



Great Ocean Walk End to End 7 Days

Trip notes

For those who want it all, the full Great Ocean Walk all 104 glorious km of it! Come and experience what is fast becoming one of the world's great hikes - right on your doorstep. Opened in 2006, the new Great Ocean Walk spans 104km kilometres of one of the most spectacular stretches of coastline in Australia. If you think you already know this area from driving the Great Ocean Road, think again! The walk takes you to unspoiled and previously inaccessible terrain, far from crowds and traffic. Breathtaking coastal scenery, deserted wild beaches, sheer cliffs, historical lighthouses and shipwrecks, giant mountain ash forests, pristine river estuaries, abundant wildlife, dunes and coastal heathlands all await the intrepid hiker on this exciting adventure.

Itinerary

Day 1 Melbourne - Apollo Bay / Walk Apollo Bay – Shelly Beach 8km walking

7.30am pick up from the Melbourne Arts Centre, St Kilda Road. Transfer to Apollo Bay approx. 3 hours drive and where we stop for lunch and check into our accommodation. After a briefing from your walking leader we'll head out that afternoon on the first section of the walk. The Great Ocean walk starts from the Apollo Bay visitor's centre and winds out through the town to the beachside suburb of Marengo, named by a passing French explorer.

Marengo is home to a colony of Australian fur seals who hang out on rocks in the bay. The walk follows the foreshore as we leave Marengo and enters the Otway forests, eventually coming out at Shelly beach where we end for today and transfer back to Apollo Bay for the evening. That night we'll enjoy a good meal out on the town and prepare for a big walk the next day.

Accommodation: Apollo Bay

Walking distance: approx. 8 km / 3 - 4 hours walking

Meals included: Dinner only

Day 2 Walk Shelly Beach – Parker Inlet 20.5km walking

The first section of our walk today takes us away from the coast and into the towering forests of mountain ash that characterize this part of the Otway national park. At upto 65m high these are some of the biggest trees in Australia and walking through the heart of the giant forest is a wonderful experience though there are some hills to be negotiated!

We rejoin the coast at Blanket bay, an isolated stretch of coast that was one of the original ports for unloading supplies for the Cape Otway light station. The track meanders along the cliff tops and through coastal forests to the quiet haven of Parker's inlet. Expect to see Black wallabies, Echnida's, Black Cockatoo's, Rosella's and other wildlife along our route. At Parker's inlet we transfer to our accommodation at Cape Otway. You will be in shared bunk house style accommodation in natural surroundings – a great place to see the resident koalas of Cape Otway.

Accommodation: Cape Otway

Walking distance: approx. 20.5 km walking / 6 - 7 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, packed lunch and dinner

Day 3: Cape Otway – Johanna Beach 24km walking

This morning we start from the Cape Otway light house, which is Australia's oldest continuously operating lighthouse. We then ascend back up to the escarpment overlooking the beach and walk along a narrow coastal path overlooking Station beach. The path winds through along the cliff tops and then wind sculpted sand dunes before descending to the beautiful Aire River estuary and surrounding wetlands. After stopping for a break at Aire river we continue along the coastal path with stunning coastal views ahead en route to Castle Cove. Located on a spectacular bend of the Great Ocean Road at Glenaire, Castle Cove is a beautiful beach surrounded with towering cliffs which have high archaeological significance, as dinosaur fossils have been found here.

Continuing on from Castle Cove we encounter some of the most spectacular coastal views of the entire walk. The track winds its way along the cliff tops, through heathlands and forests, occasionally emerging to give breathtaking and extensive views along the coast. The forest here is an interesting mixture of with grass trees and manna gums. Eventually we emerge onto the broad expanse of Johanna Beach. We finish the day by walking along this beautiful beach which must rate as one of the best in Australia for its views and crashing surf. We transfer back from Johanna Beach to our accommodation at Cape Otway.

Walking distance: Approx. 24 km walking / 6-8 hours

Meals included: Breakfast and packed lunch

Day 4: Parker Inlet - Cape Otway 6km walking

Today is a relatively relaxing day where we take time to explore Cape Otway at a leisurely pace. This morning we return to Parkers Inlet and join a local Shipwreck Historian who'll inform us of some of the fascinating and often tragic history of Cape Otway and it's significance in Australia's development. We meander along the waters edge following rock shelves and beaches before we ascend the cliffs along the coast to the Cape Otway light house, which is Australia's oldest continuously operating lighthouse. We take a tour around this historic structure with it's museum and telegraph station. Remainder of the day can be spent relaxing or enjoying further short walks in the area.

Day 5: Johanna Beach - Milanesia 18km walking

Our afternoon walk is one of the wildest and most challenging sections of the entire track. We From Johanna beach the track rises through rolling hills and farmland as it cuts inland before returning to the coast and one of the walk's highlights: Milanesia Beach. Isolated, rugged and hidden, Milanesia receives few visitors and is all the more special for it. From here the trail continues along the high sea cliffs to our take out point with breathtaking views all the way back to Cape Otway lighthouse.

Accommodation: Princetown

Meals included: Breakfast, packed lunch and dinner

Day 6: Milanesia – Wreck Beach 17 km walking

We continue through coastal forests that lead us to the evocatively named Moonlight Head and Cape Volney with more breathtaking views to Cape Otway. After Moonlight head the track turns inland and follows an unsealed road several kilometers before returning to the coast. The final highlight of today's walk is the Gables Lookout, perched on one of the highest sea cliffs in mainland Australia. Groups in September may be lucky enough to see one of the departing Southern right whales which frequent this coast in the winter months. We continue through a grove of Casuarina trees to come out near Wreck Beach where at low tide we can descend and see the anchors of two of the many shipwrecks that lie submerged along this coast ('The Fiji' and the 'Marie Gabrielle').

Accommodation: Princetown

Meals included: Breakfast, packed lunch and dinner

Day 7: Wreck Beach– 12 Apostles 17 km walking

Our final day on the Great Ocean walk! We continue our walk from Wreck Beach passing the Devil's Kitchen we follow an old coach road towards Princetown and the Twelve Apostles marine park. The wetlands around Princetown support a wide variety of birdlife and we cross the Gellibrand River on a trestle bridge. We are now on the home stretch into Port Campbell national park and the world famous Twelve Apostles soon come into sight. The Great Ocean walk currently finishes by Glen Ample homestead and we'll have a drink to celebrate our achievement. For those who are keen the last few kilometers can be walked to reach the visitor centre at the Twelve Apostles (time permitting). That evening we return to Melbourne, anticipating arriving by 8pm after stopping en route for dinner

Meals included: Breakfast, packed lunch

Joining Point

The pick up on Friday morning will be at 7.30am outside the Arts Centre., 100, St Kilda Road, Central Melbourne. The driver will be wearing a RAW T-shirt.

How to get there

The Arts centre is only a 5 minute walk over the bridge from Flinders Station and Federation Square. All trams that travel up or down St Kilda Road stop outside the Arts Centre. By car: While the Arts Centre is on St. Kilda Road, city traffic means it's probably quicker and easier to take Alexandra Avenue, Sturt Street or City Road, depending on where you're coming from. The Arts Centre has its own 850 space undercover car park. The entry is accessible via Sturt and Kavanagh Streets, just off Southbank Boulevard.

Finishing Point

We will drop people off at the end of the trip back at the Melbourne Arts Centre. Approx. 9.30pm on the Sunday night.

Group Size

Maximum of 20 travellers per group

Accommodation

We are based at a camping park in the Otway's for the 2 nights in shared bunk bed style accommodation. It is basic but very clean with excellent toilet and shower facilities.

Meal Inclusions

Most meals included - see itinerary.

Transport

Minibus

Physical Rating

You will need to have an average level of fitness as we walk over 55km over a mixture of terrain from cliff paths, steps and sand. Please see our trekking guide for an overview on fitness training.

Important Notes

1. Please note that this is Victoria which is famous for its ever changing and unpredictable weather conditions ('four seasons in one day'). Please ensure you are prepared with the right clothing. Warm jacket, thermals, woollen hat is advisable year round. A hat and sunscreen is essential from October to April due to high UV radiation. There are often no alternatives for those who do not want to do walks, apart from waiting at the trail head until the group returns - this may require a wait of up to 3 hours.
2. In extreme heat conditions we will shorten the walks.
3. Please notify us in advance of any special meal requirements.
4. There is limited space available in the vehicle for luggage storage so please only bring essential items on the trip. See our suggested list of 'What to Take' below.

Health

All RAW travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our group leader, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, RAW reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund. We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

Our leaders are first aid qualified and will be carrying a first aid kit. Please ensure that you bring a good hat and high factor sun screen, insect repellent. We advise that you carry at least 2 litres of water with you at the start of each day.

Spending Money

You will need to buy lunch on day 1 when we stop in Apollo Bay. Also we will be stopping at a restaurant with stunning views over the Otway's on the last day before we return to Melbourne airport to celebrate completing the Great Ocean Walk. You may like to bring along some beer, wine or whatever takes your fancy for the evenings at the camp site.

Keeping in touch

Mobile reception is limited due to the rolling hills and tree cover. During the walk there is sporadic mobile phone reception in certain places. The leaders will be carrying 2 way radios. At the camp site there is a phone box available.

Emergency Contact

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency outside of office hours please call 0413 703 632
RAW Travel's Melbourne office can be reached on Tel: +61 3 9597 0799

Your fellow walkers

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the

frustrations of travelling in a group. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group. We will operate the walks as a sweep system with a leader in the front and also at the back. We will have regular stops to regroup with photo opportunities (which are around every corner!). In this way we can cater for a variety of walking speeds.

Group Leader

All RAW Challenge events are accompanied by one of our group leaders. Your group leader is also your driver, taking you from the start to finish in a minibus. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best time possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the areas visited on the trip, including historical, environmental, cultural and social aspects.

What to Take

Generally speaking, you should pack as lightly as possible. Your luggage will remain at the campsite while we are out walking. You will also need to bring a day pack to carry at least 2 litres of water, camera, packed lunch, waterproof, warm top, snacks, sunscreen etc.

Checklist

Personal Items

- High factor sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries
- Watch or alarm clock
- Ear plugs (in case room mate snores!)
- Plastic bags for wet or dirty clothing
- Wet wipes or antiseptic hand gel

Clothing

- 3 T-shirts / long sleeved T-shirt
- Pair of comfy shoes (to relax in)
- Walking shoes or boots advisable as muddy on some sections
- 2 pairs of knee length shorts or long trousers (not jeans)
- Light sweater/ fleece
- Light weight waterproof
- Towel and swim wear
- Sun hat
- Clothes to relax in
- 2 water bottles

Please be prepared for cold, windy & possibly wet conditions whilst on the walk as you never know with Victoria weather especially in the Otways.

Other suggestions:

- Camera
- Adapter for recharging digital camera
- Small binoculars
- Reading material
- Penknife
- Torch / head torch
- Favourite snacks for energy boost e.g. 'Power Bars', dried fruit or nuts, snakes, bananas

Local dress

Australia has relaxed attitudes towards standards of dress; however the extreme sunshine can cause sunburn - particularly in the summer. We recommend that you bring loose, cool, cotton clothing to protect yourself from the harsh sunrays. A sunhat and sunglasses are a must.

Safety

Dehydration is the biggest risk when undertaking a physical activity. It is so important to be aware of your fluid intake and to constantly drink water throughout the day (even when you do not feel thirsty).

Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects.

RAW Challenges newsletter

We have a free email newsletter full of traveller's stories and experiences as well as news on new trips that we are running. Please send us an extract from your travel journal at the end of the trip.

We would also love to receive any photos after the event as we are starting to build up a traveller's album for each of our destinations on our website. We need resolution of around 1MB.

Please could you send a CD to: RAW Challenges Photo album, 1/24 Bay Road, Sandringham, VIC 3191.

If you have any suggestions to add more information to our trip dossier that you think other walkers would find useful please email: adventure@rawtravel.com. And of course email us if you have any questions leading up to the event. HAVE AN AMAZING ADVENTURE!

The information in these trip notes has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and RAW Travel.