



CRADLE MOUNTAIN

huts walk

Welcome to the Cradle Mountain Huts *Winter Walk*

8 Day/7 Night
guided winter
walk along
Tasmania's iconic
Overland Track

Ready for an unforgettable winter walk in Tasmania? The crowds are gone, the air is crisp and the iconic Overland Track beckons with winter adventure. Nothing beats this World Heritage Area after a fresh snowfall!

Prepare by day, to trek beneath rugged snowy mountains, past cascading waterfalls and through ancient rainforests. By night, cold winter evenings often deliver the surprise of clear skies dominated by the radiant Milky Way Galaxy cast within a dome of thousands of bright stars!

Enabling this incredible walking experience are our inspiring guides, lightweight

packs and the sanctuary of the Tasmanian Walking Company's private-in-park accommodation complemented by hearty home-cooked meals, a glass of wine, hot showers, warm fire, drying rooms and a cosy bed. These simple creature comforts enable you to awaken rejuvenated each morning and truly engage with one of the World's great walking experiences!

Here you will find everything you need to prepare and get excited about your adventure, all in one document. From pick-up times to gear lists, daily distances to accommodation details, this is your Cradle Mountain Huts Winter Walk go-to-guide.



CRADLE MOUNTAIN

huts walk



The Trip

Trip Summary

Trip Duration: 8 days/7 nights

Grade: Challenging

Activities: Winter trekking with a full pack on the iconic Overland Track.



Why walk with us?

It's very important to us that you spend time reconnecting with friends and family or simply giving yourself some space, so we make sure the small things are taken care of. From the moment you join us, the adventure begins - no need to worry about a thing - we have it covered!

We were the first operator entrusted by the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service to build and operate accommodation within its National Parks and Wilderness World Heritage Area; and more than 30 years later that key relationship and trust remains.

Our groups have exclusive use of our architecturally designed huts which sit gently on the natural environment. Ours are the only private huts along the trail. As you are not camping we can offer truly light pack weight. Each hut has been discreetly located off the main trail and offers a hot shower, drying room and twin share accommodation. Your accommodation is an important aspect of the walk and we believe it should be enjoyed not endured!

We believe that food and wine should be part of the experience, never an afterthought. Our guides become chefs and prepare meals that are both healthy and delicious. We work in remote locations which makes our menu design more challenging, however, by focusing on using as much fresh produce as possible, we proudly serve outstanding meals each day.

Our guides are our most outstanding asset. They are passionate outdoor enthusiasts, educated interpreters and fantastic hosts all rolled into one. Through your guides' interpretation, you can learn about the flora, fauna and local history of Tasmania's awe-inspiring wilderness. Our guides are trained in accident prevention, incident management and remote area first aid. They carry appropriate communications equipment to ensure that, should it be required, help is only a call away.

Over the years Tasmanian Walking Company has been the proud recipient of many awards. Call and talk to us on 03 6392 2211 and find out why we are the most awarded walking company in Tasmania.



Itinerary

At a glance

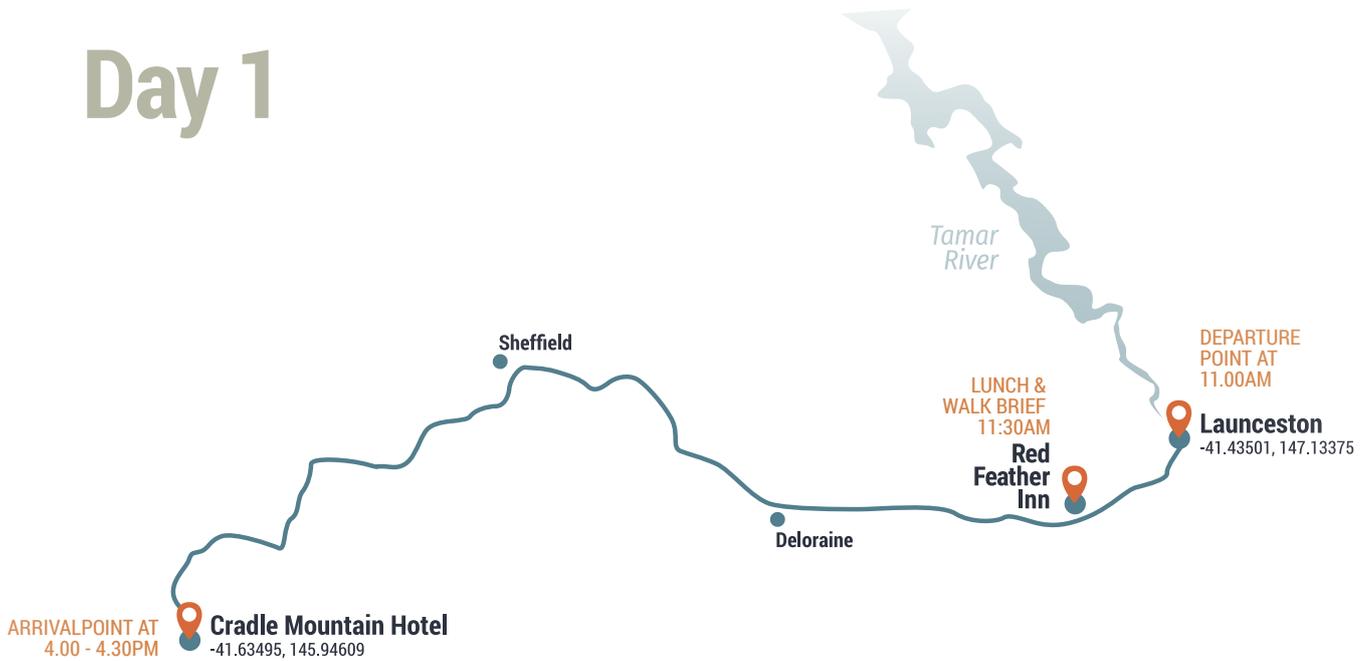
DAY	WALK SECTIONS	DISTANCE	STAY	MEALS
One	Vehicle Transfers Launceston to Cradle Mountain Valley	-	Cradle Mountain Hotel	-/L/D
Two	Cradle Valley to Barn Bluff Hut	12 km (7hrs)	Barn Bluff Hut	B/L/D
Three	Barn Bluff Hut to Pine Forest Moor Hut	12 km (7hrs)	Pine Forest Moor Hut	B/L/D
Four	Pine Forest Moor Hut to Pelion Hut	10 km (7hrs)	Pelion Hut	B/L/D
Five	Pelion Hut – Contingency Day	Optional summit trips	Pelion Hut	B/L/D
Six	Pelion Hut to Kia Ora Hut	7 km (7hrs)	Kia Ora Hut	B/L/D
Seven	Kia Ora Hut to Windy Ridge Hut	9 km (7hrs)	Windy Ridge Hut	B/L/D
Eight	Windy Ridge Hut to Lake St Clair	10 km (7hrs)	Return to Launceston	B/L/-

* PLEASE NOTE THAT DISTANCES MAY VARY ON TRACKING DEVICES.

Please note this itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions. We will endeavour to remain as close to the written itinerary as is practicably possible. Our guides will keep you up to date and informed along the way. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call us on 03 6392 2211 or email bookings@taswalkingco.com.au.



Day 1

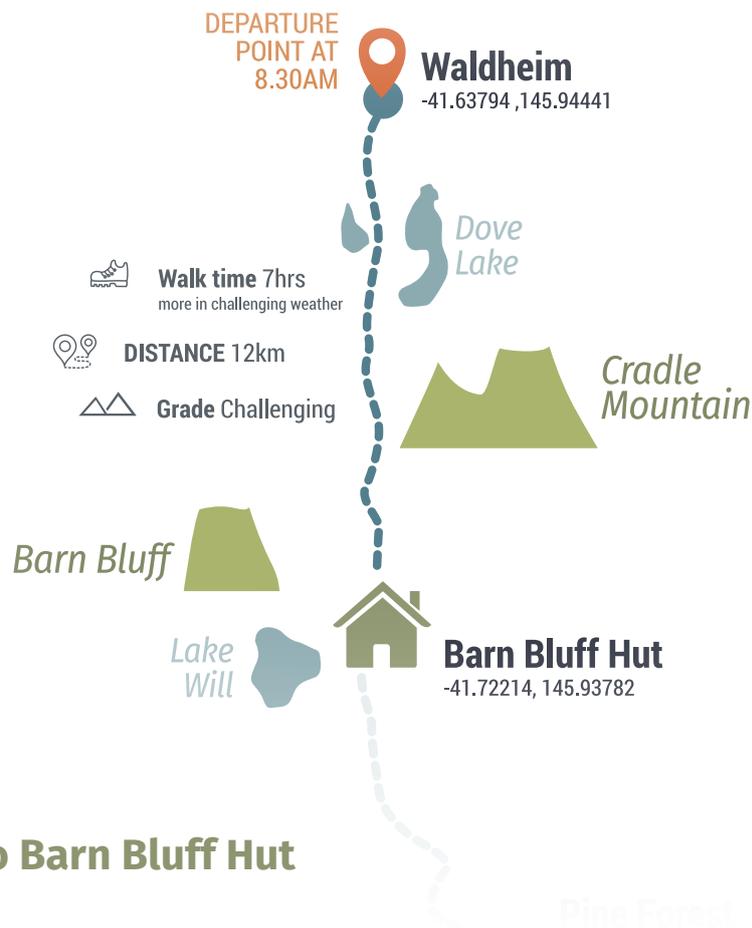


Launceston – Walkers Base at Red Feather Inn – Cradle Valley

At the start of your walk: we ask that you be at our walker’s base at Red Feather Inn at for 11:30am for a briefing. Our shuttle will collect guests from The Sebel Hotel Launceston at 11:10am. You will need to be ready in front of reception at 11.00am. At Red Feather Inn, you will meet your guides, and have a gear check and briefing. Lunch on Day One is following gear check and briefing, before heading up to the Cradle Valley.

We will arrive at Cradle Mountain Hotel between 4-4:30pm, so there will be plenty of time for a relaxed dinner before retiring for the evening.

Day 2



Waldheim to Barn Bluff Hut

After breakfasting at the Cradle Mountain Hotel, you will need to be ready to meet your guides in the Hotel's reception area at 7.45am. From here, our bus will transfer you to Waldheim and the start of the Overland Track, where we aim to start walking by 8.30am.

Your personal luggage not required for the walk will be transferred to our walkers base at Red Feather Inn, stored securely for the duration of your walk and will be accessible upon your return to the Walkers' Base.

By lunch time, we have walked through our first section of ancient temperate rainforest and witnessed the dramatic glacially carved Crater Lake. The steepest section of the whole Overland Track is behind us. It gets us onto Marion's Lookout, which, in clear conditions, offers iconic and spectacular views of Cradle Mountain (1,545m), with Dove Lake at its base – worth every step.

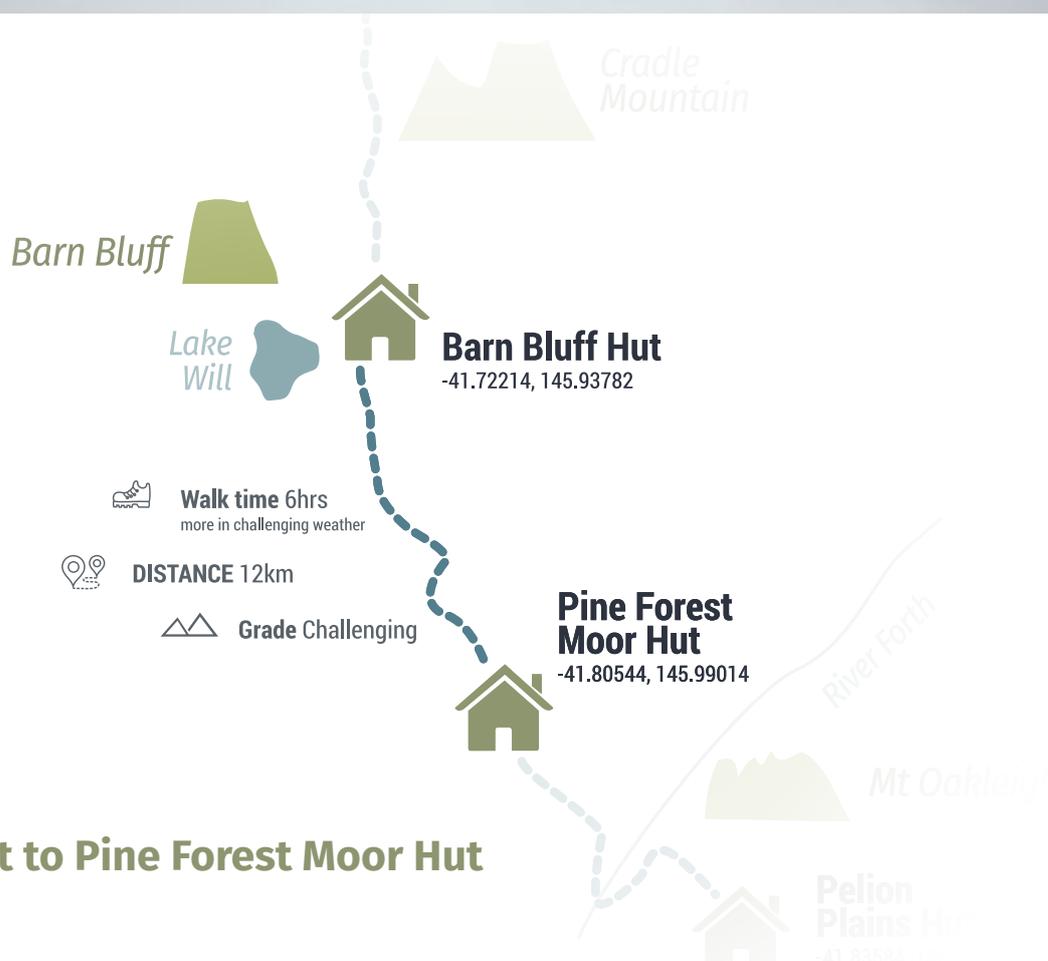
If the weather is fine, we stop for lunch by the peaceful Plateau Creek. We then continue on for about another 4 hours around the base of Cradle Mountain, out along the edge of a spectacular glacial cirque. We drop into Waterfall Valley, which we cross before arriving at our hut at the base of the towering Barn Bluff (1,559m).

Several hours of this day's walk traverses exposed alpine plateau, which allows great views on a clear day. In rough weather, the wind howls over the landscape, making for exciting and sometimes challenging walking conditions.

Some of the track is uneven under foot, however, we take our time to walk carefully and make sure we still look at the wonderful scenery all around.



Day 3



Barn Bluff Hut to Pine Forest Moor Hut

Today we'll be walking across plains where glaciers once rested, slowly moving and scouring out shallow tarns. The track provides an undulating trek with a few sections of exposed moorland and multiple hill climbs and descents. The once notoriously muddy Pine Forest Moor now has a duckboard path over the mud! We may offer an optional side trip to Lake Will.

We travel across plains, where once glaciers sat and slowly moved, scouring out shallow tarns. Now we see plains of button grass, with ancient Pencil Pines sitting with their roots in the water. Rising from the moors, the peaks of Cradle Mountain and Barn Bluff are behind us to the north, and the stately Mount Pelion West (1,560m) directly ahead. Take advantage of the viewing opportunities at several lookout points and complete the day through an enchanting rainforest before arriving to the comfort of Pine Forest Moor Hut.



Day 4

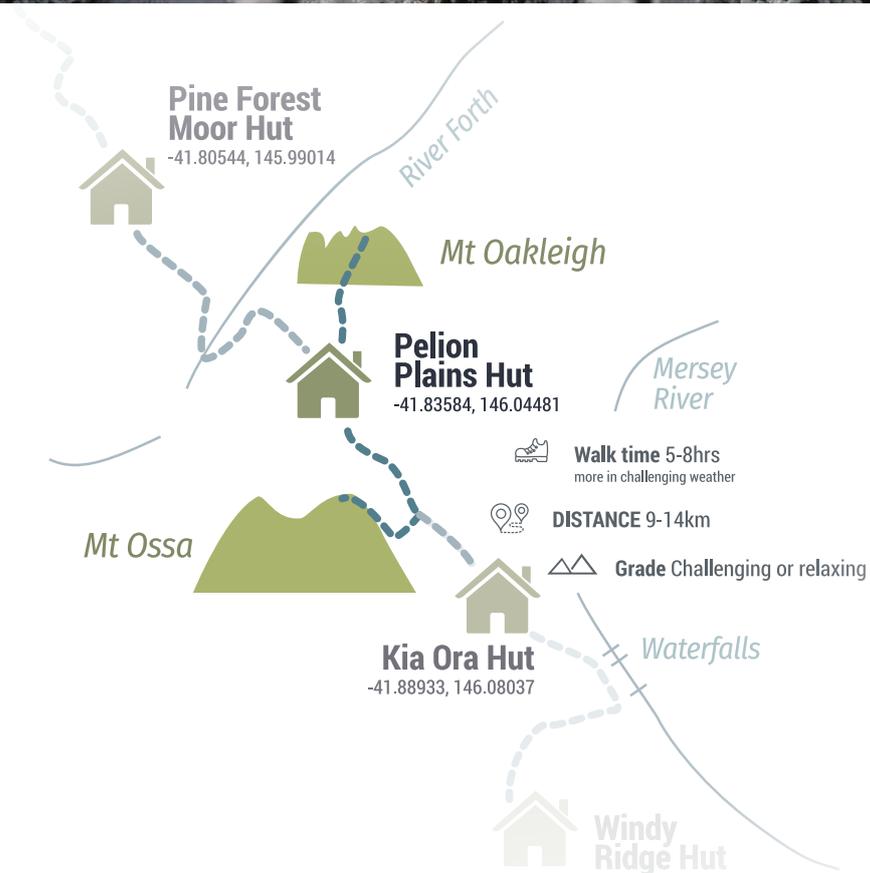


Pine Forest Moor Hut to Pelion Plains Hut

Today we begin with a long slow descent around the base of Mt Pelion West down to the Forth River before it plunges into the Lemonthyme Valley. After a break at Frog Flats by the Forth River, we have a long gentle ascent out of the valley onto the beautiful Pelion Plains with outstanding views of Mount Oakleigh (1,252m). If the weather allows there are many side trips in the Pelion Plains area with mountains all around, including an abandoned copper mine and peaceful and humbling spots to rest quietly.



Day 5



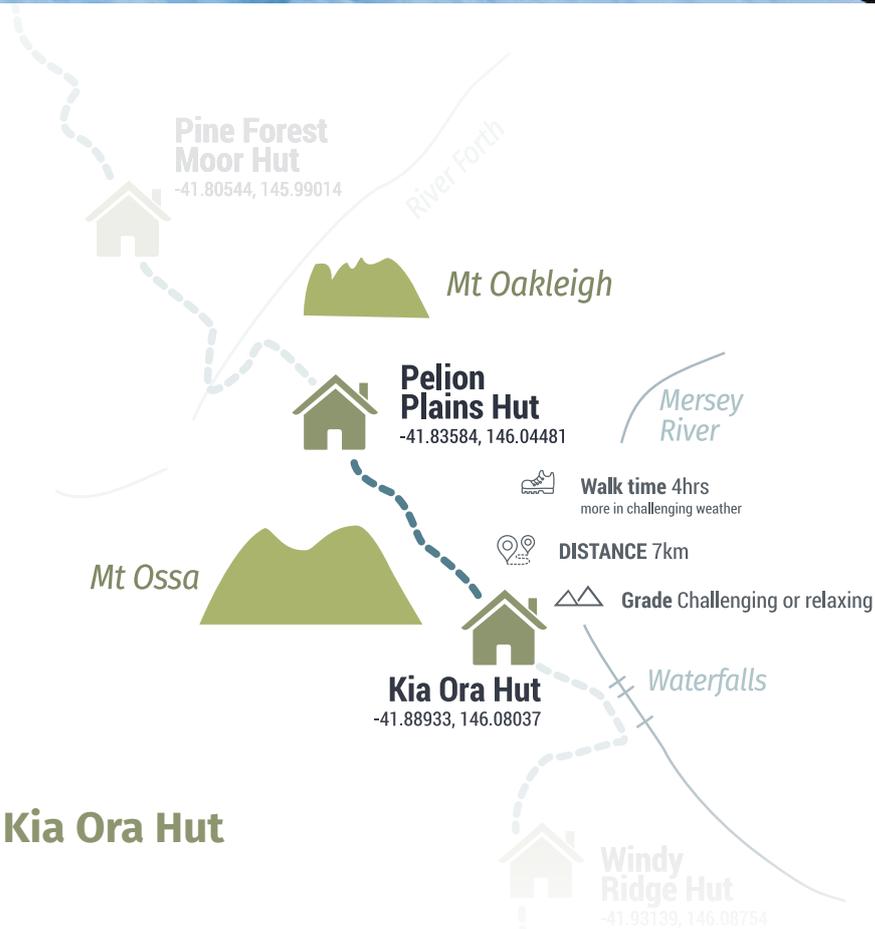
Pelion Plains Hut – Contingency/Rest Day

Today is a day of options. If you would like to relax at Pelion Hut and have a rest day, you are most welcome. If the weather is good, we can climb either Mt Ossa (1,617m) or Mt Oakleigh (1,252m). The guides will discuss different options with the group.

Please note if weather conditions are poor throughout another section of the itinerary, the guides may change the rest day to be at a different hut.



Day 6

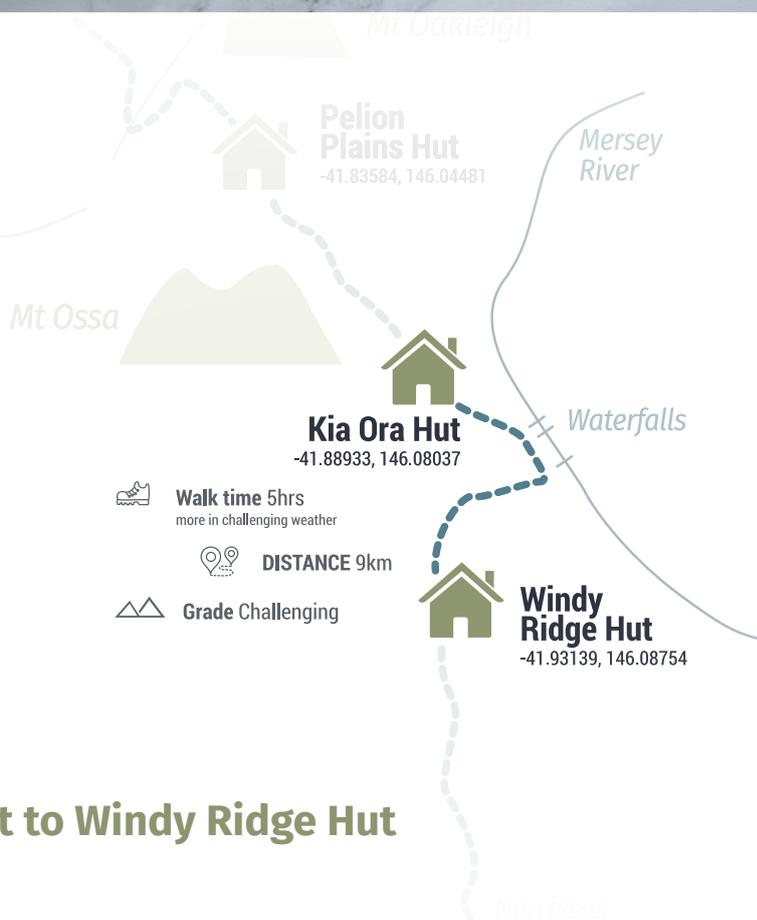


Pelion Hut to Kia Ora Hut

Begin today with a climb to Pelion Gap, where there are great views both back to the north and forward to the south. Today we allow extra time for additional side trips from Pelion Gap. It's a further few hours of gentle downhill from the gap to the hut, so it is a very relaxing day, with the option to make it more challenging.



Day 7



Kia Ora Hut to Windy Ridge Hut

This is a day of waterfalls and majestic forests. We depart Kia Ora hut and walk about an hour of easy travelling to Du Cane, where a hut remains from the long-gone days of animal trapping. A fine spot to rest in the native gardens planted by trapper Paddy Hartnett’s wife during her long stints in the bush with her husband. From there we wander through some of the oldest forest in the National Park with King Billy Pines as old as 2,000 years. Here, we are above the Mersey River, which descends steeply northward towards Bass Strait. There are three major sets of waterfalls and we opt to visit one or more of these. We will probably take lunch down to enjoy beside one of the falls.

During the afternoon, we make our way over Du Cane Gap, then descend beside the spectacular Falling Mountain to Windy Ridge Hut.



Day 8



Windy Ridge Hut to Lake St Clair

Lake St Clair is Australia's deepest natural lake and, as with most of this area, it has been shaped by glaciers. Our final day's walk is mainly through cool temperate eucalypt forest, and bird song is all around. We arrive at Narcissus Hut, at the northern end of Lake St Clair, in time for lunch. We then board the Ida Clair cruise boat, for the spectacular 17km cruise back to Cynthia Bay.

There is a visitor centre at Cynthia Bay, and we usually have around an hour to look around the Visitor Centre here.

The return trip to Red Feather Inn is through the trout fishing mecca of the highland lakes, descending the rugged Western Tiers.



What is included

- / Return Transfers between Launceston and the walk base/Cradle Valley/Lake St Clair
- / Accommodation (twin share) each evening while on the track in one of our five private huts - twin share
- / All meals and non-alcoholic beverages while on the track, plus a limited selection of Tasmanian wines while staying in our huts
- / Boat transfer across Lake St Clair (on Day 8 only)
- / National Park passes
- / Use of a backpack, weatherproof jacket for the duration of the walk
- / Pillows and a comfortable mattress at each hut
- / Sleeping bag, foam mat, sleeping sheet and pillowcase to carry with you
- / Two qualified guides and one hut support staff member for the duration of the walk
- / Accommodation with dinner on the first night at Cradle Valley and breakfast on day two



Gear List

We provide the following:

- / A high quality 65 litre backpack
- / Rain jacket (3-layer membrane; weatherproof and breathable)
- / Pack cover and pack liner
- / Sleeping bag and liner, pillow case,
- / Foam mat (in case of emergencies)
- / Lunch container and cutlery
- / Either crampons or chains are provided for the duration of the walk – these items you will carry each day
- / Snow shoes will be provided if weather conditions necessitate. They will be available for you at our walkers' base on day one
- / Pillows and comfortable mattresses are provided in each hut
- / Sunscreen, after-sun care, insect repellent and sorbolene-based skin moisturiser are available in each hut. We still recommend you bring a small amount with you for use on the track
- / We also provide biodegradable soap that is suitable for our eco-friendly grey water systems. Please avoid bringing your own soaps, shampoos and conditioners (unless prescribed for medical reasons), as standard products are not designed for use in these sensitive wilderness areas

Essential Gear List

The gear list outlines the essentials required to enjoy your walk in comfort and safety. The items below will be packed into your 65 litre pack (provided) and carried by you. If followed correctly, the pack should weigh about 12-15kg. Your comfort and enjoyment are of paramount importance to us, and keeping your pack weight to a minimum is our goal. Aim for one set of warm clothes for the evening and another set to wear whilst walking plus have a spare warm top. Thermals are necessary due to their lightweight, quick-drying and warm properties. There are no facilities for laundry available at the huts.

Please note that guides will do a thorough gear check prior to departure. If you are unsure about anything on the gear list, please call us or talk to your local outdoor adventure store.

Any luggage not required on your walk can be stored with us.



Essential Items

- / Lace-up walking boots, which provide good support & have strong, treaded soles (e.g. Vibram), waterproof and ankle support. Walking boots must cover the ankle bone. Guests arriving with the incorrect footwear will be unable to start the walk.
- / Synthetic fleece jacket or jumper
- / Light jumper/long-sleeved top (warm)
- / Down jacket/vest (or synthetic equivalent)
- / Beanie (wool or synthetic)
- / Scarf, neck warmer or buff
- / Waterproof gloves/mittens with insulation
- / Gaiters (long – reaching to just below the knee (available through Bushwalking Hire Gear)
- / Waterproof over pants 3 layer waterproof membrane preferred, nylon acceptable (available through Bushwalking Hire Gear)
- / Shorts and/or light trousers for walking
- / Thermal base layer (3 sets: merino or polypropylene long-sleeved top and long johns)
- / Shirts/t-shirts (3 recommended; avoid cotton)
- / Socks (3 pairs recommended)
- / Underwear
- / Lightweight hut footwear (thongs/ sports sandals)
- / Sun hat and sun screen (small bottle for use during the day)
- / Travel towel, body chamois (bodysized, for showering)
- / Water bottle(s) (2 litres total capacity)
- / Travel mug for hot drinks out on track
- / Head torch - minimum 300 lumens with spare batteries or USB charging cable
- / Walking poles with snow baskets (available through Bushwalking Hire Gear)
- / Please note: Denim clothing is not appropriate as it is heavy and very cold to wear when wet
- / Any personal medication, including anti-inflammatories and EpiPens
- / Warm long pants (evening hut wear – wool or synthetic)





Recommended Items

- / Camera (with spare batteries, or USB or car charger – limited recharging capacity in huts)

Optional Items

- / Pocket day pack (for optional side trips – can be prepurchased at www.bushwalkinghiregear.com)
- / Face masks- enough for the duration of the walk
- / Instant hand and/or foot warmers

Hire Gear - Bush Walking Gear Hire Tasmania

Gaiters, wet weather over pants, headlamps and walking poles are available for hire from Bushwalking Hire Gear Tasmania. You can arrange this directly by booking and paying online at www.bushwalkinghiregear.com at least one week prior to your walk, to arrange hire and delivery to our walker's base before departure of your walk.

Frequently Asked Questions

What flights should I book? Due to the nature of the Tasmanian winter weather, we highly recommend you book fully flexible flights. Should the weather become inclement, your group may need to spend an additional night in one of the huts. This is unlikely, however we cannot guarantee it won't happen. We recommend you arrive in Launceston the day prior to the walk departure to ensure you can be ready for the walker briefing on time.

How much weight do we carry? Before the trip, the guides will carry out a thorough gear check to ensure you have suitable gear. Pack weight will typically be approximately 12-15 kg.

What do we carry? Each person must carry their lunch, wet weather gear, sleeping bag, foam mat (emergency use), spare clothes for the hut, thermals, and warm clothing, plus any extras, such as a camera. It is important that all clothing and equipment that you bring is of an adequate standard. If you need further advice, please speak with our reservations staff. For more detailed information, please refer to the gear checklist.

What style of boots should we have? It is essential you have good quality, lace-up hiking boots with good ankle support. They should preferably be waterproof and have a treaded sole. Boots must be worn in to minimise the risk of blisters. Hiking shoes, approach shoes, walking or running shoes, sandals or similar are not acceptable.

Do we need travel insurance? You must have travel insurance before joining us on a winter walk. Consideration needs to be given to our cancellation policy, injury, evacuation, delayed flights, illness, etc.

What will our walk accommodation be like? Our groups have exclusive use of the only private hut accommodation along the Overland Track. Each hut has been discreetly located off the main trail and offers a hot shower, drying room and a dining and lounge area. The huts have 6 twin rooms with comfortable beds.

How many guides? Two guides and one hut support staff member will accompany each trip.

How about food? The guides prepare sumptuous meals each night. We are quite happy to cater for special dietary requirements. We just need to know in advance.

For example, here is the dinner menu served at Kia Ora Hut on Day 4:

On arrival at hut:

Grazing plate

Main course:

Forest mushroom and pea risotto with parmesan

Dessert:

Crème Brûlée





What time does the trip commence/conclude? Please be on time as we have a tight schedule. We ask that you be at our walker's base at Red Feather Inn at 11:30am for a briefing.

/ Launceston - For those staying in Launceston CBD, we offer a complimentary shuttle service from The Sebel Launceston (12/14 St John Street, Launceston). You will need to be ready in front of reception at 11:00am for an 11:10am *sharp* departure. From The Sebel Hotel, you will be transferred to Red Feather Inn. At Red Feather Inn you will meet your guides, have a gear check and briefing and shared lunch before heading up to the Cradle Valley. We will arrive at Cradle Mountain Hotel between 4-4:30pm, so there will be plenty of time for a relaxed dinner before retiring for the evening.

/ Day 2 - Please check out and be at the reception by 7:35am for a 7:45am departure.

Your walk will conclude at Red Feather Inn at 6.00pm with airport drop offs at 6.30pm and Launceston drop offs at 7:00pm.

What accommodation options do we have pre and post-walk?

Red Feather Inn – our walking base: Located in the small township of Hadspen, just a 10 minute drive from Launceston's CBD makes it the perfect accommodation prior to your walk. Red Feather Inn has a range of double and twin heritage rooms and three beautiful cottages which are perfect if you are travelling with friends or family. To see details of the current special rate which includes in room continental breakfast.

Quamby Homestead: Set on the grounds of Quamby Estate, Quamby Homestead is the perfect pre or post night of accommodation if you would like a little luxury. The homestead features ten restored guest rooms which feature antique furniture. Rooms are appointed with king, queen or twin bedding, marble or stone bathrooms and heated floors. To see details of the current special rate which includes cooked breakfast visit our **Walker benefits**. We will provide a transfer to Red Feather Inn for your trip departure on the morning of day one.

How to contact us

Phone: (03) 6392 2211
www.taswalkingco.com.au
Email: bookings@taswalkingco.com.au



Fitness Training

Multi-day bushwalking/trekking/tramping/hiking is a unique physical activity as it involves endurance, joint stabilisation and strength. Being physically prepared ensures that your experience will be enjoyable. We recommend that you undertake some hiking-specific training in the lead-up, ideally starting 6 months in advance to allow your body time to become conditioned.

Hiking-training is more than just regular walking; your body needs to be prepared for not only the duration of the trek, but also the uneven terrain, undulating hills, pack weight and slippery surfaces. Adequate training months before the trek begins will ensure you are skipping around the hut at the end of the day with a smile on your dial.

6 months before your walk

If you have limited experience with long-distance treks, ideally you will get started with your training as soon as possible. We recommend starting with a more moderate training program, and gradually increasing the length/difficulty/duration of your walks.

IDEAS:

- / Try parking your car further from work and walking to/from, then every second day increase the distance you park your car from work.
- / Getting off your bus a stop earlier and walk the extra distance to work
- / Short bush walks or coastal strolls on the weekend.
- / Encourage a friend or family member to walk with you to increase motivation
- / Record distance and duration each day that you walk. Aim to increase either distance or duration each week.

5 months before your walk

As you become conditioned and can comfortably walk for 30mins to 1hr every second day (3-4 days per week), it is time to start challenging your cardiovascular endurance by adding hills and stair climbs to your weekly routine. Try to find routes that allow you to walk on uneven ground, as this will help strengthen the muscles of your lower limbs. Start by walking at a relaxed speed up the slope or stairs for the first two sessions (record the time it takes you). Focus these sessions on relaxed breathing and your technique (standing up straight, engaging your bottom muscles as you push through your heels when ascending stairs). Each session following try to increase your pace (decreasing your recorded time).

If you haven't already, start "breaking in" your hiking boots to prevent blisters and determine whether your boots are the right fit and feel. If your boots are more than 10 years old there is a good chance the glue will have deteriorated and they will fall apart. It's better to find this out on your training walk than in the middle of the Tasmanian wilderness!

Stability is essential for injury prevention when hiking, especially when carrying a backpack. This includes stability around your spine and pelvis and your more distal joints such as knees and ankles. Therefore balance, yoga and/or pilates based exercises should be added to your training.

IDEAS:

- / Single leg balances, keeping a micro bend in your knee
 - / Advance single leg balance by standing on a rolled towel, foam mat or pillow
 - / Barefoot beach walking on soft sand for ankle stability
 - / Pilates based abdominal exercises (various depending on starting level)
-

4 months before your walk

On your Cradle Mountain Huts Walk, you will be carrying between 12-15kg, so we strongly recommend that you start wearing a backpack on your training walks. Start with a lighter backpack (~5kgs) and gradually increase the weight of your pack.

IDEAS:

- / Start to add a longer walk ~2hours at least once a week; this includes wearing hiking boots and carrying a pack
- / Soft sand walking
- / Walking on dry riverbeds
- / Alternating training walks with selected focuses e.g. Mon= hills, Wed= intervals of increased pace, Fri=distance



No doubt you are starting to discover new muscles and feeling a little tight and stiff. Adding a gentle stretching program (after you have warmed up) will aid in injury prevention. Aim to stretch major muscle groups such as hamstrings, quadriceps, buttocks and calf muscles. A gentle stretch of the muscles should be felt and pain should never be produced. Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds and avoid bouncing movements.

3 months before your walk

Map out a 7km hike in your area consisting of average hills and flat surfaces. Time how long it takes you to walk this distance (wearing hiking boots and backpack). Complete this hike once per week in conjunction with your other walking. Each week, add an extra km to your hike. By the end of the month the goal is to walk 10km comfortably. This hike is a good chance to practice with all the gear that you intend to take on your actual hike. This will enable you to work out where things are best located in/on your pack for your individual preference. Now is also good time to add in more strength based exercises.

IDEAS:

- / Squats (feet are hip width apart, body weight in your heels). Advance by added weights in each hand or increasing repetitions
 - / Lunges (alternating legs in front, protect your knees by making sure front knee does not come further forward than your ankle, keep torso up straight). Advance by increasing repetitions, adding weights in hands or walking lunges
-

2 months before your walk

The trekking tour is getting closer and now you are comfortable walking on different surfaces at different intensities. On the actual hike, you will be required to walk long distances on consecutive days in all weather conditions. Aim to walk 30mins - 1hour every day of the week, despite the weather (in addition to your weekly 7km hike).

Continue carrying your backpack that you will actually need to carry on the trek. Ideally by the end of this month you will be able to comfortably carry up to 15kgs on all your training walks.

1 month to go!

This is your “tapering” month, we recommend reducing the intensity of your training in this last month to avoid a burnout. The idea is to keep walking regularly, but decrease your intensity e.g. slower pace, one stair at a time rather than two, decrease your pack weight back to what you will carry on the trek. The last thing you want to do is get an injury just before your walk.

Remember to continue your strengthening and stretching exercises throughout your hike.