

Waipu Caves Walk, Waipu Caves Scenic Reserve

WILD FILE

Access From the Waipu Caves or Ormiston Road car parks

Grade Easy

Length 3.07km

Time 2hr

Map AX30

Description

This is a great walk to do on the way to Whangarei or as a half-day trip from Auckland. Bring a headlamp or torch for the caves. Start at the Waipu Caves Road end and cross a boggy paddock of cows to get to the caves. A short slippery scramble inside, and your headlamps illuminate swallows, stalactites and eels cruising the underground river. It's possible to explore the caves via the river and emerge 175m downstream, otherwise scramble out past the glow worms and into the karst landscape outside. The track crosses the stream and climbs through the moss-laden bush amongst massive craggy boulders. The land is forested in giant and in miniature – huge trees filter out the light while the ground is carpeted with tiny green umbrellas.

The track leads out of the bush and up the ridge where you're surrounded by ti tree and gorse, looking back across farm paddocks dotted with marshes and stands of totara.

At the ridgeline, the view opens up to the Whangarei Heads and the Hen and Chicken Islands. The track drops down to the Ormiston Road end through farmland. There are several branches off the track, but they all head back towards the stream. One track heads through stacks of huge limestone boulders. The boulders have been carved out in wavy runnels by carbonic acid dissolved in rainwater, a process called karstification that formed this whole unique landscape.

Back at the car park, there's a toilet block with an outdoor shower on the exterior wall, which you can use to wash off the mud.

Elevation Profile



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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, Wilderness Magazine does not take responsibility for any errors in the route. Users should use discretion when planning their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing.

