

Cruising Tasmania's southwest wilderness & Bathurst Harbour | Skyscanner Australia

Cruise Tasmania's famous southwest wilderness area with [Skyscanner Australia's](#) guide to Bathurst Harbour and Port Davey. This is adventure and expedition cruising for travellers who like their landscapes wild and their lobster fresh.

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Avoid the crowds

With a land area equivalent to Fiji, Tasmania's World Heritage Areas areas are blessed with more culture and heritage than any other region on Earth. At 43 degrees south, Southwest National Park is as wild and untamed as the handful of hardy pioneers who've attempted to carve a far-flung wilderness home. With no roads in or out, these days the only humans you'll come across are conservation volunteers, hikers, lobster and abalone fishermen sheltering from bad weather along with the odd cruising yachtie.

[Tasmanian Boat Charters](#), with their custom-built 20m motor cruiser, are the only cruise operator for a gazillion miles. Odalisque provides a plush and comfortable base in a sort of an expedition voyage crewed by exceptionally knowledgeable crew with the added bonus of chefs 'borrowed' from Hobart's best restaurants.



Orange Bellied Parrots – the world's rarest bird

Conservationists believe that as few as 20 Orange Bellied Parrots (OBP's) exist in the wild. Extremely rare to the point of near-extinction, these migratory ground dwelling parrots favour the button grass plains around the Melaleuca airstrip – the starting point for your cruise. Melaleuca is the 'hub' of Southwest NP and offers the best chance on the planet to spot one of these birds. Even if you're not a twitcher, being witness to the extinction of a species can't help but generate self-reflection on man's impact on our planet.



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Cruise a waterway three times larger than Sydney Harbour

Bathurst Harbour and Port Davey combined create a waterway three times larger than Sydney Harbour. As you'd expect in southern Tasmania, the land and sea scapes are as dramatic as they come. Jagged mountain peaks cloaked in cloud, island beaches stained deep orange by tannin leeching from the soil. Forests draped in iridescent green moss. Australia's wildest and most remote region, the raw landscape is just as nature intended, carved by fluctuating seasons.

Little impacted by human influence beyond the odd cottage or pier built by optimistic pioneers, tin miners, lumberjacks and whalers, the southwest wilderness remains little-changed since inhabited by Indigenous Needwonnee people. An interpretive walk, with ephemeral installations designed to eventually return to the landscape, weaves its way through forest and buttongrass plains alongside Melaleuca lagoon.



History and Headstones in the wilderness

Southern Tasmania hasn't been kind to those who sought to tame the wilderness. Critchley Parker was a wealthy intellectual in the 1940's when he fell head over heels with Jewish woman Caroline Isaacson. Disturbed by WWII extermination he hatched an ambitious plan to establish a Jewish safe haven in southern Tasmania. Embarking on a solo foray to Port Davey, Chritchley's dream foundered with his lonely death, documented in his diary as he starved to death. His forlorn grave is marked with a granite headstone rising from button grass at the foot of Mt MacKenzie.

On the beach at Bramble Cove another headstone pays tribute to whalers who lost their lives far from their loved ones in the remote Southern Ocean. The ashes of naturalist, ornithologist, environmentalist, tin miner and allround Tasmanian hero Deny King, (who was instrumental in preserving the OBP's habitat), were scattered across the button grass plains he adored near Melaleuca.



Hike on trails where few have walked

Whether you're a hardcore hiker or a leisurely walker content to take in the scenery, Southwest National Park has you covered. The famed South Coast Track starts at Melaleuca and winds its way to Cockle Creek 84km to the east. But the entire Bathurst Harbour region has a network of walking trails suitable for *Odalisque* passengers to step ashore and stretch their legs. Some, like the hike to the summit of Mt Beattie come with the added challenge of brisk prevailing winds that do their best to knock hikers off their feet. Others are more sedate, peppered with leisurely beach combing with time to rest and contemplate a world immersed in absolute serenity.

