

Last corrected: September 2019

Cape Reinga

Cape Maria van Diemen

Pekapeka Bay & Dukes Nose

St Pauls Rock

Waitangi Mangroves



Mimiwhangata Peninsula

Tutukaka Head

A. H. Reed Kauri Forest

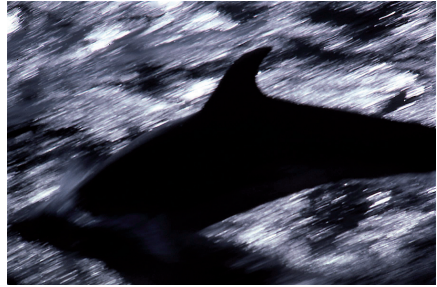
Mount Manaia

Pinnacles & Peach Cove

Smugglers Cove



THE FAR NORTH



South Head

Waiapoua Kauri Forest

Urupukapuka Island

Maunganui Bluff



Tawharanui Park

Kawau Island

Great Barrier Mt Hiramakata

Great Barrier Hot Springs

Cape Reinga

Top of New Zealand

Headlands, beaches, wild shores

Good track for families

Great camping sites

2-3 hours return

Grassy paths

7 kilometres return

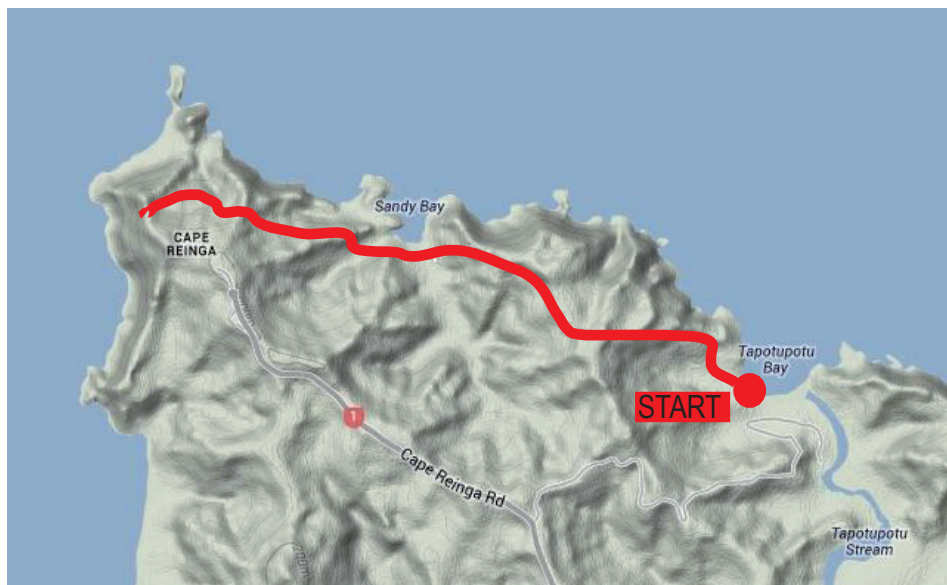
From Kaitaia drive north 100 km on State Highway 1. Just before Cape Reinga a sign-posted turn-off to Tapotupotu Bay 2 km.

A good way to escape the mania of Cape Reinga yet still visit it. From Tapotupotu Bay the track follows the red posts and zigzags steeply up onto the grassy headland, with brilliant views.

Then it follows an old vehicle track across the top of a gully onto another headland. You can see the Cape Reinga lighthouse now, as the track descends into the pretty Sandy Bay (Ngatangawhiti Bay). This cove has shady pohutukawa and rock platforms to explore.

A steep climb up the open spur to the Cape Reinga carpark, where there are toilets, superb information shelter, an archway that plays spooky Maori flute music when you pass through and a zillion people etc. There's a link track onto Cape Maria van Diemen, otherwise enjoy the walk back. Its just as good.





Camping: DOC open grass sites beside beach at Tapotupotu Bay, also DOC sites at beach at Spirits Bay. Toilets.

Cape Maria van Diemen

Strange desert landscape

Beaches and sand dunes

Good track circuit

Wild weather the norm

3-4 hours return

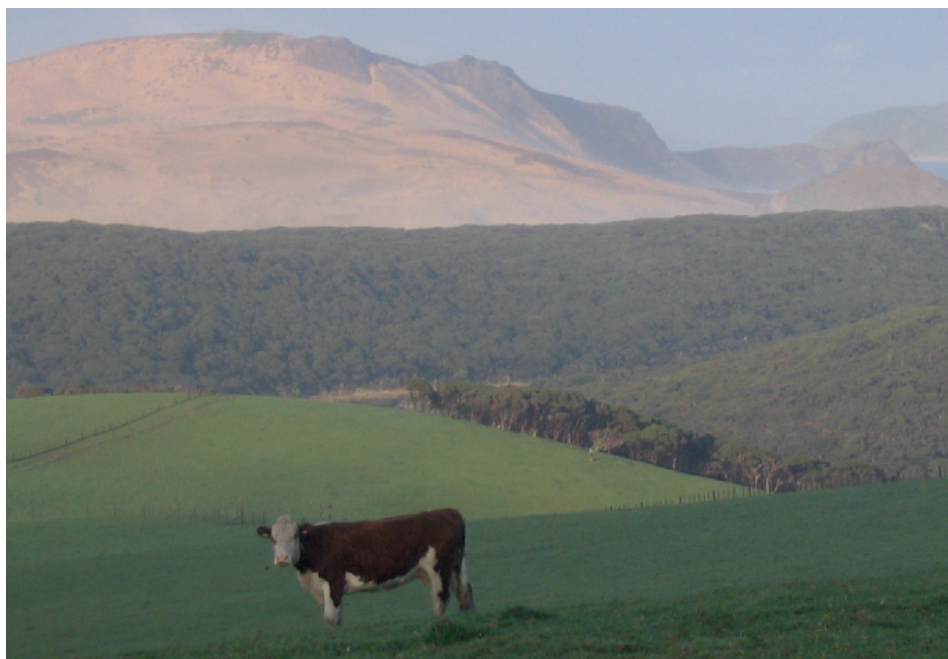
Farm trails, beach, tramping track

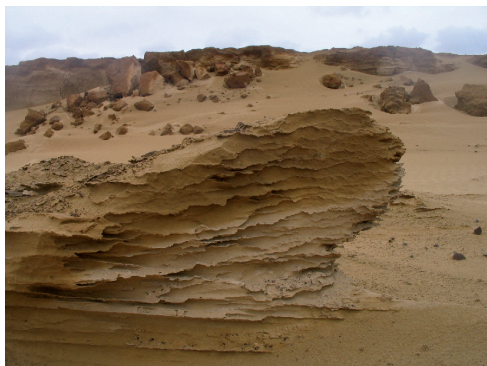
13 kilometre circuit

From Kaitaia drive north to 4 km before Cape Reinga, at a signposted carpark.

Te Werahi Beach and Cape Maria van Diemen is a pure wind-blasted wilderness of dunes, ephemeral wetlands and coastal forest. Big skies, big views, strong light, and peculiar sand formations.

From the carpark the track crosses farmland through coastal forest to the break out onto the beach plain. Boots off to cross Te Werahi Stream, then climb around Herangi Hill (159 m), a curious and absorbing landscape of weirdly coloured sands. For a side-trip follow the lonely marker poles across the beach tombolo and up onto the flax headland where the automatic lighthouse is. A good view of Motuopao Island and it's historic lighthouse.





Back at the junction, the track rollicks through coastal shrublands to Twilight Beach. Now turn inland through a desert of sculptured rock outcrops.

Orange lollipops keep you on target (just) and the track crosses a deep wetland on a boardwalk. At the farm-land the markers follow the crest of the hill along the fenceline, which you follow back to the carpark.



Pekapeka Bay & Dukes Nose

Bush track to remote cove

Hut on high tide line

Wire route up to rock outcrop

Complex, interesting landscape

4-5 hours Perimeter Walk return

Tramping track return

8 kilometres return

About 30 km north of Kerikeri on Highway 10, turn into Totara North, an historic and charming settlement. After 2 km turn up Campbell Road to the small carpark and DOC sign.

Whangaroa Harbour in the far north has a weird, unexpected landscape. Bushy inlets filter down to the sea, and strange pinnacles stick up. There are mangroves and rickety historic towns. It's charming, nostalgic and involving.

The track to Lane Cove follows the old bridleway over the bush saddle, a 200 m climb, then down into Shermans Stream till it merges with Waiarakau Stream. Rock bluffs loom over this flat river valley, and you are beside mangrove forest. The track wanders along this tidal waterway that feels untouched by the outside world.

The track pops over a low saddle to Lane Cove Hut. The 16 bunk hut is barely above the high tideline, a blissful place, looking across the lapping waters of Pekapeka Bay, and the strange rock outcrops around the harbour.

One of these is called Kaiarara Rock or Duke's Nose. A steep side-track leads to the base of the bluffs, and a chain has been bolted in place. It gives moral sup-

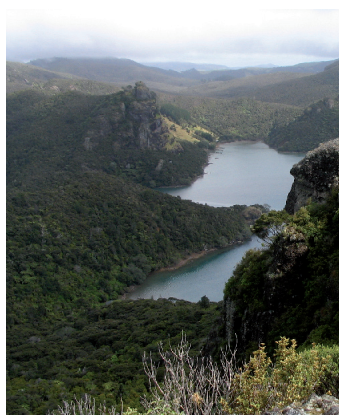




port as you pant and sweat up the greasy rocks.

There are bluffs at every edge of this pinnacle, so on top it's like a little lost world, with panoramic views of Whangaroa Harbour.

Getting off Duke's Nose is actually harder than getting up, so take care.



Cafe: 1904, at Mangonui

Lane Cove hut is kept locked, and a booking needs to be made with DOC at Kerikeri to get the key.



St Pauls Rock (Ohakiri)

Striking rock mountain

Great short walk for families

Splendid harbour views

Interesting rock outcrops

1 hour return

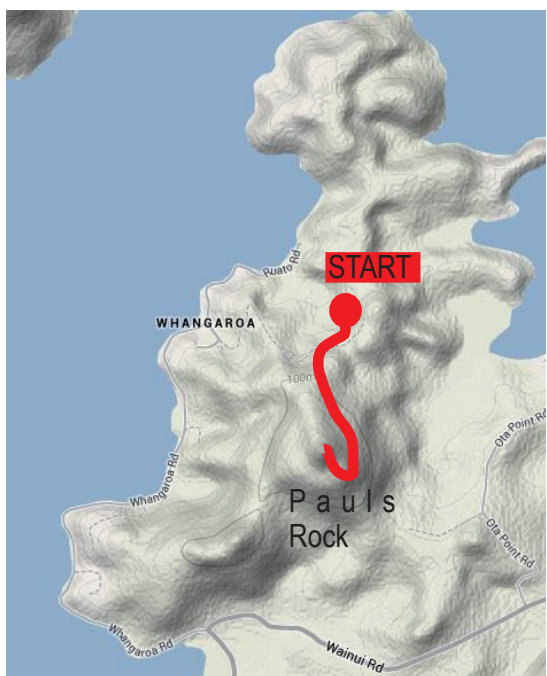
Bush and grass paths

4 kilometres return

From Highway 1 drive 5 km to the coastal community of Whangaroa, and take the Old Hospital Road to the carpark and sign.

St Pauls Rock or Ohakiri is 180 m above sea level and commands great views of Whangaroa Harbour. It's an easy walk through bush and farmland to the top of the rock outcrop. Very salubrious.





Urupukapuka Island

Peaceful and beautiful island

Boat cruise and good beaches

Round the island track

Historic sites

2-3 hours return

Cliff trails and grass paths

4 kilometres circuit

Its about 15 km by boat from Russell to the island.

You need a boat to get to Urupukapuka, and ferry times change all the time. Generally you can take the morning cruise to Cape Brett, get dropped off at Urupukapuka island on the way back, walk around the island, and get picked up by the afternoon cruise about 4-ish.

The Bay of Islands is well-named, and on the boat from Russell island after island shifts and slinks out of view: The jetty at Otehei Bay is a quiet place, and the red building is an historic woolshed. There were over eight pa sites on this fertile island, and in 1926 the legendary fisherman Zane Gray established his famous fishing camp.

The track circles the island, and it's easy walking. Turn left from the jetty and Otehei Bay quickly disappears behind the pohutukawa forest that has sprung up over the island. Short pretty bays follow in quick succession.

At Otiao Bay the track turns inland and starts to climb, following the cliff line around the northern coast. At Paradise Bay (Oneura) the track meets the coast again, then wanders out over the farm peninsula towards Kapurarahurahu Point. This is a marvellous lookout, but when you see the bow wave of the ferry returning from Cape Brett, then you know that your little island sojourn has come to an end.





Waitangi Mangroves

Track through mangrove forest

Haruru falls

Shag colony and estuary birds

Waitangi treaty house

1-2 hours one way

Bush track and boardwalk

3 kilometre one way

Waitangi is 60 km north of Whangarei on Highway 1, turn off at Kawakawa. The east end of the mangrove walk starts by the golf course. For Haruru Falls take Highway 11 (Puketona road) 3 km and follow the signs to the car-park.

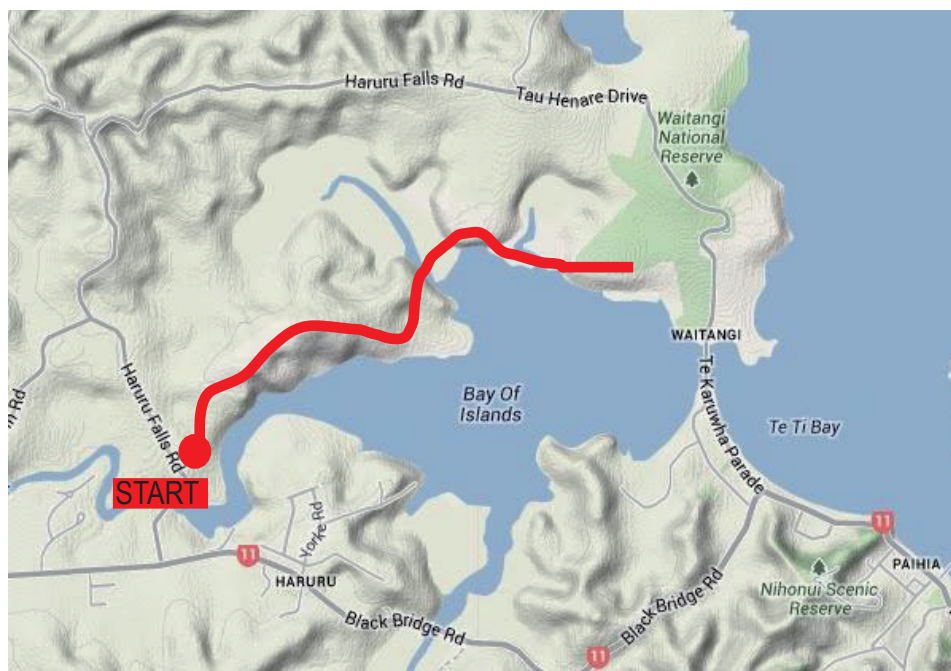
Haruru Falls can be translated as 'roar' or 'thunder', and it's an impressive start to this walk. The mangrove track follows the estuarine coast past a shag colony, in a forest of tree ferns. There's kiwi here.

It's easy walking to Hutia Creek inlet, and the long boardwalk zig-zags through mangrove forest with information panels. White-faced herons, shags and kingfishers are common. The peculiar 'pistol popping' sounds are caused by the Snapping Shrimp, which has a grossly enlarged special joint for the purpose.





If you don't have transport at the other end, this boardwalk is a good place to turn back, otherwise after 30 minutes you come out to a lookout platform over the Waitangi estuary. The track skirts farmland and a golf course, and pops onto a fairway just before the carpark. It's only a ten minute walk to the Waitangi Treaty House, which bustles with visitors and ceremony, in contrast to the privacy of the estuary.



South Head

Intriguing low-tide rock formations

Beach and tidal platforms

Views over harbour entrance

Fishing and exploring

1 hour on headland and beach,
2 hours return to Waiwhatawhata
Stream Bay and point, 3-4 hours
(8 km) return to Waimamaku River
mouth.

Grass paths and beach walking

From Omapere on Highway 12,
drive south for 1 km then follow Sig-
nal Hill Road 2 km to the carpark.

South Head commands the entrance to Hokianga Harbour. In 1838 John Martin erected a signalling mast to help boats cross the dangerous bar, and he acted as pilot once vessels had entered the harbour. Good view from the carpark, and there's a short historic trail around the headland (10 minutes), with the huge, barren sand dunes on the North Head of Hokianga Harbour gleaming white in the sun.

To explore the coast at low tide, a graded track goes down to the main beach, but to continue south you need to climb up onto the next headland and follow the track around a recessed rock cove. The track then follows a fenceline around farmland before dropping through sand dunes into Waiwhatawhata Stream Bay.

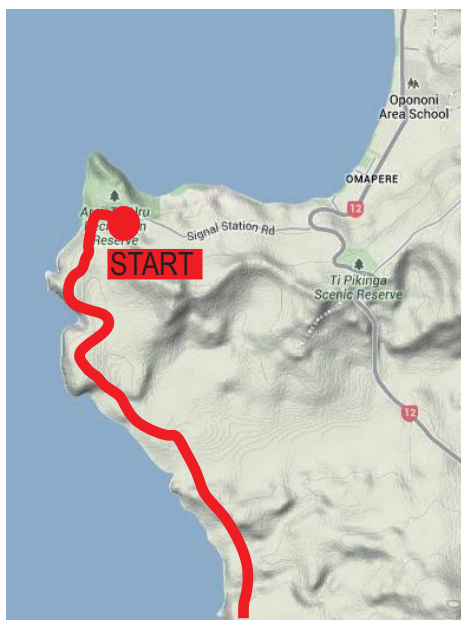
There are extensive tidal platforms here, and the track continues around to the point at the south end of the bay. If you wish, you can continue along this wild and remote shoreline for 4 km to the Waimamaku River mouth.





Other walks: South Head is at the top end of the Waipoua Coastal Track, a three-day tramping trip that travels past the Waipoua Kauri Forest then over Maunganui Bluff to the Kai Iwi Lakes. There is also a low-tide route from South Head to Omapere settlement.

Cafe: Schooner, above Omapere Highway 12



Waipoua Kauri Forest

Biggest kauri in New Zealand

Several short walks

Remote iconic forests

Tane Mahuta is 10 minutes return, Four Sisters 5 minutes return, Te Matua Ngahere 30 minutes return.

Gravel tracks

Waipoua Forest is on Highway 12, about 30 km south of Opononi and 60 km north of Dargaville. Rawene car ferry crosses Hokianga Harbour.

King kauri. These walks are unique, for the Waipoua Forest is one of the last places in New Zealand where you can see big kauri in a pristine forest. These huge trees never fail to impress, part of the era of the great moa and the giant eagle — 'there were giants on the earth in those days'.

They can live up to a thousand years, and a tree like Tane Mahuta could be milled to make ten houses. Waipoua is the kauri's most important sanctuary, 2600 hectares of mature kauri, that was preserved only as late as 1952

Kauri is a conifer, and starts life as a normal looking tree in a nursery forest like manuka, grows through a teenage or 'ricker' stage, then thickens into middle age and swells into a vast cylinder while the crown gets thin. The bark flakes off in pieces the size of dinner plates, which prevents epiphytes establishing a hold.

The Tane Mahuta walk goes to the largest kauri in existence, quite awesome, with a 13 metre girth and 17 metres to the first branch. The Four Sisters walk follows an elegant boardwalk around four 'sisterly' kauri.





The Matua Ngahere ('father of the forest') walk is the most impressive of the three, mainly because you have time to become absorbed by the forest as you head deeper into it. The silence is deafening, and big trees slide by in a splendid parade until you reach the second biggest kauri in existence.

Camping: DOC Trounson Kauri Park grass sites beside river and kauri forest, , 15 km south of Waipoua.

Maunganui Bluff

Great views along coast

Beach wandering

Bush tracks and farm views

2 hours return

Bush track

3 kilometres return

From Dargaville drive about 15 km north to the Aranga Coast Road and follow down to Aranga Beach settlement. Carparking is a bit limited.

Maunganui Bluff track starts at the Aranga beach settlement and sidles around the hillsides with good views over the surf-washed shoreline. Then it climbs and sidles through shrubland into the forest, and climbs up to a fenceline and surprising farmland.

After edging along the fence for a while the track reaches a road which leads to the large transmitter tower on top of the bluff, 459 m altitude. There's a picnic table on top. This track is part of the long coastal track that starts from South Head at Opononi.





Mimiwhangata Peninsula

Remote beach landscape

Rare birds

Interesting walk circuit

Islands, tidal platforms, headlands

2-3 hours (3-4 km) return peninsula circuit or coastal lookout and Waikahoa Bay. For the whole lot allow 4-5 hours (7-8 km) return.

Farm tracks.

Mimiwhangata is about 50 km north from Whangarei. Turn off Highway 1 at Whakapara to Helena Bay and Teal Bay, then a narrow, winding, road over a bush saddle to the coastal carpark. Carpark, information board, toilet and ranger station here. Strictly no dogs.

Even by Northland's high standards, Mimiwhangata has a ridiculously perfect beach landscape. Remote sandy bays ending in headlands covered with pohutukawa. Offshore islands hang around the coast and coastal fishing boats chug languidly by.

It's so good even the Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip stopped by for a picnic on the beach in 1955. If you stroll south from Okupe Beach you round an attractive headland into another long and gorgeous beach. Most visitors turn north along Okupe Beach, past the lodge to the headland, along a vehicle track to Kaituna Bay. The Eastern Rosellas are often making a colourful racket in the pohutukawas.

The vehicle track circles the wetland and you might spot the rare brown teal, along with the nosey pukeko. Excellent views along the coast. Another vehicle track leads to the wide Mimiwhangata Bay and it's a good walk over the next headland to the





sheltered Waikahoa Bay, where camping is permitted. Paradise ducks raise their chicks here, and seem quite happy dabbling in the sea.

Following the shoreline a bush track is signposted which clambers up a kanuka spur to a lookout point. A ridge track offers an alternative exit through bush and farmland (and past some massive pohutukawa trees) down to the road saddle and back to the ranger station.

A very satisfying day, and back up the dusty road out of Mimiwhangata, you might catch a last regretful glimpse in the rear-view mirror of an island sprinkled sea.

Tutukaka Head

Sweet, short headland walk
Pretty coves but need low tide
Good views from lighthouse
A walk that suits everyone

1 hour return

Grass paths and beach

2 kilometres return

Tutukaka is 20 km east of Whangarei. 500 m north of Tutukaka is Landowners Lane, a private right of way to the headland carpark.

Tutukaka Head is a succession of islets with tiny jewel-like bays on either side, where the sea sweeps right through. Surf scours the tide platforms, and Kukutauwhao Island anchors the whole fragile assemblage of islands together.

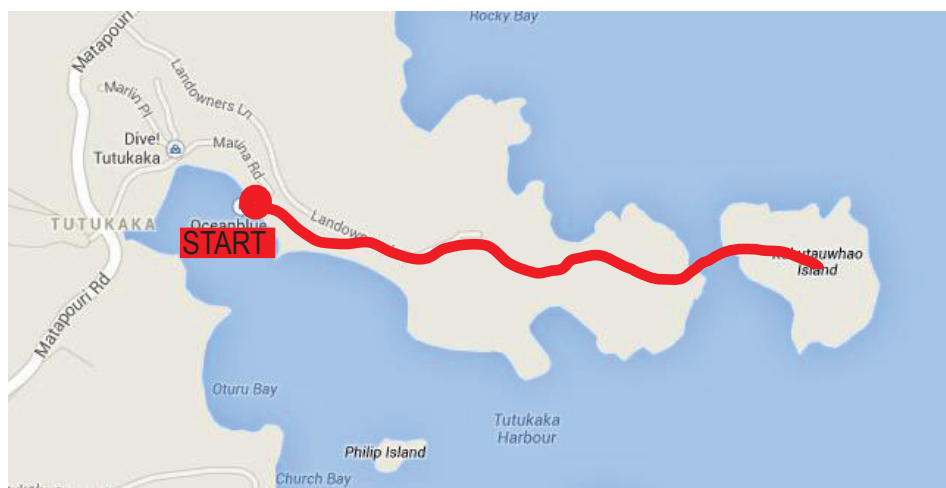
The main track from the carpark leads over the grassy headland, then sharply down a staircase to the beach. The little sandy bays are perfect, and so are the rock platforms that skirt both sides of the peninsula.





The final part of the walk clambers up a bush track onto Kuku-tauwhao Island. At the high point a lighthouse watches over the Poor Knights Islands, with views everywhere.

There is an alternative track from the carpark, which goes down to an unnamed bay where there is nothing more than sand, grass and solitude.



Whangarei Falls

Superb waterfall

Well marked forest tracks

High boardwalks into bush canopy

Good family area

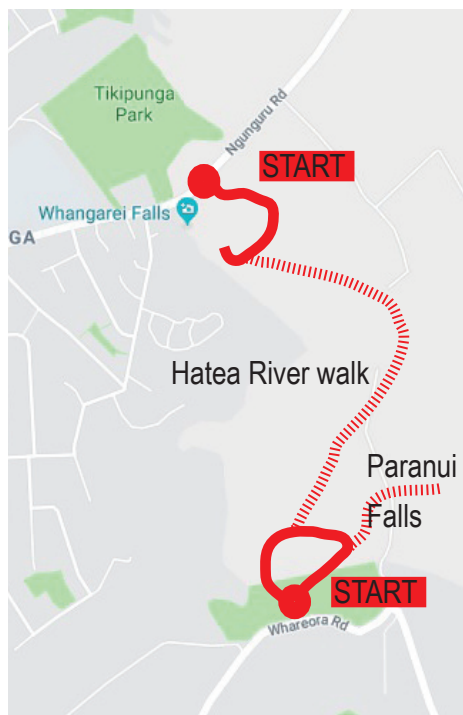
Whangarei Falls 30 minutes return.
Bush boardwalk 30 minutes return.
Track down to A. H. Reed boardwalk, 1 hour one way.

From Whangarei take Highway 1 5 km north to Puna Rere Drive and then Kiri-paka Road. Well signposted. Both car-parks have toilets. The lower carpark at Whareora Road can be accessed from Whangarei on Mill Road.

This splendid waterfall can be fitted into most people's schedules. A good track descends to the foot of the falls with impressive views. The Hatea River Walk then goes down to the A. H. Reed Memorial park, and there is spectacular short boardwalk loop around several thick-waisted kauri. At times the canopy platforms are a giddy 10 metres above the valley floor, and the gentle stream underneath is softened by deep-green, moss-encrusted boulders.

Both walks can be done separately, tho the best plan is to get dropped off at the Whangarei Falls top carpark, then walk down to the A. H. Reed memorial boardwalk and get picked up from the lower carpark off Whareora Road. The Hatea River Walk continues all the way down to Mair Park. From the lower carpark there is also another short walk to view the pretty Paranui Falls.





Cafes: several good choices by Whangarei Town Basin

Mount Manaia

Steep, hard climb, 1088 steps

Dramatic rock pinnacles

Superb views

Maori history and legend

2 hours return

Steep bush tracks and steps

3 kilometre return

From Whangarei follow the airport road then the coast road to Whangarei Heads and Urquharts Bay, then take the Ocean Beach Road 1 km to a carpark and information sign.

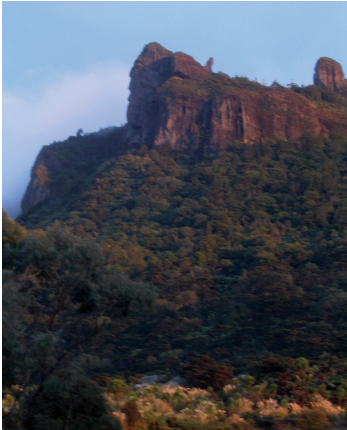
This striking mountain can be seen from many points around Whangarei Harbour and Bream Bay. Fingers of volcanic rock stretch up from a coastal forest, and DOC has built a viewing platform that is spectacular and nerve-racking. There are 1088 steps!

The andesite rock is the remains of a volcano that erupted 20 million years ago, and the peak is of important cultural and spiritual significance to Ngati Manaia and Ngati Wai.

From the large carpark beside the pub, follow the track past the weird sculptures and picnic table. At first the track sidles gently, but this quickly changes as it climbs up through dense bush with some impressive puriri trees. The track lurches upwards around the base of Mount Manaia to the bluff lookout (not sign-posted but an obvious worn trail), where there are good views of Bream Head and the Hen and Chicken Islands. No handrails here!

The track steepens past fine specimen trees of totara and kauri, then reaches the main ridge, wriggling past increasingly forbidding rock pinnacles. It's an exciting place as you reach the steps leading up to the top viewing rock. Dizzying views looking out over the bluffs to the Marsden point oil refinery.





Pinnacles & Peach Cove

Gorgeous landscape and beaches

Amazing pinnacles

Podocarp bush and birds

Several track options

2-3 hours circuit

Bush tracks, steps and staircases

5 kilometres return

From Whangarei follow the airport road then the coast road to Whangarei Heads and Urquharts Bay, then take the Ocean Beach Road to the end carpark.

Ocean Beach is a velvety smooth stretch of sand, with classic pohutukawa trees on the headlands. Cross the beach to the signposted track, and walk up the steep grass spur to the historic radar station. Superb views.

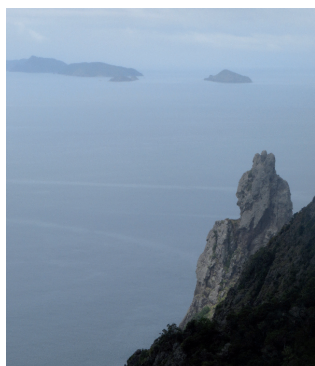
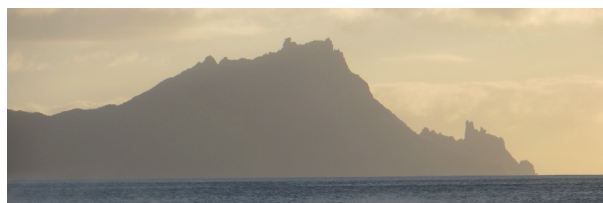
In the bush the track glimpses pinnacles and gradually reached the ridge crest where more dramatic rock pinnacles come into view. Some side trails clamber to the top of one but this looks pretty risky. The tallest pinnacle is called Te Whara (see photo) a majestic oblong of rock.

The track circles around the base and drops via steps and staircases to a low saddle and junction. If you want to drop down to Peach Cove Hut allow another 2 hours, and there's over 500 steps.





Otherwise wander down the track, that comes out on farmland and meets the a short side-road down to Ocean Beach Road. Now its a 1 km roadwalk back to Ocean Beach carpark.



Smugglers Cove

Classic beach cove

Curious rock formations

Historic military sites and pa

Easy family circuit walk

2 hours return

Bush tracks and tussock trails

3 kilometres return

From Whangarei follow the coast road to Whangarei Heads and Urquharts Bay, then take the Ocean Beach Road McKenzie Bay and turn off down Home Pt Road to the car park and toilets.

Smugglers Cove circuit is a great family walk with lots of interesting sights. First the track leaves the carpark and goes over the low saddle to the pretty Smugglers Cove, with interesting rock formations. Then it sidles in bush to Busby Head and a historic pa site.

Finally the track turns north, and wanders through open areas up to the Home Bay military site. This historic gun battery was built in the Second World war and has an unusual mural to help the gunnery officers and men identify the landscape.





Many of the original military buildings were designed to look like farm sheds, or rocks, but the gun was never fired in anger.

Wonderful views of Marsden Point oil refinery and Mt Manaia as the track turns the corner back to the carpark again.



Tawharanui Park

Special regional park

Beaches and bush walks

Rare birds and sea views

Many track options

2 hours circuit

Bush tracks and farm trails

4 kilometres circuit

From Highway 1 at Warkworth, follow the road to Omaha Flats, then turn onto Takatu Road through to Anchor Bay in Tawharanui Regional Park.

Each twist and turn of the road to Tawharanui reveals another magical indentation. Matronly peninsulas shepherd close-knit groups of islands, and every bay is a golden slice of summer all year round. This coast offers a perpetual promise of escape.

Tawharanui peninsula is a predator free reserve, and you have to drive through the large automated gates to get to Anchor Bay. Here, there are toilets, a picnic area and excellent camping reserves. Anchor Bay is also a marine reserve.

Anchor Bay is an open, sandy beach broken with tidal platforms, offshore reefs and headlands with sea caves. It is hard to walk away from all this, but there is a fine walking circuit around the peninsula.

From Anchor Bay follow the farm road up onto the broad tops of the peninsula, crossing the Ecology Trail. After 2 km you reach a track junction, where you have the option of following the peninsula out to Takatu Point. You can see cloudcapped Little Barrier Island in the distance, and Kawau Island nearby to the south.





Follow the track along the south coast and turn onto the side-track that drops through a shady stream with stands of manuka and puriri, then follows alongside a dam, meeting the Ecology Trail again on the way. Shortly you exit out to Anchor Bay again and that stunning beach.



Camping: grass sites alongside Anchor Bay to be pre-booked and pre-paid

Kawau Island

Island escape

Easy bush walks

Historic mining sites

Gracious historic house

1 hour (2 km) return to copper mine,
2 hours (3 km) for full circuit.

Bush tracks and low tide rocks

Daily ferry service (Reubens) from Sandspit, a wharf about 10 km from Warkworth. There is a DOC charge to go inside the Mansion House. There are toilets and tearooms, and plenty of places to picnic outside.

Time out on a timeless island. Maori called Kawau 'Te Kawau-tu-Marō', 'island of the motionless shag'. Kawau Island was a prime fishing ground for Maori, but manganese was discovered here in New Zealand's second underground mine, then copper in 1844. Cornish miners were brought in, with some 300 miners and their families at the height of the industry; the 'Mansion House' began life as the mine manager's house, built in 1847.

In 1862 Governor George Grey bought the island. He owned it for 25 years, during which time he enlarged the house and established a cultured paradise of exotic birds, plants and conversation. The restored Mansion House was officially opened to the public in 1979.

From the wharf, walk past the Mansion House and persistent peacocks onto the Coach Road that leads to Lady's Bay, a small, discreet cove. The track continues onto a lookout, and from here you take the Miners' Track down to Dispute Cove — a nice snoozing spot.

Either take the inland track to the copper mine, or at low tide wander on the tidal platform to the massive ruin of the engine house. The rich colours of copper stain the rocks and the stillness is broken only by scavenging gulls.

On the return you can explore the broad tidal platforms around to Lady's Bay, or follow the Redwood Track down to Two House Bay and around the point to the Mansion House. Of course, you have to allow some time to explore the grand Mansion House, and by then you will be scampering to catch the return ferry. You quickly run out of time in Kawau.



Great Barrier Mt Hirakamata

High point of Great Barrier

Interesting rock formations

Great views of island

5-6 hours return

Bush tracks

5 kilometres return

Catch the regular car ferry or fly to the island. A taxi will be needed to get to the carpark on Aotea Road, or you can walk.

Great Barrier was first named by Captain Cook, and the first glimpse of the island emerging out of a squall or burnt black against a brilliant Hauraki Gulf day fulfils expectations. The island is now well serviced with car ferry and daily air services, new cafes have sprung up, there is more accommodation, but still the remoteness lingers.

This ridge track is a great way to sample the views and scenery of Great Barrier Island, passing through the strange rock formations of Windy Canyon and onto the high peak of Hobson or Hirakamata at 627 metres. The great storm of 2014 destroyed the famous kauri dam and damaged many tracks, but the island has largely recovered.





From Aotea Road the track clammers around the rock formations of Windy Canyon with good views on both sides of the ridge. Then the track reaches a scrub band and an historic 'wooden horse' or H-frame, used for winching kauri logs over the saddle. Tremendous views along the well-marked ridge trail before the numerous steps and hard slog up to the high peak itself. A viewing platform on top, and much of the island can be seen



Camping: DOC camping site by beach at Awana Bay

Great Barrier Hot Springs

Natural hot springs

Easy bush walks

Away from it all island escape

Off the beaten track

2-3 hours circuit

Bush tracks

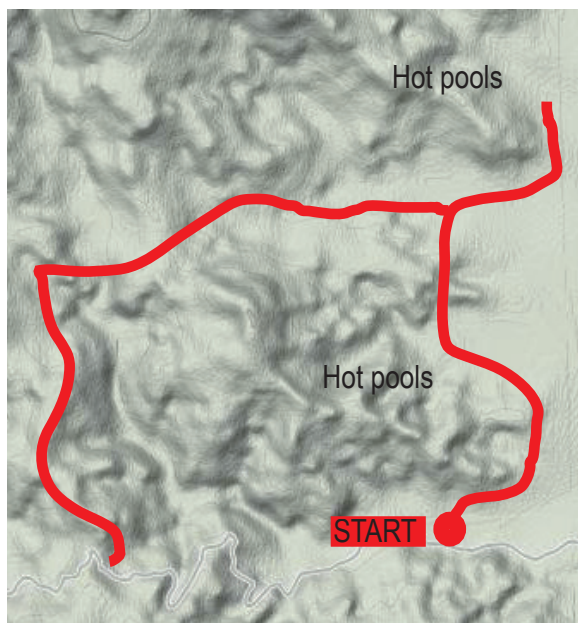
6 kilometres circuit

Catch the regular car ferry or fly to the island. A taxi will be needed to get to the carpark on Whangaparara Road. About an hours walk from Claris airport and beach.

It's surprising to find natural hot pools on Great Barrier Island. This track can be made into a circuit visiting both sets of pools. From Whangaparara Road take the easy bush track through manuka some twenty minutes to the first hot pools. People often regard these as the best.

Then the track climbs a low saddle and descends to a junction. If you want to visit the second set of hot pools turn east 30 minutes one way — these pools are often very hot indeed. Back at the track junction wander upvalley in forest onto a ridge and another track jnction. Turn south and follow this old vehicle track along to the Whangaparara Saddle. Here you can walk back down the road to complete the circuit.





Camping: Green campsite at the end of the Whangaparapara Road, no car access. but shelter and water (needs boiling)