

## WELCOME TO CRANKY PENGUIN LAND

Penguin is unique in that there is no other locality in the world with this name. Penguin (population approx 3,924 – 2011 census) gained its name from the fairy penguin colonies which dot the coast in this part of Tasmania. There are twilight viewing sessions of the rookeries at the Little Penguin Observation Centre and Habitat behind the Burnie Makers Workshop, or Lillico Beach near Devonport, where the penguins clamber ashore to return to their nests after a day of feeding in Bass Strait (November until March). Enjoy a stroll along the beautiful north-facing Penguin Esplanade with the sunbeam shimmering off the sea and you might be lucky to see penguins, a pod of dolphins or maybe a whale!

The first discovery of silver in Tasmania was in Penguin, followed by discoveries of copper and manganese. However, settlement occurred a decade after the 1850s gold rush in Victoria that created a demand for palings provided by splitters cutting in the Penguin district. The long piles of black rocks on Penguin beach have historic significance since they are the ballast offloaded from ships loading timber back to Victoria. The area was settled in the 1860s. The heritage-listed Penguin General Cemetery (closed in 1977) bears testament to the pioneers of the area. At rest are Bounty immigrants of the 1850s, returned soldiers, notable former residents as well as former convicts.

The backdrop for Penguin is the Dial Range, where there are numerous trails for bushwalking, mountain biking and horse riding. Two of the best places to visit are Ferndene and Mt Montgomery State Reserves. The former has picnic facilities and there is a beautiful walk through the fern glade along a clear stream, surrounded by huge tree ferns reminiscent of Gondwana, with two disused silver mine shafts further up the gorge, known as Brownings' and Thorsbys'. There are panoramic bike rides along the coast, particularly the breathtaking Old Penguin Road to Ulverstone from where you can see the Three Sisters Islands from Penguin Point and further along, Goat Island.

In Penguin itself, St Stephens Church and the Uniting Church are both classified by the National Trust. The delightful Hiscutt Park has a Dutch Windmill and tulips (in season), plus a lake which is home for ducks and the elusive platypus - and where you can see remote control enthusiasts race their sailboats on Sundays. Hiscutt Park also has a picnic area with BBQs, a playground and public toilets. Another BBQ and picnic area is the popular Lions Club Park at the end of Surf Drive on a headland overlooking Penguin and Watcombe beaches that has a picnic area and public toilets. It is a quite popular spot with RV and campervans. A third picnic area is up on the knoll, that has amazing views of Penguin town, behind the Scout Hall next to the skate rink, along Johnsons Beach Road leading to the Penguin Caravan Park. There is a playground and public toilets located opposite Johnsons Beach. The Penguin Miniature Railway loops around the knoll, operating twice monthly on the second and fourth Sundays that is a big hit with children and adults alike.

A beautiful three kilometre walk is to start at the western end of Penguin at Johnsons Beach, walking along the Esplanade past Penguin Beach to Surf Drive, then proceed along Watcombe Beach where you walk along the grass strip before climbing to cross the railway track, where you discover the start of the beautiful Perry-Ling Gardens along the railway verge. For those seeking an extra two kilometres of power-walking, cross the road onto the footpath that takes you to the eastern end of the township for a return trip.

Penguin also has the largest undercover Sunday Market in northern Tasmania. Impervious to the weather, it is a mainly bustling craft market, with a food court and live music performed therein throughout the day. Visitors travel from afar to check out the stalls before enjoying Penguin's other attractions such as the Big Penguin in the centre of town.

These, combined with excellent eateries, cafes, and speciality shops are all within five minutes walk from the Penguin Visitors Centre. The only fine-dining restaurant, Casablanca, is located at the Surf Club at Preservation Bay.

## OUT AND ABOUT PENGUIN: SUGGESTED DAY ITINERARIES

### Nearby to Penguin

For a beautiful coastal drive take the Old Penguin Road to Ulverstone, visit the Ulverstone History Museum that records the region's immigration experience dating back to the 1850s, or take a cruise on the Leven River (there are several tour companies). Hire Pedal Buggies and ride along Ulverstone Beach to Turners Beach to the Berry Patch (pick berries in season or try their delicious ice-creams). Drive up inland 30 kms to Gunns Plains, where you can feed a Tassie Devil at the Wings Wildlife Park or tour one of Tasmania's earliest caves reserves renowned for its magnificent formations, calcite shawls and flowstones, and its glow-worm display. Another 20 kms leads to the breathtaking Leven Canyon with spectacular sweeping views 275 metres above the river, then enjoy a spot of tea and wander the beautiful gardens at Kaydale Lodge.

### Further afield to the east

Train buffs and Thomas the Tank enthusiasts will check out the Don River Railway (just before Devonport) where there are a variety of vintage steam and diesel locomotives and railcars. Stop at Mersey Bluff to take in the spectacular sea views, then proceed to the newly refurbished Maritime Museum. For history buffs, tour Home Hill, the house of Tasmania's only Prime Minister. Nearby at Eugenana is the 27.5HA Tasmanian Arboretum containing the world's largest collection of Tasmanian living woody plants. Chocolate lovers will find Anvers Chocolate Factory on the outskirts to Latrobe, as is the Cherry Shed. In Latrobe, there is the Axemen's Hall of Fame and the nation's most amazing toy store-come-museum Reliquaire Shop – beware the ghouls' gallery! In the direction of Port Sorell, wine lovers will find Ghost Rock winery for tastings.

### Further afield to the south

For an iconic wilderness experience, walk around Dove Lake at Cradle Mountain, where it sometimes snows in summertime! To get there do a loop via Promised Land and get lost in one of Tazmazia's eight maze featuring the Great Maze (reputedly the largest botanical maze in the world), then Wilmot and visit the original Coles Shop operated by the Coles family 1910-21. Return via the Sheffield Murals and take in all the outdoor art. Wine lovers will enjoy spectacular scenery at the Barringwood winery.

### Further afield to the west

Burnie caters for all: for single-malt lovers there is the Hellyers Road Distillery where you can bottle your own or enjoy the lovely lush green countryside from the cafe; the 11 HA world class woodland garden at the Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden; and the Burnie Pioneer Village Museum that captures a charming c 1900 Federation streetscape that has been frozen in time. Cheese lovers and paper makers will enjoy the Makers Workshop! For the motor enthusiast, visit the Wonders of Wynyard Exhibition Centre, where the only two 1903 Model A Ford in existence and equal oldest Ford in the world can be seen. Depending on the season, you will find the fertile Table Cape carpeted with tulips, poppies, pyrethrum or onions, the lighthouse and the lookout where you can see all the way to Low Head! A few drive away is Boat Harbour Beach, one of Australia's prettiest little beaches. From there, the NW's main fishing port and tourist destination of Stanley is over half an hour's drive. Wedged between the old volcanic plug of the Nut and land, this pretty seaside village is reminiscent of the small fishing villages dotting the north European coastline. The historic Highfield House and house where Tasmania's Prime Minister Joseph Lyons was born are the highlights, as well as the delicious locally-caught crayfish! From here is it a further hour's drive to the Tarkine, Cape Grim, and to Arthur River's 'Edge of the World'.