

Cycling in Tasmania

Welcome to our free guide to cycling in Tasmania.

It features information on riding from Devonport to Hobart, through some of Tasmania's most beautiful scenery and mostly on quiet roads.

There are also notes on visiting on Cradle Mountain and Bruny Island.

More information about Tasmania and other places we've visited is on our website: www.travellingtwo.com

Please feel free to distribute this guide to other cyclists and if you have something to add, we'd love to hear from you: us@travellingtwo.com

One Week in Tasmania

Tasmania deserves far more than a week but life being what it is, you may not have much time to spare. This '**bit of everything**' tour takes in mountains, farmland and the seaside in **7-10 days**.

It starts in **Devonport**, the landing spot for the **Spirit of Tasmania ferry**, and ends in **Hobart**. You could just as easily skip the first two days and start from **Launceston** or cut out a couple days by going directly south to **Sheffield** from Devonport.

There are two **optional side trips**: Cradle Mountain (1 day) and Bruny Island (at least 3 days). Those notes appear after the main route description. Notes on **Hobart** also follow.

One last word of advice: if you're going in January, book accommodation ahead of time for Swansea and Hobart or be prepared to bush camp. Everything – and we do mean everything – gets filled up when the kids are out of school.

Distance: 775km

Duration: 7-10 days

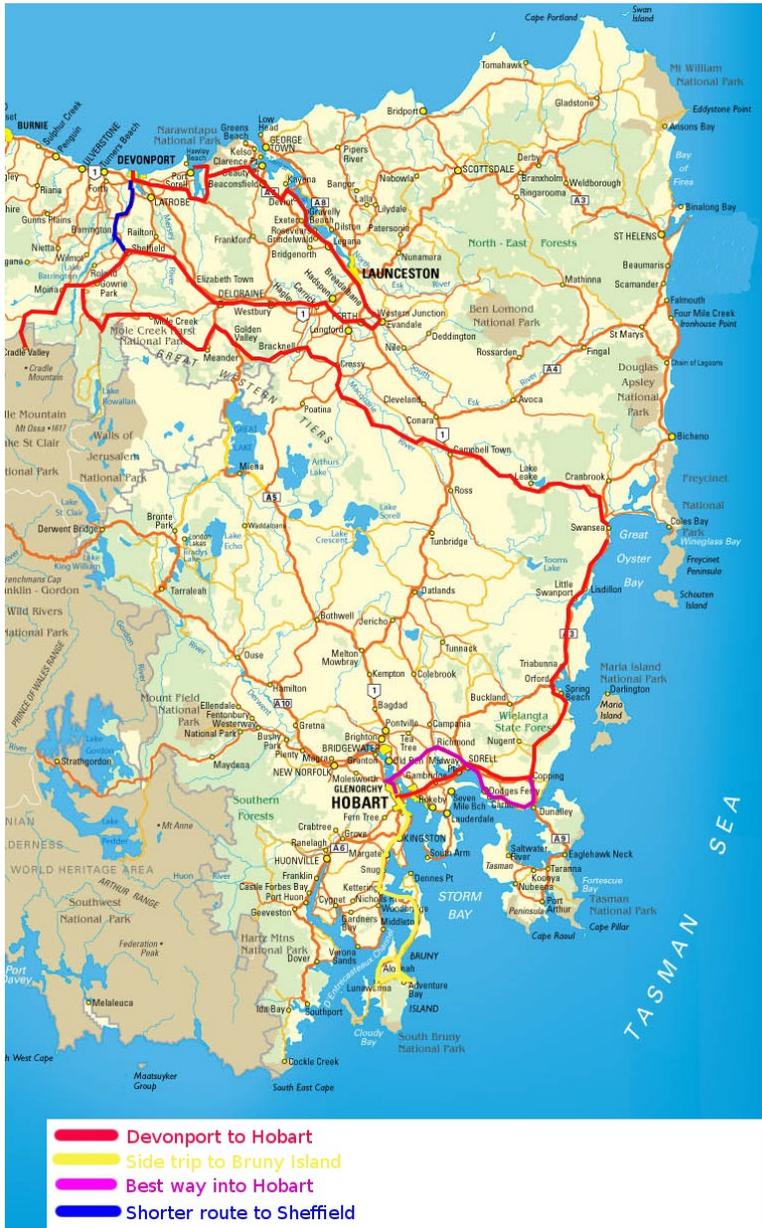
Terrain: Lots of hills! Beautiful and ever-changing scenery from barren plains and mountains to farming fields to aqua blue seas along the eastern coastline.

Accommodation: Plenty of camping – both free and paying sites – as well as a range of hostels, B&Bs and hotels.

Highlights: Cradle Mountain. Mt. Roland Backpackers. Scenery around Mole Creek. Coastline south of Swansea.

Lowlights: Heavy traffic from Swansea south. Changeable weather.

Be sure to bring: A National Parks pass (A\$28/person for 2 months). Warm clothing for chilly weather, even in summer.



Day 1: Devonport to Narawntapu National Park (40km)

The ferry from Melbourne arrives at the early hour of **7am**. A coffee on board goes a long way to putting a spring in your step. Eat any **fresh food** before you disembark or the **quarantine beagle** will single you out.

Devonport (large town – all amenities, bike shops) is split into two halves, across an inlet. Cycle south for a short distance and across the bridge to reach the town centre.

Ready to go? Return across the bridge on **Route 1**, the major road out of town. If you're doing the full route, take the **first exit** for the **B74**, then **left off the exit ramp** and **right at the next intersection** for the **B71**. From here you can follow signs for the **Narawntapu National Park**.

Alternative Route 1: Stay on Route 1 a bit longer for **free tastings** at the **chocolate factory** near Latrobe. After filling your boots with sweets, take the **C702** to **Moriarty** to rejoin the **B71** and follow signs to the park.

Alternative Route 2: If you're short on time, leave Devonport on the **B19**, which becomes the **B14** and then **fork left** onto the **C150** for Sheffield. Jump ahead to notes for Day 4.

For those doing the whole route, the ride along the B71 is **gently undulating** and lined with farmland and poppy fields. **Traffic is fairly light**. Once in the park, there are 3 camping areas to choose from (A\$13/unpowered for 2 people), with rainwater and toilets but no showers. Pay at the ranger station as you enter. The park is popular with locals and there's plenty of wildlife around. Don't be surprised to see a wallaby wander past your tent.

Day 2: Narawntapu National Park to Deviot (54km)

Retrace your steps out of the park and take the first road to your left, the **C741** towards **Yorktown**. It's unpaved and a bit rutted in parts but overall the surface isn't bad for a dirt road. There's a **steep climb** about halfway through to **300 meters**. This whole road runs through forest and there are a few **good wild camping spots**, if you didn't want to stay in the park (get water before leaving the park).

When you reach the **A7**, there's a **picnic park** (toilets, BBQ, no water). **Turn right** onto the A7 and go **7km** to **Beaconsfield** (backpackers, wholefoods shop, IGA, online access centre).

Just past the IGA, the **C724 goes left** towards Rowella, Kayena and Sidmouth. Scrubby farmland quickly gives way to rolling hills alongside the picturesque Tamar River. After a **steep climb to Sidmouth**, you briefly **go left** along the **B73** and then take the **first right** onto the **C728** towards Deviot.

As you're pedaling along the water, **watch for the ruins of an old flour mill** on your right, just after you cross a bridge. A 400m track leads from the parking lot to the ruins and you can ride your bicycle down the track. There's a waterfall here and picnic tables. This could make a wild camping spot.

A little further down the road is **Paper Beach**, with unserviced campsites.

Day 3: Deviot to Westbury (85km)

Your day starts with a pleasant meander along the Tamar River towards **Exeter**. After the town, **turn left** on the **A7** to Launceston. There's a climb up to a lookout point (toilets) and then it's an easy run into Launceston, one of Tasmania's biggest towns.



Spend the night in **Launceston** and do a bit of sightseeing, or carry on south. To continue further, take **Wellington Street** towards the airport (ignore signs for Highway 1). This eventually turns into **Hobart Road**. Traffic is steady but not fast flowing.

Things slow down after the airport. Take the **C417** towards **Perth** and then the **B52** out of Perth, towards the **B54** and the quaint village of **Carrick** (pubs, accommodation). The **B54** leads you over **rolling hills** all the way to **Westbury** (IGA supermarket), where **Andy's Bakery & Caravan Park** makes a perfect stopping point.

It's just A\$2.50/per person to camp, including free internet access (wifi or on their computer) and the bakery is wonderful. You can get meals, an ice cream or a loaf of bread. Delicious! The campground is basic but for the price, who's complaining?

Day 4: Westbury to Gowrie Park (70km)

More rolling hills take you from Westbury to **Deloraine**, along the mostly quiet **B54**.

Deloraine is the biggest town in the area (Woolworths supermarket, camping shop, wholefoods shop, banks, YHA).

To leave town, head up the main street, past the Woolworths and straight on to **Route 1**. It's busy but there's a wide shoulder and you only need to stay on this road for **6km** until **Elizabeth Town**, where you **turn left** onto the **B13**.

Now you're really in farming country and you can meander on tranquil roads all the way to **Sheffield**. Take the **left turn** onto the **C156** in **Kimberly**, which meets the **B14** for the final leg into Sheffield, famous for its murals depicting the town's history.

There are a few **alpacas** in Sheffield so don't be surprised to see one or two wandering the main street.

Sheffield's tourist bureau is staffed by exceptionally friendly folks who can tell you where to check your **email**, find a **supermarket**, get a **shower** (A\$1/3 minutes) or even tell you where it's possible to **free camp** near the town (on the Tasman trail).

Most cyclists continue on to **Gowrie Park**, a tiny village just **14km** down the road on the **C136** - and for good reason!. The scenery on this approach to Cradle Mountain is nothing short of stunning and Gowrie Park has another attraction - an excellent campground.

Mount Roland Backpackers is run by the lovely Charlotte and family and is a screaming bargain. For

A\$8/person you can pitch a tent, with hot showers, laundry, internet access and a kitchen all included in the price. Rooms are A\$15/person. **The smorgasbord** that Charlotte puts on in the evenings is a **hungry cyclist's dream!** It's worth breaking the budget for.

If you don't want a hot shower, there's **free camping** at **O'Neills Park** in Gowrie Park, on the left just before you get to Mount Roland Backpackers.

Gowrie Park is an excellent place to leave the bags behind and do a day trip to Cradle Mountain.

Day 5: Gowrie Park to Meander (80km)

Once recovered from the exertion of climbing Cradle Mountain, do an about-turn and head for the east coast.

Go left out of Gowrie Park and **left again** at the first junction, onto the **C138**. It's a tough **3km climb** to the stunning lookout point.

Down the other side of the hill, there's a steep but short descent, followed by a few rolling hills before the real **thriller of a descent** begins, around the 15km mark.

For the next 7km, the road twists and turns, through leafy forest before emerging into a broad, beautiful valley. The downhill run ends at the Mersey River and then it's back to the rolling hills.

You'll eventually come out on the **B12**. Follow signs for **Mole Creek** (hotel, gas station, shops, picnic area) and take time, if you like, to visit the caves in the area.

From Mole Creek, you could continue straight on back to Deloraine but a more scenic option is to go right onto the **C169** to **Caveside**. This leads you through beautiful farmland on extremely quiet roads.

After Caveside, take the **C168** to **Western Creek**. As you go through Western Creek, the road narrows and turns to dirt but it's only for a short stretch before you reach **C166**. Keep going for some distance until you reach **Sandy Lane Road**, on your right, just after a dilapidated farmhouse and a bridge.

Take this to go straight to **Meander** (picnic area, BBQs, toilets). We **free camped** but there's also the option to continue into the **Meander Forest Reserve**, another **8km** or so down the road.

Day 6: Meander to Campbell Town (115km)

Today is rather long. If you don't feel up to the challenge, camp at **Liffey Falls** to break the journey up. If you're starting from Deloraine, rather than Meander, the total distance will be about 20km shorter (using the C501 and the C505 via Osmaston and Cluan).



Traffic is light throughout the day.

Leave Meander by going **8km** north on the **C167** and then veering right on the **A5** towards **Golden Valley**. The road climbs upwards for a short distance and then swoops down again as you approach Golden Valley.

Look for a **small road on your left**, leading to the **C504**, **Liffey Falls Lodge** and **Quamby Brook**. It's another fast and furious descent to the **C504**, where you **go right on the dirt stretch** for about **10km**. The surface is in good shape so, as far as dirt roads go, it's good riding and very beautiful when you get to a lookout point over the valley around 27km into the day.

There's an **optional detour** to Liffey Falls (camping area).

Keep following signs for the village of **Liffey** and then **Bracknell** (shop, gas station, post office), a town with a historic church. From Bracknell, it's mostly straight ahead, with a couple dog legs (follow the signs) to **Cressy**, the biggest town in the area (shops, picnic area, toilets, post office). Cressy makes a good lunch stop.

From Cressy, head south on the **B53** for **4km**, then take the **C522** towards **Ross** and **Campbell Town**. It's a long, flat and mostly straight road through endless fields of wheat, poppies, sheep and cows. Despite the unpopulated landscape, there's little opportunity to free camp as everything is fenced. If you're lucky, a tailwind will blow you along and you can cover this 45km stretch quite quickly.

Campbell Town is where you cross **Route 1** and it boasts a range of shops plus a **Lions Club campground** down by the Elizabeth River. You'll find a BBQ, water, picnic tables and toilets plus a grassy patch of land to pitch your tent on - **all for free**. If you're desperate for a shower, the nearest caravan park is in Ross, 13km down the main road.

Day 7: Campbell Town to Swansea (70km)

Grab food and water before you head out of Campbell Town. The **B34 to Swansea**, which leads **east off Route 1**, has no shops or services.

The climb out of Campbell Town towards Swansea is gentle, with a few downhill stretches to break up the ascent. The **peak of 640 meters** is just over halfway between Campbell Town and Swansea.



Although there are very few homes and plenty of trees along the B34, there's almost no chance to wild camp for the first 25km because everything is fenced but there is a **free camping area on the shores of Lake Leake**. Otherwise, a few opportunities pop up after you cross the peak.

If it's a hotel you're after, there's one on the shores of Lake Leake, 30km out of Campbell Town. Signs mark the turnoff and the lake is 4km off the B34.

From the peak (picnic table, information board, no water), there's a good **20km descent** to the junction with the **A3**, where you **go right** for the last 10km into **Swansea**.

Swansea (shops, IGA supermarket, bakery, online access centre) is a **major tourist stop** and in high season the hotels and campgrounds get booked out. Reserve before you leave Campbell Town or arrive early to find a spot. Once you're set up, take a walk along the beach. Near dusk you may see seals or penguins.

From Swansea, you can also arrange a **boat** to take you and your bike **to Coles Bay**. For this, you'd ride down **Nine Mile Road**, catch a lift across the tiny sliver of water and cycle on the last few kilometers to Coles Bay. The cost is **A\$10-15/person** and it saves about 50km of riding. You'll need to arrange this ahead of time. The caravan parks in Swansea should have the phone number of people offering boat rides.

Day 8: Swansea to Sandspit Forest Reserve (85km)

This day starts out easy, with spectacular views, but ends with a tough climb on a dirt road. The easier option is to cut the day short in **Triabunna** or **Orford** and carry on, with a fresh start, the following day.

Either way, roll out of Swansea and down the **A3 towards Triabunna**. Keep an eye on traffic because there's no shoulder for large stretches of today's ride. Traffic can sometimes be on the heavy side of things.

If you start early, you'll have a better chance of quiet roads, so you can really relax and enjoy the incredible views over the water. For the first 15km, the cycling is breathtaking. If you didn't want to stay in Swansea, it's on this stretch just south of the town that you'll find the **Mayfields Bay campsite**, a free camping area (no showers).

Little Swanport is about **30km** from Swansea. There are no shops or other services here but there is a small rest area. In a pinch, you might camp here for a night. There's no water, just a pit toilet. There is a river but you'd have to filter the water and it's not flowing so the quality is dubious.

Triabunna (supermarket, cafes, caravan park, backpackers hotel, tourist information) is the first town after Swansea. It's also here that you catch a **ferry to Maria Island** (A\$50/return plus A\$10/bike). **Orford** is just 10km down the road (hotels, restaurants, supermarket).

From Orford, head straight through the main roundabout to **Spring Beach** and **Rheban** on a road that hugs the coastline. It's not flat – you'll climb a couple good hills – but the views over the water and towards Maria Island are worth the effort. About 10km down the road, the asphalt ends and the dirt road continues through forest and past farms. It eventually merges with another road and brings you into the **Sandspit Forest Reserve** on the **Wielangta Forest Drive**.

The dirt road is a bit corrugated in parts but overall in good shape.

Bump along until the last hurdle of the day appears, a **climb to nearly 300 meters** at a reasonably steep grade, then a downhill and one more tiny incline, which brings you to a picnic area on the left hand side of the road. There are a few huts with tables, pit toilets and rainwater. A tranquil place to spend a night.

Day 9: Sandspit Forest Reserve to Hobart (65km)

A couple more hills await you as you leave the picnic area but mostly it's downhill to **Copping** (B&B, roadhouse), a small town on the **A9**.

How not to get into Hobart: We did it entirely wrong, taking the busy and shoulder-less A9 towards Sorell and then the A3 over the causeway and into Hobart via the Tasman Bridge with its incredibly narrow bicycle path and set of stairs at the end. We briefly escaped the A3 by taking the exit for Cambridge but eventually we had to return to it and the traffic.

How you should do it: Keep on the back roads from the Sandspit Reserve, **EITHER** heading for **Nugent** and **Wattle Hill** to Sorell **OR** alternatively via **Dunalley** and **Dodges Ferry**. From **Sorell**, head towards **Richmond** on the **C351**, then south on the **C324** for **Risdon Vale**, where you can cross a small bridge and hit the **cycle path** into **Hobart**.

Book a room before you arrive in Hobart. The city fills up quickly during peak season and it's not unusual to pay upwards of A\$150 for a room.

Hobart

Tasmania's capital city is a charming spot, with more of a small town feel to it than anything like a bustling metropolis. From **markets** to **museums**, from its **photogenic streets** to the imposing **Mount Wellington**, there are plenty of reasons to hang around.

Hobart also makes a **good base** for a series of short rides (3-5 days) around the region, visiting sites like **Bruny Island** and **Mount Field National Park**.

Accommodation: Getting a room in Hobart can be surprisingly expensive in peak season and on weekends you might find everything is booked solid. Plan ahead, especially if you want a place in a backpackers, and don't be surprised to find double rooms going for A\$150 or more.

Treasure Island Caravan Park is the budget option. You'll find it just off the cycle path, on Main Road in Berriedale and beside Moorilla Winery. It's about 10km out from the Tasman Bridge. A tent site for two will run you about A\$25 and it's fairly pleasant, set on the banks of the Derwent River. (1 Alcorso Drive, 03 6249 2379)

Montgomery's Private Hotel and **YHA Backpackers** is very central but could be noisy. Some rooms are above a pub with karaoke until 1am. A bed in a 6-bed dorm room goes for A\$32 and private double rooms, with shared bath, start at A\$138. (9 Argyle Street, 03 6231 2660 www.montgomerys.com.au)

If you're really strapped for cash, you could discreetly pitching a tent in the picnic area at Fern Tree, on the way to Mount Wellington. There's flat ground, water taps and plenty of trees. Save energy for the climb up there at the end of the day.

Bike Shops: There's no shortage of bicycle shops around Hobart but **Bike Ride** is run by a bike tourist and has a good reputation among travelling cyclists. (Liverpool Street, near the junction with Elizabeth Street, www.bikeride.com.au)

Eating: The New Sydney Hotel is the place to down a glass or two of Boag's draft with the locals and treat yourself to a plate of fish 'n' chips (A\$18). (87 Bathurst Street, 03 6234 4516, www.newsydneymotel.com)

Self-catering: Salamanca Market is a Saturday morning tradition in Hobart. Don't miss it! Aside from beautiful fruit and veg and the food stalls, there are plenty of handicrafts and other trinkets and souvenirs to buy.

Internet: The State Library on Murray Street has free internet access. It's on a first-come first-served basis and you can only use a maximum of 1 hour at a time. Just show up and take your place in the queue.

There are many internet cafes around town. Rates run A\$6-10/hour.

Medical: To restock your toiletry kit or renew a prescription, try the **discount chemist** on Murray Street, just uphill from the State Library. You can't miss the huge sign. Prices are noticeably cheaper than the supermarkets.

Dr. Bridgette Watts is the woman to see if you need medical advice. She's a cycle tourist so just tell her you're travelling by bicycle and you'll find she's enormously helpful. (03 6228 2200, 67 Hopkins Street, Moonah)

Cradle Mountain Day Trip

Cradle Mountain in Northwest Tasmania is one of the island's most beautiful sites - a national park and in a UNESCO World Heritage area.

It's a shame to pass by and not see **Dove Lake** at the base of the mountain but it's a strenuous hike up to 900 meters on a loaded mountain bike.

Leave your gear instead at the excellent **Mt. Roland Backpackers** in Gowrie Park (14km from Sheffield) and do this 100km round trip unloaded. It's a challenging day out but if you're accustomed to covering 70-80km with a load, you should manage it just fine.



THE ROUTE: Start out from Mt. Roland Backpackers in Gowrie Park.

The road climbs steadily but gently for the first 5.5km towards **Moina**, followed by a speedy descent down to the dam but then there's a grueling 5km climb back up at grades of 10% before you reach the hamlet of Moina.

You've earned a break so stop at **Cradle Chalet** for a coffee and a muffin. It's a big boost for the remaining distance. If you really want to splurge, they also have luxury rooms for about A\$200/night. The cafe will happily refill your water bottles.

Go left at the Moina junction. The road climbs gently for another few kilometers and eventually breaks into rolling hills that take you through green forests and across the barren Middlesex Plain. Keep an eye out for cockatoos, wombats and echidnas by the side of the road.

Watch too for the Post Office Tree on your left, where a local man used to collect his mail.

Around the **40km mark**, the Cradle Mountain turnoff appears on the left and from here it's a further 10km of rolling hills up to Dove Lake. Sit on a bench and admire the view as you eat your lunch.

There **shuttle buses** from a visitor's centre if you don't fancy the climb.

If you don't already have a **park pass**, you'll need to buy one (A\$28/2 months or A\$11/day pass) here.

Once you've had your fill of soaking in the scenery around Dove Lake, turn yourself around and head back to Gowrie Park for a hot shower.

The leg back home takes far less time, since it's largely downhill. Congratulate yourself on a day's trip well done!

Bruny Island

Just south of Hobart, Bruny Island makes a great short trip from the Tasmanian capital. You need as little as 3 days to cycle from the city to the island, do a bit of exploring and return. With 5-7 days, you could take in more of Bruny and the area south of Hobart.

Bike out of Hobart on **Sandy Bay Road**, keeping to the coastal road that runs through **Taroona**. In Taroona, take 15 minutes to visit the historic **shot tower**, once the highest structure in Tasmania.

Continue along the coast to **Kingston**, where you go straight ahead to join the **B68** heading for **Kettering**. Stop at a **fruit stand** or two along the way and then follow the signs for the **ferry dock** in **Kettering**.

Cyclists pay just A\$3 return for the 15-minute trip and ferries go throughout the day.

| Leaving Kettering | Leaving Bruny Island |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 6:35am (not on Sunday) | 7:00am (not on Sunday) |
| 7:45am | 8:25am |
| 9:30am | 10:00am |
| 11:05am | 11:35am |
| 12:05pm | 12:35pm |
| 1:45pm | 2:15pm |
| 2:45pm | 3:15pm |
| 3:45pm | 4:30pm |
| 5:00pm | 5:30pm |
| 6:30pm | 7:00pm |
| 7:30pm (Friday only) | 7:50pm (Friday only) |

WHERE TO GO

When you disembark, it's nearly **30km** on a mixture of paved and dirt roads to the first **National Park campsite**, just at the end of '**The Neck**' - a narrow strip of land that connects the north and south parts of Bruny Island.

There aren't many houses en route but you'll pass a kiosk selling drinks at the ferry dock, a bottle shop and the **Bruny Island Cheese Company**, with wines and a range of gourmet foods in addition to hand-made cheese.

Just at the end of The Neck, you'll come to a National Park campsite. A further **10km** on is **Adventure Bay** (caravan park, shops).

Three more **free camping** areas - Jetty Beach, Prices Lookout and Cloudy Corner - are available on the far southern end of the island. From the end of The Neck to the southern campsites would be about 25-30km, perhaps too far for your first day out from Hobart but a good option for your second night.

Alternatively, stay camped on the shores of Adventure Bay and explore unloaded for your second day. This is a good option for weekends during the high season, when sites are highly sought after and the caravan park often fills up.

WHAT TO BRING

Bruny Island is quite isolated. There are a few **general stores** on the southern part of the island (Adventure Bay, Alonnah, Lunawanna) but you should **be prepared to carry food**. You might find it's a long trip to the shop when hunger strikes. The only **ATM** is in **Adventure Bay**, while **internet access** and a **post office** can be found in **Alonnah**.

Fill your water bottles before boarding the ferry or at the public toilets behind the kiosk as you disembark. Take any extra water you need for the first night's camping. Bruny Island is the only place where we arrived at a National Park campsite to find the rainwater tank completely dry and no other source of water for more than 10km.