

## MOUNT TIHIA CIRCUIT

**260 Series Map:** Tongariro, T19

**Topo50 Map:** BH35 Turangi

**How to get to START:** Exit Taupo down the lake on **SH1**

- In Turangi turn right off **SH1** on to **SH41** towards Tokaanu
- Turn left off **SH41** on to **SH47** as if going to Whakapapa – set your trip meter
- Look for small car park on **RHS** of road at 4.5km from Junction (This is where you exit) [WP No **TC 18**]
- Pass the path on your left to Lake Rotopounamu (*the van mover might go and walk round here*)
- Pass both tracks on your left that go down to the head of Lake Rotoaira
- About 1km past the second of the above access roads look for a small grassy track on your right when heading NW. Walk in on this track from the road (WP No **TC 01**)

**Rough description:** This is a long walk not to be undertaken lightly or without having someone along who knows just where they are going and reliable navigation skills. Most of the walk is on uncharted tracks, there are some “paint splurges” on trees or plastic ribbons tied on trees but there is a great deal of “bush bashing involved. Much of the bush bashing is through very high, very thick virtually impenetrable shrubs which do a good job of skin removal and offer many trip-ups – the bush recalls the story of the tribe of pygmies wandering through high bush and having to stand on each others shoulders to see if there was anything to see accompanied by cries of “where the f&%# are we” – the tribe eventually being called the “Werethefukawee!” Allow 6 – 7 hours including tea and lunch stops plus some spare in case you have navigational irregularities. There is a height gain of around 430 metres taking about 3 hours; you then lose 25 metres passing through the basin of the crater followed by another gain of about 90 metres to just below the top of Mount Tihia. Some of the descent is quite steep and relentless but relieved by the birdcalls (Tui).

**Detail:** Drive out of Turangi on the Tokaanu Road (SH41) then turn left on to the road for Whakapapa (SH47) and continue up SH47 for 4.5km when you should see a small car parking area on the right hand side of the road as you go up. The van or car mover should take note of this as the walkers will emerge here in a few hours.

Continue up the highway passing the start of the circular walk of Lake Rotopounamu – the car or van mover might want to walk round this lake. Keep going on SH47 passing the access / exit tracks that lead to the head of Lake Rotoaira and about 1 km past the second access road / track look for a grassy track on your right. This is your starting point and is noted as WP **TC 1**.

After a matter of 2 minutes on this track turn right at an old “dumped” car (**TC2**) then in another minute or so bear left under the power lines (**TC3**) and almost immediately right at a T-junction when you start ascending. The path is not at all clear so keep your eyes open for signs of previous trampers or hunters – foot prints, broken or cut branches, odd paint spots or ribbon.

In about a total time of 15 minutes you should find an old track crossing and you should bear leftish (**TC4 646masl**) at a large conifer. There is then a small meadow (**TC5 942masl**) which is, reportedly, the site of a previous village. From here you ascend further and pass several holes and trenches on the ground – these are reportedly old fortifications. It is possible that the trench might have been a water supply channel. The forest in this area is most attractive with many varied species and some “old giants” tower high above you. In about 1:30 minutes after some slightly steep sections you reach a minor crest which has a bivouac constructed from poles and black plastic (**TC6 942masl**) which makes a good tea / coffee stop. The forest is very thick here and it can be seen opposite that there was no GPS signal so there is a break in the red line which indicates the GPS track.

Anyway, you should be heading uphill, roughly north eastwards and several sections of the track have been marked and chopped shrubs and branches also indicate the correct route. In about 2:20 minutes the amazing tree as shown below should be encountered (**TC8 1012masl**).

### Amazing looped tree



This tree must have been damaged or bent round whilst a sapling as it is well nigh fully grown with a strong trunk which lies along the ground.

On the day this walk was done the next 20 minutes or so passed upwards in a continual struggle through dense forest with virtually no clear indications of where you were or guide indications. A position fix was taken in a slight clearing by GPS (**TC9 1009masl**) at 2:45 minutes walking time. From this point a compass bearing was used to continue in a north-easterly direction until emerging out into the open and turning left on to a minor footpath (**TC10 1016masl**) at just on 3 hours.

The edge of the crater depression was reached in 10 minutes or so (**TC11 982masl**) when walking became a pleasure on the short tussock grassland. Fifteen minutes later the NE corner of the crater was reached (**TC12 996masl**).

At this point there is a low ridge (3:30 minutes) and this is ascended into low bush. Over the ridge the stream is followed on the true right bank till a low mound is reached (**TC13 994masl**) below Mount Tihia.

**NZ Grid GPS:** Geodetic Datum 1949

**NZTM GPS:** NZTM on WGS84

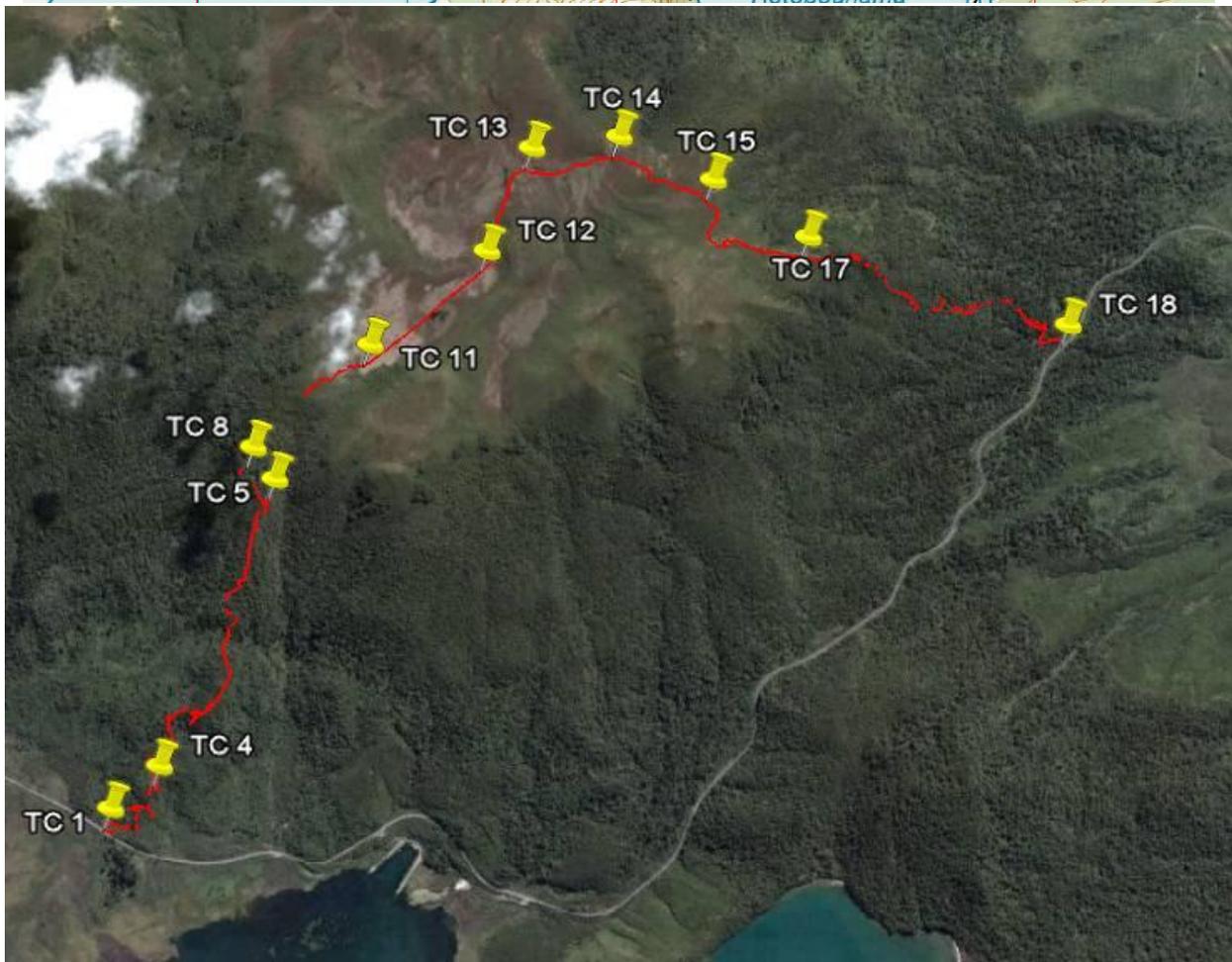
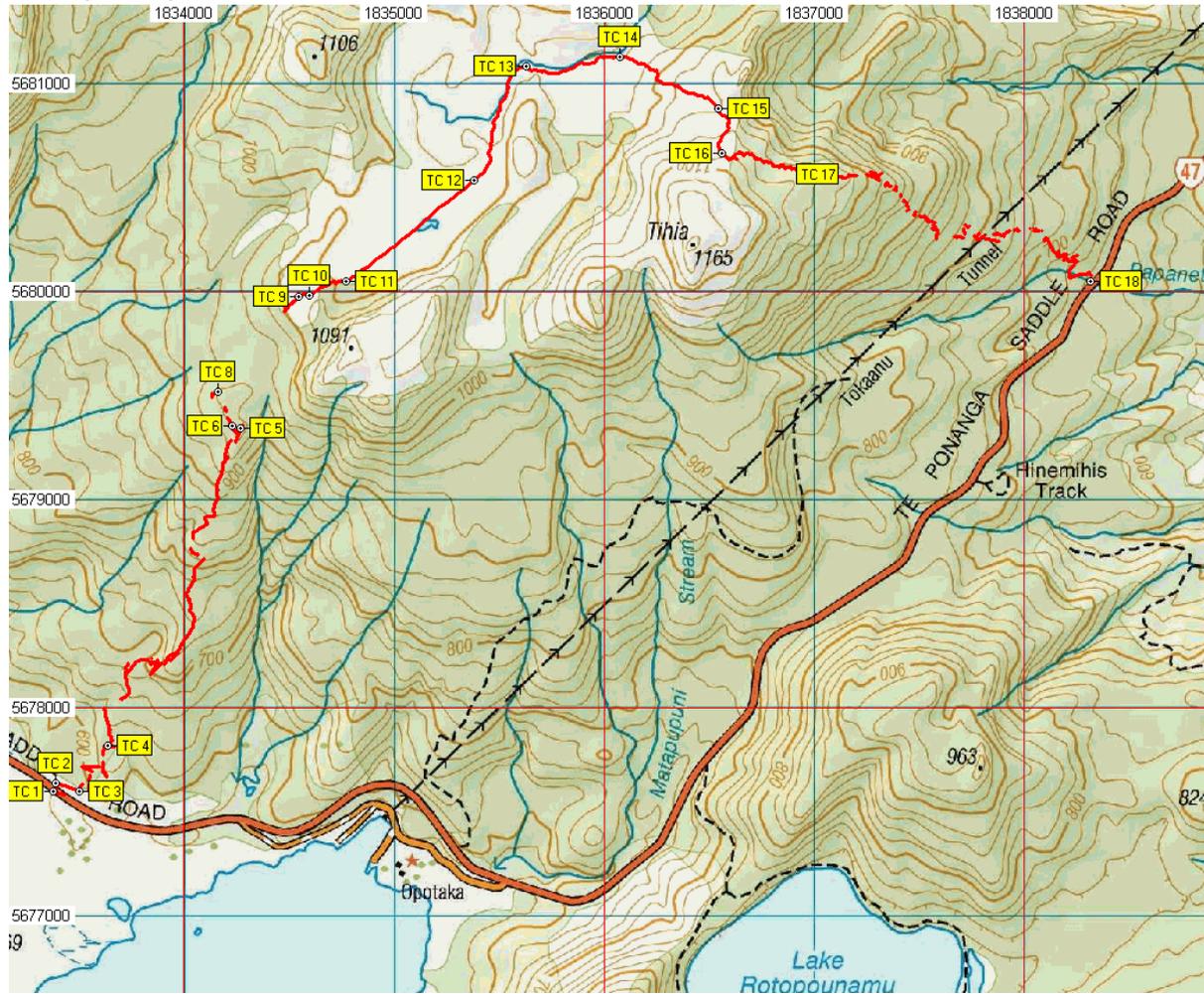
### Access



The start and end points of the tramp show as yellow WPs above whilst the route is the red line



Map and Google Image with GPS data



NB Broken GPS trace as Garmin Summit in use

## Waypoints – NZ Grid

Name	NZ Grid			Description	NZTM	
	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)		Easting	Northing
TC 1	2743377	6239690	586	Side of main road with track on N side	1833370	5677331
TC 2	2743382	6239730	585	2mins, T-junction, go right at old, dumped car	1833376	5677372
TC 3	2743500	6239691	596	5min, Bear left under power line then go right and up on poorly marked path	1833493	5677333
TC 4	2743631	6239911	646	15min, old track crosses, go leftish at large conifer	1833624	5677552
TC 5	2744264	6241431	942	20 min, meadow that was old Maori village, then up through fortified area with holes/trenches	1834257	5679075
TC 6	2744227	6241447	942	1:30min, Bivouac on crest after thick, steep forest	1834220	5679090
TC 8	2744161	6241606	1012	2:20min, looped tree	1834153	5679249
TC 9	2744542	6242063	1009	2:45 min, Nasty thick bush (Fix position for compass bearing)	1834535	5679706
TC 10	2744597	6242066	1016	3 hrs, out of nasty bush into open then left on small path	1834589	5679710
TC 11	2744772	6242137	992	3:10min, edge of crater depression on tussock grass	1834764	5679780
TC 12	2745378	6242621	996	3:30min, NE edge of crater and into low bush	1835370	5680266
TC 13	2745624	6243167	994	3:40min, mound at edge of crater below Mnt Tihia after long slow ascent parallel to stream	1835616	5680812
TC 14	2746069	6243214	966	4 hrs, lunch stop above stream	1836061	5680859
TC 15	2746539	6242967	1046	5 hrs, into high bush, awful bush bashing	1836531	5680613
TC 16	2746558	6242750	1082	5:20min, Emerge into the open again and hit rough track below Mnt Tihia	1836550	5680396
TC 17	2747012	6242645	1061	5:45min, near end of ridge with rocky outcrop before descent	1837005	5680291
TC 18	2748314	6242133	652	6:45min, emerge onto SH 47 at car park on edge of road	1838308	5679780

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### Morning tea stop on the path!



From this point a compass bearing was used to continue in a north-easterly direction until emerging out into the open and turning left on to a minor footpath (**TC10 1016masl**) at just on 3 hours.

The edge of the crater depression was reached in 10 minutes or so (**TC11 982masl**) when walking became a pleasure on the short tussock grassland. Fifteen minutes later the NE corner of the crater was reached (**TC12 996masl**).

At this point there is a low ridge (3:30 minutes) and this is ascended into low bush. Over the ridge the stream is followed on the true right bank till a low mound is reached (**TC13 994masl**) below Mount Tihia. The route then continues through more of the crater in an ENE direction to arrive at a reasonably sheltered lunch spot (**TC14 966masl**) just above the stream line (4 hours walking). From here the going gets really tough with a steepish climb up on to the shoulder of Mount Tihia through almost impenetrable bush (**TC15 1046masl**).

After 25 minutes of not seeing anything, but knowing there were people ahead since the bushes were moving and minor cries of anguish etc the relief is immense on re-emerging into the open in much lower bush (**TC16 1082masl**) with an obvious track.

From here the track gets better and better and offers some very good views of Lake Taupo and Mount Ruapehu. The descent from this point takes about 1:30 minutes and once you are past the rocky outcrops (**TC17 1061masl**) in 5:45 total walk time it is all downhill.

The descent is a bit brutal as it is relentless, made worse due to several windfalls, but it is again very attractive forest and rich in bird life. The end is near when you cross the line of the Tokaanu Tunnel and the road is reached in something like 6 to 7 hours total walking (**TC18 652masl**).

An easier alternative, with no bush bashing, is to ascend Mount Tihia from the end point of the above tramp as described. This, of course, means going up and down on the same route – but this gives two chances to hear the birds when they are in song.

### Emerging from the impenetrable bush



Notes:

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