

TASMANIA

Australia's Island State

9 days

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Day 1 Arrival in Hobart, Australia

Arrival in Hobart - welcome to Tasmania!

Separated from mainland Australia by the 240 km stretch of Bass Strait, Tasmania is truly one of Australia's best-kept secrets!! This unique region of the world offers dramatic mountain peaks, alpine lakes, waterfalls, rainforests, abundant native wildlife, fields of lavender and small Victorian towns becoming increasingly known for their production of Tasmanian wines, cheeses, honey and other culinary specialties.

Tasmania is often promoted as the 'natural state' and the 'island of inspiration' owing to its large and relatively unspoiled natural environment. More than 40% of Tasmania lies in reserves, national parks and UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Depending on our flight arrival time, we may be able to include some informal sightseeing after we settle in. Please note that your Tour Leader may be arriving today with travellers coming from our tour of greater Australia (tour code AU10).

Overnight in Hobart.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Hobart City Tour & Port Arthur Excursion

Today, we have a leisurely tour of Hobart, the charming capital city of Tasmania. Nestled beneath the majestic Mount Wellington and overlooking the Derwent River, Hobart offers a captivating blend of natural beauty and historical significance.

Our morning begins with a tour of both the city and the picturesque Botanical Gardens. As we stroll through Hobart's historic Battery Point, we are transported back in time, marveling at the well-preserved Georgian architecture and learning about the city's rich history. Salamanca Place, another historic gem, showcases a collection of restored warehouses that now house art galleries, boutiques, and cafes.

After exploring the city's historic landmarks, we venture into the serene Royal Botanical Gardens. This botanical paradise boasts a diverse collection of plants, offering a peaceful retreat amidst the urban landscape.

In the afternoon, a scenic drive takes us to the Tasman Peninsula, where the renowned Port Arthur is located. Surrounded by pristine beaches and dense forests, Port Arthur is a must-visit destination for any traveller to Tasmania. The history of Port Arthur dates back to the 1830s when it served as a penal colony, housing convicted criminals transported from Britain. Today, Port Arthur stands as one of Australia's most significant heritage areas, offering a fascinating open-air museum.

Our guided walking tour of Port Arthur takes us through the historic prison complex, revealing the harsh realities of life for the convicts who were incarcerated here. We have the opportunity to explore the various buildings, including the penitentiary, the church, and the cemetery, gaining a deeper understanding of the site's dark past.

After our tour, we enjoy some free time for lunch before returning to Hobart. Our journey back takes us through the historic village of Richmond, offering a glimpse into the region's early colonial settlement. Return to Hobart.

Overnight in Hobart.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Hobart - Lake St Clair - Strahan

After breakfast, we begin a scenic journey across Tasmania, traversing the island from east to west. Our adventure begins along the upper Derwent River, where we delve into the heart of Tasmania's World Heritage wilderness.

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As we travel through this pristine landscape, we encounter a unique art project that captures the essence of Tasmania's stories. Sculptor Greg Duncan has created "The Wall," a 100-meter-long wall of wooden relief sculpture that depicts the island's rich history and natural beauty. The intricate carvings, rendered on three-meter-high panels of Tasmania's rare Huon Pine, offer a visual feast for the senses.

Our journey continues to Lake St. Clair, Australia's deepest lake. Here, we step out of our vehicles to savour the fresh alpine air and enjoy the tranquility of the lake's shores. The pristine beauty of Lake St. Clair offers a peaceful respite amidst the rugged wilderness.

From Lake St. Clair, we venture towards the charming seaside village of Strahan, located on the West Coast. Along the way, we encounter the majestic Franklin River, a pristine waterway that winds through the rugged wilderness. We also make a stop at the breathtaking Nelson Waterfalls, where cascading waters create a stunning spectacle.

Overnight in Strahan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Strahan - Gordon River - Cradle Mountain

Today we have a leisurely cruise across Macquarie Harbour, venturing into the tranquil depths of the Gordon River, a highlight of our Tasmanian adventure. As we glide through the serene waters, we indulge in the luxury of the Premier Upperdeck cabin, where we are treated to breakfast, lunch, and refreshing drinks. For those seeking a unique experience, the captain's bridge is (usually) open for exploration.

Our first stop is Heritage Landing, a gateway to the pristine rainforest. Here we embark on a leisurely walk amidst ancient temperate rainforest trees, many of which are Gondwanan relics, dating back to the supercontinent of Gondwana. As we stroll through this lush landscape, we are surrounded by the towering giants of the forest, their trunks adorned with moss and ferns.

Next, we delve into the convict world of Sarah Island, Tasmania's most remote and notorious penal settlement. As we wander through the now peaceful bush setting, we can't help but imagine the harsh realities faced by the unfortunate convicts who once inhabited this isolated outpost.

Our tour continues to the World Heritage-listed Cradle Mountain National Park, a breathtaking landscape of alpine beauty. The scenic drive takes us through lush farmland, gradually ascending into the alpine regions, offering stunning vistas along the way.

The centerpiece of the park is Cradle Mountain, a majestic peak that rises to 1545 meters. Surrounded by stands of native deciduous beech, rainforest, alpine heath lands, and button grass, Cradle Mountain is a haven for nature lovers. Icy streams cascade down the mountain slopes, reflecting in the still glacial lakes, creating a scene of serene tranquility.

At some point during our visit, we stop by the Visitor Center to gain a deeper understanding of this unique region. The center provides valuable information about the park's flora, fauna, and geological features, enhancing our appreciation for this natural wonderland.

DUE TO the size of our lunch we do not include dinner this evening.

Overnight at Cradle Mountain.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 5 Cradle Mountain National Park

On a clear day, Cradle Mountain National Park reveals its breathtaking beauty, with the rugged grandeur of the mountain reflected in the tranquil waters of Dove Lake. The swirling mist that often envelops the craggy peaks adds an air of mystery and drama to the landscape.

Today, we have a captivating bushwalk along the Dove Lake Circuit, a 2.5-hour route that immerses us in the natural splendour of this majestic setting. As we traverse the circuit, we learn about the diverse flora and fauna that inhabit this unique ecosystem. One of the highlights of the walk is the ballroom forest, a magical grove of tall, ancient trees that create a cathedral-like atmosphere. The sunlight filters through the canopy, casting intricate patterns on the forest floor.

If weather conditions permit, we may choose to explore other walking trails within the park, each offering its own unique experiences and breathtaking vistas. From challenging hikes to leisurely strolls, there is a trail to suit every fitness level and preference.

Overnight in Cradle Mountain National Park Area.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 6 Cradle Mountain - Freycinet Peninsula

Today, we bid farewell to the serene landscapes of Cradle Valley and travel towards Tasmania's East Coast, renowned for its exceptional beauty, pristine white sandy beaches, and dramatic granite coastline. As we traverse the lush rolling farm pastures, we witness the idyllic countryside that characterizes this region of Tasmania. The scenic drive offers breathtaking vistas of rolling hills, meandering rivers, and quaint rural settlements.

Our route takes us to Cape Tourville, a picturesque coastal destination that offers stunning panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. We take a leisurely stroll to the lighthouse, perched atop a rocky promontory, where we can enjoy the fresh sea breeze and admire the sweeping vistas of the coastline.

For those seeking a more adventurous experience, the walk up to the Wineglass Bay lookout is a rewarding option. This challenging hike leads to a vantage point that overlooks the iconic Wineglass Bay, a crescent-shaped bay renowned for its pristine waters and white sandy beaches. The effort of the climb is rewarded with panoramic views that capture the essence of Tasmania's coastal beauty.

Whether we choose to explore Cape Tourville or venture to the Wineglass Bay lookout, our time on the East Coast offers a memorable experience. The combination of lush landscapes, pristine beaches, and stunning coastal vistas creates a truly spectacular setting.

Overnight at Freycinet Lodge.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Freycinet - Maria Island - Hobart

Today's scenic drive along the East Coast takes us towards the seaside village of Triabunna. From Triabunna, we board a ferry that takes us across the Mercury Passage to Maria Island, a unique island national park nestled just off Tasmania's east coast.

As we step onto Maria Island, we are greeted by a serene and peaceful atmosphere. The island offers a captivating blend of historic ruins, sweeping bays, rugged fossil cliffs, and imposing mountains. As we explore the island, we encounter a diverse array of wildlife, including wombats, Cape Barren geese, Tasmanian pademelons, forester kangaroos, and maybe even the elusive Tasmanian devil.

Our day on Maria Island is filled with leisurely walks through the island's picturesque landscapes. We explore the historic ruins, remnants of the island's past as a place of convict settlement. We stroll across the sweeping bays, enjoying the breathtaking coastal views, discovering fascinating geological formations and learning about the island's ancient history.

Mid-afternoon, we board the ferry to return to the mainland and continue back to Hobart, where we can reflect on the island's natural beauty, historical significance, and the unique wildlife encounters that made our visit truly memorable.

Overnight in Hobart.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Coal River Valley & Richmond

Today we explore the fertile lands of the Coal River Valley, a picturesque region just outside of Hobart. Our day begins with a visit to the historic village of Richmond, renowned for its well-preserved sandstone architecture.

As we stroll through the village, we admire the stunning buildings, including Australia's oldest convict-built sandstone bridge and the historic gaol. These architectural gems offer a glimpse into the region's rich history and the convict era that shaped its development.

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After taking in the sights of Richmond, we have some free time to explore the village at our own pace. We can wander through the charming streets, browse the local shops, or simply relax in the peaceful ambiance.

Our day continues with a delightful lunch at a local winery, where we savor the flavours of the Coal River Valley's renowned wines. After a farewell lunch,* we indulge in wine tastings at Puddleduck and Frogmore Creek Vineyards, two prominent wineries in the region. We sample a variety of wines, learning about the unique terroir and the passion that goes into crafting these exceptional beverages.

As the day draws to a close, we return to Hobart.

* Due to our substantial lunch and the possibility of early departures tomorrow, we do not include dinner this evening.

Overnight in Hobart.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 9 Departure from Hobart

Today we depart from Tasmania.

BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast