

SOUTH COAST TRACK

SOUTHWEST NATIONAL PARK

DURATION: 8 days

TOUR GRADE: T1 T2 T3 T4

Narrower but distinct tracks which can be muddy in some places, in pristine natural environments. Facilities are minimal and you will encounter few other walkers. These moderate tours require a reasonable level of fitness.

The South Coast Track is one of Tasmania's most remote tracks, combining an extraordinary range of environments and conditions featuring bleak button grass plains, breathtaking ocean vistas, unspoilt temperate rainforest and an exposed alpine plateau. The walk encompasses the entire panorama of Tasmania's geological history from its oldest rocks in the west (600 million years old), coal seams and fluted dolerite cliffs in the east (160m) to sands and gravels from the last ice age (2m). The sense of isolation is highlighted by the light aircraft flight from Cambridge Airport (Hobart) to the landing strip at Melaleuca. This short exhilarating flight provides spectacular views of the Eastern Arthur Range, including the remarkable Federation Peak, before landing at the now-defunct tin mining works at Melaleuca.

ITINERARY & TOUR DESCRIPTION

Day 1:

BCT to Point Eric on the Cox Bight

We fly to Melaleuca airstrip near Bathurst Harbour and start our walk from there. We descend on gentle slopes to Freney Lagoon with the bleak New Harbour Range to the west, and then along the beach at Cox Bight. After a short walk we arrive at our delightful campsite at Point Eric in the forest above the beach. You can enjoy a refreshing swim in the Bight here before dinner or just soak up the views.

Day 2:

Point Eric to Louisa River

We leave the beach for a short steep climb up the Red Point Hills which gives us our first views of the track ahead to our destination at the river, and the Ironbound Range beyond. Gentle walking around the slopes as we gradually descend onto the flood plain of the Louisa River. We walk through occasional thickets of eucalypts at stream crossings, and ford the Louisa River leading us to our campsite. Based in the forest next to the ancient

alluvial deposits exposed by the river, there is an opportunity for a quick dip in the river to freshen up.

Day 3:

Louisa River to Little Deadmans Bay

An early start for the long and strenuous climb up the Ironbounds for our lunch stop. We ascend from the moorland plain to an exposed alpine plateau on the range, with more stunning 360° views from Louisa Bay to Federation Peak and beyond. The plateau features typical low growing alpine flora, with wind and ice-pruned herbs, grasses and shrubs, cushion plants, and stunted eucalypts. We descend from the Ironbounds plateau on the more sheltered eastern side of the range, with a striking change to a temperate rainforest featuring a variety of old growth trees (sassafras, myrtle, leatherwood and celery-top pine). Our campsite is at the peaceful Little Deadmans Bay with another swimming opportunity, and the chance to explore the coastal fringe.



The Fluted Cliffs from the track above Granite Beach

Day 4:

Little Deadmans Bay to New River Lagoon

An easy day's walking to Prion Beach and the New River Lagoon. We walk the beach with the Southern Ocean booming on our right to the lagoon entrance, and cross it by rowboats to our campsite among the coastal tea-trees. The wonderful coastal and lagoon views here are matched by the backdrop of Precipitous Bluff in the hinterland and the Ironbounds to the west. Refreshing swims are again possible in the lagoon.

Day 5:

New River Lagoon to Granite Beach

A short wade along the sandy lagoon leads us to our track through the eucalypt forest and on to the aptly-named Granite Beach, and the delightful waterfall at our campsite. Along the way we rejoin the Southern Ocean for another beach walk at Surprise Bay and catch the first sight of the spectacular Fluted Cliffs of dolerite on South Cape. We camp with the sound of ocean breakers in a pretty treed glade above the rounded granite boulders of the beach.

Day 6:

Granite Beach to South Cape Rivulet

We head inland from Granite Beach over the South Cape Range to our campsite at the beautiful lagoon at South Cape Rivulet - through button grass plains and open forest with views of Pindars Peak in the distance to the north, and more coastal views to the south. Once again we can freshen up here with a swim in the lagoon or just roam along the wide ocean beach at South Cape Bay.

Day 7:

South Cape Rivulet to Cockle Creek

This is a pleasant, undemanding day's walk to our final campsite at Cockle Creek beside the ocean, with more stunning ocean views across to the fluted dolerite formations on South East Cape. We pass the brooding mass of Coal Bluff and the headland of Lion Rock, before turning inland along a pleasant track in open heathland to Rocky Bay at Cockle Creek.

Day 8:

Cockle Creek to BCT

A morning swim, a leisurely breakfast with time to explore beautiful Rocky Bay (and maybe a short walk to Fishers Point) before we join the mini-bus back to BCT. Along the way we pass through the delightful hamlets of Southport and Dover before journeying through the Huon Valley to our destination for a well-deserved home-cooked meal and a glass of wine.

Let us share our love of the extraordinary diversity of Tasmania's unique wilderness areas with you



Give us a call on 1300 882 293 and we'll gladly discuss your needs and interests. Together we'll work out an exciting walking experience that is designed especially for you. Or go to www.twe.travel to check out further information online.

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