

FACT FILE

# WALKING IN TASMANIA

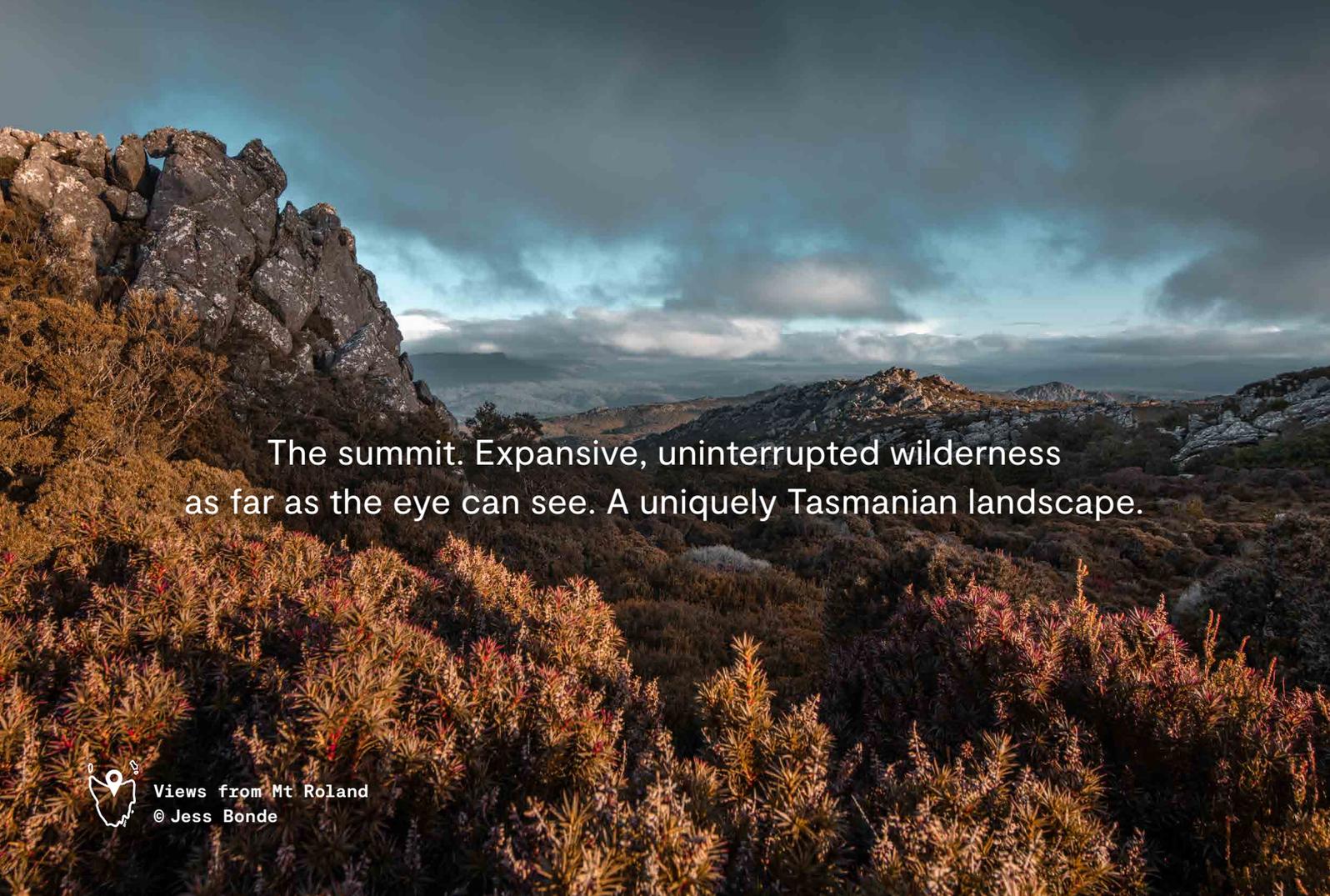
UNORDINARY ADVENTURES



Barn Bluff, Overland Track  
© Emilie Ristevski

# TASMANIA

COME DOWN FOR AIR



The summit. Expansive, uninterrupted wilderness  
as far as the eye can see. A uniquely Tasmanian landscape.



Views from Mt Roland  
© Jess Bonde

Conservation and protection of Tasmania's remarkable biodiversity are the foundations of the state's rich walking history and experience. Tasmania's reputation as a premier wilderness walking destination is largely based on the scale of its wild places – about 40 per cent of the island is protected as national parks, conservation areas, reserves and UNESCO World Heritage areas.

Diversity is at the heart of Tasmania's walking experience. More than 2800 kilometres of maintained walking trails form some 880 separate walks. Trails traverse multiple environments, even within short walks, covering tracts of pristine alpine wilderness, buttongrass plains, rugged coastal environments, dry sclerophyll forest and lush temperate rainforest.

## What makes walking in Tasmania special

### WORLD HERITAGE STATUS

Declared by UNESCO in 1982, the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area encompasses about 1.5 million hectares in the island's south west, spanning about 20 per cent of Tasmania's land mass.

It protects natural and cultural heritage, rich biodiversity and ancient landscapes, and is one of only two World Heritage sites globally that meets seven of 10 natural and cultural selection criteria.

### ENVIRONMENTAL DIVERSITY AND QUALITY

Tasmania's ancient temperate forests, glacial lakes and tarns, secluded waterfalls, remote mountain ranges and immense dolerite coastal cliffs are the foundations of the Tasmanian walking experience.

### ACCESSIBLE REMOTENESS

The island's small size and the proximity of wilderness to the main gateways and urban centres of Hobart, Launceston and Devonport allow walkers to reach trackheads within a couple of hours of arrival, maximising their walking time during a trip.

### DIVERSITY OF WALKS

Walkers of all fitness levels and interests can explore Tasmania's wilderness on easy walks of less than four hours to challenging walks of more than 10 days, and on both guided and independent walks. Guided walks follow well-built tracks and some use high-quality accommodation offering creature comforts in rugged environments.

## FLORA AND FAUNA

Tasmania's biodiversity stems from its Gondwanan heritage, created when sea levels rose at the end of the last Ice Age some 12,000 years ago and separated the land from the rest of Australia. Walkers can traverse forests of giant *Eucalyptus regnans*, the world's tallest flowering plant, and hillsides coloured by fagus, Australia's only cold-climate deciduous tree, see emerald cushion plants at alpine altitudes and strappy pandani in cool temperate rainforests. A relatively large number of endemic species, found nowhere else on Earth, include Huon pine, King Billy pine, leatherwood, Tasmanian waratah and flowering scoparia plants, and animals such as the Tasmanian devil, eastern quoll, pademelon, bettong, long-tailed mouse, forty-spotted pardalote, green rosella and Tasmanian native hen. Lucky walkers might wander alongside wombats, hear the growls of an elusive Tasmanian devil or spot sea eagles and whales off the coast.

## CLIMATE AND SEASONS

A mild summer climate creates comfortable walking conditions when key Australian mainland destinations such as Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory are experiencing hot conditions. Autumn brings the turning of the fagus, lighting up highland hillsides with displays of gold and red as the deciduous beech prepares to drop its leaves. Alpine areas are blanketed in snow in winter, while spring heralds new growth and wildflowers.

## SOUTHERN LIGHTS

Tasmania is one of the few places in the world to witness the Aurora Australis, or the Southern Lights. The remoteness of Tasmania's walking experiences provide walkers with ample vantages to view billions of stars and a chance to look for the Southern Lights, free from the light pollution of cities.

## Plan to walk

### DAY WALKS SHORTER THAN FOUR HOURS

Short walking tracks are located across all regions of Tasmania. Tracks range from gentle to more physically challenging to suit a range of abilities and are popular with entry-level walkers, families and travellers seeking several experiences during a day. Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service's [60 Great Short Walks](#) include some of Tasmania's best day walks, including easily accessible and well-known tracks such as the Dove Lake Circuit at Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, Russell Falls at Mount Field National Park, and the Organ Pipes at kunanyi/Mount Wellington.

### DAY WALKS LONGER THAN FOUR HOURS

These options allow immersion in Tasmania's wild places without requiring walkers to carry overnight equipment. The collection of 60 Great Short Walks includes a range of longer tracks of varying lengths and degrees of difficulty. Popular options include Cape Raoul at Tasman National Park, Mount Rufus at Lake St Clair, Mount Strzelecki on Flinders Island, and the Hazards Beach Circuit at Freycinet National Park.

### MULTI-DAY WALKS

Tasmania is perhaps best known for its world-class multi-day walks. The remarkable range of tracks across the state, from steep climbs in alpine wilderness to rugged coastal routes, gives experienced, independent walkers plenty of reason to plan return trips. Some multi-day walks require pre-registration with Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service. Guided experiences, meanwhile, open up options for walkers with a range of abilities, typically requiring less equipment and few, if any, provisions to be carried. Five of the 13 guided walks within Tourism Australia's [Great Walks of Australia](#) collection are located in Tasmania: Cradle Mountain Huts Walk (Overland Track), Bay of Fires Lodge Walk, Freycinet Experience Walk, the Maria Island Walk, and Three Capes Lodge Walk. The majority of these walks and another four are included in the [Great Walks of Tasmania](#) portfolio of guided walks, highlighting the quality of Tasmania's walking experiences. The four-day, Aboriginal-owned and operated wukalina walk in the state's north east is the first major indigenous experience of its type in Tasmania, and provides walkers with an immersive cultural experience and insight into palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal) culture and history.

[Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service](#) has a broad range of walks categorised by region, duration and difficulty, as well as the latest safety advice and track information.

## Where to walk

### OVERLAND TRACK

Tasmania's best-known wilderness walk can be explored independently or on a guided trip. Spanning 65 kilometres of varied terrain through Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, the track traverses some of Tasmania's most impressive mountains and its tallest peak, Mount Ossa. The track generally takes five to seven days to complete and is open year-round. In winter, snow blankets the landscape and only very experienced walkers should tackle the track independently. The most popular time to walk is during the warmer months from October to May, when walking numbers are capped to protect the sensitive alpine environment. Bookings with Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service are essential for all walkers.

There is limited and basic hut accommodation along the track; independent walkers should be experienced and completely self-sufficient, carrying all provisions including a tent. Guided walks are operated by a number of private operators, including Tasmanian Expeditions, Trek Tasmania, Wilderness Expeditions and Tasmanian Walking Company; the latter offers overnight stays at private huts.

### THREE CAPES TRACK

Located on Tasman Peninsula in the state's south east, this 48-kilometre track spans Australia's highest sea cliffs, winding through coastal heath and eucalypt forest in Tasman National Park. Bookings with Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service are essential for all walkers. The experience starts at the Port Arthur Historic Site with a boat ride to the trackhead at Denmans Cove, and takes four days. Opened in 2015, the track has been built to dry-boot standard and is suitable for walking year-round. It features three environmentally-sensitive huts with cooking facilities, reducing the amount of equipment needed and opening up the track to people with a reasonable level of fitness but limited bushwalking experience. Walkers are required to stay in the huts and cannot pitch a tent. A private operator, Tasmanian Walking Company, operates the guided Three Capes Lodge Walk, a fully catered experience staying in exclusive lodges in the national park. Walkers on alternative guided experiences, such as Tasmanian Expeditions' Cape to Cape Tasman Peninsula walk, use the track for day walks and stay in cabins outside the national park.

### SOUTH COAST TRACK

Located in Southwest National Park on the southern edge of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, this is one of Australia's most remote and rugged walks. Flanked by the wild Southern Ocean, it spans 85 kilometres of coastal terrain between Melaleuca and Cockle Creek, and passes the island's southernmost point. The track can be walked in either direction, but walkers generally start at Melaleuca, accessible by light plane from Cambridge Airport near Hobart, and depart Cockle Creek by shuttle bus or car. The walk generally takes six to eight days and is suitable for self-sufficient, experienced walkers only. The unpredictable weather conditions, weather-dependency of flights and expanses of exposed track mean the warmer months are most popular. The walk can be done independently or as part of a guided experience offered by private operators including Tasmanian Expeditions, Trek Tasmania and Wilderness Expeditions.

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<https://www.discovertasmania.com.au/what-to-do/outdoors-and-adventure/walking>

## Travelling to walk

### SEASONS

Tasmania has four distinct seasons and walking is possible year-round in most locations. Weather conditions can change quickly and unexpectedly, and walkers should check the forecast before setting out. Alpine regions can experience snow at any time of year; good planning is essential and walkers should be prepared for all conditions.

### EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY

Planning and safety are critical considerations for any walk. Regardless of the length or location, it's essential to carry appropriate safety equipment, first aid and clothing when walking in Tasmania. Walkers should always carry a warm, windproof and waterproof jacket and wear sturdy, closed-toe footwear. [Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service](#) has useful safety tips, planning and pack lists.

### GETTING AROUND

A Tasmanian National Parks Pass is required to access all national parks and is available from [Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service](#). Holiday passes are a good option for walkers and are valid for two months. Passes are not required to access conservation areas or state forest reserves, although some require permission to enter.

### WALKING RESPONSIBLY

Tasmania's environment is sensitive and the [respectful walking principles](#) of leaving no trace and staying on formed tracks are essential to protect these special places. Camp only at designated sites and carry out all waste. Respect wildlife and never feed or touch animals or birds in Tasmania's wilderness areas.

## Competitive landscape

Tasmania's key international competitor for wilderness walking is New Zealand. It has similarly diverse, accessible and well-established walking networks and the advantage of direct flights from international markets and hut accommodation for large numbers of walkers. Other international competitors include the US, Canada, Spain, Japan, South America and the UK. In the domestic market, Tasmania's walking experiences are distinctive and have the unique advantages of environmental diversity and a comparably mild summer climate.

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