

Pahautea Hut via Ruapane, Pirongia Forest Park

From the Grey Road car park, the Mangakara Nature Walk leads through a gorgeous old-growth forest with many interpretive panels pointing out a selection of flora, including rimu, tawa and kahikatea. It's an easy introduction to the trip.

At Mangakara Stream (the last water source before the hut) the Link Track is joined, and this climbs steeply out of the valley to join the spur leading to Ruapane.

After 1km, the junction with Ruapane Track is reached and this continues in a southwesterly direction for 1.5km to the junction with Tirohanga Track. This section is mostly easy going and non-technical. However, about 400m before the Tirohanga junction, it steepens and the terrain gradually becomes more technical. From the junction, Tirohanga Track continues to Ruapane (723m) from where there are views north and west. With the longest steep section behind, there is hope of easier going, but there are many ups and downs along the spur to Pirongia and this hope is soon dashed.

Rounding Ruapane, views of Pirongia Mountain open up, as does the route ahead. A short, sharp descent is followed by a brief and winding ridge traverse through bush to the 700m contour. Here it's a steep climb to Tirohanga (770m), involving clambering up chains bolted to the rock face.

On the south side of Tirohanga, more chains aid a short down-climb and then the trail passes beside a cliff – a rocky pinnacle really – with tree roots and vines hanging down. In misty conditions, this looks like a scene from *Avatar*. The trail is mostly in good condition, but some flat areas have collected water and deep mud.

Past the cliffs is the final 1.5km ascent to the 959m summit of Pirongia. Two track junctions are passed en route.

The platform at the summit offers a magnificent vantage point from which to view the park and land in all directions.

The hut is a further 15 minutes along a narrow and winding track.

Pahautea Hut has 20 bunks in two bunk rooms and ample campsites.

Multiple tracks lead to the summit, but to reach Grey Road you need to retrace your steps. It is also possible to complete a loop to the car park by taking the longer, more difficult Mahaukura Track.

Wild file

Access Grey Road end

Grade Moderate

Time 6hr to hut

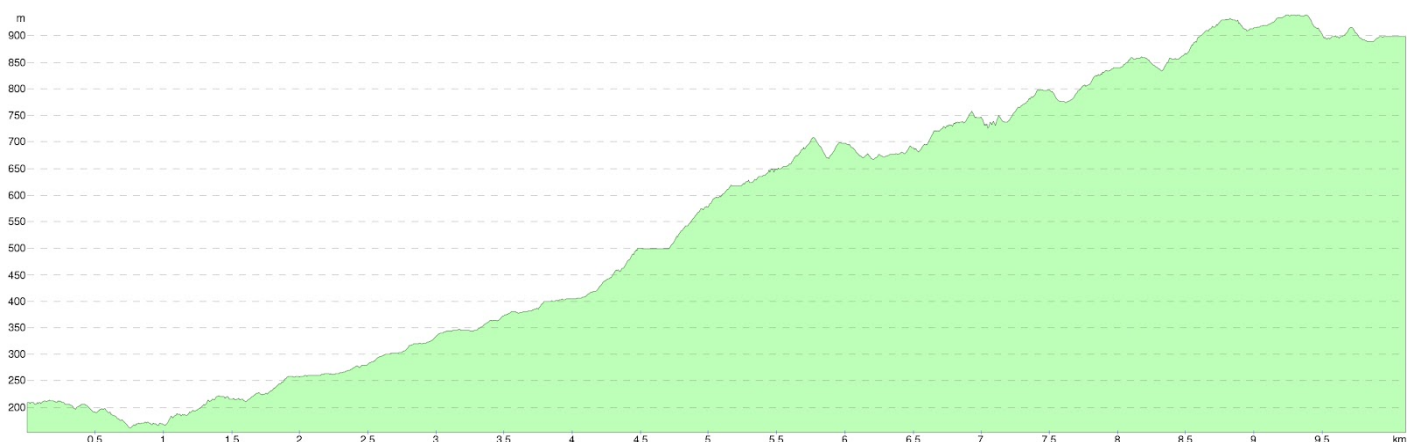
Distance 10.1km

Total ascent 793m

Accommodation Pahautea Hut (standard, 20 bunks)

Topo50 map BE33

Elevation



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