Otways Drive You've never seen it like this before!

Parks Healthy People

Victoria's Iconic 4WD Adventures www.iconic4wd.com.au



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This tour offers the perfect opportunity to explore the famous Otways coast and lush green hinterland, including Victoria's Great Otway National Park.

It's a relaxing and inspiring journey through tall forests and heathlands, past fern gullies and cascading waterfalls before returning along the Great Ocean Road, where the coastal scenery has few equals in the world.

The 242-kilometre drive can be taken at your own pace, spending time at the various attractions and taking advantage of as many of the scenic picnic grounds and campsites as you wish. The tour is classified as Easy in dry conditions, under Victoria's new 4WD Recreational Track Classification System – see Track Classification section for details.

Anglesea to Beech Forest (101 kms)

Starting from Anglesea, the route heads west along mostly unsealed road to Deans Marsh, then south on bitumen to Big Hill Camping Area (seasonally closed). A short distance further along the unsealed Mt Sabine-Bennwerrin Road is the turnoff to Blanket Leaf Picnic Area and the nearby Erskine Falls.

Perhaps the most impressive of the Otway waterfalls, Erskine Falls plunges nearly 40 metres down the rocky cliff to a fern-filled valley below. A short walk leads to a lookout with a panoramic view of the falls or you can follow steps that lead down to the river and along to the base of the falls.

Returning to the route, continue towards Beech Forest on one of the Otways most picturesque drives, as the track winds gently amid tranquil forest and fern gullies. In some sections, enormous tree-ferns arch over the road as it passes beneath a thick canopy of tall Mountain Ash and Blackwood.

Further along the drive towards the town of Beech Forest, the Aire Valley Road leads to Beauchamp and Hopetoun Falls. Take time out to relax or picnic in one of the two scenic forest reserves, set amid towering Mountain Ash and cool temperate rainforest.

A walking track leads from the Beauchamp Picnic Area to the falls, while Hopetoun Falls can be seen from a viewing platform near the car park. There is a steep and sometimes slippery walking track down to the shaded valley floor and the base of Hopetoun Falls, an unbroken torrent that thunders into a clear pool surrounded by ferns.

Beech Forest to Apollo Bay (67 kms)

Another of the Otways most spectacular natural highlights, the triple cascade of Triplet Falls, lies a few kilometres west of Beech Forest. Enjoy spectacular views of the three cascades from a series of elevated viewing platforms on a stunning one-hour loop walk through the ancient rainforest.

The tour now heads back towards the coast, joining the Great Ocean Road near Glenaire and heading towards Apollo Bay. There is no better place to experience the majestic beauty of this rugged coast than Cape Otway, reached via a turn-off that meanders through woodland and heathland.

Take in the dramatic views along the coast and over the wild seas of Bass Strait crashing on the rocks below, or spend time exploring the Cape Otway Lightstation in its magnificent setting perched high on soaring cliffs. Constructed in 1848 and operational until late last century, it is the oldest surviving lightstation on the Australian mainland.

The tour offers one last magical rainforest experience before reaching Apollo Bay and the coastal part of the drive. A few kilometres past the Cape Otway turnoff and just beside the highway lies the beautiful Maits Rest. Allow some time to explore this ancient rainforest on a boardwalk that winds among towering Myrtle Beeches, giant tree ferns and moss-covered roots.

Apollo Bay to Anglesea (74 kms)

With its refreshing village ambience and sweeping crescent beach, framed against an emerald backdrop of rolling hills, Apollo Bay is a perfect place to break the journey – and perhaps sample the delicious local seafood.

The drive along the Great Ocean Road back to Anglesea is a sheer delight, with every turn opening up another glorious vista along the coast – you can stop at a number of lookouts to take your own picture postcard photo.

About 5 km north of Wye River is one of the most accessible shipwrecks on the Otway Coast - the Godfrey Gravesite, sometimes known as the Lonely Grave. This historic site shows where the barque 'WB Godfrey' was wrecked in 1891, and at low tide wreckage from the ship is clearly visible straight out to sea.

The tour then passes through Lorne, a favourite Victorian seaside resort for over a hundred years and still popular for its combination of attractive beaches and sidewalk cafes, before continuing to Anglesea.

Otways Drive Important information

FOUR WHEEL DRIVING IN VICTORIA'S PARKS AND FORESTS

- Plan ahead and obtain a detailed map before you go this map is a guide only
- Drive vehicles only on formed roads and vehicle tracks that are open to the public do not drve off-track
- Stay off tracks that are too wet, or have been recently graded
- Avoid wheel spin and churning up the track surface
- Remove fallen trees or limbs from roads; don't create new tracks by driving around them
- Cross rivers and streams only where river crossings are clearly marked. Check depths and drive slowly
- Use a tree protector if winching is required and use wheel chains as a last resort
- Be aware that Seasonal Road Closures exist across Victoria due to the potential for increased environmental impacts and risks to public safety during the wetter months
- Be sure to check for road closures before you go check with Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au or the Department of Sustainability and Environment on 13 6186 or at www.dse.vic.gov.au

The best way to enjoy four wheel driving is by joining one of the many four wheel driving clubs in Victoria. Contact Four Wheel Drive Victoria for more information or visit www.fwdvictoria.org.au

OFF-ROAD DRIVING TECHNIQUES

Off-road driving demands different techniques to road driving, and every surface has its own particular characteristics. All vehicles should be in first-class mechanical condition and carry equipment appropriate to the trip.

It may be worth considering one of the training programs for touring off-roaders run by Four Wheel Drive Victoria to ensure you are properly prepared. Here are some brief pointers.

QUICK TIPS: DIRT ROADS

Driving

- Reduce speed to match tyre pressure
- Expect the unexpected
- Engage 4WD on part-time systems, and stability control for those cars that have it
- Use a slightly lower gear than normal
- · Headlights on for visibility
- Don't swerve for animals; slow down
- · Slow down for oncoming vehicles, especially those with dust clouds
- · When following another vehicle keep well back to avoid dust
- Expect vehicles anywhere on the road
- Keep away from loose, gravelly parts of the road, follow defined wheel tracks.

TREAD LIGHTLY IN THE VICTORIAN BUSH

Please help protect the natural environment by following these guidelines:

- · Keep to walking tracks. Short cuts cause erosion and disturb native habitat
- If you carry it in carry it out! Please take your rubbish out
- Dogs, cats or other pets are prohibited in National Parks
- Firewood is limited. Please use fuel stoves for cooking, and observe fire regulations and days of TOTAL FIRE BAN.

MINIMAL IMPACT CAMPING

- Be self-sufficient with drinking water. Carry it in and/or know how to make untreated water safe for drinking
- · Camp at least 20 metres from any stream, lake or reservoir
- Dispose of and dirty water away from streams and waterways. Do not use soaps, detergents and toothpaste near water sources so fish and wildlife aren't harmed
- Use toilets where provided or bring your own portable toilet. If there are no toilets, walk at least 100 metres from water sources and campsites, dig a hole 15 centimetres and cover
- Light fires in designated fireplaces. Use a fuel stove where possible as it's better for the bush.

FIRE SAFETY

A bushfire survival plan is just as essential for drivers and campers as it is for those at home. Check the weather forecast before you go, stay aware of daily conditions and be ready to activate your bushfire survival plan.

Remember that official warnings of bushfires are not always available in remote locations, so extra effort is required to keep informed. If you are camping, take a portable radio and tune in to ABC or local outlets for weather and fire updates. Monitor conditions with updated bushfire information from the Victorian Bushfire Information Line: 1800 240 667.

Extra care must be taken with any potential ignition sources like power tools and cigarette butts. Vehicles should not be driven over dry ground cover or parked on dry grassy areas.

TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land and recognises their rich culture and intrinsic connection that stretches back over many tens of thousands of years, including the areas now managed as par





A new classification system for 4WD tracks on Public Land across Victoria has been developed.

A standard four level colour coded system is used to indicate the degree of difficulty of 4WD tracks and routes. Standard symbols and signage are used to show easy to very difficult tracks.

The Otways Drive is rated as Easy

- All Wheel Drive and High Range 4WD
- · Mostly unsealed roads with no obstacles and minor gradients
- Can be low clearance with single range and road tyres
- · Suitable for novice drivers
- · May be more difficult in wet conditions.

The terrain and track conditions aim to provide a general description of the likely terrain and have limited subjective comments such as boggy or rutted as these can be interpreted differently by individuals.

The suitability of a vehicle relates to high/low range capacity, ground clearance and tyres.

The recovery equipment is advisory only and in line with Tourism Adventure Activity Standards and is not mandatory.

This is to guide the inexperienced driver that it may be in their best interest to have driver training or further experience before attempting more difficult terrain.

Note: Drivers need to be aware of changing weather conditions and how this may affect tracks they are using or planning to use. The tracks have been classified in dry conditions and most medium, difficult and very difficult tracks will become more difficult in wet weather. One of the most enjoyable ways to experience Victoria's diverse and unforgettable memorable landscapes is on a four-wheel drive tour to enjoy the peace and solitude of the bush.

Now you can experience the best four-wheel drive experiences Victoria has to offer, on a range of tours from full day to several days. Licensed Tour Operators will help you get the most out of your park visit.

Victoria's Iconic 4WD Adventures are just waiting to be discovered, with a new series of touring guides to steer your journey of exploration.

Grampians Drive • Otways Drive • Mallee Drive Wonnangatta Drive • Snowy River Drive • Davies Plain Drive

Further Information

Parks Victoria: call 13 1963 or visit www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Department of Sustainability and Environment: call 13 6186 or visit www.dse.vic.gov.au

Four Wheel Drive Victoria: call (03) 9857 5209 or visit www.fwdvictoria.org.au

Look out for the distinctive blue and yellow 'i' sign 🗾 as you travel around Victoria, which identifies Accredited Visitor Information Centres.

This track is subject to Seasonal Road Closures. Please visit **www.parkweb.vic.gov.au** for current track information. The map contained within is a guide only. Ensure you obtain a detailed map before you embark on your journey.







