



Midlands & Central Highlands

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Ross Village Bakery (p131)
- ➔ Red Bridge Cafe & Providore (p132)
- ➔ Zeps (p132)
- ➔ Highlander Restaurant (p136)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Blossom's Cottage (p129)
- ➔ Cherry Villa (p136)
- ➔ Tarraleah Lodge (p136)

Why Go?

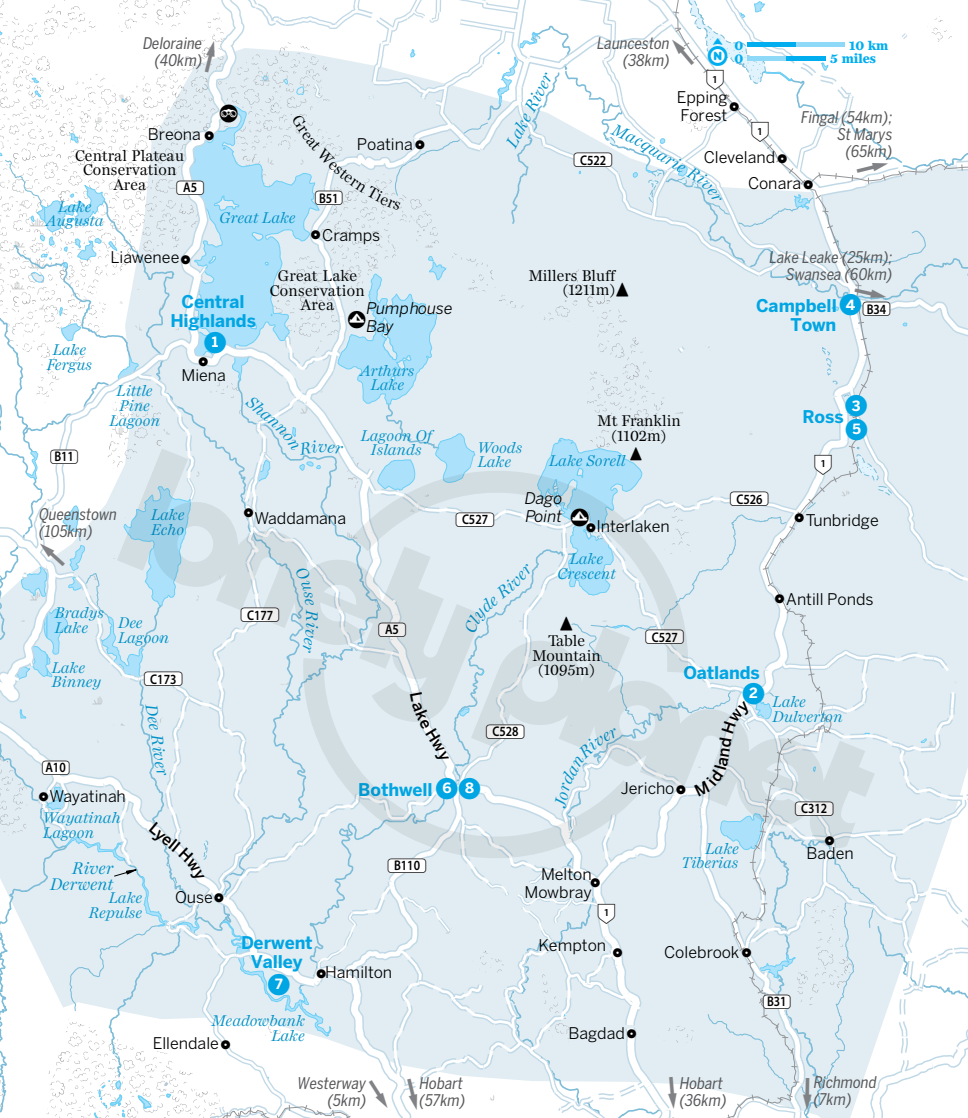
Baked, straw-coloured plains, hawthorn hedgerows, rows of poplars, roadside mansions...Tasmania's Midlands have a distinct English-countryside feel. This is old-school Tasmania, tracing the route between Hobart and Launceston hammered out by convict gangs in the early 1800s. As the road rolled itself out, sandstone garrison towns and pastoral properties appeared: the Midlands soon became the food factory of Van Diemen's Land.

The current course of the Midland Hwy has strayed from its original path – a few meandering detours are required to explore the old towns with their Georgian main streets, antique shops and country pubs.

The underpopulated, undertouristed Central Highlands feature subalpine moorlands and trout-filled lakes. On the highlands' southern fringe is the Derwent Valley, a fecund fold studded with vineyards, hop fields, orchards and old oast houses (for drying hops). If you thumbed through a dictionary looking for the definition of 'sleepy backwater', it would say 'See Derwent Valley towns'.

When to Go

- ➔ The Midlands and the Central Highlands are definitely at their best from December to March, with warm, settled weather and extended opening hours.
- ➔ Through the winter months (June to August), snow is quite common around the Central Highlands. A wee dram of local single malt whisky will keep the chills at bay on a cold highland night.
- ➔ If you're keen on checking out the heritage architecture around Ross and Oatlands, shoot for the shoulder months – October, November, April and May – when accommodation owners crank up the discounts.



Midlands & Central Highlands Highlights

1 Arc a fly across a highland stream and **snare a trout** (p134) in the Central Highlands.

2 Ascend the steps inside Oatlands' heritage **Callington Mill** (p129).

3 Look for the carving of Jorgen Jorgenson, former

king of Iceland, on the **Ross Bridge** (p130).

4 Read the heinous convict histories in the red bricks along the main street of **Campbell Town** (p132).

5 Question your moral direction at the **Four Corners of Ross** (p130).

6 Nose your way into a whisky tasting at the **Nant Distillery** (p133) in Bothwell.

7 Wander through sandstone villages and old hydroelectric towns in the **Derwent Valley** (p135)

8 Make par on Australia's oldest golf course, **Ratho Farm** (p134).