



WILD SIDE

THE WILDERNESS SHOP NEWSLETTER

Trip Review: The Great Ocean Walk

by Mary



View from the Ryans Den Campsite

Not everyone wants to climb high mountains. Why not consider our coastal environment when planning your next walk.

The Great Ocean Walk, on Victoria's spectacular west coast, stretches 104km from the resort town of Apollo Bay, to within sight of the magnificent 12 Apostles. It follows the coast around Cape Otway and for much of its length is within the Great Otway National Park. Although it is not too far from the road for much of its length, it traverses deserted beaches and looks out over azure marine sanctuaries. It is a long but satisfying walk through diverse terrain and forest types including heathland with spring wildflowers, dry woodland, wet forest, and open beaches with awesome sea views. Koalas along the way are a particular highlight.

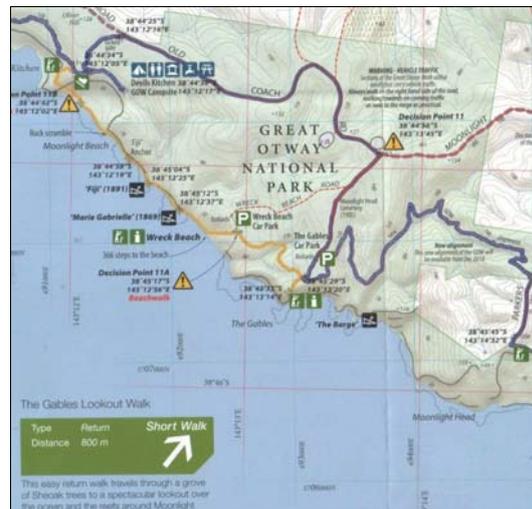
This is a walk that can be done in its entirety, or in stages. Booking of campsites is essential, and tent sites are limited so it is advisable to plan ahead. There are various options, and virtually all require some form of car shuttle or a booked pick up service, as it is a longitudinal walk. Our family group (6 of us) chose a 5 day section, starting from Shelley Beach near Apollo Bay and finishing near Ryans Den.

There is plenty of variety on this walk. You might think that you would be just walking along beaches, but no, there were stages when we could not even see the sea. We went through farmland and ti-tree forests. There may be no mountains, but there are definitely hills! I discovered that walking along sand in boots is not easy. But keeping to the firmer moist sand and the lunchtime swims on a hot day made it worthwhile.

Now this could be a walk for all shapes and sizes. While I "fought on" with my rucksack (granted with the help of my two strapping sons), another group of ladies had it all worked out. They carried only daypacks, as their tents, rucksacks (and bottles of wine) were delivered to each night's site by a commercial company. This vehicle access to each campsite makes for an easy introduction to overnight walking.

There are designated campsites along the route, all in fantastic locations. Many are perched on the cliffs overlooking the ocean while others are further inland alongside the Aire River or in forest. They all have a tank, toilets and a picnic shelter. Something very handy was the large low table / bench at each tentsite. I enjoyed wandering around the campsite, sharing the day's stories with our fellow walkers. Two of the campsites, Johanna Beach and Ryans Den, provided spectacular sunset viewings from high bluffs overlooking the ocean.

This is beautiful country: beach, coast, bush and farmland, and along the Great Ocean Walk we experienced it all! If you are interested in doing the Great Ocean Walk but don't know where to start, then come in and speak to the friendly and helpful staff at The Wilderness Shop.



**1:25,000
Great Ocean
Walk Map
showing
track
information,
campsites,
side-trips &
car access.
The map has
gradient
profiles and
notes on
natural
history &
safety. RRR
\$17.95**



Overlooking the wild Southern Ocean

Technical Tip: Trekking Poles

by Nick



Bernadette crossing the slippery Lerderberg River with the help of her trekking poles

Being an Australian male, I used to think that I was too tough for trekking poles. That was until I went to New Zealand for the first time. At the end of my first NZ tramp, having walked 1300 metres down a very steep rocky track, my legs were uncontrollably shaking. The next day it hurt to walk. Almost everyone in New Zealand (and Europe) uses trekking poles. In fact one guy I met in a backcountry hut said "you'd be mad not to use poles in New Zealand. They help uphill and downhill, save your knees, and are almost essential with the river crossings." "One or two? I asked. "Two. You get much better balance and drive that way."

Needless to say, as soon as I returned to Melbourne I started researching the pros and cons of trekking poles and this is what I found: Someone has gone to the effort of calculating that by using trekking poles you reduce the load on your feet, legs and back by 15%-20%. I've been using trekking poles for three years now and I can anecdotally confirm this, especially with my knee, which had been playing up prior to using poles. The effect is most noticeable going downhill, but when using poles going uphill I find you get a lot more drive and propulsion. On flat ground, trekking poles really help you to increase your stride length which also increases walking speed. There are few if any cons that I have found when using trekking poles. Occasionally I find the scrub is too thick and the swinging poles keep catching. Other times it's convenient to have free hands.

The Wilderness Shop stocks a wide range of trekking poles, from short to long, ultralight to shock absorbing. Come in and visit us at the store and we'll help find the right pole for you.

Tents: What Our Staff Use



W.E. Tectite 1

Mark - Wilderness Equipment Tectite 1 RRP \$359, Tectite 2 \$449, Tectite 4 \$499

I own a Tectite 1 and have used it as a single man tent for many of my adventures as well as weekend base camping. Its very spacious as a one person single-skin tent with plenty of room for your pack inside. I appreciate the simplicity and speed of putting it up as well as its low weight. W.E. have managed to make a lightweight group of single skin tents while maintaining their commitment to keeping their products robust and strong. It achieves this by doing away with the conventional double skin design and opting for a single waterproof exterior. On rockclimbing trips, when saving weight is essential, I use it as a two man tent but packs then need to stay outside.

Greg - Mont Epoch RRP \$799

The Epoch from Mont is a true 4-season mountaineering tent that is spacious and stable in very high winds. In the wilds of South West Tasmania, during the walk-in to remote Precipitous Bluff, it proved equal to the challenge of resisting extremely strong wind gusts at the exposed Ooze Lake campsite. The inclusion of multiple roof vents greatly improves ventilation during use in warmer weather, and allows the escape of condensation during winter alpine ski tours.



Mont Epoch

Nick - Venus II RRP \$679, Venus II Extreme \$699

The Exped Venus II tent has proved to be a very adaptable tent for unpredictable Australian conditions. The Venus II has very large side entry vestibules which have enough room for a large pack, yet still leave enough room for cooking and getting in and out of the tent. The Venus II is a light 4 season tent (2.7Kg trail weight) and has dealt well with south-west Tasmanian wind and snow as well as a ski touring tent on the Main Range. The inner is connected to the fly so pitching is quick and dry in wet weather and the floor is durable and waterproof (10,000mm).



Exped Venus II

Glenn - Sierra Leone II RRP \$569

The Salewa Sierra Leone II is the perfect tent for a base camp or road trip. I often set mine up at Arapiles for weeks at a time. There is plenty of space for impromptu parties and plenty of vestibule space to store unwanted party-goers. Unlike most tents, the Sierra Leone II has two zips per vestibule which makes it very easy to get in and out. The fabrics are durable and waterproof throughout.



Salewa Sierra Leone II

Richard - Mont Moondance 2 RRP \$499 Moondance 1 \$399

I have used my Moondance 2 in all seasons and conditions and have found it extremely liveable tent. The Moondance 1 is also available: a single person model at a even further reduced weight. It is a freestanding tent (1.85 kg trail weight) with plenty of head room, is quick to pitch and all parts of the pitch are taut. The internal walls block wind and sand on the lower half and provide a well ventilated mesh on the upper half. The floor is very durable and waterproof (10,000mm), unlike some lightweight tents which rely upon an extra footprint. The vestibules are on the sides, in which you can stow a pack, boots and a bit more.



Mont Moondance 2

Review: Northcote Wall

by Glenn

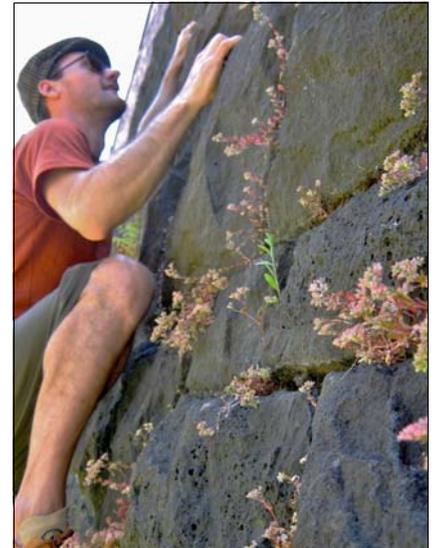


Situated in a quiet side street, Northcote Wall is regarded as the largest and most user friendly bluestone wall in the Melbourne area. Being a little further out of the city, the wall receives a lot less traffic and subsequent wear than Richmond or Princess Bridges. The holds on the rough hewn blocks retaining their positive edges and friction. A grass nature strip runs along the entire length of the wall, providing soft landings and is therefore a perfect training facility for beginner to intermediate climbers. At the wall's highest point, many climbers use a bouldering mat or top rope to spare the strain on ankles.

With largish holds, the wall is considered technically easy. Therefore, traversing laps of the wall for stamina training is the essential key to this wall. Eliminating horizontal holds and relying entirely on vertical edges on alternate laps provides more than adequate interest as you become increasingly pumped. Before the days of Burnley and indoor gyms, Northcote Wall was the number one spot for training before heading out to Arapiles or the Grampians.

For a break - hop onto a tram and head north up High Street to sample Turkish treats from numerous bakeries and sweet shops, or take in a movie at Westgarth Cinema, just around the corner.

A few cautionary notes: Bees have been known to nest in the overhanging foliage at the far left of the wall. Also, unattended bags have been known to disappear while the owners merrily traverse out of sight/reach of any would be thief. Best lock any gear in a car if possible.



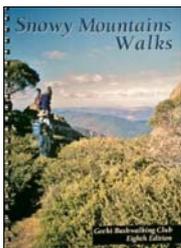
Unlike many bluestone walls around Melbourne, Northcote Wall is not heavily grouted which means great hand holds. Likewise, the stone is very roughly cut which gives you plenty of options for footholds.

Northcote Wall Overview:
Rock: rough hewn bluestone
Height: 1m, rising to 5m
Length: approx 200 metres
Location: Timmins Street, Northcote Melways 30 F10
Train: 5 min from Westgarth
Tram: No. 86 Bundoora
Orientation: The wall faces west, so gets shade in the morning and trees provide some shade in the afternoon.

Book Review: Kosciuszko Walking Guides

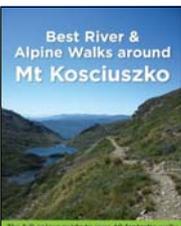
by Nick

Summer and early autumn is a great time to visit the Kosciuszko National Park. At this time of year you have the best chance of fine weather and the wildflowers are in full bloom. The key to any trip is a good guidebook and map.



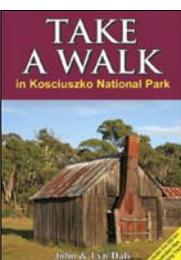
Snowy Mountains Walks RRP \$24.95

The Geehi bushwalking club has been producing this book for many years. Now in its 8th edition, this book remains a classic, covering all the popular day and overnight walks as well as some of the more out of the way places. There is an extensive section of the geology of the Snowy Mountains, as well as colour photos and contour maps.



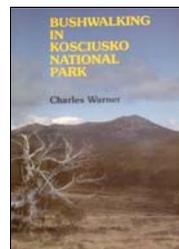
Best River & Alpine Walks around Mt Kosciuszko RRP \$29.95

This book is the perfect companion for those setting up a base camp somewhere near Thredbo or simply passing by on a summer road trip. Daywalks covered vary in length from 45 minutes to 9 hours. Colour photos with easy to read colour maps.



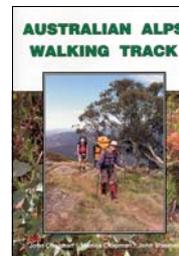
Take a Walk in Kosciuszko National Park RRP \$34.95

This book contains notes to 50 day and overnight walks throughout the Kosciuszko National Park. If this wasn't enough, John & Lyn Daly have provided extensive track notes and maps for the entire length of the Australian Alps Walking Track. This book is a must have for anyone interested in bushwalking in Australia.



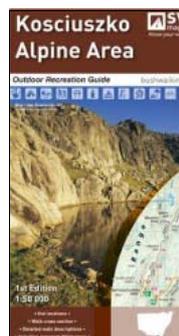
Bushwalking Kosciuszko NP RRP \$24.95

This is another book that has been around for a while. It is divided into ten sections which cover an area stretching from the foothills of Canberra to the Cobberas in Victoria. The background information on the areas natural history is great. This is the only book that covers off-track walking destinations.



Australian Alps Walking Track RRP \$37.50

Within the 240 pages of this marvelous book is everything you'll need to know about completing all, or part, of the Australian Alps Walking Track. Included is information about equipment, food drops, weather, natural history, preparation and safety. The colour contour maps are superb, as are the gradient profiles and time estimates for each leg. All you need now is the time!



Kosciuszko Alpine Area Map RRP \$13.95

Underpinning all great bushwalking guide books is a great map. This full colour map covers an area from Thredbo all the way north to Mt Jagungal and all the road access points. The map also includes notes to several popular walks in the area.

For those venturing further afield, The Wilderness Shop stocks a thorough selection of NSW 1:25,000 contour maps. RRP \$9.95