

Day Two

Matahiwi to Whanganui

47 km Elevation 320m

Although pounded by heavy rain during the night, we gratefully awoke to a grey sky that was trying desperately to be blue. We consumed a hearty breakfast thanks to the hospitality of Marlene and her daughter at the Matahiwi Cafe and Gallery. Lunches were made, some making the most of last night's leftovers: roasted lamb and veggies. Fond farewells were given to our free ranging Kune Kune pigs and we were keen to head off before the ominous clouds gifted their bulging bucket loads of water upon us. The day's journey once again promised a freewheeling down hill joy ride with only the last hill to the Aramoana viewpoint to be of any concern. Ken, Barry and Bruce led the way with a 15 min stop at a fascinating man made culvert tunnel, which was not only aesthetically beautiful, but appeared to be a feat of man's ingenuity and hard labour. A reminder of all the efforts of early pioneers who had carved their way down this river valley. To keep our minds on the job there was a wee bit of dodging the papa rock slips spilling over the road and a few charming waterfalls to ooh and aah at. Suddenly the hill to Aramoana viewpoint loomed while at the same time the clouds decided it was time they let loose, so by the time we all got to the top we were both hot and sweaty and wet and shivering. That dampened any long sustaining conversations and we were all off again, downhill to a fabulous lunchtime shelter displaying the local history and bordering our next turn off down State Highway 4. A few kms on and we all happily tumbled into the Upokongaro Cafe, thankfully open. Discarding dripping coats we feasted on warm coffees and satisfying homemade treats. There was a path taking us under the main road and popping up to cross a brand new cycle bridge over the mighty Whanganui River. Then down the new path to the Aramoho Top 10 Holiday Park for the night.