

VA & NZ Experience Australia Famil

Tasmania

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**TRAVEL
TODAY**

A Travel Today Destination Feature
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Tassie Cuisine, Outdoors On Show

Increasing numbers of Kiwis are heading to Tasmania to experience its famous seafood, laidback lifestyle and great outdoors—all of which was on show for Kiwi agents on the Air New Zealand Virgin Australia Experience Australia famil to the state. In the year ending Jun 2015, New Zealand visitors to Tasmania increased 2% to 16,100, while overall the state hosts around one million visitors a year for both holiday and work. “While here they enjoy our untamed wilderness, our convict heritage, our world class beaches and our clean green produce,” says Tourism

Tasmania chief executive John Fitzgerald. . . . **Hobart** Tasmania’s capital and Australia’s second oldest city, Hobart was voted one of the top 10 cities to visit in the world by Lonely Planet in 2013, and it’s here the famil group started their Tassie adventure. Settled in 1804 beside the Derwent River, its heritage reflects a colourful colonial history founded on convicts, whalers, wealthy merchants and seamen. These days its population sits at around 205,000 and it’s known for its arts and crafts, festivals and annual Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.

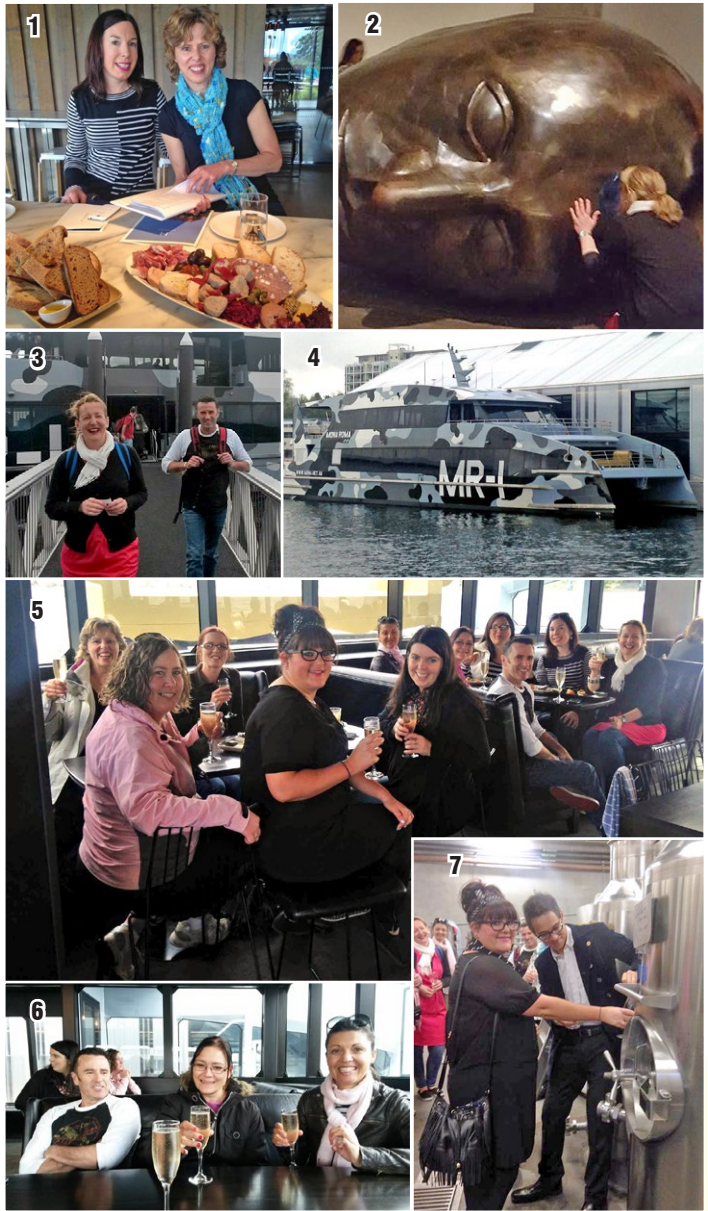


Meeting Local Wildlife At Bonorong Sanctuary

Borong Wildlife Sanctuary isn’t a zoo—it’s a place where injured and sick animals like Tasmanian devils, quolls, wombats and echidnas are nursed back to health and released into the wild. Visitors can get up close to its residents, including kangaroos and koalas. Entry is AUD26 for adults and AUD12 for children aged three-12, including a free bag of kangaroo food. See bonorong.com.au **Pictured is:** **1** One of the sanctuary’s koala residents. **2** Wombats are always a popular attraction. **3** Trish Little, Flight Centre Downtown comes under attack from friendly (or hungry) kangaroos. **4** Liz Morris, House of Travel meets a wombat.

Weird And Wonderful Art At Mona

The Museum of Old and New Art is Australia’s largest private museum, with owner David Walsh describing it as a ‘subversive adult Disneyland’. Visitors can wander through three levels of subterranean art space, marvelling at weird and wonderful exhibitions.



1 Enjoying lunch is Kate Tawhai, House of Travel Havelock North with Raewyn Higham, Harvey World Travel Pukekohe. **2** One of the artworks. **3** Arrival by MONA ROMA. **4** The MONA ROMA ferry service. **5** Enjoying a champagne breakfast on the ferry over. **6** VA’s Terry Wakefield, Trish Little of Flight Centre Downtown and Taryn Burwell, United Travel Waiheke. **7** Getting some tips in the MONA winery is Liz Morris, House of Travel.

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Exploring Tasmania's Convict Past

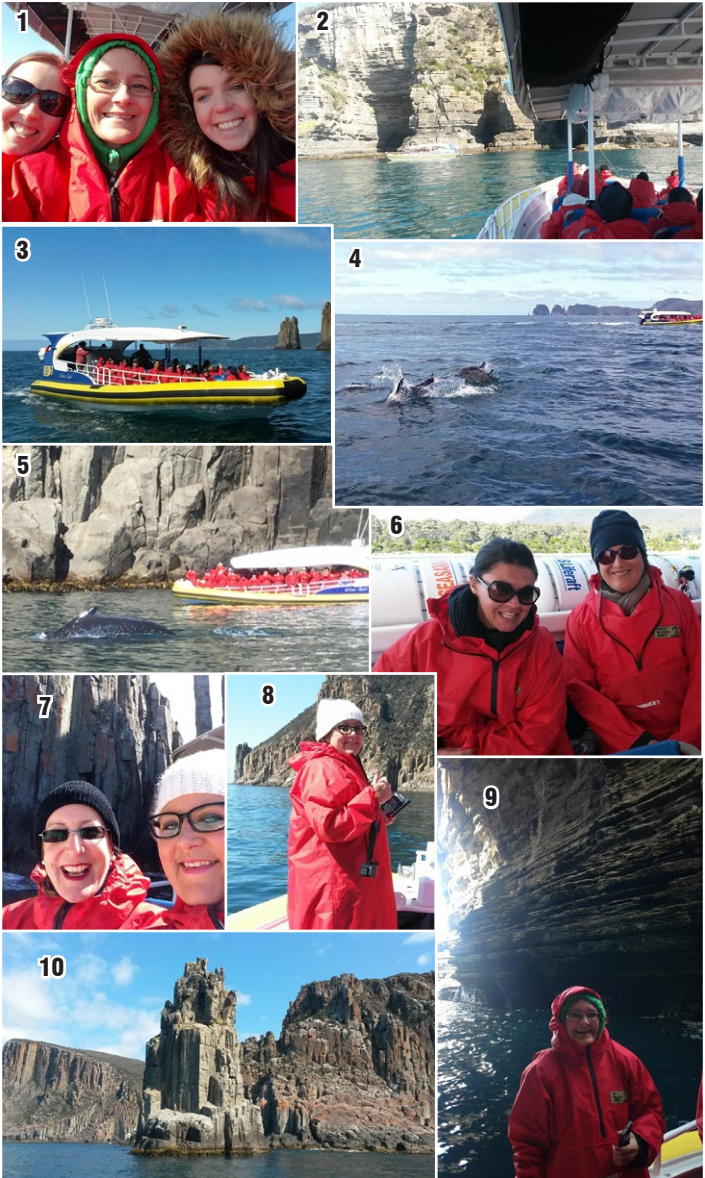


These days Port Arthur is a pretty town popular with tourists, but it has a dark past—the town was home to the Port Arthur penal settlement from 1830-1877. During that time, 12,700 offenders were housed there, with the Tasman Peninsula acting as a natural penitentiary. One of Australia's leading historic

sites, the Port Arthur penal settlement is the most significant of seven locations on the Tasman Peninsula Convict Trail. Set on 309 acres, it's now a popular tourist destination, with a world-class visitor centre and more than 30 historic buildings and ruins, as well as beautiful gardens. See portarthur.org.au



Pictured at Port Arthur is: 1 Exploring the old prison. 2 Virgin Australia's Terry Wakefield takes to the pulpit. 3 In the cells. 4 A deceptively pretty view. 5 The gang gets ready for their tour.



Enjoying Tasmania From The Ocean

Travelling between Port Arthur and Eaglehawk Neck, Tasman Island Cruises allow visitors to see Tasmania's marine wildlife, from seals to seabirds, as well as offering views over the towering cliffs of Tasman Island and Cape Pillar. Cruises operate year-round and are tailored for all weather. See tasmancruises.com.au

Pictured on the cruise is: 1 Linnea Robinson, United Travel; Trish Little, Flight Centre Downtown; and Hannah Hutton-Smith, Flight Centre. 2 Getting close to the rocks. 3 The boat. 4 Dolphin-spotting. 5 Whale-watching. 6 Taryn Burwell, United Travel Waiheke; and Jane Southon, Flight Centre Lower Hutt. 7 Jolanda Odermatt, Flight Centre Lynn mall, with Liz Morris, House of Travel. 8 Liz Morris, House of Travel. 9 Trish Little, Flight Centre Downtown. 10 Spectacular rock formations on the Tassie coast.

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Exploring Tassie's Natural Beauty

Tasmania is home to plenty of spectacular scenery and agents checked out two of the state's top national parks on day three of their famil.

Tasman National Park is famous for soaring cliffs, dramatic rock formations and plenty of wildlife, says Tourism Tasmania. The park is found on the rugged Tasman Peninsula and features a spectacular coastal environment, including 300m high dolerite sea cliffs.

It's also home to animals including fur seals, penguins, dolphins and migrating whales, and birdlife like the endangered swift parrot.

Many rock formations along the coastline are easily accessed by car, including Tasman Arch and The Blowhole, two of Tasmania's most-visited attractions, as well as Waterfall Bay, Remarkable Cave and the Tessellated Pavement.

There's also plenty of bushwalks and for clients wanting to spend a little longer, there's a new Three Capes Track due to open soon. The 46km independent multi-day includes cliff top outlooks on Cape Pillar, Cape Hauy and Cape Raoul.

Other popular activities at the park include climbing and abseiling the dolerite columns and cliffs at the southern end of the park; hang-gliding at Pirates Bay; and boating and swimming off Pirates Bay, Fortescue Bay, Port Arthur and the Tasman Sea.

... Freycinet

Freycinet National Park, on Tasmania's east coast, is home to dramatic pink granite peaks, secluded bays, white sandy beaches and abundant birdlife. Famous attractions include the pink peaks of the Hazards Range and iconic Wineglass Bay—there's a short trek to the bay lookout which is a bit of a scramble, but worth it for one of Tasmania's most photographed views. Tourism Tasmania suggests continuing on from the lookout down to the perfectly curved beach and back to the park entrance via the Hazards Range, which takes around half a day. Suggest clients time their trip to see the Hazards at sunrise and sunset when the pink granite glows.

There's plenty of spots for swimming and snorkelling, and the Moulting Lagoon is a wetland sanctuary for black swans, water fowl and other birds.



Never Too Early For Oyster Tasting

Proving it's never too early for fresh seafood, the famil group stopped in for morning tea and oyster tasting at Bangor Wine & Oyster Shed, which features a cellar door, farm gate shop and restaurant. See bangorshed.com.au



1 Exploring Freycinet is Jolanda Odermatt, Flight Centre Lynnmall. **2** Taking in one of the many spectacular views is Jane Southon, Flight Centre Lower Hutt with Kate Tawhai, House of Travel. **3** Hannah Hutton-Smith, Flight Centre, and House of Travel's Liz Morris in front of Wineglass Bay. **4** Walking down from the lookout at Wineglass Bay was much happier than on the way up. With lovely guide Rosemary is Raewyn Higham, Harvey World Travel Pukekohe and Hannah Hutton-Smith, Flight Centre. **5** Having a rest stop in Freycinet National Park is Liz Morris, House of Travel; Virgin Australia's Terry Wakefield; Jane Southon, Flight Centre Lower Hutt; and Trish Little, Flight Centre Downtown. **6** Wineglass Bay.

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Trying Tasmania's Famous Cuisine

After exploring Tassie's natural wonders it was time to indulge in some of its famous epicurean delights—namely, cheese and chocolate tasting.

Ashgrove Farm Cheese in Elizabeth Town produces traditional English country cheeses, such as cheddar and Lancashire, with cheesemaker Jane Bennett having honed her skills in England before putting them to use in the family business. She's not afraid to push the boundaries, offering flavours like wasabi and lavender. See ashgrovecheese.com.au

At the nearby Anvers Chocolate Factory, acclaimed chocolate-maker Igor van Gerwen claims to make the best chocolate in Australia, and while it's a big call it's no hardship putting his claims to the test. There's a tasting centre, space to watch chocolates being made, and a museum highlighting why chocolate is so popular, as well as a café. The group also dined at Red Feather Inn, a Georgian property built by convict labour and licensed as an inn in 1844. See redfeatherinn.com.au



Indulging In TAS Epicurean Delights

1 Liz Morris, House of Travel samples the merchandise at Anvers Chocolate Factory. **2-4** Touring the Red Feather Inn.



Cradle Mountain From Dove Lake

One of the most picturesque views in Tassie is the site of Cradle Mountain from Dove Lake, particularly with the famous Boat Shed in front. The 6km Dove Lake walk is one of the state's premier walks, and while most of it is low-key boardwalk, the surrounds are anything but tame. Walkers can expect to come across unexpected beaches, an ancient Ballroom Forest, horizontal scrub and the occasional echidna or platypus.

Pictured: **1** A walk to Dove Lake. **2** The Boat Shed. **3** Hannah Hutton-Smith spots a wombat on the way to Dove Lake. **4** A group shot after a rainforest walk at Cradle Mountain. **5** Exploring Dove Lake. **6** Liz Morris, House of Travel with Cradle Mountain. **7** Rest stop. **8** Scenic wonders.

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