

OVERLAND TRACK

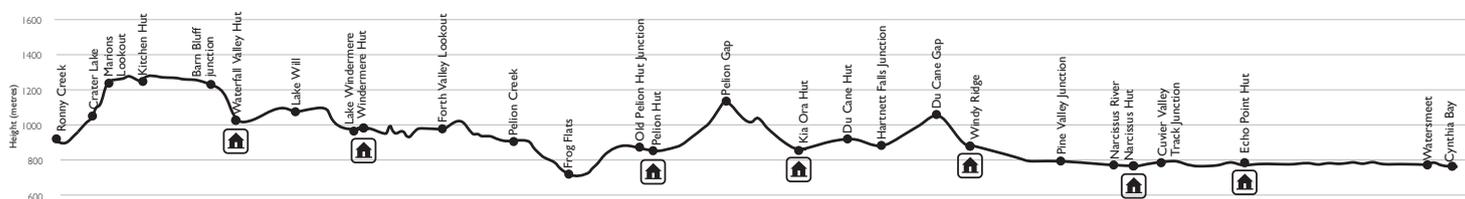


Daily walk notes

The following daily walk notes suit the itinerary of the far majority of walkers, with most people taking 6 days (if you take the ferry from Narcissus to Cynthia Bay), or 7 days (if you walk the Lakeside Track to Cynthia Bay). Create your own itinerary, depending on how many rest days or side-trips you wish to enjoy.

NOTE: The walk times listed are estimates for moderately fit people. They do not include breaks. Walking times vary with group fitness, weather and track conditions. For example, if a time says 4–6 hours, it may well take you 7, if you enjoy leisurely walking and frequent stops.

DAY	LOCATION	DISTANCE	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Day 1	Ronny Creek to Waterfall Valley	10.7 km	4-6 hrs
Day 2	Waterfall Valley to Lake Windermere	7.8 km	2.5-3.5 hrs
Day 3	Lake Windermere to Pelion	16.8 km	5-7 hrs
Day 4	Pelion to Kia Ora	8.6 km	3-4 hrs
Day 5	Kia Ora to Windy Ridge (Bert Nichols Hut)	9.6 km	3.5-4.5 hrs
Day 6	Windy Ridge to Narcissus (ferry terminal), Narcissus to Cynthia Bay (Lake St Clair Visitor Centre)	9 km	3-4 hrs 0.5 hrs (on ferry)
Day 7 (optional)	Narcissus to Cynthia Bay (via Lakeside Track)	17.5 km	5-6 hrs



Day 1 Ronny Creek to Waterfall Valley

Distance:	10.7 km
Time:	4-6 hours
Terrain:	Gradual ascent to Crater Lake, followed by a very steep, short ascent to Marions Lookout. Undulating across the alpine plains and a final gradual descent to Waterfall Valley.
Track Surface:	Duckboard over the buttongrass plains, followed by mainly natural surface (rock/gravel).
Warning:	Most of the day's walk is very exposed. In wet, windy or snowy weather, wear wind and waterproof clothing. Eat and drink regularly to maintain salt and sugar levels.

The first half hour of your journey on the Overland Track is on boardwalk, across the buttongrass moorland. The track soon rises and passes beside Crater Falls, then follows beside Crater Lake. Rest and replenish here before you tackle Marions Lookout (1250m) – the steepest section of the Overland Track.

For the next 5km you will enjoy sweeping views across the glacial landscape as you walk beside the base of Cradle Mountain, before steadily descending into spectacular Waterfall Valley to the huts and campsites. Once there, feel proud that you've just completed what many regard as the most difficult day – Day 1 of your Overland journey.

At Waterfall Valley

Waterfall Valley Hut – sleeps 24

Old Waterfall Valley Hut – sleeps 4

Tent Platforms – registered groups behind Old Waterfall Valley Hut

Tent Sites – general public on grass beside Old Waterfall Valley Hut

OPTIONAL SIDE TRIPS

Cradle Mountain (1545m)

Many walkers choose to leave their pack at Kitchen Hut and carry a day pack to the summit with essential items (eg waterproof jacket, first-aid kit, food and water etc). If leaving your pack at Kitchen Hut, tie zip ends together as currawongs have cleverly learnt to undo zips to access your food!

Distance 2km return from the junction

Time 2-3 hours return

Grade Moderate-Difficult. Very steep sections, with boulder scrambling toward the summit.

Warning Not recommended after or during rain and snow, or for walkers unsettled by heights and exposure.

Barn Bluff (1559m)

This side trip, to Tasmania's fourth-tallest mountain, is for very experienced walkers. Leave your pack at the junction and carry a day pack with essential items (eg waterproof jacket, first-aid kit, food and water etc). If leaving your pack at the junction, tie zip ends together as currawongs have cleverly learnt to undo zips to access your food!

Distance 7km return from the junction

Time 3-4 hours return

Grade Moderate-Difficult. Very steep sections, with boulder scrambling toward summit. The route is cairned.

Warning As challenging and exposed as Cradle Mountain. Only attempt in fine weather.



Day 2 Waterfall Valley to Lake Windermere

Distance	7.8km
Time	2.5-3.5 hours
Terrain	Undulating over the buttongrass plains, heathlands, alpine lakes and tarns.
Track Surface	Natural surface (rock, gravel), planking, duckboard and cordwood.
Warning	A short section of the walk, between Lake Will and Lake Windermere, is very exposed. In wet, windy or snowy weather, wear wind and waterproof clothing. Eat and drink regularly to maintain salt and sugar levels.

Compared with the previous day's big climb up to Marions Lookout and across the highest part of the Overland Track, the walk to Lake Windermere is relatively flat and leisurely – but still above 1000 metres in elevation.

In the first half hour you'll walk through heathland and alpine gums as you skirt the rim of the spectacular Waterfall Valley cirque. After rain, you can hear several waterfalls far below. About an hour down the track you'll reach the junction to Lake Will. This is a popular side trip, where many people choose to lunch on the lake's shore, beneath the backdrop of Barn Bluff.

From Lake Will to Lake Windermere you'll feel on top of the world as you travel high across the plateau. In clear weather there are expansive views to the east and west of the tarn-studded alpine moors. As you approach Lake Windermere, climb the small knoll for views down to the lake.

Windermere Hut is just beyond the lake, at the edge of a myrtle forest. Tent platforms are located either side of the hut, amongst gnarly snow peppermints and graceful pandanis, with Lake Windermere visible in the distance. Enjoy a refreshing mountain lake swim on arrival. No camping at the lake please.

At Windermere Hut

Windermere Hut – sleeps 16

Tent Platforms – numerous

OPTIONAL SIDE TRIP

Lake Will

A short walk along timber planking leads to this lovely alpine lake, fringed with ancient pencil pines and a thin rind of quartzite sand, with Barn Bluff as a dramatic backdrop. On the way, you'll pass several mounds of gravel – these are the remains of 1890s coal mining by Joseph Wills. Lake Will is a popular lunch spot.

Distance 3km return

Time 1 hour return

Grade Easy

Warning Many people leave their pack at the Lake Will junction. Currawongs have cleverly learnt to undo zips to access your food. Secure your pack!



Day 3 Lake Windermere to Pelion

Distance	16.8km
Time	5-7 hours
Terrain	Undulating across the buttongrass plains, with some steep forested sections.
Track Surface	Mainly natural gravel surface with some planking and cordwood.
Warning	The first half of the walk is exposed as you cross Pine Forest Moor. In wet, windy or snowy weather, wear wind and waterproof clothing. Eat and drink regularly to maintain salt and sugar levels.

Your day begins striding out across the heathland and moorland. About 4km in, take the short side track to the Forth Valley Lookout to view into this deep, dramatic valley.

Back on the main track, you'll pass through Pine Forest Moor and continue on through buttongrass moorlands before crossing Pelion Creek. You'll then enter a glorious myrtle-beech rainforest on the eastern flanks of Mt Pelion West. It's a gradual descent all the way through rainforest to Frog Flats – the lowest section of the Overland Track (730m above sea level). At Frog Flats you'll cross the Forth River. There is a campsite here, however most walkers push on to Pelion.

From Frog Flats it's a gradual walk up through more rainforest before breaking out into the open eucalypt forest on the edge of Pelion Plains. The spacious Pelion Hut is set on the edge of picturesque buttongrass plains, with the spectacular dolerite spires of Mt Oakleigh framing the view to the north.

At Pelion

Pelion Hut – sleeps 36

Tent Platforms – one large platform

Tent Sites – on grass, near the platforms

OPTIONAL SIDE TRIP

Old Pelion Hut

Several hundred metres before Pelion Hut is the junction to Old Pelion Hut. Many people visit this charming, historic hut on the way to Pelion. Alternatively, it's a good afternoon leg-stretch after arriving at Pelion campsite to back-track to the hut. Old Pelion Hut is one of the park's oldest, constructed around 1916 to accommodate workers in the nearby (now disused) copper mines. It was later used by graziers and snarers. Careful observers may see remnants of the mine operations. The hut is for day shelter and emergency overnight use only. There is a good swimming hole in nearby Douglas Creek (follow the foot track).

Distance 1 km return

Time 1/2 hour return

Grade Easy



Day 4 Pelion to Kia Ora

Distance	8.6km
Time	3-4 hours
Terrain	Gradual ascent through wet forest to Pelion Gap, followed by a gradual descent across buttongrass plains and through eucalypt forest to Kia Ora.
Track Surface	The climb to Pelion Gap is mainly on a natural surface (tree roots, muddy, rocky). The descent to Kia Ora includes muddy sections with some planking, cordwood and duckboard.
Warning	Pelion Gap is an extremely exposed plateau. In wet, snowy or windy weather, layer up with your water/windproof clothing before emerging out of the rainforest onto the plateau. Eat/drink in the shelter of the forest too.

Today is mountain day. You'll start your walk at the same altitude as you finish, with Pelion Hut and Kia Ora Hut both at 850m in elevation. In between, however, you'll climb almost 300m to Pelion Gap – and more if you choose to summit one of the peaks.

Start by ascending steadily through rainforest, at first following beside Douglas Creek. After a few hours, you'll emerge from the forest onto Pelion Gap – the exposed alpine plateau between Mt Pelion East and Mt Ossa. If fine weather and time allows, you may choose to attempt to summit Tasmania's highest mountain (Mt Ossa-1617m) or the slightly lower Mt Pelion East. Good views can also be had by climbing to the saddle between Mt Doris and Mt Ossa.

Leave your pack at the junction and carry a day pack with waterproof jacket, food, water, first aid kit, torch, map, compass, etc. Injury and death have occurred in the Tasmanian mountains. Don't risk your safety, or that of your group. No matter how close to the summit you might be, it's better to turn around if the weather closes in, rather than risk your party's safety.

The gradual descent from Pelion Gap to Kia Ora Hut through beautiful Pinestone Valley with views to your left of Cathedral Mountain, is a favourite part of the track for many.

After arriving at Kia Ora, you'll find the delightful Kia Ora Creek just beyond the hut.

At Kia Ora

Kia Ora Hut – sleeps 20

Tent Platforms – numerous

OPTIONAL SIDE TRIPS

Mt Ossa (1617m)

Tasmania's highest peak! The track to Mt Ossa has steep and very exposed sections. We strongly advise against climbing if it is raining or snowing, or if there is heavy snow on the ground. Once in the boulderfield, the track can be difficult to follow in low cloud and/or if snow-covered. Boulderfields under snow are dangerous. You will need 4-5 hours of daylight to summit and return to Pelion Gap – and a further hour to reach Kia Ora Hut.

Distance 5.2km return

Time 4-5 hours return

Grade medium-hard

Mt Pelion East (1433m)

A good alternative climb if time or fitness limits your capacity to scale Mt Ossa. It's a gradual uphill with a steep final scramble to a rocky summit. In clear weather, you'll have spectacular views over Mt Ossa, the Pelion Range and most of the park's highest peaks. The same weather warnings apply as for Mt Ossa.

Distance 2.4km return

Time 2 hours return

Grade medium-hard



Day 5 Kia Ora to Windy Ridge

Distance	9.6km
Time	3.5-4.5 hours
Terrain	Undulating, with gradual ascent and descent over Du Cane Gap. Mainly rainforest walking.
Track Surface	Almost entirely natural surface (with tree root, gravel, rock or mud base), with some small amounts of cordwood and duckboard.
Warning	If visiting the falls, parts of the track are slippery and pass very close to the cliff edge.

Today is rainforest and waterfall day. Initially the track passes through buttongrass, but soon you'll be immersed in rainforest as you skirt the lower slopes of Castle Crag. Below you, unseen from the main track, the Mersey River crashes through chasms and plunges over cliffs.

About an hour into the walk, you'll break out of the forest into a small clearing, where you'll find Du Cane Hut, built in 1910 by Paddy Hartnett, a snarer, miner and bushman. You're welcome to take a look inside, but its overnight use is only permitted in emergencies.

A little further on, you'll come to the track junction marking the first side trip down to see D'Alton and Fergusson Falls – the latter named after Ranger "Fergy" – the first ranger in the south end of the park. Hartnett Falls – the tallest of the three – is a little further on, off another track junction. You can leave your pack at the track junctions to explore the falls. They're all well worth a visit.

Back on the main track, you'll swing west and begin a gradual climb to Du Cane Gap – the saddle between the Traveller Range and the Du Cane Range. When you cross over the gap and start a steep descent, you'll be entering the bowl-like cirque of the Du Cane Range, sculpted by glaciers thousands of years ago.

Once the canopy starts to open out and eucalypts begin to appear, you're close to camp: Windy Ridge and Bert Nichols Hut – a stunning location almost totally encircled by the spectacular Du Cane Range.

At Windy Ridge

Bert Nichols Hut – sleeps 24
Tent Platforms – numerous

OPTIONAL SIDE TRIPS

D'Alton and Fergusson Falls

Gradual descent through rainforest to both waterfalls. Beware of slippery tracks and sheer drop-offs at the top of the falls.

Distance 1 km return
Time 1 hour return
Grade Easy

Hartnett Falls

Gradual descent to the top of the falls. A narrow, rough track leads along the cliff edge to the base of the falls. Beware of slippery track and sheer drop-off at top of falls.

Distance 1.5km return
Time 1 hour return
Grade Easy (to top of falls)



Day 6 Windy Ridge to Narcissus

Distance	9km
Time	3-4 hours
Terrain	Gradual, easy decent to Narcissus through eucalypt forest and across buttongrass plains.
Track Surface	Almost entirely natural surface through the forest (gravel/tree root base), with duckboard over the buttongrass plains.
Warning	If you are catching the ferry back to Cynthia Bay, re-confirm your booking using the ferry radio in Narcissus Hut.

Whether you're finishing your walk at Narcissus, or continuing on foot to Cynthia Bay, either way, there's no more uphill! It's a gentle walk down the glacier's path to Narcissus Hut beside Lake St Clair. Relax and enjoy your final hours of walking.

Aside from pockets of wet forest beside creeks, you'll be walking in an environment most Australians are more familiar with – amongst tall eucalypts and fragrant heath shrubs, surrounded by birdsong and scurrying skinks, and perhaps even an occasional snake on warmer days.

About halfway to Narcissus, is the track junction to Pine Valley Hut. The hut is a popular spot for Tasmanian bushwalkers who journey up from Lake St Clair and use it as a base to explore the Du Cane Range.

As you near Narcissus River, the dolerite columns of Mount Olympus form a dramatic backdrop to the golden glow of buttongrass moorland. The comfortable duckboard track, which protects the boggy peat soils, is a welcome change, allowing you to stroll along, savouring the view, instead of constantly watching your feet. Crossing the Narcissus River is exciting – it's the only suspension bridge on the Overland Track.

A little further on, you'll find the small and rustic Narcissus Hut on the banks of the Narcissus River. If you intend to catch the ferry down Lake St Clair, confirm your ferry booking using the hut radio. And a little further on again, is the jetty where the ferry will collect you – and where you can FINALLY take off your pack and your boots and celebrate your remarkable achievement!

On arrival at Cynthia Bay, remember to sign out/de-register your walk and write some reflections in the walkers' journal of your extraordinary journey on one of the world's most famous long-distance walks in the heart of Tasmania's magnificent world heritage area.

(For those walking through to Cynthia Bay around the edge of Lake St Clair on the Lakeside Track, you have another day of beautiful rainforest ahead of you.)

At Narcissus

Hut– sleeps 18

Tent Sites – several near the hut

OPTIONAL SIDE TRIP

Pine Valley Hut (recommended as an overnight trip)

It's a lovely walk through moorland, eucalypt forest then rainforest to reach the hut. Pine Valley Hut is used as a base for exploring the Du Cane Range. The most popular day walk is to the Acropolis. Details on the walk options can be found in the hut.

Distance 4.7km one way

Time 1.5 - 2 hours one way

Grade Easy

Pine Valley Hut sleeps 24

(very limited tent space)



Day 7 Narcissus to Cynthia Bay

Distance	17.5km
Time	5-6 hours
Terrain	Gently undulating through the rainforest.
Track Surface	Almost entirely natural forest floor surface, with some duckboard/cordwood/planking over wetter areas.

No more steep hills to climb or descend. From here on, savour the last day of your Overland Track journey as you meander lakeside to Cynthia Bay.

After an initial stride across the swampy Hamilton Plains, your day will be spent in ancient rainforest, in a world of lichens and mosses, with damp, spongy earth beneath your feet. Occasionally, you will have glimpses to Lake St Clair. And once in a while, the rainforest will open out to younger eucalypt forest, with towering gum-topped stringybarks.

About 5km (2 hours) into the walk, you'll reach the small, rustic Echo Point Hut on the shores of Lake St Clair. If you have the time, you might like to spend an extra night out on the track. (The hut sleeps 8 and there are a few campsites. Water collection is from the lake.)

From Echo Point, your final few hours on the track continues through rainforest, and then, as you approach Cynthia Bay, through eucalypt forest and tall ferns.

On arrival at Cynthia Bay, remember to de-register your walk and write some reflections on your amazing journey in the walkers' journal.

Most importantly, feel proud of yourself. You will have just completed one of the world's great long-distance walks through magnificent world heritage wilderness, carrying all that you needed on your back!

At Cynthia Bay

Tent Sites – Fergys Paddock, 10 min walk from Cynthia Bay (PWS) (water collection from lake)

Other Accommodation

Lake St Clair – cabins, backpacker dorms (private)

Derwent Bridge – cabins, hotel (private)

