



5 Tui Domain Track

Time: 1 hour 30mins one way
Distance: 3.4kms
Start: Mokena Geysers, Te Aroha Domain
Finish: Second carpark on Tui Road

The track passes a short detour to the No 22 spring, a cold water spring in a small grotto, before reaching a junction with the Reservoir Loop Track. This is a 25min detour. There are two shallow stream crossings before the water treatment station.

The track continues through regenerating bush, including kanuka. A gate controls the second crossing of the mountain bike track. From this point there is a 5 min detour to a lookout over Te Aroha. The track continues to the junction with Hamilton Street, which is 5 mins away.

The track crosses the left branch of the Tunakohia Stream and ascends steeply in zigzags past an old mine entrance, which is part of the old Mayflower Claim. There is a steep section before reaching the junction with a short side track to a waterfall lookout. The main track goes left on an easy grade, passing through lowland forest before reaching the junction with the Tui Link Track. There are two historic reservoirs originating from Te Aroha's first electric power supply. Shortly after passing this junction, the track emerges on to Tui Road at the second carpark.

8 Golf Link Track

Time: 30 mins one way
Distance: 1km
Start/Finish: Tui Road

This track links two car parking areas at Tui Road – one at the end of the sealed road and the other opposite the end of the Tui Domain Track. There are some steep sections and caution is required crossing the Tui Stream. It is a very pleasant walk with some lovely groves of nikau and parataniwha.

9 Tui Link Track and Ridge Track

Time: 2 hours one way
Distance: 5kms
Start: Mount Te Aroha Summit
Finish: Junction with Tui Domain Track, Carpark at Tui Road

The track descends from the summit with stairways and steps on the steeper sections. Dog Kennel Flat is reached after 20 mins. This area gained its name from past goat culling operations, the kennels were kept on the cleared area when hunters were operating.

Just below Dog Kennel Flat is an intersection with the track to the Tui Saddle. Follow the Ridge Track to the Tui Saddle junction. The Mangakino Pack Track Route branches off to the north. Mine workings from the early Tui era are visible from the track. It descends steeply down a rocky section on an old mining horse trail, to the more recent Tui mine workings and the associated mining road.

The track follows the road for about 15 mins before taking a marked track on the left. Just below here is the Tui Mine mill site and tailings. The track passes an old concrete explosives magazine, crosses the Mountain Road and meanders down through lowland forest of puriri and kohekohe to the junction with the Tui Domain Track.

6 Whakapipi Lookout Baldspur

Time: 45 mins one way
Distance: 1.2km
Start: Mokena Geysers, Te Aroha Domain
Finish: Whakapipi Lookout

From behind the Mokena Geysers at the Te Aroha Domain the track to Whakapipi Lookout and Mount Te Aroha zigzags up a well defined path with plenty of resting spots and views. The Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, upon the recommendation of the batologist, Dr. Wohlmann in 1903 originally established the track.

He considered the lookout a suitable slope for the Oerfel treatment, which suggested that graduated hill climbing was good for heart problems.

The lookout is also known as Bald Spur, which is a legacy from the area's past when it was repeatedly burnt both by accident and for gold prospecting during the late 1800s. The track passes several stands of mature puriri and radialis trees planted in the early 1900s. The lookout provides spectacular views of Te Aroha and the surrounding district.

7 Te Aroha Mountain Track

Time: 1-2 hours one way
Distance: 2.7kms
Start: Whakapipi Lookout
Finish: Mount Te Aroha summit

From the lookout the track dips through a small saddle and then climbs to the summit (952m). The track becomes steep and the surface is rough. As the track climbs in altitude, the forest changes with rimu and miro becoming common. As the altitude increases silver beech and nei nei become noticeable.

The view from the summit is spectacular with 360° views over the Kaimai Range and the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions. Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Taranaki are visible on a clear day. Return to Te Aroha via the same track or take the Ridge Track/Tui Track back to the domain.

11 Waiorongomai Saddle to Tui Saddle

Time: 1 hour 30 mins one way
Distance: 2.5kms
Start: Waiorongomai Saddle
Finish: Tui Saddle

From the Plutus Claim Track the Mangakino Pack Track Route heads north for 1 hour before meeting the junction with the Tui Saddle Track. The track is for experienced people with possible windfalls and steep slippery sections. It meanders through gullies around the side of a ridge. This used to be the main roughshar from the Waiorongomai Goldfields to the Ohinemuri Goldfields near Paeroa. From the junction it is a steady climb to Tui Saddle. There is a choice of either the Tui Road (1 hour) or the Te Aroha Summit (1 hour 30 mins).

12 Low Level Loop Track

Time: 2 hours return
Distance: 5.5kms
Start/Finish: Carpark at the Waiorongomai Loop Road

The loop track combines the Low Level Track with the Ridge Track. This well graded track takes in a number of significant sites around the lower Waiorongomai Goldfields. There is a series of interpretation panels that give a valuable insight into the natural and cultural history of the area.

The Low Level Track was constructed as a horse pack track to service the developments in the lower Waiorongomai Valley. The track is a very gradual climb up through regenerating native bush. There are a few small streams, which can be crossed easily. Take care after rain and if the rocks are slippery. After the track passes a small tunnel and pipeline a detour of 10 mins will take you down a steep track to the Bendigo Battery site. At the T Junction the Loop Track veers to the left while the Low Level Track continues up the valley. Soon after this junction the base of Butlers Incline is reached. The incline is 400m long and at 25° is very steep.

If you wish to detour off the Low Level Loop Track and investigate the incline it is advisable to walk up rather than down to protect it from erosion. Return along one of the other tracks. The loop track then turns from the base of the incline to follow the tramway down the valley. There are a number of fascinating historic sites with relics of the gold mining days still in place. After about 45 mins the High Level Track crosses the track and descends straight to the carpark.

The Loop Track continues straight ahead before reaching a T junction. To the right is a 1 min walk to the Low Level Drive. After reaching the tunnel, the track does a short loop past the old compressor site. Retrace your steps back to the junction, follow the bushline to the bottom of the Fern Spur Incline and the carpark.

13 Low Level Track / New Era Branch

Time: 2 hours one way
Distance: 3.2kms
Start/Finish: Waiorongomai carpark
Finish: Junction with Tramway

Follow the Low Level Loop Track (description above) until it reaches a T junction. From here the track continues up the stream for 20 mins. There are two stream crossings which can be difficult after rain. The Kauri Grove Loop branches off to the right while the Water Race Branch is linked to the New Era Branch by following a steep spur and a short section of pack track. The New Era Branch Line took two years to build although it is only 400m long.

This track meets up with the Piako County Tramway just below the May Queen Incline.

14 High Level Pack Track

Time: 2 hours 30 mins one way
Distance: 4.3kms
Start: Waiorongomai carpark
Finish: Hardy's Hut

This pack horse track sidles along the Waiorongomai Valley on a generally steady uphill grade. It historically allowed access to the workings of the upper goldfield. The track leaves the bush edge at a junction just past the base of the Fern Spur Incline. It crosses the Low Level Loop Track and then the Buck Rock Track branches off to the left. The track meanders in and out of gullies with stream crossings and some waterfalls. It then becomes a little steeper before reaching a bridge across Butler's Incline.

After reaching the old Tramway there is a 80m return side trip to the top of Butlers Incline. About 10m after the intersection, the High Level Pack Track branches off to the left and continues upwards, passing many mine portals and waterfalls. It levels out just before the old mining camp known as Quartzville, before meeting the tramway again.

15 Buck Rock Track

Time: 1 hour one way
Distance: 2kms
Start: High Level Pack Track 30 mins from the road end
Finish: Top of Butlers Incline

The track climbs steadily for one hour, then levels off for a further 30 mins, before meeting the Piako County Tramway at the top of Butlers Incline. This track was known as the Ruby Track in 1888 and the Cadman Track in 1900. It gave access along the length of the quartz reef between the Incline and Buck Rock. Numerous drives (mining tunnels) are scattered along its path.

About mid way a very steep 20 minute side track leads to the top of Buck Rock, giving spectacular views of the Waikato. Care is required.

16 Tramway from Butler's Incline to Premier Creek

Time: 1 hour 30 mins one way
Distance: 2.3kms
Start: Bottom of Butler's Incline
Finish: Premier Creek

Butler's Incline is 400m long and has a 25° angle. To protect the incline from further erosion, walk up rather than down (30mins). From the top of Butlers Incline the track follows the Piako County Tramway, passing the lower junction with the High Level Track after 40m. It is a level grade with rail along the whole length. The track crosses Diamond Creek before reaching the intersection with the New Era Branch. At this point is a compressor which was lifted out of the creek in the 1990's to protect it from flood damage. It was assembled on site and has an interpretation panel describing how it worked.

The track then follows the May Queen Incline, passing a kauri timbered trestle site along the way. The winding gear is visible at the top. The track continues along the tramway and passes the top junction of the High Level Track crossing a gully and stream before passing through a short but dark tunnel. The tramway finishes at Premier Creek.

17 Kauri Grove Route

Time: 3 hrs one way
Distance: 3km
Start: Side track down to Bendigo Battery
Finish: Junction with New Era Branch Line

This side track leaves the Low Level Loop Track after approximately 45 mins. Just before the battery site the route crosses the Waiorongomai Stream and climbs very steeply to a junction with the Pylon Line Route. After this the track descends steeply to the north through a grove of kauri fickers, then undulates, with small stream crossings before meeting the junction with the New Era Branch Track. This is a route only and is rough and overgrown in places. Experience is required.

The Pylon Line Route climbs steeply up to a good lookout over the Waikato plains. From here it is a steep climb that meets the old North South Route (1 hour). This route is not maintained and is overgrown and rough.



Spring No. 15, Te Aroha