

Tasmania's Best with Maria and Bruny Islands

Departs 18th
February 2023

Blue Dot Travel

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TASMANIA'S BEST WITH MARIA AND BRUNY ISLANDS

The island of Tasmania is renowned for its pristine wilderness, abundant wildlife, gourmet food, convict history and wonderful walks. We'll share the best of all of these with you.

Our tour begins in Hobart, at the foothills of Mt Wellington, a city which offers a contrasting blend of heritage, scenery and culture, with world class attractions nearby. We'll explore Salamanca Place, a short walk from the waterfront, with its galleries, theatres, craft shops and restaurants in 1830s Georgian warehouses and enjoy the food and entertainment of Salamanca Market, Australia's best outdoor market.

The Museum of Old and New Art – or MONA – is one of Australia's biggest private galleries. Described by its owner as a "subversive adult Disneyland", the unique collection includes some of the world's most thought-provoking and innovative contemporary art.

Visit iconic Cradle Mountain National Park and walk amongst ancient rainforests, glacial lakes and rugged mountains. Travel to the edge of the Tarkine wilderness and spend a full day cruising the remote Arthur River. Marvel at the rocky granite peaks, abundant wildlife and pristine waters of Freycinet National Park. Leave civilisation behind on secluded Maria Island, where visitors are limited by the National Park. Explore the UNESCO listed Port Arthur historic site, then eat your way across beautiful Bruny Island.

Throughout your journey you'll be taking in the fresh clean air and walking through the iconic landscapes Tasmania is known for, as well as indulging in carefully selected meals that focus on top-quality seasonal produce and local wines.



**Day 1, Saturday 18th February
HOBART**

Welcome to Hobart, Tasmania's charming capital which is just the right mix of laid back and lively. A

group arrival transfer is available for those arriving before 12pm, otherwise, it is an easy taxi ride to our starting hotel, MacQ1 Hotel. For those who arrive early the wonderful Salamanca markets run from 9am to 3pm; the perfect spot to browse local art and enjoy the vibrant outdoor atmosphere. From the hotel, it's a leisurely walk along colonial streets to the city centre, where we'll enjoy a guided tour focussing on the history and people of Hobart. We'll have time to freshen up before dinner at a local restaurant, enjoying the fresh local cuisine Tasmania is known for. *D*

**Day 2, Sunday 19th February
HOBART SURROUNDS**

Hailed as the most important addition to the Australian cultural landscape since the opening of the Sydney Opera House, MONA has shaken up the art world and got everyone talking. After breakfast, we'll travel to MONA along the Derwent River and spend the morning exploring this quirky

and unique museum. We'll meet for lunch at one of Hobart's many excellent restaurants. In the afternoon we'll visit Mount Field National Park, part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area. It is home to the spectacular three-tiered Russel Falls, set amidst glaciated landscapes. We'll enjoy a moderate walk through the park before returning to Hobart where there'll be free time to head out for a wander or grab a bite to eat at your leisure. *B/L*

**Day 3, Monday 20th February
HOBART – CRADLE MOUNTAIN**

After breakfast, we'll drive to Cradle Mountain, meandering through farming areas and historic towns, before turning inland and climbing onto the Alpine Plateau. Tasmania is increasingly making its mark on the Whisky scene and we'll stop en route at a historic distillery for a Whisky & Gin talk and tasting. As we reach the edge of the National Park, we'll stop for a walk around Cynthia Bay, providing panoramic views across Lake Sinclair towards Mount Olympic. The 4.7km walk is a scenic introduction to the surrounding area, and if you're lucky, you may just spot a shy platypus at Platypus bay. We'll arrive at the exceptional Lemonthyme Lodge in the afternoon, where we will spend the next two nights. The lodge is a collection of beautifully handcrafted pine cabins set amidst the Cradle Mountain wilderness; the perfect place to

cosy up and enjoy the alpine surroundings. We'll enjoy dinner together at the lodge tonight. *B/D*



Day 4, Tuesday 21st February
CRADLE MOUNTAIN

Cradle Mountain is a hiker's paradise, and part of the World Heritage-listed Tasmanian Wilderness area. Today we'll experience the beauty of Tasmania's wilderness first hand with a guided hike through the area. With cascading rivers, alpine heaths and dense, old-growth rainforest, it's truly a pristine place. The hike will take approx 3 hours and requires an adequate level of fitness; for those who choose not to hike, there are many short, accessible walks throughout the park. On our way back we'll visit the Tasmanian devil sanctuary. This is a breeding and conservation facility for three of Tasmania's unique threatened carnivorous marsupials; the Tasmanian devil, the Spotted-tailed Quoll, and Eastern Quoll. After immersing ourselves in the raw beauty of the area, we'll return to the comfort of our lodge with time to relax and enjoy this special place. *B/D*



Day 5, Wednesday 22nd February
CRADLE MOUNTAIN — SMITHTON

This morning we'll travel towards the rugged Northwest tip of Tasmania. Our first stop is the historic Table Cape Lighthouse, established by the Van Dieman's Land Company in the 1820's, and set on a sheer cliff edge surrounded by scenic farmlands. We'll continue to the town of Stanley, which is nestled at the base of "The Nut", a sheer-sided bluff that is the remains of an ancient volcanic plug. We'll ride the chairlift to the summit of the Nut, which provides spectacular views across Bass Strait beaches and over the town. We'll arrive in the afternoon to the town of Smithton, the last stop before Arthur River – and the beginning of the untamed Tarkine wilderness. We'll enjoy dinner at our hotel, which is situated amidst rolling rural landscapes. *B/D*

Day 6, Thursday 23rd February
ARTHUR RIVER

Surrounded by dense rainforest and named after the wild river that runs from the mountains to the sea, Arthur River is one of the last truly "wild rivers" of Australia. It passes through the Tarkine wilderness area, the second-largest expanse of cool temperate rainforest in the world. Its wonder can only be appreciated from the water and we'll spend the day cruising down the river, a truly Tasmanian experience. The rainforest is home to an astounding array of flora including myrtles, sassafras, celery-top pine, laurels, blackwoods, and giant tree ferns. As we're cruising along, you'll see the lush greenery of Tasmania reflected in the still tea-coloured waters. An abundance of birdlife can be heard and seen in this part of Tasmania, including the Azure Kingfishers, white-bellied Sea

Eagles and there has even been the occasional sighting of platypus in their own habitat. We'll return from our cruise in the afternoon with time to freshen up before meeting for dinner at our hotel. *B/L/D*

Day 7, Friday 24th February
SMITHTON — LAUNCESTON

We'll travel back down the coastline towards Launceston this morning. We'll stop en-route for morning tea at the Hellyers Road Distillery, which offers views of the rolling landscapes and the picturesque Emu Valley - and a tasty drop of course. This part of Tasmania is known for its beautiful farmlands and premier cool-climate wines, and our lunch today is the culmination of both these things. We'll visit the family run Ghost Rock Wine Estate for a paddock to plate lunch experience and wine tasting amongst the rolling patchwork of surrounding hills. In the late afternoon, we'll arrive in Launceston, one of Australia's oldest cities filled with beautifully maintained Georgian and Victorian buildings. We'll be staying at the unique Peppers Silo hotel, which brings history alive on the banks of the idyllic Tamar River. Dating back to the 1960's, the heritage building which used to contain grain in four huge silos, has been converted into a hotel and a unique place to stay. Your evening is free, and we recommend dinner at one of the many great restaurants along Launceston's nearby seaport. *B/L*



Day 8, Saturday
25th February
LAUNCESTON

Cataract Gorge is a touch of wilderness just outside the city, and this morning we'll enjoy a gentle walk through the area.



We'll be joined by a local aboriginal elder for a unique Welcome to Country before beginning our walk. Our path leads us past towering rocks and tumbling waters to centuries-old trees, where friendly peacocks showcase their beautiful tails. We'll return to Launceston for lunch at your leisure, before meeting in the afternoon for a walk around the city. Launceston is renowned for its lovingly restored colonial and Victorian buildings, and the best way to explore them is on foot. After our walk you can relax in the City Park, dotted with old elms and oaks or visit the excellent Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery. We'll share dinner at our hotel tonight. *B/D*



Day 9, Sunday 26th February
LAUNCESTON - FREYCINET NP - TRIBUNNA

We have a scenic day of travel ahead, taking us from the farmlands surrounding Launceston to the pristine East Coast. We'll arrive at Coles Bay after

lunch, where pink granite mountains rise straight from the sea to form a magnificent sheltered



waterway. Wineglass Bay's iconic shape and breathtakingly blue waters are world-renowned, and to get the best view of its white sandy beach, we'll be walking the Wine

Glass Bay Lookout track. This is a short walk but does involve some steep sections, so adequate fitness is required, and the views at the top are not to be missed. After our walk, we'll get away from the crowds in the tiny township of Triabunna, a beautiful waterfront location looking out towards Maria Island. We'll enjoy a dinner featuring fresh seafood from the surrounding waters as the sun sets across the water. **B/D**



Day 10, Monday 27th February
MARIA ISLAND

Maria Island is the sort of place that gives Tasmania its reputation as remote, untouched and pristine. The entire island is a National Park, and you certainly get the feeling that humans are secondary here. We'll take a short 30 minute ferry ride to reach the island, where our day will be spent exploring the island on foot. There are no roads, shops or places to charge your devices - which we think is a drawback - but you will need to come prepared. The island is rich in indigenous and European history and the Darlington Probation Station; a World Heritage Australian Convict Site; feels like a ghost town now. A former limestone



quarry at the Fossil Cliffs provides a fascinating close-up look at the many ancient creatures immortalised as fossils in the rocks. The Painted Cliffs at Hopground Beach are beautifully

patterned sandstone shaped by the mineral-rich water and wind. Plentiful wombats can be seen around the island, as well as pademelons, Forester Kangaroos, Bennetts wallabies and Tasmanian Devils. Maria Island is also one of Tasmania's great bird watching hot spots. All this, set against a backdrop of long sandy beaches, turquoise water and mountaintop vistas. After our day on this tranquil island, we'll return by ferry to Tribunna where we'll have dinner at our hotel. **B/L/D**



Day 11, Tuesday 28th February
TRIABUNNA - PORT ARTHUR - HOBART

After breakfast, we'll travel to UNESCO listed Port Arthur, one of Australia's most significant heritage

areas and an open air museum. We'll be taken on a guided tour of the site which has more than 30 buildings, ruins and restored period homes dating from the prison's establishment in 1830 until its closure in 1877. During its operation as many as 12,500 convicts served sentences and their stories are both fascinating and appalling. Our visit includes a walking tour of the "isle of the dead", Port Arthur's tiny cemetery island and the final resting place for more than 1000



convicts, military and civil officers, women and children. We'll continue towards Hobart in the afternoon, stopping en-route at the unusual geological formations known as "Devils Kitchen". On arrival to Hobart there'll be time to freshen up before heading out for dinner. **B/D**

Day 12, Wednesday 1st March
BRUNY ISLAND

Today we will taste our way across Bruny Island, visiting several excellent artisan producers, whilst taking in the spectacular scenery of this stunning island 45 minutes south of Hobart. We'll meet and hear the stories of producers from the island's two specialties: cheese and chocolate. Then dine on freshly shucked oysters at our lunch spot which provides sweeping views of Adventure Bay. We'll need a couple of walks to make room for the rest of our day, enjoying a gentle rainforest walk in search of white wallabies and a coastal walk where towering cliffs overlook long sandy beaches. Now that we've earned it, it's time to enjoy handcrafted whisky, locally made fudge and regional honey before we hit the water again. The coastline of this island is wild and rugged, with soaring cliffs and craggy rock formations. It is also abundant with marine life including a huge colony of fur seals, dolphins and albatross. We'll sail back towards Hobart arriving late in the afternoon for our final night in this charming city. **B/L**

Day 13, Thursday 2nd March
HOBART

Our tour concludes after breakfast today, with a group airport transfer scheduled for flights leaving before 1pm. If you choose a later flight home, it's an easy taxi ride to the airport and gives you an afternoon to explore charming Hobart further. **B**



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required; eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required; eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.