



Piha Surf & Bush Run

NEARBY TOWN/CITY: Auckland

DISTANCE FROM TOWN CENTRE: 50 minutes; 40 kms.

EXACT LOCATION: Park on the main road anywhere near the Piha Cafe

TOTAL ROUTE DISTANCE: 20.5 kms

TIME TO RUN: Elite 2 hrs; Novice 3½ hrs

TOTAL ASCENT: 850 metres **TOTAL DESCENT:** 850 metres

TYPE OF TRAIL RUN: Loop

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS: A mix of trail conditions from sand to groomed trail, including some sections that are steep and technical. Includes a few easy stream crossings.

FEATURES OF INTEREST: Stunning west coast landscapes, beautiful bush (incl. nikau groves) & the incomparable Kitekite Falls.

ONLINE REFERENCE: See the run in detail via Running Wild's [Garmin Connect](#) page.

BEST MAP/S: The Recreation Map of Waitakere Ranges Regional Park, sold at [Arataki Visitor Centre](#).

RUN IT: From the Piha Café run on the road towards the sea. Take the first path you see over the dunes and on to the beach. Head north for about 2.5 kms to the far end and pick up the Laird Thomson Track. This climbs to a headland – turn right and head up the steps, admiring the great views as you go.

When the single track you are on turns into a 4WD track turn left and follow this around to the right heading uphill on what is now the Rose Track (signposted Anawhata Rd. 20 mins). Climb 100m over just half a km and turn right on to Anawhata Rd, followed by an immediate right turn onto a grassy 4WD track. You are now on the Hillary Trail. After a couple of hundred metres, turn left onto White Track and follow this downhill to a couple of stream crossings. On the far side of the second stream pick up Marawhara Walk.

Shortly you'll hit the road. Turn left and follow this back towards Piha for 400 metres. Immediately after crossing a creek on the road bridge turn left on a track marked 'to Garden Road' (not shown on maps). Keep to the right and follow the fenceline through to Garden Road. Turn left and run tarmac

for 100m or so before joining the Mangaroa Lookout Track. Follow this through nikau and over a couple of streams before tackling the steep climb up the ridge. At the top (about 8.4 km into the run) bear left, following the signs to McKenzie Junction ¾ hr. This small clearing is reached after another 2.3 km of glorious running. Exit on the Quarry Track and bear left to stay on this at the next junction. A bit further along turn left on McElwain Lookout Track and take in the awesome 360° views from this raised platform before continuing on to meet Anawhata Rd again.

Don't run on the road, just turn immediately right to pick up the Centennial Track, bearing left at the next junction to stay on the Centennial (signposted to Home Track 1 hr) and follow this awesome single track down to a boulder-hopping river crossing. Pick up the steps on the far side and follow them up the hill. Now follow the Piha Valley Track (to Glen Esk Rd 1 hr) and just before reaching the trailhead turn a sharp left onto Byers Walk. You are now some 16.5 kms in. After crossing the stream on a bridge turn left on to Kitekite Track and in about 300 metres fork left following the signs to Ussher Cross 25 mins. This re-crosses the stream and climbs on a long series of steps.

At the top of the climb turn right on the Knutzen Track and follow to the amazing Kitekite Falls – a great place for a refreshing dip on a hot day. Cross in front of the falls and exit the far side on steps that lead uphill to a spectacular viewpoint back over the Falls. Follow the trail downhill, turning left to rejoin the Kitekite Track and stay on this all the way out to Glen Esk Road. Follow the road back towards Piha, making a final right turn over the road bridge to return to the Piha Café.

POST RUN GOODNESS: The [Piha Café](#) has a great selection of food (including awesome pizzas) and a selection of craft beers. Combined with its convivial atmosphere this makes for the perfect post-run binge.