



FACILITIES AT VISITOR CENTRE

- Retail
- Café
- First Aid
- Restrooms
- Baby Changing
- Lockers
- Bike Rack
- Telephone
- Mail Box
- Picnic Area



EMERGENCY Ph. 07 366 6333 EXT 11

After crossing the Wai-O-Tapu hot stream, the first thermal sights to be seen are:

The Weather Pool The colour of the water in this pool changes with the weather. After heavy rainfall, the water appears cloudy and sunlight can make it appear to be a grey/blue colour. Next door an underground stream with a water temperature of about 100° C exits the crater area.

The Craters These are up to 50 metres in diameter and up to 20 metres deep. Several contain hot water springs and most have extensive sulphur deposits formed by escaping vapors meeting with our atmosphere. Most of these craters have been formed over the last few hundred years by the action of acidic steam rising from super-heated under-ground water dissolving the ground above and ultimately causing it to collapse.

1 Devil's Home The first example of a collapsed crater where under-ground acid action has caused the ground to collapse. Note the rough sides and yellow/greenish colours where cooling volcanic vapours have coloured the walls.

2 Rainbow Crater Named after the sulphur crystals and coloured mineral veins exposed in the kaolin clay walls of the crater. An oily slick is visible on top of the boiling water at its base. During the summer when the rainfall is less, the water becomes less fluid and resembles a boiling mud pool. Opposite the crater is an area of steaming ground. Where the steam leaves the ground crystals are forming around the vents. These vents are known as fumaroles.

3 Thunder Crater A collapsed crater formed in 1968. It graphically illustrates how unstable the land can be, note the steaming water at the bottom which is responsible for the erosion.

4 Devil's Ink Pots A series of mud pools whose water levels fluctuate with the amount of rainfall. The colour is due to small amounts of graphite and crude oil brought to the surface by the water forcing its way up.

5 Artist's Palette Overflowing water from the Champagne Pool draws with it minerals that have originated from below the surface. As the waters cool and the minerals are exposed to our atmosphere they show themselves in a variety of locations and colours depending upon water levels and wind direction. On the left of the Palette is a geyser from which steam rises and water can erupt up to a height of one metre.

6 Opal Pool A sulphurous spring on the edge of the sinter terrace named after its greenish yellow colour. From here there is a great side view of the terraces and down the valley to Ohaki geothermal power station in the distance.

7 Crossing the Terrace on the Boardwalk An experience unique to Wai-O-Tapu. The structure sits on the very edge of the firmer ground associated with the terraces. It rests on specially treated timber and is secured by stainless steel pins.

8 The Primrose Terrace These sinter terraces are the largest in New Zealand since the destruction of the Pink and White Terraces in the eruption of Mt Tarawera (1886). The water from the Champagne Pool contains dissolved silica which, as the water evaporates, is deposited as siliceous sinter. They are regarded as being very fragile and have been forming at a variable rate over the last 700 years currently covering an area of about 1.5 hectares (3 acres).

9 Jean Batten Geyser Named after the famous Rotorua-born aviatrix who visited Wai-O-Tapu in 1931. She was famous for her solo flights and became the first woman to fly both ways between Australia and England in April 1935. The geyser has been known to erupt to about 3m high but has been relatively quiet in recent years.

10 The Sacred Track This shaded track winds its way through a stand of Pinus pinaster linking the boardwalk with the panoramic view. It passes the site of what is believed to have been an early settlement, identified from the track by Rhododendron trees. A short track leads to the lookout from which there is a great view of the Primrose Terrace.

11 Panoramic View The Kaingaroa forest (the largest man-made forest in the southern hemisphere) covers the Kaingaroa Plains and in the distance is the cooling tower of Ohaki geothermal power station. The green waters of Lake Ngakoro (the grandfathers) cover about 12 hectares and takes the water that has flowed across Frying Pan Flat from the direction of the Champagne Pool and Lake Whangī-o-terangi (colour of the sky). This blue lake covers about 5 hectares, the colour is due to fine mineral particles being suspended in its waters.

12 Bridal Veil Falls These falls mark the end of the sinter terraces and have been partially coloured by the overflow from the Opal Pool while the green colour is attributable to microbial mats. From here the water flows into a shallow creek as it makes its way southward towards Lake Ngakoro.

13 Wai-O-Tapu Geyser Erupts to heights of up to 3 meters on a cycle from 2 to 36 hours when the water table is low.

14 Alum Cliffs The track winds its way past cliffs of alum. Shallow horizontal ridges indicate ancient weathering, the eruption crater opposite with its acidic lake is about 700 years old.

15 Frying Pan Flat Also an eruption crater the unstable floor of which is littered with bubbling hot springs and fumaroles. The island is home to families of Pied Stilts who have claimed the insects in the area as their own.

16 Oyster Pool Viewed from the timber boardwalk and located in unstable ground this natural sulphurous pool is named after its distinct shape.

17 Sulphur Cave Viewed from the track, there are magnificent examples of undisturbed crystallized sulphur formed as hot sulphur gases have cooled in the sheltered atmosphere of the overhanging cliff.

NO SMOKING

FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY VISITORS MUST FOLLOW THE SIGN POSTS AND KEEP TO THE FORMED TRACKS.

TIME AND DISTANCE			
WALK 1	30 mins	1.5km	
WALK 1 & 2	40 mins	2km	
WALK 1, 2 & 3	75 mins	3km	
	SEATS		
	SHELTERS		
	VIEWING AREAS		
	BRIDGE		
	STEPS		

18 Lake Ngakoro Waterfall Having taken the bush trail along the flats you are rewarded by the sight and sound of water tumbling over the rocks into the green waters of Lake Ngakoro (the grandfathers). From the lookout area above the falls the majority of the lake is visible which was formed after an eruption more than 700 years ago. Looking to the left hand shore, rising stream indicates that the land is still thermally active.

19 Native Bush Walk Representative of marginal forestry land in the area, this walk follows a ridge through a stand of giant kanuka (Kunzea ericoides) before dropping into the valley linking Echo Lake with Frying Pan Flat. The high canopy and the natural water courses provide an excellent habitat for native Bellbirds, Tuis and Fantails that frequent this area.

20 Sulphur Mounds Looking like large ant hills these mounds of sulphur were formed under water and were exposed when the area was drained for road formation further to the east in the 1950s.

21 The Champagne Pool This spring is the largest in the district, being 65m in diameter and 62m deep. Its surface temperature is 74° C and bubbles are due to carbon dioxide. The pool was formed 700 years ago by a hydrothermal eruption the rocks from which can be seen at the top of the embankment by the track. Minerals contained in the water are gold, silver, mercury, sulphur, arsenic, thallium, antimony etc and are presently depositing in the surrounding sinter ledge. The various sinter ledges have been associated with tilting of the pool as a consequence of earthquake activity.

22 Inferno Crater This crater has a bottom of violently boiling mud. In recent history an earth archway linking the sides has been completely destroyed by the action of acidic steam.

23 Bird's Nest Crater Starlings, Swallows and Mynahs nest in holes on the walls of this collapse crater. The heat from below rises up the crater walls to incubate the eggs.

24 Sulphur Cave Sulphur crystals have formed beautiful formations on the cave wall above the vents. To the extreme right are some of the few chlorine pools in the area that may have been suitable for cooking in. Holes currently forming in the crater's base illustrate the whole collapse process.

25 Devil's Bath A large ruggedly-edged crater adjoining the bush line with an amazing natural water colour at its base. The colour is the result of excess water from the Champagne Pool mixing with sulphur and ferrous salts. Changes in colour through green to yellow are associated with the amount of reflected light and cloud cover.

For more information visit our website at www.waiotapu.co.nz