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## 6 of the Best Reasons to Visit Tasmania's East Coast

by [Fiona Harper](#)

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There's a gazillion reasons to visit Australia's largest island so it was no easy task to limit ourselves to just six. Travel writer Fiona Harper dons her hiking boots (along with a little black dress) to explore Tasmania's east coast.

For a stunning, relaxing yet adventure-seeking holiday, you can't go past Tasmania's east coast. Explore Australia's largest island with a few expert tips.

### 1. Maria Island



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## 1. Maria Island



They were a motley bunch of residents on Maria Island back in the 1800's. Many were immigrant settlers forging a new life in a harsh land. Whalers and smugglers plied their trade far removed from the prying eyes of the law. Others arrived involuntarily, shipped from Hobart and press-ganged into constructing the settlement of Darlington, including their own prison cells!

Much has changed in the intervening 200-odd years. Today, travellers visit one of Australia's finest National Parks to delve into convict history but also to explore an island renowned for wilderness and wombats, wild rugged coastline and dreamy beaches connected by a network of hiking trails.

Maria Island hosts approximately 70 tumor free Tasmanian devils thanks to a devil translocation project. Elsewhere in Tasmania they're in danger of extinction from devil facial tumor disease. The Parks and Wildlife Service closely monitor devils' health, breeding and impact on the island. Wombats and wallaby populations are also prolific, so too Cape Barron Geese, fairy penguins and a host of migratory birds.

## 2 Guided Hiking

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## 2 Guided Hiking



For us, we've come to enjoy all of the above, signing on for the four day [Maria Island Walk](#) which promises 'the best place on the planet to walk off a gourmet meal.' Hiking from Haunted Bay in the south and arriving in in Darlington in the north four days later, I'm happy to say they've nailed it.

Camping out in eco-styled tents with beguiling names such as Casuarina Beach Camp and White Gum Beach Camp, accommodation is simple but super comfortable. Hot water bottles and an early morning wakeup call with 'bed tea' are much appreciated little luxuries for trail-weary campers. With two guides to whip up superb meals as well as keep wine glasses topped, this is eco-friendly glamping rather than camping.

Falling asleep to the sound of waves caressing the beach and waking to birdsong, the forest air is crisp, smelling deliciously of Australian bush. On bush trails wombats and wallabies freeze long enough for us to eyeball each other before bounding away. We don't spot the elusive Tasmanian devil but tellingly we do spot devil scat as well as their paw prints.

### 3. Tasmanian devils

### 3. Tasmanian devils



One of the best places for a guaranteed devil sighting is at the enclosure recently opened at [Saffire Freycinet](#) on nearby Freycinet Peninsula. Partnering with the Save the Devil program, four healthy devils are living out what their keeper Nicole calls 'devil retirement'. These mature age devils have been part of a successful breeding program, essentially helping to ensure the survival of their species. Ensnconed in their new luxury retirement home, their only obligation into old age is to remain disease free (an easy task considering their free-range controlled enclosure) and to entertain and educate visitors (a no-brainer with their amusing antics).

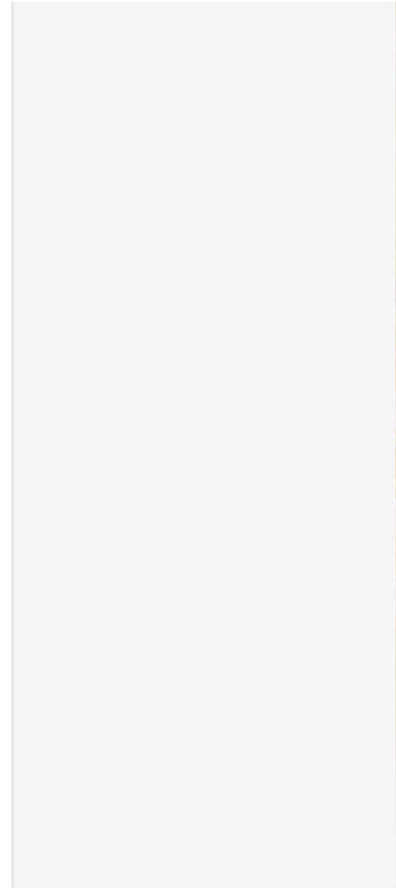
### 4. Bespoke hotel



It's a cunning addition by Saffire's management, giving them street-cred for supporting such a vital wildlife program while offering guests an on-site attraction with real integrity. Not that there is any doubting Saffire's credentials.

A bespoke hotel making regular red carpet appearances on ['best hotel' lists](#) globally, Saffire morphs carefully into the landscape. So ingenious is the architecture that when looking back across Coles Bay from The Hazards, the only sign that the hotel exists are sea ray-style curves of its main roof. Other clever tricks include pathway lights linked to sensors that switch themselves off once guests have passed by, minimising nocturnal wildlife impact as well as the hotels environmental footprint. Fashionista sistas, should break out the little black dress for oh-so elegant dining at Palate Restaurant. Concealed behind graceful walls of glass, guests linger on plush sofas, luxuriate in bathtubs or awake in king beds positioned to maximise dramatic views of the geological masterpiece of The Hazards. They're kind of hard to ignore!

##### 5. Wineglass Bay





Beyond these granitic monoliths lies one of Tasmania's prettiest beaches. Rivaling the Whitsundays' Whitehaven Beach for perfection, Wineglass Bay is a serious contender for Australia's best. Dazzlingly white beach sand, cobalt blue water surrounded by heavily wooded forest cladding granite peaks, the bay is blessed with beauty. It's surely no coincidence that its perfect wineglass shape is a nod to outstanding Freycinet winemakers.

#### 6. Wines and vines



[Apsley Gorge Vineyard](#) is one of them. The brainchild of former fisherman and would be Francophile, Brian Franklin describes his wines as unpretentious yet exacting. The man himself is far from pretentious, cellaring his wines in a former waterfront fish processing factory at a quaint cove called The Gulch. Franklin's Pinot Noir and Chardonnay have established cult-like followings with restaurateurs across the globe, including Saffire's Executive Chef Hugh Whitehouse. [Freycinet Winery](#) is another, having kick-started the local industry by planting the first commercial vines on the Peninsula. Claudio Radenti has picked up a Winemaker of the Year gong and their Pinot Noir has won enough gold stars to make a bullion bar.

Wine, it's the last reason on our list, but unless you've been living under a rock for the last century, it's absolutely one of the best reasons to sample a taste of Tasmania. But who are we to judge – go there and find out for yourself!

Fiona Harper is a travel writer specialising in cruising, active and soft adventures. Follow her at Travel Boating Lifestyle - [travelboatinglifestyle.com](http://travelboatinglifestyle.com)

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