NEW ZEALAND’S CYCLING HEARTLAND

A TRIP TO THE HAMILTON & WAIKATO REGION ISN’T COMPLETE WITHOUT A FEW DAYS SPENT EXPLORING BY BIKE.

There are hundreds of kilometres of trails to discover, offering riders a close-up look at the region’s picturesque scenery and fascinating past.

Whether its racing down forest-clad hills or meandering alongside winding rivers and through rolling farmland, the region’s tracks and trails offer memorable experiences for riders of all fitness and skill levels.

Laid-back riders and family groups will love the sights of the Hauraki Rail Trail and the backcountry scenery of The Timber Trail, while the rugged Waikato River Trails offer excitement for serious mountain bikers and families of intermediate riding ability.

There are shorter rides to enjoy too, from mountain biking on Mount Te Aroha and in the Te Miro and Cougar Mountain Bike Parks, to urban jaunts along Hamilton’s riverside paths. Te Awu – The Great New Zealand River Ride offers great views, while those wanting a compact off-road experience shouldn’t miss Hamilton Mountain Bike Track.

The region’s cycling future is bright, with new trails and facilities being developed all the time.

In New Zealand’s cycling heartland, one visit is never enough.

CYCLING SAFETY

Safety while cycling for you and other track, trail and road users is paramount. Please see the ‘plan your ride’ section of the Nga Haerenga – The New Zealand Cycle Trail website for information on both ‘on’ and ‘off road’ cycling safety as well as biking etiquette guidelines.

www.nzcycletrail.com/plan-your-ride

Please note the grades indicated are guidelines and have been taken from the NZCT and track park websites.

GUIDE TO TRAIL GRADES

GRADE ONE: EASIEST
Flat and suitable for all riders. Surface is either firm gravel or asphalt and trails are wide enough for two people to cycle side by side most of the way.

GRADE TWO: EASY
Predictable and mostly flat with some gentle climbs. Surface is either firm gravel or asphalt and trails are wide enough for two people to cycle side by side most of the time.

GRADE THREE: INTERMEDIATE
Can be narrow in sections and may include hill climbs, steep drop-offs and small river crossings.

GRADE FOUR: ADVANCED
May include steep or narrow track, sections where traction is poor, and obstacles that are difficult to avoid.

GRADE FIVE: EXPERT
Technically challenging and may include physically demanding climbs, numerous obstacles and narrow track. Some walking and bike carrying may be required.

MORE INFORMATION

There are many other riding options also available in the region - for more information about these as well as the rides listed in this brochure please visit www.hamiltonwaikato.com/cycling
**Hamilton City River Rides**

This shared walkway and cycleway runs for 10km through central Hamilton, along the banks of the Waikato River. The track is well signposted and can be accessed at multiple points along the river. It stretches between Pukete in the north, where it links with the nearby Hamilton Mountain Bike Track in Pukete Farm Park, and Hamilton Gardens in the south. It is suitable for riders of all fitness and experience levels. There are park benches and grassy areas along the track with scenic views of the river and CBD, and it forms part of the wider Te Awa River Ride.

**Avantidrome - Home of Cycling**

With Olympic medal winning cyclists such as Sarah Ulmer (road and track) and Sarah Walker (BMX) already calling Cambridge home, the town has also recently become New Zealand’s official home of cycling due to the opening of the new national cycling centre of excellence.

The $28.5 million Avantidrome features a world class 250m velodrome track, the Gallagher Bike Skills Park and links with nearby BMX, road, trail and mountain biking facilities. It also features an area large enough to host other indoor sports and community events and houses the offices of national sporting organisations such as Bike NZ, Paracycling NZ, Triathlon NZ, High Performance NZ, University of Waikato, a café, public fitness centre, bike shop and office space.

The facility provides a base for New Zealand’s cycling elite but is also available for community use, allowing those keen to give track cycling a go to follow in the footsteps of the country’s legends.

**Hauraki Rail Trail**

In the north-east of the region is one of its hidden gems – the Hauraki Rail Trail. This 79km trail makes a great three day ride and stretches from Thames on the Coromandel Peninsula to the historic Waikino Railway Station and onto Wairua in the east, and the spa town of Te Aroha to the south. The Hauraki Rail Trail follows two historic rail lines, combining spectacular scenery with a glimpse into the area’s rich gold mining past. It’s easy gradient makes it perfect for relaxed riding and family adventures.

The Hauraki Rail Trail is divided into three sections – Thames to Paeroa, Paeroa to Waihi and Paeroa to Te Aroha. Most people begin at the Thames end of the trail, taking in the small gold mining town’s charms before embarking on the 33km journey to Paeroa.

The 25km Paeroa to Waihi leg winds through the stunning Karangahake Gorge, famous for its gold mining history, while the 21km ride from Paeroa to Te Aroha (35km from Waikino to Te Aroha) offers views of Mount Te Aroha and the option of a relaxing soak in Te Aroha Mineral Spas at the end.
TE AWA - THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND RIVER RIDE

This scenic 70km river ride is under construction between Ngaruawahia and Horahora, 20km south of the Mighty River Domain at Lake Karapiro. The route weaves through rural and urban landscapes, taking in waterfalls and historic Maori sites as well as trendy shops, cafes and eateries.

The sections through Hamilton city, Horotiu and between the Avantidrome, Cambridge and Lake Karapiro are complete and ready to ride now while the remaining sections are due for completion by 2016. The tracks are primarily wide, smooth and largely flat making Te Awa suitable for cyclists of all fitness and experience levels.

Once complete, Te Awa will link with the Waikato River Trails near Horahora, providing cyclists with 170km of trails to enjoy.

THE TIMBER TRAIL

The Timber Trail follows historic tramways through the ancient native forest of the Pureora Forest Park. It stretches for 85km between Pureora Village and the old logging town of Ongarue, offering riders a backcountry adventure through an area abundant in birdlife.

The trail takes in 42 bridges, including eight suspension bridges, as it winds its way through giant rimu, totara and kahikatea trees. The area was once home to a booming logging industry and much of the trail follows the Ellis & Burnand Ongarue Tramway. The tramway is the longest bush tramway in New Zealand and a highlight of the journey is the Ongarue Spiral.

The Timber Trail can be cycled in either direction, but north to south is the easier option. The trail can be completed in one to three days (average two days to complete).

HAMLETON MOUNTAIN BIKE TRACK

Conveniently located within Hamilton's northern city limits, Hamilton Mountain Bike Track in Pukete Farm Park is great for riders looking for something close to the city, cramming lots of track into a relatively small, centralised area.

The largely flat track is surrounded by native tree plantings. Its easy contour is suitable for beginners and families as well as more advanced riders who will appreciate the track's tight twists and turns, table top jump and the more rugged northern corner.

TE AWA – THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND RIVER RIDE

- River views and a mix of rural and urban landscapes
- Wide track suitable for social riding
- Stunning views of Lake Karapiro and a 400m boardwalk around the edge of the lake

LENGTH: 70km GRADE: 1-2

ACCESS: This ride can be accessed at various points along the trail

For more information visit: www.te-awa.org.nz

THE TIMBER TRAIL

- Ride through ancient native forest, abundant in birdlife
- Follow New Zealand's longest bush tramway and see the marvel of engineering that is the Ongarue Spiral
- Travel over 42 bridges – eight of them suspension bridges
- Experience a slice of New Zealand's forestry history

PUREORA TO PIROPIRO: 40km GRADE: 3
PIROPIRO TO ONGARUE: 45km GRADE: 2

ACCESS: This ride can be accessed at the northern and southern end as well as in the middle at Propiro

For more information visit: www.thetimbertrail.com
www.doc.govt.nz/timber-trail

HAMLETON MOUNTAIN BIKE TRACK

- Ten minutes drive from central Hamilton
- Compact single track full of twists and turns
- Sections suitable for riders of all skill levels

LENGTH: 10km GRADE: 2-3

ACCESS: Maui Street, Hamilton
For more information visit: www.hamiltonmtb.org.nz
Mount Te Aroha

Nestled in the foothills of Mount Te Aroha, this mountain bike track offers something for all abilities, including challenging ascents and exhilarating downhill sections for more daring riders.

The varied track takes in native bush, open grassy areas, waterfalls and stream crossings. Tui, Kereru, pheasants and quail can often be seen from the track and night riders may spot glowworms. The 10km track starts and ends in Te Aroha Hot Springs Domain by the Mokena Geyser, the world's only hot soda water geyser.

Te Miro Mountain Bike Park

Te Miro Mountain Bike Park, 20 minutes north-east of Cambridge, is a new mountain biking area in the Waikato that's proving popular with a wide cross-section of riders. Built by Te Miro Mountain Bike Club for the enjoyment of their members and other like-minded individuals, Te Miro Mountain Bike Park offers a variety of terrain and tracks to suit active families as well as hard-core enthusiasts.

With trail names such as Big Red, Ready or Not and Kaimai Kurla the tracks are sure to be entertaining — some with technical single track sections and steep downhills, others with large sweeping berms or lake side trails.

Native and exotic forest surrounds the park's trails, providing not only great infrastructure features but also picturesque scenery and plenty of interesting places to stop for a breather.

Raglan — Mount Karioi Loop and Pipiwharauroa Trail

Raglan, famous for its left-hand surf break, is also home to two great cycle trails. Mount Karioi Loop is a challenging half-day ride, boasting views of the west coast and surrounding farmland. The loop starts and finishes in Raglan. The 45km track circles Mount Karioi on both gravel and sealed roads. It offers winding uphill climbs and speedy downhill sections for thrill experienced riders.

Pipiwharauroa Trail, located south of Raglan, winds through Te Uku Wind Farm and gives riders a chance to view the 137m high wind turbines up close. The 18km ride covers steep to rolling terrain and offers 360 degree views over the Hamilton & Waikato region.

Both tracks require a reasonable level of fitness and offer great views of Raglan, Aotea and Kawhia harbours. On a clear day riders may be able to see south to Mount Taranaki from either track. Note: The Pipiwharauroa Trail crosses private farmland and riders are asked to keep to the track.

Raglan — Mount Karioi Loop

- Mount Karioi Loop: Winding uphill climbs and speedy downhill sections
- Pipiwharauroa Trail: 360 degree views over the Hamilton & Waikato region

Mount Karioi Loop:
- Length: 45km
- Grade: 3
- Access: Mount Karioi Loop starts and finishes in Raglan. Pipiwharauroa Trail is signposted from Te Mata Rd, off State Highway 23 between Raglan and Hamilton

For more information visit: www.hamiltonwaikato.com/raglan-cycle-trails

Pipiwharauroa Trail:
- Length: 18km
- Grade: 3
- Access: Pipiwharauroa Trail is signposted from Te Mata Rd, off State Highway 23 between Raglan and Hamilton

For more information visit: www.temiromtbclub.co.nz

Raglan — Pipiwharauroa Trail

- Native and exotic forest trails
- Stunning views over the reservoir lake and surrounding farmland
- Optional jumps and rollers
- Challenging technical sections on grade 4-5 tracks (all tracks well signposted)

Length:
- Tracks vary in length from 500m – 3km (total track network of over 20km)
- Grade: 3-5 depending on the track

Access: The park can be accessed off Waterworks Rd, Te Miro

For more information visit: www.temiromtbclub.co.nz
COUGAR MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK

Located in central Tokoroa, Cougar Park offers 35km of off-road forest tracks with views over the surrounding area. The park’s 14 different tracks range from loop, cross country and downhill, catering to riders of all abilities. The Tester is a challenging, hand cut track for experienced mountain bikers. This 600m, grade 5 ride is made up of a steep climb, followed by a technical single trail and an elevated wooden bridge finale.

‘3 Blind Mice’ is a great track for families and beginners, offering a variety of climbs and descents with fast flowing sections. There are a number of exits along the 3.4km track, allowing beginner riders to stop off the track if they become tired.

HIGHLIGHTS
- 35km of off-road forest tracks
- 14 different rides catering for riders of all abilities

LENGTH: Tracks range from 600m to 3.6km
GRADE: 3-5
ACCESS: Mossop Road, Tokoroa

For more information visit: www.sportsground.co.nz/tokoroambt

WAIKATO RIVER TRAILS

There are few better places for cycling than the banks of the mighty Waikato River. From native forest and birdlife to hydro dams, suspension bridges and exhilarating downhills, there’s plenty for mountain bikers to enjoy.

The Waikato River is New Zealand’s longest and the 103km of off-road trails that follow the river’s banks between Atiamuri and Pokaiwhenua Bridge are known as the Waikato River Trails. The journey takes in five lakes, four hydro dams, suspension bridges and a number of small towns and villages, showcasing some of the best of the Waikato heartland.

The Maraetai and Whakamaru sections in the south and Karapiro section in the north are Grade 3, making them ideal for nature lovers and family groups of intermediate riding ability. More experienced riders might want to try the Waipapa and Arapuni sections, graded 4 and 5 – both of which offer challenging downhills.

HIGHLIGHTS
- Discover 100km of trails taking in five lakes and four hydro dams
- Explore the banks of New Zealand’s longest river
- Ride along tracks and boardwalks through native and exotic forest
- Cross suspension bridges high above the water including the 80m long Mangawera Suspension Bridge

GRADE: 2-4 depending on section
ACCESS: This ride can be accessed from various different points along the trail

For more information visit: www.waikatorivertrails.com