

South West Tasmania

Wilderness Sea Kayak Adventure Eight day trip



South-West Tasmania-Wilderness Sea Kayak Adventure



Eight day trip-six to seven days kayaking

The area of Bathurst Harbour and Port Davey, in south-west Tasmania, is one of Australia's most remote destinations, with no roads and no settlements. What the area does have is World Heritage Listing with sheltered harbours, rugged ocean coastlines, remote islands and wild rivers. The best way to discover this spectacular area is by kayak and on this trip we spend six days paddling between remote bush and beach camps, exploring the striking sea and landscapes along the way. The trip includes a spectacular return flight between Hobart and Melaleuca in the Southwest National Park, a fantastic experience that bookends this amazing Australian kayak adventure.

A Quick Itinerary

B = Breakfast • L = Lunch • D = Dinner

Day 1: Depart Hobart for the one hour flight to Melaleuca. Camping. D

Days 2-7: Kayaking Tasmania's World Heritage wilderness. Camping. B • L • D

Day 8: Last kayak day. Flight to Hobart. End of trip arrangements. B

Meeting Place and Time

We meet at Hobart's Cambridge airport one hour prior to the flight departure. Flight times may vary so check your booking confirmation or call the number noted on your final itinerary to confirm. Flights usually depart at 11.30am or sometimes 2.30pm, depending on Par Avion scheduling. Cambridge airport is a five minute drive from Hobart airport and 20 minutes from Hobart city. We can arrange a Hobart city hotel and Hobart airport pick up approximately two hours prior to the flight time. If you have your own vehicle you can park at Cambridge Airport where there is free unsecured parking. We recommend you arrive into Hobart the day prior to Day 1.

Sea Kayaking

Sea kayaking is an activity that any reasonably fit person can participate in and could be compared to brisk walking or cycling. Previous paddling experience is

required as we may paddle up to six hours per day, although paddling speed is generally relaxed. The degree of difficulty of the trip **will depend on the weather** we encounter. We ask that all participants feel confident in swimming.

The kayaks used are double sit-in expedition sea kayaks (Paddling Perfection Sea Bear II) with rudder. The kayaks are stable, easy to paddle and control-ideally suited for this remote trip. They are very forgiving and are suited for beginners to experts. The kayaks are designed as an expedition boat and it is important to keep gear to a minimum as we carry all of our provisions and equipment on board with us. On day two you will be given a thorough briefing on all aspects of sea kayaking techniques with ample time to practice and familiarise yourself with the kayaks. We generally limit our group size to a maximum of 10 clients, plus two guides.

Paddles used are Werner Skaggit paddles with 70 degree right hand feather, with two split paddles available that can be adjusted for left hand paddlers. You're welcome to bring your own split paddle if you prefer.

In general, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling. It's a good idea to begin some regular exercise like walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics or swimming well before the trip. If you have not paddled recently we highly recommend some practice and/or tuition before your trip.

Proposed Itinerary

Due to the unique nature of this area and the variability of weather, there is no fixed route or schedule. The following itinerary is a sample only. Please note that flight delay, weather, logistical conditions and group preference will determine the day to day activities. Paddling distances should be seen as an approximate guide only.

Day 1: Meet at Hobart's Cambridge Airport one hour before the scheduled departure (check your booking confirmation). This allows time to repack your personal luggage into the supplied dry bags and duffle.

It's a 40-50 minute flight with Par Avion to Melaleuca in the Southwest National Park. The flight can follow two routes depending on cloud and visibility. If the cloud is low then the route is via the southeast and southern coasts of Tasmania. Otherwise, the route is directly over the rugged mountains to the west of Hobart; both routes offer wild and spectacular scenery.

We arrive on the airstrip originally built in the 1950's by Deny King, who lived with his family at Melaleuca for 55 years. On arrival, we unload the gear into wheelbarrows for transport to the campsite, about 400 metres from the airstrip. After setting up camp, the rest of the day is at your leisure to explore Melaleuca. The Needwonnee Walk shares the story of the indigenous people of the Southwest and weaves its way through the forest and button grass plains beside Melaleuca lagoon. Other activities in Melaleuca include visiting the Deny King museum and historic tin mining areas. Bird lovers can visit the Orange Bellied Parrot viewing hide, where there may be the chance to spot the critically endangered animal.

During your evening meal, the guides will discuss itinerary options for the coming week.

D / CAMPING

Day 2: After a nourishing breakfast, we pack the kayaks and after a safety briefing, start our adventure. We head up Melaleuca Inlet and around Claytons

Corner to either Farrell Point or Balmoral Beach in Bathurst Channel. Paddling distance is about 15km and takes approximately 4-5 hours, typically against 15-20 knot head winds (which will be appreciated on the return paddle!) We'll stop along the way to rest arms, stretch legs and take in the breathtaking views.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 3: Our destination today is Spain Bay in Port Davey marine reserve. Our route may possibly be around the Breaksea Islands, a group of six islands located near the mouth of Port Davey. The group comprise the North Breaksea and Main Breaksea Islands, the Fitzroy, Kathleen, Munday Islands and Mavourneen Rocks. The islands are noted as a breeding site for many seabird species, including approximately 400 pairs of little penguin. Paddling distance today is around 15-20 kms, depending on the route. From our camp on Spain Bay, we have a walking option of 2-3 hours to the spectacular Stephens Beach.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 4: After a hearty breakfast we pack up and launch our kayaks, heading north to Bramble Cove where we plan to spend two nights. The paddle distance today is around 6-10kms (about 2-4 hours). The cove is surrounded by mountain peaks and the sunrises are spectacular!

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 5: Today we have numerous day trip options from Bramble Cove. They include an exploration of Bramble Cove's whaling history (1-2 hours return), a 400m climb to Mt Stokes (3-4 hours return) or the 180m walk up Mt Milner (2-3 hours). Paddle options include Wallaby Bay (3-4 hours) and Whale Head (4-5 hours). Whatever we end up doing, the surrounding scenery will ensure an amazing day.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 6: We paddle back through the narrow Bathurst Channel passing Mount Rugby, which at 771 metres, is the highest peak bordering the marine reserve. Our destination is protected Bathurst Harbour, a 20km paddle (4-5 hours). With the winds typically at our backs, the distance will pass quickly. The still waters of Bathurst Harbour (three times the size of Sydney harbour) are stained a deep red-brown due to tannin leached from adjacent button grass heathland. The dark band of fresh water sits above heavier layers of clear saltwater, making a reflective surface that's perfect for photography.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 7: Today we head for the Forest Lagoon standing camp via North River and/or Celery Top Islands. Today we cover around 10-15 kms, enjoying the quiet of the harbour's protective waters, a meditative experience with just the sound of the splash of our paddles. Forest Lagoon standing camp is made up of five two-person platform yurts, a dining/kitchen shelter and communal amenities with flushing toilets. The camp has magnificent views of Mt Rugby, which we can appreciate from the comfort of our accommodation.

B • L • D / CAMPING

Day 8: The final day of our adventure typically starts with a relaxed breakfast followed by a 6km paddle back up the Melaleuca Inlet to Melaleuca. On arrival there's time to tidy the kayaks and organise gear for the flight back to Cambridge airport. The scheduled departure is 12.30pm with an arrival time of 1.30pm. A transfer to your Hobart hotel is included.

B / END OF TRIP ARRANGEMENTS

End of Trip

We finish the trip the flight back to Cambridge airport and a transfer to your Hobart hotel if required. Accommodation on this night needs to be booked by you and is not included in the trip cost.

Access to Melaleuca is by light aircraft. These planes cannot operate in extremes of weather or poor visibility. While it is unusual, delays can occur on both the inbound and outbound flights. **Due to this we highly recommend you do not arrange onward travel for at least 24 hours after our scheduled finish time.**

Luggage, Packing and Gear

Upon arrival at Cambridge airport you will be supplied with:

- Two dry bags (1 x 25 litre and 1 x 20 litre).
- Waterproof paddling jacket and waterproof paddling pants.
- PFD/life jacket.
- Sleeping bag and sleeping bag liner.
- 70 litre duffle bag.

You will receive your tent and sleeping mat on arrival at Melaleuca.

All your gear, including dry bags and sleeping bag but excluding PFD must fit into the 70 litre duffle bag.

At Cambridge airport there will be time allocated to repack your personal luggage into the supplied dry bags and duffle bag. Your guides will go through the gear list to ensure you have adequate and appropriate clothing and rain jacket. You will be able to leave your travel luggage and other personal items not needed on the trip with our local operators for safe keeping.

Thermals

Synthetic or wool thermals will ensure your comfort in cooler and wet weather. These materials wick water away from the skin, keeping the layer closest to you warm and dry. We strongly recommend you bring two sets of thermals, one for paddling and one for camp. Clothing made froms cotton, cotton blend or silk are not suitable (once these fabrics get wet they will become cold on your skin).

Rain Gear

You will be supplied with a good quality waterproof paddling jacket and waterproof pants for kayaking. The jacket has gaskets around the wrists to stop water from running along your arms while paddling, however this gasket can become uncomfortable and hot when walking. The pants are non-breathable, but great for stopping the wind when you get out of the kayak. For walking and for wearing around camp, we recommend your bring your own breathable waterproof jacket.

Footwear

Be prepared to get your feet wet! You can either opt for water sandals (Texas/Keens), light neoprene booties or Crocs (most of the guides wear Crocs). The itinerary includes walking. Trail walking shoes or runners are ideal, or lightweight hiking boots if you prefer ankle support. The tracks can be muddy and rutted. It is recommended that you also have a dry pair of shoes for around camp. Runners or Crocs (fashionably worn with socks for warmth) are preferred options.

Water bottle/Hydration system

You will require at least one litre of water carrying capacity. Each morning and at lunch you will be able to re-fill your water bottles. Each kayak will have a deck bag where you can store either your water bottle or hydration pack. The PFD's also have the ability to zip a hydration pack into the back.

Notes on Packing

All your gear will need to fit into the 70 litre duffel bag supplied at Cambridge airport. Also supplied are two dry bags for your sleeping bag and clothes. Waterproof clothing and shoes do not need to be packed into dry bags and can be placed into the duffel bag and the kayak hatch individually. If you follow the gear list at the end of these notes your gear should fit nicely into the supplied bags.

Kayaking Equipment

Our local operator provides high quality sea kayaking equipment. You'll have a pfd that fits, quality spray deck, a light paddle, good quality paddle jacket and pants, pogies (paddling mits) and a well-maintained sea kayak. You are welcome to bring your favourite paddling accessories such a split paddle, pfd, dry bags and paddling jackets but please contact us prior to your trip regarding suitability.

Camping Equipment

You'll be provided with good quality camping gear suitable for Southwest Tasmania's climate. If you prefer to use your own sleeping bag and/or mat, please let us know so we don't double up, as some of this equipment is flown into Melaleuca the week before the expedition.

Provided are roomy double tents for couples and one-person tents for single travellers. Singles will not be expected to share a tent but may be required to share the yurt at Forest Lagoon standing camp on the last night of the trip (there is a heavy curtain separating the single beds). Each yurt at Forest Lagoon has a double bed or two single beds and is high enough for you to walk around.

Climate

The dynamic weather is one of the many attractions of this World Heritage wilderness. Daytime summer temperatures can range from 10 to 35 celsius with at least one day (and sometimes multiple days) with rain or drizzle to be expected. Evening temperatures regularly drop below 10 C. In this moist maritime environment, quality wet-weather gear and thermal garments are a necessity for your safety and comfort.

Follow the gear list and you will be comfortable and prepared to enjoy the many variations of weather that we may encounter.

Trip Organisation

Due to the unique nature of this area and the variability of weather, there is no fixed route or schedule. The number of days paddling and the number of hours in the kayaks is variable and dependent upon the group and weather conditions. The guides are highly experienced at optimising each day's plan to make the most of prevailing conditions. On a typical day we aim to paddle for

approximately 2-3 hours in the morning and 2-3 hours in the afternoon. Sometimes a short walk may be substituted for paddling. It's important to realise that the group will kayak at the speed of the slowest members.

The expedition will run more smoothly if everyone pitches in and helps. The guides will show you how to erect your tent and from then on, it's your task to pull down and erect the tent each day. The guides will prepare meals but we ask that each person takes turns with the dishes each evening.

Expedition Staff

The guides' role is to co-ordinate the expedition and ensure the safety of the group. They will answer questions and inform you of the objectives and progress of the trip. They will decide on safety matters and administer the medical kit if required. The guides carry a satellite phone, location beacon, marine radio, flare kits and towing equipment in case of emergencies. Should you have any enquiries during the trip, feel free to ask your guides.

Travel Arrangements

Should you voluntarily decide to alter your travel arrangements after commencement of your trip, Southern Sea Ventures and local operator are not responsible for any additional charges involved. Our staff will assist you if possible but you are responsible for organising these arrangements yourself. Delays may occur due to weather or transport difficulties and your guides will do their best to rectify the situation. Please understand that delays and waiting can occur.

Travel Insurance

It is necessary to take out a personal comprehensive travel insurance policy. Please make sure your insurance policy covers lost monies in the event that you need to cancel your trip or the trip has to be cancelled/curtailed due to inclement weather. Southern Sea Ventures and local operator are not responsible for any expenses incurred due to flight delays.

Australian residents should note: Under the Federal Government Medicare Act it is prohibited for any domestic travel insurance product to provide any financial reimbursement with regards to ambulance or air ambulance services. We advise clients to take specific cover for ambulance services through the respective State Ambulance Service providers or through your own private health insurance.

Ensure you have read your travel insurance policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim. We will require proof of your insurance prior to departure.

Time & Communication

Tasmania is on Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT).

There is no mobile coverage and no power available during the trip. Your guides carry a satellite phone for emergencies. Please ensure all cameras are fully charged and spare batteries are packed.



Meals

All meals, snacks and drinks, cooking equipment and eating utensils are provided.

The food is freshly prepared by the guides who are all great camp cooks. Breakfasts are a mix of hot and cold, with items such as muesli, fruit salad, scrambled eggs and pancakes on offer. Lunches are picnic-style, with a selection of wraps, crackers, cheese, cold meat and a salad. Dinners are prepared with fresh ingredients and varied daily. Dinners start with a snack, such as cheese and biscuits (with a glass of wine), then a main (for example, Moroccan Lamb with cous cous), finishing with dessert such as Tasmanian berries and cream.

We are happy to cater for vegetarians and other special dietary requirements. Please write your dietary requirements on your medical form.

Conservation

It has always been our motto that “we take only photographs and leave only footprints”. We are keenly aware of the ecology of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Our local operator follows the principles of Leave No Trace to minimise impact.

- Please keep toiletries to a minimum. Discuss the suitability of any biodegradable products you bring with your guides. We suggest leaving shampoo, soaps and hair products behind. Natural 100% tea tree oil serves as a good antiseptic soap/shampoo alternative. Please note there are no shower facilities.
- Toilet paper is supplied and the disposal of waste as per Leave No Trace principles will be outlined during your tour.
- If possible, organic/natural brands of insect repellent, sunscreen, deodorant and toothpaste are preferred. Small quantities take up less space!
- Sanitising hand gel will be provided at meal times and around camp. Having a small personal quantity is also recommended. Approximately 60ml is sufficient.

Biosecurity

The greatest threat to some of Tasmania's plants is an introduced disease called root rot (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*). Root rot is spread on the muddy boots and camping gear of visitors. Once root rot infects an area it cannot be removed. Other threats include didymo algae, chytrid frog fungus, myrtle rust and weed seeds.

Before you pack please CHECK, CLEAN AND DRY all clothing and equipment. Pay particular attention to boots and velcro on clothing. A boot wash down station is provided at Cambridge airport for an additional clean of your shoes prior to your flight.

Money Matters

Your tour cost includes:

- Return transfers between Hobart city and Cambridge airport.
- Return scenic flight between Cambridge airport and Melaleuca.
- National Park entry and camping fees.
- Double expedition kayaks, paddles, pfd, spray skirts.
- Tent, mats, sleeping bag and liner (notify us if you prefer to bring your own).
- Two dry bags for your sleeping bag and clothes.
- Duffle bag for transport of your gear on the flight.
- Waterproof paddling jacket and pants.
- Pogies (paddling mittens).
- Two professional sea kayak guides.
- All meals and snacks from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8 including a glass of wine in the evenings.
- All cooking equipment including cups, plates and eating utensils.
- Toilet paper, toilet kit, antibacterial hand gel.
- Comprehensive first aid kit and emergency safety equipment.

Your tour cost *does not* include:

- Flights to Hobart.
- Accommodation and meals in Hobart.
- Travel insurance.

Medical Matters

Any passenger undertaking this trip is required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately. Be sure to let your guide know of any medications you take (and side-effects) as well as noting this on your medical form. Include an extra supply of your medication, packed separately, just in case. You will be isolated from modern medical facilities, so attention to medical matters is vital. Your guides carry a comprehensive medical kit and are trained in wilderness first aid.

Equipment & Clothing: What You Need to Bring

Due to weight and space limits in both the aircraft and kayaks, your entire personal luggage, including the provided sleeping bag and waterproof clothing, **must fit into the 70 litre (600mm x 400mm x 300mm) duffle bag** issued at Cambridge airport. Contact us if you have any questions.

Gear List

Essential Items:

- Lightweight thermal long sleeve top for paddling.
- Lightweight thermal long johns for paddling.
- Medium/heavy weight thermal long sleeve top for night.
- Medium/heavy weight thermal long johns or polar fleece pants for night.
- Lightweight fleece for paddling.
- Nylon quick drying shorts (like board shorts).
- Synthetic quick drying long trousers.
- One or two lightweight quick drying t-shirts.
- Warm polar fleece or down jacket.
- Quality, breathable rain jacket with hood.
- Waterproof over trousers (for walking and at camp).
- Footwear for paddling that can get wet (sandals, wet suit booties, Crocs).
- Trail walking shoes/runners or light weight hiking boots.
- Dry footwear for camp (sneakers or Crocs).
- Sun-glasses with a cord to prevent them from falling into the water.
- Sun hat with a stiff brim.
- Woollen or polar fleece gloves.
- One or two woollen or fleece beanies (one for paddling and one for camp).
- One pair of warm socks for night.
- Two pairs of walking socks.
- Underwear for eight days.

Essential Personal items:

- Water bottle/hydration system (minimum one litre capacity).
- Personal toiletries and medications (note there are no shower facilities and if you bring soap please ensure it is biodegradable.)
- 60ml sanitising hand gel.
- Pack towel: light and quick dry.
- Headlamp with spare batteries.
- Sunscreen (water resistant and at least SPF30) and lip salve.
- Insect repellent.
- Pillowcase (for use at standing camp).

Optional items:

- Small dry bag for camera, sunscreen etc.
- Short or long sleeved rash vest.
- Long sleeved quick drying shirt for sun protection.

- Paddling gloves (we supply pogies).
- Gaiters
- A pair of swimmers.
- Camera
- Book.
- Small frameless daypack.
- Small inflatable camping pillow.
- Plastic bags for wet gear.
- Wine or spirits (no glass and everything must fit into the 70 litre duffle bag).

Delays or Problems

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures. A local number will be noted on your final itinerary.

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