



The High Country

Includes »

Baw Baw NP	255
Lake Eildon NP	255
Mansfield	259
Mt Buller	261
Beechworth	264
Mt Buffalo NP	268
Bright	268
Mt Beauty	271
Falls Creek	272
Mt Hotham	275

Best Places to Eat

- » Mansfield Regional Produce Store (p261)
- » Provenance (p266)
- » King River Café (p263)
- » Butter Factory (p268)
- » Simone's Restaurant (p271)

Best Places to Stay

- » Freeman on Ford (p266)
- » Odd Frog (p270)
- » Dreamers (p273)
- » Houseboat on Lake Eildon (p258)
- » Camping, Mt Buffalo (p268)

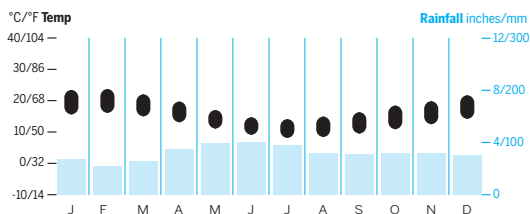
Why Go?

If you're looking for adventure, you've found the right place. The Great Dividing Range – Australia's eastern mountain spine – curls around eastern Victoria from the Snowy Mountains to the Grampians, peaking in the spectacular High Country. These are Victoria's Alps – a mountain playground attracting skiers and snowboarders in winter and bushwalkers and mountain bikers in summer. Although not particularly high – the highest point is Mt Bogong at 1986m – the mountain air is clear and invigorating, winter snowfalls usually reliable and the scenery spectacular.

There are plenty of year-round activities on offer here, but it's the ski resorts that really pull the crowds. Mt Buller, Mt Hotham and Falls Creek in particular all have good infrastructure. Away from the mountain tops, the High Country offers plenty of summer activities from horse riding, canoeing, abseiling and mountain-bike riding to the more restful pastimes of touring the wineries and gourmet regions of Milawa, the King Valley and Beechworth.

When to Go

Point Hicks



Winter Hit the snowy mountain slopes; July/August is peak season

Apr–May Best time for glorious Autumn colours around Bright and Omeo

Dec–Feb The green season for mountain-biking, horse riding and wine touring

BAW BAW NATIONAL PARK

Baw Baw National Park, an offshoot of the Great Dividing Range, is the southern-most part of Victoria's High Country and is technically in West Gippsland. The Baw Baw Plateau and the forested valleys of the Thomson and Aberfeldy Rivers, are a wonderful places for bushwalking, with marked tracks through subalpine vegetation, ranging from open eucalypt stands to wet gullies and tall forests on the plateau. The 3km **Mushroom Rocks Walk** from Mt Erica car park leads to huge granite tors (blocks of granite broken off from the massif). The highest points are **Mt St Phillack** (1566m) and **Mt Baw Baw** (1564m). The higher sections of the park are snow-covered in winter, when everyone heads for Baw Baw Village ski resort and the **Mt St Gwinear** cross-country skiing area.

There is a camping area in the north-eastern section of the park, with picnic tables, fireplaces and pit toilets. Dispersed free bush camping is also allowed on the Baw Baw Plateau (fuel stove only). A section of the **Australian Alps Walking Track**, which starts its 655km journey at Walhalla, passes by a few kilometres from Baw Baw Village.

Baw Baw Village

POP 11

Baw Baw is Victoria's smallest (and also cheapest) downhill-skiing resort and a relaxed option for both beginners and families. The downhill-skiing area is set over 35 hectares with a vertical drop of 140m and seven ski lifts. Baw Baw is also a base for cross-country skiing, with plenty of trails, including one that connects to the Mt St Gwinear trails on the southern edge of the plateau. In winter the day car park costs weekday/weekend \$30/35 per car; green season is \$5 per day. Lifts for adult/child cost from \$59/39 per day mid-week and \$64/44 weekends; cross-country passes cost \$9/5 and toboggan passes \$5 per person. **Mt Baw Baw Ski Hire** (%5165 1120; www.bawbawskihire.com.au; Currawong Rd) hires out equipment. For freestyle riders, **Cactus Rail Park** has rails and kick boxes, and there's the **Big Air Bag**, where you can practise your snowboarding stunts with a guaranteed soft landing!

4 Sleeping & Eating

Most lodges and eateries are open year-round.

Kelly's Lodge

B&B, CAFE \$\$

(%5165 1129; www.kellyslodge.com.au; 11 Frosti Ln; r summer/winter from \$100/330) This long-running and superfriendly place, with comfortable rooms and a cosy lounge, is in the centre of everything. The ski-in cafe (mains \$14 to \$30) is a Baw Baw favourite, with legendary pizzas and lamb shanks.

Alpine Hotel

HOTEL \$

(%5165 1136; Currawong Rd; dm summer/winter from \$25/30, d from \$100/130) Superb value, year-round backpacker and motel-style accommodation. In winter the sports bar-cafe and Powder Lounge is *the* place to hang while local bands belt out rock covers.

Village Central

CAFE-RESTAURANT \$\$

(%5165 1123; Alpine Resort, Currawong Rd; mains \$6-25; h daily summer, Fri-Sun winter) The cafe-restaurant at Village Central, specialising in local produce, offers good valley views while you enjoy Mod Oz meals.

8 Information

In the centre of the village, **Mt Baw Baw Alpine Resort Management** (%5165 1136; www.mountbawbaw.com.au) offers general tourist information and an **accommodation service** (%1300 651 136).

8 Getting There & Away

The main access road to Baw Baw Village is the windy Baw Baw Tourist Rd via Noojee, reached off the Princes Hwy at Drouin. The alternative back route from the Latrobe Valley is the unsealed, but all-season, South Face Rd from Rawson, north of Moe. Either way, the last 5km up to Baw Baw Village is probably the steepest road in the country – low gear all the way.

LAKE EILDON NATIONAL PARK

Surrounding most of its namesake lake, Lake Eildon National Park is the low-lying southern gateway to the High Country, covering over 270 sq km and providing superb opportunities for walking and camping. From the 1850s, the areas around Lake Eildon were logged and mined for gold, so much of the vegetation is regrowth eucalypt forest.

Originally called Sugarloaf Reserve, **Lake Eildon** was created as a massive reservoir for irrigation and hydroelectric schemes. It