

# Understand Tasmania

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Small island, big issues... Fast-track your understanding of the matters that matter in Tasmania today.

## **HISTORY .....264**

Rattle the skeletons in Tasmania's closet (there's not much room for anything else in there...). The island's history is compellingly intertwined with the story of Australia itself.

## **GOURMET TASMANIA ..... 273**

Source the island's best farm-gate produce, hook yourself some fresh seafood, and sip Tasmanian craft beer, whisky and cool-climate wine.

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Lose yourself (not literally) in Tasmania's rugged, remote landscapes and read up on the best places to see the island's amazing wildlife.

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Trace the timeline of Tasmania's combustible brew of politics, primary industry and environmental activism.

# Tasmania Today

There's an expression from the 1980s: 'Wake up Australia, Tasmania is floating away!' Mainlanders mightn't have been too interested in Tasmania back then, but these days Australia is awake to the Apple Isle's loveliness. Sea- and tree-change migrants are escaping to the island, reversing the historical drift of young Tasmanians heading north for careers or study. Tasmania's astounding natural beauty, fab food and compact cities have become essential antidotes to the more pressured urban lifestyles to the north.

## Best on Film

**The Hunter** (2011) Willem Dafoe goes hunting for the last Tasmanian tiger.

**Van Diemen's Land** (2009) Cannibal convict Alexander Pearce escapes from Macquarie Harbour.

**The Sound of One Hand Clapping** (1998) A father and daughter at odds in Tasmania's Central Highlands.

**The Tale of Ruby Rose** (1988) Ruby gets spooked in the wilds after dark.

**Captain Blood** (1935) Legendary Tasmanian Errol Flynn swashbuckles his way towards Olivia de Havilland.

## Best in Print

**The Narrow Road to the Deep North** (Richard Flanagan; 2014) From Hobart to the Thai–Burma Death Railway. The 2014 Man Booker Prize winner.

**In Tasmania** (Nicholas Shakespeare; 2004) A British spin on the island's history, heritage and culture.

**Thylacine** (David Owen; 2003) Poignant recounting of the tragic demise of the Tasmanian tiger.

**Into the Woods: the Battle for Tasmania's Forests** (Anna Krien; 2012) Pro- and anti-logging conflict in Tasmania's forests, courtrooms and media.

**For the Term of His Natural Life** (Marcus Clarke; 1874) Classic account of convict life at Port Arthur.

## An Outdoor State of Mind

The modern Tasmanian identity is mirrored in the island's ancient and remarkable landscape. Dark foliage and craggy peaks are whipped by notorious winds, and stunted winter days are infused with the stark clarity of southern light. This Gothic environment fosters a keen sense of adventure and an understated resilience. Rather than hiding indoors behind sandstone walls, Tasmanians embrace their wilderness: getting into it, over it, or on top of it is something the Tasmanian work-life balance absolutely mandates. Beneath woollen beanies and layers of thermals and Gore-Tex, locals are ready to launch into the bush given the slightest excuse.

## Tasting Tasmania

A highlight of any Tasmanian trip is getting stuck into the island's food and drink, especially fresh seafood, luscious fruits, craft beer and stellar wines. This cool-climate combo is a hit with both Australian and international chefs: local salmon is served in the restaurants of Tokyo, while whiffy Tassie cheeses provide the perfect finish to meals in Melbourne and Sydney bistros. And how about the whisky! Hobart's Sullivans Cove whisky won the gold medal at the 2014 World Whisky Masters in London – a coveted prize rarely won by anyone other than traditional Scottish producers. There are now a dozen whisky distillers across the state producing superb single malts. And, of course, the classic Tasmanian snack on-the-run remains the curried scallop pie – a peppery, lurid-yellow concoction sheathed in pie pastry that will fuel your wilderness adventure, solve your morning hangover or prepare you for tomorrow's.