

1. Kerosene Creek

First on our list of hot pools in Rotorua is the world-famous Kerosene Creek. 35 minutes from Rotorua and down a gravel road will take you to the thermal pool and waterfall at Kerosene Creek. The creek is popular not just for its geothermal activity but its beautiful surroundings. Location: 28km south of Rotorua. Take State Highway 5, then travel about 2km down Old Waiotapu Road.



2. Wairua Stream

Wairua Stream is a bit harder to get to as you have to get a boat across Lake Tarawera, making it a local's paradise. It is near Te Rata Bay and is one of the most picturesque hot pools near Rotorua. Location: About 25 minutes out of Rotorua down Spencer Road, Lake Tarawera. By boat, launch at Stoney Point and head straight across Lake Tarawera to the headlands on the right of Mt Tarawera. Go straight through these headlands to where the lake opens. Steer gently to starboard and make for the only beach in this area.



3. Wai-o-Tapu / The Bridge / The Secret Spot

When it comes to Rotorua hot pools, it does not get more popular than this one. Funnily enough, it is supposed to be a secret. Get the remnants from the Wai-O-Tapu geothermal attraction by bathing in the hot pool formed by the hot Wai-O-Tapu stream meeting the cool river. It's a thermal pool, completely natural and completely free! Location: Just outside the Wai-O-Tapu geothermal park (under the bridge). 30km south of Rotorua just off State Highway 5.



4. Kuirau Park

No need to bring the togs; just dip your feet in. This free geothermal park in Rotorua has dedicated hot foot baths to make use of. Don't dip your feet behind any of the fenced areas. That will hurt. Kuirau Park is situated in Rotorua town. Location: Along Pukuatua Street & Ranolf Street in Rotorua city centre.



5. Waterfall Spout Bath Wai-o-Tapu

This hot spring is found along the road towards the Lady Knox Geyser. It's rather muddy, as to be expected in Rotorua, but at least there is a waterfall to wash yourself. Find the entrance of the roadside where the bush has been cleared. Out of all the hot springs in Rotorua, this the muddiest, but guess what? It's great for your skin. When was the last time you got access to a free mudpool?! Location: On the Waiotapu Loop Road, turn onto The Avenue and the Waterfall Spout Bath is about 500m on your right.



6. Rainbow Mountain

Maunga Kakaramaea, also known as “mountain of coloured earth” or Rainbow Mountain, is easily accessed by a 3km walk. It passes in front of many typical Rotorua features such as steam rising from the ground and crater lakes. The view from the summit is a perfect picture opportunity too if you take the 1-hour one-way track. Location: 26km southeast of Rotorua, along State Highway 5 (between Rotorua and Taupo).



7. Redwood Forest

The forest is a gigantic network of mountain biking and walking tracks. Known as Whakarewarewa Forest by the locals, it is mainly constituted by Californian Coast Redwood, hence its nickname “Redwood Forest”. Get a bike from your hostel or hire one in town and head to this mountain biker paradise!



8. Kerosene Creek

When leaving Rotorua heading to Taupo, stop by the toasties creek in the region. The hot stream creates multiple small natural pools lodged between the rocks where locals and knowledgeable tourists come to sooth their soar hiker's feet. Location: About 30km south of Rotorua, off State Highway 5 (between Rotorua and Taupo), on Old Waiotapu Road. Kerosene Creek is 2.2km down the gravel road.



9. Okere Falls

Okere Falls is the highest commercially rafted waterfall in the world. Even by itself, it is a stunning fall of pristine natural beauty. If you are lucky, you might see some raft-flipping going on and tourists swimming to get back on board. Location: 21km from Rotorua on Trout Pool Road off State Highway 33 (the Rotorua to Tauranga road).



10. Blue and Green Lakes

Which one of Lake Tikitapu and Lake Rotokakahi is the green one? Take a hike and go decide for yourself. The hike to view both lakes starts near Redwood Forest (see above). At the hike's highest point, you will be able to see both lakes and witness their clear difference in shade.

Location: 9km southeast of Rotorua, along Te Ngae Road then along Tarawera Road at the roundabout.



11. Kuirau Park

Located almost in Rotorua town centre, KuirauPark features living proof of the geothermal activity happening under our feet. Expect shallow hot pools, bubbling mud, and lots of steam! Location: Pukuatua Street & Ranolf Street



12. Wai-O-Tapu Boardwalk

The short track along the “Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland” and near Rainbow Mountain is the ideal short stop between Rotorua and Taupo. It hides a pool of bubbling mud and, yet again, more steam! The platform elevates above the mud pool to offer another perspective. **Location:** 27km south of Rotorua off State Highway 5, turn left on Loop Road until you reach Waiotapu



13. Government Gardens

Sitting in front of the Rotorua Museum, the Government Gardens are the pride of the Rotorua community. It is both a historical place telling tales of yore and the perfect place to just simply chill out. Incidentally, the Rotorua Museum is one of our favourite things to do on a rainy day in Rotorua. **Location:** Queens Drive



14. Hot Water Beach (Te Rata Bay)

Not to be confused with the famous Hot Water Beach in the [Coromandel](#), Te Rata Bay features a small hot stream falling into Lake Tarawera. It is accessible by water taxi and is also part of the 15km Tarawera Trail.

Location: Water Taxi from Tarawera Road, Lake Tarawera. Alternatively, access the Tarawera Trail from Te Wairoa car park on Tarawera Road.



15. Hamurana Springs [Update: This attraction is no longer free. The fee is under NZ\$20].

Blue, green, turquoise: the waters of the Hamurana Springs look like the something from a fairy tale. The deepest freshwater spring of the North Island is, in fact, a tranquil stream that begs to be photographed! Swimmers beware: the water is fresh... Very fresh! **Location:** Hamurana Springs is located about 15km northeast of Rotorua, along Hamurana Road.

