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BOOKING INFORMATION

For more information about the regions mountain bike rides, walks & treks, contact the visitor information centres in Taumarunui, Whakapapa Village, Ohakune and Raetihi.

Ruapehu i-SITE Visitor Centre
54 Clyde Street, Ohakune
Ph: 06 385 8427
Email: ruapehu.vic@xtra.co.nz

Taumarunui i-SITE Visitor Centre
Railway Station, Hakiaha Street, Taumarunui
Ph: 07 895 7494
Email: taumarunui.vic@xtra.co.nz

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Here are some of the rides you might like to explore: * Difficulty grades are:
1 = easy, 5 = expert

OHAKUNE OLD COACH ROAD

Length: 3-4 hours
Distance: 15kms
Difficulty: Grade 2

This historic trail was used by horse drawn coaches in the early 1900's to transport passengers between the two rail heads of the unfinished North Island trunk line. The cobbled route became obsolete with the completion of the railway and was lost to the forest for almost 100 years.

Recently restored, the route ambles along the lower slopes of Mt Ruapehu passing historical sites including the camps of railway workers, the remnants of the Taonui viaduct and the Hapuawhenua Viaduct.

The terrain covers farmland and native forest. For a slightly easier ride start in Horopito and take your time to enjoy the journey. There are a number of friendly businesses that will drop you and your bikes at Horopito to make the logistics simple and easy.

The Highlights

- Venturing through the pitch black of the Hapuawhenua Tunnel.
- Learning history along the way through stories told on the many information boards.
- Watching freight trains steam across the new Hapuawhenua Viaduct from the perfect vantage point of the original structure.



BRIDGE TO NOWHERE VIA MANGAPURUA TRACK

Length: 5-7 hours + 1 hour jet boat transfer
Distance: 35km
Difficulty: Grade 3

In 1917 the Mangapurua Valley was opened by the government to encourage settlement by returning World War 1 soldiers and their families. Up to 35 families lived in the valley at the height of its occupation. Built originally as a means of linking the valley settlements with the riverboat transport service, the bridge was in use for a mere 6 years before the valley was abandoned in 1942.

The Mangapurua Track starts 30kms north-west of Raetihi with an uphill climb to the trig before winding down amongst the forest, along sheer bluff faces and across deep ravines. Today this isolated valley is regenerating in native forest, but there are still signs of the original settlement offering visitors a fascinating glimpse into post-war life in the central North Island.

A jet boat pick up from the Mangapurua Landing must be booked in advance.

The Highlights

- Stopping to remember the past at the settlement plots that still bear the names of the families that occupied them.
- Marvelling at the awesome scale of Battleship Bluff with the river far below.
- Skimming through gorges and rapids on your end of the day jet boat experience.



BRIDGE TO NOWHERE VIA KAIWHAKAUKA TRACK

Length: 5-7 hours + 1 hour jet boat transfer
Distance: 40km
Difficulty: Grade 4

Like the Mangapurua, land within the Kaiwhakauka Valley was offered to returned World War 1 servicemen. These early pioneers cleared the land of its forest and transformed it into farmland but problems such as poor access, bad erosion and falling prices for stock during the Depression years forced most of the settlers to abandon their farms.

Adventure across farmland & through native bush on a road which once provided access by horse and cart to the Mangapurua Valley and the Bridge to Nowhere. The Kaiwhakauka Track starts at the end of Oio Road, Whakahoro, which is 45km west of State Highway 4 near Owahango. This track joins the Mangapurua Track and ends at The Bridge to Nowhere.

A jet boat pick up from the Mangapurua Landing must be booked in advance.

The Highlights

- The stunning Kaiwhakauka waterfall, 3kms into the ride from Whakahoro.
- Hearing and if you're lucky seeing the rare and endangered blue duck (whio).
- Stopping at the historic depot building to remember the abandoned dreams of early settlers.



FISHERS TRACK

Length: 2-3 hours
Distance: 28km
Difficulty: Grade 2

Part of the Mountains to Sea - Nga Ara Tuhono Cycle Trail, Fishers Track requires minimal fitness levels which makes it a great option for beginner mountain bike enthusiasts. Starting at National Park Village, there is a short, easy climb, winding through stunning native bush before descending down through farmland.

This track is 95% downhill, which includes a 520m descent and finishes at Monument corner (Oio Road). For advanced riders it is possible to continue along Oio Road to Whakahoro and access The Bridge to Nowhere via the Kaiwhakauka Track.

The Highlights

- The 11km downhill scenic ride through farmland.
- Taking in the stunning mountain views.
- Having one of Ruapehu's friendly tourism operators pick you up at the bottom (needs to be booked in advance).



42 TRAVERSE

Length: 4-7 hours
Distance: 46km
Difficulty: Grade 3-4

The 42 Traverse is one of the North Island's premier rides known for the long and winding down-hills. Starting on Kapoors Road off State Highway 47, it follows old logging tracks through native bush and across streams. Leave plenty of energy for the final 2km climb up from the bridge crossing the Whakapapa River to the historic village of Owahango.

This ride covers a diverse range of terrain with around 60 percent of it following 4WD tracks. Start from the Whakapapa end and arrange transport from the finish point back to your vehicle in advance.

The Highlights

- Being easily distracted by the lush native forest and sweeping views of the volcanic mountains.
- Feeling a million miles from civilisation as you ride through stunning Canyon Valley.
- A well-earned cold drink at the end of your adventure!

FORGOTTEN WORLD HIGHWAY

Length: 2 days
Distance: 150km
Difficulty: Grade 3

Spanning 150km between Taumarunui and Stratford, this route cuts through some of the most remote and historic parts of New Zealand, winding over four mountain saddles, through the 180m one-way Moki tunnel and along the beautiful Tangarakau Gorge.

This mostly sealed road features historic sites and plenty of scenic walks. The Otunui and Aukopae Landings were once used by settlers when riverboats on the Whanganui were the main means of transport. Museums, coal mines, waterfalls and scenic lookouts that take in panoramic views of the Mountains, Taranaki, Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngauruhoe, dotted along the journey. Book transport from Whangamomona back to Taumarunui before departure.

The Highlights

- Learning about the significance of Maori and early European history at Maraehowkai Reserve.
- Mount Dampier Falls, one of the highest waterfalls in the North Island.
- Visiting the Republic of Whangamomona (as declared by locals). Among former Presidents of Whangamomona were a poodle and a goat!

MOUNTAINS TO SEA - NGA ARA TUHONO

Length: 4-6 days
Distance: 267km
Difficulty: Grade 3-4

The Mountains to Sea - Nga Ara Tuhono National Cycle Trail, officially opened by Prime Minister John Key in July 2010, starts at the Turoa Ski Area carpark and ends in Whanganui. It covers Tongariro and Whanganui National Parks and includes Ohakune Mountain Road, Ohakune Old Coach Road, Fishers Track, The Bridge to Nowhere and the Whanganui River Road. See individual rides for more information and highlights.



CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND RAIL TRAIL

(The Timber Trail) Opening Spring 2012

Length: 1-2 days
Distance: 77km
Difficulty: Grade 1

Taumarunui is the perfect base for this new National Cycle Trail. Rumoured to be the next Otago Central Rail Trail, the ride starts in Pureora and finishes at Ongarue (north of Taumarunui).

The Timber Trail passes through the Pureora Forest Park and showcases remnants of the great forests that once dominated the area. The trail traverses the culturally significant Mt Pureora then runs along the western side of the Hauhungaroa Range.

Historic jiggers and bush camps elude to life during the timber logging era. The nationally significant Ongarue Spiral will be restored to its former glory as part of the Cycle Trail's development and the trail will feature New Zealand's highest and longest suspension bridge.

The Highlights

- Crossing several of New Zealand's highest and longest suspension bridges.
- A side visit to the eco-cultural centre; Pa Harakeke. The Maraeroa cycle trail opened in 2011.
- Amazing curved tunnel and the Ongarue Spiral.



OTHER RIDES IN THE REGION:

WHANGANUI RIVER ROAD

Distance: 76km Difficulty: Grade 2

The Whanganui River Road forms the last section of the Mountain to Sea cycle trail. On arrival at Pipiriki by jet boat, mountain bike riders continue their journey alongside the Whanganui River taking in historic sites such as Jerusalem, Ranana and the Flour Mill before arriving at Whanganui City and the Tasman Sea.

OHAKUNE MOUNTAIN ROAD

Distance: 17km Difficulty: Grade 2

Originally the starting point for the Mountains to Sea cycle trail, this sealed road leads to/from Turoa Ski Area with a 1000m vertical ascent/descent. A number of operators offer transport to the top. There are several excellent walks that can be accessed along the way but be prepared for differing weather conditions.

RUATITI ROAD

Distance: 22km Difficulty: Grade 2

This partially sealed, scenic road (off State Highway 4, 3km north of Raetihi), follows the Maungani-o-te-ao River. Picnic and camping facilities are available at the Domain along with some of NZ's best trout fishing. For the serious mountain bike rider, continue on to join the Mangapurua Track to The Bridge to Nowhere.

MIDDLE ROAD

Distance: 26km Difficulty: Grade 2

Travelling North to South parallel to State Highway 4, Middle Road provides a gravel road link between Ohakune Old Coach Road (Horopito end) and the Mangapurua Track to The Bridge to Nowhere. The end of Middle Road connects with Ruatiti Road.

LAKES RESERVE and Ratamarie Road

Distance: 1.8km Difficulty: Grade 1

Follow the Raetihi - Ohakune Road from Clyde Street until you see the turn off to Lakes Reserve (signposted) or take Ratamarie Road (grade 2) from Rangataua. This partially formed paper road covers farmland, market gardens and boasts spectacular views of Mt Ruapehu.

RANGATAUA FOREST

Distance: 12km Difficulty: Grade 3

A picturesque loop at the base of Mt Ruapehu which follows an old metal forest road. Start on Rangataua Road or Middle Track and travel north to meet the North Track loop. An optional extra is to include the pleasant 1-2 hour walk around two crater lakes at Rotokura Reserve.

TREE TRUNK GORGE and the pillars of Hercules

Distance: 18km Difficulty: Grade 3

On a side road off the Desert Road (State Highway 1, 40km north of Waiouru) is Tree Trunk Gorge. Old lava flows, stands of beech forest and pristine native bush lead to the Pillars of Hercules. Book transport from your Ruapehu accommodation to avoid returning to your car via the main highway.

BRUCE ROAD

Distance: 6km Difficulty: Grade 2

Also known as the road to Whakapapa Ski Area, this is an uphill challenge and/or a downhill buzz! Local transport operators can drop you at the top of the Bruce car park. Take care on corners and beware of vehicles sharing the road.

MARTON SASH AND DOOR

Distance: 16km Difficulty: Grade 2

Opening in October 2012, this loop trail from National Park Village takes in a recovered bush tramway route, some back country dirt roads and a pine plantation which travels alongside the North Island Main Trunk Railway line. Elevation range is 120m between 720m and 840m.

TUKINO ROAD

Distance: 26km Difficulty: Grade 3

This desert like road provides access during winter to Tukino Ski Area. It's a lovely scenic ride offering a challenging uphill climb and/or a thrilling 600m descent.

PROPOSED PUMP TRACK

Proposed Ohakune bike skills area for family fun (opening mid 2012).

Ruapehu Great Rides



Whether you are a first time mountain biker or serious enthusiast, the Ruapehu region has a bike trail to suit.

In fact, two of the Governments National Cycle Trails are right here. The Mountains to Sea - Nga Ara Tuhono and the Central North Island Rail Trail (The Timber Trail, opening Spring 2012) feature some of the best terrain, landscape and history New Zealand has to offer.

The Mountains to Sea - Nga Ara Tuhono starts at the Turoa Ski Area carpark, ends in Whanganui and covers Tongariro and Whanganui National Parks, Ohakune Mountain Road, Ohakune Old Coach Road, Fishers Track, The Bridge to Nowhere and the Whanganui River Road. The Central North Island Rail Trail (The Timber Trail) starts in Pureora and ends at Ongarue encompassing New Zealand's longest suspension bridge.

Fans of Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit and River Queen will recognise locations as scenes from the famous films were shot around the Ruapehu region.

