

Your White Beach Itinerary

White Beach is located in one of the most beautiful areas of Tasmania on the stunning Tasman Peninsula which has a rugged coastline, white beaches, spectacular sunsets and diverse wildlife. 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 at White Beach and to enjoy your holiday.

Sunday

Aim to stop at Sorell, it is the last major town on the drive out to White Beach. It is a good place to pick up your groceries as it has a supermarket, butcher, bakery and bottle shop. More importantly, between October and May it is the home of the Sorell Fruit Farm. This is a marvellous, pick-your-own, fruit farm in Tasmania, and attracts visitors from overseas. In early spring it sometimes opens just for the displays of apple, apricot, peach and cherry blossoms. It is well worth a visit so you can sample a range of berries you will be hard pressed to find anywhere else. Have you ever eaten a Sylvan berry? When was the last time you gorged yourself on such healthy things such as blackberries, and black currants just to name a few? The café is fantastic and uses the farm produce to create mouth-watering delights and is a great place for a cuppa. The shop also has an extensive range of local produce, including chutneys and fruit liquors to help you remember your holiday.

We recommend you duck in to the fish markets in Fullam Road, Dunalley as you make your way to White Beach. Dunalley was the site of the first European landing in Tasmania, in December 1642, and is now a successful fishing town with cafes and craft stalls. The fish markets will give you very fresh produce, all caught locally. The oysters are only opened when you ask for them. The crayfish (the Tasmanian terms for lobsters) are cooked daily. If you like your seafood fresh, you will be in heaven. Approaching Dunalley look for the 'castle' to your left, a local's home!

As you drive out of Dunalley and pass over the swing bridge, look down into the hand dug Dennison Canal. Immediately after the swing bridge, the beautiful and historic Dunalley Hotel will be on your right. Built in 1866 the hotel is a landmark. Drop in for lunch - it serves all that local fresh seafood you just looked at in the fish market, as well as serving up views over Norfolk Bay.

When you get to the home at White beach, relax on the balcony or in the lounge room with a nice cup of tea, or a little something you may have picked up at the Sorell Fruit Farm, and enjoy the water views over Wedge Bay. At dusk, take a stroll down to the beach and enjoy the spectacular sunset.

Monday

White Beach is ideally located only 15-minutes drive from Port Arthur, Tasmania's premier tourist attraction; it is literally just down the road. You could easily spend a couple of days here; even after several trips you can still discover new areas and interesting facts. All entry tickets are valid for two consecutive days and include a 40-minute introductory walking tour, a valuable way to get a good understanding of the site and a 20-minute harbour cruise which will take you over the crystal clear waters and give you a different perspective of the site. Perhaps you could consider one of the optional tours, the Isle of the Dead Tour or Point Puer Tour. By staying so close, you could even consider the after dark pass which includes dinner and a lamp lit Historic Ghost Tour, bookings are essential for the Ghost Tour. The last time we stayed there we went 'home' for a cup of tea after wandering around for 6 hours and then went back for a delicious dinner beside the open log fire.

Surprisingly for a tourist location the meals are reasonably priced and are good quality. At the guest shop you can pick up some Tasmanian whisky, if you really wish to get into the spirit of things. Tasmania has a long history of whisky distilling and some of our whiskeys have beaten Scottish varieties to win prestigious awards in Europe. Surely that is a good excuse to buy some.

Tuesday

The Tasman Peninsula has many amazing bushwalks in the Tasman National Park. The Waterfall Bay walk is an hour, to an hour and a half return and takes you along the stunning coast to Waterfall Bay, after rain, you can see the waterfall running directly into the sea. To get there, drive back to Eagle Hawk Neck and take the C338 down to Waterfall Bay. There are other even shorter walks such as to the Tasman Arch, Devil's Kitchen or the Blowhole. Take your camera, as the unusual rock formations are good photo spots. Try to get here at high tide as the blow hole can spurt up to 10 meters on a good day, but is good to see at any time. If you are fit and want to stretch your legs for longer, head down to the Cape Raoul walk. It will take 6 hours. Don't forget to take water as there is none along the way.

There are many lovely spots for a picnic in the National Park and along the walks, or if you prefer to relax and eat out; try in and around Eaglehawk Neck. Here you will find everything from fast food to cafes. The Eaglehawk Neck Café on the Arthur Highway is a great café that focuses on using local produce.

Tasmania is known for its spectacular diving and the Tasman Peninsula is one of Tassie's best spots. Waterfall Bay has dive sites for all levels of experience and all weather. Cathedral Cave in Waterfall Bay is a spectacular dive and hosts an array of invertebrates. Dive tours for the area can be organised from Hobart or Eaglehawk Neck.

Fortescue Bay also offers snorkelling in calm waters, good boating and fishing as well as a variety of coastal cliff walks. The walk to Canoe Bay sets off from Fortescue Bay and is suitable for families. It will lead you to an old steel boat wreck. Please note there are no food facilities at Fortescue Bay so you will need to take your own supplies. The walk should take you less than 2 hours for the round trip.

Wednesday

The Tasmanian Devil Conservation Park is located on the Port Arthur Highway in Taranna, 15-minute drive from White Beach. You may have passed it on your way to the house. Here you can see Tassie Devils and feed kangaroos etc. We particularly enjoy the spectacular "Kings of the Wind" free-flight show. For the chocoholics, there is Federation Chocolate, a small chocolate factory and museum almost opposite. Watch the chocolate being made and then sample some of the wares.

For a quirky drive, head for Dootown. All of the homes in this town near the Blowhole are named something Doo related, such as "Dr Doo Little", or "Doo-n-nothing". In 1935, Hobart architect Eric Round began a custom when he named his weekenders at Pirate's Bay 'Doo I'. This was quickly followed by Charles Gibson (Doo-Me) and Bill Eldridge (Doo-Us). The tradition caught on and today most of the town's 30 or so cottages have Doo names including Thistledoo and Gunnadoo. It provides another interesting photo opportunity or take a pen and paper and try to find all of the 30 or so Doo names.

Nearby, Eaglehawk Neck, is also worth a visit, check out the Dog Line and museum. This is where dogs were chained across the isthmus to prevent any escaped convicts from Port Arthur getting past this point. The surf beach here is also excellent. All of the beaches in the area are spectacular and particularly worth a visit at dusk, as sunsets here beautiful!

On your way back, consider stopping for a good pub-grub dinner at the Nubeena Tavern and Family Restaurant. The meals are generous.

Thursday

Take a trip back past Dunalley and take the C337 to Marion Bay, a 45-minute trip from White Beach. Marion Bay is the site of the Tasmanian Falls Festival which takes place over the New Year period each year. It is a marathon of movies, bands, DJs and entertainers. We suggest you visit Marion Bay for another of the areas gorgeous beaches; you may even encounter wild seals whilst walking along the beach and you may well be the only people on the beach!

Travel a little further on and you will get to the Wielangta State Forest. The Wielangta Forest Drive is a dirt road, if it has been raining heavily it can be muddy, but in fine weather it is fine for a 2WD vehicle. Driving through the forest you will pass 200 year old stands of Blue Gums towering above you. Take the turn off to Three Thumbs Lookout; from up here on a clear day, you can see up and down the coast, as far away as the Freycinet Peninsula and Maria Island. This is a great spot for a picnic; after lunch you can stretch your legs with a two hour bushwalk.

Friday

Doongara Fishing Tours and Charters operate 7 days per week, departing from Pirates Bay near Eagle Hawk neck. The area is renowned as a sports fishing paradise. There is a whole range of fishing charters to choose from, but if fishing is not your thing, perhaps one of their scenic boat tours will suit you better. They have child friendly tours, bird watching animal viewing etc. You can choose from full or half day tours, and can choose to take lunch along with you, or it can be supplied.

Saturday

There is a hidden gem on the peninsular that tends to be overshadowed by the Port Arthur settlement. People often overlook the fact the entire area is rich in its convict past. Take a trip up the C341 past Saltwater River to the National Heritage listed, and formally dreaded, Historic Coal Mines. The site lets you see first hand the ruins of the hand dug coal mines with shafts over 300 feet deep. The site operated from 1833 to 1848. This site was very important to Van Diemen's Land in the early days and illustrates the value of cheap convict labour. In 1841 the site was mechanised, and the steam boiler can still be seen at the site. Semaphore signals were used to transmit signals to and from Port Arthur.

Two penal outstations were established at Saltwater River. The first was a rather pleasant option - the agricultural farm supplying food for Port Arthur and other outstations on the Peninsula. The second, the coal mine, was widely regarded as 'hell on earth'.

You will need to drive beyond the small settlement of Saltwater, which is now little more than a hamlet, on a dirt road through the bush until you reach a fork in the road. Don't be put off by the signs at the fork which are less than welcoming. One sign reads 'Dangerous Ruins and Disused Mines' and this leads to the major convict ruins and the coal mine.

If, however, you take the road indicated by the sign 'Vehicles including Trail Bikes must keep to formed roads' it winds through the bush to the Penitentiary and the Convict Ruins and continues on to a number of pleasant bush locations overlooking Ironstone Bay which provide good opportunities for picnics.

The 'Dangerous Ruins and Disused Mines' road winds for a short distance through the bush before reaching the Underground Cells which were restored in 1977. These cells must surely be one of the most horrific examples of penal life anywhere in Australia. They are totally without light, the air is fetid, they are small, harsh and inhospitable. Imagine being incarcerated here.

Unfortunately it is apparent the ruins are collapsing and while the buildings are as substantial as those at Port Arthur they have been allowed to deteriorate to a point where the bricks are flaking away with decay.

Further up the track (it is almost 4WD territory although it is only a short walk from the Underground Cells) is the old mine shaft.

The site is much more peaceful with far less visitors than Port Arthur, giving it a sense of isolation the convicts must have feared. Take a picnic as there are no food kiosks - you may actually be on your own.

On your way back, turn left on the B37 and head to Koonya. Koonya is now literally nothing more than a few isolated houses and a superbly restored penitentiary comprising a hospital, officer's quarters, workshops, chapel, stone quarries, cell blocks and overseer's quarters set between the mountains and the sea. It is in an exquisite setting. In the convict times, the town was known as 'Cascades'.

Let us know what you enjoyed the most on your holiday.