



See fur seals on a Pennicott Wilderness Cruise.



The Neck, Bruny Island.



Get Shucked's tempting oysters.



Bruny Island Honey.



House of Whisky.



Cape Bruny Lighthouse.

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BRUNY BECKONS

BE SURE TO TAKE YOUR TIME EXPLORING THIS SMALL ISLAND OFF TASMANIA THAT'S BIG ON ATTRACTIONS.

IF ANYONE SAYS Bruny Island is a day-trip destination, “tell ‘em they’re dreaming”, to misquote *The Castle*’s Darryl Kerrigan.

Sure, it’s only about 50km long but with stops for local produce, panoramic views, wildlife and walks, you can’t do it

justice in a day – just ask those racing to catch the last ferry back to “mainland” Tasmania.

And beyond the bitumen, gravel roads lead to forest reserves, breathtaking beaches and national parks.

Allow five days to explore the island

properly, more if you love nature walks.

Called Lunawanna-alonnah by the Nuenonne people, it was renamed after explorer Bruni D’Entrecasteaux.

Home to about 800 residents, the population swells come weekends and holidays.

The Arch at Mars Bluff on the walk to Cape Queen Elizabeth.



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Pinched in the middle, it is an island of two parts, connected by a narrow isthmus known as The Neck.

From Hobart it’s a 40-minute drive to Kettering and 20-minute ferry ride to Roberts Point, North Bruny.

South Bruny is larger, much of it reserves and South Bruny National Park, so I head there first, stopping to walk to Cape Queen Elizabeth.

From atop the cape, Adventure Bay arcs southward to distant Fluted Cape like curved arms, protecting a string of pristine sandy beaches, including The Neck.

Next stop is Bruny Island Cheese Company for fresh produce and a wheel of soft white mould.

They serve tasting platters and locally crafted beer under shady blackwood trees, but I’m preparing my own.

At Get Shucked I bypass the Oyster Bar for the drive-through, collecting a dozen Pacific oysters, freshly shucked from the bay across the road, and a chilled riesling, as I’ll be too late to buy a sav blanc from Australia’s southernmost vineyard, Bruny Island Premium Wines.

Elissa Wright, of Bruny Island Honey, says the family business keeps half their hives on Bruny, following the blossom trail for flavours like prickly box and blue gum, which I add to my stash with salted honey popcorn.

From The Bruny Baker’s vintage roadside fridges, I buy the last loaf.

A wood-fired dark sourdough, it pairs perfectly with my cheese and briny oysters on the deck of Nairana Cottage, my home for three nights, cocooned inside 600ha Inala Nature Reserve.

Established by biologist Dr Tonia Cochran, the reserve attracts all 12 Tasmanian endemic birds.

On a tour the next morning, guide Cat Davidson explains their conservation efforts have helped save the forty-spotted pardalote.

There are raptors, too, and I watch a grey goshawk feasting on roadkill from the state-of-the-art raptor hide.

Inala’s Jurassic Garden, showing

the similarities between Gondwanan plants now geographically separated, is open to the public, along with the Nature Museum, housing Dr Cochran’s impressive collection of shells, fossils and gemstones.

Across the road is Sprockelwood, a garden gallery of artworks dotted among mature European trees, and further south is Cloudy Bay, a popular surfing spot.

You can drive along the beach at low tide and walk to East Cloudy Head, but I’ve booked a tour of Cape Bruny Lighthouse.

“...larrikin Aussie humour accompanies geology and history as we cruise beneath fractured cliffs, zoom between rock stacks and feel the exhale of “breathing rock”.

Completed in 1838, it’s Australia’s second oldest and longest continually staffed lighthouse. Views from the top show the treacherous, rugged coastline.

The next day I explore Adventure Bay, starting with Mavista Nature Walk through lush rainforest.

Having previously walked the stunning Fluted Cape track I’m keen to see the towering dolerite cliffs from the water, aboard a Pennicott Wilderness Cruise.

At The Friars, fur seals bask on rocks, while albatross soar above and dolphins

dive across our boat’s bow.

Explorers like Cook, Bligh and Flinders sheltered in Adventure Bay and the tiny Bligh Museum houses a collection of their maps, logs and artefacts.

An early seafood dinner at Hotel Bruny allows me to catch sunset from Truganini Lookout at The Neck, before using a torch to spot little penguins from the boardwalk.

Heading to North Bruny the following day I visit Bruny Island House of Whisky, where co-owner Lee Herron says they stock the largest range of Tasmanian single malts, but I leave with a bottle of limited-release gin.

Arriving at Free Spirit Pods I regret not booking two nights.

Fishing rods, kayaks and picnic blankets prompt exploration of the protected bay and photography books beckon to be read on the deck or snuggled by the fireplace, nibbling complimentary Bruny Island Chocolate Company fudge.

Owner Garry Deutscher suggests Jetty Cafe at Dennes Point for Friday night fish and chips.

Enamoured by the architecture I return next morning for coffee. Built by locals as a community hub from plans donated by architect John Wardle, it has a wood-fired pizza room and gallery space.

Last stop is the Quarantine Station which was opened in 1884 as a defence against infectious diseases and became a plant quarantine in the 1950s.

Now it’s a reserve and a tranquil place to wander back through history.

“Ah the serenity, so much serenity,” as Darryl might say. ■

The writer travelled with the assistance of Tourism Tasmania.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Choose a ferry outside peak times.
- Check opening hours/days of providores, cellar doors and restaurants – they change year-round.
- Bring some provisions – the only fuel and general store is at Adventure Bay.
- Hotel Bruny offers dinner every night, other venues on Friday or Saturday only. Book ahead.
- Walking track signage isn’t great, so get a good map.