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Tasman Peninsula & Port Arthur

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Why Go?

Just an hour from Hobart are the staggering coastal landscapes, sandy surf beaches and historic sites of the Tasman Peninsula. Bushwalking, surfing, sea-kayaking, scuba-diving and rock-climbing opportunities abound – all good reasons to extend your visit beyond a hurried day trip from Hobart.

Don't miss visiting the peninsula's legendary 300m-high sea cliffs, which will dose you up on natural awe. Most of the cliffs are protected by Tasman National Park, a coastal enclave embracing chunky offshore islands and underwater kelp forests. The cliffs are a safe haven for seabirds, while the fertile waters below throng with seals, dolphins and whales.

Waiting portentously at the end of Arthur Hwy is Port Arthur, the infamous and allegedly escape-proof penal colony in the mid-19th century. Today kids kick footballs and dads poke sausages on BBQs there, but it's impossible to forget this is a tragic place, both historically and more recently.

When to Go

The Tasman Peninsula's weather is at its best from November to March, but from December to February you'll need to be prepared for crowds at the Port Arthur Historic Site, especially on weekends. Lovers of fresh fruit should visit from December to January, when the Sorell Fruit Farm is awash with juicy varieties. Negotiating the Tasman Peninsula's many walking tracks is definitely a summer activity, best undertaken from December to April.

Tours

If you don't have wheels, you can take a coach or ferry tour to the Tasman Peninsula from Hobart. Many operators run trips to Port Arthur.

Tasman Island Adventure

Cruises SIGHTSEEING CRUISE (26253 5325: www.tasmanadventurecruises.com. au; full-day tour adult/child from \$169/110)

Trips departing Hobart and incorporating a three-hour adventure cruise, the Tasman Peninsula's most spectacular coastal scenery, and the option of exploring Port Arthur. The cruise can also be joined from Eaglehawk Neck (adult/child \$100/55).

Gray Line

SIGHTSEEING, CRUISE (21300 858 687; www.grayline.com.au; full-day tour adult/child from \$100/50) Coach tours



Tasman Peninsula & Port Arthur Highlights

 Paying your respects to the past, both distant and recent, at the Port Arthur Historic Site (p97)

2 Sea-kayaking (p94) around the Tasman Peninsula's broken coastline

Getting your hands dirty picking fresh raspberries, apricots and silvanberries at the Sorell Fruit Farm (p92)

4 Spotting seals, dolphins and maybe even a whale on a cruise around Tasman Island (p94) from Port Arthur

5 Battling vertigo atop the southern hemisphere's highest sea cliffs at Cape Pillar on the Tasman Coastal Trail (p94)

Oiving the clear. cool waters of the Tasman Peninsula from Eaglehawk **Neck** (p94)

Chowing down on local seafood at the **Dunalley** Waterfront Café (p93)

8 Pitching your tent at remote Fortescue Bay (p96) and falling asleep to the lull of the waves