



KAUAERANGA

Gorge v2a3III☆☆

Location

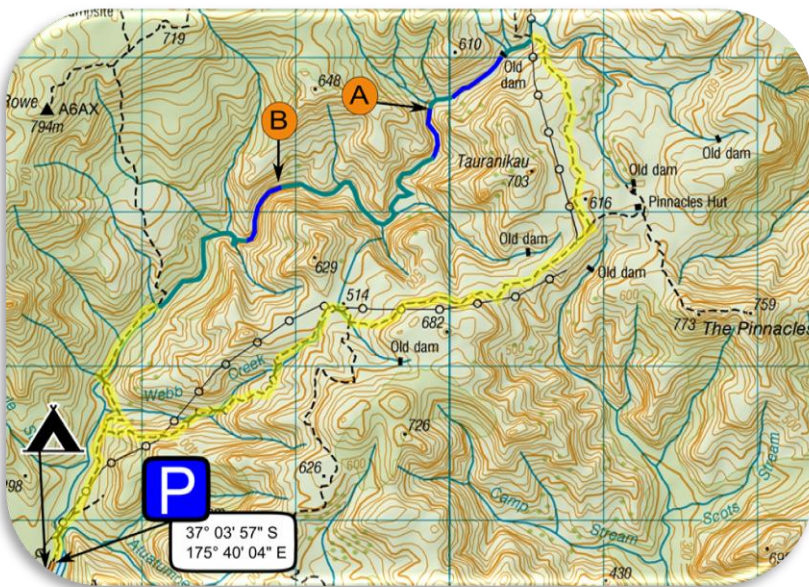
Kauaeranga Valley, Thames.

Character

Non-technical gorge walk with plenty of small jumps, some tricky down climbs and spectacular scenery.

Map

BB35 Hikuai



Approach by Car

Heading north into Thames on the main road (SH25) cross the Kauaeranga River, then turn right at obvious signs for Kauaeranga Valley. Follow the sealed, then gravel road for 22km to a car park at the road end.

Approach on Foot

From the car park, follow the Kauri Trial to a swing bridge over the Kauaeranga River. The track climbs up beside Webb Creek, following signs towards Pinnacles hut. At a marked junction before Pinnacles Hut, head north on the slippery and boggy Rangihau track to the river.

Rock

Solid Rhyolite.

Water

Generally low flows and a number of compulsory swims.

Catchment

9.4 km²

Anchors

No compulsory anchors required.

Gear

A 6m rope, long sling and karabiner can be useful as a hand line for some tricky down climbs and to get down to inspect some pools for jumping.

Route Description

Walk downstream for about 10minutes and suit up by the old Kauri dam. The river soon narrows into classic canyon formations, with a couple of tricky down-climbs. A short rope is recommended even for skilled climbers. The beautiful narrow gorge widens slightly then opens up before an obvious confluence and 90 degree left hand bend.

Descend easily beside numerous small cascades, by passing an inviting 8m drop with a pool that is too shallow to jump. The greater gorge walls soar 300m or more up to the ridgelines, Down-climb some huge stacked boulder carefully, as there are a few spots that may have nasty strainers in medium or high flow conditions.

Next is 1hr30min of open stream walking, until the gorge walls close in again with a number of small to medium jumps and pools. Some pools are deep and obstacle free, others look deep but have dangerous underwater boulders and small safe landing zones. Inspect all pools before you jump. Not all drops are down-climbed with ease, so this is where your rope may come in handy again.

The final down-climb is narrow and in the full current. This section is the technical crux, but poses no problems for competent canyoneers in normal flows. In high flows, this could be very awkward and/or dangerous. See the photo by the CanyonTopo.

After the gorge ends, there are a few more pools to swim and small down-climbs before you exit onto the moss creek track by climbing a few meters up a tributary on the TR, 5mins after a large distinctive moss covered boulder.

Time

Vehicle park to start of canyon	2hr20min
Gorge descent	4hr
Return on track to Vehicle	40min
Total	7hr

Escapes

Best escapes out of the watercourse are shown on the topo. However, escape from partway down the gorge back to a track would be extremely difficult, perhaps impossible due to the steepness of the valley walls. Even though the whole gorge can be up-climbed with skill, this trip still has a degree of commitment.

Flash Flood Danger

High. Reasonable sized catchment, with inescapable narrow sections.

Notes

There are a large number of DOC campsites in the Kauaeranga Valley. A worthwhile side trip to the summit of the Pinnacles adds about 1hr30min to the day

