



Great Nature Trail

This journey takes you from the abundant wildlife of Narawntapu National Park along a spectacular coastline to the wild and remote far North-West coast. You'll discover penguin rookeries, seal colonies, and platypuses in streams. See the Dismal Swamp Maze in a sunken Blackwood Forest. The historic village of Stanley and the dramatic landform of the Nut are also journey highlights. Detours inland offer a different perspective on the Great Nature Trail: a loop road from Ulverstone and Penguin introduces you to wildlife, spectacular canyons and caves, while farther west are tumbling waterfalls, forest walks and reserves.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

DAY 1

Start your journey at Narawntapu National Park just east of Devonport, where Forester kangaroos, wallabies, wombats and pademelons graze unconcerned by your presence. In peak season, you can join a variety of popular activities arranged by the Summer Ranger Program, while at other times a guided tour from Devonport is an enjoyable way to

Boat Harbour Vista



Viewing platform at Narawntapu National Park learn about the park and its animals.

Across the Rubicon estuary from the park is Port Sorell, with its distinctive, attractive beach and laid-back lifestyle. Join the locals on a relaxed walk along the foreshore after a meal of local food and wine. Devonport, too, has casual eateries and a great network of walking trails on both sides of the Mersey River. Walk or hire a bike to visit the Imaginarium Science Centre, Devonport Maritime Museum, Tiagarra Aboriginal Culture Centre and the Don River Railway, all accessible from the track network.

If you are looking for excitement without the pain of extreme adventure, an inflatable-canoe trip on the Mersey or Forth rivers may fit the bill. For something more sedate, perhaps wander among the 1,900 trees and shrubs of the Tasmanian Arboretum at Eugenana. Identify native species and see first-hand how exotic plants adjust to Tasmanian conditions.



The original highway between Devonport and Burnie is a scenic coastal drive that passes through the fascinating small towns of Ulverstone and Penguin. As the name of the latter suggests, evening penguin tours are a great favourite with visitors. The Sunday Penguin School Market is popular with people en route to destinations farther west. If you're already in Burnie, consider catching the market train to this attraction.



The Nut at Stanley

Farther west is Wynyard, famous for its 10-day Bloomin' Tulips festival celebrating the October flowering of the tulips that are grown commercially in the area. Wynyard's defining landmark is the massive Table Cape, a cliff-top patchwork of rich soils and colourful crops high above Bass Strait. While visiting the town, test your golf stroke on one of the two picturesque courses, wander along the Inglis River or search for fossils at Fossil Bluff.

DAY 2

The 'Caves and Canyon' detour inland from Ulverstone or Penguin is diverse and rewarding. The road takes you first through Gunns Plains, the idyllic setting for Gunns Plains Caves and Wings Farm wildlife park, featuring native Tasmanian wildlife, a reptile park and an extensive range of domestic farm animals. Hop-growing and viticulture thrive in the fertile soil of the plains, but farther inland the landscape changes, revealing the spectacular Leven Canyon and Black Bluff, with a number of walking tracks and opportunities for wild-cave experiences.

Back on the coast, a host of wildlife has colonised urban areas of the industrial port town of Burnie. Take an evening guided or self-guided tour to view penguins and platypuses. On the town's doorstep, for example, is Fern Glade, the natural habitat of a number of platypus families you can readily see most days. Early mornings and evenings are the best viewing times.

Table Cape Tulips

The North-West Coast is the only place in the world where you can see the Giant Freshwater Crayfish. View them in their natural habitat on a guided tour or visit the only licensed 'lobster' park, just out of town at Flowerdale.

Boat Harbour and Sisters Beach are picture-postcard locations, the latter providing access to Rocky Cape National Park, where you can take great walks to view Aboriginal sites, unique flora and the unusual geology of the area.

DAY 3

Stanley, a historic fishing village dominated by an unusual landform known as the 'Nut', is the destination for most people travelling along the Great Nature Trail.

Relive the past with a guided walking tour of the village or a visit to Highfield House, the imposing former residence of the General Manager of the Van





Stanley Seal Tours

Diemens Land Company. Evening ghost tours recount the stories and hardships of the families who lived and worked on the property.

During your stay, take a short cruise to a local Australian fur seal colony, visit platypuses at twilight by four wheel drive, or take an evening tour to little penguin and short tailed shearwater rookeries.

West of Stanley is the recently completed Dismal Swamp Visitor Centre and Maze, offering visitors an exciting new experience. Take a slide onto the forest floor, explore a maze that tells the story of this unique environment and the wood that it produces, or relax in the interpretive centre and dine on local produce.

Farther west, near the settlement of Arthur River, is the 'Edge of the World', so christened by locals because from here the open ocean extends all the way to Argentina. On the Arthur River itself, rainforest reflections rival those of the famed Gordon River, and during a cruise you are almost certain to catch sight of sea eagles soaring overhead. If you're feeling adventurous, hire a canoe or rowing boat and drift quietly along the river keeping an eye out for platypuses and other wildlife.

On your way back to Stanley, consider taking the unsealed road through the South Arthur Forest, a working forest that contains a number of forest reserves.

DAY 4

If you decide to stay on the North-West Coast for a fourth day, visit Woolnorth and Cape Grim, the westernmost point on the mainland of Tasmania. Woolnorth is a working farm that still operates under its original charter granted to the Van Diemens Land Company in the early 1800s.

Day Tours available from Stanley or Smithton also take in the Woolnorth Wind Farm.

Connections from Great Nature Trail

From Devonport to Cradle Country Touring Route
- Via Formby Rd & Mersey Main Rd

From Narawntapu to Tamar Valley Touring Route
- Via Frankford Highway

From Somerset/Wynyard to West Coast
Wilderness Way

- Via Murchison Highway

From Arthur River to West Coast Wilderness Way
- Via the Western Explorer

Dismal Swamp Visitor Centre

