



Cradle Country & the West

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Why Go?

If you imagined Tasmania as a land of soaring alpine peaks and dreamy, untouched wilderness, then you've imagined this part of the state. Welcome to the island's wild west, a land of endless ocean beaches, ancient mossy rainforests, tannin-tinted rivers, glacier-sculpted mountains and boundless horizons, where you feel like the only soul on earth. This is Tasmania's vast outdoor playground, where your options for adventure are varied and plentiful. Come here for the toughest multi-day hikes (or gentle rainforest wanders); come to shoot rapids on untamed rivers (or cruise mirror-calm waters); and come to kayak into some of the last untouched temperate wilderness on earth (or fly over it all in a light plane). Get out into the wilds independently, or come with a guided group, but whatever you do, get out there.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Linda Valley Cafe (p247)
- ➔ Risby Cove (p243)
- ➔ Highland Restaurant (p254)
- ➔ Empire Hotel (p247)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Cradle Mountain Highlanders Cottages (p253)
- ➔ Franklin Manor (p242)
- ➔ Wheelhouse Apartments (p242)
- ➔ Cradle Mountain Lodge (p254)
- ➔ Penghana (p246)

When to Go

- ➔ This whole region buzzes in the warmest months (December to March). It may be busy, but the long days give you more time in the outdoors, and visitor services operate at full tilt.
- ➔ Tasmania's alpine heart can be gorgeously ice-encrusted in winter (June to August). Fewer souls get out bushwalking now, and even the most-trodden tracks are hushed. If you're equipped and keen for a frosty – even snowy – highland adventure, it's a great time to visit.
- ➔ The southwest returns to remotest isolation in the cold months (May to September): this is when ferocious western gales arrive...and few visitors dare.

Cradle Country & the West Highlights

- 1 Get a bird's-eye view of World Heritage wilderness then landing by seaplane on the **Gordon River** (p241).
- 2 Feel the power of Roaring Forties waves on 33km-long **Ocean Beach** (p239).
- 3 Watch the true tale of convict escape in Strahan's hilarious production, **The Ship that Never Was** (p243).
- 4 Tour mines and rainforest at **Queenstown** (p246).
- 5 Travel along the deep-rainforest **West Coast Wilderness Railway** (p242).
- 6 Experience wilderness on water on a rafting journey

