

FRENCHMANS CAP

FRANKLIN – GORDON WILD RIVERS NATIONAL PARK

DURATION: 5 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.

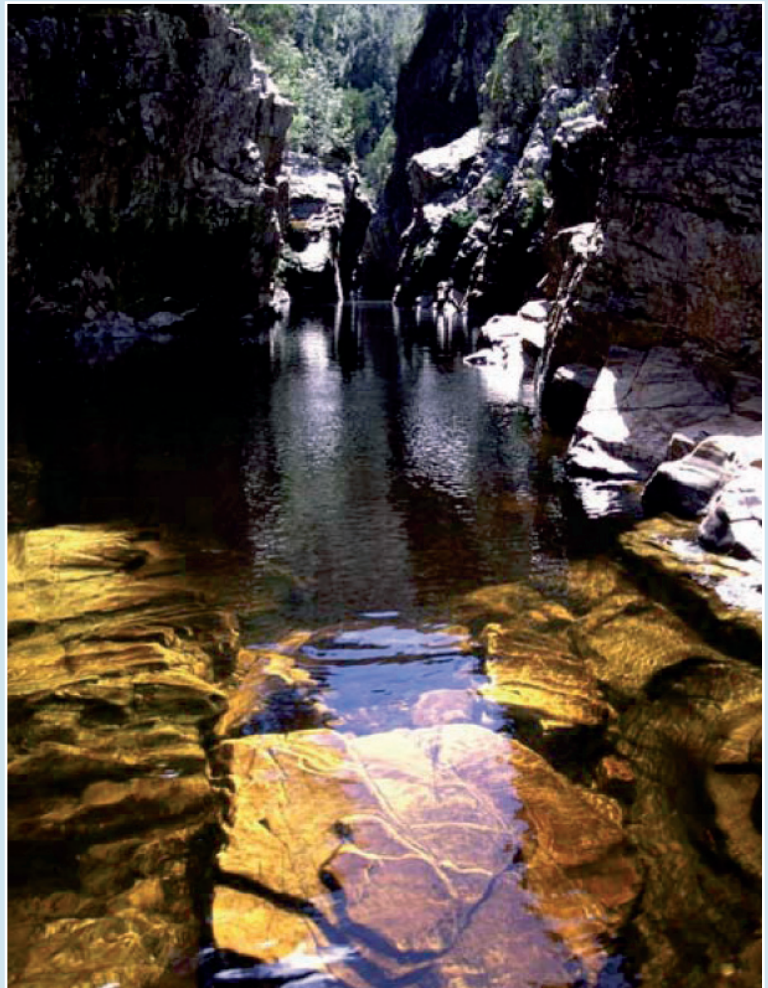
Frenchmans Cap (1446m), an outstanding white monolith in southwest Tasmania's Wild Rivers National Park, dates back more than 700 million years, making it one of the most ancient landforms in Tasmania. With its sheer cliff face of 450m and panoramic 360° views of the World Heritage Area, it represents a challenging and spectacular walking experience. The vegetation is also of primeval origin: cathedral-like rainforest on sheltered slopes and broad swathes of button-grass, teeming with diversity, clothing the lower flanks of the mountain. The Cap towers above the land of the Wild Rivers, the most famous of which is the Franklin, whose tannin-stained and sometimes turbulent waters flow through deep gorges flanking the Cap. In five days you will appreciate the diversity of the plains, the majesty of the rainforest, the grandeur of the mountain plateaus and the "terrible beauty" of the Franklin River.

ITINERARY & TOUR DESCRIPTION

Day 1:

BCT to Lake Vera

We leave BCT and drive first through the picturesque undulating rural countryside of the Derwent Valley before reaching our start point on the Lyell Highway just past the King William Saddle (830m) in the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park. Our walk begins here at a swing bridge over the Franklin River, and we descend to the poorly drained (and often sodden) Loddon Plains of button-grass formed by the floodplain of the Loddon and South Loddon Rivers. In all but the driest season, there will no doubt be many humorous photo opportunities of walkers sometimes knee-deep in mud – the price walkers must pay to reach one of Tasmania's most incredible places. After several kilometres of muddy track (alleviated in spots by raised boardwalks) we reach the end of the Loddon Plains and ascend into an ancient rainforest, alive with the sublime aromas of fungi and forest litter. After a heart-pumping climb we reach our evening campsite at the beautiful Lake Vera by late afternoon in time to set up and have a well-earned wash in the creek.



The Irenabyss, Franklin River below Frenchmans Cap.

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Day 2:

Lake Vera to Lake Tahune

Today the track sidles the rain-forested shores of Lake Vera before beginning a long and invigorating climb to the Barron Pass. Upon reaching the pass, the splendour of the landforms becomes apparent – peaks of shimmering green schists, diamond-hard quartzite, and towers of incredible angles jutting above the landscape; create a weird, wonderful and primeval setting. The track undulates around the sides of these peaks and across the incredible Artichoke Valley before descending to our campsite at Lake Tahune, an alpine tarn at the base of the Cap’s sheer cliff face. If time, energy and weather permit, an afternoon ascent of Frenchman’s Cap is possible, as is a refreshing and icy swim Lake Tahune.

Day 3:

Lake Tahune to the Irenabyss

The name “Irenabyss” means bottomless chasm of peace. Here the turbulent waters of the Franklin flow into a deep and peaceful abyss. On a sunny day it is a great experience to swim up the narrow gorge, where mesmerising dapples of sunlight reflect off the water and play gently on the towering cliffs around. The return walk from our base camp at Lake Tahune to the Irenabyss is a long day-walk, so we start early in the morning to head out across the airy mountain ridges before steeply descending into the valley of the Franklin. We have the option to carry our full packs and spend a night camped by the river, at a rainforest

campsite (also used by Franklin River rafting parties) just absorbing its tranquillity.

Day 4:

Lake Tahune to Lake Vera

We will break camp, whether at Lake Tahune or The Irenabyss, and descend from the mountains through the rainforest to Lake Vera. If based at Lake Tahune, we have another opportunity to the summit of Frenchman’s Cap to view the morning sunrise.

Day 5:

Lake Vera to BCT

From Lake Vera it is simply a matter of retracing our steps down the hill and across the button-grass plains to meet the bus for our return trip to BCT. Some may wish to take a quick dip in the Franklin to wash the mud off, while others may prefer to wait for the hot showers at BCT.

Frenchman’s Cap is a walk that crowds into just five days some of the most majestic, dramatic and diverse examples of Western Tasmanian landscape – a breathtaking and spectacular experience!

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.

Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences
 ABN 65 632 316 265
BASE CAMP TASMANIA
 959 Glenfern Road
 GLENFERN TAS 7140

local call 1300 882 293
phone 03 6261 4971
fax 03 6261 2786
mobile 0414 238 458
email info@twe.travel
web www.twe.travel

