

# MOTU Trails



Motu Road © Neil Hutton

## DUNES TRAIL to LOOP RIDE

1-3 days | 10-91km

Be set free on an Eastland escapade, where trails lead you on journeys from cruisy seaside rides to remote wilderness adventures.

The Motu Trails have it all, and with three trails to choose from (or you can combine them all), you can enjoy a ride no matter your age, fitness level or riding ability. Cycle for a few hours, or a few days. The Motu Trail also

links to the Rere Falls Trail from Matawai to Gisborne. Clinging to the sand dunes alongside the sparkling Pacific Ocean, the Dunes Trail is an easy gravel path running parallel with the

Bay of Plenty coastline for 10km. It's ideal for all riders and there's a shop next to the Tirohanga Beach Motor Camp selling ice creams and drinks – just the ticket for a beautiful summer's day!

The Motu Road Trail runs from the end of the Dunes Trail to the rustic settlement of Matawai, 67km away. It follows a quiet country road past scenic farmland and through forested conservation reserves. There are plenty of hills that require reasonable fitness, especially riding from the coast to Matawai, but the views are incredible and there's lots of freewheeling to get your heart racing.

The Pakihi Track is the third trail in the Motu trilogy and the most challenging, set in splendid isolation. Although it's mostly downhill, it includes Grade 4 (Advanced) mountain biking on a narrow trail through remote native forest. Take your time and admire the gorgeous views along the way.

The 91km Loop Ride offers you a taste of all three of the Motu Trails, starting and ending your ride in Opotiki.

## TRAIL INFO



### TRAIL GRADES:

**DUNES TRAIL**  
GRADE 2 (EASY)

**MOTU ROAD TRAIL**  
GRADE 3 (INTERMEDIATE)

**PAKIHI TRACK**  
GRADE 4 (ADVANCED)

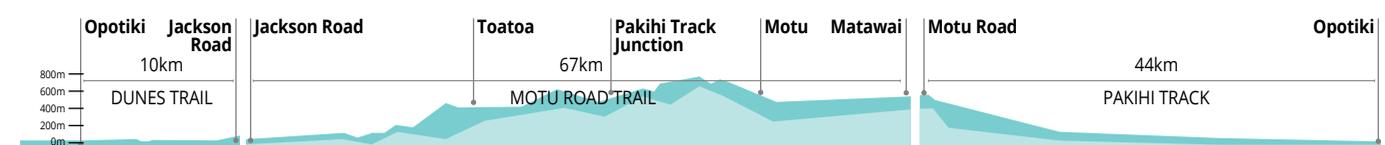
**LOOP RIDE** GRADES 2-4  
(EASY-ADVANCED)

**MOBILE PHONE COVERAGE:**  
Mobile phone coverage is very poor and will sometimes disappear. You can get coverage on the Dunes Trail and coming back into town after the Pakihi Track.

**DRINKING WATER:**  
It's recommended that you carry all your own water. Tank water is available at Motu and water can be drawn from the streams along the route. It is recommended that this is boiled (for 3 minutes), filtered or treated before drinking.



Dunes Trail © Jim Robinson  
OPPOSITE: Motu River  
© Linear Photographs



## look out for...

**Gateway to the East Cape**  
Opotiki sits at the confluence of two rivers and several long, safe, sandy beaches are nearby. Steep hills, fast rivers and dramatic coastlines surround the town, ripe for adventure and exploration. Down the coast from the town a collection of bays provide good

snorkelling and deep-sea fishing. Just 7km out of Opotiki is the Hukutaia Domain, the home of a 2000-year-old puriri tree known as Taketakerau. To reach it, there's a brilliant short walk in a majestic pocket of forest. You can't ride in the domain, but it's a nice rural on-road ride to get there.

## Meet Motu

Motu Community House is a very popular place to stay, offering affordable accommodation (ideal for groups) and plenty of tips on what to do in the area. A 5km detour from Motu takes you to beautiful Motu Falls on the wild Motu River. Cross the high swing bridge onto a beautiful forest walking track (no bikes).



# riding the trail

## ► DUNES TRAIL, 10KM

This beautiful trail starts at the Pakowhai ki Otutaopuku Bridge (Memorial Park) in Opotiki and meanders along a spectacular stretch of coast to Jackson Rd (and the start of the Motu Road Trail).

Hugging the sand dunes, the trail provides excellent unspoilt views of the Pacific Ocean and rugged hinterland of the East Cape. This is a Grade 2 (Easy) trail that caters for all abilities and fitness levels. The trail has an easy gradient that is enjoyed by walkers, runners and cyclists.

The return journey of 20km can be comfortably ridden in two or three hours from either end with time to stop for a swim and a picnic along the way.

The Dunes Trail also provides a great warm-up for those preparing to tackle the more challenging Motu Road Trail.

## ► MOTU ROAD TRAIL, 67KM

This trail follows the historic coach road from Matawai (about 500m above sea level, climbing to almost 800m through the Raukumara Ranges) down to the Eastern Bay of Plenty coast. This is a

Grade 3 (Intermediate) trail through remote bush country wilderness. It can be ridden in either direction, but you'll get the best views (and more downhill riding) starting from Matawai.

Just beyond the tiny settlement of Motu is a steep 3km climb, but the views from the top are worth it! The trail then follows the ridgeline where you'll enjoy lots of freewheeling. Then it's mostly downhill en route to the coast, where the Motu Road Trail connects with the Dunes Trail to take you into Opotiki.

Note: this section is on a road, so be alert for vehicles, although traffic counts are low.

Riders who want a more challenging ride to Opotiki can divert on to the more advanced Pakihi Track.

## ► PAKIHI TRACK, 44KM

This track is ONE-WAY from Motu Rd towards Opotiki. It is not a trail to ride at high speed. It starts 29km (about halfway) along the Motu Road Trail and includes 20km of advanced off-road riding through splendid isolation.

The largely downhill track takes you through magnificent bush, with



Dunes Trail, Motu Trails © Neil Hutton

wonderful panoramas so stop and admire the view. The trail crosses 25 bridges, including a 35m swing bridge.

Pahihi Rd marks your return to civilisation with 23km of gravel/sealed road and river stopbank trail, back to Opotiki. This is a Grade 4 (Advanced) trail that requires a reasonable level of fitness. The off-road section includes steep drop-offs so ride with caution.

## ► RIDE THE LOOP, 91KM

You can have a taste of all three of the Motu Trails, starting and ending in Opotiki. Head off on the Dunes Trail, which links to the bottom of the Motu

Road Trail, which leads to the start of the Pakihi Track back to Opotiki.

We recommend you take two days to ride the loop. The Pakihi Track can also be completed via the Otara Stopbank Trail back to Memorial Park in Opotiki. Remember that while the Dunes Trail and Motu Road Trail are graded Easy and Intermediate, the Pakihi Track section of this ride is for advanced riders only.

## ► RERE FALLS TRAIL

From Matawai, you can ride the Rere Falls Trail to Gisborne. See page 140 for details.



Ohope Beach © Whakatane District Council

# Along the trail

## Sublime beaches, lush forest and islands on the horizon...

Warm and welcoming Whakatane is an ideal hub for discovering the many cycling and outdoor experiences across the eastern Bay of Plenty and Eastland. Perennially sunny, the township is a short drive from the freedom of the Motu Trails and has a range of accommodation and dining options, but that's just the start.

**Opotiki** ■  
45km E of Whakatane on SH 2

The paved, flat trail stretching 4km beside Whakatane's riverbank is a popular out-and-back cycle, walk or run featuring saltmarsh, varied bird life, a busy wharf and the spectacular Whakatane river heads. You'll also find excellent, easy on-road cycling in Ohope, with magical views of the Pacific Ocean and Ohiwa Harbour.

The historic Burma Rd cycle path links Ohope with Whakatane and includes the option of a 10km loop ride. One of the region's first connections and

now closed to motor traffic, Burma Rd twists through forest that is home to wild kiwi, North Island robin and other bird life.

South of Whakatane, family-friendly **Onepu Mountain Bike Park** is only 20 minutes away, while the epic adventure of Whirinaki/Moerangi track is a very achievable drive.

Beyond the bike, **Nga Tapuwae o Toi** walking trail is a journey through forest and along sublime beaches, passing important pa sites. Shorter walks include the climb to Tauwhare Pa which overlooks Ohiwa Harbour, and the flat, Whakatane Gardens.

Almost wherever you go along the Whakatane-Opotiki coast, you'll see **Whakaari (White Island)** and **Moutohora (Whale island)** on the horizon. Both islands make for spectacular guided trips, one volcanically dramatic, the other a forested bird-paradise.

According to tradition, the region was settled over 1000 years ago. Te Koputu a te Whanga a Toi, Whakatane's Exhibition Centre, takes you on a voyage of discovery. Mataatua Whareniui, 'The house that came home,' is an incredible encounter, while Native Connectionz shares stories and tastes of the area.

**Eastland Pacific Motor Lodge**  
OPOTIKI • NEW ZEALAND  
WELCOME

- Large units suitable for meetings or training sessions - up to 14 people
- 10 units with spa baths, 4 x 2-brm units, 6 x 1-brm, 8 studio units
- Wheelchair access units • Sky TV
- Guest laundry
- Continental and cooked breakfasts
- Wireless internet access
- Warm welcome & friendly service

Cnr Bridge & St John Sts, Opotiki Ph: 07 315 5524 Fax: 07 315 5504  
Email: eastlandopotiki@xtra.co.nz www.eastlandpacific.co.nz  
Reservations: 0800 103 003 Resident Hosts: Lyn & Gary Savage

# Extend your journey to our untouched paradise

**Whakatane & Ohope**  
Everything under the sun  
Ohope Harbourside Trail

[whakatane.com](http://whakatane.com)

MOTU  
• TRAILS •

BE SET FREE

## Your Eastland adventure starts right here!

Ride by the ocean, through historic farmland and deep into the forest. Pause by a century-old railway bridge. Laugh at cheeky North Island Weka, zipping across the track. Pedal on to Rere Falls and Gisborne, or to Ohiwa Harbour and Whakatane. The Motu Trails Great Ride is the start of your brilliant adventure in the eastern Bay of Plenty and Eastland.

- Motu Trails maps, track info, shuttles, cafes, accommodation and services:  
[www.motutrails.co.nz](http://www.motutrails.co.nz)  
Facebook/Instagram: **Motu Trails Cycleway**
- Eastern Bay attractions and info:  
[www.opotikin.z.com/visit-opotiki](http://www.opotikin.z.com/visit-opotiki) or contact Opotiki i-SITE, 07 315 3031, 70 Bridge St Opotiki





East Cape Lighthouse, Eastland  
INSET: Vineyard, Waipaoa, Gisborne  
BOTH © davidwallphoto.com

## Chardonnay Capital

Known as the chardonnay capital of New Zealand, sunny Gisborne is the nation's third biggest wine region. There are fun, informative tours around the vineyards. If you are visiting in October, don't miss the annual Food and Wine Festival and the chance to rub shoulders with local foodies and winemakers. Tickets sell out fast so be sure to book in advance.



## Eastland: a tranquil paradise

This is a real heartland corner of New Zealand, where community ties are strong and visitors are welcome, and a love of the ocean is shared by all. Tractors on the beach, horseback riding and fresh kaimoana for dinner are the scenes of daily life here.

Enjoy Eastland's spectacular and wild surf beaches. Head to Wainui Beach and The Pipe for top waves. Gisborne is where Captain Cook made his first landfall in 1769. Follow the Gisborne Historical Walk to see where he came to shore. Explore the tranquil walking tracks through the Hackfalls Arboretum and Eastwoodhill Arboretum.

Hackfalls is spectacular in autumn when copper leaves from its vast oak trees flutter to the forest floor. Eastwoodhill, New Zealand's national arboretum, has a massive collection of northern hemisphere trees over its ambling 131ha.

### Magnolia Court Motel

Opotiki

Cnr Bridge & Nelson Sts,  
Opotiki • Ph: +64 7 315 8490  
E: magnolia.crt.motel@xtra.co.nz  
[www.magnoliacourtotel.co.nz](http://www.magnoliacourtotel.co.nz)

PERFECT FOR CYCLISTS

- 13 spacious groundfloor studios, 1 & 2-brm units with queen-size beds
- Continental breakfast
- Near shops/restaurants, opposite garden & park • Serviced daily
- Ample off-street parking for boats, trailers, buses • WiFi access
- Tariff: \$120-\$165 (2 persons), extra \$20
- Spacious grounds allows room for cycles & vehicles
- Caraging for safe cycle storage
- Separate accommodation blocks
- Caters for privacy and relaxation

Reservations: 0800 55 62 46

## Tirohanga Beach Motor Camp

SH 35, Tirohanga Beach, Opotiki  
Ph/Fax: 07 315 7942 Email: [tmcamp@xtra.co.nz](mailto:tmcamp@xtra.co.nz)

**Tirohanga Beach Motor Camp: the right place to start your Motu Trail Adventure.** We have a variety of accommodation & are situated on the Dune Trail to assist you in making this ride something to remember.

Don't rush home; enjoy our beautiful beach & see what Opotiki has to offer. One of the trail's OFFICIAL PARTNERS.

Give us a call if you need some advice on **07 315 7942** or check out our website [www.tirohangabeachmotorcamp.co.nz](http://www.tirohangabeachmotorcamp.co.nz)

## Opotiki Holiday Park

39 Potts Ave, Opotiki  
Phone: +64 7 315 6050  
Email: [opotiki.holidays@xtra.co.nz](mailto:opotiki.holidays@xtra.co.nz)

**Accommodation:**  
Relax in a rural setting only 200m walk to Opotiki town centre. Start of the Motu Trail on our doorstep, or we can arrange shuttle services. Secure lock-up for bikes and group rates available. Choice of self-contained units, kitchen cabins, tent sites & motel units.

**Features:**  
Communal kitchen, metered showers, laundry, TV lounge, Freeview TV, Zenbu WiFi, swimming pool, playground and dump station.

**Tariff:**  
2 persons \$50-\$120/night; sites from \$15/person, seasonal rates may apply. Visa, Mastercard, EFTPOS.

[www.opotikiholidaypark.com](http://www.opotikiholidaypark.com)

## Gisborne

after Colonial Secretary William Gisborne • 215km NE of Napier on SH 2

Looking for a

## CYCLING ADVENTURE

on the Motu Trails, Gisborne?

Base your trip from Heritage Collection Portside Hotel, Gisborne.

On the water's edge in the heart of Gisborne, studio & suites accommodation.

2 Reads Quay, Gisborne.

Book now: [www.heritagehotels.co.nz/NZCycleTrail](http://www.heritagehotels.co.nz/NZCycleTrail) or 0800 36 88 88