

Tasmanian Temptations



Hobart city marina

Need to get away from it all? It is a long flight, but the island state of Tasmania offers a perfect escape from the mundane.

Fresh produce abounds, boutique wineries offer top quality cool climate wines, world class fly fishing, golf and hiking are available and The Tasmanian World Heritage Area has a greater range of natural and cultural values than any other region on earth. Despite these drawcards, many visitors to Australia do not make the hop across Bass Strait to explore what may be Australia's best kept secret.

Tasmania sits approximately 150 miles off the southern coast of Australia, separated by Bass Strait. The state includes the island of Tasmania, the 26th largest island in the world, and the surrounding 334 islands. With a population close to 500,000 in an area roughly the same size as Wales, around half of whom live in the capital city, Hobart, uninhabited areas abound. More than one third of the island lies in reserves, national parks and World Heritage Wilderness Sites.

As the island has been volcanically inactive in recent geological times, the mountain ranges are rounded and smooth. Tasmania is the most mountainous state in Australia, with the most mountainous region being the Central Highlands, covering most of the central western parts of the state. The Midlands in the central east, is fairly flat, and is predominantly used for agriculture. Much of Tasmania is still densely forested, with the Southwest National Park and neighbouring areas holding some of the last temperate rainforests in the Southern Hemisphere. The Tarkine, in the far North West, is the largest temperate rainforest area in Australia covering approximately 1,500 square miles.

With this focus on the natural environment, it comes as no surprise that hiking is a popular pastime for both visitors and locals alike. Hikes range from easy day hikes, to the challenging 40 mile hike of

the Overland Track in the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park. The track winds through terrain ranging from sheer mountains, temperate rainforest, to wild rivers and alpine plains.

Other natural highlights include:

The Bay of Fires

The Bay of Fires Lodge Walk is a four day experience that incorporates outdoor activities with a luxury retreat. Discover breathtaking beaches along the East Coast of Tasmania traversing the wonderfully remote landscape of the Mount William National Park. This is one of the most pristine environments Tasmania has to offer, with soft sandy beaches, hidden coves, and the Ansons River, perfectly complemented by the uncomplicated luxury of the accommodation at Forester Beach Camp and the award winning Bay of Fires Lodge.

Wineglass Bay

Let your eyes follow the perfect curve where white sand meets turquoise waters and you will know why Wineglass Bay consistently rates among the

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top ten beaches in the world and is one of Tasmania's most iconic destinations. It is also a maximum reward, minimum effort hike, where a 45-minute uphill walk rewards you with breathtaking views at Wineglass Bay lookout and another half hour will see you on a squeaky white sand beach.



Also consider taking to the water on a scenic cruise where you might be lucky enough to witness dolphins diving or a pod of migrating whales in the incredibly clear waters.

Mt Field National Park

Around 40 miles from Hobart, Mt Field National Park has a wide variety of scenic features and wildlife and offers a great range of facilities for day visitors. Few other national parks in Australia offer such diversity in vegetation, ranging from tall swamp gum forests and massive tree ferns at the base of the mountain, through rainforest along the Lake Dobson Road, to alpine vegetation at the higher elevations.

If the great outdoors is something you prefer to enjoy from the comfort of your hotel room, interesting city

and historical sites include:

Port Arthur

Port Arthur is a small town and former convict settlement on the Tasman Peninsula, south of Hobart. It is one of Australia's most significant heritage areas and the open air museum is officially Tasmania's top tourist attraction. Visitors can either survey the site for themselves, or participate in guided tours, a harbour cruise, or an evening Historic Ghost Tour.

Museum of Old and New Art (MONA)

MONA is the newest tourist attraction in Tasmania and has attracted over 400,000 visitors from all over the world since opening in January 2011. The MONA museum and gallery houses one of the biggest private art collections in Australia built at a cost of over \$100 million. Be

warned that many of the exhibitions may not be suitable for children.

Strahan

Strahan is a small town and former port on the west coast. Originally a penal colony, it became a mining port and later an important timber industry and general shipping centre for the area. Strahan is now the main tourist centre for Tasmania's west coast region, the gateway for boats, planes and helicopters taking visitors to the southwest wilderness.

To combine the best of both worlds; the outdoor activities with city comforts, try:

The Hobart Paddle

The Hobart Paddle offers a different perspective of the beautiful harbour city. It is a two hour kayaking adventure that glides across the



waters of the Derwent Estuary, following Hobart's shoreline to explore the bustling docks of the city's waterfront. Work up an appetite in time to enjoy fish and chips straight from a dockside fish punt – you don't even have to leave your kayak.

Most importantly, while you circumnavigate the island, don't miss the culinary temptations. Tasmania is all about fresh local produce. Tempt the tastebuds on the East Coast with treats from Kate's Berry Farm, acclaimed for her truly outstanding cool climate berries and refreshing home-made berry ice-cream. Christmas Hills Raspberry Farm in central Tasmania is also a worthwhile berry stop. The chocolate coated raspberries are a decadent burst of flavour. For something savoury just down the road, Ashgrove



Cheese produces award winning, premium quality dairy products specialising in cheddar style cheeses. If you are looking for a unique experience try the Wild Wasabi Cheese.

Finally, no culinary experience of Tasmania is complete without seafood. Barilla Bay, close to the airport in Hobart, is one of Tasmania's leading suppliers of premium pacific oysters. The farm gate sells freshly opened or unopened oysters daily, while the restaurant serves superb fresh seafood overlooking the working Barilla Bay Oyster Farm and unique wetlands

Wash it down with a glass of wine from any one of the superb boutique wineries across the state. Whether it is from the Coal River Valley in the South or the central Tamar Valley, the cool climate wines are deliciously crisp and inviting.

Outdoor adventures, historical sites, natural beauty, wildlife and exceptional cuisine are all part of the Tasmanian adventure. It may be a long haul but it is worth the effort.



For more information:
www.discovertasmania.com
www.parks.tas.gov.au

Top Left: Wineglass Bay
 Inset: Cradle Mountain
 Top Right: Mt Field National Park
 Above: Tasmanian Devil