



WEST COAST WILDERNESS WAY

This route links the three World Heritage Areas of Cradle Mountain, the wild rivers of the Franklin and lower Gordon River and the land and 3,000 lakes that surround Lake St Clair. The route starts from Cradle Mountain and explores the unique post-settlement history of the region that includes convicts, miners and railway men and their families.

START: Cradle Mountain
EXPLORE: Tasmania's West Coast
DURATION: 3-4 days

NATIONAL PARKS ON THIS ROUTE:
 > Franklin - Gordon Wild Rivers National Park

LEG	TIME / DISTANCE
Cradle Mountain to Zeehan	1 hr 35 min / 106 km
Zeehan to Strahan	41 min / 44 km
Strahan to Queenstown	37 min / 41 km
Queenstown to Lake St Clair (Derwent Bridge)	1 hr / 86 km

Cradle Mountain - Zeehan

- > After enjoying the Cradle Mountain experience make your next stop Tullah, a town with a chequered history of mining and hydro development that now caters to visitors.
- > Stop for refreshments at Tullah Lakeside Lodge or maybe a bit of fishing on Lake Rosebery.
- > The town of Rosebery, a short drive farther southwest, is a working mine township proud of its environmental management. Tour the mine's surface infrastructure.
- > Nearby is a three-hour return walk to Tasmania's tallest waterfall, Montezuma Falls.
- > Continue on to Zeehan, once Tasmania's third-largest town with gold and silver mines, numerous hotels and more than 10,000 residents. Now it's at the centre of the west coast's mining heritage, with the West Coast Heritage Centre, the unusual Spray Tunnel and the Grand Hotel and Gaiety Theatre.
- > Overnight Zeehan or continue on to Strahan.

Strahan

- > In Strahan, you can take a cruise up the Gordon River into the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park.
- > Along the way, step back in time on Sarah Island, the infamous penal settlement that was once the colony's largest ship-building centre. The dark and silent Gordon River will hypnotise you with its mirror-still reflections, and afterwards there's still time to enjoy a fishing excursion on the harbour, a scenic floatplane trip up the Gordon or an exhilarating jet boat ride on the King River.
- > On the other hand, a leisurely stroll around the foreshore walking track and a cup of coffee may be more your style. At the Visitor Centre watch a performance of *The Ship That Never Was* – the longest running theatre show in Australia, telling the story of convicts who stole a small boat and sailed it halfway around the world.

Strahan – Queenstown

- > From Strahan drive on to Queenstown where the starkly beautiful, barren hills that encircle Queenstown and the verandas that line its main street, give the town a wild west atmosphere. The smelting and mining practices of the early 1900s that caused the deforestation of the slopes ceased long ago and plants are slowly recolonising the slopes.
- > Take a ride on the West Coast Wilderness Railway from Queenstown and take a trip along river gorges, across bridges and over 35km of mountain ranges on a unique Abt rail system, rebuilt after 40 years.
- > In Queenstown, talk to the local tour guides, tour the Mt Jukes Road to Bird River, or descend 1.5 km underground and explore more than 7 km of drives and workings of the Mt Lyell copper mine, still operating after more than 100 years.
- > The West Coast produces world-class furniture and craft timber – the famed Huon pine, sassafras, blackwood and myrtle – most of which can be viewed and purchased at sawmills in Queenstown and Strahan. If you're not a craftsman yourself, select beautifully crafted finished products from local outlets.
- > The Galley Museum displays a photographic collection, minerals collection, and local memorabilia. The Galley Museum is housed in the original Imperial Hotel, built in 1897. The building operated as one of Queenstown's leading hotels for twenty years, and was also used as a Hospital for a time, as well as a single men's quarters for the Mt Lyell Mine. Since the 1970s the Eric Thomas photographic collection made its home there.
- > The historic Empire Hotel features a National Trust listed staircase carved from locally cut blackwood, made in England and returned to Queenstown for assembly in 1904.
- > Overnight Strahan or Queenstown

Queenstown – Lake St Clair

- > Depart Queenstown or Strahan via Tasmania's newest hydro dam and trout fishery, Lake Burbury, then cross 60 km of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area through the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, on the way to Lake St Clair.
- > Around 50 km from Queenstown look out for a sign to Donaghy's Lookout. The 40-minute return walk from the Lyell Highway climbs a small hill at an easy grade to a sheltered, rocky viewpoint with stunning views of the mountain ranges of Tasmania's South West Wilderness.
- > Another 9 km further on along the highway is the Franklin River Nature Trail. This short, easy walk along the banks of the Franklin through cool temperate rainforest will give you an idea of the beauty that lies within the heart of this wild river wilderness.
- > Drive on to Lake St Clair and the end of the West Coast Wilderness Way touring route, and the start of the Rivers Run Touring Route.
- > See also the Rivers Run Touring Route.