

Mangatainoka Campsite, Kaweka Forest Park

Mangatainoka Hot Springs is the most popular drawcard in Kaweka Forest Park, and it's worth every minute of the drive to get there, including at least an hour on gravel roads.

The Te Puia Track starts at the end of Makahu Road, 75km north-west of Napier, beyond Puketitiri. The road end campsite offers a thermal soak, with the (free) Mangatutu Hot Springs right there.

The track follows the true right of the Mohaka River the whole way to Te Puia Lodge and beyond to the springs. The only water crossing of note is the Makino River, beyond the hut, and this is bridged and poses no problem. This all-weather assurance, coupled with a short tramping time, makes Te Puia Lodge an attractive option for families and beginner trampers. That means it's popular, and the hut is not bookable.

Te Puia Track is well graded and benched, and features around three short hill climbs but is otherwise mostly flat and not physically taxing. Even so, it takes two to three hours to cover the 6.6km to the hut.

The 26-bunk Te Puia is a lodge by name, but don't be deceived: it is a hut. It's also somewhat aged. It is located right on the cool and emerald green Mohaka River – an ideal spot for a dip on a hot day.

The track continues from the hut up the Mohaka River on the true right, passing a junction with another track to Makino Hut. There's a bridge here over the Makino River and the track to the hot springs is well signposted and takes about 45min.

It's well constructed, gaining almost 100m almost imperceptibly then dropping to rejoin the river, and then the hot springs.

DOC has renovated the hot pools, which have gone from being two white square tubs to three round black pools, surrounded by decking with non-slip surfacing. Each pool is fairly deep and has valves to control water flow and to empty the tubs. The incoming water is too hot to soak in. You'll need to allow time for it to cool, or use a bucket to add cold water from the river.

Next to the hot tubs is the Mangatainoka Hot Springs Campsite, which the author recommends as a more alluring option than staying at the hut. The campsite offers sheltered spots among stands of mānuka, and there's no long walk needed after having a soak. There are toilets, and water from the river.

Trampers should also be aware that the road in can sometimes be closed if water levels render a ford, around 7.5km from the road end, impassable. This ford can also be affected in warm spring weather that creates snow melt. Hastings District Council's website has road closure information.

Wild File

Access Makahu Road, Kaweka Forest Park

Grade Easy

Time 2–3hr to Te Puia Lodge; 45min to Mangatainoka Hot Springs

Distance 9.47km to campground

Total ascent 368m

Topo50 Map BH37

Elevation



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