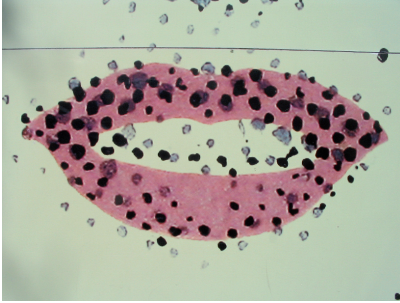


Last corrected: September 2019

WAIKATO & BAY OF PLENTY



The Butler Incline
Tuahu Track
Wairere Falls
Hurunui Hut



Miranda Estuary
Hammond Park — Hamilton
Hamilton Botanic Gardens
Maungatautari Mountain



Bowentown Heads
Waikareao Walkway — Tauranga
Mount Maunganui
Kohi Point
Ohiwa Harbour Hill

Miranda Estuary

Magical light at Miranda

Rare wading birds

Great views and long horizons

Estuary and mud flats

1 hour return

Old farm track, stopbank, shellbanks and mudflats.

2 kilometres return

Miranda is at the lower end of the Firth of Thames, south of Kaiaua. You can access Miranda off Highway 25 from Waitakaruru.

Early mornings at Miranda spill washes of gentle colour over the flat horizon. The sea turns from black to silver and then blue, and the shellbanks reflect the first glitter of the morning sun.

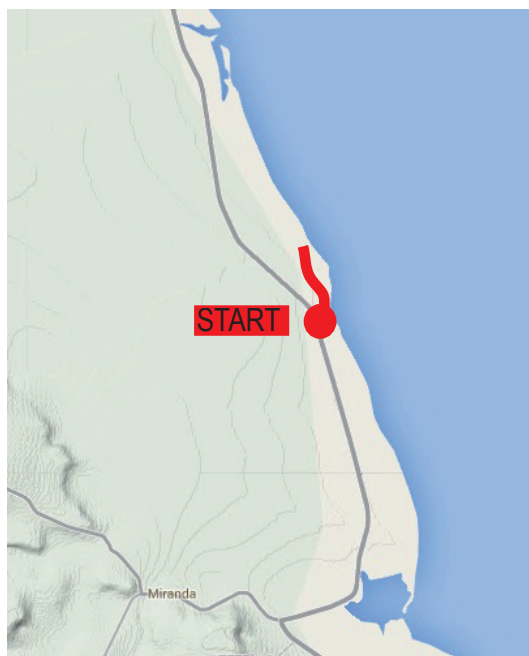
There are several access points to the Miranda foreshore, including opposite the Miranda Trust lodge and rest areas along the highway. The best access is about 800 m south past the Miranda Trust lodge, where there is a stile and signpost, and a bird-hide a short distance from the road. .

This is one of the best sites for wading birds in the country, birds with exotic and faraway names that reek of Asia Minor — red-necked stint, terek sandpiper, lesser knot, whimbrel, eastern curlew, turnstone, bar-tailed godwit and Pacific golden plover.

Miranda does not involve much walking, and the best times to visit are at dawn and dusk. High tides bring the birds closer, while low tides reveal the slither of the tidal streams as they trickle through the exposed mudflats. From the stile a vehicle track wanders through the Robert Findlay Wildlife Reserve to the bird-hide.

Keen birdies will need a good pair of binoculars, but anyone can enjoy the open, pure expanses of Miranda, and the occasional buzzing car on the coastal highway does not disturb the peacefulness. It is 100 km from Auckland — a world away.

Camping: site for self-contained campervans only about 2 km north of the Trust lodge by beach. Shop at Kaiaua.



Hamilton Hammond Park

Easy walk along the riverside

Forest and boardwalks

Suits young or old

1 hour circuit

Boardwalk and footpaths. Partly accessible to wheelchairs.

3 kilometre circuit

Take a road map. From Cobham Drive turn down Howell Avenue, then Louise Place and right into Malcolm Street, and right again when Malcolm Street forks down a road to a pretty riverside picnic and car-turning area.

This is an unexpected gem that even many Hamiltonians do not seem to know about. It is an easy, friendly little circuit that you could safely take your grandmother on.

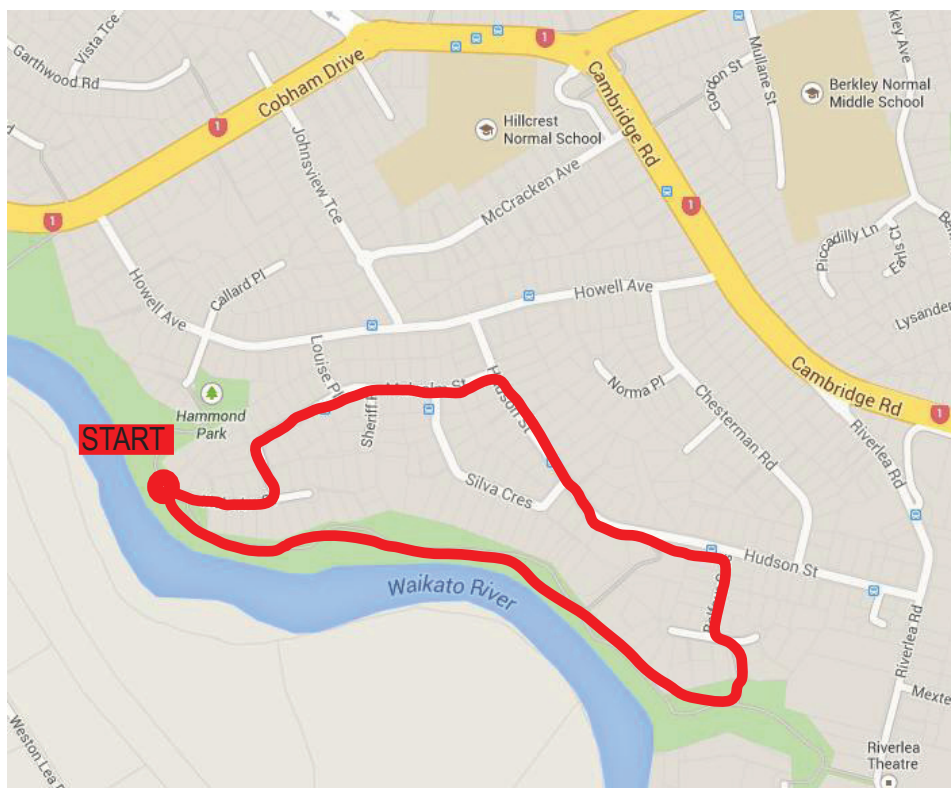
From the clipped and tidy river park, turn upstream and you will reach an architect-designed boardwalk. This zigzags amiably along with good views of the river (as well as people's backyards) until it reaches Hammond Park. With the native bush and birds, this boardwalk really seems a long way away from busy city life.





Across the grassland of Hammond Park there is a steep access path (you may have to push granny at this point) up onto Balfour Crescent.

To complete the circuit continue up Hudson Street, then left along to Malcolm Street. Short, but sweet.



Hamilton Botanic Gardens

Spectacular gardens

Unique sections: Japanese, Italian, etc

Great for families

Cafe and picnic areas

2 hours wandering

Gravel paths and grass paths

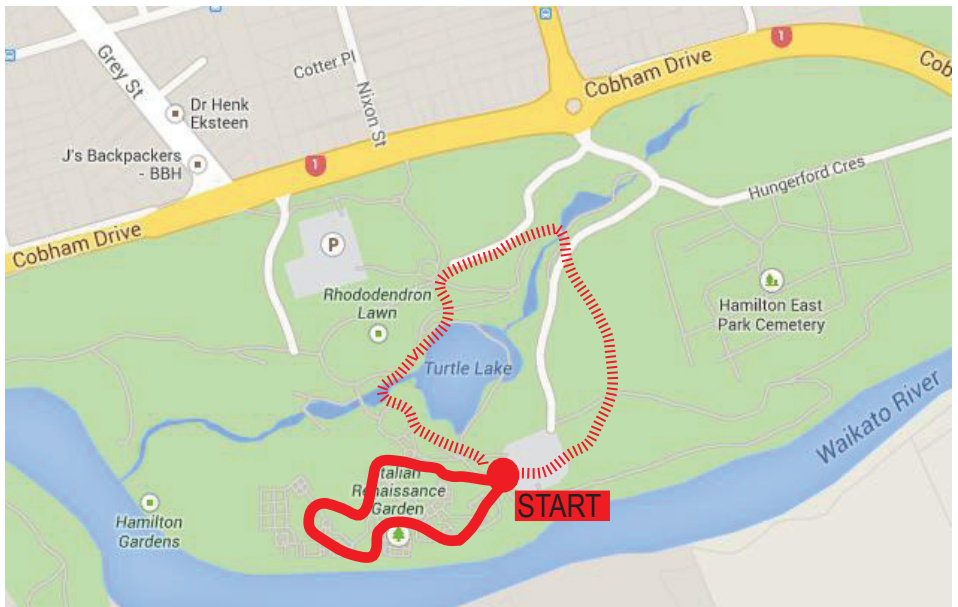
2 kilometres return

From downtown Hamilton take Cobham Drive to Bot gardens main gate.

The Hamilton Public Gardens are spectacular with many detailed and lovingly recreated gardens, such as the Japanese Scholar garden, the Maori garden, the Indian garden, the Renaissance garden etc. There's also an info centre and café.

You can wander here for hours and don't forget the wider park outside, which includes sculptures and such oddities as a Russian tower.





Cafe: Hamilton Garden cafe

Maungatautari Mountain

Isolated mountain forest scenery
Predator proof fence and rare birds
Lookout tower and high quality tracks
Picnic areas and entrance fee

For Pukeatua Peak, 2-3 hours return, for the entire over the mountain track allow 5-6 hours one way. Need to arrange transport.

Gravel paths and bush tracks.

3 kilometres return.

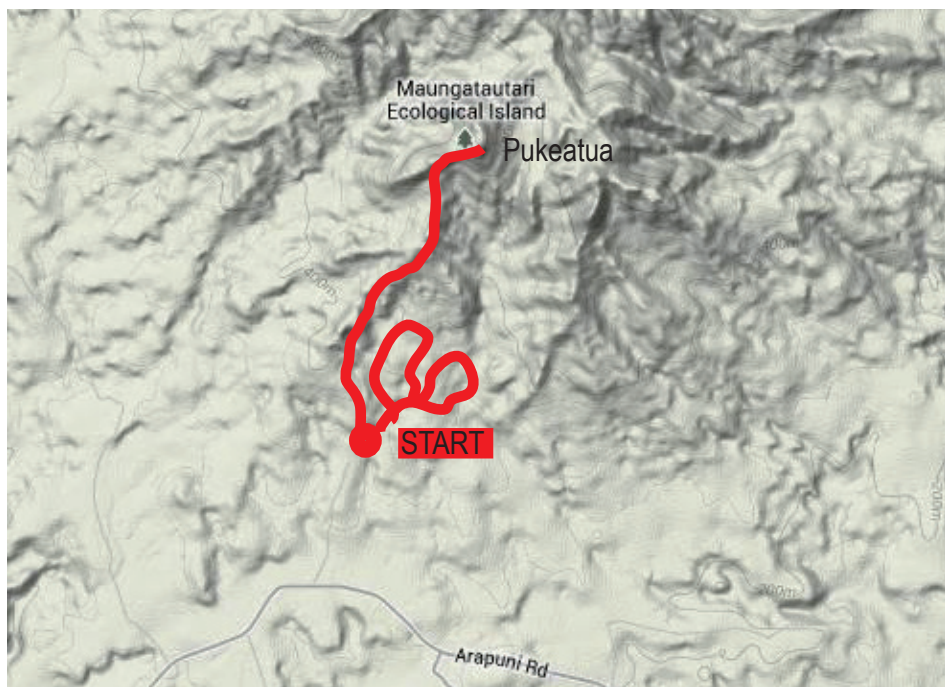
From Arapuni follow the Arapuni Road to Pukeatua, then turn down Tari Road to the carpark.

This lonely mountain dubbed 'Sanctuary Mountain' has been transformed into a bird haven, with a predator proof fence around two enclosures, and plans to fence the entire mountain. The rare takahe, tuatara and stitch birds are found here. There's an entrance fee for the southern enclosure (currently \$15) which you purchase at the visitor centre. However the main track across the mountain is free access all the time, and it's a five-star track.

Bird Enclosures

Buy your ticket at the visitor centre and go through the turnstiles into the southern enclosure where there are various well marked trail circuits — Rimu, Nikau, Rata — to features such as a forest lookout tower, aviary, brown teal pond etc, with excellent information signs.





Over the Mountain Track — Pukeatua

The main mountain track starts near the visitor centre and follows a broad well graded track to Pukeatua Peak (753 m). It's a total climb of 350 metres to a prominent seat and saddle on the bush ridge with views of the Waikato River. For Pukeatua itself, there's a short 50 metre scramble up a rougher track to the rock outcrops, a great place to have lunch with views everywhere.

The main graded track continues from Pukeatua and wanders up and down along the ridge to the main Maungatautari high peak (797 m) but there's no real views here. Then it descends 500 metres from the high peak to the north entrance.



The Butler Incline

Historic tramway and relics

Bush forest and a steep climb

Many track options

Good information signs

2-3 hour circuit

Bush tracks and old tramways

3 kilometres circuit

From Te Aroha drive 3 km south on the Te Aroha-Gordon Road to Wairongomai turn-off, then 2 km to carpark and old battery site. Toilets and info board.

Are you ready for the Butler Incline challenge? It's a 400 metre climb at a 25 degrees angle, and some people resort to hand over hand work. You will be totally stuffed by the time you reach the top.

Wairongomai goldfield in the Wairongomai Stream was a great and glorious failure. The rush started in 1882-1883 and the local council financed the building of the massive Piako County Tramway, of which the Butlers Incline is a part of. Te Aroha information centre has information on Wairongomai mining history and the historic town. Information boards on the tracks, but take the pamphlet and map, as the maze of interconnecting trails can get confusing.

You start to appreciate the huge mine workings as you walk up the low-level track, and it's hard to realise that most of this bush was cleared for the mine operations. The low-level track is easy walking and then turns uphill and pops out at the foot of the Butler Incline on the mid-level track.

(An alternative way to get to the Butler Incline is via the mid-level track, or main Piako tramway, from the carpark).

DOC encourage people only to walk up the incline, which still has its rails in place. As you toil up you can see where the lines split to allow the waggons to pass. The principle of the incline is that the full waggons pull up the empties, and there are three self-acting inclines all told at Wairongomai.

There's an easier way round. Take the Low Level, New Era Branch track as it crosses the stream twice before climbing a spur up to the tramway just before the May Queen Incline. Walk back along the tramway to reach the head of the incline. The top is a good spot for a cup of tea, and to appreciate the impressive reconstruction of the original pulley system.



From here it's all downhill to the carpark. Take the high-level pack track back across the small footbridge, and then it wanders past two pretty waterfalls with glimpses of Buck Rock. Just before the Fern Hill incline, take the direct track (still on the high level) down to the fenceline and carpark.



Other walks: Wai-rongomai would take a few weekends to explore, with tracks linking up to the ruins of Hardies Hut, and all the way onto Te Aroha peak itself. You can no longer drive up the road to the peak.

Tuahu Track

Ancient Maori trail

Well graded hill climb

Kauri forest and views

4-5 hours return

Good benched track

12 kilometres return

Turn off Highway 2 onto the Hot Springs Road and follow this 5 km past the Sapphire Springs motor camp to the road-end carpark.

The Tuahu Track is an ancient Maori trail into the Kaimai mountains, a long, easy climb to the crest of the Kaimai Range. It was widened to a bridle path in the late 1890s. Don't be put off by the distance and 400 climb, its a gentle and genial track, and the eventual view is worth the effort.

About 10 minutes after leaving the carpark you reach a side-track that goes up to a large kauri — well worth the deviation. This side-track then continues and regains the main Tuahu Track. Note also a bit further on the side-track to Sentinel Rock.

The main Tuahu trail wanders in and out of stream gullies, climbing very steadily, and with little in the way of views until you are nearly at the top. Eventually the track reaches the crest of the ridge at a four-way track junction.





Follow the Tuahu Track for another 5 minutes to get broad views of the Waikato, or turn up the track towards Te Rereatukahia Hut to find an immediate flax and tussock clearing with a panorama of the Bay of Plenty and Mayor Island. A great munch spot, safe in the knowledge that the downhill return on the Tuahu Track is a romp.



Wairere Falls

Tremendous waterfall

Bridges and staircases

Forest and big boulders

Fun for families

2 hours (3 km) return to lower waterfall lookout; 3–4 hours (4 km) return to top of waterfall.

Footbridges and bush track

From Te Aroha drive south along the straight Te Aroha–Gordon Road–Okauia Road 25 km. The Wairere Falls carpark is signposted 1 km down the unsealed Goodwin Road.

A showpiece waterfall that, if you are game enough, you can admire from both the graceful foot and the stomach-heaving top. There are boulders like giant's marbles, attractive footbridges, and a scary route up to the Kaimai escarpment.

The track starts by wandering up the Wairere Stream in a regenerating forest of kawakawa, then crosses a bridge, skirts some farmland, and drops back beside the stream.

The stream is attractive, with rich mosses on the big boulders, and there are two more bridges to cross with boardwalks.

The track then climbs to the foot of a steep 40 m (126 steps) staircase, with a number of landings





to pause on. After another 100 steps there's a side trail to a lookout platform, where you can admire the splendid waterfall framed by bush, as it tumbles down in two leaps of 73 and 80 metres. It is about two hours return to here

The bush track continues to zigzag steeply up through to the top of the escarpment. Because Wairere Falls is a natural break in the mountain defences, the Maori used the route for hundreds of years.

At the top, the old Maori trail is followed for 15 minutes to a side-track that takes you to the dizzy lookout platform at the top of the waterfall.

The views of the Waikato are amazing, and on a clear day you can see the distant peaks of the Tongariro plateau.



Hurunui Hut

Lonely hut in Kaimai Ranges
Old bush tramways and ruins
Good views
Off the beaten track

4-5 hours return

Bush track

12 kilometre return

From Highway 29 as it crosses the Kaimai Range, turn off onto the Old Kaimai Road and about halfway along there's a signpost.

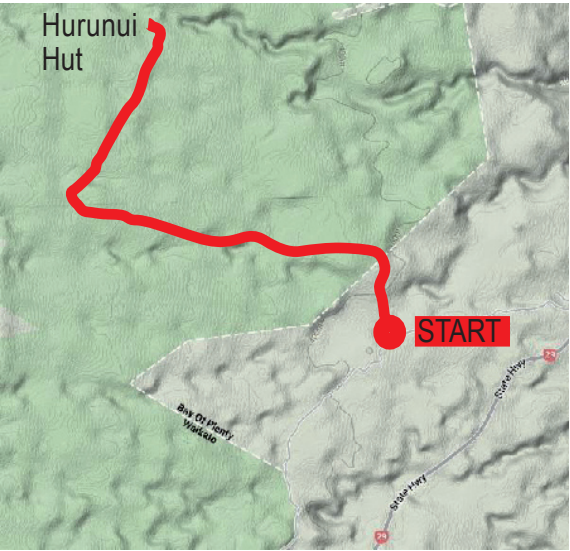
All sorts of secrets are tucked away on the bushy plateaus of the Kaimai, and the recently renovated Hurunui Hut is one of them. A network of old tramway and logging trails provides most of the track, and pretty moss covered stream cut through the regenerating forest.

From the old Kaimai Road the track drops through farmland, and then across Rataroa Stream and into the bush. After crossing another stream, the track turns uphill and diligently follows the line of an old tramway (Henderson Tramline North Branch) to the North-South ridge line track junction.

Turning right or north as this track goes through open grassy clearing where coils of wire rust in the sunshine. The bush is lush already and after about 2 km a side-track turns off to Hurunui Hut. Should be well signposted, but if you reach Hurunui Stream, you've gone too far.

The 6 bunk hut has been renovated and occupies a clearing with a good view to the north, and the quiet ambiance of bird song makes the place seem restful. A shame to leave.





Bowentown Heads

Headland overlooking Tauranga harbour

Short walks and lookouts

Beaches and picnic areas

1 hour return to headland summit; 1 hour return to Shelly Bay; 1 hour Anzac/summit circuit

All 3 km return

Gravel tracks and grass paths

From Highway 2 take the Athenree Road, then Steele Road and Emerton Road to the main beach on Seaforth Road. Alternatively drive from Waihi Beach to Seaforth Road and follow this all the way to Anzac Bay carpark and toilets.

The Tauranga Harbour is a huge inland lagoon, stretching from Mount Maunganui in the south to Pios Beach in the north. Bowentown Head is a relaxed and miniature version of the more famous Mount Maunganui hump, with short, easy walks to a terraced pa site, fishing beaches and a marvellous outlook over the Bay of Plenty.

None of the walks take more than an hour, but if you include the summit, the pa and a beach swim the time just flies away.

From Anzac Bay (which is part of Bowentown Domain) walk up onto the rocky headland and pa site. There are fine views of the entrance, and the pa Te Kura a Maia is magnificent, with lines of terraces sloping down to the sea. The track





goes on up to the top carpark and wanders past a side-track to Cave Bay, a popular fishing spot.

There are good views from the summit and a track that circles underneath and goes down the other side to sidle above the motor camp back down to the access road and Anzac Bay.

The track to Shelly Bay leaves from Anzac Bay and follows a well-benched (if muddy) path up through pohutukawa forest and over a grass clearing down to Shelly Bay. There are trails all over the place, either up onto the summit or down to prime coastal fishing spots. Yet despite its popularity, it seems to be quite easy to find a cosy corner of your own on this lovely headland.

Waikareao Walkway

Circuit of pretty suburban lagoon

Good tracks and lookouts

Mangroves and estuary

2 hours circuit

Flat gravel paths and boardwalks

7 kilometres circuit

The Waikareao estuary is in the heart of Tauranga. A good starting point is the carparking area at Maxwell Road, off Chapel Street, but there are many other access points.

Gentle urban track around a fine estuary, an intimate and interesting walk alongside urban reserves and mangrove inlets. There are no roads to cross and plenty of unhurried places along the way, with linking tracks into other parts of the city.

At the attractive carpark and picnic area by Maxwell Road, take the wellsignposted track along the Daisy Hardwick section of track around to the Goods Road carpark. The track travels between the sparkling estuary and a profusion of urban plants spilling over from people's backyards.





At Goods Road there is a patch of coastal forest, then the botany changes character as the track winds along a mangrove inlet. Just near the Coach Road carpark there is a boardwalk out into the estuary, with an information panel and a lookout platform with seats.

The main track follows a beautiful boardwalk, cutting across the mangroves, then goes around the point and passes the low-tide road to Motuopae Island. This is a good return point if you want to stay on the quieter sections of track.

The next part of the walkway wriggles along coastal mangroves, it quickly reaches the busy Waihi Road, then turns along the even busier Waikareao expressway.

This is still a good track though, popular with runners, with footbridges linking to Graham Park and Tauranga Domain. The last section of track follows Chapel Street back to Maxwell Road.



Mount Maunganui

Landscape icon and great views

Walk around base or to summit

Beaches and pohutukawa trees

Close to shops and cafes

2 hour circuit

Gravel paths and grass trails

3 kilometres circuit

From Tauranga cross the bridge, drive 2 km to Mount Maunganui beach and then to Pilot Bay. Toilets and carparking.

'The Mount' is an emotional and cultural icon of the Bay of Plenty, and it sticks up at more than its mere 230-metre height would suggest. The Maori knew the mount as 'Mauao', and used the hill as habitation, lookout and pa refuge. It provides good walking and plenty of views, and the cafes and bars of the town are not far away.

From Pilot Bay head south along the coastal track, which stays 50 metres or so above the shore. A short side-trail goes down to a pretty, sandy beach where you get good views of the harbour entrance and the Tangaroa statue.

The coast track rounds Stoney Point, with views of the dead-flat Rabbit Island, and the pohutukawa provide shade. North West Rock is a popular surf-fishers' hang-out, and round the corner there are several attractive sandy coves at low tide.

The track climbs slightly to a major track junction. For the easier loop carry on down to the shore, and walk back along the road to Pilot Bay. For the summit, fol-





low up the historic 1860 stone steps and join the Oruahine Track as it continues up onto a plateau and turns steeply uphill to the Waikorere Track junction.

Follow the Waikorere Track as it climbs steadily through regrowth forest, past a side-track to a lookout, then up onto the beacon on the summit of the Mount.

There are excellent views, of course, particularly of the beach, township and Mayor Island. It is then easy walking down the old vehicle track as it winds down through scrub and farm country, passing a large reservoir, before reaching Pilot Bay.



Kohi Point

Ancient pa

Fit walking circuit

Interesting rock formations

Low tide essential for circuit.

2-3 hours return

Bush tracks and beach

4 kilometres return

From Whakatane take the road to Ohope Beach to the turn-off at Otarawairere Road, then veer left at the next junction to the lookout and carpark on the hilltop.

Kohi Point is heavy with history. There are at least eight pa sites along the ridge from the carpark to the end of the point, and a further four pa along the rugged coastline between Kohi Point and Ohope Beach. Kaputerangi is claimed to be New Zealand's oldest pa site, founded between 1070 and 1210 AD.

The carpark has magnificent views of the coast, Moutohora Island, and distant White Island. As you walk down the open grass slopes into the bush escarpment track, you can see typical features of the pa — ditches, terraces, and storage pits. Much of this history is overgrown by the shrub forest of pohutukawa, manuka, kawakawa, kanuka, notably rewarewa, with its splendid red flowers.

The track plunges down the spur (600 steps in all) with fine views over the turbulent Kohi Point itself. Then it sidles around to the staircase down to Otarawairere Bay. This is where the low tide is crucial.



It is an attractive bay, with 'sand' that on closer inspection seems to be composed of zillions of tiny shells. Pohutukawa's shade the beach, and there's a picnic area and toilet halfway along. Here the track to Otarawairere village starts, but before climbing up it, it's well worth fossicking to the south end of the bay.

At low tide you can scramble around the rocky islet point where they are some dramatic geological strata, twisted in quite bizarre shapes. You cannot get round to Ohope Beach because a sea-channel cuts right in against the rock.



The track up to Otarawairere village is actually an old road, put in by a film company many years ago, and the Otarawairere village was constructed as a company village by the Tasman Pulp and Paper Company in the affluent sixties, and boasts some of the best views in the Bay of Plenty. Follow the scenic road back up the lookout and carpark.



Other walks

Kahi Point is part of a much longer 8-9 hour walk (10 km) to Ohope Beach and through bush reserves back to Whakatane. Well worth doing

Ohiwa Harbour Hill

Great harbour views

Old pa sites

Bush track circuit

Glow-worms

1-2 hours return

Bush tracks and beach

3 kilometres return

From Highway 2, 10 km before Opo-tiki turn onto Ohiwa Harbour Road to the small carpark just before Ohiwa and camp ground. There are more tracks than the signpost currently indicates.

Charming headland and beach walk with tremendous views over Ohiwa Harbour and to Whale Island. At night, the glow-worm walk is popular.

From the carpark the track curls around a wetland, and there's a side-trail to the glow-worm cliff face. The main track carries onto the ridge, where there's a another side-trail back down to the camping ground.

The main track goes onto the headland pa with great views, and then carried onto the road. This quiet road can be followed down to the Ohiwa Beach Road, and a pleasant beach walk back to Ohiwa and carpark.





There are several other short walks onto the Ohiwa Spit and if you stay in the campground you can hire their canoes, an idyllic way to spend an afternoon on the usually placid estuary.

