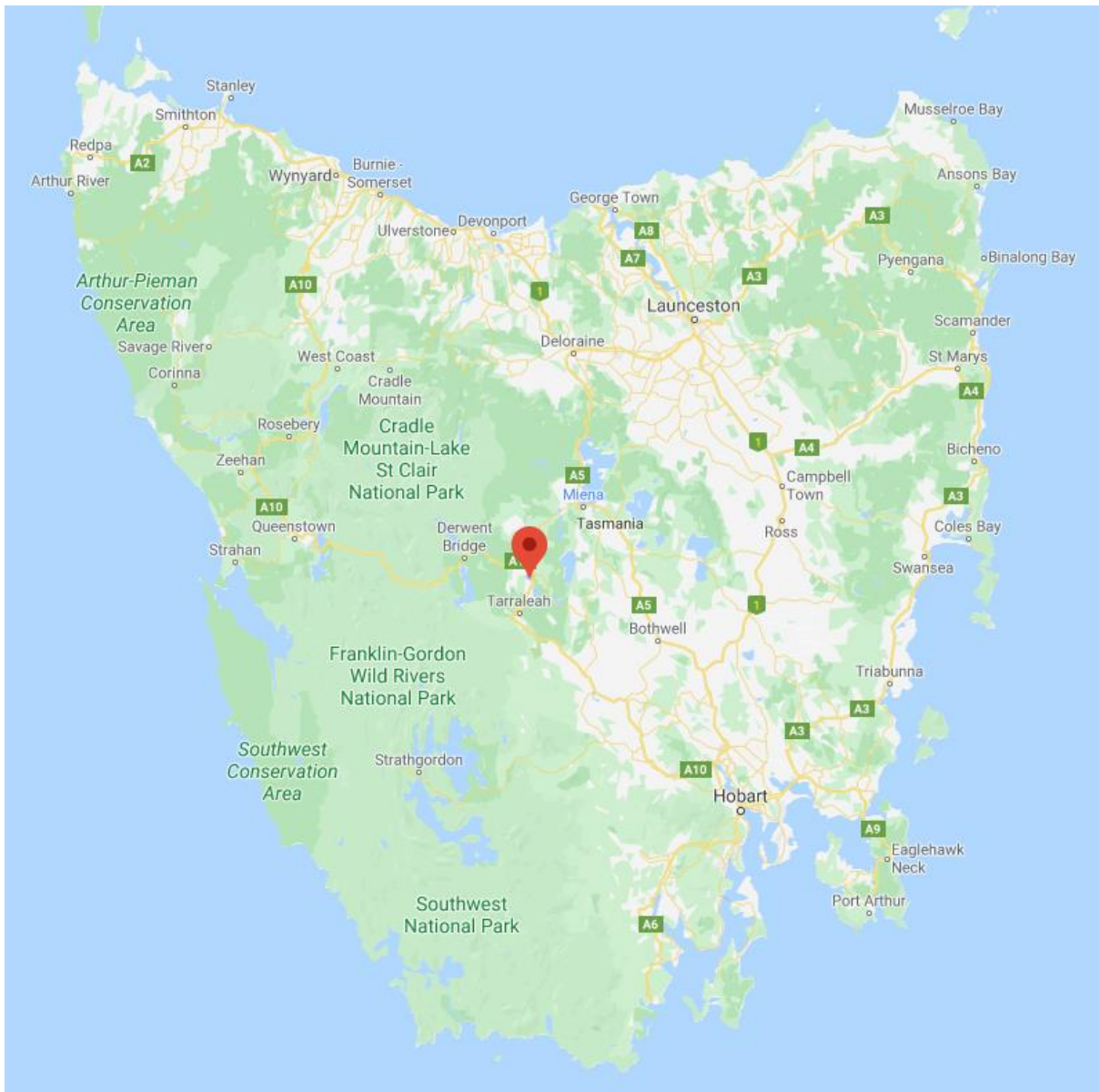


Tasmania Trippin

Jason M



I thought I'd add some notes on the back of my (8 Jul 2020) Bronte Fly Fishing School presentation. Bronte Lagoon is marked above.

One of the benefits of going to Tasmania instead of New Zealand, is you can take your vehicle there. Usually, we drive down to Melbourne and get the ferry over, so I thought I'd share some tips.

Getting There



Menu

Find a Fare



One option is to leave Canberra before lunch, and make the evening ferry. In summer, Spirit of Tasmania runs twice a day. The cost of a cabin isn't bad, and comparable to staying in a hotel in Melbourne or Tasmania, and you can get off fishing early the next morning.

The other option, which we usually do both to school/work and having relatives in Melbourne, is to head down in the evening and get the ferry the next morning. We usually get a cabin then anyway, which gives the family somewhere to hang out, and you can have a leisurely sleep or catch up on watching Source Tasmania or reading those unread fishing magazines.

If you get a double cabin, try to get one with a porthole, and it has plenty of room even if you want the kids to chill out there. These usually come with a television, no brew making facilities, but has an ensuite. Bunk cabins (rated up to 4) are a bit smaller, and have no TV but have power if the family needs to run devices, and an ensuite. The top bunks can be flipped up, so the bottom ones can be used as a couch. We usually get a cabin for around \$120-\$140, and bring some snacks for the kids and a thermos for my coffee fix (especially for the early morning rise and sitting in the car waiting to head off).

The food onboard is good, and we find the pizzas upstairs might be easy for kids near the playground and game machines (about \$14), the buffet is great and now focused on Tasmanian produce. I think it also has some free kid's meal, but even for the tasty fish and chips, roast, curry, and/or waldorf salad, it is both tasty and fills you up for the trip – I had it for lunch on our day trip in December. The bar is also quite good, and has some more boutique ales than just Boags Strongarm to help wash down the salmon.

Phone reception is available until around a couple of hours from departure, and within a couple of hours of arriving, but don't expect coverage across the straight (you may get some off the odd island), or deep inside the hull. Take the chance to check out the sunrise/sunset and the stars instead, or go to the cinema with some Valhalla ice cream.

Vehicles - Getting on and off

If you haven't stopped for a fish on the way to Melbourne, there is no need to show your fishing gear, so keep it dry like you would for the 48hrs before flying out of NZ. Flies etc are not an issue. Watch out for pine needles etc under the bonnet – expect to open bonnets and tailgates for quarantine.

We usually fuel up in Melbourne before heading to the ferry (note, they will soon be moving to a Geelong dock, not sure how soon). If you are taking jerry cans for that remote fishing trip (or fun 4WD excursion to the West Coast), take them empty and you won't need to hand them over for hazmat storage during the trip, which allows you to head straight off at the other end.

Similarly, whilst 9kg LPG cylinders are surrendered for storage, the smaller ones (eg Coleman 900g ones) are fine to keep in your vehicle, provided they have the plastic cap on them. On my last trip, I took a butane stove (no canister carried) and a two-burner stove that ran off of the Coleman 900g canister, which meant I was able to take some for the camp without a bulk larger cylinder.

What's Included in your Ticket?

Tickets can often be picked up cheap, and usually slightly cheaper on the return leg. From memory, I think I paid \$99-119 each way for an adult, and about \$40-70 per child. The vehicle costs around \$400, and with a cabin each way it came out around \$900 – more around \$1200 if you are picking a busier sailing date.

The vehicle dimensions then shape which deck it gets put on. Caravans can go too, I understand it's less than \$1k, but might be worth checking however is quite reasonable and our relatives do it a couple of times per year. In identifying your vehicle, you can also indicate you will have something on the roof (ie kayak or rooftop box/tent) and tailgate (eg mountain bikes) for the dimension planning, but those items don't cost extra, so I usually select both when I book in the likelihood of taking one or both.

Devonport

This is where you disembark. If wanting to wet a line, some flathead and salmon can be caught down the beach or the breakwall if you turn left when leaving the ferry terminal to the East Devonport beach.

If wanting to stock up, my tip is to head to Devonport downtown/West Devonport. If hungry for dinner, I head to Straight Off The Boat for tasty fish and chips, and grab some other goodies while it cooks. Near there is the William Street Butcher I described in the talk, who can vacuum seal your goodies for you, and even have local spuds etc (also, look out on the backroads for local spud stalls for around \$12 for 2 or 5 kg for kennebecs, bismarks etc). Their stir fry was quite tasty (even vac sealed for me), and after my wife heard from the guy parked next to us that their chicken patties were the best around, I bought some and concurred with a tasty herb blend in the patty.

If arriving during the day, head to Hill St Mall. At the end (opposite to Target) is Giaconda Coffee and if you buy a 1kg bag of coffee to keep you going, you also get a free small coffee for the drive. Across the road is Blue Sky Sports (or something similar), which is a local adventure/sports store, stocking Simms and local flies. The advice there varies, but you might luck in with one of the staff who fishes – I have had mixed results. It was here that I found the flyer on the fishing school.

If heading south, one of the local fly makers now just sells at the Sportscene in Deloraine (the venison pie in Frogs Hollow café was pretty good there, and a public toilet on the same corner as these makes a great reason for a pit stop) before you cross the river and head down to Liawenee and the Central Lakes from Devonport. This is also your last main fuel stop (eg if heading to Julian Lakes), but there is the odd fuel station every hour or two (Miena was the next one down Great Lake).

Devonport also has a local gin distillery Dasher and Fisher just behind the mall. Hellyer Road whiskjey distillers are further west in Burnie, and plenty of goodies on the way over to there. Ashgroves Dairy for cheese and milk (and sell Giaconda coffees), the chocolate and fudge factory, and the berry farm, and a pickled onion outlet.

Whilst good to support the local shops, if like me, you had a quick need for camping gear or don't have time to shop locally (the tackle shop was closed during Xmas-Boxing Day, and closes at "normal hours"), there is BCF and Anaconda in Devonport, which have a bit more fly fishing gear than around here but still limited, but also other local fishing equipment and camping gear. Macpac is in Launceston, which can also allow you to go to the Essential Fly Fisher. I was able to use the Christmas period to do some online shopping, which let me do a quick stop and collect on my way to the fishing school.

Anaconda also stock the Sea2Summit wet one-like shower wipes, as there are no general use showers at the school, but to be honest, the lake wasn't too cold in the shallows, but at \$5 these were a simpler and cheaper alternative to solar shower/shower cubicle/shower stand (mostly short shrubs near the camp) to stay hygienic. The other fishers though are understanding, but no harm in making use of the ability to stay clean before climbing into those cosy pajamas after a hard day's casting before it gets too cold at night. With prior knowledge of your fishing trip though, you won't need to be like me and risk doubling your outdoor gear to take advantage of the opportunity to fish or learn down in Tasmania.

Hopefully this gives you some thoughts if thinking of a trip to Tasmania, and considering the ferry instead of flying to Launceston or Hobart.