

Alpine National Park

Victoria's largest national park, the Alpine National Park, stretches from central Gippsland all the way to the New South Wales border where it adjoins Kosciuszko National Park. Here you will find some of Australia's most stunning alpine landscapes, including mountain peaks, escarpments and grassy high plains.



Getting there

There are many ways to reach the Alpine National Park.

One of the main access points to the Alpine National Parks is the town of Mansfield, via the Maroondah Highway from Melbourne (200km) or Midland Highway from Benalla (63km).

From the south access is via the Great Alpine Road, from Bairnsdale to Omeo and Mt Hotham or the Dargo High Plains Road from Dargo to Mt Hotham.

From the north access is via the Bogong High Plains Road from Mount Beauty or the Great Alpine Road from Bright to Mt Hotham.

Walking and hiking

Some of the best mountain walking country in Australia is found in the Alps. There are some easy short walks that can be tackled on a family weekend. Others are long, rough and challenging, requiring a degree of bushwalking skill and stamina.

Due to the remote nature of this park, walkers must be self-sufficient with food, water, first aid and camping gear, and be skilled in the use of maps and compass.

Walkers and hikers should also be aware that the weather can deteriorate suddenly and without warning, and snow can fall at any time of year, including mid-summer. Don't hesitate to turn back if the trip becomes too difficult.

Be sure to visit www.parks.vic.gov.au to check the advice on safety and regulations before walking or hiking in the park.

Short and medium walks

Howqua Hills Historic Walk – 1.5 hours return

This easy and enjoyable walk follows the Howqua River from Sheepland Flat to Fry's Flat in Howqua Hills Historic Area, near Mansfield. There are self guided interpretive panels along the way.

Paw Paw Plain – 2km, 1 hour return

Paw Paw Plain is located a short distance from the Great Alpine Road, between Mt Hotham and Dinner Plain, has fine views and has fine views of the remote Dargo River Valley and Mt Tabletop. The track climbs steeply at first, then follows a ridge to the plain.

Paradise falls – 0.5km, 30 minutes return

Paradise Falls, near Whitfield, cascade uninterrupted 31 metres and are most spectacular in spring, early summer or after rain. The walk to the viewing platform is a well-made stepped track. There are picnic facilities at the car park so pack a lunch and enjoy the park.

Bryces Gorge – 8km, 3.5 hours circuit

North of Licola a well defined track will take you across open snow plains, through woodlands, to creeks and waterfalls.

Bryce Guy's Hut, near the end of the walk, was built in 1940 and is an excellent example of bush architecture.

Long distance walks

The Bluff Trail – 27km, 2 days return

From a pleasant grassy clearing beside the Howqua River, the track climbs steadily through dry open forest to the rugged natural ramparts of the Bluff. From the treeless 1,725 metre summit a

spectacular alpine panorama unfolds, stretching to Mount Buller in the north and faraway Lake Eildon. Access to this trail is via Mansfield.

The Razorback Trail – 22km, 8 hours return

The superb trail from Mt Hotham to the summit of Mt Feathertop (1,922m), the state's second highest mountain, follows the sharp, craggy spine of the Razorback above the treeline. The stunning 360 degree views from the peak extend across the Alps.

Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing – 37km, 3 days one way

Beginning at either Falls Creek or Mt Hotham, nature lovers, adventure seekers and history buffs alike will revel in the sweeping views and diverse wildlife, cattlemen's huts and vivid flora found along this trail.

Horse riding

There are many opportunities to explore and enjoy the mountains and valleys of the Alpine National Park on horseback, particularly in the Howqua Valley and the Bogong High Plains. Restrictions apply so please visit www.parks.vic.gov.au or call **13 1963** for further details and special conditions.

Camping

The Alpine National Park offers some of the most authentic and scenic bush camping opportunities in Victoria.

Dispersed camping is permitted throughout much of the park. There are some camping areas that include facilities such as pit toilets, picnic tables and fireplaces.

When camping you should be fully self sufficient with food, water and camping equipment. Always carry a tent. Huts are for emergency use only. Firewood supplies are limited especially in the alpine and sub alpine areas, so the use of camping stoves is preferred.

Car touring and 4WD

Car touring is a great way to explore and experience a park as large and varied as the Alpine National Park. Many attractions in the park are accessible in a conventional 2WD car.

If you have a full day driving the Great Alpine Circuit (250km) is a great way to spend it. It passes through Bright, Omeo, Falls Creek and Mount Beauty, offering spectacular views along the way.

Other areas can only be reached on rough tracks that require a 4WD vehicle. Please remember that a few millimetres of rain can turn a dirt track into one that is treacherous or impassable, even for the most experienced driver. Many roads and tracks are closed seasonally during the colder, wetter months for environmental and safety reasons. Please respect seasonal road closures.

Rafting and canoeing

The Snowy River is renowned for its challenging white-water canoeing and rafting. River levels, normally quite low in summer, can rise suddenly after heavy rain over the catchment so please consult canoeing guidebooks and park staff when planning your trip, and check river flow levels and weather close to your trip.

Fishing

There are many great opportunities for fishing in the alps. The major streams and rivers such as the Wellington, Macalister, Wonnangatta, Caledonia, Howqua, King and Rose Rivers all provide good fishing.

Fishing is also particularly popular on and around Lake Dartmouth.

Check your Fishing Guide for trout seasons, bag limits and freshwater cray regulations and ensure that you hold a current Victorian fishing licence.

Skiing

The alpine region boasts some of Australia's finest ski touring areas, from well-defined and groomed trails within and near the Falls Creek and Mt Hotham Alpine Resorts, to the winter wilderness of the Dargo High Plains.

Popular spots for cross-country skiing include areas around the resorts such as the Bogong High Plains, JB Plain and the Mt Loch area. The resorts also offer downhill skiing opportunities. Mt Bogong, The Razorback, Mt Feathertop and the Dargo High Plains are visited by more experienced cross-country skiers.

Mountain bike riding

The Dargo and Bogong High Plains offer some great opportunities for exploration on two wheels. Track surfaces vary from sealed roads to steep, rough four wheel drive tracks. Cycling is not permitted on walking tracks.

All public and management vehicle only roads, except for Spion Kopje Track on the Bogong High Plains, are available for bike riding. In addition, you can explore Rocky Valley, Cope East, Cope West, Langford East and Langford West aqueducts on the Bogong High Plains.

Be prepared and stay safe

Alpine National Park is in the North East and East Gippsland Total Fire Ban Districts. Be aware of forecast Fire Danger Ratings for this fire district. No fires may be lit on days of Total Fire Ban.

On days of Code Red Fire Danger this park will be closed for public safety. Closure signs will be erected and rangers will patrol when possible, however you may not receive a personal warning that the park is closed. Check the latest conditions by calling **13 1963** or visiting www.parks.vic.gov.au

When driving through the park please remember:

- Check road conditions and river crossing levels before starting out.
- Vehicle access is limited to formed roads and tracks open to the public. Public vehicles are not permitted in Wilderness Areas.
- Many roads and tracks are closed seasonally for environmental and safety reasons.

All visitors, and especially walkers, should realise that weather conditions can change rapidly in alpine areas.

Snowfalls can be experienced at any time of the year and water can be extremely scarce, so always be prepared with:

- warm clothing
- wind and waterproof jacket
- gloves, hat, sunglasses and strong footwear
- first aid kit and sunscreen
- energy food and water
- compass and relevant topographical map.

Before you go, let someone know where you are going, and when you expect to return. Also, please keep your group small (4 - 8 people).

Please keep to walking tracks, particularly in old gold mining areas where there may be mine shafts or unsafe cliff edges.