

Great Otway National Park

– Apollo Bay, Cape Otway and surrounds

Visitor Guide



Breathtaking coastlines, dramatic cliff faces, deep valleys of tall forest and fern-clad gullies embracing spectacular waterfalls all feature here. From glow worms to fishing, you will be delighted with things to see and do in this incredibly beautiful part of the state.



Getting there

Great Otway National Park is south of Melbourne via Geelong or Colac. From the east, approach Apollo Bay and Cape Otway along the Great Ocean Road (B100) by taking either Anglesea Road or Surf Coast Highway from Geelong.

From Colac, approach through Lavers Hill (inland route C155).

From the west, pick up the Great Ocean Road by approaching via Port Campbell (inland route C164).

A daily bus service between Geelong, Lorne and Apollo Bay connects with train services to Melbourne.

Things to see and do

Walking



The Cemetery – 2.8km, 40 minutes return

Starting at the far end of Lightstation Carpark near the information board, a gravel path leads uphill past a highpoint with a view of surrounds. Continue downhill, following the sandy track for approximately 10 more minutes to visit the historic cemetery.



Station Beach/Rainbow Falls – 8km, 3.5 hours return

Walk through sand dunes and then down along Station Beach to the colourful cliff that is Rainbow Falls, which is spring-fed and trickles through algae to the rock platform on the beach below. Return the same way. This is an unpatrolled beach and swimming is not recommended.

There are no litter, toilet or camping facilities. The unspoilt nature of this area depends on you to stay unpolluted and beautiful.



Parker Hill Campground and Stringybark Loop Walk – 3km, 1 hour circuit

This walk can begin from Parker Hill or Point Franklin. The inland Stringybark Track to Parker Hill has high views above Parker Inlet. If time permits, take the steep steps down to explore the sheltered inlet.

Return to Point Franklin via the Great Ocean Walk along the clifftop track, taking in distant views of Cape Otway Lightstation.



Great Ocean Walk – 104km, 8 days one way www.greatoceanwalk.com.au for detailed planning

Weave your way through tall forests, coastal heathlands, beside wild rocky shores and along windswept clifftops with amazing views.

Hike up to eight days or choose a day walk along this incredible one-direction walk from Apollo Bay to the Twelve Apostles.



Triplet Falls Walk – 2km, 1 hour circuit

Enjoy the history and story of this rainforest, as told by the signs that lead you around the circuit walk. Look for the giant Mountain Ash trees along the way. Some of these trees are estimated to be more than 200 years old and have generated from a seed the size of a grain of sand.

Listen for the falls as you walk through the ancient forest on a series of elevated walkways. Platforms provide you with spectacular views of Triplet Falls's lower and upper cascades.

Youngs Creek flows to the falls from Weeaprounah, which has the state's highest average annual rainfall of almost two metres. The falls are even more spectacular after rain.

Stay on the path while looking for the different mosses and fungi growing on the forest floor. They play an important role in maintaining this rainforest.



Little Aire Walk – 2.5km, 2.5 hours return

This walk leads off the Triplet Falls track and passes through spectacular rainforest along an old logging winch line. View the falls from an eight metre platform.



Madsen's Track Nature Walk – 1.2km, 35 minutes circuit

This 35-minute loop walk is an adventure into a world of ancient, mossy trees and cool fern gullies. Start at the Melba Gully Picnic Area and follow the information signs along the track and listen for the soothing sound of Anne's Cascades.

Cape Otway Lightstation

Cape Otway Lightstation is a wonderful place to visit with many reminders and stories of Australia's maritime history. It is Australia's oldest working lighthouse operating since 1848. The lightstation was decommissioned in January 1994 after being the longest continuous operating light on the Australian mainland.

Today the lightstation operates as a business and visitors can explore the lightkeeper's house, accommodation, café, telegraph station displays and walks. Take a tour and explore this unique site. An entry fee applies.

Picnicking

There are many beautiful places to picnic so plan your visit to get the most out of your day. Picnic areas with facilities include Shelly Beach Picnic Area, Blanket Bay, Aire River, Johanna Beach Day Visitor and Camping Area, Melba Gully Picnic Area and Sabine Falls.

Great Otway National Park

Apollo Bay and Cape Otway Inset



www.parks.vic.gov.au

Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without flaw of any kind and therefore disclaims all liability which may arise from you relying on this information. Cartography by Parks Victoria May 2018.



0 1 2 Kilometers

Camping

Some excellent national park camping opportunities include:

Aire River (East) and (West) Campgrounds

Located on opposite banks of the Aire River Estuary are two campgrounds.

The estuary is home to a magnitude of native and migratory bird species as well as an abundance of fish species making it a great place to go bird watching, fishing, swimming and canoeing.

A boat ramp is available to launch small boats, canoes and kayaks. A short walk to the ocean beach follows the banks of the river. This is an unpatrolled ocean beach and not recommended for swimming.

Parker Hill Campground

This small campground is set on a high forested hill overlooking the beach and the Parker River estuary. A walking track loop links it to Point Franklin and further on to the Cape Otway Lightstation.

Blanket Bay Campground

This popular and often busy camping and day visitor area is located off Blanket Bay Road. All campsites are unpowered and suitable for tents, camper-trailers, campervans or recreational vehicles. A boat ramp and day visitor area are present here.

Advanced bookings and payment are required year-round.

Johanna Beach Campground

At the end of Red Johanna Road this camping area is separate to the day visitor area. Both access the stunning and rugged Johanna Beach. The open camping areas are sheltered by the main dune. Dogs on-lead are permitted at this campground.

Advanced bookings and payment are required year-round.

For further information or to book go to www.parks.vic.gov.au/stay

Otway Forest Park camping

Go to www.delwp.vic.gov.au

Swimming and surfing

Swimming is very popular at beaches along the coastline, however many beaches and rivers are exposed to unseen dangers such as currents, rips, reefs and logs. Beaches are not patrolled within Great Otway National Park.

Surfers frequent a variety of beaches along this coastline including the world-famous Johanna Beach and the popular Apollo Bay.

Parks Victoria recommends swimming only at beaches patrolled by lifesaving services. Beaches are patrolled by lifesavers when red and yellow flags are displayed.

Marengo Reefs Marine Sanctuary

Marengo Reefs Marine Sanctuary protects 12ha of ocean waters. About 150m offshore, this sanctuary protects a reef system known as Little Henty Reef. Two sections of the reef are usually exposed at low tide and with calm seas when separated by a narrow channel known as 'The Gap'. Visitors who choose to explore need to be prepared and experienced with offshore snorkelling and diving.

For further information on Marengo Reefs Marine Sanctuary, visit www.parks.vic.gov.au

Waterfalls

Many of the spectacular waterfalls found in the park are accessible by only a short stroll. Be sure to visit Triplet Falls, Beauchamp Falls, Sabine Falls, Hopetoun Falls and Melba Gully's Annies Cascades.

Glow worms

In the wetter parts of the Otway Ranges such as Melba Gully, colonies of delicate glow worms put on a spectacular light show best

appreciated at night. No torches please as this will disturb and shut down their glowing display.

Four wheel driving, trail and mountain bike riding

Licensed drivers and riders with registered vehicles will find a range of formed vehicle tracks and roads on offer throughout the national and forest parks. This includes mountain bikes which are not permitted on walking tracks in this section of the park.

Seasonal track closures apply to many tracks in Great Otway National Park. For more information go to www.parks.vic.gov.au

Remember to always stay on the tracks and avoid muddy areas to reduce damage to the environment. Be considerate, slow down or stop for horse riders, cyclists or hikers. Parks are for everyone to enjoy.

Be sure to plan your driving and trail riding tour routes using detailed topographical maps. Check the Parks Victoria website for the latest track conditions at www.parks.vic.gov.au

Fishing

The coastline, as well as a number of streams and rivers which flow through the park, provide great opportunities for keen anglers. The Gellibrand River's upper waters are popular with anglers seeking River Blackfish, Brown Trout and Black Bream near Princetown.

Fishing is not permitted in marine national parks and sanctuaries. Check separate marine visitor guides for activity/boundary guidelines.

Adults generally require a Victorian Recreational Fishing Licence, available from the Victorian Fisheries Authority at www.vfa.vic.gov.au, or your local fishing licence outlet.

Horse riding

A wide range of roads and tracks are available for horse riding in Great Otway National Park.

For more information on horse riding and for seasonal road closures, visit www.parks.vic.gov.au

Dogs in the national park

Dogs are generally not permitted in Great Otway National Park, however there are a few specific areas that allow for dogs on leads – refer to Dogs in Otway Parks fact sheet for more information.

Different land managers on the Surf Coast have different dog regulations – be sure to check signage whenever visiting beaches and parks in the region.

Be prepared and stay safe

Great Otway National Park is in the South West and Central fire district. Bushfire and severe weather safety is a personal responsibility. Anyone entering parks and forests during the bushfire season or severe weather such as strong winds needs to stay aware of forecast weather conditions. Check the Fire Danger Rating and for days of Total Fire Ban at www.emergency.vic.gov.au, on the VicEmergency smartphone app or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226. No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban days. However, gas stoves may be used under certain conditions for food preparation. Be aware that strong winds can occur anytime, which can be hazardous with falling timbers on walking tracks.

On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days and days of severe weather this park will be closed for public safety. Closure signs will be erected but do not expect an official warning. Check the latest conditions at www.parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963.

For emergency assistance call Triple Zero (000). If there is a green emergency marker sign near you, read the information on the marker to the operator.