

History

Tasmania's short written history is bleak and powerful. But like the rest of Australia, it has a much longer story, that of its *palawa*, or 'first man': the term some Tasmanian Aborigines use to describe themselves. Depicted as a people all but wiped out in an attempted genocide, their culture survives today, despite the fact that their home became Britain's prison island in the first years of the 19th century. In 1804 74 convicts were shipped out to Van Diemen's Land (as Tasmania was then known), with 71 soldiers, plus their 21 wives and 14 children. Early Tasmania was dominated by the mentality, 'If it grows, chop it down; if it runs, shoot it'. Penal settlements were built in the island's most inhospitable places. Macquarie Harbour, on the harsh west coast, became Tasmania's first penal site in 1822, and by 1833 roughly 2000 convicts a year were sent to this end of the earth as punishment for often trivial crimes.

The community quickly developed a very particular character: lawlessness and debauchery were rife. Yet it was also defined by great pioneering innovation and courage. Tasmanian culture has undergone a transition from shame and an increasing number of Tasmanians now identify with their convict past – or their indigenous heritage.

TASMANIAN ABORIGINES The Land Bridge & the Ice Age

Tasmania was part of the supercontinent Gondwana until it broke away and drifted south 160 million years ago. Aboriginal people probably migrated across a land bridge that joined Tasmania to the rest of Australia at least 35,000 years ago. The sea level was much lower then and the Tasmanian climate much drier and colder. Aborigines settled the extensive grasslands on the western side of Tasmania, where they hunted wallabies. When the last ice age ended between 18,000 and 12,000 years ago, the glaciers retreated, sea levels rose and tall forests became established in the western half of the island, while in the east, rainfall increased and new grasslands developed. Most people abandoned their caves and shelters and followed the animals they hunted to the more open, eastern tracts of land. Tasmania 'floated away' from mainland Australia and a distinctive existence began for the people, animals and plants of the island.

Life on the Smaller Island

The culture of the Tasmanian Aborigines diverged from the way people were living on the mainland, as they developed a sustainable, seasonal culture of hunting, fishing and gathering. They produced more sophisticated boats

and used them to hunt seals and mutton birds on and around the offshore islands. While mainland groups developed more specialised tools for hunting, such as boomerangs, *woomeras* and pronged spears, the Tasmanian people continued to use simpler tools, such as ordinary spears, wooden *waddies* (war clubs) and stones.

Those who remained in the west lived mainly on the coast. Aboriginal women collected shellfish (mussels, abalone and oysters), the remains of which make up the enormous middens around Tasmania's coastline. Both men and women wore necklaces of shell. They sheltered in bark lean-tos and protected themselves from the island's cold weather by rubbing a mixture of ochre, charcoal and fat on their skin.

Sails, Guns & Fences

The first European to spy Tasmania was Dutch navigator Abel Tasman, who bumped into it in 1642. He named this new place Van Diemen's Land after the Dutch East Indies' governor. It's estimated there were between 5000 and 10,000 Aborigines in Tasmania when Europeans arrived, living in 'bands' of around 50 people, each claiming rights over a specific area of land and being part of one of the nine main language groups. These included the Nuenonne people in the southern area and the Tommeginne in the North.

European sealers began to work Bass Strait in 1798 and they raided tribes along the coast, kidnapping Aboriginal women as workers and sex slaves. The sealers were uninterested in Aboriginal land and eventually formed a reciprocal trade relationship with the Aborigines. Some accounts suggest the sealers traded dogs and other items for accompaniment back to their islands by Aboriginal women and occasionally men.

Risdon Cove, on the Derwent River, became the site of Australia's second British colony in 1803. One year later the settlement moved to the present site of Hobart, where fresh water ran plentifully off Mt Wellington.

During this period, despite some initial friendly exchanges and trade, an unknown number of peaceable Aboriginal people were killed as European fences and farming encroached on their hunting grounds and significant places. In return, Aboriginal people began to carry out their own raids. In 1816 Governor Thomas Davey produced his 'Proclamation to the Aborigines', which represented settlers and Aborigines living together amicably – in direct contrast to the realities of a brutal conflict.

By the 1820s these territorial disputes had developed into the so-called Black Wars, as Aboriginal people increasingly refused to surrender their lands, women and children without a fight. In 1828 martial law was declared by Lieutenant-Governor Arthur. Aboriginal groups were systematically murdered, arrested or forced at gunpoint from districts settled by whites; arsenic on bread and steel traps designed to catch humans were used. Many more succumbed to exotic diseases.

Sites along the west coast harbour stone engravings, thought to be important symbols of Tasmanian Aboriginal beliefs; they also had knowledge of astronomy.

For more information, see the excellent *Deep Time: Continuing Tasmanian Aboriginal Culture* brochure available at the Hobart Visitor Information Centre.

The level of frontier violence across Australia is disputed in the acrimonious and highly political 'history wars', as detailed in Stuart McIntyre's *The History Wars* (2003).

TIMELINE

60,000–35,000 BC

Aborigines settled in Australia sometime during this period

12,000–8000 BC

Tasmania's Aborigines are separated from the mainland when sea levels rise

1642

Abel Tasman discovers Tasmania and names it Van Diemen's Land after a Dutch governor

1700s

Captain Bligh cleverly plants the isle's first apple tree

1788

The First Fleet arrives at Sydney with its cargo of convicts

1798

'Straitsmen', a rough bunch of sealers, make their home and their living in Bass Strait

Meanwhile, a disapproving Tasmanian establishment contemptuously termed the descendants of sealers and Aboriginal women 'half-castes', and even though Cape Barren was designated an Aboriginal reserve in the 1880s, there was continual pressure on the islanders to adopt European farming ways and assimilate with mainlanders.

THE BLACK LINE

By now, the British were concerned at how it might look to the world if their actions led to the extinction of an entire people: this would appear an 'indelible stain upon the government's character'. In 1830, in an attempt to flush out all Aborigines and corner them on the Tasman Peninsula, a human chain of about 2200 men known as the 'Black Line' was formed by settlers and soldiers, moving through the settled areas of the state from Moulting Lagoon, through Campbell Town, to Quamby's Bluff. Three weeks later, the farcical manoeuvre had succeeded in capturing only an old man and a boy, and confirmed settlers' fears that they couldn't defeat the Aborigines by force of arms. The *Hobart Courier* mocked the exercise: it had cost half the annual budget. In turn, it must have given the Aboriginal people an awful sense that their time was running out.

A PARALLEL PRISON

As a result, Lieutenant-Governor Arthur consented to George Augustus Robinson's plan to 'conciliate' the Aboriginal people. In effect Robinson enticed and cajoled virtually all of the Aborigines in mainland Tasmania to lay down their arms, leave their traditional lands and accompany him to new settlements. In doing so, he became the first European to walk across much of the state, adding the title of 'explorer' to that of missionary. There is strong historical evidence that the people of Oyster Bay, including their prominent chief Tongerlongetter, whom Robinson regarded as 'a man of great tact and judgement', followed him to a succession of settlements in the Furneaux Islands based on the promise of sanctuary and land. Instead, they were subjected to attempts to 'civilise' and Christianise them, and made to work for the government.

After enduring a number of moves, including to Sarah Island on the west coast, they were finally settled at Wybalenna (Black Man's Houses) on Flinders Island. One by one, the people began to die from a potent mixture of despair, homesickness, poor food and respiratory disease. In 1847 those who had managed to survive petitioned Queen Victoria, complaining of their treatment and referring to the 'agreement' they thought Robinson had made with Lieutenant-Governor Arthur on their behalf. Wybalenna was eventually abandoned and the survivors transferred to mainland Tasmania. Of the 135 who had been sent to Flinders Island, only 47 lived to make the journey to Oyster Cove, south of Hobart. The new accommodation here

proved to be substandard and the Aborigines once again experienced the criminal neglect of the authorities, and growing demoralisation. Within a decade, half of them were dead.

TRUGANINI'S STORY

Truganini's life was lived out during the white invasion and her death became a symbol for the attempted genocide of Tasmania's Aboriginal people. By all accounts a lovely looking and intelligent woman, she was born on Bruny Island in either 1803 or 1812, the daughter of Mangana, the chief of the Nuenonne people. Along with her husband, Woureddy, she left her island home to travel with George Robinson; accounts also suggest she lived with sealers as a young woman, an experience which left her unable to bear children. When she was older, Truganini lived with fellow Tasmanian Aborigines in the derelict environment of Wybalenna on Flinders Island and afterwards at the disastrous Oyster Cove settlement.

It is remarkable given the times that Truganini lived into her seventies. When she died in Hobart in 1876, the Tasmanian Government declared that she was the last of the island's Aborigines and that her race was extinct (in fact, she was outlived by Suke and Fanny Cochrane, two women of tribal parentage). The announcement of her death, and the resulting funeral procession through Hobart, aimed to 'end the native problem'; this demise was taken as fact – and still is in some encyclopaedias and school history lessons.

Against her wishes to be buried in the mountains behind Oyster Cove or dropped deep into the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, Truganini's 4ft skeleton was instead displayed for many years as a public curio in the Tasmanian Museum. Much to the chagrin of the Royal Society in Tasmania, other parts of her contested remains were shipped to Britain by the Royal College of Surgeons in London and were only repatriated in 2002. It took more than a lifetime for Truganini's wishes to be granted and her ashes finally scattered in the channel beside her beloved Bruny Island. Travellers can visit a memorial to Truganini at The Neck on Bruny Island (p137) and there is a memorial on Mt Nelson, at the top of the Truganini Track.

MAPPING VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

Nearly 130 years after Abel Tasman's able efforts, Tasmania was sighted and visited by a series of other European sailors including captains Tobias Furneaux, James Cook and William Bligh. Between 1770 and 1790 they all visited Adventure Bay on Bruny Island and believed it to be part of the Australian mainland, rather than an island off an island (off an island). In 1792 Admiral Bruni D'Entrecasteaux explored the southeastern coastline more thoroughly, mapping and naming many of its features. Most major Tasmanian landmarks still bear the French names he gave them.

Truganini's people knew Bruny Island as Lunawanna-Alonnah, names adopted by two present-day settlements there.

The reference to 'Truganini in chains' in the Midnight Oil song *Truganini* is not correct: it's more likely to be a metaphor for the appalling treatment of Tasmania's Aboriginal people.

1803

Risdon Cove, Australia's second British penal settlement, is established

1804

Tasmania's first permanent colonial settlements are established, at Sullivan's Cove (Hobart) and George Town

1822–53

Convicts are imprisoned at various penal settlements around the state, including at Sarah Island and Port Arthur

1830

The Black Line, a human chain of 2200 men, tries and fails to flush out Tasmania's Aborigines

1853

The Anti-Transportation League lobbyists are successful, bringing an end to convict transportation

1856

The state changes its name from Van Diemen's Land to Tasmania to remove stigma

European contact with Tasmania increased after the British arrived at Sydney Cove in 1788 – Van Diemen's Land was a convenient pit-stop en route to New South Wales.

In 1798 Lieutenant Matthew Flinders circumnavigated Van Diemen's Land and proved that it was an island. He named the rough stretch of sea between the island and the mainland Bass Strait, after George Bass, the ship's surgeon.

Australia's Second Settlement

In the late 1790s Governor King of NSW decided to establish a second settlement in Australia, south of Sydney Cove. Port Phillip Bay in Victoria was initially considered, but the site was rejected due to a lack of water on the Mornington Peninsula and, in 1803, Tasmania's Risdon Cove was chosen. A year later, the settlement was moved 10km away to the present site of Hobart. The threat of French interest in the island suggested the need for a settlement up north, on a site proclaimed 'George Town' on the Tamar River.

Exploring Coast to Coast

The establishment of George Town in 1804 attracted new settlers, resulting in a demand for more land. Settlers initially spread along the southern coast towards Port Arthur, along the east coast and around the Launceston area. By 1807 an overland route from Hobart to Launceston had been forged. The earliest buildings were rough timber huts, but, as towns developed, settlers with stone masonry skills arrived. Stone was readily available for construction work and many early stone buildings have survived; some of the best examples of these buildings can be found in Richmond (p109) and the small towns along the Midland (Heritage) Highway (p154).

To the settlers, Tasmania's big unknown was its rugged hinterland, where difficult, mountainous country barred the way. The first Europeans to cross the island were escapees from Macquarie Harbour; many escaped, but only a few survived the journey across to Hobart Town.

Then, in 1828, George Frankland was appointed Tasmania's surveyor-general. Determined to map the entire state, he sent many surveyors on long, arduous journeys during the 1830s, often accompanying them. By 1845, when Frankland died, most of the state was roughly mapped and catalogued.

LET'S DO THE TIME WARP AGAIN

As you explore Tasmania you'll often come across gracious old heritage homes and properties managed by the **National Trust** (☎ 6344 6233; www.nationaltrusttas.org.au; 413 Hobart Rd, Launceston). Many are staffed by volunteers and have rather specific opening hours, but if you do fancy a spot of time travel, be sure to talk with the attendants as they are often passionately knowledgeable about stories in the area. Step onto the well-worn flagstones of the Georgian Regency mansion, Clarendon near Evandale (p225), convict-built Franklin House in Launceston (p206) and the colony's first lawyer's digs, Runnymede in Hobart (p87) – all are well worth a visit.

The European discovery of Bass Strait shortened the journey to Sydney from India or Africa's Cape of Good Hope by a week.

Tasmania's coast has claimed over a thousand ships. One of the most treacherous spots was King Island in Bass Strait – take the virtual tour at www.kingisland.net.au/~maritime.

Building roads across the mountainous west was difficult and many were surveyed across all sorts of landscapes before being abandoned. But in 1932 the Lyell Hwy from Hobart to Queenstown was finally opened for business, linking the west coast to Hobart.

CONVICT LIFE

Sarah, Maria & Arthur: the Worst of the Worst

The actual site of the first penal settlement in Tasmania was on small Sarah Island, in Macquarie Harbour on the west coast. The prisoners sent there were those who had committed further crimes after arriving in Australia. Their severe punishment was the manual labour of cutting down Huon pine in the rainforest. It's believed conditions were so dreadful here that some prisoners committed murder in order to be sent for trial and execution in Hobart. Today, visitors can tour Sarah Island and hear more about convict life here on cruises out of Strahan (p279).

The number of prisoners sent to Van Diemen's Land increased in 1825; in the same year the island was recognised as a colony independent of NSW and another penal settlement was established, this one on the east coast of Maria Island, where prisoners were treated more humanely.

In 1830 a third penal settlement was established at Port Arthur on the Tasman Peninsula. Shortly after its construction, the other two penal settlements closed – Maria Island in 1832 and Sarah Island in 1833.

Punishments meted out to convicts at Port Arthur, which, like its predecessors, was considered escape-proof, included weeks of solitary confinement, sometimes in total darkness and silence. The worst prisoners were sent to work in the coal mines of nearby Saltwater River Arthur (p131), where they were housed in miserably damp underground cells. A visit to Port Arthur (p127) evokes the terrible conditions suffered by prisoners during this era.

A Name Change & a New Image

In 1840 convict transportation to NSW ceased, resulting in an increase in the number of convicts being sent to Van Diemen's Land; there was a peak of 5329 new arrivals in 1842. In 1844 control of the Norfolk Island penal settlement (in the Pacific Ocean, 1610km northeast of Sydney) was transferred from NSW to Van Diemen's Land and by 1848 'VDL' was the only place in the British Empire to which convicts were still being transported.

Vociferous opposition to the continued transportation of convicts came from free settlers, who in 1850 formed the Anti-Transportation League to successfully lobby for change. The last convicts transported to the colony arrived in 1853.

Van Diemen's Land had been the most feared destination for British prisoners for more than three decades. During those years a total of 74,000

London-born Marcus Clarke visited Tasmania in the 1870s and wrote *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1874), an epic novel about convict life. Today it's still considered a ripping yarn.

Robert Hughes' compelling bestseller, *The Fatal Shore* (1987), offers a colourful and exhaustive historical account of convict transportation from Britain to Australia.

The website www.portarthur.org.au is an introduction to one of the most powerful historic sites in Australia; in a twist of fate, a tragic massacre occurred here in 1996.

1870s

Gold and tin are discovered in the state's north, signalling the beginning of mining interests in Tasmania

1932

Tasmanian Joseph Lyons becomes Australia's first (and only) Tasmanian prime minister

1932

The Lyell Hwy is opened, linking Tasmania's west coast with Hobart

1934

Construction of the 7km Pinnacle Rd up Mt Wellington begins, creating employment for thousands of men during the Depression

1935

Tasmanian Errol Flynn stars in *Captain Blood*, in which his character is sold as a slave to Olivia de Havilland, escapes, and becomes a pirate...(art mirrors life?)

1945

Arguably the world's toughest open-ocean yacht race, the Sydney-to-Hobart Yacht Race is run for the first time

convicts had been transported to the island. The majority of these people had served out their sentences and settled in the colony, yet so terrible was its reputation that in 1856 – the year it achieved responsible self-government – it changed its name to Tasmania in an attempt to free its image once and for all from the shackles of its past.

GOLD, BUT NO GREAT RUSH

In the 1870s gold was discovered near the Tamar River as was tin in the northeast. These discoveries prompted a deluge of international prospectors. In the northeast a number of Chinese miners arrived, bringing their culture with them. Tourism authorities are constructing a themed ‘Trail of the Tin Dragon’ through the northeast to highlight this aspect of the state’s history (see p190).

Mining was a tough way of life and most people didn’t make their fortunes. Individual prospectors grabbed the rich, easily found surface deposits, but once these were gone the miners had to form larger groups and companies to mine deeper deposits, until eventually these either ran out or became unprofitable to work. Remains of the mine workings at Derby (p196) and the still-operating (and now-notorious) mine at Beaconsfield can be visited today. For a brief summation of the Beaconsfield gold mine disaster of April 2006, see p218.

Once it was realised that there was mineral wealth to be found, prospectors randomly explored most of the state. On the west coast, discoveries of large deposits of silver and lead resulted in a boom in the 1880s and an associated rush at Zeehan. In fact, so rich in minerals was the area that it ultimately supported mines significant enough to create the towns of Rosebery, Tullah and Queenstown. Geological exploitation went unchecked, however, and by the 1920s, copper mining at Queenstown had gashed holes in the surrounding hills, while logging, pollution, fires and heavy rain stripped the terrain of its vegetation and topsoil. The environment has only begun repairing itself over the past few decades.

The rich belt of land from Queenstown to the northern coast is still being mined in several places, but this is now being done with a little more environmental consideration and fewer visible effects than in the past. New finds will undoubtedly occur in this mineral-rich belt and may well see industry pitted against conservation interests yet again.

TASMANIA LAST CENTURY

Although it was ignored in the initial Federal ministry, Tasmania officially became a state when Australia’s Federation took place in 1901. For Tasmanians, as for mainlanders in the new Commonwealth of Australia, the first half of the 20th century was dominated by war, beginning with the dispatch of a contingent of 80 Tasmanian soldiers to South Africa and the

Boer War, through the Great War and WWII, with the Depression of the late 1920s thrown in for bad measure.

The state’s post-WWII economy was reassuringly buoyant, with industrial success embodied by Bell Bay’s aluminium refinery and the ongoing developments of the powerful Hydro-Electric Commission. However, by the 1980s it had suffered a worrisome decline. Subsequent years saw economic unease reflected in climbing ‘emigration’ levels to the mainland (especially among the under-30s) and falling birth rates.

Saving the Wilderness

In 1910 an Austrian, Gustav Weindorfer, reached the summit of Cradle Mountain. Throwing his arms out, he declared that the magnificence of the place, ‘where there is no time and nothing matters’, was something the people of the world should share – it later became a national park. In the 20th century, the extinction of the thylacine (see p54) and the flooding of Lake Pedder in the late 1960s and early ’70s led to the birth of the green movement in 1972, when concerned groups got together to form the United Tasmania Group. Ten years later, thousands of people acted to stop the damming of the Franklin River in 1984–85. Leaders in these movements became a force in Australian federal politics, the Greens Party, under the leadership of Bob Brown, who has been a senator since 1996 (see p50); the Greens became national in 2003 when WA joined the party.

The long-running debate between pro-logging groups, pro-pulp mill corporations and conservationists keen to protect Tasmania’s old growth forests and wild heritage continues (with some new ‘bad guys’, in the form of property developers, being added to the mix). Environmental issues are never far from the headlines – see p46 for more information.

TASSIE TODAY

At the start of the 21st century, the exodus of young, educated Tasmanians has begun a slow reversal, with a revival of Tasmania’s economy heralding a new era of optimism. An improved unemployment rate, record levels of investment, increased exports, a statewide real estate boom, a small but significant growth in the population and a surge in tourist numbers have seen Tasmania finally shrugging off mainlanders’ insults.

Backed by strong tourism campaigns, vocal supporters in mainstream media, a respected arts scene and the emergence of several excellent local brands that wind up in shopping trolleys across the country, Tasmania’s image change is well underway as it fosters its reputation as a ‘pure’ holiday isle and lifestyle haven.

Tasmanian Aborigines continue to claim rights to land and compensation for past injustices. Acknowledgement of the treatment meted out to Aborigines by Europeans has resulted in the recognition of native titles

Tony Wright’s *Bad Ground: Inside the Beaconsfield Mine Rescue* is the definitive account of the tragedy.

The Parks & Wildlife Service’s website (www.parks.tas.gov.au) has a section dedicated to exploring the past, with information on historic sites, plus whaling, sealing and shipwrecks off the state’s coast.

In 1997 the Tasmanian parliament became the first in Australia to formally apologise to the Aboriginal community for past actions connected with the ‘Stolen Generation’.

1972

Lake Pedder is flooded as part of hydro-electric industrialisation

1975

Hobart’s Tasman Bridge collapses, killing twelve, when the ore carrier Lake Illawarra crashes into it

1982–83

The Franklin River Blockade is staged to oppose construction of a dam in the area, and is ultimately successful

1996

The Port Arthur massacre stuns the nation, and eventually results in stricter gun-control laws in Australia

2004

Launceston-born Ricky Ponting makes Tasmanians proud when he becomes captain of Australia’s test cricket team

2006–2007

Tasmania breaks through to win the Pura Cup (formerly the Sheffield Shield) interstate cricket competition for the first time

Trying to find a convict in your family tree? To help with genealogy searches, check the website of the Tasmanian Family History Society (www.tasfhs.org).

to land. In 1995 the state government returned 12 sites to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, including Oyster Cove, Kutikina Cave and Steep Island. Wybalenna was added to this list in 1999, and areas of Cape Barren and Clarke Islands in 2005.

It's interesting to note that the subject of Tasmania's early treatment of Aborigines is still a very contentious one. Sydneysider and journalist Keith Windschuttle released a controversial book in 2002 entitled *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History, Volume One: Van Diemen's Land 1803–1847*, which argues that the violence committed against the Tasmanian Aborigines has been vastly overstated; a second volume is due to be published. *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (edited by academic and historian Robert Manne) was released in reply and is a collection of arguments from noted historians refuting Windschuttle's claims.

Good places to learn about Aboriginal art and culture are Tiagarra (p230), the Aboriginal cultural centre and museum in Devonport, and the new Living History Museum of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, outside Cygnet in the southeast (p142).

2007

The issue of the pulp mill in the tourism- and winery-rich Tamar Valley becomes a political hot potato during the federal election

2008

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologises to Australia's Aboriginal 'Stolen Generation'; Tasmanian Aboriginal activist Michael Mansell questions whether financial compensation will follow

2008

Labor Premier Paul Lennon resigns; the furore over the pulp mill continues

The Culture

REGIONAL IDENTITY

Tasmania has often been dismissed as Australia's cultural backwater, a blip on the travel radar compared with the siren call of the east coast. How many times has this little heart-shaped island state been left off maps of Australia? In Aussie vernacular, the 'map o' Tassie' is more likely to be used to describe 'hair down there'. Given all this, it would be no great surprise to find Tasmanians harbouring yacht-sized inferiority complexes and well-cooked chips on their shoulders.

Yet these days they don't appear to have much of either, now they're truly on the national map and the traveller's hit list. Tasmanians (old-timers and newcomers) are some of the friendliest, most laid-back people you'll encounter. Despite a dark history that is just coming to light, the extreme beauty of the wilderness and the now-established arts and foodie scenes are the staples of a burgeoning identity.

If Australia's national identity is rooted in its past, this is particularly true in Tasmania's case. The seminal colony was characterised by extreme hardship, resentment at being sent so far with so little, and an incalculable sense of loss of loved ones and homes left behind. This struggle against nature and tyranny created a culture based on the principles of a 'fair go' and back-slaps for challenges to authority. You can add to this the convict experience of Van Diemen's Land and a heightened sense of isolation from the rest of the country.

Tasmanian culture is now arguably richer for embracing indigenous culture, but it hasn't always been this way. By accepting that Tasmanian settlers wiped out the island's Aboriginal population, the rest of Australia could potentially say: 'at least we weren't as bad as *that*...' However, contemporary Tasmania now chooses to recognise its 40,000-year-old indigenous heritage as an ongoing culture, with a future as well as a past. You'll see it in the landscape – carvings and paintings in once-inhabited caves, coastal middens of shells that yielded meals, quarries where stone tools were fashioned. Importantly, new generations of Tasmanian Aboriginal people are acknowledging their identity and some of the island's best cultural centres are devoted to their unique traditions. It's also true that Tasmanian indigenous identity is complex, and remains as debated as it is celebrated. For more, see p31.

The greater Tasmanian identity is mirrored in the island's remarkable landscape: dark foliage and craggy peaks whipped by notorious winds, with short winter days and the stark clarity of the light down here. The environment fosters a keen sense of adventure and a certain toughness. Rather than hiding indoors behind solid stone, Tasmanians embrace their wilderness beneath a thin layer of Gore-Tex. Once an adversary, the landscape is now adored. Getting into it, over it or on top of it is something the Tassie work-life balance allows.

In the countryside the hedgerows, old stone dwellings and neat gardens seem to endure in the face of an austere landscape. These things give the British an instant affinity with the place to this day (try tallying up UK expat B&B owners on your travels). Colonial doilies and a stolid 'meat and two veg' mentality are still ingrained, but Tasmania's tastes are shifting. The first genuine croissants and espresso were served in Hobart in the 1980s. Since then the food scene has leapt out of the deep-fryer and into the wood-fired pizza oven, as the new Tasmania tries on a gourmet crown for size, and dishes up an increasingly multicultural menu.

Eminent Tasmanian historian Henry Reynolds' *Fate of a Free People* reexamines the history of the Aboriginal relationship with Tasmania's colonial invaders, asking questions such as did Aborigines tamely surrender their lands and just what happened to their petition to Queen Victoria.

LIFESTYLE

Australians have been sold to the world as outdoorsy, sporty, big-drinking country folk, but despite the stereotypes, many Australians can barely swim a lap and loads wouldn't be seen dead in an Akubra hat. But you *are* more likely to see an array of outdoor wear in Tasmania (of the boot-and-beanie variety) and there's more country composure than urban verve. Everything moves at a slower pace, which can leave you content or frustrated, depending on your state of mind.

The drinking thing: Hobart's original reputation for drunken lawlessness has settled down into a historical hangover, but boozing outdoors is still a familiar thing to most Tasmanians. Wine and beer duke it out for the title of number-one beverage. Wines from the Tamar Valley are readily available, even in smaller towns, while the two main local beers (Cascade and James Boags) are available in more variety and are more likely to be on tap here than on the mainland. You can also whet your whistle with a wide range of local ciders and ginger beers.

The 'Australian Dream' has long been to own a rambling house on a quarter-acre block – sprawling suburbia is endemic in Australian towns and cities. Tasmanian homes often enjoy astoundingly beautiful views of water or mountains; a room *without* a view and swathes of natural light is considered a rip-off down here! Open the door of an average Tasmanian suburban home and you'll probably find a married heterosexual couple with two kids, though it's increasingly likely they'll be de facto or onto their second marriage. These days, attitudes towards gay and lesbian couples in Tasmania are much more tolerant than they were just over a decade ago, before the Tasmanian parliament repealed the state's antigay laws. This brought Tasmania into compliance with the 1994 UN ruling on this issue, and eliminated Australia's only remaining state law banning same-sex relations.

Our typical Tassie family (with a water view) will have an average of 1.4 children, probably called Jack and Isabella, Australia's names of the moment. The average gross wage of either parent is probably around \$1010 per week (compared with \$1128 in New South Wales).

Like most Australians, our typical Tassie family probably loves the sun (and the sun does shine down here, despite the wintry rep). Australians have the highest rate of skin cancer in the world, accounting for over 80% of all new cancers diagnosed each year. Wearing sunscreen and hats, our family is proud of Tasmania's wilderness and its unique vegetation – they probably know a number of secret camping spots, and may well take the tent into a national park every holiday. Younger Tasmanians often camp on their weekends with tight-knit posses of mates, or they might try a spot of beach cricket, kayaking or fishing, after which there'll be plentiful bounty: abalone, oysters from the rocks, squid or flathead. On other weekends they probably watch sport, check out the local footy, go to the movies or head to the shops, which will no doubt involve a stop for a latte at some point.

ECONOMY

In 2008 Tasmania was breaking previous economic records, largely driven by a population boom (see opposite) and the range and affordability of urban and rural real estate. Although prices have spiked in many areas, it's still possible to bag yourself a bargain – often with water views, plenty of land and access to nearby wilderness. Gross State Product is growing at 3.1% (higher than the national rate) and exports rose by over 17% to around \$3.71 billion in the year up to September 2007. Strong jobs growth is also reflected in Tasmania's steadily rising participation rate. A 6.1% unemployment rate in December 2007 isn't the lowest it's ever been, but it's not far off the mark

The moody settings and often gloomy subject matter of many books by Tassie authors have led to the coining of the term 'Tasmanian Gothic'.

Billing itself as 'Tasmania's Journal of Discovery', www.thistasmania.com covers everything from adventure travel to local recipes, with fabulous photography.

Run by one guy from Howrah in Hobart, www.tasmaniantimes.com is a 'forum of discussion and dissent' and a way to check the pulse of local issues like the proposed Tamar Valley pulp mill or political goings-on.

(though it's still above the national average of 4.6%). Deregulating shop trading hours has led to growth in the retail sector.

Apart from being a seaport and a base for Antarctic activities, Hobart's economic success is based on tourism, fishing and forestry; other industries include a zinc smelter and a high-speed catamaran manufacturing facility. Launceston derives its wealth from wool, wine, agriculture, niche manufacturing and resource processing at the nearby Bell Bay industrial site. In the fertile northwest, Burnie has a thriving dairy industry and specialised manufacturers in addition to the traditional port, pulp and paper industries. Nearby Devonport is the tourism gateway to the state, welcoming the ferries from the mainland.

POPULATION

Demographers believe Tasmania's population will soon pass the half-million mark. Most people live on the northern and southeastern coasts, where fertile, undulating countryside and accessible harbours invited European settlement. The population density is around seven people per square kilometre (although no-one's within shouting distance in the southwest). The majority live in and around Hobart and Launceston: greater Hobart has a population of around 203,600, while about 137,900 people live in the greater Launceston area.

Australia's population topped 21 million in 2007 due to a strong birth rate and overseas migration, and Tasmania has followed suit. Its recent economic fortune has seen significant population growth (about 1200 people a year) to reach a new population record of 494,500 in late 2007.

Around 16,000 people of Aboriginal descent live in Tasmania. The state has the lowest percentage of overseas-born residents (around 11% of the population, compared with 24% for Australia overall, and 29% in Western Australia). Of the overseas-born residents, about half are from the UK, and most Tasmanians have a British ancestry.

SPORT

If you're an armchair sports fan, Tasmania has much to offer. The Australian Rules football season has passions running high from about March to September, and when it ends, it's simply time for the cricket season to begin.

Tasmanians avidly follow the national **Australian Football League** (AFL; www.afl.com.au), and Aurora Stadium in Launceston hosts a handful of well-attended AFL matches each year – both St Kilda and Hawthorn (Melbourne-based teams) have been playing regular-season games here in recent years, and Hawthorn at least look set to continue the habit (wearing specially badged 'Tasmania Hawks' guernseys). The **AFL Tasmania** (www.footballtas.com.au) website lists scheduled games and ticketing information. **Redline Coaches** (www.redlinecoaches.com.au) runs a Hobart-to-Launceston bus service on game days.

Tasmania has two football leagues of its own: the **Northern Tasmanian Football League** (NTFL; www.ntfl.com.au) and the **Southern Football League** (SFL; www.southernfootball.com.au). Squads from either end of the state occasionally play an intrastate match.

Cricket is played during the other, nonfootball half of the year (November to March), and the state has produced two outstanding Australian batsmen in recent decades: the legendary, moustached David Boon, and current Australian captain Ricky Ponting, widely regarded as the best batsman in the world. Tasmania hosts one day international (ODI) and international test matches at Bellerive Oval, east of the Derwent River in Hobart – usually one test and one or two ODIs every summer.

For articles of current social relevance, local (and mainland) poetry and short stories, see the elegant *Island* magazine online: www.islandmag.com.

The Tasmania Tigers compete in the interstate Pura Cup competition (formerly the Sheffield Shield), which they won for the first time in 2007. There are lower-key district cricket matches across the state right through summer. Contact the **Tasmanian Cricket Association** (☎ 6282 0400; www.tascricket.com.au) for tickets and match fixtures.

Hobart's harbour comes alive with spectators and party-goers for the finish of the famous **Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race** (www.rolexsydneyhobart.com), and the lesser-known Melbourne to Hobart race, at New Year. See p61 for details.

ARTS Cinema

Most people need little introduction to Australia's vibrant movie industry, one of the earliest established in the world and a playground for screen greats Errol Flynn (a Hobart lad, see below), the beloved and missed Heath Ledger, 'our' Nicole (Kidman) and Russell Crowe (born in New Zealand, but wishes it was South Sydney). Very few Australian movies are set or shot in Tasmania, however. Worth checking out are Roger Scholes' *The Tale of Ruby Rose* (1988), a psychological drama about a couple living in the Tasmanian highlands in the 1920s, and *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1998), based on Richard Flanagan's harrowing book (and scripted and directed by Flanagan). Set in a remote Tasmanian hydroelectric construction camp, Flanagan's tale traces the impact of war, displacement and abandonment on successive generations of a single family of European migrants. *Young Einstein*, a cult film in 1988, was the madcap account of Tasmanian apple farmer Albert Einstein, who discovers the Theory of Relativity in 1905 when he is sitting under an apple tree, and an apple...well, you can probably guess. In 1906 he invents rock and roll. The movie starred comedian Yahoo Serious (and his hairstyle). It also featured a soundtrack by big Australian music names Paul Kelly, Icehouse, The Saints, The Models and Mental as Anything, and introduced the rest of Australia to the extraordinary beauty of the Tasmanian landscape in cinemas across the country.

Craft & Design

A strong crafts movement has existed in Tasmania since the turn of the century. The Design Centre of Tasmania (p206) in Launceston displays and sells work by Tasmanian artisans. The galleries, shops and market at

IN LIKE FLYNN

The song *Errol* by Aussie band Australian Crawl goes 'Ohh, Er-rol. I would give anything, just to be like him...', referring to the legendary Tasmanian actor Errol Flynn, who somehow made his way from the Apple Isle to the Big Apple and beyond, to Hollywood. Born in Hobart in 1909, Errol attended numerous schools in Hobart, Sydney and in England. After many jobs (as sailor, gold-hunter, slave-trader and journalist, if you believe all the publicity), Errol drifted into acting with his first role as Fletcher Christian in *In the Wake of the Bounty*, filmed in Sydney in 1933. By 1935 he had moved to Hollywood and became a celebrated star when he featured in *Captain Blood*. He starred in over 60 films and gained screen-idol status playing such swashbucklers as Robin Hood and Don Juan. The expression 'in like Flynn' means a dead certainty or sure thing – usually in the sexual sense. Old Errol certainly established a reputation for bedding women with the greatest of ease.

Flynn died of a heart attack in 1959; from his three marriages he fathered a son and three daughters (but who knows how many outside the vows!). Despite a somewhat tarnished movie-star image created by a private life of divorces, alcohol abuse and sex scandals (recounted in his autobiography *My Wicked, Wicked Ways*), he is affectionately remembered as the devilishly handsome leading man and quintessential Hollywood hero.

For information on Hobart's vibrant arts scene, see the Salamanca Arts Centre website (www.salarts.org.au).

Hobart's Salamanca Place also exhibit and sell crafts, with an emphasis on wood-turning, pottery, weaving and photography, while regional craftspeople advertise their creative efforts throughout the state.

Pottery and furniture-making have been particularly important, with cedar pieces from colonial times highly prized today. Contemporary furniture designers such as Patrick Hall, John Smith and Peter Costello (not the politician!) are nationally recognised for their highly refined and often sculptural use of Tasmania's superb native timbers, such as Huon pine and sassafras. Photography also has a strong tradition here, due to the diversity of landscape and the clarity of the light. For more see p38.

Literature

Tasmania's unique culture and landscape and its historical treatment of Tasmanian Aborigines and convicts have inspired and burdened writers of both fiction and nonfiction. The island has become the adopted home of a number of seasoned writers, including novelist Robert Dessaix and British writer Nicholas Shakespeare (see p18 for information on Shakespeare's excellent book *In Tasmania*).

Marcus Clarke, a prolific writer who was born in London but spent most of his life in Australia, visited Tasmania in the 1870s and wrote the novel *For the Term of His Natural Life*, an epic about convict life.

Queensland-born poet Gwen Harwood lived in Tasmania from 1945 until her death in 1996, and much of her work, such as *The Lion's Bride* (1981) and *Bone Scan* (1988), explores the island's natural beauty and the history of its Aboriginal population.

Hobart author Richard Flanagan is one of Australia's best-known (and biggest-selling) contemporary literary stars. His award-winning novel *Death of a River Guide* (1995) weaves together Tasmanian history and myths in a story set on the Franklin River – it makes an excellent introduction to Tasmanian history and life. His next novel, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997), won a national literary award, while the film of the same name was also well received (see). More recently Flanagan wrote an enigmatic (and very violent) fictional account of convicts on Sarah Island in *Gould's Book of Fish* (2002), followed by *The Unknown Terrorist* (2006).

Christopher Koch is a Hobart-born author. His novels include *The Boys in the Island* (1958), an account of growing up in Tasmania; *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1978), which was made into a high-profile film; and *Out of Ireland* (1999), worked around the journal of a revolutionary Irishman who finds himself exiled in Van Diemen's Land.

Carmel Bird, born in Launceston but now living in Melbourne, is known for the quirky black humour of her stories and novels, including *Red Shoes* (1998), short-listed for the prestigious Miles Franklin award. Her latest offering, *Cape Grimm* (2004), is set in northwest Tassie.

Matthew Kneale was short-listed for the Booker Prize for the historical fiction novel *English Passengers* (1999), a witty stew of multiple narratives telling the interwoven stories of a mid-19th-century expedition to Van Diemen's Land and the trials of the Tasmanian Aborigines.

Danielle Wood, one-time journalist with Hobart's *Mercury* newspaper, won the 2003 *The Australian/Vogel* Literary Award (the country's richest and most prestigious award for an unpublished manuscript) with her debut novel, *The Alphabet of Light and Dark*. Exploring family history, it's set in Bruny Island's lighthouse and inspired by the adventures and stories of Wood's great-great-grandfather.

Keen readers should get hold of the latest copy of Tasmania's quarterly literary journal, *Island* (www.islandmag.com), which publishes local writers'

For a quarterly list of all the latest local books, check out this bookshop's website: www.fullersbookshop.com.au/tasmaniana.html.

TRUCHANAS & DOMBROVSKIS

What would be the odds of two men from Baltic states, each of them finishing up in Tasmania, being top wilderness photographers, each dying out there, each devoted one to the other?

Max Angus

On calendars, postcards and greeting cards, in books and on posters throughout Tasmania you will no doubt see breathtaking images of the state's incredible wilderness. Many of the best photographs will bear the name of Peter Dombrovskis; his story, and that of his mentor, Olegas Truchanas, is an extraordinary one.

Olegas Truchanas (1923–72) was born in Lithuania and came to Tasmania as a refugee in 1945; Peter Dombrovskis (1945–96) was born to Latvian parents in a refugee camp in Germany near the end of WWII, and arrived in Tasmania with his mother in 1950. Both men came to Australia from war-ravaged countries, an experience that possibly left their senses open to the pristine, peaceful beauty of their new country. Both took reverential photographs of remote wilderness areas, and these beautiful images came to inspire the establishment of conservation movements in Tasmania and on the mainland.

Truchanas photographed Lake Pedder and campaigned passionately to save it from being flooded as part of a hydroelectricity scheme (p301); he also acted as a father-figure and mentor to Dombrovskis. In turn, Dombrovskis' stunning photographic images of the remote and wild Franklin River were central to the ultimately successful 1980s campaign (p287) to save the river from meeting the same fate as had befallen Lake Pedder. Dombrovskis' image of the Franklin's Rock Island Bend, in particular, became a national icon. The philosophy of both men was simple and effective: if people could see the beauty of these wild places, then they might be moved to protect them.

Sadly, both men died alone in the wilderness of the southwest, in the pursuit of their art. When Truchanas drowned while photographing the Gordon River in 1972, the year Lake Pedder was flooded, it was Dombrovskis who found his body. Dombrovskis died of a heart attack while on a photographic expedition in the Western Arthur Range in 1996.

Both photographers have left an amazing legacy of images. These days it is a little difficult to find examples of Truchanas' work, although an extensive collection of his wilderness photographs was compiled by Max Angus in *The World of Olegas Truchanas*. Dombrovskis' images are more readily available.

If you like Dombrovskis' work, check out *On the Mountain*, a selection of images of Mt Wellington, which was Dombrovskis' home for the greater part of 50 years. This book also contains a personal reflection on the mountain and its significance by Richard Flanagan and an account of its natural history by academic Jamie Kirkpatrick. *Wild Rivers* by Bob Brown contains photographs of the Franklin River taken by Dombrovskis and is accompanied by the author's account of his own experiences on that river. The newest book featuring Dombrovskis' photography is *Simply*, the first collection of his work in five years.

short stories, poetry, reviews, extracts from forthcoming novels and a variety of articles and essays.

Painting & Sculpture

Tasmania's art scene flourished from colonial times, particularly in the early 19th century under the governorship of Sir John Franklin and the patronage of his wife, Lady Jane Franklin. One of the first artists to successfully capture the Australian landscape's distinctive forms and colours was John Glover, an English artist who migrated to Tasmania in 1830. The English sculptor Benjamin Law also arrived in Tasmania in the 1830s and sculpted busts of two of the better-known Tasmanian Aborigines, the married couple Truganini and Woureddy (for more on their lives, see p27). Hobart-born William Piquenit has been called 'the first Australian-born professional painter'. He painted romantic Tasmanian landscapes, including Lake St Clair and Lake

Writers and keen readers should have a look at the website of the Tasmanian Writers' Centre (www.tasmanianwriters.org).

Pedder, in the 1870s, and his works were among the first exhibited by the Art Society of Tasmania, founded in 1884.

In 1938 the Tasmanian Group of Painters was founded to foster the work of local artists. Founding members included Joseph Connor, a Hobart-born landscape watercolourist who was one of the early Australian modernists. Since the 1940s a strong landscape watercolour school has developed in Tasmania, with artists such as Max Angus and Patricia Giles among the best known.

Tasmanian sculptor Stephen Walker has produced many bronze works that adorn Hobart's public spaces – he was also responsible for a sculptural tribute to the Midlands at the Steppes (p161), near Great Lake. Other notable contemporary artists include Bea Maddock, whose serialised images incorporate painting and photography, and Bob and Lorraine Jenyns, both sculptors and ceramists. Since the early 1980s Tasmania's art culture has been revitalised and the new wave includes printmaker Ray Arnold, painter David Keeling, photographer David Stephenson and video maker Leigh Hobbs.

The Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery (p87) in Hobart has a good collection of Tasmanian colonial art and exhibits relating to Tasmanian Aboriginal culture. Galleries and studios in Hobart's Salamanca precinct (p84) are full of locally produced treasures. Also worth visiting are the Inveresk site of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery (p205) in Launceston, Burnie's Regional Art Gallery (p253) and the Devonport Regional Centre (p231). On your travels around the island, you'll also find plenty of smaller contemporary galleries to enjoy.

Performing Arts

The **Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra** (www.tso.com.au) is highly regarded and tours nationally and internationally. It gives regular performances at Hobart's Federation Concert Hall (p106), its home venue, and in Launceston's Princess Theatre (p212).

Tasmania's professional contemporary dance company is **TasDance** (www.tasdance.com.au), which is based in Launceston and tours statewide and interstate. It performs dance and dance-theatre, and often collaborates with artists in other fields. Another innovative company is **IHOS Opera** (www.ihosopera.com) in Hobart, an experimental music and theatre troupe.

Terrapin Theatre (www.terrapin.org.au) is a leading Australian contemporary performing arts company that has created puppetry productions for audiences of all ages both locally and internationally. Its works combine a variety of puppetry styles, including object theatre, black theatre, shadow puppetry and mobile interactive performances.

If you fancy a night of theatre, dance or music, venture to Hobart's Theatre Royal (built by convicts in 1837); www.theatreroyal.com.au.

Food & Drink

Tasmania has a blossoming food and wine culture, grown from a super range of seafood, juicy berries and stone fruits, award-winning dairy products and cheeses, beers of international reputation and, of course, excellent cool-climate wines. Locals (and travellers!) are reaping the rewards.

Innumerable farms, orchards, vineyards and small enterprises are busy supplying fresh local produce, and buyers (restaurants, markets, food stores and individuals) are snapping it up. Dishes on menus throughout Australia feature Tasmanian oysters, scallops and salmon, and King Island cream appears on dessert menus from Sydney to Perth. Hobart and Launceston eateries offer more still in the way of local goods.

Despite the relatively newfound fascination with tucker and Tasmania's reputation as a gourmet's paradise, at heart Tasmanians are still mostly simple eaters. Foodies may find themselves despairing in some country towns, especially where the local pub is the only eatery. Occasionally you'll find mutton(bird) dressed up as lamb. This is changing, however, as the influx of mainlanders and immigrants has led to a rise in dining standards, better availability of produce and a frenetic buzz about food in general.

STAPLES & SPECIALITIES

Tasmania's best food comes from the sea, garnered from some of the purest waters you'll find anywhere. Genuine specialties for you to try include oysters at Coles Bay near Freycinet Peninsula National Park and Barilla Bay near Hobart; or ocean trout from the waters of Macquarie Harbour.

Fish like trevalla (blue eye) and striped trumpeter are delicious, as is the local Atlantic salmon, largely farmed in the Huon estuary. Rock lobster (usually called crayfish – fantastic tasting, and usually fantastically expensive), abalone, scallops, mussels and oysters are among the crustaceans and shellfish available.

Tasmania is known for its high-quality beef, based on a natural, grass-fed (as opposed to grain-fed) production system and free from growth hormones, antibiotics and chemical contaminants. Beef from King Island and Flinders Island is where it's at; and if you see it on a menu and the wallet allows, tuck into premium Wagyu beef from Robbins Island in Bass Strait. Flinders Island also farms prime lamb. These meats are available Tasmania-wide and in upmarket restaurants throughout Australia, and command a ransom on overseas markets (Wagyu shifts for up to \$300 per kg in Tokyo).

You may also spy game meats on some restaurant menus – quail, wallaby and farmed venison are often available (and occasionally mutton bird). Wallaby meat is tender, lean and has a mild flavour. It's commonly found in the pies of Tasmania's countryside bakeries.

There's a brilliant cheese industry here, somewhat hampered by the fact that all the milk must be pasteurised, unlike in Italy and France, the homes of the world's best cheeses. Despite that, the results can be great: to confirm, slap some local leatherwood honey over a slice of blue cheese.

Visit Pyengana Cheese Factory (p193), not far from St Helens, for sensational cheddar; Grandveve Cheeses (p141), just south of Woodbridge, which produces organic cheese from sheep and cows milk; Ashgrove Farm Cheese (p239), near Deloraine, for traditional cheeses like Rubicon red, smoked cheddar and creamy Lancashire; and the big daddy of them all, King Island Dairy (p307), for superb brie and rich, thick cream, among

other dairy delights. Alternatively, head for the cheese section of the supermarket, which will no doubt stock many of the state's finest cheeses.

Tasmania's cold climate means its berries and stone fruit are sublime, and picking your own (in season) is a great way to sample and enjoy them. Sorell Fruit Farm (p123) is a favourite – it gives visitors the opportunity to pick all sorts, including raspberries, cherries, apples and pears. Roadside stalls in the Huon and Tamar Valleys offer the chance to buy freshly picked fruits. Other places worth a visit for their fantastic homemade fruity produce include Christmas Hills Raspberry Farm Café (p241) near Deloraine, Kate's Berry Farm (p174) outside Swansea, and Eureka Farm (p187) in Scamander.

Needless to say, the jams, sauces, fruit wines, ciders and juices made from Tasmanian fruits are excellent, and make great souvenirs of your stay. Lots of varieties are available at gourmet food stores and from stalls at Hobart's Salamanca Market (p85); otherwise, head to the Gourmet Sauce Co (p225) west of Evandale, or Fleurtyts (p141) near Woodbridge in the southeast.

Without having to look very hard, you'll also find fantastic honey, chocolate and fudge, mushrooms, asparagus, olive oil, walnuts, and mustards and relishes. Locals are getting creative and showing off their agricultural skill, growing or harvesting some wonderfully diverse products, including buckwheat, *wasabi*, *wakame* (edible seaweed) and saffron. Black truffles are even being harvested in the north of Tasmania, with an idea to capture the French market in the other half of the year.

DRINKS

You can wash down all this delicious local fare with great beverages, including refreshing soft drinks (plenty of local stuff under the Cascade brand) and fruit juices – be sure to try the sparking apple juice.

Expect the best coffee in Hobart and Launceston, decent stuff in most other large towns, and a sniff of a chance of good coffee in many rural areas (but if you're lucky, some better accommodation might supply plunger coffee, tea leaves and teapots in guest rooms, instead of cheap instant coffee and teabags).

Tasmania excels in the beer and wine department, and is now recognised for its whiskies, some of which are doing well as exports.

Beer

Tasmanian beer will be fairly familiar to North Americans and to lager enthusiasts from the UK. It may taste like lemonade to the European real-ale addict, but full-strength beer can still pack a punch. Standard beer generally contains around 5% alcohol, while low-alcohol (light) beer contains between 2% and 3.5%. It's invariably chilled before drinking, even in wintry Tasmania.

In terms of breweries, there's Cascade Brewery in the state's south, based in Hobart, and James Boag's Brewery in the north (Launceston). Cascade produces the very drinkable Cascade Premium Lager and Pale Ale. Visitors tend to ask for 'Cascade' expecting to get the bottle with the distinctive label bearing a Tasmanian Tiger, but you're unlikely to get Premium unless you ask specifically for it – you'll probably get Cascade Draught. Boag's produces similar-style beers to the Cascade brews such as James Boag's Premium Lager and Boag's Draught. See p88 for details of tours of the Cascade Brewery, and p205 for information on touring Boag's Brewery.

Wine

Since the mid-1950s Tasmania has gained international recognition for producing quality wines, characterised by their full, fruity flavour, along with the high acidity expected of cool, temperate wine regions. Today more than 140

Before We Eat: A Delicious Slice of Tasmania's Culinary Life, by Bernard Lloyd and Paul County, is a great, glossy book tracing the history of Tassie food and drink.

When We Eat: A Seasonal Celebration of Fine Tasmanian Food and Drink, by Liz McLeod, Bernard Lloyd and Paul County, is the companion guide to *Before We Eat*. This title covers the availability of seasonal foods in the state, accompanied by great recipes and photographs.

Check out *Tasmania Wine & Food – Cellar Door & Farm Gate Guide*, a free brochure published by Tourism Tasmania and available at most visitor centres. See *Predeparture Reading* (p18) for more.

Travellers who want to eat their way around the Apple Isle should go to www.discovertasmania.com.au, click on 'Activities', then 'Food & Wine', and start salivating.

THE INVISIBLE BEER LINE

The definitive example of Tasmanian parochialism is the local loyalty to regionally brewed beer: in the south it's Cascade; in the north, James Boag's. Up until quite recently you could draw a line from Strahan through Ross to Bicheno, north of which no sane publican would serve Cascade; south of which any mention of Boag's would provoke confusion and ridicule. These days things are much less exclusive, but we challenge you to uphold the traditional drinking rules!

vineyards across the state are producing award-winning pinot noirs, rieslings and chardonnays, and Tassie wineries are growing a large percentage of the grapes for many of the top Australian sparkling brands.

Grapes are grown all over the state, but it's simple enough to split Tassie into three wine growing regions: the north around Launceston, the south around Hobart and the east coast around Bicheno. Throughout these areas there are a growing number of larger operators with sophisticated cellar doors; well-known names include Tamar Ridge, Clover Hill, Pipers Brook, Freycinet, Domaine A and Moorilla Estate. There are also dozens of smaller, family-owned vineyards quietly going about the business of fine-wine-making, some open to the public by appointment only, others with restricted opening hours.

Start with some wine tastings right at the cellar door, where you can also pick up bottles of your preferred drops more cheaply than in retail outlets. Many wineries have such tastings; some of them are free but most charge a small fee (usually a few dollars), which is refundable if you purchase any wine. Bear in mind that the key word here is 'tasting', not 'guzzling' – you won't get endless glasses of the vineyard's finest, just enough in the bottom of a glass to whet your appetite.

The Tamar Valley and Pipers River area is home to a number of well-established wineries, including Rosevears Estate (p215), Tamar Ridge Wines (p217) and Pipers Brook (p221). Wineries are dotted down the east coast from Bicheno to Dunally, including the well-respected Freycinet Vineyard (p173). Further south, in the Huon Valley area, you'll find Hartzview Vineyard (p141), Panorama Vineyard (p144) and Home Hill (p145), among others. A major producer in the Derwent River Valley is Moorilla Estate (p88), established in 1958, making it the oldest vineyard in southern Tasmania. The Coal River Valley, easily accessed from Richmond and Hobart, is home to an increasing number of wineries, among them Meadowbank Estate, Coal Valley Vineyard and Puddleduck Vineyard (p109).

If your visit to Tasmania is short but you'd still like to learn more about the state's wine industry (not to mention taste some drops, and purchase lots of bottles!), visit the Tasmanian Wine Centre (p107) in Hobart. They can arrange worldwide shipping of wine purchases.

There are a number of excellent vineyard restaurants (usually serving lunch only); see the boxed text, opposite, for our pick of vineyard eateries.

CELEBRATIONS

Celebrating in Tasmania often involves equal amounts of food and alcohol. A birthday could well be a barbecue (barbie) of steak (or seafood), washed down with a beverage or two. Weddings are usually a big slap-up dinner, though the food is sometimes less than memorable.

If you get the chance, don't miss one of Tasmania's major food festivals: the week-long festival 'The Taste' (aka the Taste of Tasmania) is staged around the waterfront as part of the Hobart Summer Festival (p94), while Launceston celebrates the three-day Festive (p207) in City Park in February.

To get an idea of the number of grape-wreathed properties around the island, and how to find them, see www.tasmanianwine.route.com.au.

Tasmania's wines are expensive compared with similar mainland wines – you'll fork out more than \$20 for an acceptable bottle of wine – but the best of them are superb. See www.winediva.com.au/regions/tasmania.asp.

Cradle Mountain also gets in on the act, warming up winter visitors with the three-day Tastings at the Top in mid-June. Many other regions also celebrate their produce.

For many events, especially in the warmer months, Tasmanians fill the car with an esky, tables, chairs, a cricket set or a footy, and head off for a barbie by the lake/river/beach/mountains.

At Christmas the more traditional baked dinner is often replaced by a barbecue, in response to the warm weather. In recent times, seafood has become more popular still: perhaps a whole baked trout or salmon, or prawns, served with a cold salad rather than hot baked veggies.

WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

The Tasmanian taste for the unusual usually kicks in at dinner only. Most people still eat cereal for breakfast, or perhaps eggs and bacon on weekends. They devour sandwiches for lunch, with most sandwich fillings in cafés now coming on grilled, fancy-pants Italian bread such as focaccia, on bagels, or on Turkish bread (also known as *pide*). They may also enjoy other café fare such as quiche, salad or pasta dishes – and then eat anything and everything in the evening.

A competitively priced place to eat in a pub. Most serve two types of meals: bistro meals, which are usually in the \$13 to \$24 range and are served in the dining room or lounge bar; and bar (or counter) meals, which are filling, no-frills meals eaten in the public bar and costing around \$7 to \$15.

The quality of pub food varies enormously. Upmarket city pubs will change their menus as much as midrange restaurants do, while standard country pubs will stick to the tried and true meals like schnitzels, roasts and basic seafood. The usual meal times are from noon to 2pm and 6pm to 8pm.

Solo diners find that cafés and noodle bars are welcoming, and good fine-dining restaurants often treat you like a star, but sadly, some midrange places may still make you feel a little ill at ease.

One of the most interesting features of the dining scene is the Bring Your Own (BYO), a restaurant that allows you to bring your own alcohol. If the restaurant also sells alcohol, the BYO bit is usually limited to bottled wine only (no beer, no casks of wine) and a corkage charge is added to your bill. The cost is either per person or per bottle, and ranges from a few dollars per person to \$15 per bottle in fancy places. Be warned, however, that BYO is a custom that is slowly dying out, and many if not most licensed restaurants don't like you bringing your own wine, so ask when you book.

Most restaurants open at noon for lunch and from 6pm or 7pm for dinner. Australians usually eat lunch shortly after noon, and dinner bookings are usually made for 7.30pm or 8pm.

TOP FIVE VINEYARD RESTAURANTS

Here are a few places worth heading to for a long, leisurely lunch with some beautiful Tassie wines (definitely book ahead):

- **Meadowbank Estate** (p110) Cambridge near Hobart
- **Home Hill Winery Restaurant** (p145) Ranelagh in the Southeast
- **Moorilla Estate** (p88) Hobart
- **Strathlynn** (p215) Rosevears in the Tamar Valley near Launceston
- **Bay of Fires Wines** (p221) Pipers River near Launceston

The nickname 'Apple Isle' stemmed from the state's huge apple production, based largely in the Huon Valley. At its peak during the 1960s there were over 2000 orchards exporting eight million boxes of apples, mainly to the UK.

Some species of Tasmanian fish are more sustainable than others. Check out the Australian Marine Conservation Society's Sustainable Fish Finder (www.amcs.org.au), which categorises about 60 species of locally harvested seafood into three sections: Say No, Think Twice, and Better Choice.

Quick Eats

There's not a huge culture of street vending in Tasmania. Most quick eats traditionally come from a corner shop or milk bar (a small shop selling basic provisions), which serves old-fashioned hamburgers (with bacon, egg, pineapple and beetroot if you want) and other takeaway foods. Every town has at least one busy fish and chip shop, particularly in the beachside areas.

American-style fast food is common, though many Aussies still love a meat pie, often from a milk bar but also from bakeries, kiosks and some cafés. Traditional pies are of the steak-and-gravy variety, but many bakeries offer more gourmet fare in their pastry casings. Be on the lookout for a Tasmanian speciality, the scallop pie.

Pizza has become one of the most popular fast foods; most are of the American style (thick and with lots of toppings) rather than Italian style. That said, more and more wood-fired, thin, Neapolitan-style pizzas can be found in pizzerias and restaurants around the state.

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Vegetarian eateries and vegetarian menu selections, including choices for vegans and coeliac-sufferers, are becoming common in large towns and are forging a stronger presence in areas visited by tourists. Small-town Tasmania mostly continues its stolid dedication to meat (especially where the local pub is the only eatery). Cafés seem to always have vegetarian options, but take care with risotto and soups, as meat stock is often used. Vegans will find the going much tougher, but there are usually dishes that are vegan-adaptable at restaurants.

Vegetarians and vegans feeling neglected as they travel around the state should make a beeline for Sirens (p101) restaurant and Nourish (p101) as soon as they reach Hobart. For coeliac-sufferers, a growing number of eateries are offering gluten-free options, and larger supermarkets usually stock gluten-free bread and pasta.

EATING WITH KIDS

Dining with children in Tasmania is relatively easy. If you avoid the flashiest places, children are generally welcomed, particularly at Chinese, Greek or Italian restaurants. It's usually fine to take kids to cafés and you'll see families dining early in bistros and pub dining rooms. For more, see Children (p320).

Many places that do welcome children don't have separate kids' menus: it's better to find something on the regular menu (say a pasta or salad) and ask to have the kitchen adapt it slightly to your children's needs. Places catering to kids usually offer everything straight from the deep fryer: crumbed chicken, chips and that kind of thing. It's probably fine to bring toddler food in with you and just ask for a highchair.

Good news for travelling families, weather permitting, is that there are plenty of picnic spots, and sometimes free or coin-operated barbecues in parks.

BILLS & TIPPING

The total at the bottom of a restaurant bill is all you really need to pay. It should include GST (as should menu prices) and there is no 'optional' service charge added. Waiters are paid a reasonable salary, so they don't rely on tips to survive. Often, though, especially in urban Australia, people tip a few coins in a café, while the tip for excellent service can go as high as 15% in whiz-bang establishments. The incidence of add-ons (bread, water, surcharges on weekends etc) is rising.

MORE FABULOUS FOODIE EXPERIENCES

Here are some of our island-wide favourites. Also check out the smorgasbord of gourmet delights in the Loosen Your Belts itinerary (p74).

- Pick your own fresh berries at Sorell Fruit Farm (p123)
- Slurp oysters fresh from the Freycinet Marine Farm on the Freycinet Peninsula (p179) or Barilla Bay (p118) near Hobart
- Attend the Festivale in Launceston (p207)
- Pan-fry the trout you just caught yourself in a highland lake – fish never tasted so good (p161)
- Worship the gastronomic gods at one the new breed of Tassie food temples: Peppermint Bay (p142), Marque IV (p102), Stillwater (p211) or Angasi (p195)
- Scoff down fresh fish and chips from the floating fish punts at Hobart's Constitution Dock (p101)
- Coffee in Tasmania is something that no longer comes from a jar. Get espressoed at our fave coffee shops: Retro (p101) in Hobart, and Tant pour Tant (p211) in Launceston

HABITS & CUSTOMS

Tasmanian table manners are fairly standard. Avoid talking with your mouth full, wait until everyone has been served before you eat, and don't use your fingers to pick up food unless it can't be tackled another way.

If you're invited over for dinner at someone's house, always take a gift. You may offer to bring something for the meal, but even if the host down-right refuses – insisting you just bring your scintillating conversation – still take a bottle of wine. Flowers or a box of chocolates are also acceptable.

'Shouting' is a revered custom where people in a bar or pub take turns to buy drinks for their group. Just don't leave before it's your turn to buy! At a toast, everyone should touch glasses.

EAT YOUR WORDS

Australians love to shorten everything, including people's names, so expect many other words to be abbreviated. Here are some words you might hear in Tassie:

barbie – a barbecue, where (traditionally) smoke and overcooked meat are matched with lashings of coleslaw, potato salad and beer

esky – an insulated ice chest to hold your tinnies (see below), before you hold them in your tinny holder

pav – pavlova, the meringue dessert topped with cream, passion fruit, kiwi fruit or other fresh fruit

pot – a medium glass of beer (in Victoria and Tasmania)

sanger – a sandwich

surf 'n' turf – a classic 1970s pub meal of steak topped with prawns, usually in a creamy sauce; also known as reef 'n' beef

snags – sausages

Tim Tam – a commercially produced chocolate biscuit that lies close to the heart of most Australians. Try a 'Tim Slam': nibble off two opposing corners, dip one into your cup of tea/coffee, suck it through like a straw then slam down the whole delicious mess!

tinny – usually refers to a can of beer, but could also be the small boat you go fishing in (and you'd take a few tinnies in your tinny, in that case)

tinny holder – insulating material that protects your hand from your icy beer, and nothing to do with a boat

Vegemite – salty, dark-brown breakfast spread, popular on toast: adored by Aussie masses, maligned by visitors

Smoking is illegal in Tasmania's indoor cafés, restaurants and pubs and bars, but many places have built new outside areas for the purpose.

Environment

THE LAND

Adrift some 240km south of Victoria across tumultuous Bass Strait, Tasmania is the smallest Australian state, and the only one that's an island. To its east is the Tasman Sea, which separates Australia and New Zealand; to its west and south is the cold, steely Southern Ocean, maintaining a buffer between Australia and Antarctica. Tasmania is 296km from north to south and 315km from east to west. Including its lesser islands, it has an area of 68,332 sq km.

Although Tasmania's highest mountain, Mt Ossa, stands at only 1617m, much of the island's interior is extremely rugged. One indication of the dearth of flat land is the proximity of the centres of its two largest cities, Hobart and Launceston, to extremely steep hills.

The state's coastline is beautiful in every sense of the word, with a multitude of coves and beaches, shallow bays and broad estuaries, the result of river valleys being flooded by rising sea levels after the last ice age. By contrast, the Central Plateau, which was covered by a single ice sheet during that ice age, is a bleak, harsh environment, completely unsuitable for farming; Australia's deepest natural freshwater lake, Lake St Clair (167m deep), is up here.

Showing the scars of recent glaciation, most of the island's western half is a twisted nest of mountainous ranges and ridges. The climate here is inhospitable, with annual rainfall of a discouraging 3m or more, and for much of the year, uncompromising seas pummel the coast into submission. Yet the cliffs, lakes, rainforests and wild rivers of this magnificent region are among Tasmania's greatest attractions – sweet temptation for walkers, adventurers and photographers. Conversely, the rain-shadowed east coast is usually dry, sunny and beachy-keen.

ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

Despite a long history of bad, often atrocious, environmental management, Tasmania is famous for its pristine wilderness areas. Both the air and water in parts of the state are claimed to be the purest on the planet, while the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, which blankets approximately 20% of the island, is an international smash hit. Yet, ironically, the preservation of much of the environment that Tasmania is proud of has been achieved only by protracted campaigns on rivers and in forests, in the media, and in parliaments and courts.

Gold was discovered in Tasmania in the 1870s and prospectors started exploring most of the state in search of mineral wealth, finding tin, silver, copper and lead. The subsequent prolonged exploitation of natural resources inevitably clashed with environmental preservation. In the late 1960s and early '70s, the unsuccessful efforts of bushwalkers and conservationists to stop Lake Pedder in the southwest from being flooded for hydroelectric purposes (see p301) resulted in the formation of what's believed to be the world's first Green political party. The lessons learnt during the fight for Pedder were crucial in enabling a new generation of activists to execute a vastly more sophisticated campaign a decade later, one that saved the Franklin River – one of the finest wild rivers on the planet – from being flooded for similar purposes (see p287). The Franklin River campaign saw the conservation movement mature as a political force and gain acceptance as an influential player in the corridors of policy-making power.

A successful campaign in the late 1980s to prevent construction of a pulp mill in the northwest saw a Green independents' party form, led by Bob

Brown (see the boxed text, p50). Subsequently, five of its members were elected to state parliament, and the Greens held the balance of power in the Tasmanian parliament from 1989 to 1998. Changes to the number of state parliamentarians, however, resulted in three of the four sitting Tasmanian Greens members losing their seats in the 1998 state election and a significant muting of the Greens' parliamentary voice. In the 2002 election, the Greens increased their state parliament representation to four seats. This held steady in 2006.

Despite Tasmania's relatively new-found appreciation for its wild areas, the balance between conservation interests and industry (especially old-growth logging, pulp milling and mining) remains uneasy at best.

TODAY'S ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

On a collision course since the 1960s, Tasmania's environmental conservationists and prodevelopment interests continue to bang heads today.

During the 2004 Australian federal election, logging and the preservation of Tasmania's old-growth forests became a central campaign issue. 'Old-growth' is a term generally used to describe forest which has had little human disturbance and is ecologically mature. Such forests provide the best habitat for the widest range of species and therefore, according to the Wilderness Society and many other groups, are the most important ecosystem for conserving biodiversity. In a statistic provided by the Wilderness Society, less than 20% of Tasmania's original, presettlement old-growth forests remain today. More than half of what remains (including large parts of the Styx, the Tarkine and northeastern Tasmania) is unprotected and targeted for logging and wood-chipping. In 2004, the left-wing federal Labor Party took a proconservation stance, and lost several parliamentary seats in Tasmania as a result.

In the 2007 federal election, the focus shifted to the proposed Tamar Valley pulp mill and fears of pollution and further old-growth logging. The logging issue was less of a turning point in the election result this time around, but Labor regained the seats it lost in 2004 by appearing to adopt a 'maybe we will, maybe we won't' approach to the pulp mill.

All this is just the latest in a *looong* saga of political glad-handing, lawsuits, resignations, pay-outs and allegations of mismanagement surrounding both the Tasmanian Government and Gunns Ltd, the Tasmanian timber and woodchip conglomerate looking to develop the mill. At the time of writing, the situation was still muddy, unresolved and bound up in spite – a real political hot potato, and a real mess. Every Tasmanian has an opinion on whether or not the mill should proceed – pull up a stool in a pub and see what the locals think! For more on the pulp mill, see the boxed text, p220.

Meanwhile, climate change continues to both enthral and terrify Tasmanians. Some think a few degrees of extra warmth will do wonders for Tassie's tourist industry; some look at their gorgeous but low-lying coastal estates and quiver in their waterproof boots.

WILDLIFE

Animals

The distinctive mammals of mainland Australia – the weird and wonderful marsupials and monotremes isolated here for at least 45 million years – are also found in Tasmania. Marsupials, including wallabies and pademelons, give birth to partially developed young that they then protect and suckle in a pouch. Monotremes (platypuses and echidnas) lay eggs but also suckle their young. Most are nocturnal and the best time to see them in the wild is around dusk. The smaller mammals can be difficult to find in the bush, but there are plenty of wildlife parks around the state where they can be seen.

Find out more about Antarctica on the Australian Government website, www.aad.gov.au, where you can watch videos of life aboard expeditions on the icebreaker *Aurora*, which sails from Hobart.

AUSTRALIAN ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES *Tim Flannery*

The European colonisation of Australia, commencing in 1788, heralded a period of catastrophic environmental upheaval, with the result that Australians today are struggling with some of the most severe environmental problems to be found anywhere. It may seem strange that a population of just 21 million, living in a continent the size of the USA minus Alaska, could inflict such damage on its environment, but Australia's long isolation, its fragile soils and difficult climate have made it particularly vulnerable to human-induced change.

Damage to Australia's environment has been inflicted in several ways, the most important being the introduction of pest species, destruction of forests, overstocking rangelands, inappropriate agriculture and interference with water flows. Beginning with the escape of domestic cats into the Australian bush shortly after 1788, a plethora of vermin – from foxes to wild camels and cane toads – have run wild in Australia, causing extinctions in the native fauna. One out of every 10 native mammals living in Australia prior to European colonisation is now extinct, and many more are highly endangered. Extinctions have also affected native plants, birds and amphibians.

The destruction of forests has also had a profound effect on the environment. Most of Australia's rainforests have suffered clearing, while conservationists fight with loggers over the fate of the last unprotected stands of old-growth trees. Many Australian rangelands have been chronically overstocked for more than a century, the result being the extreme vulnerability of both soils and rural economies to Australia's drought and flood cycle, as well as the extinction of many native species. The development of agriculture has involved land clearance and the provision of irrigation, and here again the effect has been profound. Clearing of the diverse and spectacular plant communities of the Western Australian wheat belt began just a century ago, yet today up to one-third of that country is degraded by salination of the soils. Between 70kg and 120kg of salt lies below every square metre of the region, and clearing of native vegetation has allowed water to penetrate deep into the soil, dissolving the salt crystals and carrying brine towards the surface.

In terms of financial value, just 1.5% of Australia's land surface provides over 95% of agricultural yield, and much of this land lies in the irrigated regions of the Murray-Darling Basin. This is Australia's agricultural heartland, yet it too is under severe threat from salting of soils and rivers. Irrigation water penetrates into the sediments laid down in an ancient sea, carrying salt into the catchments and fields. If nothing is done, the lower Murray River will become too salty to drink in a decade or two, threatening the water supply of Adelaide, a city of over a million people.

Despite the scale of the biological crisis engulfing Australia, governments and the community have been slow to respond. In the 1980s, coordinated action began to take place, but not until the 1990s were major steps taken. The establishment of **Landcare** (www.landcareaustralia.com.au), an organisation enabling people to effectively address local environmental issues, and the expenditure of \$2.5 billion through the National Heritage Trust Fund have been important national initiatives. Yet so difficult are some of the issues the nation faces that, as yet, little has been achieved in terms of halting the destructive processes. Individuals are also banding together to help. Groups like the **Australian Bush Heritage Fund** (www.bushheritage.asn.au) and the **Australian Wildlife Conservancy** (AWC; www.australianwildlife.org) allow people to donate funds and time to the conservation of native species. Some such groups have been spectacularly successful; the AWC, for example, already manages many endangered species over its 5260-sq-km holdings.

So severe are Australia's problems that it will take a revolution before they can be overcome; sustainable practices need to be implemented in every arena of life, from farms to suburbs and city centres. Renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and water use lie at the heart of these changes, and Australians are only now developing the road map to sustainability that they so desperately need if they are to have a long-term future on the continent.

Tim Flannery is a naturalist, explorer, writer and climate change activist. He was named Australian of the Year in 2007, and is currently an adjunct professor at Macquarie University in NSW. Flannery's books include The Future Eaters (1994) and The Weather Makers (2006).

Tasmania's fauna is not as varied as that of the rest of Australia and it has relatively few large mammals. Its best-known marsupial, the Tasmanian tiger, which resembled a large dog or wolf and had dark stripes and a stiff tail, was officially declared extinct in 1986, but hadn't been sighted with any certainty since 1936 (see the boxed text, p54).

BIRDS

Some extremely rare birds are found in Tasmania; one of the best known is the orange-bellied parrot, of which only a small number survive, on the buttongrass plains of the southwest. They winter on the mainland and make the treacherous crossing of Bass Strait to reach their breeding grounds in southwest Tasmania. More common, but also threatened with extinction, is the ground parrot. To see it you'll need to visit Melaleuca in the southwest (see p304) and wait in the specially constructed bird-hide.

Many twitchers stalk the dry sclerophyll forest on the eastern side of Tasmania to try to catch a glimpse of the uber-rare forty-spotted pardalote, found mainly on Bruny Island (p136) and in Mt William National Park (p196).

There's a wide variety of seabirds, parrots, cockatoos, honeyeaters and wrens here too. Birds of prey (hawks, owls, falcons and eagles) are also on the prowl.

Black Currawongs

The black currawong (*Stepera fuliginosa*), found only in Tasmania, lives primarily on plant matter and insects, but will sometimes kill small mammals or infant birds. You'll often see this large, black, fearless bird goose-stepping around picnic areas. You get the feeling they'd just as soon have your eye out as steal your sandwich!

Mutton Birds

The mutton bird (a name derived from a Norfolk Island marine officer who nicknamed a closely related bird the 'flying sheep') is more correctly called the short-tailed shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*). It lives in burrows in sand dunes and migrates annually to the northern hemisphere. These small birds fly in spectacular flocks on their way back to their burrows (the same ones every year) at dusk. They are still hunted by some Tasmanians, notably around Flinders Island, and you'll occasionally see cooked mutton bird advertised for sale.

Penguins

The fairy penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) is the smallest penguin in the world, and lives in burrows in Tasmania's sand dunes. There are plenty of penguin rookeries around Tasmania where you can see them waddle from the ocean to their nests just after sunset, including at Bruny Island (p137), Burnie (p253), Penguin (of course!; p251), Low Head (p221) and King Island (p307).

KANGAROOS & WALLABIES

The kangaroo and wallaby species found in Tasmania are related to those found on the mainland, but are usually smaller. The largest marsupial is the forester kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*), which at one stage looked like becoming extinct because it favoured crop-rich farmland for its lunch. The Narawntapu National Park (p219) and Mt William National Park (p196) have been set aside to preserve this impressive bouncer.

The Bennetts wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*) thrives in colder climes – this is the beast that you are most likely to see begging for food at the Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park (p289) or Freycinet National

The Australian Museum's online resource, www.amonline.net.au, links you to hundreds of fact sheets on Australia's environment: geology, water, biodiversity and marine life to name a handful.

Park (p175). Don't feed them, though, because the animals are meant to be wild and should be feeding themselves – also, giving them processed foods such as bread causes a fatal disease called 'lumpy jaw'. Bennetts wallabies stand just over 1m in height and can seem very friendly, but be careful, as these and other native animals can sometimes be aggressive.

If you spy any shorter, rounder wallabies hiding in the forest, then you'll have seen a pademelon (*Thylogale billardierii*, also known as a rufous wallaby). This smaller species is shyer than its larger relatives.

PLATYPUSES & ECHIDNAS

The platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) and echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) are the only living monotremes – mammals which lay eggs.

Monotremes are often regarded as living fossils, and although they display some intriguing features of their reptile ancestors (egg-laying, and that their reproductive, defecatory and urinary systems utilise a single outlet), they suckle their young on milk secreted from mammary glands.

The platypus lives in water and has a ducklike bill, webbed feet and a beaver-like body. You're most likely to see one in a stream or lake, searching out food in the form of crustaceans, worms and tadpoles with its electrosensitive bill.

Echidnas are totally different and look similar to porcupines, covered in impressively sharp spikes. They primarily eat ants, and have powerful claws for unearthing their food and digging into the dirt to protect themselves when threatened. They're common in Tasmania but if you approach one,

SIMPLE STEPS FOR SAVING THE FORESTS *Senator Bob Brown*

Tasmania's wild and scenic beauty, along with a human history dating back 30,000 years, is a priceless heritage available to all of us. The waterfalls, wild rivers, lovely beaches, snow-capped mountains, turquoise seas, and wildlife are abundant and accessible for locals and visitors alike.

Because we are all creations of nature – the curl of our ears is fashioned to pick up the faintest sounds of the forest floor – we are all bonded to the wilds. No wonder that in this anxiety-ridden world there is such a thirst for remote, pristine, natural places. Yet around the world, wilderness is a fast-disappearing resource and Tasmania is no exception.

This year 150,000 truckloads of the island's native forests, including giant eucalypt species producing the tallest flowering plants on earth, will arrive at the woodchip mills, en route to Japan. After logging, the forests are firebombed and every wisp of fur, feather and flower is destroyed. These great forests, built of carbon, are one of the world's best hedges against global warming. They are carbon banks. Yet they are being looted, taken from our fellow creatures and all who come after us. The log trucks on Tasmania's highways are enriching banks of a different kind.

Over two decades ago, people power saved Tasmania's wild Franklin and Lower Gordon Rivers (p287), which nowadays attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to the west coast. Those visitors, in turn, bring jobs, investment and local prosperity. Saving the environment has been a boon for the economy and employment.

The rescue of Tasmania's forests relies on each of us, and there are plenty of ways we can help. We can help with letters or phone calls to newspapers, radio stations or politicians; with every cent donated to the forest campaigners; and in every well-directed vote. The tourist dollar speaks loudly in Tasmania, so even overseas travellers, who cannot vote, should take the opportunity to write letters to our newspapers and politicians. With each step we take, we move toward ending this destruction of Tasmania's wild and scenic heritage.

Senator Bob Brown was elected to the Tasmanian parliament in 1983 and first elected to the Senate in 1996. His books include The Valley of the Giants (The Wilderness Society, with Vica Bayley, 2005). Read more about Bob Brown at www.bobbrown.org.au.

PULP FICTION

It's an age-old argument in Tasmania: should the state preserve old-growth forests and steer away from unsustainable forestry industries, or should they boost employment and stimulate the economy at all costs? In a state with a historically more robust bank balance, the issue might not be so contentious, and perhaps a proposal such as the Tamar Valley pulp mill might never have been floated. But this is Tasmania, a place where such battle lines often become volatile schisms, tearing through the very identity of the island.

As with any new development, the pulp mill has pros and cons. On the 'pros' side of the fence, the mill will be a boon for both local and state-wide economies, bringing in much-needed investment and export dollars. Its construction and operation will provide ongoing employment for countless northerners. More abstractly, the mill also represents progress and global validation: two things Tasmania's fragile, bottom-of-the-world psyche has always craved. On the 'cons' side, there is the fear of the loss of Tassie's unique forests and with it native habitat. The prospect of a hazy pall of pulp-smoke across the wineries of the Tamar Valley, one of Tassie's main tourist draws, and yet more log-trucks jamming island roads is also far from appealing. Effluent disposal and local marine ecology are other sensitive issues. And where does all that pulp go? It seems absurd to sell a base substance overseas for others to convert into more profitable, value-added products – the pulp created here would be exported to Japan and turned into paper. Opponents of the mill say it doesn't make economic sense for Tasmania to sell a base substance overseas so other countries can add value to it.

Either way, you're sure to draw an opinion from whomever you ask – keeping an open mind will help you see both the forest and the trees.

all you're likely to see up close is a brown, spiky ball. However, if you keep quiet and don't move, you might be lucky: they have poor eyesight and will sometimes walk right past your feet.

POSSUMS

There are several varieties of possum in the state, one of which is the sugar glider (*Petaurus breviceps*), which has developed webs between its legs, enabling it to glide from tree to tree. The most common and boldest is the brushtail possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), which lives and sleeps in trees but descends to the ground in search of food. Possums show little fear of humans, and regularly conduct late-night food heists at camping grounds. A shy relation is the smaller ringtail possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*).

SNAKES & SPIDERS

There are only three types of snake found in Tasmania, but they're all poisonous. The largest and most dangerous is the tiger snake (*Notechis scutatus*), which will sometimes attack, particularly in late summer. The other snakes are the copperhead (*Austrelaps superbus*) and the smaller white-lipped whip snake (*Drysdalia coronoides*). Bites are very rare, as most snakes are generally shy and try to avoid humans. If you do get bitten, don't try to catch the snake, as there's a common antivenin for all three – instead, get to hospital for treatment.

The eight-legged critter with the longest reach (up to 18cm) on the island is the Tasmanian cave spider (*Hickmania troglodytes*), which spins horizontal mesh-webs on the ceiling of a cave to catch insects such as cave crickets. Other local species include the Tasmanian funnel-web, huntsman and white-tailed spiders.

See p346 for more on things that go bite in the night.

TASMANIAN DEVILS

The obnoxious Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisi*) mostly eats insects, small birds and mammals, and carrion, and can often be seen at night feasting

Young adult kookaburras hang out with their parents, helping to feed their siblings – behaviour common to many Australian bird species, due to harsh conditions.

TOP FIVE WILDLIFE PARKS

Tasmania's wildlife is fabulously accessible for most visitors – you may encounter a pademelon or wallaby on a bush walk at dusk, or get lucky and spot a platypus in a quiet stream (sadly, you'll no doubt also see a lot of road-kill on your travels). If you're after more meaningful interaction with the local wildlife (including devils), stop by the following wildlife parks:

- **Bonorong Wildlife Centre** (p110) Educative park near Richmond. Protection and rehabilitation of native wildlife.
- **East Coast Natureworld** (p183) Just north of Bicheno. Aviary, seething snake pits and free-roaming native animals.
- **Something Wild** (p114) Near Mt Field National Park. Devils, wombats, quolls and maybe a platypus or two.
- **Tasmanian Devil Conservation Park** (p126) In Taranna on the Tasman Peninsula. A quarantined breeding centre for devils to help protect against Devil Facial Tumour Disease.
- **Trowunna Wildlife Park** (p242) Two kilometres west of Chudleigh. Specialises in devils and wombats.

on road-kill (a habit that unfortunately often leads to it becoming road-kill itself). It's about 75cm long and has a short, stocky body covered in black fur with a white stripe across its chest.

Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD, a fatal, communicable cancer) infects up to 75% of the wild population. Quarantined populations have been established, but efforts to find a cure have been depressingly fruitless. The actual beast is nothing like the Warner Bros cartoon, but financial contributions from this company to help save the devil are rumoured. Check out www.tassiedevil.com.au and the website of the **Department of Primary Industries, Water & Environment** (DPIWE; www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au – click on 'Weeds, Pests & Diseases', then 'Animal Diseases') for more DFTD info. To make a tax-free donation to the devils' cause, log on to www.devilsindanger.com.au.

WHALES

Southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) migrate annually from Antarctica to southern Australia to give birth to their calves in shallow waters. So named because they were the 'right' whales to kill, they were hunted to the point of extinction while sustaining a lucrative industry around Tasmania. They are still seen off the Tasmanian coast (sometimes in Hobart's Derwent River estuary; see the boxed text, p86) and occasionally beach themselves.

Long-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala melas*) are more commonly involved in beach strandings in Tasmania. In late 2004 there were two mass strandings of pilot whales within one day of each other (one on King Island, the other on Maria Island), reigniting the debate about what causes such tragic incidents (for now, the answer remains a mystery).

WOMBATS

Wombats (*Vombatus ursinus*) are very solid, powerfully built marsupials with broad heads and short, stumpy legs (the weightlifters of the animal kingdom), weighing up to 35kg. They live in underground burrows that they excavate, and are usually very casual, slow-moving animals, partly because they don't have any natural predators to worry about.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Since Europeans arrived, Tasmania has lost more than 30 species of plants and animals – most famously, the thylacine, or Tasmanian tiger. Currently,

over 600 types of flora and fauna are listed under the state's Threatened Species Protection Act.

Among Tasmania's threatened birds are the forty-spotted pardalote, orange-bellied parrot and wedge-tailed eagle. Tasmania is also home to the largest invertebrate in the world, the giant freshwater crayfish, whose numbers have been so depleted by recreational fishing and habitat destruction that it's now illegal to take any specimens from their natural habitat.

INTRODUCED SPECIES

In mid-2001, Tasmania received some of the worst environmental news imaginable for native animals: a fox had been spotted near Longford in the state's north. Fox predation puts nearly 80 of the island's indigenous land species at enormous risk because of their vulnerability to attack from an animal against which they have no defence. Just as horrifying as the original sighting and subsequent reports of the European red fox in other parts of the state is the revelation that the foxes were deliberately introduced to Tasmania, probably for the purposes of hunting. A full-time fox taskforce has been set up by the state government, though it may be too late to eradicate the threat to Tasmania's biodiversity that the animal poses. If you see a fox or evidence of one, phone the **Fox Hotline** (☎ 1300 369 688).

The second-biggest entrenched threat to native wildlife in Tasmania is the feral cat (unless the speed-obsessed car drivers who kill incalculable numbers of native animals count as introduced pests). The cat has established itself throughout the state, including in the southwest and central highlands.

Feral dogs, goats and pigs can also be found in Tasmania, but they're not nearly so widespread as on the mainland. Even rabbits, which are a problem in rural areas, have had trouble penetrating the state's natural forests; this is just as well, because it appears that one of science's most touted weapons against the animal – calicivirus – is not particularly effective in cool, wet areas.

Plants

Tasmania's myriad flora ranges from the dry forests of the east, through the alpine moorlands of the centre to the rainforests of the west. Many of the state's plants are unlike those found in the rest of Australia and have ties with species that grew millions of years ago, when the southern continents were joined at the hip as Gondwanaland. Similar plants are found in South America and fossilised in Antarctica.

Many of Tasmania's trees are unique to the state – the island's native pines are particularly distinctive. The best known is the Huon pine (see p55), which can live for thousands of years, but there are other slow-growing island pines, including the king billy pine, celery-top pine and pencil pine, all of which are commonly at higher altitudes and live for around 500 years. Some pencil pines on the Central Plateau have managed to hang in there for 1000 years,

WATCHING WILDLIFE *Tim Flannery*

Tasmania is jam-packed with wallabies, wombats and possums, principally because foxes, which have decimated marsupial populations on the mainland, were slow to reach the island state (the first fox was found in Tasmania only as recently as 2001). It is also home to the Tasmanian devil – the Australian hyena, but less than one-third the size of its African ecological counterpart. They're common on the island. In some national parks you can watch them tear apart road-killed wombats. Their squabbling is fearsome; their shrieks ear-splitting. It's the nearest thing Australia can offer to experiencing a lion kill on the Masai Mara.

The Mammals of Australia, edited by Ron Strahan, is a complete survey of Australia's somewhat offbeat mammals. Every species is illustrated and almost everything known about them is covered in individual species accounts, written by the nation's experts.

Wombats have large brains and live in complex burrows where they can remain for a week, surviving on just a third of the food a sheep would need.

The ABC TV nature documentary *The Terrors of Tasmania* looks at the lifestyle of the maligned and iconic Tasmanian devil, now struggling with the real-life nightmare of Devil Facial Tumour Disease.

but they're especially vulnerable to fire – one-third of the plateau's pencil pines have been charred to a crisp over the past 200 years.

The dominant tree of the wetter forests is myrtle beech – similar to European beeches. Tasmania's many flowering trees include the leatherwood, which is nondescript most of the year but erupts into bright flowers during summer, when it's covered with white and pale-pink flowers that yield a unique and fragrant honey.

Many of Tasmania's eucalyptus trees also grow on the mainland, but down on the island they often grow ludicrously tall. The swamp gum (*Eucalyptus regnans*, known as mountain ash on the mainland) can grow to 100m in height and is the tallest flowering plant in the world. Look for it in the forests of the southeast, where you'll also find the state's floral emblem, the Tasmanian blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*).

In autumn you might catch an eye-full of the deciduous beech, the only truly deciduous native plant in Australia. It usually grows as a fairly straggly bush with bright green leaves. In autumn, however, the leaves become golden and sometimes red, adding a splash of colour to the forests. The easiest places to see the display are the Cradle Mountain and Mt Field National Parks.

A notable component of the understorey in Tasmanian forests is the infamous horizontal scrub (see opposite), a plant that can make life hell for bushwalkers attempting to avoid established tracks. More familiar to bushwalkers, and considerably more benign, is buttongrass. Growing in thick clumps up to 2m high, this unique Tasmanian grass prefers broad, swampy areas like the many flat-bottomed valleys pressed out by ice ages. Buttongrass plains are usually so muddy and unpleasant to walk over that in many places, the Parks & Wildlife Service has incorporated sections of elevated boardwalk into tracks crossing such areas, for both walker comfort and the protection of the environment.

Another interesting specimen is the cushion plant, which is found in alpine areas and at first sight resembles a green rock. In fact, it's an extremely tough, short plant that grows into thick mats ideally suited to helping it cope with

David Owen's little hardback *Thylacine* investigates the great fascination with the Tasmanian tiger, hunted to extinction and now a treasured symbol of Tasmania and of the conservation movement worldwide.

TIGER, TIGER, BURNING BRIGHT

The story of the Tasmanian tiger (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*, or thylacine), a striped, nocturnal, dog-like predator once widespread in Tasmania, has two different endings. Version one says thylacines were hunted to extinction in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the last captive tiger dying in Hobart Zoo in 1936. No specimen, living or dead, has been conclusively discovered since then, despite hundreds of alleged sightings.

Version two maintains that thylacines continue a furtive existence deep in the Tasmanian wilderness. Scientists ridicule such suggestions, but the tantalising possibility of remnant tigers makes them prime corporate fodder – Tasmanian companies plaster tiger imagery on everything from beer bottles to licence plates.

In recent years, scientists at Sydney's Australia Museum began scripting another possible ending to the tiger saga. Kicking off version three, biologists managed to extract DNA from a thylacine pup preserved in alcohol since 1866. Their aim was to successfully replicate the DNA, with the long-term goal of cloning the species. Needless to say, there were many obstacles, and the project drew criticism from those who would rather have seen the money spent on helping current endangered species. In early 2005 the project was shelved due to the quality of the extracted DNA being too poor to work with, but science may well add a new twist to the tiger's tale sometime in the future.

For information on the Tassie Tiger and the cloning project, visit www.austmus.gov.au/thylacine. Another good source of information is at www.parks.tas.gov.au/wildlife/mammals/thylacine.html. You can also see black-and-white footage of a tiger in captivity at the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery in Hobart (p87).

TASMANIAN CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS

The **Tasmanian Conservation Trust** (TCT; ☎ 6234 3552; www.tct.org.au; 102 Bathurst St, Hobart; 🕒 9am–5pm Mon–Fri) is the state's primary nongovernmental conservation organisation. In addition to managing its own campaigns, the TCT hosts the Tasmanian offices of two other Australian environmental organisations: the National Threatened Species Network, which undertakes public education programs aimed at students, landholders and the wider community, and the Marine and Coastal Community Network, which has particular interests in the establishment of no-take marine reserves and the promotion of safe marine waste-management practices.

The **Wilderness Society** (Map p82; ☎ 6224 1550; www.wilderness.org.au; 130 Davey St, Hobart; 🕒 9.30am–5pm Mon–Fri) works hard to ensure the preservation of several important areas, including the Styx Valley (see the boxed text, p302), which contains the tallest hardwood eucalypt forests on earth, and the Tarkine Wilderness (p268), which occupies 3500 sq km between the Arthur and Pieman Rivers. Both areas are under threat from logging.

its severe living conditions. It's not so tough, however, that it can tolerate footprints – stepping on one can destroy thousands of tiny leaves, which take decades to regenerate.

HORIZONTAL SCRUB

The skinny horizontal scrub (*Anodopetalum biglandulosum*) is a feature of the undergrowth in many parts of Tasmania's southwest. It grows by sending up thin, vigorous stems whenever an opening appears in the forest canopy. The old branches soon become heavy and fall, then put up shoots of their own. This continuous process of growth and collapse creates dense, tangled thickets – bushwalkers have been rumoured to completely disappear into it when venturing off the beaten track. You can see twisted examples of horizontal on nature walks in the southwest and in the Hartz Mountains (p148).

HUON PINE

Prized by shipbuilders and furniture makers for its rich golden hue, rot-resisted oils and fine grain, Tasmania's Huon pine (*Lagarostrobos franklinii*) is one of the slowest-growing and longest-living trees on the planet. Individual trees can take 2000 years to reach 30m in height and live to 3000 years, a situation overlooked by 19th-century loggers and ship builders who plundered the southwest forests in search of this 'yellow gold'. Fortunately it's now a protected species – most of the Huon pine furniture and timberwork you'll see around the state is recycled, or comes from dead trees salvaged from riverbeds and hydroelectric dams. Some older trees remain – one 2500-year-old beauty can be viewed during a cruise on the Gordon River (see p279).

KING'S LOMATIA

This endemic Tasmanian plant, a member of the *Proteaceae* family, has flowers similar to those of the grevillea, and grows in the wild in only one small part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Studies of the plant's chromosomes have revealed that it's incapable of reproducing sexually, which is why it must rely on sending up shoots to create new plants. Further research has shown that there's absolutely no genetic diversity within the population, which means that every king's lomatia in existence is a clone. It's the oldest known clone in the world, thought to have been around for at least 43,600 years.

NATIONAL PARKS

About one quarter of Tasmania is given over to national parks and reserves. For full details, see p63.

The Parks & Wildlife Service website, www.parks.tas.gov.au, has comprehensive information on Tasmania's amazing flora and fauna: click on 'The Nature of Tasmania'.

Tasmania Outdoors

If Tasmania was a person, it would be very much the 'outdoors type'. The state-wide dress code – beanie, walking boots and woollen shirt – is a source of *haute couture* embarrassment for many, but allows locals the freedom to lurch into the wilderness at any moment. The bushwalks you can do here are among the best (and the most taxing and treacherous) in Australia: if you really want to test your mettle, try propelling yourself up Federation Peak or the Western Arthurs. If you're more of a water-baby, white-water rafting on the Franklin River is charged with environmental grandeur and excitement, or you can join the hardened core of Tassie surfers who carve up the southern swell. Abseiling and rock climbing on the Tasman and Freycinet Peninsulas is a thrill a minute, while cycling around the state is a great way to see the countryside – roads are untrafficked and generally well surfaced. Horse riding also happens around the state in various locales, including the Tasman Peninsula, near Cradle Mountain and Huonville – keep an eye out as you tour the island.

For those who want less physically demanding activities, there's boating on the Arthur and Pieman Rivers in the Northwest, sea-kayaking in the Southeast, and walks through the Hastings Caves in the south. If you have a yacht (or can afford to charter one) you can spend lazy days exploring the bays and inlets of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. If you're a trout fisher with a hankering for seclusion, you'll find plenty of fish (and no humans) around the Central Plateau lakes.

Some useful online info sources:

Networking Tasmanian Adventures (www.tasmanianadventures.com.au) Lists operators and activities, categorised as either 'wild' (scuba diving, white-water rafting, abseiling etc) or 'mild' (fishing, scenic flights, river cruises etc).

Parks & Wildlife Service (www.parks.tas.gov.au) Click on 'Outdoor Recreation'.

Tourism Tasmania (www.discovertasmania.com) Click on 'Activities & Attractions' then 'Outdoor Activities'.

BUSHWALKING

The best-known of Tasmania's many superb bushwalks is the six-day, 65km Overland Track through Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park (p290). In fact, most of the state's great walks are in national parks – see the National Parks & Nature Reserves chapter (p63) and relevant chapters throughout this book. Bear in mind that entry fees apply to all Tasmanian national parks (see p64).

Books, Maps & Equipment

Shelves of books have been written specifically for walkers in Tasmania. Lonely Planet's *Walking in Australia* has info on some of Tasmania's best (longer) walks. Even if you're not growing a beard and going bush for weeks on end, you can still experience Tassie's famed wilderness on foot – the Parks & Wildlife Service's *60 Great Short Walks* brochure (free from visitors centres) lists the state's best quick ambles, with durations from 10 minutes to all day. Check the **Parks & Wildlife Service** (www.parks.tas.gov.au/recreation/bushwalking.html) website for more info.

Other compilations of walks throughout the state include *A Visitor's Guide to Tasmania's National Parks* by Greg Buckman, *120 Walks in Tasmania* by Tyrone Thomas, which covers a wide variety of short and multiday walks, or *Day Walks Tasmania* by John Chapman and Monica Chapman. There are

THE TASMANIAN TRAIL

The Tasmanian Trail is a 480km route from Devonport to Dover, geared towards walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers. Most of the trail is on forestry roads, fire trails or country roads; it passes towns, pastoral land and forests, and there are camping spots about every 30km. All the information you need to follow the trail is in the *Tasmanian Trail Guide Book*, which costs \$25 and is available in many bookshops, outdoor-equipment shops and visitors centres. See www.tasmaniantrail.com.au or the website of the **Parks & Wildlife Service** (www.parks.tas.gov.au/recreation/tastrail.html) for more information.

also detailed guides to specific walks or areas, including *South West Tasmania* by John Chapman and *Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair & Walls of Jerusalem National Parks* by John Chapman and John Siseman. Jan Hardy and Bert Elson's short-walk books are also worth hunting down (covering Hobart, Mt Wellington, Launceston, the Northeast and the Northwest).

Tasmap produces excellent maps available from visitors centres. In Hobart you'll also find them at Service Tasmania (p84) and the Tasmanian Map Centre (p81), as well as state-wide outdoors stores.

Shops specialising in bushwalking gear and outdoors equipment proliferate around the state: see p107 for options in Hobart, p212 for Launceston, and p230 for Devonport. A number of shops, hostels and activity operators can also organise rental of outdoors gear.

Code of Ethics & Safety Precautions

The **Parks & Wildlife Service** (PWS; ☎ 6233 6191; www.parks.tas.gov.au) publishes a booklet called *Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area: Essential Bushwalking Guide & Trip Planner*, which has sections on the basics of planning, minimal impact bushwalking, first aid and what gear you need to bring to cope with Tasmania's changeable weather (the booklet is available online at www.parks.tas.gov.au/recreation/mib.html). You can pick up PWS literature at Service Tasmania (p84), at any national park visitors centre or ranger station, or download it from the PWS website.

Tasmanian national parks are 'fuel stove only' areas. A brochure outlining regulations relating to these and other areas under this classification is available from the PWS.

In Tasmania (particularly in the west and southwest), a fine day can quickly become cold and stormy at any time of year – always carry warm clothing, waterproof gear and a compass. In addition, you should always carry a tent, rather than relying on finding a bed in a hut, particularly on popular walks such as the Overland Track.

On all extended walks, you must carry extra food in case you have to sit out a few days of particularly inclement weather. This is a very important point, as the PWS routinely hears of walkers running out of food in such instances and having to rely on the goodwill of better-prepared people they meet along the way to supplement their supplies. In the worst of circumstances, such lack of preparation puts lives at risk: if the bad weather continues for long enough, everyone suffers.

Tasmanian walks are famous for their mud, so be prepared: waterproof your boots, wear gaiters and watch where you're putting your feet. Even on the Overland Track, long sections of which are covered by boardwalk, you can sometimes find yourself up to your hips in mud if you're not careful. A few basic pointers for the uninitiated:

- Bushwalkers should stick to established trails, avoid cutting corners and taking short cuts, and stay on hard ground where possible.

A fossil of the giant conifer *Fitzroya tasmanensis*, which grows only in Chile, was recently discovered near Cradle Mountain: more evidence of Tasmania's links to the Gondwana supercontinent.

The *Tasmania's Great Short Walks* brochure (freely available at visitors centres) lists 60 of the state's best short walks, with durations from 10 minutes to all day.

Lonely Planet's *Walking in Australia* describes Tasmanian walks of varying length and difficulty, including short jaunts through Mt Field National Park and around Maria Island, as well as the Overland Track and a seven-day excursion along the South Coast Track.

- Before tackling a long or remote walk, tell someone about your plans and arrange to contact them when you return. Make sure you sign a PWS register at the start and finish of your walk.
- Keep bushwalking parties small.
- Where possible, visit popular areas at low-season times.
- When camping, always use designated camping grounds. When bush camping, try to find a natural clearing to set up your tent.
- When driving, stay on existing tracks or roads.
- Don't harm native birds or animals; these are protected by law.
- Don't feed native animals.
- Carry all your rubbish out with you; don't burn or bury it.
- Avoid polluting lakes and streams: don't wash yourself or your dishes in them, and keep soap and detergent at least 50m away.
- Use toilets provided; otherwise bury human waste at least 100m from waterways.
- Boil all water for 10 minutes before drinking it, or use water-purifying tablets.
- Don't take pets into national parks.
- Don't light fires in any bush environment; use only fuel stoves for cooking.
- On days of total fire ban, don't light any fire whatsoever, including fuel stoves.

Guided Walks

A veritable plethora of companies offer guided walks ranging from one-day excursions to multiday epics involving accommodation in everything from tents to upmarket lodges, plus trips that blend foot power with time on a bike, bus or canoe.

Some well-established companies offering trips along the Overland Track to Walls of Jerusalem and other popular destinations include **Craclair Tours** (☎ 6339 4488; www.craclair.com.au) and **Tasmanian Expeditions** (☎ 1300 666 856, 6339 3999; www.tas-ex.com) – see p329 for the low-down on these and other companies. Also hitting trails in the Cradle Mountain area is **Tasman Bush Tours** (☎ 6423 2335; www.tasmanbushstours.com).

If you like your walks with a touch more luxury than an inflatable camp mat, a leaky tent and reconstituted faux-potato, you can have your wishes fulfilled. Many companies offer guided multiday walks, with gourmet dinners, wine, hot showers and a real bed en route (for a premium, of course!):

Bay of Fires (☎ 6391 9339; www.bayoffires.com.au) A four-day walk along this photogenic, rock-strewn stretch of coast in the Northeast; see p195.

Cradle Mountain Huts (☎ 6391 9339; www.cradlehuts.com.au) Six-day walk along the Overland Track, staying in private huts; see p294.

Freycinet Experience (☎ 1800 506 003; www.freycinet.com.au) A fully catered, lodge-based, four-day stroll down the famous peninsula; see p178.

Maria Island Walk (☎ 6227 8800; www.mariaislandwalk.com.au) Another four-day option, this time on Maria Island (a national park off the east coast); see p171.

CANOEING, RAFTING & SEA-KAYAKING

Tasmania is famed for white-knuckle, white-water rafting on the Franklin River (p288). See the 'Franklin River Rafting Notes' at www.parks.tas.gov.au/recreation/boating for a raft of priceless advice. Other rivers offering rapid thrills include the Derwent (upstream from Hobart), the Picton (southwest of Hobart) and the Mersey in the north.

For a more sedate paddle, try the Arthur (p267) and Pieman (p269) Rivers in the northwest, and the Ansons River (p194) in the northeast. You can

rent canoes at Arthur River. The Huon, Weld, Leven and North Esk Rivers also attract their fair share of canoes and rafts.

Sea-kayaking centres include Kettering, southeast of Hobart (p136), from where you can explore the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, Bruny Island and the south coast; and Coles Bay, the launching place for Freycinet Peninsula explorations (p177). You can also have a paddle around the Hobart docks (p91). See the 'Leave No Wake' notes at www.parks.tas.gov.au/recreation/misk for how to tackle sea-kayaking in a sustainable way.

CAVING

Tasmania's limestone karst caves are among the most impressive in Australia. The caves at Mole Creek (p242), Gunns Plains (p252) and Hastings (p151) are open to the public daily. Both Mole Creek and Hastings offer the chance to get troglodytic on cave tours – see regional chapters for details.

CYCLING & MOUNTAIN BIKING

Cycling is a terrific way to tour Tasmania and engage with the island landscapes, especially on the dry east coast. To cycle between Hobart and Launceston via either coast, allow between 10 and 14 days. For a 'lap of the map' by bike, allow between 18 and 28 days. If you're planning a cycling trip, **Bicycle Tasmania** (www.biket.as.org.au) is a solid source of information. Click on 'Routes to Ride by Region' for details of two- and three-week circuits. See p337 for further cycle touring tips.

Short- and long-term bike rental is available in Hobart (p91) and in Launceston (p213). If you prefer a guided cycling tour, contact **Island Cycle Tours** (☎ 1300 880 334, 6228 4255; www.islandcycletours.com) or **Tasmanian Expeditions** (☎ 1300 666 856; 6339 3999; www.tas-ex.com); see p329 for more information. Island Cycle Tours also offers a two-wheeled descent of Mt Wellington (p89) behind Hobart. **Green Island Tours** (☎ 6376 3080; www.cycling-tasmania.com) offer group guided and self-guided tours of the northeast, east and west coasts. Prices start at \$490/675/1050 for six-/eight-/12-day self-guided tours including accommodation; guided group tour prices start at \$1350/1690 for nine/11 days.

There are no dedicated mountain biking trails within parks in Tasmania, but there are plenty of fire trails and off-the-beaten-track tracks around to explore – ask at bike shops. On the competition front, check out January's four-day, 200km **Wildside Mountain Bike Race** (www.wildsidemt.com), which wheels through the west coast wilderness from Cradle Mountain to Strahan. There's also the multisport **Freycinet Lodge Challenge** (www.tasultra.org), held in Freycinet National Park every October.

For information on low-impact mountain biking, see www.parks.tas.gov.au/recreation/bikes.

FISHING

Brown trout were introduced into Tasmania's Plenty River in 1866, followed by Lake Sorell in 1867. Innumerable lakes and rivers have subsequently been stocked, including artificial lakes built by Hydro Tasmania for hydroelectricity production. Trout have thrived, and today anglers make the most of the state's inland fisheries. The Tamar River is another great fishing area, with a series of 10 fishing pontoons (accessible by disabled fishers) between Launceston and George Town. The George Town (p219) area is particularly good for both freshwater and saltwater fishing.

A licence is required to fish Tasmania's inland waters; there are bag, season and size limits on most fish. Licence costs vary from \$18 for one day to \$73.50 for the full season, and are available from sports stores, Service Tasmania outlets, post offices, visitors centres and some country shops and

There's a refreshing summary of all the things you can do outdoors in Tasmania at www.leatherwoodonline.com (click on 'Travel & Leisure').

The *Guide to Free Camping in Tasmania* by S and S Collis (\$15) lists over 60 sites (and will pay for itself on the first night!).

Planning on walking the Overland Track? Look no further than the excellent Parks & Wildlife website www.overlandtrack.com.au, where you can make a booking, access maps and learn about minimal-impact hiking.

THE GREAT TASMANIAN BIKE RIDE

Over nine days in February, the super-popular Great Tasmanian Bike Ride wheels across Tasmania in random years, exploring different cycling routes in the state each time. Rain or shine, the ride covers around 500km to 600km each ride, with a rest day, and draws a couple of thousand riders (supported by a crack team of volunteers), with most cyclists camping along the way.

This well-organised event costs about \$850 to participate in, including camp sites and meals (BYO tent and bike), and is organised by **Bicycle Victoria** (☎ 1800 639 634, 8636 8888; www.bv.com.au); contact them for details. They rotate their 'Great Rides' between NSW, Victoria and Tasmania, but should be able to tell you if a Tassie one is scheduled!

petrol stations. In general, inland waters open for fishing on the Saturday closest to 1 August and close on the Sunday nearest 30 April; the best fishing is between October and April. Different dates apply to some places and these (plus other essential bits of information) are all detailed in the *Fishing Code* brochure you'll be given when you buy your licence. See the **Inland Fisheries Service** (www.dpiw.tas.gov.au) website for details.

The sparsely populated Lake Country (p159) on Tasmania's Central Plateau is a region of glacial lakes and streams, and is home to the state's best-known spots for brown and rainbow trout: Arthurs Lake, Great Lake, Little Pine Lagoon (fly-fishing only), Western Lakes (including Lake St Clair), Lake Sorell and the Lake Pedder impoundment. On some parts of Great Lake you're only allowed to use artificial lures, and you're not allowed to fish any of the streams flowing into Great Lake.

If you want to bone up on Tassie trout before you unpack your rod, get a copy of *Tasmanian Trout Waters* by Greg French. Also worth a look is the bimonthly *Tasmanian Fishing & Boating News* (\$4), available online at www.tasfish.com. In Hobart, the spot for spot-on lures and fishing info is **Spot On Fishing Tackle** (Map p82; ☎ 6234 4880; 89 Harrington St; 🕒 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3.45pm Sat).

Tasmanian trout (brown and rainbow) can be difficult to catch as they're fickle about what they eat; the right lures are needed for the right river, lake, season or weather. If you find you just can't hook them yourself, there are dozens of operators offering guides, lessons and fishing trips – **Trout Guides & Lodges Tasmania** (www.troutguidest Tasmania.com.au) is a great starting point.

Rod fishing in saltwater is allowed year-round without a permit, but size restrictions and bag limits apply. If you're diving for abalone, rock lobsters or scallops, or fishing with a net, recreational sea fishing licences are required. These are available from post offices, Service Tasmania or online from the **Department of Primary Industries & Water** (www.dpiw.tas.gov.au). There are on-the-spot fines for breaches of fishing regulations.

Meanwhile, on the east coast, ocean charter fishing is big business. See www.fishnet.com.au for a directory of operators.

ROCK CLIMBING & ABSEILING

Although clear skies are desirable for rock climbing and Tasmania's weather is often wet, the sport nonetheless thrives around the state, as does abseiling. There are some excellent cliffs for climbing, particularly along the east coast where the weather is usually best. The Organ Pipes on Mt Wellington above Hobart (p88), the Hazards at Coles Bay (p178), the cliffs on Mt Killiecrankie on Flinders Island (p312) and Launceston's Cataract Gorge (p202) offer brilliant climbing on solid rock. Climbing fiends often see images of the magnificent rock formations on the Tasman Peninsula (p121) and head straight for that region, but the coastal cliffs there are impossible to climb if the ocean swell is too big.

The wild brown trout are teeming in Tasmania's 3000 lakes and rivers, but it may help to have your own accredited trout guide to find the buggers: www.troutguidest Tasmania.com.au/fisheryfly.htm.

If you want to climb or abseil with an experienced instructor, try one of these outfits:

Aardvark Adventures (☎ 6273 7722; www.aardvarkadventures.com.au)

Freycinet Adventures (☎ 6257 0500; www.freycinetadventures.com.au)

Tasmanian Expeditions (☎ 1300 666 856; 6339 3999; www.tas-ex.com)

SAILING

The D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River south of Hobart are wide, deep and tantalizing places to set sail, with more inlets and harbours than you could swing a boom at (although conditions can be difficult south of Gordon). Fleets of white sails often dot Hobart's Derwent River in summer – many Hobartians own yachts and consider the city's nautical opportunities among its greatest assets.

For casual berths in Hobart (overnight or weekly), contact the **Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania** (☎ 03-6223 4599; www.ryct.org.au) in Sandy Bay, or the **Hobart Ports Corporation** (☎ 03-6235 1000; www.hpc.com.au), which manages berths right in the city. North of the bridge, you can anchor in Cornelian Bay or New Town Bay. There's a great marina at Kettering, in the channel south of Hobart, but it's usually crowded so finding a mooring isn't always easy.

If you're an experienced sailor, hire a yacht from **Yachting Holidays** (☎ 03-6224 3195; www.yachtingholidays.com.au), based in Hobart. Charter of a six-berth vessel is \$700 per day, with reduced rates for long rentals or in the off-peak (April to November) period. Skipped charter is also available.

For cruising and trailer boat owners, a useful publication is *Cruising South-east Tasmania* (\$27.50), available from Service Tasmania (p84) in Hobart.

SCUBA DIVING & SNORKELLING

National Geographic magazine says that Tasmania offers the 'most accessible underwater wilderness in the world'. Visibility ranges from 12m in summer to 40m in winter, with temperate waters offering unique biodiversity. There are excellent scuba-diving opportunities around Rocky Cape on the north coast, on the east coast, and around the shipwrecks of King and Flinders Islands. At Tinderbox near Hobart and off Maria Island there are marked underwater snorkelling trails. There's also a new artificial dive site created by the scuttling of the *Troy D* off the west coast of Maria Island; see www.troyd.com.au for info.

If you want to learn to dive, diving courses in Tasmania are considerably cheaper than on the mainland. **Dive Tasmania** (www.divetasmania.com.au) can give you information on affiliated diving businesses and equipment hire around the state. Otherwise, contact dive operators in Eaglehawk Neck (p125), Bicheno (p183), St Helens (p191), Wynyard (p257) and King Island (p307).

SKIING

There are two petite ski resorts in Tasmania: Ben Lomond (p226), 55km southeast of Launceston, and Mt Mawson (p117) in Mt Field National Park,

During the peak summer holiday period, Discovery Rangers provide a range of free activities for all visitors to Tasmania's national parks and reserves. Check park noticeboards.

SYDNEY TO HOBART YACHT RACE

Arguably the world's greatest and most treacherous open-ocean yacht race, the **Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race** (www.rolexsydneyhobart.com) winds up at Hobart's Constitution Dock every New Year's Eve. As the storm-battered maxis limp across the finish line, champagne corks pop and weary sailors turn the town upside down. On New Year's Day, find a sunny spot by the harbour, munch some lunch from the Taste of Tasmania food festival (p94) and count the spinnakers on the river. New Year's resolutions? What New Year's resolutions?

TOP 10 BEACHES

Pack your swimsuit, brace yourself for a cold water collision, and jump right in! In a state of gorgeous (and often empty) coastline, these are our favourite beaches:

- **Wineglass Bay** (p177) Consistently voted one of the top beaches in the world – once you've seen it, you'll understand why. Well worth the sweaty trek in.
- **Binalong Bay** (p194) Binalong time since you had a dip? Head for this long crescent of sand just north of St Helens.
- **Friendly Beaches** (p177) Often overshadowed by its near neighbour (Wineglass Bay), but offering just as lovely, and more-accessible, white sand and impossibly clear water.
- **Seven Mile Beach** (p118) A seven-mile stretch, just 15km from Hobart. When the swell is working the point break here is awesome!
- **Boat Harbour Beach** (p258) The drive down the steep access road offers postcard-perfect views of this divine little bay.
- **Marrawah** (p265) Hardcore ocean surf for harder-core surfers.
- **Adventure Bay** (p136) A few European explorers also considered this a good place to spend some down time.
- **Fortescue Bay** (p127) A little slice of heaven, complete with low-key camping ground.
- **Trousers Point** (p312) A kooky name indeed, but this magnificent beach makes the waters of Bass Strait look unfeasibly alluring.
- **Stanley** (p260) A long arc of Bass Strait sand with The Nut looming as a backdrop.

80km northwest of Hobart. Both offer cheaper, though much less-developed, ski facilities than at mainland resorts in Victoria and New South Wales (rope tows are still used on some runs!). Despite the state's southerly latitude, snowfalls tend to be patchy and unreliable.

SURFING

Tasmania has dozens of wicked surf beaches, but the water is (pardon our French) bloody cold – steamer wetsuits are mandatory! Close to Hobart, the most reliable spots are Clifton Beach and Goats Beach (unsigned) en route to South Arm. The southern beaches on Bruny Island (p137), particularly Cloudy Bay, offer consistent swells. The east coast from Bicheno north to St Helens has solid beach breaks when conditions are working. Eaglehawk Neck (p124) on the Tasman Peninsula is also worth checking out. The east coast from Ironhouse Point south to Spring and Shelly Beaches near Orford (p166) has consistent surf; King Island (p306) also gets its share. At Marrawah (p265) on the west coast the waves are often towering – hardcore corduroy all the way to South America! Australia's heaviest wave, Shipstern Bluff off the south coast, isn't recommended for anyone other than serious pros. Gnarly...

Websites with surf reports and conditions updates include www.surftasmania.com and www.tassiesurf.com.

SWIMMING

The north and east coasts have plenty of sheltered, white-sand beaches offering excellent swimming, although the water is (to understate it) rather cold. There are also sheltered beaches near Hobart, including Bellerive and Sandy Bay, but these tend to receive some urban pollution – things will be less soupy further south at Kingston and Blackmans Bay, or east at Seven Mile Beach. On the west coast, the surf can be ferocious and the beaches aren't patrolled – play it safe.

The website www.magicseaweed.com provides updates on surf conditions (swell, wind and temperature) at Bicheno, Clifton Beach, Cloudy Bay, Scamander and the legendary Shipstern Bluff.



JOURNEYS

Any visit to Tasmania, whether it's a long-weekend dash or a month-long 'lap-of-the-map', will offer up a bounty of fine food and drink, as well as the chance to propel yourself into the island's famed wilderness and cross paths with its abundant wildlife. More subtly, Tasmania serves as a portal into Australia's colonial past: what you'll discover is often disquieting and may leave you feeling decidedly spooked!



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Tasmanian Gothic

There's an unspoken sadness to Tasmania that's undeniable, lacing the landscape and infusing the manmade environment with melancholy. Bound to a savage industrial, convict and indigenous past, here are just some of the places that will make you ponder, reflect, or send a shiver up your spine.



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1 Northwest Aboriginal Sites

Tasmania's Northwest is endowed with a rich archaeological record (p265). Aboriginal shell middens, petroglyphs, hut depressions, seal hides and stone artefacts litter the coast, telling the deeply saddening story of the people who once lived here.

2 Richmond Bridge

Richmond Bridge (p109) is haunted by George Grover, the 'Flagellator of Richmond', who died here in 1832. The nearby Richmond Gaol (1825; p109) predates Port Arthur by five years. Its history is engrossing but the atmosphere is unrelentingly grim.

3 Port Arthur Remembrance

It wasn't enough for 12,500 convicts to serve their sentences at Port Arthur in dehumanizing conditions from 1830 to 1877: in 1996, a gunman killed 35 tourists here. The Port Arthur Historic Site (p128) is weighted with menace and memory.

4 Cannibals & Escapees

Woebegone Sarah Island (p283) was the cruelest, most isolated Tasmanian penitentiary. Still, several convicts escaped: some turned to cannibalism to survive; others hijacked a ship and sailed to South America!

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Take a Walk on the Wild Side

Whether you're a broke-ass backpacker or wallowing in lucre, some bushwalking is probably near the top of your Tassie 'Things To Do' list. Take a luxury, fully catered guided walk, or strike out solo. Lethargic? You can still get a feel for Tassie's forests, beaches and wildlife just off the road.



Author Tip

You're old and wise enough to know that the number one *worst* item to bring on any bushwalk – in Tasmania or anywhere else – is thin socks. Wear 'em thick, and wear 'em proud!

1 Tarkine Encounter

An ancient swathe of rainforest, buttongrass plains and wickedly wild beaches, the Tarkine Wilderness (p268) is relatively undiscovered (and alarmingly unprotected). Traverse its fringes on a driving adventure, or take a guided tour into its forested heart.

2 South Coast Epic

Take a week-long walk along the legendary South Coast Track (p303), traversing the Southwest National Park from Melaleuca to Cockle Creek. A once-in-a-lifetime experience you'll tell your grandchildren about.

3 Bay of Fires Walk

Our favourite Tasmanian guided walk is the four-day, three night Bay of Fires Walk (see the boxed text, p195) on the northeast coast. Pristine coastline, ecolodge accommodation, fine food and wine: this is bushwalking in style!

4 The Overland Track

Many come to Tassie just to walk the five-day Overland Track (p290) in Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park. Deft management maintains its purity: craggy peaks, tarn shelves, eucalypt forests and icy-cold lakes.

5 Devil of a Time

Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD) threatens to decimate the Tasmanian Devil population. Before they go the way of the Tasmanian Tiger, support the Devils' cause at the Tasmanian Devil Conservation Park (p126).

6 Hartz Mountains National Park

Hartz Mountains National Park (p148) offers brilliant, bite-sized day-walks (from 20 minutes to five hours) across elevated alpine moorlands, with views from mountain passes across the untamed Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.





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Tasting Tasmania

There are sumptuous culinary experiences to be had all over Tasmania. Sure, it's all the fresh air and water, but local enthusiasm for the good life has something to do with it too. Enjoy a great feed from north to south, by the roadside, the bayside, or a romantic fireside.

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Author Tip

Sample lesser-known delights at Tassie's gourmet food stores: leatherwood honey; truffles; berries, jams and jellies; ocean trout, mussels, venison and wallaby. To locate stores, see www.foodtourist.com.

1 How do you like *them* Apples?

Tasmania's southeast accounts for 85% of the state's apple crop. Munch on crisp apples bought from a Huon Valley (p146) roadside stall near Cradoc, Cygnet and Franklin.

2 Cheese Please

The unpretentious King Island Dairy (p307) is a cheese-lover's decadent dream. Pick up a scorecard and taste-test every award-winning cheese, from bries to blues, then purchase a round or three to take home.

3 Seafood on the Road

Rip into fresh crayfish, oysters, scallops or flounder straight off the boat in a fishing town such as St Helens (p190), or snack on fish and chips along the Hobart waterfront (pictured; p85).

4 The Taste Festival

Fine food and wine producers share a table with locals and travellers at premier festival The Taste (p94) in Hobart. There's free admission to over 70 stalls at Princes Wharf.

5 Freycinet Marine Farm

For just-out-of-the-water oysters, go to Freycinet Marine Farm (p179). Enjoy them on the deck of the farm's tasting rooms with a fine Freycinet riesling. Ahhhh...

6 Pyengana

Pyengana's (p193) impossibly green fields are home to happy milking cows and happy dairy farmers. Drop in at Pyengana Dairy Company to sample alluring homemade ice-creams and mouth watering cheddars.

7 Binalong Bay Bounty

Satisfy your stomach with a meal at Binalong Bay's wonderful restaurant, Angasi (p195). It's a tough choice: look at the astounding view or concentrate on your plate! Legendary salt-and-pepper squid and lobster tortellini.



Drinking Down South

Tasmania is as about as chilly and southern as Australia gets, but this hasn't stopped the locals from working up a powerful thirst. The island is justly famous for its beers, but more recently a terrific wine industry has emerged. Peppy cool-climate drops fill the glasses of the state's restaurants.



1 Good for what Ales You

Hobart's gothic-looking Cascade brewery has been bubbling out the beers since 1824: fine stouts, ales and lagers that are acclaimed around Australia and the world. Roll up to South Hobart and take a working tour of the brewery (p88).

2 Top Drops in Northern Tassie

Go vineyard-hopping for cool-climate wines in the Tamar Valley (p213) and the nearby Pipers River Region (p221). Book lunch at one of the excellent vineyard restaurants (p43) then fill the boot with pinot noirs, rieslings, chardonnays and bottles of bubbly.

3 Northern Brews

Launceston's much-lauded Boag's Brewery (p205) wages an age-old battle with Cascade (in Hobart) for the palates and stomachs of Tasmania's beer drinkers. Both brands come in more plentiful varieties down here, and both make juices and ciders too.



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