

# Your Sisters Beach Itinerary

Sisters Beach is a small hamlet surrounded by the Rocky Cape National Park on Tasmania's far northwest coast. It is an area of rugged beauty, and whilst remote, is the ideal place to get away from it all, relax and be one with nature. We are passionate about this area and have provided a list of suggested activities; they are but a small selection, which we hope will inspire you to make the most of your time in Sisters Beach and to enjoy your holiday.

## Sunday

Whether arriving from Devonport, Launceston or Hobart the trip to Sisters Beach can be pleasantly broken up with a variety of stops.

117km north of Hobart is Ross, which has been described as the most beautiful, historic town in Tasmania, and I would have to agree. It is a sleepier and less touristy town than either Richmond or Campbell Town, but it is perhaps better preserved and more "authentically" "historic" because of this. It is a shaded town, which makes it the perfect place to park the car and simply enjoying a leisurely stroll, exploring the town. You should definitely wander down to the Macquarie River and admire the intricately carved sandstone bridge; the faces carved into the bridge are prominent people in the colony at the time. From here, wander up to the Uniting Church, past the old barracks and on to the ruins of the female factory. If you have worked up a thirst, perhaps drop in to the Man O' Ross hotel.

Westbury is another lovely old town, with a distinctly "English" feel to it. It is literally packed with beautiful, historic buildings, the best way to see the town is to park the car and explore on foot. The National Trust operated White House is a must see. It includes a bakery, coach house and stables, all open to the public. The bakery's wood-fired oven is hard at work even today - stop by for a snack or perhaps a light meal. Opposite the White House is the town's original Village Green, complete with maypole and stocks - any over-ripe tomatoes to hand? Also in Westbury is one of Australia's best hedged mazes, the Westbury Maze and Tea Rooms.

Back in the car continue on the Bass Highway, for just 15 minutes, to the Meander Valley Rd exit which will take you to Deloraine, another charming, historic town. Deloraine is located on the banks of the Meander River and is a very pretty town. In November of each year Deloraine plays host to the Tasmanian Craft Fair, Australia's largest working craft fair, because of this, year round you will find a wide selection of arts and crafts in the local galleries and stores.

Back on the Bass Highway for another 15 minutes will take you to Elizabeth Town. Midway between Deloraine and Elizabeth Town, is the Christmas Hills Raspberry Farm and Café. It is a raspberry lover's delight. Just a few kilometres past Elizabeth Town is another gourmet delight. The Ashgrove Cheese Shop, home to the delicious Ashgrove Farm Cheeses. Here you can watch the cheese being made, sample the full range of Ashgrove cheeses (there will be one to suit everyone tastes!), as well as buy a wide range of Tasmanian cheeses and other produce. If all that has made you hungry, you will be pleased to know there is a café serving light meals and drinks which feature Ashgrove cheese and milk.

Continue on just over an hour to Burnie. We recommend you stock up here on groceries and any other necessities as there are no supermarkets in Sisters Beach. Sisters Beach is now just half an hour down the road. Settle in, make yourself at home and relax!

## Monday

Cradle Mountain is one of Tasmania's premier attractions and no visit to Tasmania is complete without seeing this awesome area. Cradle Mountain is at the northern end of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park and in turn, is part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Cradle Mountain is about an hour and a half drive from Sisters Beach.

Simply head out of Sisters Beach and follow the Bass Highway and then the Murchison Highway, before turning into Wilmot Road at Guildford. Then continue on to the jewel of the north-west, Cradle Mountain.

Depending on how long you plan to spend here there are a number of walks that can be undertaken. For the really keen, there is the famous, six day, Overland Track, however, if you are considering this walk please refer to the following website for important information <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/index.aspx?base=7771>. A must for the day walker is the Dove Lake Circuit, you should allow about two hours for the walk.

There are many other activities to keep you busy at Cradle Mountain. Perhaps a trail ride or four-wheel-drive motorcycle tour just outside the park boundaries sounds like your idea of fun? Or view world class photography at the Wilderness Gallery. A purpose built showcase for environmental photography from around Australia and the world.

### **Tuesday**

Today we'll explore the 'Edge of the World'. West of Sisters Beach is the beautiful, but remote far northwest coast of Tasmania and the 'Edge of the World'. To do full justice to this beautiful area, you may want to consider breaking the following activities over two days. Drive west towards Smithton on the banks of the quaintly named Duck River, head up to the lookout on Tier Hill, for great views over the town and river.

Continue west, to Woolnorth and Cape Grim, the westernmost point on the mainland of Tasmania, about an hour and a half from Sisters Beach. Woolnorth is a working farm that still operates under its original charter granted to the Van Diemens Land Company in the early 1800s. Woolnorth is an intriguing mix of old and new, and has the cleanest air in the world! You can take a tour of the Woolnorth Wind Farm, or longer tours that also take in some of the history of this amazing farm. All tours need to be booked in advance on (03) 6452 1493.

An hour to the south is the settlement of Arthur River, 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.

The Tarkine Wilderness Reserve is nestled deep in the heart of the "Edge of The World" region. The remaining tracts of this fabled rainforest contain ancient specimens of Myrtle and Sassafras, as well as Eucalypt mix rainforests, and have not yet seen the effects of the chainsaw, only to have been briefly disturbed in the era by selective hand cutting of trees. There are even areas of the Tarkine that are yet to be seen by the eyes of the settlers of Tasmania!

### **Wednesday**

Today we'll explore closer to home, just a pleasant hour down the road is Devonport. The original highway between Burnie and Devonport 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. If you are about on Sunday, the Penguin Market is popular. They are the largest undercover markets in Tasmania; a fun way to get to the markets is to catch the market train from Burnie.

Straddling the Mersey River on the central north coast, you can explore Devonport's coastline by walking or cycling along Victoria Parade to the Bluff, where Tiagarra Aboriginal Centre explains the areas' Aboriginal history and nearby rock carvings.

This is a pleasant walk of its own accord and much of the activities listed can be easily accessed by the walking/cycling tracks through Devonport. The Don River Railway is well worth a visit. Passenger trains have all but disappeared from Tasmania...except this one - a full-sized locomotive service from the Don Village Station to Coles Beach every day. The trip takes 30 minutes return.

The Imaginarium Science Centre is the only science and discovery centre in Tasmania. The Imaginarium is located in the heart of Devonport and features regularly changing exhibitions, many of them interactive.

Visit "Home Hill", the National Trust listed home of Joseph Lyons, the only Tasmanian Prime Minister of Australia. Here you can glimpse fascinating artefacts from our political history, but also more mundane, day to day objects such as the wine chest in the dining room. If you are a history buff you are also likely to be interested by the Devonport Maritime Museum. Devonport's history has been dominated by the water and the Maritime Museum traces this history through to the present day.

Drive south from Devonport to the historic streetscapes of Latrobe where treasures hide in its many antique stores and where the House of Anvers' qualified confectionery staff temper and mould fine chocolates, truffles, pralines and fudge according to the authentic method taught to them by expert Belgian chocolate-maker Igor van Gerwen. Also in Latrobe is the Australian Axeman's Hall of Fame, where champion axemen and women give regular wood-chopping exhibitions and are always happy to chat about their sport and the secrets of their success.

#### Thursday

The historic, fishing village of Stanley and the dramatic landform of the Nut are also highlights of the northwest coast. Stanley is less than an hour's drive west of Sister Beach. Before reaching Stanley turn off at Mawbanna Road, Black River, for the Water Wheel Creek Timber Heritage Experience, a unique tourist attraction. The Timber Heritage Experience includes guided tours of 20 hectares of beautiful, privately owned and preserved, natural Tasmanian bush-land which was once one of many sites used for selective logging by early pioneer settlers. Since the days of early settlers, our land has been left to its own, and nature and wildlife once again hold sway over what was the heart of Tasmanian Tiger Country.

Water Wheel Creek Timber Heritage Experience is located on the picturesque Mawbanna Road which leads to Dip Falls and The Big Tree another two attractions worth visiting.

Continue on to Stanley and 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 Diemens Land Company. The homestead is a wonderful example of the early pioneering spirit. Construction of the property started in 1832 for the Van Diemen's Land Company chief agent Edward Curr. Later additions to the homestead were designed by John Lee Archer, a colonial architect, and built over two years to 1845. Convict barracks, barns, stables, farmyards, and a large ornamental garden are also unique features of this estate. If you are still in Stanley of an evening, ghost tours recount the stories and hardships of the families who lived and worked on the property.

No visit to Stanley is complete without seeing one of Tasmania's truly iconic attractions, The Nut. The Nut is a volcanic plug deposited millions of years ago. A ride on the chairlift or a walk to the top of this is a must, although beware it is quite an arduous walk!

Tarkine Forest Adventures is the new name for the former Dismal Swamp site, located west of Smithton. It is a bit out of the way, being about an hour drive from Stanley, but well worth the trip. Tarkine Forest Adventures provides the northern access to the Tarkine and is a large sinkhole which has developed over millions of years, offering visitors a variety of exciting experiences. Take a slide onto the forest floor, explore a maze that tells the story of this unique environment and the wood that it produces, hire and ride the 13kms of bike tracks, or relax in the interpretive centre and dine on local produce.

#### Friday

It would be remiss to not spend time exploring the Rocky Cape National Park whilst staying at Sisters Beach, so today we'll do just that! Rocky Cape National Park is full of surprises. You may only want to make a quick visit to the Rocky Cape lighthouse with its sweeping views, but there is much more to see if you take the time. Before you know it you're finding out there's more to this park than meets the eye. Aboriginal heritage, ship wrecks, rock formations turned sideways, beautiful hills running down to the sea and an incredible variety of flowering plants. It makes the many corners of this small park worth closer inspection.

Burnie and Wynyard are just down the road from Sisters Beach; Burnie is just over half an hour from the home. It is the main commercial centre of the west coast but it also boasts some great cultural experiences. The Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens is a spectacular garden featuring many rare

and endangered rhododendron varieties. The gardens are at their best in spring but are spectacular throughout summer and autumn.

Creative Paper tells of Burnie's links to the paper industry and produces fine hand-crafted paper products. The talents of the town's paper sculptors are on show here in displays of detailed, life-sized "paper people". Why not try your hand?

For the cheese lover you can't go past tasting the award-winning Tasmanian Heritage range of cheese or the classic St Clare Swiss at the Lactos Cheese Factory. For more fresh, local fruit and produce direct from growers and makers try the Burnie Markets held fortnightly on a Saturday.

Heading back towards Sisters Beach, we'll pass through Wynyard, famous for its 10-day Bloomin' Tulips festival celebrating the October flowering of the tulips. Wynyard's defining landmark is the massive Table Cape, a cliff-top patchwork of rich soils and colourful crops high above Bass Strait. If you are a golfer there are the two picturesque courses in Wynyard to tempt you.

### **Saturday**

Sheffield, "The Town of Murals" is an hour and a half south east of Sisters Beach. With the impressive Mount Roland as its gallery and the walls of shops and public buildings as its canvasses, this town has depicted its rich social history in more than 40 extensive outdoor murals that draw admirers from all over the country. While Sheffield is famous for its murals, the nearby towns of Railton and Wilmot have their own outdoor art. Railton is home to an impressive display of topiary plants, and Wilmot boasts an extensive collection of innovative and humorous letterboxes.

From Sheffield, visit the world's largest maze complex, Tasmazia. Tasmazia has eight mazes including the Great Maze which reputedly the largest maze in the world. You can also explore The Village of Lower Crackpot, a delightful model village. Why not stop in for some delectable pancakes at the Pancake Manor.

Further on from Sheffield, is the Mole Creek Caves, only another half an hour away. The Mole Creek Area has over 300 known caves and sink holes. The two best known are Marakoopa Cave, which features two underground streams and a glow worm display, and King Solomons Cave which is jam packed with features and lavishly decorated with shawls, stalactites and stalagmites.

Above ground, take another beautiful short walk to Devils Gullet. Even the 14km drive along the unsealed, gravel road to the start of the walk is picturesque, with stunning views over cliffs to the Fisher River valley. From the precipice lookout at the end of the walk, an amazing 180-degree panorama spreads out before you, extending all the way to the famous peaks of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park. On a clear day, you can see from Black Bluff in the north-west around to Mt Ossa off to the south-west. The walk is approximately 40 minutes return.

Complete your day by meeting a few local inhabitants at Trowunna Wildlife Park a little more than halfway to Chudleigh. You'll see Tasmanian devils being hand fed, pat koalas and hold baby wombats, among many other native species. The park also includes a Tasmanian Devil Education Centre.