

HIKING JOURNEY

# Discover Victoria's High Country

5 DAYS



**WALKABOUT**  
GOURMET ADVENTURES

## Journey Overview

Join us to discover one of Australia's most outstanding alpine regions. Based in our former hometown of Dinner Plain we have the opportunity to explore some of Victoria's magnificent High Country.

The Alpine National Park stretches from central Gippsland all the way to the New South Wales border where it adjoins Kosciuszko National Park. Within the park are some of Australia's most stunning alpine landscapes, including mountain peaks, escarpments and grassy high plains. The region encompasses some of Australia's most iconic peaks - Mt Bogong, Mt Feathertop and Mt Howitt. There are some stunning walks which lead to the summits of these mountains but there are also more gentle trails meandering through the majestic snow gums. In Spring and Summer, the area is ablaze with colourful alpine wildflowers.

Dinner Plain is a unique alpine village located on the edge of the Alpine National Park - it is a perfect location and setting for us to discover the Victorian high country. There is a series of trails leading straight from the village into the park, so we have a multitude of options available. One of the highlights of walking in the high country is discovering some of the old cattlemen's huts which are scattered throughout - their history goes back to the 1860's and are a testament to the pioneers who lived and worked this country during the years when cattle were allowed to roam freely in the high country.

The alpine environment is one of the most pristine environments in Australia. It contains several unique flora and fauna species. The park supports 110 native plant species, 12 of which (including the Bogong daisy bush and silky daisy) are found only within the park and 38 of national significance. Among its fauna is the rare mountain pygmy-possum - the world's only alpine marsupial which stores food to last through the winter. Smoky mouse, broad-toothed rat, powerful owl, spotted tree frog and she-oak skink.

## Journey Highlights

- Day 1 - takes us out of Melbourne and into East Gippsland and onto Omeo in the Victorian high country. In the late afternoon we arrive at our base for the next 4 nights, the beautiful alpine village of Dinner Plain.
- Day 2 - we acquaint ourselves with the village of Dinner Plain admiring its unique architecture for which the village is renowned. From the village, we join the cross-country ski trail which meanders its way via JB Plain, Paw Paw Plain all the way to Mt Hotham, the highest ski Resort in Victoria.
- Day 3 - we venture out across JB Plain and take the hiking trail to the top of Mt Tabletop for one of the best alpine vistas.
- Day 4 - We walk along one of Australia's most spectacular alpine walking tracks - The Razorback towards Mt Feathertop. This mountain is often looked upon as being the most beautiful mountain in the Victorian high country. It is a stunning alpine walk with amazing vistas, beautiful wildflowers and majestic snow gums.
- Day 5 - we say goodbye to lovely Dinner Plain as we drive via Mt Hotham down the mountain to Harrietville and Bright. In Milawa we stop at the famous Brown Brothers vineyard for a wine tasting and lunch before we join the Hume Highway for our return trip to Melbourne.

## Journey Schedule

### DAY 1

Melbourne - Traralgon - Bairnsdale - Omeo - Dinner Plain

### DAY 2

Dinner Plain - Brabralung Trail - Mt Hotham

### DAY 3

Dinner Plain - JB Plain - Mt Tabletop

### DAY 4

Dinner Plain - Diamantina Hut - Mt Feathertop

### DAY 5

Dinner Plain - Bright - Brown Brothers Vineyard - Melbourne

## Journey Itinerary



### DAY 1

Melbourne - Traralgon - Bairnsdale - Omeo - Dinner Plain

We depart Melbourne at 9.30 am

**RADISSON on Flagstaff Gardens,  
380 William St, Melbourne VIC 3000  
Ph +61 3 9322 8000**

Our route takes us out of Melbourne in an easterly direction towards Gippsland. We enter the Latrobe Valley and stop for an early lunch in the bustling town of Traralgon. We continue along the Princess Hwy and stop for another break at Bairnsdale, the gateway to the Gippsland Lakes. In the afternoon we continue to Bruthen where we

join the Great Alpine Road which takes us along the beautiful Tambo Valley to the high-country town of Omeo.

We stop here for a coffee and an opportunity to stretch our legs for a quick walk through this historical town. Originally a pastoral area, the discovery of gold in 1851 saw the town boom, however, things ultimately declined as the gold ran out and cattle and sheep grazing took over as the town's major industry. Remnants of the town's gold-mining history can be found at the Oriental Claims Historic Area, located a few kilometres west of Omeo. Today it is the gateway to the high country from the Eastern side and in winter it is the last town for travelers on their way to the ski resort of Mt Hotham.

We continue along the Great Alpine Road via the cattle station Cobungra before arriving in the late afternoon at Dinner Plain.

The village of Dinner Plain is located 1,560 metres above sea level – it the highest freehold village in Australia. The tradition of hospitality in Dinner Plain goes back well over a century, when mountain cattlemen first arrived to rest and graze their cattle. The site of the current Dinner Plain village was originally part of 640 acres freehold plot which was used to graze cattle in the summer months. During winter it is above the snow line and operates as a ski resort both for downhill and cross-country skiing. In days gone by when the coaches were running between Omeo and Bright, they would stop here for midday dinner, hence the area became known as Dinner Plain.

The village of Dinner Plain was officially opened in 1986. We actually purchased land here 3 years later and we completed the construction of our home and restaurant "Maraposa House "in 1991. We were based here until 1997 when we relocated to Provence so that we could be closer to our European operations. After checking into our lovely accommodation, we have time for a quick stroll around the village before we meet up for our first delicious dinner.

**1 HOUR** **DINNER PLAIN VILLAGE**

## DAY 2

### Dinner Plain - Brabralung Trail - Mt Hotham

After our delicious breakfast we take a walk around the highest freehold village in Australia and learn about its history. The village began construction in 1986 and the architect behind the design was Peter McIntyre. His design of the village features buildings architecturally inspired by the characteristics of the old cattlemen's huts. Construction in the village is still restricted to timber, local stone and corrugated iron, with a limited range of colours approved. Strict covenants limit such detractions as antennae, fences and washing lines and all buildings are subject to height restrictions. The architectural success of Dinner Plain has since led to the development of the Australian Alpine style, which is now being adopted as a benchmark by all other alpine resorts in Australia.

Dinner Plain is a distinctive village in Australia's only freehold land above the snowline. The homes, apartments and lodges reflect the heritage of the early pioneer buildings in the Victorian alpine high country. Built of stone, timber and corrugated iron and often boasting magnificent stone fireplaces, each blends-in beautifully with the surrounding snow gums and the high plains' landscape.

After our orientation walk around the village we join the Brabralung Trail in direction Mt Hotham. The gentle undulating trail takes us directly into the Alpine National Park with our first stop being at JB Hut - a cattlemen's post with remnants of yards built in the 19th century for catching wild horses. JB Plain was named after Jim Brown, who in the 1850s, brought cattle into the alpine region with partner, Jack Wells.

The present JB Hut was a forestry hut from the Swifts Creek forestry region and most likely came from a bush sawmill. It was moved to JB Plain in a joint effort between Cobungra Station and the Bairnsdale Scout Group in the 1970s. It was used as an outstation by Cobungra Station during mustering season well into the 1980s.

Our trail offers great opportunities to experience a variety of alpine landscapes. These include the naturally occurring open plains of JB Plain and Paw Paw Plain, where only low-growing plants such as grasses, heaths and alpine bog plants are able to survive

due the phenomenon known as cold air drainage. Wetlands are a key feature of the landscapes along the trail. At JB Plain and Paw Paw Plain we shall see examples of the Sphagnum Moss communities which form bright green hummocky mounds. These moss beds play a crucial role in regulating water flow from the mountains to the valleys below thanks to their ability to absorb, hold and filter huge quantities of moisture.

Along the trail we are likely to see a multitude of different plant varieties plus the resident emus who seem to enjoy JB Plain.

Aboriginal tribes were regular visitors to the high plains. In summer months they ventured into the high country in search of food, in particular, the nutritious Bogong moths. Despite squatting runs being taken up from the mid-1830s in the foothills throughout the region, the ranges of eastern Victoria were little explored by Europeans. Rich gold discoveries in the region in early 1852 on both sides of the range at Beechworth and Omeo attracted a large and industrious population in the district for the first time in history. Sections of the Hotham - Dinner Plain trail would have followed the route of these early diggers, though very little evidence remains of their early efforts. Numerous mining tracks and trails crossed the Great Divide throughout this region, accessing goldfields such as the Cobungra Diggings to the east and the Upper Dargo Goldfield to the west. At Paw Paw Plain a significant mining track accessed some deep lead workings at Boiler Plain and the mining townships of Louisville and Brocket on the Dargo River. One of the most scenic sections of the track is Paw Paw Plain from where we are rewarded with fine views towards Mt Tabletop and the Dargo Valley. We continue along the trail until we arrive at the outskirts of the ski resort of Mt Hotham. From here we are afforded magnificent views across to the Dargo Valley in the south and towards the Bogong High Plains to the north. After allowing time for a relaxing drink at the "General" we return by bus to our lovely accommodation at Dinner Plain.

 **4 HOURS**

 **DINNER PLAIN VILLAGE**

## DAY 3

### Dinner Plain - JB Plain - Mt Tabletop

After another lovely breakfast today's walk begins from the village where we make our way across JB Plain to the beginning of the walking trail to Mt Tabletop. JB Plain in spring and summer has a myriad of gorgeous alpine wildflowers and has sweeping views towards the Dargo Valley. During the years we were living at Dinner Plain this lush grassy plain was a very popular area for cattle grazing. The owners of Cobungra cattle station near Omeo would walk their cattle up to the High Plains as soon as the snow had melted. They would stay up here for 4 or 5 months and in autumn they would muster the cattle and then walk them back down to the "low" country before the first winter snow arrived. After crossing the snow plains and snow-gum woodland, our route drops down to Tabletop Creek and then follows a long ridge up the plateau. The track is marked to a rocky outcrop just below the summit which is a perfect spot for our picnic lunch. The mountain gets its name because of its flat plateau appearance which is visible from many directions. As we sit here and ponder the magnificent views, we acknowledge the Aboriginal owners of this region - the Bidawal, Dhudhuroa, Gunaikurnai, Jaithmathang, Taungurong and Nindi-Ngudjam Ngarigu Monero who identify the Alpine National Park as their traditional country. After allowing plenty of time to absorb the special atmosphere of this alpine setting we retrace our route back to JB Plain where we join the Brabralung Trail back to our comfortable lodge at Dinner Plain.

 **4 HOURS**

 **DINNER PLAIN VILLAGE**



## DAY 4

### Dinner Plain - Diamantina Hut - Mt Feathertop

Today we have been saving the best until last as they say!! After our breakfast we take the short drive to Mt Hotham and begin our walk from Diamantina Hut. Our trail towards the iconic mountain of Feathertop is along the Razorback. Mt Feathertop is Victoria's second highest mountain at 1,922 metres. The trail follows the sharp, craggy spine of the razorback above the tree line. It descends to a saddle called the Big Dipper, passing through open snow grass, low shrubs and snow gum woodlands on its way to the rocky bluffs of Twin Knobs. The stunning 360-degree views from the Razor Back are arguably some of most spectacular views in the Australian Alps and once the winter snow has melted there are normally masses of alpine daisies, billy buttons and alpine celery growing on the slopes. In the distance Mt Feathertop looms large – one can see across the Bogong High plains towards Falls Creek, down to the Ovens Valley and Harrietville and then back to Diamantina Hut and Mt Hotham. In fine conditions we also have wonderful views across to the plateau of Mt Buffalo and in the distance even Mt Buller and Sterling. The purpose of this walk is to savour this outstanding alpine scenery with its peaks and wildflowers so we want to allow ourselves plenty of time to do this – it's not about trying to "tick off" Mt Feathertop! Normally we get to a point on the trail which is about 3 km's from the summit – from here we have uninterrupted views in all directions. As we walk out and back along the same trail guests can also choose to stop at any point and wait for our return – sometimes we have guests who bring their sketch pads or journals with them and let the environment inspire them! In the afternoon we retrace our steps, passing the turnoff to the Bungalow and Bon Accord spurs before arriving back at our starting point at Diamantina Hut. From here we take the short drive back to Dinner Plain for a well-earned rest and aperitif and our final celebratory dinner.

 **5 HOURS**

 **DINNER PLAIN VILLAGE**



## DAY 5

### Dinner Plain - Bright – Brown Brothers Vineyard – Melbourne

This morning after breakfast we say goodbye to our alpine environment and head back down into the “low country”. We travel on the great alpine road again - it is Australia's highest all-weather road - 339 kms long running from Metung at the Gippsland lakes to Wangaratta in north-eastern Victoria. It was given its current name because it was considered to be the mountain equivalent of the famous great ocean road along Victoria's iconic west coast. There has been a rough road over these mountains since colonial times - in the early 1920's Bill Spargo was appointed as the supervisor of the mountain section of this road and the country roads boards (crb) built him a stone cottage at Hotham heights which later became a ski lodge. This was the beginning of the ski industry in this part of Australia. It was not until 1998 that the final section of this road was sealed between Mt Hotham and dinner plain. We continue down the mountain arriving at Harrierville and then bright. We have a break to stretch our legs and a coffee before continuing onto to Mytleford and then brown brothers vineyard in Milawa. This vineyard is still a family run vineyard and dates back to 1885 when the first vines were planted and 4 years later the first vintage was released. We have time to sample some of their delicious wines with a wine tasting and then enjoy a delicious picnic platter. In the afternoon we re-join our vehicle for the return trip to Melbourne. Our expected drop off time at the Radisson hotel at flagstaff gardens is approximately 6.00 pm.



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Hotel High Plains, Dinner Plain

**NIGHTS 1 - 4**



## Journey Notes

### PRICE INCLUDES

- Experienced guide.
- Pick up at 9.30 am in Melbourne on Day 1 and drop off at approximately 6.00 pm in Melbourne on Day 5.
- Twin share accommodation for 4 nights, all breakfasts and dinners each evening and the final celebratory lunch on Day 5.

### NOT INCLUDED IN TRIP COSTS

- Picnic lunch on Day 1- 4 (guests will have the opportunity on Day 1 to buy provisions for the next 3 picnic lunches and store in their room fridge).
- Evening drinks.
- Personal clothing.
- Laundry.
- Medical expenses and items of a personal nature.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

- 1.5 litre water bottle
- day pack
- walking boots
- waterproof raincoat
- fleece and gloves
- sunhat and warm hat
- sunscreen and insect repellent
- We recommend walking poles

As we are restricted with the amount of luggage, we can carry in our vehicles so please ensure that your CASES DO NOT EXCEED 20 KG's per guest.

## **PRE-WALK PREPARATION**

We suggest that prior to your walking holiday you prepare yourself to obtain a level of fitness that will allow you to enjoy your walking holiday.

This, of course, is dependent upon your existing fitness level. Remember, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the holiday!

Start with some short walks which include stairs or hills and increase the length of walks over a couple of months.

We suggest you carry a backpack with water, camera, jacket, snacks, etc. to assist you with your preparation and allow you to get used to the extra weight on your back.

We also ask that your boots are comfortable and well-worn in.

Perhaps enjoy some walks through our local national parks and over uneven surfaces to gain confidence with your boots or new walking shoes.

## **PLEASE NOTE**

- Single rooms can usually be arranged for a supplement. Please ask us for details. We shall endeavour to match people together if they would like to share a twin room with another guest to avoid paying the single room supplement. However, as this is not always possible 'single' clients will have to pay the supplement.
- All walks during the 5 days are optional. Guests can choose to have a free day whenever they like.
- The walking pace on the walking holiday is leisurely.
- Guests do not have to be experienced; however, a good level of fitness is necessary.

## **CONTACT**

Guide: Graeme Clarke

Tel: 0458 955 272



# Get in touch and book your journey today.

 **0461 277 612**

 **info@walkaboutgourmet.com**

## Follow the journey.



### Quality Practices

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