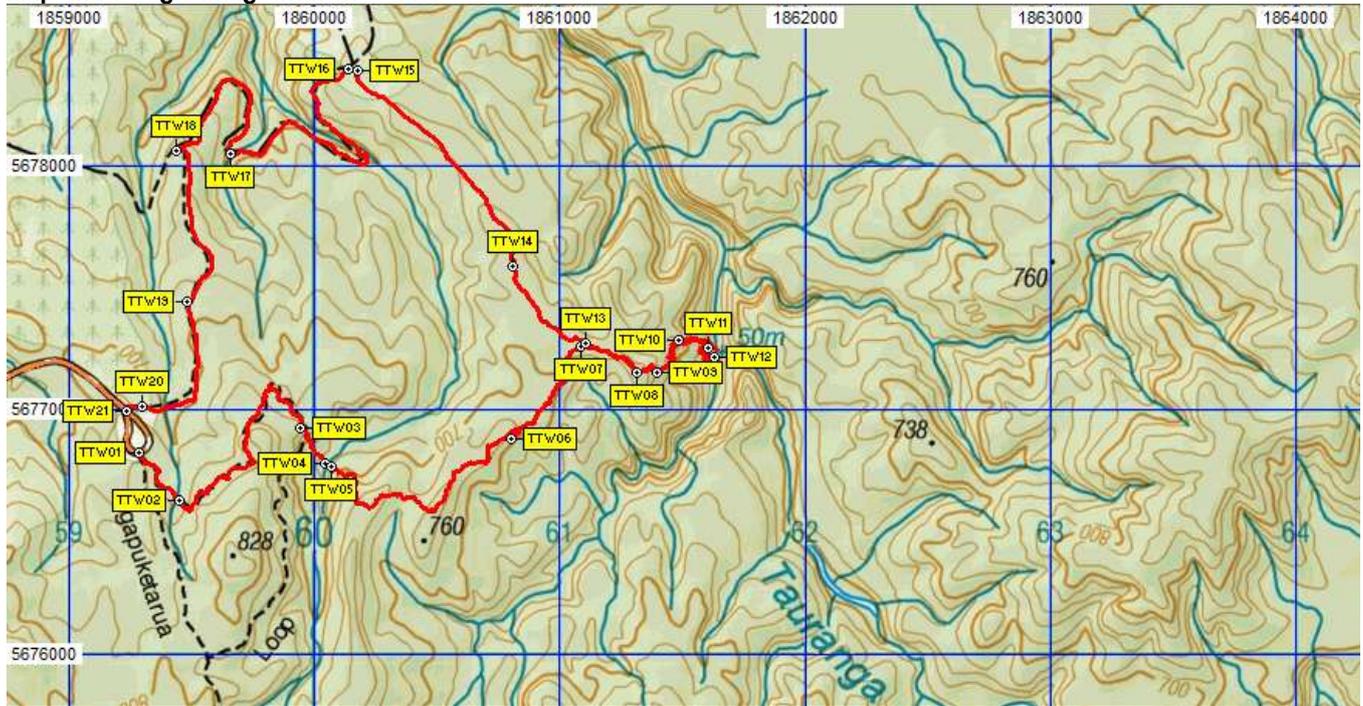


The boiling pool below the falls

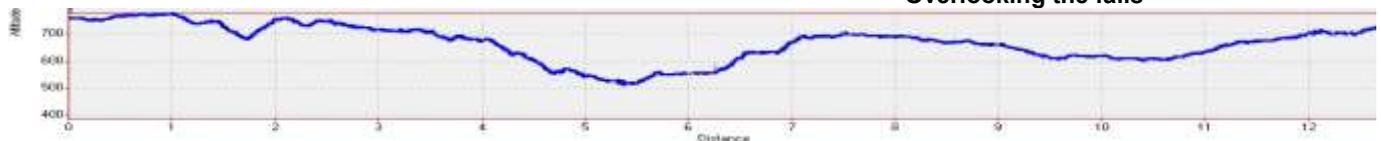
The L-shaped tree



Map and Google image with GPS data



Overlooking the falls



Waypoints – NZ Grid

N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
TTW01	1859283	5676824	764	Car park at end of Kiko Road one hour from Taupo
TTW02	1859447	5676629	739	7min (300m); Wooden bridge on good wide track
TTW03	1859944	5676927	744	28min (1.5km); Leave main track at minor junction to the left at L-shaped tree with nails
TTW04	1860042	5676784	688	36min (1.7km); Very steep, tricky descent within minor gully line
TTW05	1860072	5676769	681	40min (1.75km); Stream crossing, 2 metres wide and not deep
TTW06	1860801	5676883	722	1:18min (3km); One of the first really big native species trees
TTW07	1861084	5677260	691	1:50min (3km); T-junction at huge tree, go right on vague path. Note small path also heads west
TTW08	1861316	5677152	684	+/- 2hours (4.1km); Slip left off small ridge and start descent
TTW09	1861396	5677152	660	2:023min (4.3km); Hard left and downhill
TTW10	1861483	5677286	624	2:10min (4.4km); Into small gully and descend, some tricky bits
TTW11	1861606	5677258	561	2:25min (4.6km); Views of waterfall through the trees before "hairy" descent down bluff to river
TTW12	1861631	5677216	528	2:41min (5km); River edge after very tricky, slippery, descent
TTW13	1861103	5677276	689	+/- 4hrs (7km); Pass behind (RHS) of huge (TTW07) tree on indistinct path heading west
TTW14	1860809	5677590	692	4:10min (7.9km); Old camp site and path improved and twin (Quad bike) tracks
TTW15	1860173	5678395	661	4:31min (9km); On wide track with hunters' camp site on RHS
TTW16	1860136	5678398	643	4:32min (9.1km); Meet track from right from old sawmill site
TTW17	1859660	5678051	589	4:55min (10.4km); Top of a small grunty ascent in rolling / undulating area
TTW18	1859435	5678062	659	5:09min (11.2km); Sharp bend in road with unused, over-grown track off heading SSW
TTW19	1859484	5677444	699	5:22min (12km); Barely recognisable Y-junction with old, unused road from right
TTW20	1859297	5677017	721	5:34min (12.6km); Degraded trenches cut as quad-bike traps / dis-incentives
TTW21	1859234	5676994	723	5:40 (12.7km); Meet Kiko Road after slightly grunty multiple ascents, left to car park

NZTM

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1859283	5676824
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1859944	5676927
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1860072	5676769
1860801	5676883
1861084	5677260
1861316	5677152
1861396	5677152
1861483	5677286
1861606	5677258
1861631	5677216
1861103	5677276
1860809	5677590
1860173	5678395
1860136	5678398
1859660	5678051
1859435	5678062
1859484	5677444
1859297	5677017
1859234	5676994

The climb back up the slope out of the river is easier than the descent. The path is followed back to Peter's tree (TTW07) where the poorly marked trail (TTW13^{689masl}) goes behind the tree to the NW. Ten minutes or so from here there is an old campsite and the track improves (TTW14^{685masl}) and is wide enough for quad bikes, but it is very indistinct around the campsite so some looking about may be required. At about 4:30 min there is a branch to a bivouac/hunters' camp site (TTW15^{661masl}) on the right. Minutes later there is a Y-fork where there used to be a hanging bike frame (TTW16^{643masl}) and the track to use for the return bears left; the right branch goes to an old sawmill site. The route now passes through some undulating to rolling land so there is the odd grunty ascent (TTW17). The next obvious feature is a sharp bend with the track swinging round to the left (TTW18^{659masl}) and there is an old degraded track going off on this bend heading SW. Another Y-fork is reached some (40 minutes or so) time after this bend (TTW19^{699masl}) with the track to the right being unused and heavily overgrown. From here on there is a fair bit of ascending but the track is good and a fair pace can be maintained.

Degraded trenches (TTW20^{721masl}) are encountered about 15 minutes after this and these are reportedly failed quad-bike traps in efforts to keep them out of the forest area. Soon after this some paths / tracks converge and then the gravel road (TTW21^{723masl}) is arrived at and, by going left, it is about a minute back to the car park.

Forest tea stop



Target achieved

Steep descent to the river



Hunters Bivouac (TTW15)



The waterfall and pool



Time taken : 5:37:12
 Total Distance : 12.688 Km

 Minimum Speed : 0.000 KPH
 Maximum Speed : 31.743 KPH
 Average Speed : 2.258 KPH

 Minimum Altitude : 512 Meters
 Maximum Altitude : 776 Meters

Notes:

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