

Tamara's Scoop

Tips for Taupo

70.3 Worlds 2024

Overview

This is a **living document** with some of my tips as I explore Taupo from a **Canadian pro triathlete perspective!** I will update it as I learn more and as you ask more questions. **If you have questions - reach out to me at @tamarajewett on Instagram, and I will do my best to address them!**



Arriving in New Zealand from Abroad

1. Obviously, check visa requirements from your country. Even if you don't need a visa before arrival, you will likely need to apply and pay for a **NZeTA Before**

Travelling: [NZ Entry Requirements](#) | [Before you travel](#) | [NZTD](#) | [New Zealand Traveller Declaration](#)

2. New Zealand has **fairly strict biosecurity laws** (similar to Australia). Don't bring food, declare anything at the airport that you are unsure about,

consider cleaning your bike and bike tires before travel. And any hiking shoes!

3. **What clothing to bring - LAYERS!** The sun is hot. The mornings and evenings are cool. And it can be quite cool in the hills. You will want a mix of shorts, t-shirts, sweaters, pants and so on. I've been wearing arm warmers for some of my rides.
4. **Travel SIM plans** - this is what I'm using: [A local Travel SIM for when you visit New Zealand. One NZ.](#)

Tons of Triathletes, Small Town - some quick tips!

Taupo is a fairly small town, and hoards of triathletes are about to descend. The people I've met (hehe in fairness when traveling for triathlon, I tend to find the triathletes, open water swimmers and cyclists) are very enthusiastic about the event and volunteering, which is wonderful! **Obviously, please be respectful and bring your best triathlon energy with you because I think we may be temporarily increasing the local population by over 20%!**

Some ideas to make that easier on yourself:

- Even a few weeks before most athletes arrive, I've found **parking in the Town Centre can be tough to find**. To avoid a hassle, plan to arrive a bit early to reservations or for activities to find a spot. Or walk if you are close. On that note - Terrace Road (right in front of the lake) gets quite busy at certain times of day - just be patient!
- If you are interested in specific restaurants or tours **BOOK AHEAD**. For example, there are modern Maori carvings on the lake that are only

accessible by boat. There are many tours available, but if this is an activity that you are interested in close to race week - consider booking now.

- Make sure you **buy any groceries you need for your ideal pre-race meal when you arrive**. Locals are being told to stock up a bit on groceries just in case some items become hard to find with so many people descending on the town. **Pak'nSave** in the Town Centre reminds me a lot of a Costco and has a big selection. **Woolworths** in the East of the town is another good option.

Road Conditions

As discussed in my Reel, New Zealand roads are **chipseal**, and they are bumpier and slower than asphalt. **However, I am not finding them that bad - and there is variety - in some areas the chipseal is more worn, and, therefore, smoother than in other spots. I am also not seeing many potholes or cracks.**

I am swapping my 23mm front tire for a 25mm tire. **The correct tire width for you will depend on your wheel width. In general, a slightly wider tire with slightly lower pressure should provide a more comfortable ride on these roads.** The trade-off is not setting the pressure too low (which could cause a pinch flat if you use



tubes) or making the tire too wide for the wheel width (which will start to interfere with bike aerodynamics, particularly on the front wheel). **Check what your wheel manufacturer recommends!**

Or measure yourself: You don't want a tire that is wider than the widest part of the rim (esp. on that front wheel). Ideally, an inflated tire should be about 90% of the wheel width if you can measure with calipers.

New Zealand drivers drive fast for the size of their roads, which typically have little or no shoulder - I strongly encourage bike lights for improved visibility! Even better if you have a Garmin Varia.

I've had some questions about wind and disc wheels - it CAN be windy here. I feel safe with a disc wheel, but know your comfort zone and try it out before race day if you are unsure.

Where to Bike?

As discussed in my Reel about Road Conditions, **I think that most of the course is good to ride, especially as more and more triathletes show up and ride it.** Many signs have been put up warning cars to keep an eye out for cyclists. **I did a brick with intervals on Highway 5 that was just fine!** **The Signal Road/Butcher Road/Harlow Road area at the far end of the loop is also quite quiet.**

HOWEVER, I get a bad vibe about the business and lack of shoulder on Broadlands and have had



multiple locals tell me that it is dangerous for cyclists and cars alike. Other than the stretch to get to View Road and back into town, I've been avoiding it.

Other GREAT options:

1. Closer to town/the Worlds course - **Karen from the Taupo Master's Swim Club recommended Aratiatia Road** - which branches off of View Road - the course turns right onto it on our way to Highway 5 via the **Aratiatia Rapids (worth a look at 10am, 12pm, 2pm and 4pm when water is released from the dam into the rapids as in my photo!)**. You can also turn left onto it to get back into Taupo avoiding Broadlands. She also recommends the small, but very quiet add-on **Rapids Road** that branches off of the part of Aratiatia that is on the course towards the National Equestrian Centre.

2. **Kyle Smith recommended this route to me that goes out towards Acacia Bay and Mpara Road and past Kinloch** (to the South West of Taupo). Very quiet roads, BEAUTIFUL! Be warned - very hilly! (1541m of elevation gain)
<https://strava.app.link/R8LEruiwPOb>

3. **Fellow pro competitor Nikki Bartlett is staying in Acacia Bay before the race and recommends these routes over in the same direction as Kyle Smith's route:** <https://www.strava.com/routes/3295577281267513662> and <https://www.strava.com/routes/3295575994572004634>

What's the Lake Like? And the Pool?

The lake was fairly chilly, but has warmed up as the weather continues to warm up. It has beautiful clear water, and a **no boat zone** on most of the swim course.

It **CAN** be very wavy or calm depending on wind direction. Be prepared for either!



The **AC Baths** has two 25min pools (one outdoors and one indoors) and is open most of the day from 6am to 6pm or 7am to

Best spots to hop in: Either on the beach at the race swim start at the West end of town near the **Lake Taupo Yatch Club**, **OR** at the other end of the main waterfront, **from the waterfront trail parking near the Taharepa Baths**.



6pm on weekends. So far I've had good luck with lanes to myself, although it may get busy race week. If that ends up being frustrating - there's a ton of space in the lake ;) [AC Baths - Taupō District Council](#)

Where to Run?

I've been doing most of my running on the **path by the lake**. Part of it is on the World's course. It extends many many kilometers out along the East side of the lake with **varying surfaces (wide sidewalk-like, brick/tile-like, narrower sidewalk-like, eventually gravel if you get far enough)**. I love the further bits along Five Mile Bay - there's a part there that is quieter with wildflowers beside the lakefront that is worth a longer run if it fits into your training plan! Also have beautiful views of the mountains! **Be careful of bicycles coming around twists and turns which, as per New Zealand driving, keep LEFT.**

This path has fairly regular washrooms and water fountains, which I think is always a plus!



Massage Therapy

Kyle Smith (a Taupo local) recommended **Rachel Trapski** ([Inergi | Deep Tissue & Sports Massage](#)). I have an appointment with her on Friday. If this is part of your pre or post-race care routine, **consider booking now, since Taupo is about to be very busy.**

I tend to avoid massage very close to racing. But a week out, I don't think it's a bad idea, particularly after travel and if it is something your body is used to.

Spectating Spots on Course

The swim course and run course both go along the waterfront in town. So, it looks like you will be able to spectate the swim and run fairly easily (probably with lots of good options for grabbing a coffee or bite to eat in the Town Centre).

The best place to watch parts of the bike from town is on Rifle Range Road. The bike goes up the entire road from the transition zone near the lakefront before it turns out of town and onto highways. It comes back down Rifle Rand Road as well back into transition.

Getting To and Around Town

I have a long-term car rental from Discount Car Rental ([Auckland Airport - NZDCR](#)) and that has been the most convenient way for me to get around. If you are renting a car and driving on the opposite side of the road than you are used to - please be very careful! As I've said, I find that New Zealanders drive a bit fast for the size of their roads, and how twisty/turny some of them can be!

If you are flying into Auckland, there is also a **bus from Auckland to Taupo** that seems able to transport bikes for a small extra fee (10 dollars?) if they have room - my husband is using this to get to Taupo when he arrives in early December and I can update this based on his experience. [New Zealand's #1 National Bus Network | InterCity®](#)

In town - I haven't used it, but **there is a taxi service in town**, and I have seen the taxies around: [Taupo Taxis | Reliable & Professional Taxi Service in Taupo, New Zealand](#). **Uber** also seems to operate here.

Fun Stuff to Visit

Okay - working on this one! So far I've been focused on training. However,

- **Craters of the Moon:** Set aside **1 hour to 80 minutes for a relaxed and interesting walk through fumeroles and craters created by geothermal activity**. I loved it. Signs explain how the heat in the soil affects the vegetation/the history of geothermal activity in this area and how it has been influenced by a geothermal electrical plant/Maori legends about Lake Taupo. It costs **10 NZD to enter, which goes to the trust that takes care of this site**.



- **Huka Falls:** You can do a **pretty hike up from the Spa Thermal Park up to Huka Falls along the Waikato River**. The walk is advertised as 90 minutes, but I think that may mean round trip (?) since it seems to be only about 3km between thermal pools close to the park and the falls. I am still looking for an opportunity to do the whole thing. **The thermal pools are lukewarm geothermal pools off of the river which you can use for free.** They are beside a small cafe. *The river is beautiful with ferns on the river banks and very very clear water. Worth a quick trip!*



ALSO on my to do list right now is: **Boat tour to the Maori carvings and the Botanical Gardens!**

As noted in my section on bike routes - **Aratiatia Rapids** are an easy stop if you are riding the course and worth checking out at the times that they release water from the dam.

I've also been told that **Kinloch** is pretty to check out if you have time.

Further afield: I've already booked my post-race tour of **Hobbiton**, and my shuttle time for the **Tongariro Alpine Crossing** ([you have to register for this hike and book a shuttle since it's point to point - more info here: **Tongariro Alpine Crossing | Tongariro Alpine Crossing | Plan Your Trip**](#))

The Real Scoop: Where Do I Get My Post-Race Ice Cream?

Working on the best intel for this one! Stay tuned! So far, **Luna's Gelateria** right at the lakefront in town looks like a pretty good bet! I will have to confirm that they have hockey pokey ice cream, which I've been told to try!

