



# Overland Track Information

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The Overland Track is perfect for many reasons as we have discovered from the many groups and individuals with ages ranging from 10 to 81, from all walks of life and numerous countries that we have supported and helped.

You do the walk, you carry everything, you cook and you find your own way. We support your adventure and provide transport to the start and finish and accommodation and meals before and after.

In our experience, everyone is able to manage the overland track on their own. The track is well marked, the huts are well maintained, there are others on the track and rangers patrol. Even the most nervous we have dropped off at Cradle Mountain come back confident.

One hundred per cent of people we have looked after have totally enjoyed it and come back in the highest of spirits. No one has had any issue that became serious.

The track is well marked and hard to get lost. In parts, it can be muddy after rain. However, a lot of board walk has been laid by Tasmania National Parks and they do an excellent job to maintain the path and make it easy for all.

In winter, there is a very high chance of snow or almost certain. In the summer snow is possible so you must come prepared for very cold conditions. Most groups report they have experienced every single type of weather on the walk so do be prepared for all weathers. It can also change fast.

## **Overland Track Itinerary**

The overland walk takes you from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Clair. A distance of 65 kilometres. That is 17 kilometres short of the Lake St Clair Visitor Centre where the road reaches. You then have the option of taking the Lake St Clair ferry or walk alongside the lake.

Most walkers take 6 days and 5 nights. This can be done quicker and we do have groups doing in 3 nights. If you are doing the side trips including climbing Mount Ossa, then the 6 days will be needed.

## **Booking Overland Track**

The overland track is one way from October to May with a start at Cradle Mountain. You must book a slot and pay for an overland track permit. From June to September there is no need for an overland track permit and all you need is the national park visitor pass. You are also allowed to walk in either direction during these months.

To book overland track visit: <https://bookings.overlandtrack.com.au/otbse/controller/index.asp>, for help call 03 6233 6047.

Booking for each season opens on 1 July. Every year numbers increase so we suggest book once you have decided to go for it. By booking you have taken the first step in a great adventure.

The cost to book overland track is \$200/person with some concessions for \$160. You can book in as a group for up to 8 with the maximum departures on any one day being 34.

You will also have to pay for a Parks Pass which you can buy when you book or once in Tasmania. This will cost \$30 and valid for eight weeks so can be used for other national parks if you extend your stay in Tasmania. The fee does include the use of the Cradle Mountain Shuttle you need to use to take you from the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre to the start at Ronny Creek.

A ranger does patrol the Overland Track and will check your permit and whether you have a National Park Pass.

## **Ferry**

The Lake St Clair Lodge operates the IDA Clair, a passenger ferry that operates between Narcissus Hut and Cynthia Bay. The Lake St Clair ferry carries 22 passengers.



The ferry trip takes around 30 minutes to cover the 14km trip and operates all year.

The Lake St Clair ferry must be pre-booked as places are limited in the summer, at other times the ferry runs on demand. In the off season the ferry needs a minimum of 6 to run or if less, payment is made for 6 which is a total of \$240. The single trip is \$40/person from Narcissus and \$35 from Cynthia Bay.

To book call Lake St Clair Lodge 03 6289 1137 or email [sceniccruises@lakestclairlodge.com.au](mailto:sceniccruises@lakestclairlodge.com.au). There is a radio at Narcissus Hut where you must confirm your booking. The ferry time will be confirmed as it can change.

The ferry departs three times a day from Narcissus in the summer with a published arrival time at Narcissus of 09.45, 13.15 and 15.45, in practice is 9.30, 13.00 and 15.30.

The published arrival in Cynthia Bay being 10.30, 14.00 and 16.30. In practice 10.10, 13.40 and 16.05.

The ferry departs as soon as the booked passengers are accounted for. In winter is an on-demand service so must be pre-booked. This in practice means the ferry times are 9.30, 13.00 and 15.30 as if everyone is there the ferry leaves.

Most groups aim for the 13.00 ferry and tend to walk the last 9km from Windy Ridge Hut arriving around 11.30. Time for a swim in the lake before catching the ferry.

If you do not want to use the ferry the walk along the lake is 17km. An option if you are moving faster is to walk on day 5 to Echo Point Hut that is half way along the lake and then on day 6 to Lake St Clair. An alternative is on day 5 to reach Narcissus Hut and then walk on Day 6 to Cynthia Bay which normally means you arrive at about 14.00.

Telstra phones do work from Narcissus and a good place to send a message.

There is a very short walk to the Lake St Clair Visitor Centre from the ferry pier, housing a café with a welcoming fire, chips, coffee, beers. The visitor centre has an exhibition room and rangers on duty. There are toilets and even a shower reserved for walkers.

### **Flights**

Book early and consider secondary airports like Avalon. Do check all airlines as prices vary a lot. Sometimes one airline is cheaper one way and another on the return. Mid-week might in some cases be cheaper. Given a choice arrive in the afternoon or early evening. Do come out to the front of the airport where you will see cars picking up, the furthest lane from the terminal. As we are not allowed to stop we will circulate, this takes 5 minutes, we will be there and should be able to spot the packs.

If you arrive early and want to go into Hobart we can pick you up in the afternoon from the airport bus terminal, there is a bag store. An alternative is MONA which we can also pick up from and where bags can be stored.

The drive to Hawthorn Lodge is one hour. We are able to stop at Woolworths in New Norfolk for any last-minute supplies and the bottle shop.

### **Departure**

We depart from Hawthorn Lodge no later than 7am with the aim to reach Cradle Mountain at 10.15am. If you are ready we are very happy to depart earlier. By arriving at this time, you are ahead of the bus and other groups which avoids long queuing to register. You will also have plenty of time to climb Cradle Mountain and enjoy a coffee at the visitor centre before you start. Once all set to go, take the free shuttle bus to Ronny Creek.

### **Meeting**

We meet you at the Lake St Clair visitor centre at a pre-agreed time. Most groups book on the 13.00 ferry and our normal meeting time is 14.45. From experience, most guests want to enjoy the café at Lake St Clair and say goodbye to those they have met on the track. The drive to Hawthorn Lodge, takes around 80 minutes. If you are going direct to Hobart will take about 2.5 hours. For those staying



with us we depart the next morning to Hobart at 8.45 am and will reach Hobart at 9.30 am. For those going to the airport we will agree the departure time.

### **Huts**

The huts are all different sizes and the smaller ones can be crowded. You do need a mat for the huts. There is no cooking fuel at the huts. The Overland Track huts are cold in winter.

We do get many comments about snoring, the huts can be very full and amazing how many people snore. Not good if you are light sleeper. Some people cook in the hut but sleep in the tents.

The huts have basic heating and controlled when gas heaters may be used.

### **Camping**

A condition of walking the overland track is that you must carry a tent. This is in case the huts are full or you are caught out between huts. At every hut, there is an area for camping. This is generally on wooden platforms to provide a comfortable base. Securing your tent can be a problem and generally relies on hooks or cables that you attach the tent to. Do carry some extra strong string or strong elastic bands in case cables are missing. We have found most people in the shoulder season use the huts and do not camp as warmer in the huts and not too crowded. In the peak summer season, many just use tents.

### **Gear**

There is much advice on overland track gear on the internet. And packing lists everywhere. The challenge is to get your pack to around 16 kilos and most do and some better. The most common mistake we are finding is the mat. On cold nights and into the winter cold will come from below and so critical you invest in a suitable mat.

Don't over pack. Think carefully about what clothing you really need. Layers of clothing are winners. Being able to remove or add helps a lot. Down jackets are excellent they go small and light.

Accept wet feet. Hopefully you will not experience too much mud and in recent years the track has been much improved with boardwalk.

Winter days are short in Tasmania so a headlight is very useful. In the summer, very long and on the longest days not dark till after 9pm.

You will have plenty of relax time. Books are heavy to carry so a luxury you need to think about. Some take a Kindle which lasts well. One group played hours of cards. Choose your back packs well. Finding the one that fits you well is very important. Gaiters are important as there are snakes in the summer months. They are not aggressive but may not move out of your way too slowly.

Rain is possible at any time of the year. Dry bags inside your backpack are a great idea.

There is no mobile service on the track and so consider an emergency option. These vary in price and depend on what you need. Some systems can be hired including from the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre.

If you are travelling and do not want to bring all your Overland Track equipment we are able to hire at very good rates. Please contact us to discuss your needs.

### **Gear List**

This is NOT a definitive list but covers what we think you need to carry on the Overland Track and gives ideas to help and discuss. Most people aim to have the pack weighing around 16kilos or less. Saying that we have seen much heavier.

- ▶ Pack with comfortable shoulder and hip and chest straps. The minimum size being 65 litre.
- ▶ Pack Liner in case it rains or at least a strong plastic bag to wrap around everything to keep out rain. Some people use medium sized dead dog bags available from a vet. If very wet weather is expected consider double lining important items like the sleeping bag.
- ▶ Tent with cord to tie too tent platforms (the huts may be full) and a compulsory item
- ▶ Ground sheet to go under the tent provides some protection for the tent. The other main use is to wrap around the Pack to protect from animals and birds. Also, useful for sitting on the ground when wet.



- ▶ Sleeping bag ideally able to provide warmth to -10, if walking in the summer rated at least to 0 degrees.
- ▶ Sleeping bag inner liner provides extra insulation and keeps the inside clean and easy to wash the liner
- ▶ Pillow case that can be filled with clothes at night
- ▶ Sleeping mat, this is one area to spend more to ensure a better night's sleep. Cold comes up and important to be well insulated if walking in colder months.
- ▶ Waterproof coat with hood
- ▶ Waterproof over trousers
- ▶ Fleece jacket can be good in the evenings and also if cold at night, they also make good pillows
- ▶ Thermal top and longs, good at night and if cold in the day time, thin layers work well
- ▶ Trousers times two
- ▶ Shirt times two
- ▶ Walking boots, do make sure you have worn them in, be careful if old as we have a couple of cases of boots falling apart
- ▶ Hiking socks, two pairs
- ▶ Underwear, two pairs
- ▶ Gaiters to protect from snakes
- ▶ Sun hat, you will be surprised at the level of sun in Tassie and in the summer the days are long.
- ▶ Warm hat for the higher altitudes and critical in winter as a lot of heat is lost via the head, having a warm hat on a jacket is an alternative
- ▶ Thermal long sleeve top and long johns
- ▶ Gloves and if cold an extra waterproof mitten layer to go on top
- ▶ Camp shoes
- ▶ Bathers, there are places to swim in the summer
- ▶ Sunglasses
- ▶ Sunscreen
- ▶ Insect repellent
- ▶ Toilet trowel
- ▶ Toilet paper
- ▶ Toiletries, soap and toothbrush
- ▶ Fuel stove and fuel
- ▶ Matches kept in a container to keep dry
- ▶ Cigarette lighter as a backup or main use and generally more reliable
- ▶ Food, keep it light and nutritious and remove all packaging, see overland food
- ▶ Cooking pot or maybe two pots, depends a bit on the type of food you are taking and whether you will be frying
- ▶ Mug
- ▶ Bowl to use as a plate or bowl
- ▶ Knife, fork and spoon
- ▶ Souser for washing dishes
- ▶ Water bottle
- ▶ Collapsible water bag can be useful to carry water from the water tank or stream
- ▶ Water purification tablets some people carry but the water is generally very clean and safe
- ▶ Overland Track Map
- ▶ Compass
- ▶ Torch and spare batteries
- ▶ Headlight
- ▶ Pocket knife
- ▶ Whistle
- ▶ Day pack for any side trips (not needed if you are not doing side trips)
- ▶ First Aid Kit with Pressure bandages, Non-stick gauze dressings, Triangular bandage, Butterfly clips, Elastoplast, Band-aids, Blister pack, Antiseptic cream, Safety pins, Scissors, Tweezers
- ▶ Space blanket (this is critical and a life saver)
- ▶ Note pad and pencil
- ▶ Pack of cards
- ▶ Kindle seems to last a long time and contains many books. There is plenty of relax time if doing over six days
- ▶ Book



- ▶ Camera, some that we have helped having taking huge cameras and come back with wonderful images but is a heavy item, a small camera with AA batteries that you carry a spare set of is a good idea.
- ▶ Hiking Poles, we do not use but many swear by them, if your knees are weak then you should take.
- ▶ PLB is a debate, most do not carry, an option is to hire from the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre
- ▶ Telstra mobile, there can be pockets of reception and at Narcissus. If taking and using for images then a backup charge is a good idea.

## **Food**

The first question is what to cook with. The simple cookers using methanol seem to be the winners as little can go wrong and meths goes a long way. If you are going to use a Trangia do practice before you leave. Methanol is available in Woolworths in New Norfolk and we stock. Do make sure you bring a safe carrier that will not leak.

Many use gas to cook overland track food. Most couples find two gas canisters is enough but take 3 to be sure. Everyone seems to take enough gas and no group has yet run out meaning we have plenty of half open gas canisters in our store!

Meat can be vacuum packed. Dehydrated meals work well. Some of the best we have found are from Strive in Hobart. We are able to provide their meals if needed and they can be ordered on line and they post out.

Take a spare meal in case you are delayed. We have had instances of the Lake St Clair ferry being cancelled!

Prepare quick snacks for lunch. Dry biscuits with cheese in a zip lock bag are easy.

Some people take fresh food for the first day and night. If possible take fresh foods for lunch and might include avocado, tomatoes, cheese, ham etc. Avoid things that will not keep or go soggy such as lettuce.

You can stock up in New Norfolk on the day before on the way from the airport.

Remove all excess packaging as that does take up space and surprisingly heavy. Transfer to zip lock bags and sort into portions.

Walking burns energy so if you can carry it allow for larger portions than you would normally eat.

## **Fauna**

You should see some Tasmanian fauna, wombats, possums and if lucky a Tasmanian Devil. Look out for wombats at Ronny Creek and don't rush that first board walk as often the best place to view.

David hates snakes but does not worry about them in Tasmania. There is a very high chance you will see a Tiger snake if the sun is out. In the cold weather, rare to see. They tend to be lie in sunny spots. If you see a snake stop and walk backwards. To pass you should leave 2 metres. Normally they disappear and will do so once they feel your vibrations. Just keep your eye out.

It is very rare to be bitten by a Tiger snake and as reassurance not every snake bite results in venom being injected. If you do get bitten do not wash the area bitten. Apply a tight bandage over a folded pad on the bitten area. The idea is not to stop blood flow but to stop the venom spreading in the lymphatic system. Immobilise to reduce all limb movement.

Seek help as fast as possible. This can present a challenge on the overland track. The message needs to be relayed to the emergency services who will most likely send in a rescue helicopter as movement needs to be minimised. If you have a beacon then activate, if not then you will have to seek out someone who has or reach a ranger. As a snake bite will happen in summer there should be many others on the overland track.



To reassure the chance of this happening is very low and as far as we can gather there has not been a fatality from a snake bite in Tasmania for decades.

Possums to many are annoying. They will try and enter your backpack if they see it lying around. A good idea is to keep your backpacks in the huts at night and stacked up tight.

Be aware of Ravens and Currowongs will undo zips and spread out possessions. The best way to protect your backpack is to cover with a ground sheet or cover as they have now learnt to look for and undo zips.

**Water at Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre**

Surprising, but there is no water at the Cradle Mountain Visitor Centre. Well, there is water but with signs warning it is not safe, so do make sure you top up your water at Hawthorn Lodge. There are toilets and a café.

**The Overland Track Book**

The Overland Tack book written by John & Monica Chapman is a good buy and has a lot of detail and useful maps.

**Rubbish**

All rubbish must be carried out