

sides around the foot hills of Ngauruhoe descending into a valley and crossing one of the branches of the Waihohonu Stream. Continue through a beech clad valley before climbing towards the ridge top. Waihohonu Hut is in the next valley.

Waihohonu Hut to Whakapapa Village

5½ hours, 14.3 kilometres

From the historic hut the track follows the Waihohonu Stream gradually climbing to Tama Saddle. Tama Saddle is exposed and can be windy in bad weather.

On reaching the saddle a track branches right to Tama Lakes, two partially infilled explosion craters. The lower lake is a ten minute side trip from the junction while the upper lake is up a steep ridge, a one and a half hour side trip.

Whakapapa Village is approximately two hours from the Tama Lakes junction. After the first hour the track meets the Taranaki Falls loop walk. To view the falls, follow the lower track down a flight of stairs to a boulder-ringed pool at the base of the falls. The track then continues beside Wairere Stream through mountain beech forest.

Alternatively, take the upper track through tussock and shrubland. Both options take about one hour to return to the village.



Emerald Lakes (right)
Taranaki Falls from the lower track (below)



Summit routes (5- 12 hours)

Warning: These summit climbing routes are unmarked and should only be undertaken by fit, experienced, well equipped people who can make effective judgments about alpine and volcanic hazards. Icy or 'white out' conditions can make all climbs a serious undertaking. Before setting out check at the Whakapapa Visitor Centre for current route and weather conditions, volcanic activity and avalanche risk.

More detailed information and maps are available at Whakapapa Visitor Centre:

- Tongariro National Park 273/04 map
- NZTopo50 series: BJ34 Mt Ruapehu, BH34 Raurimu, and BH35 Turangi

The weather may deteriorate during the trip - alpine weather can change very quickly. Attempt these trips only in good weather and be prepared to turn back if conditions change.

During winter and times of snow, surface conditions will vary day to day. Depending on the time of year some of the following hazards may be encountered on Mounts Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro: icy slopes, ice cliffs, avalanches, waterfall holes, crevasses and schrunds.

Do not climb above your level of experience. Turn back as soon as you feel uncomfortable with the weather or route conditions. If travelling alone tell a responsible person of your intentions.

32. Ngauruhoe Summit (2287 metres)



6-7 hours, 19 kilometres return on same route. Begins at Mangatepopo parking area. 3 hours return from South Crater.

The 2500 year old near perfect cone of Mt Ngauruhoe entices many visitors to its summit. Relatively quiet since 1975, this parasitic cone of Mt Tongariro is traditionally one of New Zealand's most active volcanoes.

Follow the Tongariro Alpine Crossing Track up Mangatepopo Valley to the saddle between Ngauruhoe and Tongariro. A poled route leads to the foot of a ridge near the centre of Ngauruhoe's northern slope. From here the route is not marked but climbs a band of red scoria to the summit. Be aware of falling rocks dislodged by others on the steep slopes above.

Avoid entering the inner crater area, where volcanic fumaroles may emit overpowering gases. Descend via the red scoria, then on the loose scree to either side of the ridge.

33. Tongariro Summit (1967 metres)



1½ - 2 hours return from the Tongariro Alpine Crossing From Red Crater a poled route branches off to the summit of Tongariro. The route offers some wonderful views of the area.

34. Mt Ruapehu Crater Climb (2672 metres)



7 hours, 10 kilometres, return via same route. Begins from Iwikau Village at the top of the Bruce Road.

Or 5 hours, 7 kilometres, return via the same route. Take Whakapapa Ski Area chairlift from Iwikau Village. Walk begins at Knoll Ridge.

This is NOT a marked route. You need to be able to find your own way, have a map (Tongariro National Park map 273-04) and be well equipped (see gear list in introduction). It is only suitable for fit, experienced, and well equipped people who can make effective judgments about alpine and volcanic hazards. If unsure, travel with a guided party. Whakapapa Ski Area offers guided trips to the Crater during summer months. Phone (07) 892 4000. www.mtruapehu.com

If chairlifts or the guided summit walk are not operating, it is a clear indication that conditions are not suitable for tramping on Mt Ruapehu.

Mountaineering experience and equipment (such as ice axes and crampons) are essential for winter climbing. Many people have enjoyed the climb to the Crater with its panoramic views and volcanic landscape. However, some have met with tragedy because they were either not experienced or were ill equipped to handle the conditions they encountered.

The following descriptions are simplified route guides from Whakapapa Ski Area to Dome Ridge, where you can view the crater area. Two standard routes are marked on the illustration (see page 37). The most commonly used early summer route, when snow is still present in the valleys, follows up the left-hand-side of the Knoll Ridge T-bar line and continues up the valley above the last T-bar pylon. At the head of the valley climb up onto the ridge behind Glacier Knob. From this point follow the narrow foot track zigzagging up the side of and along Dome Ridge.



Dome Ridge in winter

The second marked route is recommended when most of the snow has disappeared. From the top of the Waterfall Express chairlift travel to your right past pylons indicating the Knoll Ridge T-bar line and over to Restful Ridge. Stay on Restful Ridge as you climb towards the crater area. You will go up a series of rises. The terrain is mainly rock. At the top of Restful Ridge there is a more open face. From this point follow the narrow foot track zigzagging up the side of and along Dome Ridge.



The weather can deteriorate quickly.

Lost and found

When travelling in the back country, especially on unmarked routes, it is essential to have excellent navigational skills and equipment as well as favourable weather conditions. Otherwise you may find yourself lost.

If you lose your way - do not panic!

- Try to retrace your steps to the last point where you recognise the route
- Mark your current position e.g. with a hat on a rock and only move within sighting distance of this object so that you do not stray further from your known route.
- Do not split up the party.
- Do not travel in 'white out' conditions or in the dark.
- If you can not find the route, and visibility allows, head for the best shelter that you can find (e.g. any building, the leeward side of a ridge, a large rock). Then stay in one place.
- Make your position as conspicuous as possible.

