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Introduction

Are you a beach, forest or mountain person? Do you love food and wine? What about history and culture? There are many reasons why we travel and it is often a tough choice deciding the destination of your next walking trip. Wouldn't it be easy if there was a magical place which offered the whole shebang? A dreamland or utopia that offered stunning mountain peaks, pristine beaches, charming villages, rolling vineyards, gourmet produce, abundant wildlife and spectacular national parks. Luckily, the area east of Melbourne offers everything we crave! The walks in this book manage to feature historic villages, waterfalls, national parks, rail trails, food and wine producers, aboriginal culture, waterways, scenic lookouts, beaches, coastal cliffs, gold mining sites, town attractions, classic mountain scenery, rustic huts and bush icons.

This book encompasses a fairly wide geographical area that encompasses a breathtaking range of environments. The Dandenong Ranges are a set of low mountains about 40 kilometres east of Melbourne's CBD; further east again are the Yarra Valley and Yarra Ranges. Phillip and



Introduction

French Islands lie in a large natural bay between the far western edge of Gippsland and the Mornington Peninsula. Highlights of this book also include the Cathedral Ranges, Cape Wollamai, Churchill Island, Tarra-Bulga National Park, Wilsons Promontory, Ninety Mile beach and Baw Baw National Park. Interesting and historic walks can also be experienced at villages such as Walhalla, Marysville, Noojee, Wonthaggi, Inverloch and Sale. Just to name a few!



Cambarville Picnic Ground

Grading

This book is suitable for every type of walker no matter what your experience level is. Beginners can start with the easy options and work their way through the grades to the more challenging mountain trails. Experienced hikers may focus on the more medium/hard routes but will



Cape Wollamai

Introduction

also enjoy exploring the easier trails to better appreciate and understand the region. Many of the easy walks are suitable for children and they will love getting back to nature, discovering the historic villages and exploring waterfalls, beaches and local attractions.

Easy – Mostly flat terrain, occasional small hills, well-defined trails and footpaths, suitable for children and for those with average fitness, no experience required.

Easy/medium – Some short steep sections, longer gradual inclines, well-defined trails, occasional rough or uneven surfaces.

Medium – More challenging landscapes including longer distances and steeper climbs. Sometimes rough and uneven underfoot. A good level of fitness and experience required.

Hard – Long distances, extremely steep climbs, challenging terrain, constant rough and uneven surfaces, higher altitude, extreme weather. A high level of fitness and experience required.



27 Lilly Pilly Gully & Mt Bishop

This walk provides a glance into the Prom's forested interior and takes in heathland, eucalypt forest and warm temperate rainforest. Starting from the Tidal River Visitor Centre, this walk crosses Tidal River and then links up with the Lilly Pilly Circuit. A sidetrack leads to the rocky summit of Mt Bishop which has stunning views of the Prom's west Coast and offshore islands. The route descends to the lush rainforest of Lilly Pilly Gully where there is a boardwalk and nature trail.

At a glance

Grade: Medium

Time: 3.5 hours

Distance: 11.5 km circuit

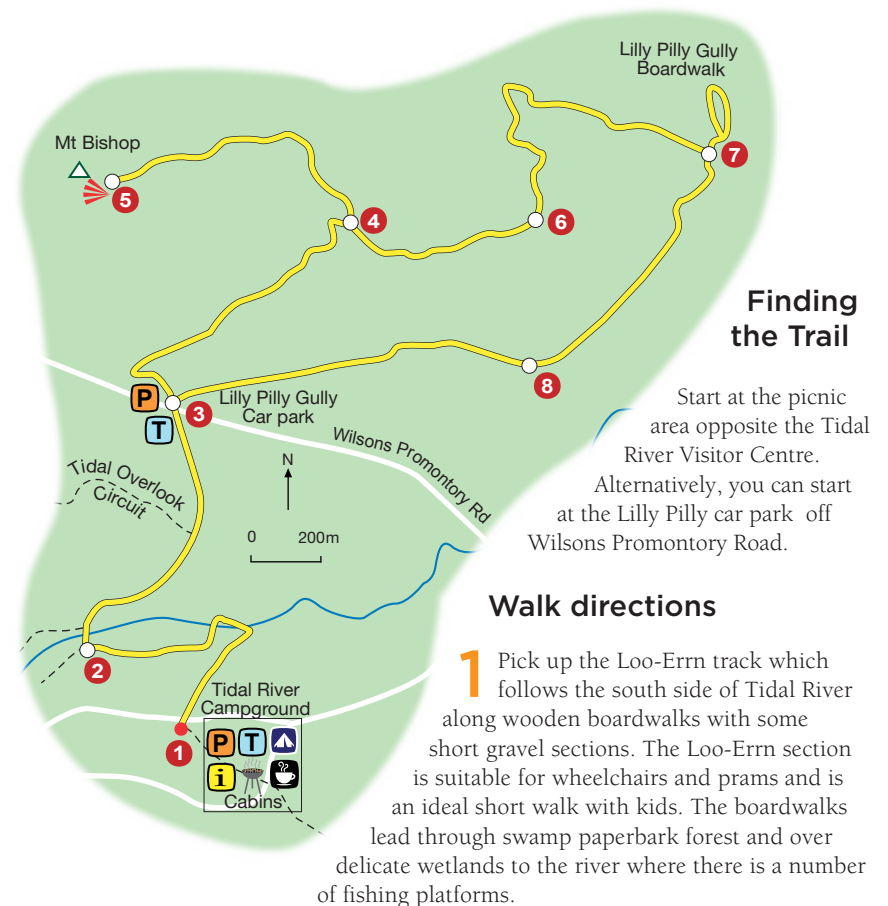
Conditions: Some steep rocky sections

Getting there: Tidal River Campground is 55 km south of Fish Creek



Mt Bishop

27 Lilly Pilly Gully & Mt Bishop



Loo-Ern Track

2 Cross over the Tidal River footbridge and turn immediately right onto the Lilly Pilly Link Track. During spring, colourful wildflower displays can be seen amongst the coastal heathland. At the next junction with



27 Lilly Pilly Gully & Mt Bishop

Tidal Overlook Circuit remain straight on the Lilly Pilly Link Track.

3 Cross Wilsons Promontory Road before arriving at Lilly Pilly Gully car park. Pick up the Lilly Pilly Circuit/Mt Bishop trail at the northern end of the car park near the toilet. Soon after you will cross a small bridge over a fern gully. The next section navigates the southern rim of Mt Bishop through stringybark forest.

4 At the next junction turn left onto the track that leads further up to the Mt Bishop Summit. The early parts of this trail are relatively easy-going, but it becomes narrower and more difficult as you climb.



5 Just before the true peak of Mt Bishop you will arrive at a clearing on a huge slab of granite that provides magnificent views towards Mt Oberon and to the south. A little further on is a second lookout area on the summit. The view here takes in more of the Prom's classic scenery including rugged coastline, indented coves and beaches plus granite headlands, tors and cliffs. Return to the

junction at waypoint 4 and then turn left back onto the Lilly Pilly Circuit.

6 The next section continues through a dense zone of native forest. Bushfires have left their mark on the tall eucalypts with vibrant regrowth dominating much of the understorey. Further on the trail loops around the valley and begins to descend into Lilly Pilly Gully.



Mt Bishop

27 Lilly Pilly Gully & Mt Bishop

7 Further on the vegetation changes abruptly from tall, open eucalypt forest to warm temperate rainforest. At this point the Lilly Pilly Gully Boardwalk (with information boards) loops around an area of rainforest which is one of Australia's southern-most patches of its type. The creek passing through this area is home to the rare Lilly Pilly Burrowing Crayfish and Climbing Galaxias (a fish). This rainforest was a valuable resource for indigenous people providing materials for hunting tools and other instruments. Its plants were also used for food and medicine. After you have completed the boardwalk circuit, continue south-west on the Lilly Pilly Gully Nature Walk.

8 The remainder of the track meanders through much more open forest and is predominantly compacted sand, relatively flat and easy going. Thickets of grass trees and a wide variety of birdlife can be seen. The impact of fires and floods on the landscape are also evident along this stretch. The trail leads back to Lilly Pilly Gully car park and then you can return to the Tidal River Campground via the Lilly Pilly Link Track.



Lilly Pilly Gully Boardwalk



Out and about: Overnight hiking

Overnight hikers are required to obtain a permit before commencing their walk and must keep it with them at all times. Advance bookings can be made online or via Parks Victoria on T 131 963. A maximum of two consecutive nights at each of the camp areas and the Light Station is permitted. Maximum group size is 12.

The Great Prom Walk is one of the most popular long-distance hikes in the country. It is a moderate 45-kilometre circuit that heads east from Tidal River to Sealers Cove and then down to Refuge Cove, Waterloo Bay and the lighthouse. You then return to Tidal River via Oberon Bay. It's recommended you allow three days to complete this walk.