

Tarawera Falls

These are the most spectacular falls in the Bay of Plenty. The Tarawera River plunges 65 metres down a sheer cliff face before tumbling down bush-lined rapids.

Te Tatau a Hape

'Te Tatau a Hape' or 'the Doorway of Hape' is the original name for the Tarawera Falls. The ancestor Hape (whose full name is Hape-ki-tumanui-o-te-rangi or Hape-ki-tumatangi-o-te-rangi) is said to have come from Hawaiki to Aotearoa/New Zealand in search of greenstone. He arrived here on the Te Rangi-matoru canoe which made landfall at Ohiwa Harbour.

From Ohiwa, Hape made his way inland until he reached a spot above the Falls. He mistook the green aquatic plants in the clear waters of the river below for greenstone and so set about blocking up the course of the Tarawera River by placing a large boulder above the Falls where the waters enter an underground cleft. Dismayed at finding no greenstone, Hape continued his quest journeying southward, eventually reaching the West Coast of the South Island and the prized greenstone.

The land and its mantle

The Tarawera River bed around the falls is carved into ancient volcanic rocks and the high cliffs are thought to be the eroded end face of an ancient lava flow that poured from Mt Tarawera about 11,000 years ago.

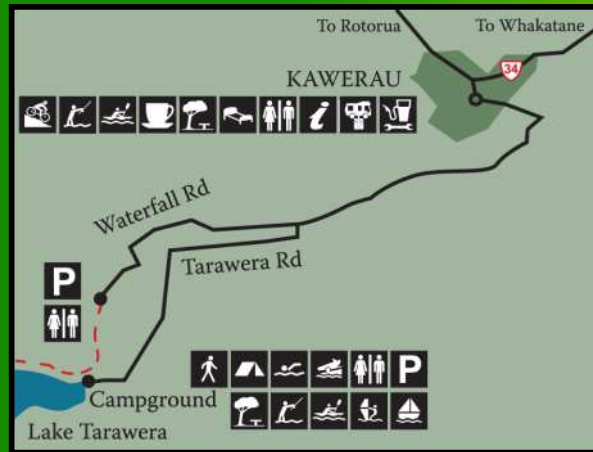
The forest, dominated by pohutukawa and rata as well as hybrids of the two, is relatively young. The Mt Tarawera eruption of 1886 devastated forests in this area. Floods, caused by the sudden release of volcanic debris blocking the lake outlet, have also caused huge changes to the upper valley. The last time it happened, in 1904,

700 meters per second flowed over the falls.

Native forest birds such as tui, tomitts, fantails and kereru often be seen near the tracks.

Access – permit required

Tarawera Outlet is located on the eastern arm of Lake Tarawera 20 kilometres from Kawerau. Vehicle access to Tarawera Falls and Outlet is along forest roads, which require an access permit. Directions and permits can be obtained **Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5.00pm** from Maori Investments, Waterhouse Street Extension, Kawerau and **Weekends and Public Holidays** from the Kawerau i-SITE Visitor Information Centre, Plunket Street, Kawerau.



For more information

The reserves around Tarawera Falls and the walking and tramping tracks are managed by the Department of Conservation, Rotorua Lakes Area. For more information contact:

Kawerau i-SITE Visitor Information Centre
07 323 6300
infocentre@kaweraudc.govt.nz
www.kaweraunz.com

Rotorua i-SITE Visitor Information Centre
07 351 7324
rotoruavisitor@doc.govt.nz
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Maori Investments Ltd
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Kawerau

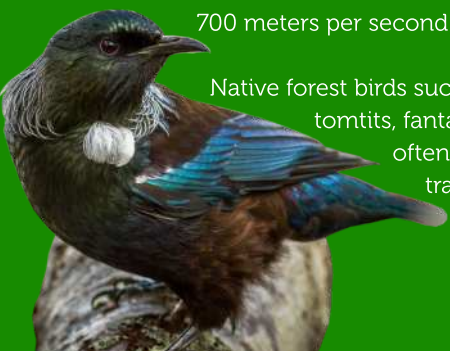
Tarawera Falls

Tarawera Outlet &

site



Visitor Information



Track Information

Tarawera Falls Track

Start: Waterfall Road carpark

Time: 20 minutes one way - 0.7 kms



This part of the track system is easy and well graded. From the car park, head upstream along the Tarawera River, cross the footbridge then continue along the river until you arrive at the Falls viewing area. It's a spectacular sight and there are signs to explain the cultural and natural significance of the area. Backtrack to the car park or continue along the walking track to Tarawera Outlet (see next section).

Tarawera Outlet to Falls Track

Start: Tarawera Outlet

Time: 1 1/2 hours one way - 5 kms



At the outlet, cross the bridge and turn right. The track meanders through the native bush, largely following the river. Caution is advised for those wishing to swim beside this track due to strong currents. However, there is a safe and popular swimming spot about 1 hour from the Outlet, at a wider and shallower stretch of the river where the water runs more gently. Shortly afterwards, the track divides for a brief distance before coming together again and zigzagging down a steep escarpment to the viewing area at the base of the Falls. The Waterfall Road carpark is approximately 20 minutes walk past the Falls. If you have not arranged return transport you will have to go back along the same track to the outlet.

Tarawera Outlet to Humphries Bay

Start: Tarawera Outlet

Time: 3 hours one way - 7 kms



Cross the bridge at the outlet and take the left hand track. Once past the jetty, lake views become less frequent as the track climbs inland. The track descends into Humphries Bay, a pleasant picnic and overnight camping area. Trampers can then take the Eastern Okataina Walkway northwards to Otangimoana Bay on Lake Okataina (about 20 minutes one way) or onward to complete the Walkway at the Okataina car park (Tauranganui Bay - a further 2 hours and 40 minutes walk.)

Tarawera Outlet and Campsite

The Tarawera Outlet is a pleasant picnic and overnight camping spot. The area is popular with both families and sports people who enjoy kayaking, fishing, windsurfing, boating, tramping, swimming, tubing and water skiing. Hot Water Beach, a natural underwater hot spring on the shores of Lake Tarawera is easily reached by either boat or kayak from the Tarawera Outlet. The large popular campsite is accessible by car from Kawerau. Facilities include toilets, cooking shelter and a boat ramp. The water supply is from the river and requires boiling before use. Fees apply and are payable to the on-site Department of Conservation warden. There are signs about the tracks and an interesting panel on Mount Tarawera's vegetation succession. The fly fishing locally is excellent too!

