



# The MS Great Ocean Walk

Trip notes current for departures in 2009

Come and experience what is destined to become one of the world's great hikes - right on your door step. Opened in 2006, the new Great Ocean Walk spans 91 kilometers 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 RAW hiker on this exciting adventure.

## Itinerary

### Day 1 Melbourne - Apollo Bay / Walk Blanket Bay to Cape Otway 13km

**7.30am pick up from the Melbourne Arts Centre, St Kilda Road.** Transfer by minibus to Cape Otway, approx. 3.5 hours drive and stopping for early lunch (*not included*) in Apollo Bay.

Drive to Blanket Bay where we start walking our first section of the Great Ocean walk trail to Parker Inlet. The track meanders along the cliff tops and through coastal forests to the quiet haven of Parker's Inlet. Expect to see Black Wallabies, Echidnas, Black Cockatoos, Rosellas and other wildlife along our route. Leaving Parker Inlet we have an optional hike to Crayfish Bay, before continuing along the track through manna gum forests. The walk emerges from the forest and into open terrain along the coast to the Cape Otway light house, which is Australia's oldest continuously operating lighthouse. It was built in 1848 and marks the entrance to the Bass Straits. A guided tour will reveal some of the remarkable stories of ship wreck along this wild coastline.

We will then be collected by minibus and driven to our accommodation at Cape Otway. We are staying in comfortable shared bunk house style accommodation in beautiful surroundings. After enjoying a wholesome dinner there will be opportunity to look around the nearby forest and watch the many koalas that seem to become more active in the coolness of the night.

Accommodation: Cape Otway

Walking distance: approx. 13 km / 4 - 5 hours walking

***Meals included: Dinner only***

### Day 2 Walk Cape Otway to Johanna 22km

An early start today as we have a good day's walk ahead of us along the magnificent stretch of coast from Station Beach to Johanna Beach. We walk through fields and sand dunes and descend to Station Beach, where we walk along a spectacular stretch of coastline with pounding surf. Time permitting we will visit the Rainbow Falls tucked away in a corner of the beach.

We then ascend back up to the escarpment overlooking the beach and walk along a narrow coastal path overlooking Station beach. The path winds 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 head inland for a while climbing up and around the next point. The route takes us through spinifex forests and then continues along the coastal path with sweeping views of the rugged coastline.

Expect some ups and downs with a little climbing before we get to our next break at 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, occa-

sionally 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 for a second night.

Accommodation: Cape Otway

Walking distance: approx. 22.4 km walking / 7-9 hours

**Meals included: Breakfast, packed lunch and dinner**

### Day 3 Walk Johanna Beach to Moonlight Head / Return to Melbourne 19km

Our last day's walk is one of the wildest and most challenging sections of the entire track. We drive along the Great Ocean Road to join the track at the point where we left off yesterday. From Johanna beach the walk cuts inland before returning to the coast and one of the walk's highlights: Milanesia Beach. Isolated and hidden, Milanesia receives few visitors and is all the more special for it. After walking along the stretch of golden sand the trail winds up and along the high sea cliffs to Cape Volney with breathtaking views all the way back to Cape Otway lighthouse. We continue on through coastal forests that lead us to our finishing point at the evocatively named Moonlight Head.

From the car park we drive a short distance to view the Great Ocean Road's iconic Twelve Apostles coastal rock formations - a fitting end to three days of magnificent coastal walks. We stop at a restaurant for dinner which has amazing views over the Otways before we return to Melbourne (approx.. 9.30pm)

Walking distance: Approx. 19 km walking / 6-8 hours

**Meals included: Breakfast and 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 an 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. 9.00pm 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 for dinner on the last day before we return to Melbourne 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, RAW Challenges Melbourne Office can be reached on Tel: +61 3 9597 0798. Outside of office hours please call 0413 703 632

## 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
- 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, 2/24 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](mailto: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.*