

CASTLE HILL ROCK

260 Series Map: T20 Ruapehu

Topo50 Map: BJ35Waiouru

How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo heading south on SH1 to Turangi
- From Turangi follow the Desert Road almost to the turn-off for the Tukino Access Road but turn off left at the sign for the Kaimanawa Forest
- Park in the mini car-park a few metres off the tar-seal

Rough description: A fairly easy, out-and-back, four to five hour trip including refreshment stops, on fairly good, slightly overgrown footpaths with moderate slopes and with a summit walk offering good views.

Care needs to be taken not to stray from the path as the tramp borders the army training ground.

Detail: From the car park [01 1105masl] – see the map - set off along the well defined, black sandy motorable track in a north easterly direction passing a minor Y-fork after a few minutes where the route goes left. After 15 minutes, near the top of a gentle ascent whilst following poles, branch right [02 1135masl] on to less clear track which is also marked with poles going SE up the hill on the right.

In 30 minutes reach a minor crest [03 1266masl] in a low bush area with an army sign on the RHS (right hand side) of the track. In about 45 minutes another minor crest [04 1315masl] is reached which lies about 500metres due north of three masts. From here the path crosses a small watershed in a dip and the track can be seen ascending to the “masts” ridge ahead.

Start of the track



Army sign



View back over the Desert Road



Within one hour the highest point to date is gained [05 1378masl] where the track bears slightly left then descends over an open stony area heading for the tree line. A good place for “smoko” is found here in the form of a small clearing which could be a campsite [06 1308masl]. Do not continue downslope in this clearing but find the small path that heads more or less south to pick up a well defined, marked track down through some very cold, damp beech forest.

Emerge from the trees into an open meadow area [07 1204 masl] in roughly 1:45 minutes. Cross the meadow, re-enter the trees to tackle a fair grunt upwards emerging from the trees again in 2:10 minutes at [08 1348masl] facing a large gullied area; the track goes to the right here. Continue on the poled route through the slightly boggy, exposed area to the crest with the large rock outcrop [09 1450masl] in 2:30 minutes walking. Obvious signs of the army having been here can be found with minor debris cast around – artifacts of flares or cooking pellets.

There is an overall altitude gain of 400 metres with an altitude range of 1074 to 1450 metres and GPS data indicate an overall distance for the round trip of 12.6 km. The vegetation on this tramp is rather limited with stunted bush in most areas plus lots of fungi and some ferns. Higher up one mostly tramps through snow grass, hebe scrub, mantangara and mud!

Southern access corridor



Castle Hill rock



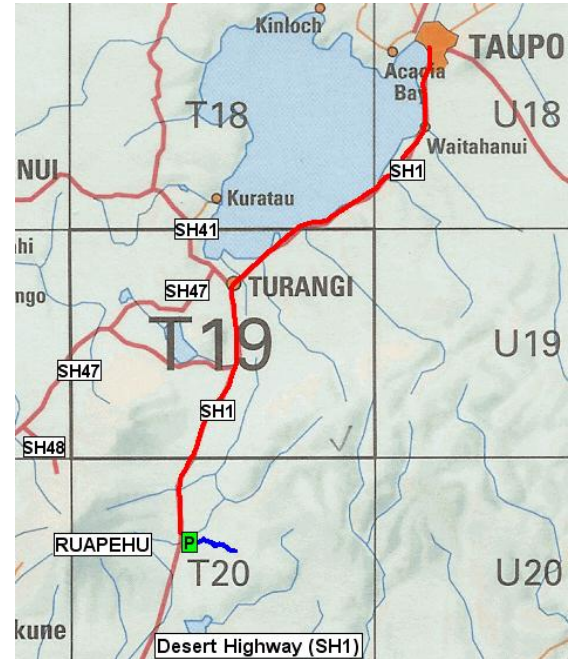
Beyond the rock



NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

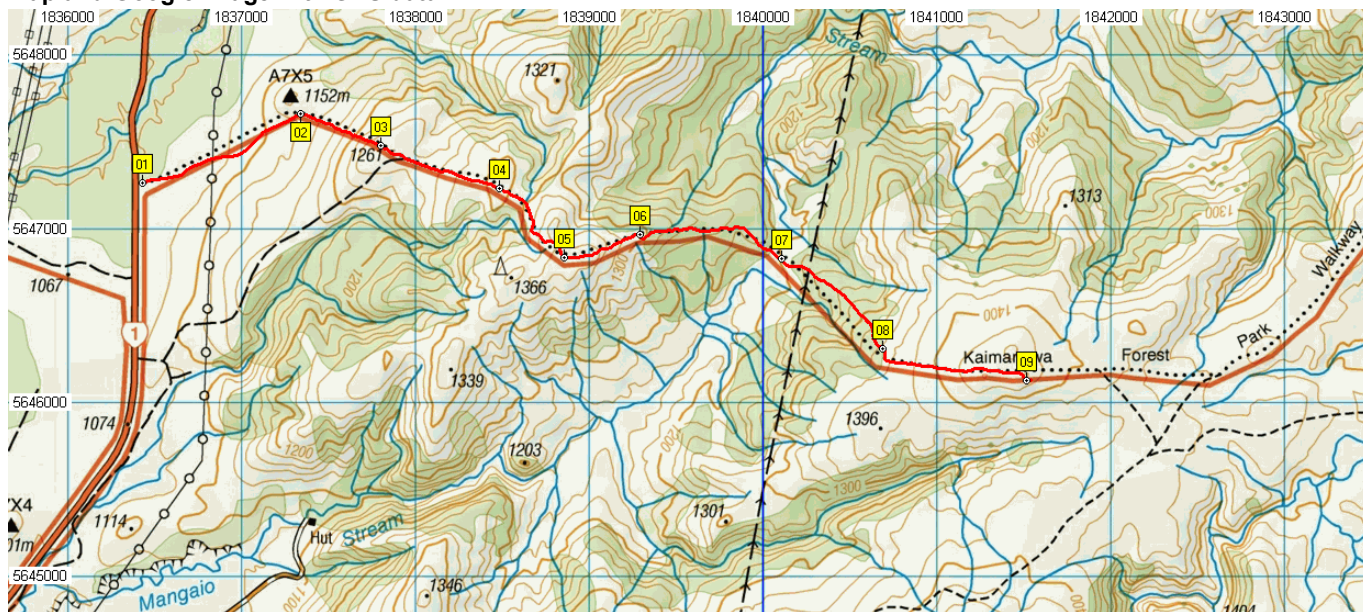
NZTM GPS: NZTM and WGS 84

Access and Location



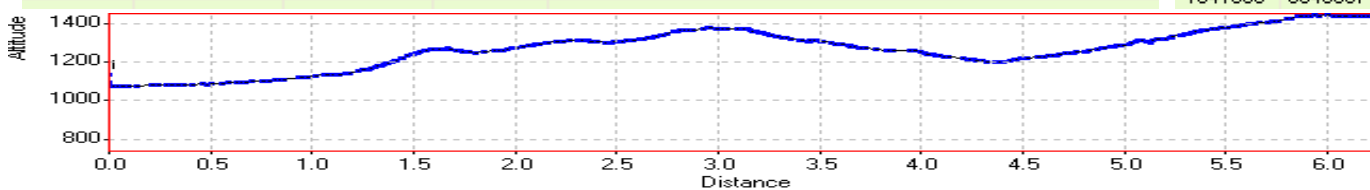
Access route in RED and tramp route BLUE

Map and Google Image with GPS data



Waypoints NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description	NZTM Easting	NZTM Northing
CH01	2746412	6209378	1048	Car park off Desert Highway - Kaimanawa Forest	1836419	5646993
CH02	2747320	6209763	1121	Branch right off track to right, follow poles - 15 min	1837330	5647394
CH03	2747768	6209576	1248	Minor crest in low bush area, army sign to RHS, 35 min	1837787	5647208
CH04	2748554	6209278	1292	Watershed in valley below ridge with masts, 1hour	1838470	5646961
CH05	2748822	6208926	1370	Crest of ridge in low bush on masts ridge, 1:05	1838842	5646563
CH06	2749252	6209064	1311	Descending slope entering trees, 1:30 min walk	1839280	5646699
CH07	2750057	6208930	1220	Open / Meadow area in trees, 1:45 min walk	1840093	5646557
CH08	2750630	6208367	1361	Exit trees on upslope towards Castle Hill, 2:10 min	1840679	5646041
CH09	2751484	6208222	1449	Castle Hill Rock - 2:30 min walking	1841505	5645857



Notes:

- **GPS** Garmin GPSMap 60CSx
- **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- **masl** = metres above sea level (as recorded by GPS)