

Tasmania: 10 reasons the Apple Isle is HOT right now! | Skyscanner Australia

Australia's Apple Isle punches above its weight: history, fine food, wine & natural beauty make it a popular holiday hotspot

Known as the Apple Isle thanks to a thriving produce industry, Tasmania is a HOT holiday destination. The big island at the bottom of Australia attracts travellers for its intriguing history, fabulous food, wild scenery and boutique hotels. Book your flight to [Hobart](#) or [Launceston](#) on [Skyscanner](#) today and check out Tasmania for your summer holiday.

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1. Sail across Bass Strait

Fresh from a brand new spruce up, the two [Spirit of Tasmania](#) vessels that ply Bass Strait between Melbourne and Devonport are looking bright and shiny for the upcoming summer season. Pull up a deck chair or sun lounge at the Top Deck Lounge Bar for panoramic views through floor to ceiling glass walls and pretend you're on a Mediterranean cruise. The Tasmanian Market Kitchen dishes up meals inspired by Tasmania's world-renowned produce while intimate Bar 7 is just the spot to imbibe in the Apple Isle's craft beers or famous wines. Cinemas, reading rooms, lounges and quiet spaces offer other diversions. For families there's a teen zone arcade and jungle gym for the little ones, face painting and roving circus performers on day sailings.

Ensuite cabins have queen beds for couples to snuggle up in while families and groups have two and four berth options for overnight sailings. Sailing across Bass Strait has always been an adventurous start to a Tasmanian holiday, now it's even more fun!

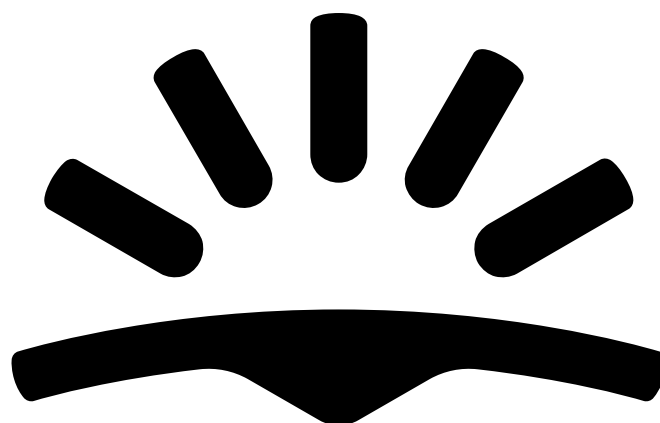


Pull up a sun lounge at the Top Deck Lounge Bar & soak in the beautiful Bass Strait. Photo courtesy of [Spirit of Tasmania](#)

2. Hike on Maria Island

Billed as the best way to walk off a gourmet meal, [The Maria Island Walk](#) ticks many of the boxes Tasmania is known for. A four day hike suitable for people of moderate fitness, it has it all: gourmet food matched with Tasmanian wines, comfortable eco-sensitive accommodation in the wilderness, wildlife aplenty (wombats please take a bow), pristine beaches and stunning mountain landscapes all underpinned by convict-era history.

Fully escorted and guided, daily hikes are just taxing enough to feel like your legs have had a good workout, but not so strenuous that you're exhausted at the end of each day. Energy to spare is crucial as social gatherings around a lively communal dinner table are an integral part of this island adventure. Hikers rest for lunch against ancient ruins built by convict hands or marvel at painted cliffs carved by nature. Bedding down glamping style (as in luxury camping) in beachside camps for two nights, the final night is spent in heritage listed Bernacchi House in historic Darlington.



The Maria Island Walk includes plenty of firm-packed beach sand. Photo courtesy of [The Maria Island Walk & Great Walks of Australia](#)

3. Taste Tasmania's temptations

An annual gastronomic extravaganza held on Hobart's waterfront from 28 Dec to 3 January, [Taste of Tasmania](#) festival is an entrée into everything wonderful about Tasmania's wining and dining scene. Alongside the festive atmosphere of nearby Constitution Dock and Sydney to Hobart yacht race celebrations, this is when Hobart gets to hog the national media spotlight. It's hands down the best time to visit the Apple Isle's capital.

What's more it's free! Though in all honesty you will need to hand over your cash if you want to partake in the abundance of tempting morsels on offer. It's unlikely you'll be disappointed, nor walk away hungry. If you can't find something scrumptious to eat or drink at Taste of Tasmania, well, perhaps a taste bud transplant is in order.



Taste of Tasmania is an annual festival on Hobart's waterfront. Photo courtesy of [Tourism Tasmania](#)

4. Indulge at the world's best boutique hotel

Taking out the top gong for Best Overall Boutique Hotel in the World in 2014, [Saffire Freycinet's](#) trophy cabinet is bulging at it's highly polished seams.

A member of Luxury Lodges of Australia, Saffire offers nothing short of perfection. The striking architecture takes full advantage of an outlook dominated by dramatic The Hazards mountains and Great Oyster Bay. From early morning to late evening glass-walled Palate restaurant is simply exquisite. The library and bar are furnished with plump sofas and a beguiling fireplace that invite guests to curl up with a gin and tonic or a cuppa and a book and while away the afternoon. Staff are highly attuned and intuitive, friendly yet professional, seamlessly accommodating guests every whim or desire.

Spacious, modern and plush guest suites have so many bells and whistles it's tempting to lock the doors and ignore the gentle reminders by staff when it's time to check out. But it's worth venturing outdoors to visit the loveable Tasmanian devils inhabiting a purpose built enclosure on-site. In danger of extinction, Saffire has introduced their program as a measure to ensure the species survival. A hotel with a caring heart? Yes please.



Indulge in fine food & exquisite suites in gorgeous surroundings at Saffire Freycinet. Photo courtesy of [Saffire Freycinet](#)

5. Check into an historic mansion

Historic hotel [Woodbridge on the Derwent](#) was in ruins when the current owners took on the challenge to restore it to its former glory as a Van Diemen's Land landmark. New Norfolk (which was then called Elizabeth Town) was the first 'capital of Tasmania when Woodbridge was built in 1825 and ships would anchor here. These days it's a pretty subdued rural village.

On the banks of the Derwent River 25 minutes from downtown Hobart, Woodbridge on the Derwent is akin to an elegant private English manor. Furnished with antiques, ancient multi-paned windows cast shadows upon 200 year old blackwood floors. Looking for some bling to take home? Sign up for an exclusive Gemstone Masterclass hosted by a qualified gemologist for an intriguing insight into bespoke gemstones and jewellery sought after by collectors worldwide.



Learn about gemstones & Jewells at a Gemstone Masterclass. Photo courtesy of [Woodbridge on the Derwent](#)

6. Play 18 holes on King Island

New kid on the block, [Cape Wickham Golf Course](#) on King Island is pegged to be one of the world's top 100 courses when it opens in late 2015. King Island in Bass Strait is windswept, wild and rugged so the course should appeal to golfers keen to sink a putt on envy-enducing greens. Bragging rights are assured having 'played Bass Strait'.

The course offers plenty of challenges with 8 holes running parallel to the Bass Strait shoreline. Greens and tees are close enough to the sea that balls are at risk of being laden with salt if you linger long enough. The 18th hole bends around the beach at Victoria Cove which forms part of the course. Cape Wickham Lighthouse, Australia's tallest, can be seen from almost every point on the course – a reminder of the island's position smack in the heart of Bass Strait.



Cape Wickham Golf Course has stunning views from every fairway. Photo courtesy of [Cape Wickham Golf Course](#)

7. See Tasmania through Indigenous eyes

Considered the world's oldest living culture, Tasmanian Aboriginals have called the Apple Isle home for more than 40,000 years. It's heartening for travellers to have an opportunity to learn a little about ancient ways through Tasman and Sheldon from [Trowunna Tours](#). Join their cultural walk on Mt Wellington (which they know as kunyani) which dabbles in bush medicine and bush tucker, an integral element of their Indigenous heritage and culture.

The name Trowunna comes from respected elder Auntie Ida West and means 'heart shaped homeland'. Take the opportunity to explore the mountain that dominates Hobart's skyline with those who feel the mountains lifeblood pumping through their hearts.



Learn about Mt Wellington's significance through Indigenous eyes. Photo courtesy of [Tourism Tasmania](#)

8. Road tripping in the Tarkine Forest

Newly launched in mid 2015 the [Tarkine Drive](#) takes travellers through extraordinary north west coast wilderness and the majestic Tarkine Forest. The drive encompasses many aspects of Tasmania from the hearts of Aboriginal communities as well as generations of miners, fishermen and foresters who have built a living from the regions natural resources. Huon pine trees are the forests poster child, coveted by traditional boat builders for their strength, durability and ramrod straight trunks.

The former mining village of Corinna in the heart of the forest has been converted into traveller's accommodation at Corinna Wilderness Experience. Shrouded in moss-dappled forest on the north bank of the Pieman River, the place oozes history and intrigue from every green pore.



The Pieman River & Corinna Wilderness Experience are smack in the heart of the Tarkine Forest. Image credit [Travel Boating Lifestyle](#)

9. Cruise the wilderness

Tasmania's not the first place you'd think of when planning a coastal cruise. Beyond signing up for a crew spot in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race there's been few opportunities to explore the east coast by sea. That's all about to change with the arrival of [Coral Expeditions](#) 7 night cruises on board their small ship. Accommodating maximum 46 guests, highlights include Freycinet Peninsula, Wineglass Bay as well as Maria Island's east coast.

Coral Expeditions are also enabling travellers to explore hard to access Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Areas of Port Davey and Bathurst Harbour. This region is little visited due to its remoteness in Tasmania's south west corner so cruises are sure to sell out quickly.



Bathurst Harbour, in Tasmania's remote southwest, is now accessible to small ship cruise passengers. Photo courtesy of [Tourism Tasmania](#)

10. Explore Salamanca's cobblestoned streets

Salamanca Place in downtown Hobart is a perennial favourite thanks to preserved sandstone warehouses, ordnance stores and former government buildings. It helps too that cobblestone streets are lined with quaint cafes, bars and restaurants dishing up some of Tasmania's finest treats. Art galleries and bespoke retail shops are in abundance too, providing ample opportunity to pick up unique Tasmanian artworks or trinkets.

Take a guided tour with [Salamanca Walk Tours](#) for an insider's perspective on Salamanca's fascinating history. Much of Salamanca was built by convict labour, chain ganged into submission for paltry crimes in the UK like stealing bread or insulting a government official. Don't miss the Salamanca Markets if you're there on a Saturday.