



Day 1 Sunday

If driving from Hobart, it will take about two and a half hours; simply follow the Tasman Highway all the way. This is a really pleasant drive so take your time and enjoy the trip. You may consider stopping at Sorell to stock up on groceries as this is the last major centre with a large supermarket on the east coast. About halfway to Swansea is the seaside town of Orford, a great place to stop for coffee or a bite to eat. This second half of the trip is one of the most scenic drives you can take anywhere; around every corner is another spectacular vista.

Like so much of Tasmania, Swansea oozes history. Again, if driving from Hobart, stop just south of Swansea at the Spiky Bridge. It was built by convicts in the 1840's; no one seems to know why it was built with the "spiky" parapet, but it is certainly unique!

After settling into the home, take a stroll around Swansea and enjoy the many fine historic buildings. There is a self-guided walk, with a brief description of each site available from the community centre. In the booklet, *Historical Walk, Swansea*, buildings of interest include Morris' General Store, Meredith House and Schouten House.



Day 2 Monday

Maria Island has had a varied history, from Aboriginal times, through the convict era and beyond; and all this can be experienced today on Maria Island, an island without electricity, shops or cars; it is like stepping back in time. It is also a place of spectacular scenery and wildlife. Maria Island has become home to a number of threatened species which have been introduced to the island, such as the Forester kangaroo and the barren goose, and is one of the best places in Tasmania for bird watching.

To get to Maria Island, travel south from Swansea for half an hour to Triabunna. From here there are ferry services that run morning and afternoon at least four days a week; the ferry will only take 45 minutes to reach Maria Island.

Once on the island there are many things to be explored. Check out the restored convict town of Darlington and imagine life on this doomed convict settlement, which pre-dates Port Arthur.

Maria Island is truly beautiful. It is surrounded by beach after beach of pristine white sand and crystal clear water, as well as rugged cliffs that contain amazing fossils. An easy walk to undertake in a day from Darlington is to the Fossil Cliffs; it will take about two hours. From here you will have great views out to Freycinet and Schouten Island. In the afternoon, another two hour walk that is well worth taking is to the Painted Cliffs; these are best viewed in the afternoon, so the light can bring out the colours of the cliffs and the walk is best done at low tide.



Day 3 Tuesday

The area around Swansea is renowned for several types of produce. An indulgent day can be spent sampling these delicacies.

Start the day of indulgence just down the road, at the Swansea Bark Mill and Museum. This is Australia's only fully restored black wattle bark mill; learn about the history and then sample some local Tassie produce in the Bark Mill Tavern. Perhaps you could try one of their wood-fired pizzas for lunch.

In the afternoon, consider going on an East Coast Tours wine tour. This is a half day tour that leaves from near the Swansea Post Office at 1.30PM. The tour takes in four wineries around Swansea and includes wine sampling and finishes at Kate's Berry Farm. At Kate's, be sure to sample not just the fruit wines, but also some of her amazing desserts. You can also pick your own berries at Kate's and she has a wide range of home-made produce.

Back at home you could turn the bountiful produce you have collected today into a great meal in the fully equipped kitchen. Or continue the indulgence and eat out at one of the great restaurants in Swansea. Kabuki by the Sea, 12km south of Swansea, with an awe inspiring view, serves "Japanese food with Tasmanian flair"; don't forget to show your API card for a discount. Or try Banc Restaurant, just down the road on the corner of Franklin and Maria Streets, for fantastic modern Australian cuisine using Tasmanian produce. Banc is particularly renowned for its seafood, which is all sourced locally and is as fresh as it can be.



Day 4 Wednesday

The Freycinet National Park is about a 45 minute drive from Swansea and is definitely worth visiting. Wineglass Bay has been voted among the top ten beaches in the world, but it is just one of the many magnificent beaches in the Freycinet National Park. There are a wide variety of bushwalks ranging from 20 minutes to the two to three day Peninsula Circuit.

The Peninsula Circuit is challenging, but well worth the effort. Be prepared for this walk; ensure you have adequate supplies, particularly of water, as it cannot be guaranteed you will find water on the walk. The walk can be done in two days, or by allowing yourself an additional day, you can take your time and relax on the virtually deserted beaches. There is nothing like arriving at a deserted, pristine white beach after a hard days walking, then after setting camp taking a dip in the turquoise waters.

Another great way to burn off the indulgence of yesterday is to hire a kayak from Coles Bay and go for a paddle in the sheltered waters of Great Oyster Bay. This is a beautiful way to get a different perspective on the Freycinet Peninsula. From the water you can really appreciate the rugged beauty of the peninsula, with towering granite cliffs meeting the crystal clear waters of the sea.

Whatever you choose to do at Freycinet, it is likely you will have earned a rest this evening. Perhaps try dinner at The Ugly Duck Out, down the bottom of Franklin Street. This child friendly restaurant has an extensive menu that includes child meals and even has a children's play room.



Day 5 Thursday

If you are doing the Peninsula Circuit you will probably be walking out today and returning to Swansea in the evening. For you, an evening of relaxation will be in order.

If not, head back in the same direction but continue on to Bicheno. Just north of Bicheno is the Douglas Apsley National Park. This is a dry sclerophyll forest which has a great diversity of plants and wildlife and is unlike other forests in Tasmania; it feels like you could be anywhere in Australia. There are a variety of short walks all over the park. The walk to the Apsley River Waterhole at the southern end of the park is just 15 minutes return. This crystal clear waterhole is beautiful and a tempting place for a swim on a hot summer's day. You will need to take a picnic with you as there are no shops in the park, but the waterhole is a lovely place for a picnic.

Another delight awaits you in Bicheno, at dusk: Bicheno Penguin Tours. These tours operate seven days a week and take only one hour. They are only \$20 per adult and take you up close and personal with the most delightful locals. This is an eco tourism operation; Bicheno Penguin Tours have rehabilitated the local penguin population and their environment and this is the safest way to see the penguins without endangering them.

You will need dinner in Bicheno this evening and for the freshest seafood matched with wines directly at the vineyard, you can't go past Apsley Gorge Vineyard. This is a rustic experience; the winery and cellar door is inside a rustic fish processing shed. The owner is a former abalone diver and cray-fisherman, turned winemaker, so he knows his stuff! The penguin tour will depart at dusk so you may need to have dinner before or after depending on the time of year.



Day 6 Friday

A leisurely day can be spent on or about the waters around Swansea. Sea Wings Eco Tours offers a three hour cruise from Triabunna in the waters around Maria Island, which departs at 10.30am. You will need to take your own food and drink along on this tour, or you can choose the Luxury Cruise, which gives you the option of catering.

On the tour you can expect to see a variety of sea-life such as whales, dolphins, fur seals and bird-life such as giant sea eagles and albatross. You will also get to explore the coastline of magnificent Maria Island and gain a different perspective of the areas you explored earlier in the week. There is even the option to get off at Darlington at 1pm, spend another three hours exploring Maria Island and catch the regular Maria Island Ferry back at no extra charge.

Once back on dry land perhaps you can try catching dinner? The fishing around Swansea is fantastic, as it still is, in so many areas of Tasmania. You can try your hand at beach fishing at Mayfield Beach, or perhaps try some rock fishing at Spiky Bridge. Or if you like bream, perhaps head north of Swansea to the Swan River? Dinner tonight will surely be delicious fresh fish cooked as you prefer in the comfort of your home away from home!



Day 7 Saturday

Today, for a change of pace you can explore inland of Swansea, on a pleasant drive, with natural and historical highlights. Virtually all of these places are well off the beaten track, so you can expect a relaxing day largely to yourself.

From Swansea, head north and take the turn off to Lake Leake, the Lake Leake Highway (B34). From Flatrock Lookout you will have spectacular views out across Oyster Bay. Continue on to until you reach the Lake Leake information booth and turn right to Meetus Falls; be wary of logging trucks, although there shouldn't be many about on the weekend. These impressive falls can be seen from the viewing platform, just a short walk from the car. From here, head to Lake Leake. This is a great place for trout fishing, if you didn't get enough yesterday and would also make the ideal place to have a picnic or barbecue.

If eating in the great outdoors is not for you, you will be able to grab a bite to eat in the next stop, Campbell Town. There are a variety of dining options here as it is a popular stopover between Hobart and Launceston. Zeps Café is a very popular choice. For the sweet tooth, a stop at the lolly shop, A Little Piece of Heaven, is a must; the name says it all... The Red Bridge is just one example of convict era craftsmanship in Campbell Town; there are over a million bricks made from locally sourced clay in the red bridge.

The next town to visit is Ross. There are many beautiful, historic towns in Tasmania, as you will already have noticed. Ross is one of the best. It is delightfully shaded, so even in summer this is a lovely town to wander around and explore the fascinating convict ruins. If you are still peckish, there are a number of dining options in Ross, or you may care to enjoy a beverage at the Man O' Ross.

From Ross, head to Oatlands. Callington Mill is the real highlight here; it is in the process of being authentically restored to once again be able to produce stone ground organic flour. There are of course many other beautiful Georgian buildings in Oatlands, however Oatlands doesn't have as many cafés or dining options as Ross or Campbell Town, so if you're short on time, this town would be the one I would remove from the trip. Either way, head back to Swansea, via Lake Leake.