



West Coast Wilderness Way

This route links three World Heritage Areas: Cradle Mountain, an alpine environment like no other; Strahan and the wild rivers of the Franklin and lower Gordon; and, finally, the land and 3,000 lakes that surround Lake St Clair. The journey uncovers the unique post-settlement history of the region that includes convicts, piners, miners and railway men and their families. It exposes the dramatic landscape of Queenstown as our unfortunate legacy of early mining practices balanced by serene lakes and rivers among majestic temperate rainforests unchanged for thousands of years.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

DAY 1

Having satisfied your soul with Cradle Mountain's magical walks and natural experiences (see Cradle Country Touring Route) perhaps make your next stop Tullah, a town with a chequered history of mining and hydro development that now caters for visitors. Stop for refreshments or extend your stay for a trail ride, a horse ride into old mine workings

Kayaking, Lake Rosebery



Strahan waterfront

or a fishing trip on Lake Rosebery.

The town of Rosebery, a short drive farther southwest, is a working mine township proud of its environmental management. Tour the mine's surface infrastructure and a 10,000-year-old Huon Pine located on the mining lease. Nearby, a three-hour return walk along a railway embankment will reward you with a spectacular view of Tasmania's tallest waterfalls, Montezuma Falls. Or perhaps take in a game of golf on a nine-hole rainforest course.

Zeehan was once Tasmania's third-largest town and boasted a number of gold and silver mines, numerous hotels and more than 10,000 residents.

West Coast
Wilderness Way

Now it is at the centre of West-Coast mining heritage, with the West Coast Pioneers Memorial Museum, the unusual Spray Tunnel and the Grand Hotel and Gaiety Theatre the major attractions. Take a guided tour with one of the locals to hear all the myths and legends.

DAY 2

Strahan is the departure point for cruise boats into the Wild Rivers National Park. Along the way, step back in time on Sarah Island, the infamous penal settlement that, over a number of years, was the colony's largest ship-building centre. The dark and silent Gordon River will hypnotise you with its mirror-still reflections, and afterwards there'll still be time to enjoy a fishing excursion on the harbour, a scenic floatplane trip up the Gordon or an exhilarating jet boat ride on the King River. Perhaps a leisurely stroll around the foreshore walking track and a cup of coffee is more your style. Almost every afternoon at the Visitor Centre there is a performance of *The Ship That Never Was* – the longest running theatre show in Australia, telling the story of convicts who

Gordon River Cruise

stole a small boat and sailed it halfway around the world.



West Coast Wilderness Railway

DAY 3

Join the West Coast Wilderness Railway in Queenstown or Strahan and take a 'totally wild' trip along river gorges, across 40 bridges and over 35km of mountain ranges on a unique Abt rail system that has been rebuilt after 40 years. The starkly beautiful barren hills that encircle Queenstown and the verandahs that line its main

street give the town a 'wild west' atmosphere. The smelting and mining practices of the early 1900s that resulted in the deforestation of the slopes ceased long ago and plants are slowly recolonising the slopes. Take the time to talk to the locals, tour the Mt Jukes Rd to Bird River, or descend 1.5km underground and explore more than 7km of drives and workings of the Mt Lyell copper mine, still operating after more than 100 years.

The West Coast produces world-class furniture and craft timber – the famed Huon pine, sassafras,





Sarah Island

blackwood and myrtle – most of which can be viewed and purchased at sawmills in Queenstown and Strahan. If you're not a craftsperson yourself, select beautifully crafted finished products from local outlets.

DAY 4

Depart the West Coast via Tasmania's newest hydro dam and trout fishery, Lake Burbury, then

West Coast, Tasmania

cross 60km of World Heritage Area on your way to Lake St Clair. The Franklin River is all but a trickle where it meets the road, but Frenchman's Cap is clearly visible in fine weather, and short walks to a waterfall and a spectacular lookout are a great way to break the drive.

Lake St Clair marks the end of the West Coast Wilderness Way and the start of the Rivers Run Touring Route. Pause a while to view wildlife or take another short walk. If fishing is your passion, be warned that you are now entering an angler's paradise of 3,000 lakes and world-class brown trout fishing. You may never want to leave.

