

Last corrected: September 2019

AUCKLAND & WAITAKERE RANGES

Shakespear Park

Tiritiri Matangi Island

Muriwai Gannet Colony

Te Henga, Bethells Beach



Onepoto Basin & Kauri Glen

North Head Devonport

One Tree Hill

Tahuna Torea Spit

Harbourview Te Atatu

Rangitoto Island

Stony Batter

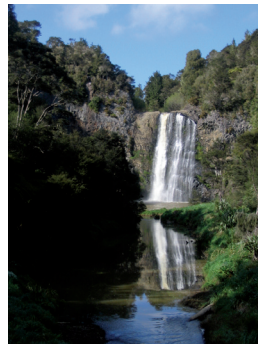


Cascade Kauri Forest

Piha & Kitekite Falls

Anawhata Beach

Whatipu Coast



Otuataua Stonefields

Hunua Falls & Cosseys Dam

Mangatawiri Dam & Lilburne Road

Awhitu Park

Hamiltons Gap

Shakespear Park

Tranquil peninsula regional park

Predator proof fence and rare birds

Great coastal views and beaches

Easy family walks

2-3 hours return

Grass paths

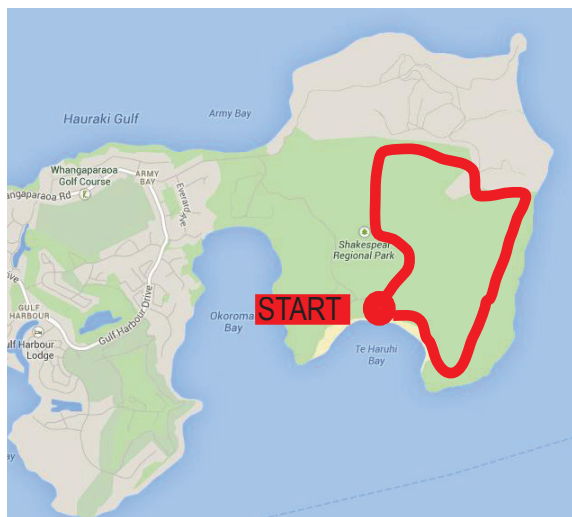
6 kilometres return

Turn off Highway 1 onto Whangaparaoa Road, which leads eventually to regional park, and predator fence. Drive onto picnic and camping area at the far end of Te Haruhi Bay.

At the end of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula is Shakespear Park, named not after the bard but W. H. Shakespear, who purchased the land in 1883. A shrewd buy, most people would think, for it included a glorious beach at Te Haruhi Bay, wide swathes of tidal platforms, some pockets of bush reserves and excellent views along the sea-eaten coastline.

In 1967 another shrewd buyer came along, and the Auckland Regional Authority purchased the land for a park. And the public have not been slow to enjoy this gorgeous park, which is alive with choices for the lazy or the walker. A predator proof fence has now been installed, and rare birds are being re-introduced.





Other walks

The Heritage Trail features forest, wetland and Maori sites; 1–2 hours return.

Camping: spacious grass campsites beside beach at Shakespear Park. Sites have to be pre-booked and pre-paid.

The best circuit walk starts from Te Haruhi Bay and follows the Tiri Tiri track up onto the headland, then swings along the easy farmland tops, displacing the well-fed sheep and passing a short side-track down to Pink Beach.

Platoons of perambulating pukeko peck in the paddocks, but the main track climbs up to a farm road and wanders around to the lookout platform, with the Hauraki Gulf spread out before you. The main poled track continues down a spur to Te Haruhi Bay and the ever-lurking peacocks.



Tiritiri Matangi Island

Rare birds on a magical island

Good day out for kids

Plenty to explore

Interesting historic sites

2-3 hours circuit

Bush and grass trails

5 kilometre circuit

Ferries run regular trips to the island leaving from Auckland, Gulf Harbour, and Whangaparoa Peninsula, Weds-Sun. Bookings essential, gives about 5 hours on the island.

New Zealand's rarest birds in abundance on an this island with stunning sea-views. Tiritiri Matangi Island is one of New Zealand's finest nature reserves, New Zealand as it was 1000 years ago, an avian paradise.

At the wharf groups are given a brief introductory talk on the island, then sent off to explore. Grab a pamphlet with the track layout. Walk to **Hobbs Beach**, passing nesting boxes for Little Blue penguins. Raucous saddlebacks and parakeets chase each noisily through the canopy.

At the end of the beach the **Kawerau Track** climbs under the pohutukawa trees and into a bush gully where brown quail scurry along the track ahead of you. Near the top of the Kawerau Track are stitchbird feeding trays, with a flurry of hungry stitchbird beaks and feathers.

On the main **Ridge/Road track** the views are excellent, and usually whiteheads can be seen feeding along the bush margins. The track wanders along the crest all the way to the historic lighthouse, toilets, lodge and shop, where friendly takahe poke about. Return to the wharf down the **Wattle Track** where there is a chance of seeing kokako.





Muriwai Gannet Colony

Dramatic gannet colony
Coastal scenery and views
Pillow lava and beach
Short walk options

30 minutes return gannet colony; 1 hour return via Flat Rock. Add 30 minutes for visiting Maori Bay.

Well made tracks

3 kilometres return

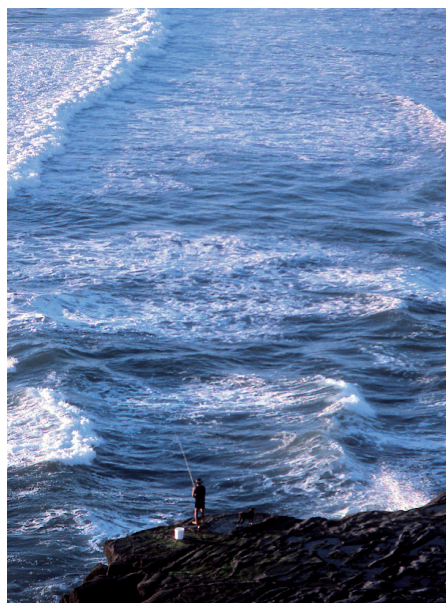
From Auckland follow Highway 16 towards Helensville for 25 km, then turn off at Waimauku, some 12 km from Muriwai. The last stretch of road down to Muriwai is steep and narrow. The closest access to the gannet colony is at the Maori Bay carpark, where there are toilets and superb information panels.

A short walk to an amazing sight: a squabbling, jostling, cackling, thriving gannet city.

There are a thousand nesting pairs of gannets at Muriwai, and the viewing platforms are only metres away. When they are not fighting for their space on the cliff edge they are whooshing overhead, bringing back food for their young or effortlessly soaring over the Pacific.

The headland updraughts make it easy for the gannets to get to the nesting sites, and the abundance of food has enabled the colony to expand. It started on the offshore Oaia Island, then moved onto Motutara ('island of the sea birds') and when this rock stack became overpopulated the gannets started a mainland colony.





You can also walk past the viewing platform and down to Flat Rock, which is a popular fishing spot, despite being both slippery and dangerous with a surf breaking. From the beach it is a short walk past the main carpark and up Maori Bay track to the main carpark again.

You can also follow a locked access road from the carpark down to Maori Bay itself, a dark volcanic cove, dotted with the corpses of gannets that didn't make the grade.

Cafe: Sand Dunz

Te Henga, Bethells Beach

Gorgeous sandy beach and cliffs

Estuary and bush walk

Wild and lonely coast

Low to mid tide needed for headland

2-3 hours return

Bush track and beaches

6 kilometres circuit

From Highway 16 towards Helensville, turn onto Bethells Road to walkway carpark (signposted just over bridge) and another 500 m to main beach carpark.

The whole Te Henga Walkway (also known as the Goldie Bush Walkway) is 8 km-long and would take 4 hours one way. By walking the initial part of the Te Henga Walkway to O'Neills Bay, you can return at low or mid tide along the beach, wet feet guaranteed.

From the carpark cross the footbridge and follow the bush track as it sidles high around overlooking Erangi Point and Kauwahaia Island. It drops to the beach at O'Neill Bay, then rambles up under huge cliffs to the cliff top, and around to Raeta-hinga Point. A fine lookout north and south along the coast.

Return to O'Neill Bay, usually busy with surfers. Cross the sand dunes at Erangi Point and nip around the headland onto Bethells Beach itself, with its lonely life guard post. Bethells is a beautiful wild beach, and surf constantly batters the headlands. A short road walk back to the car.





Cascade Kauri Forest

Kauri forest and info signs

Cascade waterfalls and gorge

Dam, lake and tunnel

Superb on a hot day

City of Auckland Walk 1 hour; Cascade-Waitakere Dam Loop 2-3 hours. Many track junctions.

Gravel paths and bush tracks

From Highway 16 just past Swanson, turn onto the Scenic Road, then Te Henga Road to Falls Road, and drive through the golf course down to the carpark.

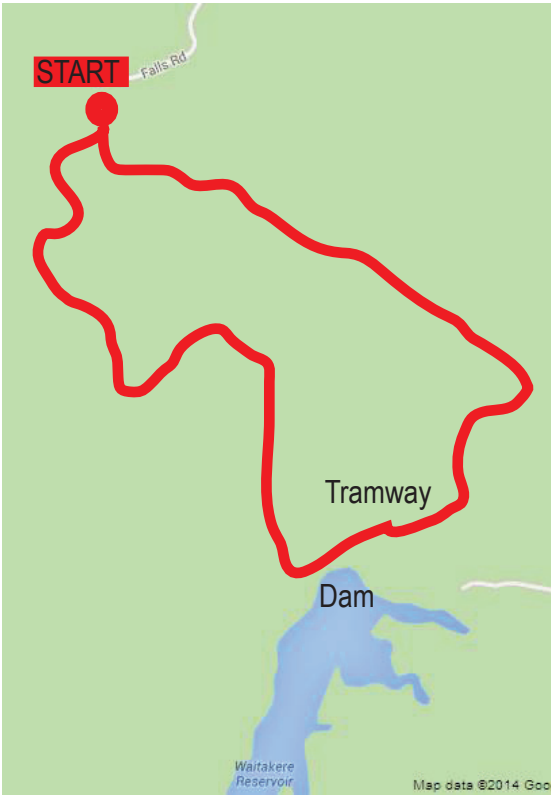
The Cascade Kauri forest has the largest kauri and totara trees in the Auckland District. The City of Auckland Walk (rather an odd name) is a short 1 hour loop and ideal for families, but the Waitakere Dam loop is described here. This incorporates the big trees, the Cascades, a tunnel, the lake and dam. The **Falls Road carpark** has toilets, shelter and information boards. There are many track junctions and it would be wise to take a map pamphlet or photograph the mapboard.

Cross the footbridge and turn left alongside the Waitakere River, with many impressive trees here. Note the short side-track to the water cascades. You reach a three-way junction and take the **Andersons Track** as it climbs up a steady spur and pops out right beside a tunnel portal.

No access through this 1 km long tramway tunnel. So follow the tramway as it winds pleasantly along the bush hillsides (through a short tunnel) and reaches the **Waitakere Dam**. This is a serene place, full of bird song.



Cross the dam and at the next junction turn down Track 19 which descends easily to the main **Cascades track** again. Turn left here as the track winds into and out of Cascade Stream, then at the next junction, drops rapidly back down to the carpark.



Piha & Kitekite Falls

Coastal cliffs and stunning beach

Bush walk to a pretty waterfall

Nikau palms

Family circuit, many track options

1-2 hour return from Piha, 1-2 hours one way from Cowan track and Piha Road.

Gravel and bush tracks

4 kilometre one way

The Piha Road is signposted off the Waitakere scenic drive. Look for the Cowan Track sign after 7 km, easy to miss.

This walk gives you a smorgasbord of what the Waitakeres have to offer. Superb forest, a clear cascading stream, beautiful waterfall, a rich coastal belt of nikau palms, and a definitive beach.

Option 1 — from Piha

You can walk up to Kitekite Falls from the **Glenesk Road carpark** at Piha, a pretty 1 hour return. Ideal for smaller children. From the carpark the well-signposted tracks head up the bush valley (tracks on both sides of the stream).

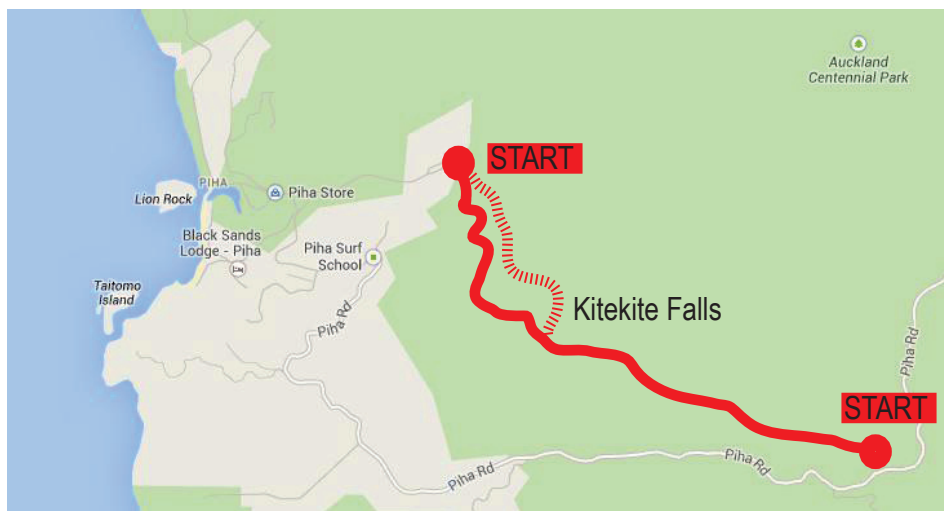
A sidling climb leads to a lookout of the falls, and then angles across to the foot of the falls themselves. Lots of people walk up here for a swim on a hot day. An alternative track downstream is well signposted.

Option 2 — from Cowan Track off Piha Road

If you get dropped off at the **Cowan Track carpark** on the Piha road, walk



Cafe: Piha Store



down the steep short track that links to the **Kauri Grove Track**. This sidles easily alongside the Glen Esk Stream (or Stockwell Stream here) to the four-way junction of **Ussher Cross**.

Keep going on the Kauri Grove Track a short way further to the top of Kitekite Falls, then follow the **Connect Track** down steeply to meet the main **Kitekite Track**.

For the falls themselves, walk back uphill a short way — it is worth it, a graceful gusher. You can keep going on this track, climbing a little then sidling easily around the valley and down to the forest floor. Then it is a broad track past several junctions and attractive bridges down to the carpark and a justly famous beach.



Anawhata Beach

Lonely, remote beach

Cliffs and headlands

Wild space

Conglomerate rock formations

1 hour return

Bush track and beach

1 kilometre return

From Waitakere Scenic Drive take the Piha Road some 4 km to Anawhata Road, and follow this narrow, twisting, confined road to the carpark at the end.

Anawhata Beach is hard to get to and isolated from the rest of the Waitakeres, but that's its charm. A sequestered spot of wilderness, with thundering surf echoing off the cliffs.

From the high carpark the track follows the road (there's a short side-track to a seat lookout) and then picks up a steep bush track down to the beach. From then on it's up to you.





Whatipu Coast

Wild shore and beach plain

Cliffs, caves and platforms

Popular fishing spot

Good escape from the city

2–3 hours (10 km) return to Tunnel Point; 4–5 hours (14 km) return to Karekare beach.

Drive to Titirangi and to Huia to the north head of Manukau Harbour at Whatipu carpark, about 25 km. There are toilets and an information board.

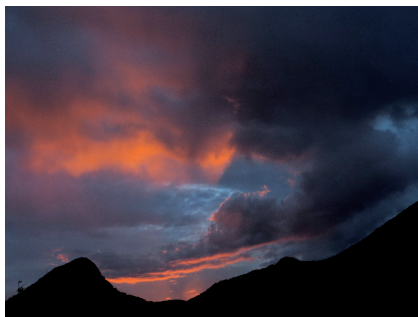
Whatipu is one of the truly great beaches — wild and stinging on windy days, haunting on calm mornings. An abundance of coastal scenery, with a huge beach plain, headlands, islets, tidal platforms, ephemeral dune ponds and swathes of jointed rush waving in the equally abundant wind.

Historic features include the old wharf on Paratutae Island, the wreck of HMS Orpheus (New Zealand's biggest shipwreck, in 1863, with the loss of 167 lives), the caves used by Maori for shelter, and the tunnel and timber tramway that can be traced all the way to Karekare beach.

For families there are short walks to the sea caves, and to the old wharf at Paratutae Island, and at low tide you scramble onto Ninepin Rock. For longer walks, head out onto the broad beach plain until you are approximately past Pararaha Point, where you should spot a short signposted track through the dunes to Tunnel Point. The old track by the cliffs has been discontinued.

The tramline and the historic tunnel were built in the 1870s to carry kauri timber from Karekare to a wharf at Whatipu. Once through the tunnel it is now easy walking to Cowan Point and the bluff at Karekare Point. The beach sands have increased greatly, and there is no need to scramble along the old tramway and bluff track to get to the magic of Karekare.





Camping: Whatipu Lodge has large grass sites, toilets and shelter.



Cafe: Huia cafe and store, at Huia

Onepoto Basin & Kauri Glen

Interlinked walks and reserves

Suburban volcanoes

Kauri bush and beach walking

Fascinating city circuit

2-3 hours circuit

Bush tracks, footpaths and grass trails

4 kilometre circuit

Onepoto Domain is on the North Shore and can be reached off Highway 1 on the Onewa Road exit, straight through into Sylvan Avenue, then immediately left into Tarahanga Street, and immediately right into the Onepoto Domain road. Head to the end of the road where there are plenty of carparks, picnic areas and toilets.

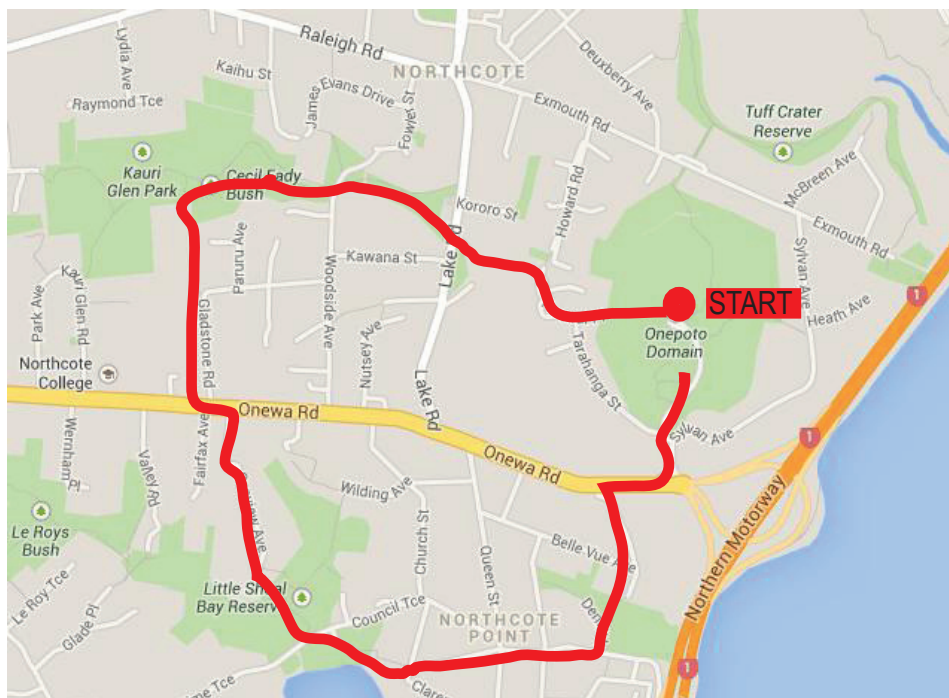
Old volcanic basins and bush reserves intertwine discreetly throughout Northcote. There are track links from Onepoto Basin into the Kauri Glen Scenic Reserve, and then onto Le Roys Bush and then Little Shoal Bay. You need a good street map and sharp eyes to find the track signs, and you might get lost, but this is splendid backyard discovery stuff that kids would really enjoy. Cafes on the way round, but there are three busy roads to cross.

From **Onepoto Domain**, follow the sealed path across the broad grass fields directly into **Puawai Place**. Go up past Tarahanga Street and keep a sharp lookout for the sign to **Rotary Reserve**, and this pleasant bush track meets a junction. Turn right and you walk upstream out of the bush and end up beside the busy tennis courts.

Cross Lake Road and walk north 100 metres past the shops to where a gravel path leads into **Kauri Glen**. It follows the stream closely to Woodside/Fowler Ave, and gets onto a boardwalk leading into the heart of Kauri Glen, an unexpectedly dense reserve of kauri trees in the heart of Auckland.

Cross the bridge over the stream on more boardwalks up to a staircase junction. Straight ahead is Paruru St, but the right branch leads into an open grass area (picnic table) and onto a broad grass path that goes alongside Northcote College to **Gladstone Road**. Cute workers cottages here before busy Onewa Road.

There's a good crossing point at St Marys school, then veer into quiet **Seaview Avenue**. A lovely line of houses along this road and at the end, follow a sign down a driveway to a sharp bush track to **Le Roys Bush**, and onto **Little Shoal**



Bay. This is a pretty seaside bay with picnic tables and toilets. By the scout den, steps lead up to **Clarence Road**, then cross directly down Vincent Road, past shops and cafes onto Stafford Road and **Stafford Park** (toilets). A concrete path leads to **Waimana Avenue**, and then you have to dodge across Onewa Road again.

Now you are on a sophisticated cycleway with elegant leaf seats, and a frond-style footbridge that leads you into Oneopoto Domain. A neat way to finish.

Cafe: Bonjour, on Queen Street, Northcote



North Head Devonport

Headland with impressive views

Historic military sites

Short walk circuit

Devonport cafes and bookshops

1 hour return

Grass and gravel paths

1 kilometre return

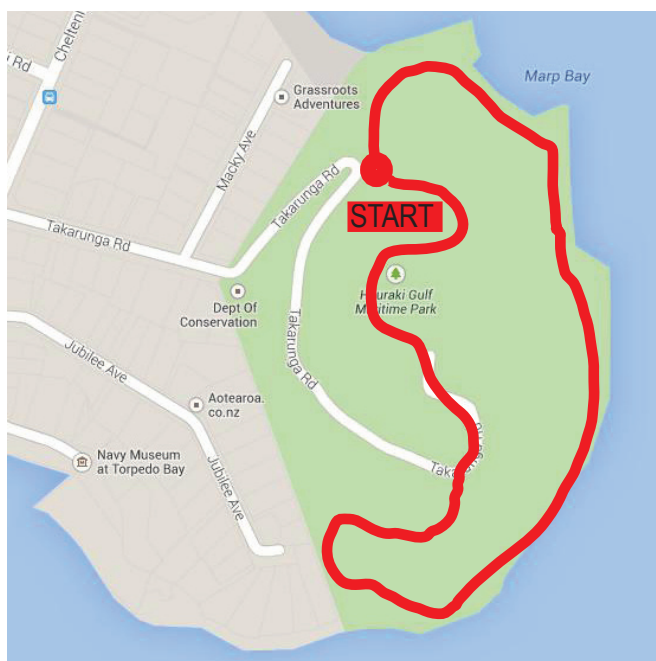
From Devonport drive along Edward Parade and then Cheltenham Street to Takarunga Street into the reserve, and park at the first (lower) carpark.

North Head Reserve is tiny but has impressive views and is probably the most interesting military site in New Zealand. It often catches a breeze which on a humid Auckland day is welcome. Linking this reserve with a fossick around Devonport shops and cafes is a pleasant way to spend an afternoon.

The best walk is to take the self-guided tour and DOC provides an excellent pamphlet. You start from the lower carpark, and wind up past batteries to the summit, explore the tunnels and then follow a lower cliff path around the base back to the carpark.

With extra time Cheltenham Beach is a great swimming spot, and Devonport has a quirky collection of cafes and shops.





Cafe: Stone Oven Bakery, in Devonport

One Tree Hill

No tree on top but obelisk
History and great panorama
Good mt biking on perimeter road
Picnic areas

1 hour return

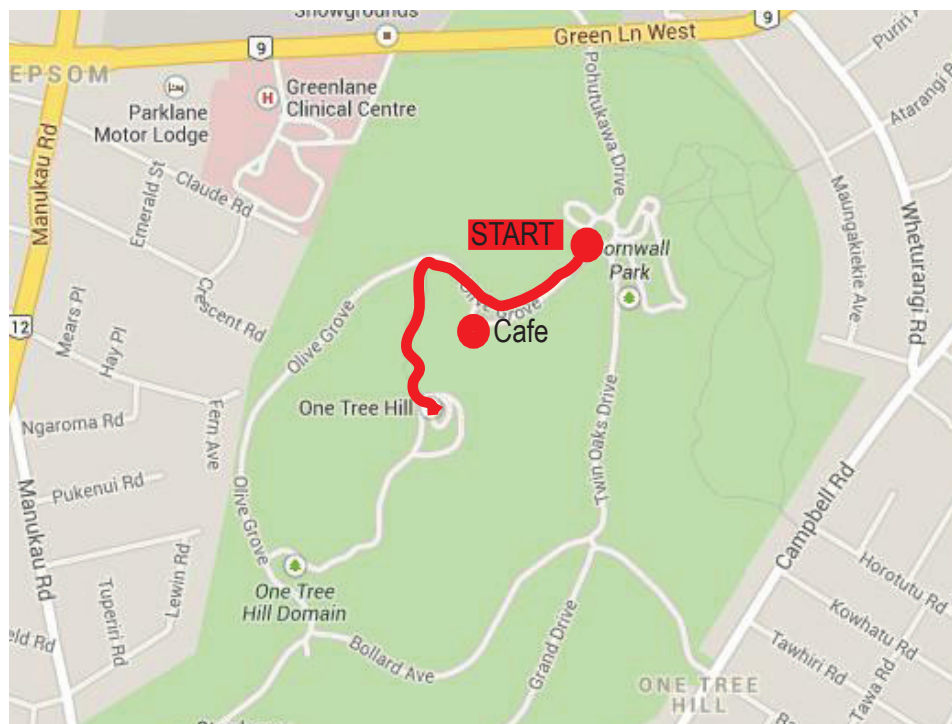
Gravel and grass paths

1 kilometre return

One Tree Hill is alongside Epsom suburb, and easiest access is probably Manakau Road, Green Lane West, then turn into Pohutukawa Drive to the main lower carpark. Toilets and cafe.

One Tree Hill (and Cornwall Park) is an icon of Auckland, a volcanic hill with a striking obelisk on top. You can drive to the summit, but that's cheating! To earn your coffee from the cafe, take this hour long walk up to the summit and back.

From the main carpark, walk past the cafe and along the road through the gates, where a worn trail starts on the left. It leads up through sheep paddocks and winds up to the obelisk. Great views.





Tahuna Torea Spit

Mini peninsula

Wetland ponds and bush reserve

Important site for sea birds

Picnic areas and great for families

40 mins return (1 km) Tahuna-To-rea reserve; 1 hour return (2 km) Pt England.

Gravel paths, boardwalks, bush track and beach.

Go through Glendowie suburb into West Tamaki Road to the carpark. Toilets and information signs.

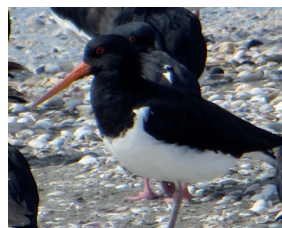
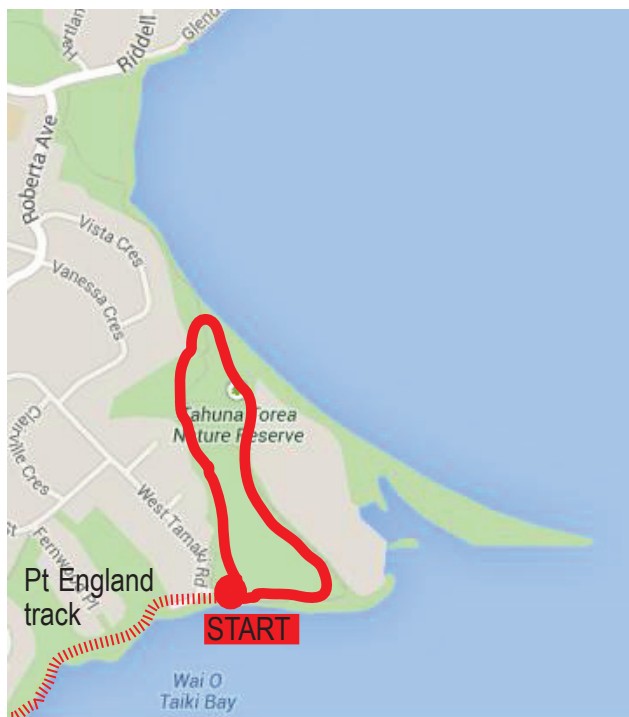
This mini nature reserve is a quiet surprise, full of birds, despite jutting out into the Tamaki River where the busy Waiheke Island ferries whizzing by. Pleasant family circuit here, and those that want a longer leg stretch can follow good paths to Pt England.

From the West Tamaki Road carpark walk past the observation shelter and follow the boardwalk into the bush. The godwit lookout provides good views of the meadows and lagoon. Take the upper bush track to the high point of the sandspit lookout, where you can see the whole reserve.



Head down steps to the lower bush walk and fish dam, and turn left to Sandspit Beach itself. Along the beach you reach the causeway between the dam and the tidal lagoon, and at the junction follow the Lagoon Walk to Cable Beacon Point.

The high-tide lagoon islands are a great place to spot waders roosting in summer. Then its back along the boardwalk and dam to the West Tamaki carpark.



Point England

This great walk starts from West Tamaki car-park and ambles along the shoreline, between the houses and the sea.

There's a bridge across Omaru Creek, and then the track goes through Pt England Reserve to Pt England Road.

Harbourview Te Atatu

Classic views across the harbour
Shelter and boardwalks by shore
Historic sites

1-2 hours return

Gravel paths and boardwalks

5 kilometres return

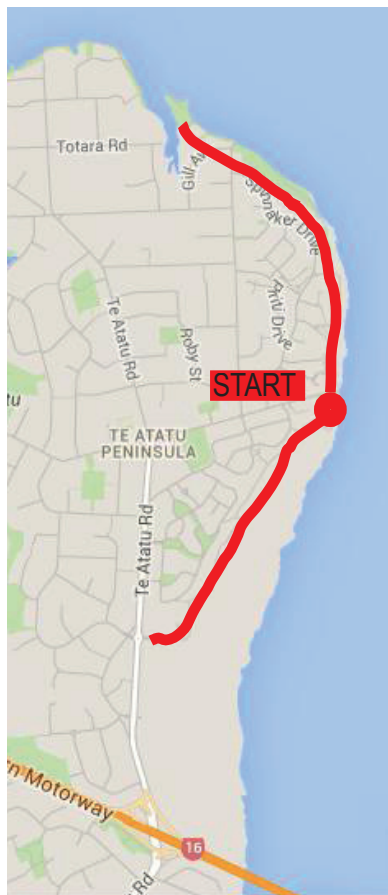
Off Te Atatu Road, then Harbour View Road to a carpark.

Harbourview has a stunning view across the glittering Waitemata Harbour to the tall, metallic skyscrapers downtown. The walkways start by a carpark and a very stylish picnic platform.

You can go north or south. If you head north from Harbourview Beach, the good track wanders along the coast and reaches Kelvin Strand park, about 2 km away. Then continues around the tip of the Te Atatu peninsula to Te Atatu Road and Chapman Road close by Henderson Creek.

South from Harbourview, and a short boardwalk circles the pond, but the main track wanders along the shoreline, where shore birds dabble among the ponds and creeks.

There is a historic Victorian villa (1890) along the track and several exit points to Te Atatu suburban roads, with a good carpark at Gloria Avenue. The walk crosses wide open spaces before it ends too soon by hitting the north-western motorway, but it is a lovely return.





Rangitoto Island

Island escape on ferry

Scoria slopes and pohutukawa

Quirky baches and teashop

Round the island walk

2–3 hours (6 km) to summit and return;
4–5 hours (12 km) summit and McKenzie Bay return. Take water.

Gravel tracks.

Fullers ferry boats leave from the main Auckland city and Devonport wharf daily, which gives you about 5-6 hours on the island. Check the ferry pick-up time before you leave the wharf.

Rangitoto's shallow volcanic cone is an icon for Auckland and a great escape for the city. It has New Zealand's largest pohutukawa forest, extensive lava fields, mangrove swamps, and a fine walking network. There are no cars, and the only hustle and bustle is the rush of walkers off the ferry. A good day out in any weather, rain or fine. At the wharf there are toilets, a barbecue area, an occasional shop, a saltwater swimming pool and an information shelter at the wharf.

From the wharf take the popular and broad summit trail, with its many excellent information panels on the way to slow you down. The scoria rock and rustling pohutukawa create a strange landscape, and on a hot day you can feel the heat radiating off the black rocks

You pass two track junctions, to Wilson Park Walk and the Lava Caves walk, then the track steepens slightly to the final summit and a splendid panorama of the Hauraki Gulf.

For the full circuit, the summit take the track down to the cross-island road and





follow this down to pretty McKenzie Bay. Then follow the coastal road, which passes a side-track to a lookout over the black-backed gull colonies at Flax Point. The main track continues over a mangrove inlet back to the wharf and that tempting ice-cream shop.



Stony Batter

Remote military site and tunnels
Superb views to Coromandel
Open farmland and bush reserves
Waiheke Island ferry

2 hours return, entrance charge for tunnels, they also hire torches

Farm roads and grass paths

2 kilometres return

From the ferry drive to Onetangi, and take the Waiheke Road, then Man O' War Road to Stony Batter Road and carpark.

The hardest and most interesting part of Stony Batter is getting there. Take the Waiheke Island ferry from Auckland, and either hire a car, scooter, or electric bike, and set off on the windy hilly roads to the far east end of the island.

At the carpark the views are a panorama from Coromandel to Hunua, and its an easy stroll along the farm road 1km or so to the Stony Batter reserve, with many odd volcanic rocks looking like grey sheep in the rolling green landscape.

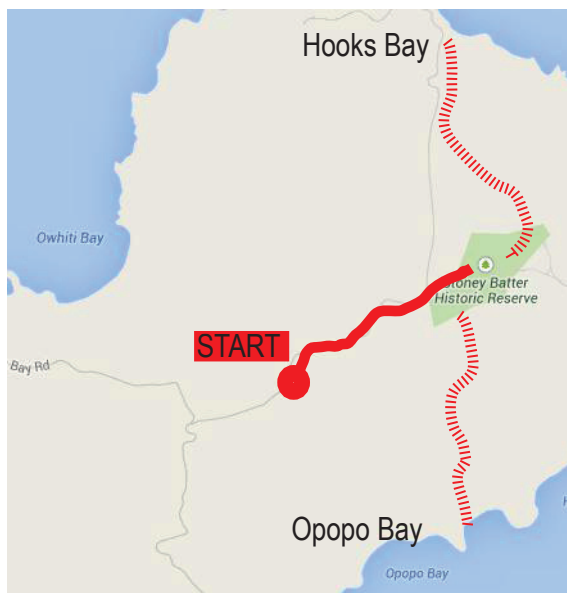
The gun emplacements were constructed during the Second World War (not finished till well after the war) as a direct fear of Japanese invasion, but they were never fired in anger. It's said that the main 9.2 inch guns (each barrel weighed 28 tons!) could hit Coromandel.



Tunnels

You need about an hour to explore the fascinating tunnels and underground-war rooms.

Don't go if you get claustrophobic, or disorientated easily. They are not everyones cup of tea.



Other Walks

One goes north down to a stony beach at Hooks Bay (30 minutes one way), the other goes south down to Opopo Bay (30 minutes one way) with its big boulders and clear water.



Camping: Whakanewha Regional Park, sheltered tree and grass campsites by the beach on Waiheke Island. Many short walks.

Otuataua Stonefields

Maori kumara gardens

European stone walls

Gigantic Moreton Bay fig

Volcanic crater

1-2 hours return

Farm trails

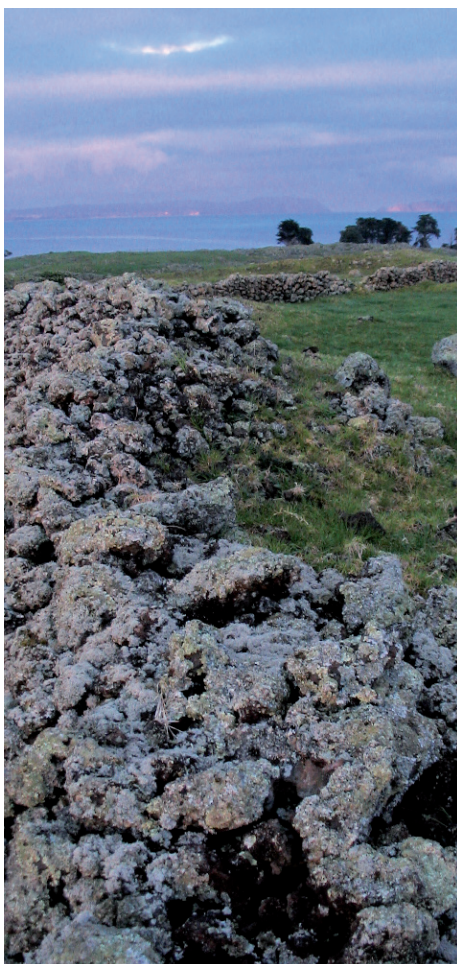
2-4 kilometres return

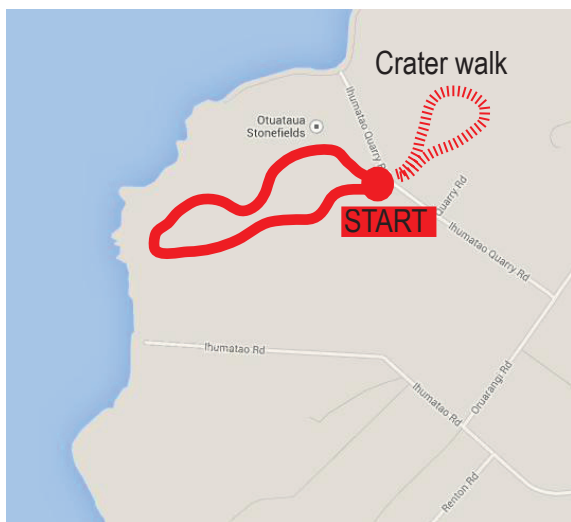
From Highway 20A (just before the first airport roundabout) turn onto Ihumatao Road for 3 km, then Oru-arangi Road and Ihumatao Quarry Road. There are signboards and a carpark at the end of the road.

Some eight hundred or a thousand years ago Polynesians landed in New Zealand, bringing with them the seeds and tubers of their island homes. Essentially tropical crops like kumara need careful maintenance, and they struggled to grow in this unfamiliar land.

Every stone in these coastal fields has been shifted, first by the Maori, then by Europeans, who crisscrossed the land with dry-stone walls. The result is an ancient matrix of agriculture that was later discarded and left to the sweeping winds off the Manukau estuary.

The three self-guiding trails — historical, botanical and geological — all become muddled with each other, and people just seem to wander off and discover all sorts of things — a Moreton Bay fig tree, 800-year-old storage pits, a barberry hedge, a saucershaped volcanic cone, a karaka grove.





Or else visitors sit by the shimmering coastal edge, gazing out to the Manukau Heads and wonder what it must have been like to come to an empty land where your crops wouldn't grow.



Hunua Falls & Cosseys Dam

Classic waterfall

Bush walks and picnic spots

Lake and dam

Many track options

2-3 hours return

Bush tracks

4 kilometres return

From Papakura on Highway 1 take the Hunua Road to Hunua settlement, then Falls Road to carpark. Pleasant picnic area and toilets.

The picture frame captures the live image of Hunua Falls, and this attractive area is just the ticket on a hot Auckland day. Easy bush trail to the waterfall, and an interesting circuit goes up to the placid dam lake and back. A good day out for the family.

From the carpark cross the footbridge, a with good view of Hunua Falls, turn left and after a few minutes you meet the main track junction. The Cossey Gorge track heads upvalley before dropping down to the stream, and stepping stones across Cossey Creek.

A bit of ambling along the stream side, then the track gets steep as it climbs up a bush spur and meets another track junction, just before the dam road. You could take this, or its better to stroll along the bush sidle track as it reaches the dam and pops out into the dam carpark. Stroll across the dam to the picnic seats at the far end. The lake is well-sheltered and usually ringing with bird calls.

Carry on up the signposted bush track as it reaches a platform lookout. The track undulates along the ridge, climbing slowly for twenty minutes to another track junction.

Take the right-hand track (don't go through the gate), and this sidles easily through the forest, past a short side-track to a group of kauri. Once the track reaches the actual spur, it drops sharply back down to Hunua Falls. A great wee circuit.





Mangatawiri Dam & Lilburne Road

Big lake and dam

Easy walk up bush hill

Wonderful for bush birds

Piggots Hut

2-3 hours return

Old road and bush track

6 kilometres return

From Hunua drive south on Hunua Road to Moumoukai Road, and follow this to road-end carpark. Toilets and information boards.

One of the least visited dams in the Hunua Range, Mangatawhiri is a beautiful bush surrounded lake, because of predator control the bird population here has increased hugely. This is a cruisey walk up an old road to a curious little hut, that looks like a caravan.

At the carpark follow the road up onto the massive dam, and walk across to where Lilburne Road is signposted. This broad road climbs a steady 200 metres up the bush ridge, and then sidles to Piggots campsite and Piggots Hut. This has four bunks and is quite tidy. The road ends here.



If you follow the bush track (Ernies Track) up onto the next knob, a short steep climb of 100 m, there are great views all around from the bald patch on top. The best thing is the bush birds: pigeons in large groups, ditto silver-eyes, tuis chortling away, bellbirds, kaka and best of all kokako. Up to twenty pairs of kokako have been counted in the Hunua Range and this is an excellent place to hear them.

Camping: grassy sites by stream at Mangatawhiri Dam, toilets and barbecue



Awhitu Park

Remote regional park by shore
Tidal flats and harbour views
Old homestead and ancient trees
Large camping areas

1 hour return

Grass trails, beach and road

2 kilometres return

From Waiuku drive north on Awhitu Road to Matakawau and then Brook Road to regional park and carpark. Toilets and picnic area.

An easy-going rural regional park, facing the Manukau Harbour with its quiet lapping tidal waters. Everything seems unhurried here. Beaches and extensive tidal platforms at low tide, an historic homestead, huge European trees, wetland, and many short tracks through the rolling country.

This is a simple route. Start from the picnic carpark, drop down to Kauritutahi beach and wander along to the jetty. Follow the track up to the old Brooks homestead, then stroll into the camping area and follow the road back to the start again.

There are other walks: Settlers Valley Walk goes alongside Brook Breach and then loops around the southern half of the park. There's also a mt bike trail and horse trekking.



Camping: tree and grass camping by beach, Awhitu Regional Park



Cafe: Karma, in Waiuku

Hamiltons Gap

Eroded cliffs and surfing sea

Pretty road end with toilets

Intriguing rock and dune forms

Forgotten corner of Awhitu peninsula

1 hour return

Beach walking

2 kilometres return

From Waiuku drive on Awhitu Road to Pollock, and just past there is the turn off down the West Coast Road to road-end carpark. Picnic area and toilets.

A wild eroded shore, with stark cliffs and a sandy beach. Interesting rock forms, deep black sands, and some of the colours in the cliffs are striking. Just nice to absorb the smells and sights of a glittering sea and a lonely shore. A low tide is best. Keep an eye on the cliff-face dunes, they look pretty unstable, and you can see sand avalanches at the base of the cliffs.



