

# Devilishly Wild



Bruny Island



Northern Tasmania



Tasmanian Devil

*Next to the enormous landmass of the Australian mainland, Tasmania is perhaps not considered a priority when exploring this vast and diverse country, but with an abundance of wildlife and easily accessible national parks, Australia's small island state is here to remind us that small is very, very beautiful as Jenny Bouquet discovered.*

Located off the south coast of Victoria, a flight to Tasmania is less than two hours from Sydney or Adelaide and half that time from Melbourne, making this beautiful state easy to include in any itinerary. Alongside regular air connections, for those conscious of their carbon footprint the Spirit of Tasmania is an acting member of the Greenhouse Challenge Plus, and runs regular overnight ferries between Melbourne and Devonport on Tasmania's north coast.

Despite providing easy access for visitors, wildlife enthusiasts should be appreciative of the Bass Strait, which not only separates the island from the mainland but, more significantly, has allowed its local flora and fauna to flourish without the threat of non-endemic predators. Fortunately, foxes are unable to navigate either Qantas flight or overnight ferry and Tasmania remains a veritable wildlife haven: both easily accessible and able to be witnessed in a variety of fashions.

There is no better place to begin your journey to Tasmania than the picturesque city of Hobart, located in the south of the island. If you only have a short time on your trip, you will be able to sample many of the things that the island is famous for from this small capital city: history,

fine wine, delicious food and varied wildlife. A short drive to the south of Hobart and it is just a fifteen minute ferry journey to the beautiful Bruny Island. Home to around 600 people and around 8,000 fur seals, Bruny Island teems with both wildlife and stunning landscapes and over half of the island is designated National Park and State Reserve. The island's rainforests include rare plant species and a huge variety of birdlife – 141 species at last count and including half the world's population of the endangered forty-spotted pardalotes. Meanwhile the rolling hills and pastureland are great for spotting, amongst others, Bennetts wallabies and spotted quolls. Taking to the water, a cruise with Bruny Island Charters reveals the rugged and unusual geology of the towering cliffs, stacks and blowholes of the southern part of the island and gives you another wildlife spotting opportunity. Albatross skim the water's surface with precision; the abundant seal population sprawl out lazily on the lower cliffs and rocks, occasionally getting up to tussle for more real-estate with their neighbours. The real stars of the show are the dolphins, who playfully swim alongside your boat, riding the waves and keeping you company as you weave between the rugged cliffs.

Tasmania is a walker's paradise and Maria Island is home to one of the most outstanding trails that the state has to offer, which helps combine the island's immense biodiversity with equal measures of wildlife. Cars are a rare sighting on the island and the best way to take in its highlights is definitely by foot, either as a day trip whilst staying on the east coast or as a four day walking tour out of Hobart, complete with expert guides and two delightful travelling companions – Tasmanian food and Tasmanian wine. Whilst it is not uncommon to be welcomed off your ferry by a local wombat or forrester kangaroo, a four-day walk will allow you to take in the multitude of wildlife on offer on the island, with the diversity of the terrain, ranging from beach, pasture and forest, only surpassed by the locals that greet you as you walk. These include the rare bandicoots, pademelons, echidnas and blue tongue lizards. It is perhaps for its birdlife that Maria Island is most widely known, and with over 130 recorded species found on the island, including the rare Cape Barren Goose, which grazes on the extensive pastures of the island. Maria Island is definitely a walker's and ornithologist's dream destination.



Kangaroo, Maria Island



Albatross



Cradle Mountain National Park



Cradle Mountain National Park



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More wildlife of Tasmania and suggested itineraries

**FACT FILE**

A two week trip to Australia including ten days visiting Tasmania's natural highlights and a four day all-inclusive guided walk on Maria Island starts from £3,100 per person. For further details please contact our Tasmania specialists on 01993 838 800.



A must see on any touring trip around Tasmania is the well known Cradle Mountain National Park, located near the centre of the island. This region is widely regarded for the famous 'Cradle Huts' walk, a six-day trek which winds a stunning path from Cradle Mountain to the turquoise waters of Lake St Claire, but for those with less time (or energy perhaps) you do not have to stray too far from Cradle Mountain to enjoy the wonderful Tasmanian scenery and wildlife. A range of shorter walks spider throughout the Cradle Mountain National Park, most notably the Dove Lake Circuit Walk, which skirts the edge of this shimmering lake through forests and native mountain flora and provides stunning views of the famous mountain. Guided nature walks will introduce you to the local wildlife and help you spot echidnas in the summer months, often found rummaging in the evening and at first light, platypus, which become more active in the months of spring. Wombats, wallabies, possums and quolls can also be spotted throughout the year, often close to your accommodation. The undisputed wildlife draw-card of the region is the shy Tasmanian Devil. Tassie Devils, as they are affectionately known, are quite elusive in the wild but a trip to the Devils@Cradle conservation centre will not only give you the chance to learn more about these threatened creatures but also enable you to see them up close.

The last stop on many people's tours to Tasmania is the state's second city, Launceston, which is located in the north of the island. Launceston is the perfect place to round out your wildlife exploration in Tasmania and team up with local expert Craig Williams from Pepperbush Adventures, who will take you off-the-beaten path and give you a fantastic insight into the local flora and fauna. Your journey will zig-zag across Launceston's surrounding regions, rarely touching on sealed roads and stopping for explanations on the local bushland and for walks through old growth forest which contains some of the tallest trees in the world. Day trips with Craig are completely tailored to your interests, although there is a good chance that the day will end with your feet up at his beautiful acreage, Craig cooking course after course of gourmet 'bushtucker', a glass of fine Tasmanian wine in hand and trying to adjust your eyes as the sun sets and countless kangaroos, quolls, wombats, pademelons and, if you are lucky, Tasmanian devils come out and join you.

**Jenny Bouquet**  
Australia & Tasmania Specialist