



Mangatāwhiri to Mercer

 Walking

Difficulty

Medium

Length

14 km

Journey Time

5 to 6 hours

Region

[Auckland](#)

Sub-Region

[Manukau / South Auckland](#)

Part of Collections

[Te Araroa - New Zealand's Trail](#), [Te Araroa - North Island](#)

Track maintained by

[Te Araroa Trail Trust](#)

Te Araroa section: Follow the Mangatāwhiri River past Dutch-style polders to connect with historic Mercer, where the first invasion of the Waikato took place. Finish on the banks of the Waikato River.

Follow SH2 east for 2 km keeping well off the road shoulder as this is an extremely busy road with a lot of traffic.

Warning. After very heavy rain the canal crossing at km 703 may be flooded and unsafe. In these conditions it may be necessary to continue another 4.5 km on SH 2 to cross the canal on the highway bridge and then walk southwest on the eastern side of the canal.

Serpel Road to Mangatawhiri River - 3.5km

- **SOBO:** turn right from State Highway 2 onto Serpel Road at km 699.4, and in 350 m enter through a farm gate on the left and follow the line of trees to the farm track. Walk along the farm track and in 620 m turn left at the track junction, then right in 140 m and follow the track for another 450 m to its junction with Dobson Road. Turn right onto Dobson Road and follow the orange TA markers 1.8 km to the Mangatawhiri River stopbank. **Turn right and follow the stopbank 330 metres downstream to the crossing point**, a concrete power pole across the riverbed. It's marked on both ends by a steel post carrying a large orange track marker, and **at this point the river has a gravel bed**. If you're unable to cross the river due to high water levels, follow the stopbank 2.8 km upstream to State Highway 2. Carefully cross then walk under the road bridge to join the other stopbank, and follow that back downstream to the crossing point
- **NOBO:** Walk upstream on the Mangatawhiri River stopbank until the crossing point, marked on both ends with a steel post carrying a large orange track marker, where the river has a gravel bed. If you're unable to cross the river due to high water levels, continue along the stopbank for 2.8 km to State Highway 2, carefully cross the road bridge, and walk along State Highway 2 for 3.6 km to rejoin TA at the junction with Serpel Road. If you can cross the river, climb the stopbank and follow it 330 metres upstream to the farm track. Follow the TA track markers along the farm track (which becomes Dobson Road) for 1.8 km to a marked farm gate and farm track on the left. Follow the track for 450 m to a left turn, then follow it for 140 m to a right turn. Continue along the track for 620 m and follow a line of trees until you reach a farm gate that enters onto Serpel Road. Follow Serpel Road for 350 m and turn left onto State

Highway 2. State Highway 2 is one of New Zealand's busiest roads, especially on Friday afternoons and weekends, so be very careful crossing and walking along it.

Mangatawhiri River Track — 2.5km / 1 hour 15 minutes

This track opens up a little-seen corner of New Zealand where you'll overlook the stopbank, a Dutch Polder-style agriculture. It follows the Mangatāwhiri River from the 2.5 km below the SH2 bridge, southwest to the exit at McIntyre Road.

Follow the stopbank, which is on the true left of the Mangatāwhiri River – that is, the left bank as you face downstream. One low-lying area about halfway along may flood, but only after heavy rains. After a 2.5km walk down the stopbank, you'll come to a drainage ditch about 10m wide. At this point, the stopbank and the track route turn left at a right angle and follow the drainage ditch inland for about 1km before finishing at the McIntyre Road end. A pump station is there for an Archimedes Screw, which is part of the drainage.

If you want to see what this land was like before being modified, look across the drainage ditch, and you'll see the natural swamp run by the Auckland/Waikato Chapter of Fish and Game.

- Note: After heavy rain and when the river is running high, this route may be underwater – check conditions carefully, and if the water is high, use Koheroa Roa from SH2 to Mercer as an alternative.

Mercer — 4.5km / 1.5 hours

McIntyre Road is a little-used road serving only a few houses. It has views across the Fish and Game swampland and a relaxing shady section before it reaches the junction with Kellyville Road.

After crossing the railway line, follow the markers into the trees opposite and under the Southern Motorway bridge.

Turn left/south and follow the marked route parallel to the motorway 1.5km to the Mercer Service Centre – where a petrol station, cafe and food court are available for refreshments before you leave the Auckland region and enter Waikato.

Conditions

Potential hazards

- Vehicles on road or track
- Farming operations Occasionally farm animals. Also temporary electric fences (can be stepped over).
- Open drains
- Track exposed to sun, wind or cold
- Few water sources

No dogs allowed

How to get here



Northern SH2, end of Serpel Road, Mangatawhiri

Southern End: Skeet Rd, Mercer

Transport

The Auckland region conveniently ends at the Mercer Service Centre, SH 1, Mercer.

It is well serviced by long haul bus companies such as:

- [InterCity](#)  - P: 09 583 5780 - E: info@intercity.co.nz
- [Northliner Express Coach Service](#)  - P: 09 307 5873

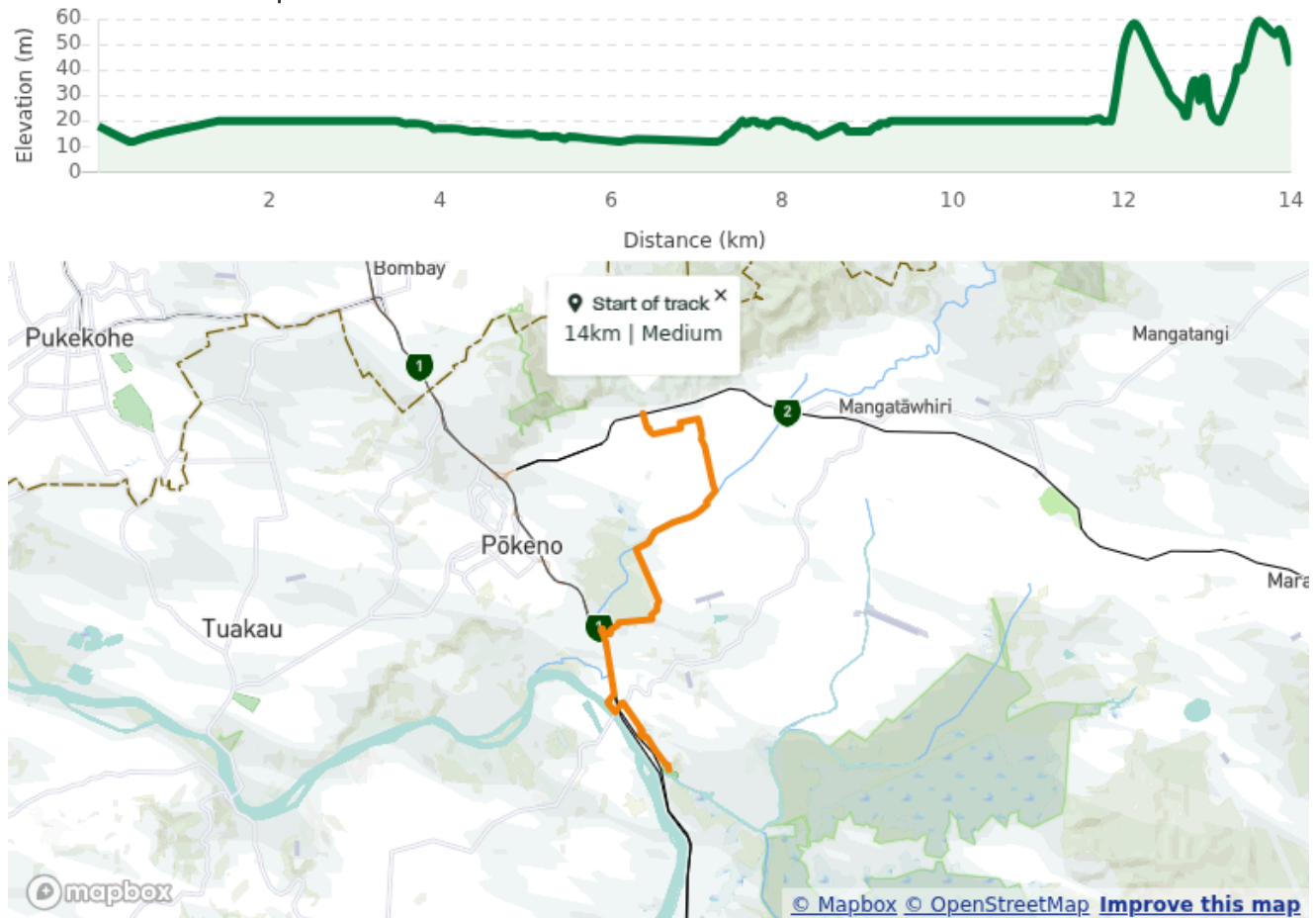
Accommodation

- [Mercer Motel](#) - 2 Roose Rd, Mercer - P: 09 233 6555 - E: info@mercermotel.co.nz - Newly renovated motel units from \$145 per night, there are also cabins for \$75 pp and camping is \$20 per night for one person and \$30 for two people. For camping, check in with the team at Mercer Landing and they'll direct you.
After Mercer Landing's hours on Monday and Tuesday (see Food and Supply section below) call the Mercer Motel number. You will not be able to leave a message but staff may return your call.
- Kellyville Road, Mercer - on the Koheroa Bypass of the Mercer part of Te Araroa. A 1930s bungalow on 2 tranquil rural acres overlooking the Waikato River and surrounding farmland. House has 2 twin guest rooms and a newly renovated bathroom and kitchen. The property sits on the Kellyville tuff ring (volcanic) on Koheroa Ridge (Land Wars) and boasts part of the old coach road to Auckland. A 2.8 km walk West will take you to the Waikato River where you will also find Mercer Museum, Mobile Petrol station, McDonalds, Muddy Waters Irish Pub & Restaurant, Mercer Cheese Shop, Esquires Cafe, Pokeno Bacon Restaurant. Please book via airbnb.com/h/kellyville or email sofiaandreen@xtra.co.nz

Food And Supply

- [Mercer Landing Kitchen & Bar](#) - 6 Roose Rd, Mercer - P: 09 236 8641 - Newly renovated restaurant and bar. Open Monday-Tuesday 7:30am to 2:00pm, Wednesday-Sunday 7:30am-Late, with coffee and pastries available for takeaway from 7am daily. Packed lunches available upon request.

Track Elevation and Map



More information

Before starting Te Araroa either as a through-walker of the whole country or a section walker, [please register on Te Araroa website](#). Please also [visit the website](#) or [download the app](#) for detailed maps, trail alerts and other relevant information.

This track is part of the Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa track database. Herenga ā Nuku has [maps and advice about public access to the outdoors](#).

We encourage you to continue gaining the skills and knowledge required for a safe trip. The NZ Mountain Safety Council has lots of free resources and information you can use. These can be accessed via www.mountainsafety.org.nz.

We recommend trying these online learning tools:

- [Trip Planning](#)
- [Tramping/field Skills](#)
- [Basic Navigation](#)
- [River Safety](#)

Additionally, check out the range of helpful videos available from the NZ Mountain Safety Council [YouTube channel](#).



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