



Tamar Valley Touring Route

The Tamar Valley Touring Route follows the majestic Tamar River as it meanders for 58kms through the heart of high-yielding vineyard country, orchards, scenic pastures and forests from Launceston to Bass Strait.

You'll discover many quaint riverside villages that feature arts and crafts from the area. Enjoy a picnic beneath the elegant Batman Bridge; the world's first cable-stayed truss bridge, or simply relax at one of the restaurants and indulge your senses with the local cuisine.

The usual starting point for the Tamar Valley Touring Route is Launceston, via either the eastern or western approach. However, if you are arriving by ship from Melbourne or Sydney, you can join the route at Exeter by taking the Frankford Highway from Devonport. Driving from the north-east, you can enter at George Town or at Rocherlea in Launceston.

SUGGESTED ITINERARY

DAY 1

Set out from Launceston along the West Tamar Highway (A7). Just 15 minutes into the drive, visit Launceston Lakes and Wildlife Park for an encounter with Tasmanian devils, quolls, wombats, emus and 40 different bird species living in natural bushland. Alternatively, try your skills fly fishing for trout in the well-stocked lakes.

To see more of the Tamar's birdlife, visit the Tamar Islands Wetlands Centre. The Tamar River's many sheltered coves and inlets are a sanctuary for thousands of native water birds. Stroll along the boardwalk to the picturesque Tamar Island and spot the birdlife along the way.



Vineyard, Tamar Valley

Just north of Legana, another special place to spend some time is Chancellor Resort Grindelwald, where day visitors are welcome. The Swiss-style shopping square has nine specialty shops offering Swiss chocolates, bakery items, crafts, souvenirs and much more. There's even a Putt-It mini-golf course.

The Tamar Valley is Tasmania's oldest and largest wine-growing region, renowned for its cool-climate wines, specialising in Pinot and Riesling varieties. You will notice the road signs indicating the Tamar Valley Wine Route.

Because many of the vineyards are small and family-owned, the growers themselves will often greet you and explain just how the wine is made. Between Legana and Beauty Point there are a number of vineyards, several with outstanding river views. Most have cellar door sales and some have their own restaurants. Rosevears Estate and Daniel Alps at Strathlynn offer lunch menus based on fresh Tasmanian produce.

If you enjoy short walks, visit the enchanting Notley

Fern Gorge, a 10 hectare sanctuary for wildlife that includes a relatively easy one-hour walk through dense rainforest.

Alternatively, just a few minutes farther along Frankford Main Road discover Glengarry Bush Maze and Tearooms in a beautiful natural setting with many puzzles and fun activities for children.

North of Exeter, at Robigana, you can find a quality piece of local art or sample some more Tasmanian wine at Artisan Gallery and Wine Centre. If it's time for a coffee, visit Lynton Farm Café and while you are there purchase some fresh Tamar Valley produce.

The town of Beaconsfield has a rich mining history and today has one of Tasmania's few working gold mines, operating next to the site of the original Grubb Shaft, which started operations more than 100 years ago. The Grubb Shaft Gold and Heritage Museum shows the workings of the old mine, recalling the boom days of gold. The museum has more than 30 visitor-activated displays highlighting the hard life of the early settlers in the region.

Five minutes farther north is Beauty Point, where families in particular will enjoy visiting Seahorse Viewing platform at Narawntapu National Park



Sea Horse World, Beauty Point

World and Platypus House, or discovering the upper Tamar River on a short river cruise on board the Shuttlefish Ferry.

Seahorse World provides a unique insight into the mystical and intriguing seahorse from birth to adulthood. Located just opposite is Platypus House, the only place in Australia where visitors can watch Tasmanian Platypuses close-up. Also view hundreds of creepy crawlies, water rats and butterflies.

DAY 2

From Beauty Point head towards the sweeping beaches, white peaks and coastal heathlands and forest of the Narawntapu National Park for panoramic views of Badger Head and Bass Strait. From the western car park at Greens Beach, take an easy 270 metre walk to the West Head lookout, where you'll be rewarded with spectacular clifftop views along Badger Head Beach and westward as far as Table Cape and the Dial Ranges behind Ulverstone. There is also an easy four-hour return coastal walk to Badger Head.

Heading south, at Beaconsfield take the first turn-off to Batman Bridge, which links the western and





Pipers Brook Vineyard

eastern banks of the river. This is a pleasant scenic drive, and on the way, stop in at Lavender House at Rowella where more than 100 different kinds of lavender are grown, flowering between August and May. Browse the showroom, peaceful gardens and fragrant fields or just sit and enjoy a tea or coffee in their tearooms.

Once across Batman Bridge, take a right turn along the partly unsealed but scenic road to the picturesque hamlet of Hillwood or take the East Tamar Highway (A8) route instead. At Hillwood Strawberry Farm treat yourself to strawberries freshly picked and topped with dollops of cream; in summer pick your own and taste some of their locally made fruit wines. Alternatively take a picnic lunch along the banks of the Tamar River at the Egg Island Picnic Reserve. Hillwood is also the home of Southern Cross Country, which sells lovely handcrafted coats. Watch them being made in the workshop.

For a short but challenging walk, take the 1.5km

track up Mt Direction and learn about the historic semaphore communications systems that once operated between Low Head and Launceston.

From Hillwood it is an easy drive to historic George Town, Australia's third-oldest town, settled in 1804. On the way, stop at Mount George Lookout, where you'll get a great perspective on the valley and surrounding districts. This is another historic semaphore site.

In George Town itself, take a self-guided tour along the George Town Heritage Trail, which highlights the historical sites and buildings here and at nearby Low Head. Of particular note is The Grove, a splendid Georgian home dated circa 1830.

In November, the George Town on Show Festival runs over a four-week period and showcases the culture and history, food and wine, industry and community of the George Town area.

At Low Head visit Australia's oldest continuously operated pilot station (circa 1805) and a maritime museum. Linger over a meal in the café and wander the peaceful shoreline. For a lasting memory of this area, take a two to three-hour journey on the historic tall ship *Windward Bound*, which is moored at the site during the warmer months. A coastal walk leads to a small beach where penguins come ashore at nightfall, and guided tours are available every evening.

Before returning to George Town, take a walk along the East Beach and visit Low Head Lighthouse. The present lighthouse (1888) takes in panoramic views of the peninsula, the Tamar River, and surf and river beaches.

If you are moving on today, why not return to Launceston or head east via the North East Trail, taking in the Pipers River wine producing area. Here you can taste and buy some of Tasmania's best premium sparkling and non-sparkling wines.