



TASMANIA

DAY 1:

Arrive Hobart (Friday) – Henry Jones Art Hotel

Pick up your car at Hobart Airport and within barely a kilometre, enjoy a salty taste of what's to come. That's right, Barilla Bay has fresh-from-the-water oysters at the ready.

Check into your Henry Jones Art Hotel Hobart accommodation for the next three nights. Come afternoon, hit the water on a cruise to Iron Pot with Pennicott Wilderness Journeys and hear about Australia's oldest lighthouse. The boat leaves at 2pm sharp from the waterfront and runs for 2.5 hours.

Feel like relaxing now? Sink into a comfy chair at Salamanca's Nant Distillery or the Lark Distillery on Davey Street to enjoy a heart-warming whisky. Just nearby, head across to Frank for a South American-style dining experience.

DAY 2:

Hobart – Salamanca Markets and Mona

Grab an early breakfast at Tricycle Café and Bar in Salamanca. This hole in the wall is right beside Bruny Island Cheese Company's Hobart cellar door. As today is Saturday don't miss the colours and flavours of Salamanca Market, Australia's largest outdoor market.

From here, either zip straight out to Mona, Museum of Old and New Art, in your hired wheels or opt for a cruisy mode of transport to David Walsh's underground playground of antiquities and modern art – aboard the MR-1 Fast Ferry from Hobart's waterfront. Venture back to Hobart on one of the later ferries. Walk off into the heart of Hobart's lively waterfront and it'll be hard to choose a dining venue elsewhere.

DAY 3:

Bruny Island – Hobart

Rise early to catch the ferry across to Bruny Island. Take the half-day Bruny Island Cruise or discover Bruny at your own pace. Get your fill at the Bruny Island Cheese Company and Get Shucked Oysters then work it off by climbing up The Neck Lookout steps.

It's difficult to squeeze lots of Bruny into a single day. Keep an eye out for albino wallabies, learn of the whaling past or sip a glass at Australia's southern-most vineyard – Bruny Island Premium Wines Bar and Grill. Just remember you have to catch a ferry and return to Hobart

by the end of the day!

DAY 4:

Port Arthur – Stewarts Bay Lodge

There is so much to see on the Tasman Peninsula that it's hard to pack it into one day. On the way down to Port Arthur, pop into Bangor Wine and Oyster Shed.

Further down the highway, pull over to see nature's special show including the Tessellated Pavement, Devil's Kitchen and Tasman's Arch. You might also spot the Doo-lishus food van in these parts – usually parked at Pirates Bay Blowhole and a great lunch stop.

Check into your Stewart's Bay Lodge Port Arthur accommodation.

On arrival at Port Arthur, take your time exploring Australia's most intact and evocative historic site.

When evening casts its shadow across the grounds, join the lantern-lit ghost tour for a whole new chilling experience.

DAY 5:

Port Arthur – Coles Bay – Freycinet Lodge

Today, travel from Port Arthur to Freycinet Peninsula. The drive itself is an experience; oodles of stories and staggering natural beauty around the bends. You'll be driving a good part of the Great Eastern Drive – that stretches between Orford and St Helens. Have your camera at the ready.

Drop into Swansea for a bite to eat. Kate's Berry Farm is hard to resist, with its delicious berry crepes and views across Great Oyster Bay. Alternately, head to Cranbrook where Spring Vale Vineyard is highly regarded for their Pinot Noir. After the liquid or dessert refuel, head straight for Freycinet Peninsula.

Check into your Freycinet Lodge accommodation for the next two nights.

This evening, dine at The Bay Restaurant within Freycinet Lodge – where perhaps you'll be tempted by seafood again, or Cape Grim Eye Fillet.

DAY 6:

Wineglass Bay Cruise

By now the stunning vistas of the Freycinet National Park are just begging to be explored. And there's no better way to see the coastal national park than on a morning trip with Wineglass Bay Cruises.

You'll journey through crystal clear waters, perhaps meeting some of the local dolphins and whales on your way while admiring the magnificent views before arriving at world famous Wineglass Bay – nothing will prepare you for this breathtaking and memorable moment.

DAY 7:

Coles Bay – Scottsdale – Launceston – Peppers Seaport

This morning hit the road inland towards Launceston. After skirting Elephant Pass you'll arrive in the township of St Marys, where you can visit the affable Ian Summers as he

potters around his shop Cranks & Tinkerers. It's open on a roster of odd hours, but if Ian's home you can stop by for a chat or one of his impromptu country banjo performances. If you feel like a nibble at this point, swing by the Purple Possum Wholefoods and Café for some healthy wholefood fare. Then drive further inland for dessert at The Tasmanian Honey Company in Perth.

Check into your Peppers Seaport Launceston accommodation for the next two nights. Stillwater on the Tamar River is your destination for tonight's dining. Book ahead for your late dinner if you like the idea of a six course degustation menu with local wines and river views to match.

DAY 8:

Launceston – Tamar Valley Wine Route – Hollybank Treetop Adventures

To begin your day in adventurous style, fly through the canopy of a Eucalypt forest. At Hollybank Treetops Adventure, zip line your way between cloud stations. If heights aren't your thing, a space-age Segway ride along the forest floor trails might appeal.

If wild rides don't take your fancy, the Josef Chromy winery in Relbia takes life at a more relaxed pace. Stay for an à la carte lunch overlooking the 60-hectare vineyard. Finish your day by the river at Mudbar and Restaurant at Seaport for a casual dinner or next door for fish and chips – the fat boy chips are delicious.

DAY 9:

Cradle Mountain – Peppers Cradle Mountain Lodge

Take the drive from Launceston to Cradle Mountain that weaves through the upper Meander Valley. That way you can stop at Mole Creek Karst National Park for some glow-worm action at Marakoopa and King Solomon caves. Stop in at the local Mole Creek Hotel for a hearty lunch.

A sweet stop along the way is Chudleigh Honey Farm with honey bee products like royal jelly, pollen and cute giftware. Continue on to Cradle Mountain to arrive in plenty of daylight.

Check into your Peppers Cradle Mountain Lodge accommodation for the next two nights. Don't be late for dinner – the Tasmanian devils at Devils@Cradle will be ready to dine right at 5.30pm. This rare opportunity to watch locals gather for mealtime can be combined with your own plate. That's right, book early if you'd like a behind the scenes tour followed up by roasted marshmallows beneath the stars and two courses at the Highland Restaurant.

DAY 10:

Cradle Mountain

Fuel up on breakfast, because today is about stepping into the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park. Make sure you have plenty of layers. Cradle Mountain is the master of sky-blue weather one minute, and a disappearing mountain peak the next. Choose your adventure and hit the trail.

The Dove Lake Circuit is a six-kilometre sojourn that leads through the Ballroom Forest with its ancient myrtles and continues beneath the crags of Cradle Mountain and Little Horn.

For those who are up for a real adventure choose to spend the day with the guys at Cradle Mountain Canyons. Climb, jump, abseil and swim through Cradle Mountain's ancient canyons. Call ahead for availability.

DAY 11:

Strahan – Risby Cove

Tasmania's rugged west coast beckons today. Before heading off, enjoy a hearty breakfast, then hit the road for Strahan via mining towns Roseberry and Zeehan. Stop in at Zeehan, once Tasmania's third largest town. It was also called 'Silver City' in the late nineteenth century – and a visit to the West Coast Heritage Centre takes you through this mining history.

Head out to the Spray Tunnel, a 100-metre-long train tunnel once used to transport ore from the Spray Silver Mine. Take a look at the grandly restored Gaiety Theatre before leaving town, rumoured to have hosted Dame Nellie Melba, Australia's first opera star. Lunch is at Mid'L Café.

Check into your Risby Cove Strahan accommodation for the next two nights.

Come dinner, enjoy freshly caught mussels or a pub-style steak at Hamers Hotel Bar and Grill along the waterfront.

DAY 12:

Gordon River Cruise

Hop aboard the Lady Jane Franklin II for the Gordon River Cruise, departing at 8.30am this morning. Your atrium seating includes lunch and returns to dry land 5.5 hours later. Cross Macquarie Harbour (six times the size of Sydney Harbour) and gain a sense of the Southern Ocean's power at Hells Gate before venturing up the Gordon River. Here, ancient forest tumbles down to the river's edge where it meets glass-like reflections. The cruise includes river stops where you're invited to explore on foot. Be back in Strahan with plenty of time to enjoy The Ship That Never Was performance at 5.30pm depicting a true story of convicts hijacking a vessel built on Sarah Island. If you're in the front row, don't be surprised if you become part of the cast.

Tonight, enjoy á la carte dining by the water's edge at Risby Cove. Freshly caught seafood is a must!

DAY 13:

Strahan – Lake St Clair – Pumphouse Point

On your way to Lake St Clair, stop in at the old mining town of Queenstown. Have a look at the unusual pink and grey hues on the mountains. Marvel at the heritage listed gravel football field (and imagine the pain of playing on it). Take an above ground tour of the old Mount Lyell Mine or grab a coffee at Tracks Café and if you're in town on a Thursday, listen out for the lone bagpiper on the main street.

Once back in the car, head to Derwent Bridge to visit the Wall in the Wilderness. Local artist Greg Duncan is carving his way through the Central Highland's history with 100 metres of rare Huon pine as his canvas. And if you have time and are feeling peckish, stop in at the Derwent Bridge Hotel for a quick bite.

Check into your Pumphouse Point Lake St Clair accommodation.

DAY 14:

Lake St Clair – Mt Field NP (Russell Falls) – Hobart

Set out to Mount Field National Park for an easy walk to one of Tassie's most loved waterfalls – Russell Falls. Or tilt your head skyward on the Tall Trees Walk, where some of Tasmania's tallest swamp gums tower, on a 30 minute circuit walk.

Continue along to Redlands Estate later in the morning, Australia's only paddock-to-bottle distillery. Enjoy a tasting in the 'Whisky Stable' and explore the grounds on a tour.

Drop into New Norfolk for lunch at the Cheeky Little Place or Patchwork Café. This town is a haven for antique hunters, so have a poke through stores dotted around town. If you're passing through Granton before closing time of 4pm, make Stefano Lubiana vineyard your final stop for the day.

Check into your Islington Hotel Hobart accommodation.

Once back in Hobart head underground for a cocktail at Ash and Bester's at 100 Elizabeth Street, surfacing for a six course set menu at Ethos Eat Drink just above for your final dinner in Tasmania.

DAY 15:

Depart Hobart

Spend your final day exploring Hobart. Wander down the sandstone warehouses of Salamanca Place - there are galleries, artist studios and shops specialising in local product, so it's a great place to pick up some handcrafted wares. Wander up Kelly's Steps and into the historic village of Battery Point, making sure you're in South Hobart by midday. The Cascade Female Factory's delivery of 'Her Story' is best described as a 45 minute roaming theatre show. After your dip into the past, drive up to the pinnacle of kunanyi / Mount Wellington for a dose of fresh air before lunch. Views across the capital and River Derwent are impressive at 1271 metres.

Leave plenty of time to get back to Hobart Airport and bid farewell to 15 wonderful Tasmanian days.