

DISCOVER AUSTRALIAN ISLANDS: TASMANIA

Hiking

beautiful

GETTING AMONGST THE TASMANIAN WILDERNESS DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO ROUGH IT. ENJOY A THREE-DAY HIKE OF BRUNY ISLAND WITH ALL THE CREATURE COMFORTS.

Bruny

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Fluted Cape Walk.

“Sounds like someone throwing up, doesn't it?” jokes our guide as we're welcomed to Bruny Island by the unpleasant gurgle of a Tasmanian wattle bird.

Enjoying diverse flora and fauna and sampling local produce (while also working it off) are key elements of our three-day island tour 85km south of Hobart, with Mark Norek from Life's An Adventure as our guide.

The first 30 minutes of our day one walk to Cape Queen Elizabeth — Bruny's easternmost point — involves trekking through a dense eucalypt forest and tea tree shrubs before the Tasman Sea appears ahead. Crossing Neck Beach, the wind throws sand in our faces as it races by at 50km per hour, but the discomfort is momentary, due to towering siltstone rocks acting as a windshield along the shore.

It's high tide so we take an elevated path across the arched rock of Mars Bluff to the cape; eye-level with a wedge-tailed eagle circling the beach below.

At the summit a clump of trees provides shelter for a picnic lunch of wraps, cheddar and smoked salmon. Across the 101-metre deep crevasse, Mark points out the route of the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race around Cape Direction, then checks the tide for our return journey.

We take the seaside track back to the van as the ocean recedes. We pile in for a stop at 'Get Shucked' cafe for fresh oysters before being taken to the domed 43 Degrees eco-cabin, where our bags await.

Although Bruny's hiking paths traverse rugged terrain, there's nothing rugged about our nightly accommodation overlooking Adventure Bay. With toasty heaters and beds that feel like clouds after five solid hours on our feet, sleep is immediate.

The next morning the smell of bacon and buttery croissants wafts through the cabin as Mark lays a spread of locally sourced pastries, meat, eggs and fruit on the kitchen bench.

Breakfast is a leisurely affair before departing at 9am for the 14-kilometre Labillardiere Peninsula track, a one-hour drive away. The peninsula is Bruny's westernmost point and was named after a French botanist on Bruni D'Entrecasteaux's expedition to the region in 1792, who was acclaimed for his detailed descriptions of Australian flora.

During the first three hours, the track crosses wide grassed paths, mounds of sand, a trail overlooking the ocean and sections of waist-high vegetation where a machete would have come in handy. “This is how you see the real Bruny,” says Mark, batting branches left and right to clear a passageway.

We're eventually led to a grassy area on Hopwood Beach, perfect for a lunch stop. White sand backs onto a forest of eucalypts and there's not a soul in sight — it feels like the end of the earth. ►



Views across Adventure Bay on Cape Queen Elizabeth walk.

Following a welcome rest we continue along the beach, passing feathered oystercatchers digging for molluscs in the sand with brilliant red beaks, then we cut into the forest to conclude the 6.5-hour circuit.

Back at the cabin, a hamper prepared by Bruny Island Premium Wines awaits with chardonnay, oysters, cheese and salmon for dinner. Outside an echidna snuffles on the lawn and dolphins frolic in the bay, but the area's white Bennett's wallabies remain unseen – likely grazing on their favourite plain a kilometre away.

On day three, we're driven five minutes to the start of the Fluted Cape walk in Bruny's southwest. The six-kilometre track passes the ruins of three whaling stations that serviced the island's thriving whaling industry in the 1830s, before beginning a steep 272-metre climb. Walking in close parallel to the dolerite cliff-face there's little room for error, but the trade-off is a sweeping view across the bay.

A billy tea break at the top lets the calf-burn subside; then it's a gentle descent to the carpark. Following lunch at the Bruny Island Cheese Co., famous for its gooey baked cheese 'Otto' wrapped in prosciutto, it's time to fly back to Hobart.

Our six-seat Cessna speeds down a dusty runway before launching into the sky, letting Bruny show off its expansive forests and blue waves one last time.

While the wattle bird did its best to offer a warm welcome, the island's farewell is far more spectacular. •

Visit [\[@\] www.lifesanadventure.com.au](https://www.lifesanadventure.com.au) or tel: (02) 9975 4553 for tour details.

The writer travelled as a guest of Life's An Adventure and Hobart's Hotel Grand Chancellor.



Hopwood Beach.



Native flowers along the Labillardiere Peninsula walk.