

Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park

Visitor Guide



Pounded by wild seas and fierce winds, the coast of Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park has been sculpted over thousands of years to become one of the most impressive natural sites in Australia. Towering rock stacks, arches and islands have been carved out of the soft cliffs by rain, wind and ocean waves. Many ships have come to grief on the rocky coastline, earning it the title of the Shipwreck Coast. These two parks offer a variety of activities including walking, fishing, canoeing and photography.



Getting there

Port Campbell National Park is located approximately 380km or 4.5 hours away from Melbourne via the Great Ocean Road. It is 230km or 3 hours away via the inland route. Bay of Islands Coastal Park is approximately 20km further west stretching from Peterborough to Warrnambool.

The direct route from Adelaide is approximately 670km or 7.5 hours.

Things to see and do

Camping

Camping and accommodation is available nearby towns. See map. There is no camping in these narrow coastal and national parks and sleeping overnight in the park and carparks is not permitted.

Port Campbell National Park (Princetown - Peterborough)



Twelve Apostles

These rock-stacks and islands are formed by the combination of the waves and winds from the Southern Ocean battering the coast, and seeping rainwater, eroding the softer limestone.

There are currently seven rock stacks that comprise the Twelve Apostles - six are on display in the classic view enjoyed by millions of people each year. The seventh is located several metres away from the corner of the main viewing platform. Story boards briefly explain their formation and history.

Car and bus parking visitor facilities for this busy site are on the northern (inland) side of the Great Ocean Road. Walking access for all abilities is linked via a walking track leading from the carpark, toilets and kiosk under the road to the lookouts.

Gibson Steps and Gibson Steps Beach

Park at the Twelve Apostles kiosk. A gentle 1.1km track takes you to Gibson Steps Lookout and, when open, 89 steps lead down the cliff-face to a wild ocean beach. If the tide is low you can view the rock stacks 'Gog and Magog' up close. The beach is often closed and inaccessible due to high tides and large ocean swell. On-site signs at the kiosk will advise if it is closed. No dogs are permitted in this park. Please note the beaches in these parks are not patrolled and Parks Victoria does not recommend them for swimming.

Loch Ard Gorge

A spectacular beach inside an impressive gorge. Looking out towards the site of the 'Loch Ard' shipwreck, this gorge was the place of an amazing tale of survival. There are several easy walking tracks with storyboards in this area highlighting nature, history and geology.

The Arch

The Arch refers to the natural rock shape visible just off the coast. It shows the middle stage of an island transitioning from tunnel, to arch, which will ultimately collapse to form two rock stacks.

London Bridge

A lookout viewing a natural rock formation previously featuring a double arch. The inner arch collapsed in 1989 leaving two people stranded on the outer side. They were later rescued by helicopter.

The Grotto

The Grotto is a cave and sinkhole located about halfway up the cliff, from sea level. The paved pathway leads to a decked staircase that descends into a viewing area. Enjoy the view of the rock pools carved out in the jagged edged limestone. Stay inside barriers.

Bay of Islands Coastal Park (Peterborough - Warrnambool)



A stunning collection of rock stacks and sheltered bays with clifftop walks, views and small beaches near Peterborough. Dogs on leads are welcome. Please observe Hooded Plover signs on some beaches.

Breathtaking and equally beautiful to the Twelve Apostles are the areas including the Bay of Martyrs, Bay of Islands, Sandy Cove* and Childers Cove. Note: *Sandy Cove is a dogs-on-lead friendly area.

This park has several dogs-on-lead friendly areas and stretches 32km to Warrnambool. The park's small beaches are not patrolled. Parks Victoria does not recommend them for swimming. Obey signs.

Walking tracks

Twelve Apostles to Gibson Steps – 2.2km return, 1hr

A gentle unsealed gravel walk across to the lookout above the beach. Starts from the Twelve Apostles Kiosk back door (ocean side).

Loch Ard Gorge has three easy, gentle walking tracks

- **Geology Walk** – 1km return, 40mins
Discover the secrets of the forces that shape the coastline on this easy self-guided walk.
- **Shipwreck Walk** – 1.4km return, 50mins
This easy walk follows the tragic story of the Loch Ard shipwreck site to the cemetery. This amazing story of courage and survival is featured in Warrnambool's Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village.
- **Living on the Edge** – 3.2km return, 1.5hrs
Discover life on the edge of the sheer cliffs. This easy walk encompasses the Muttonbird Island viewing platform, Thunder Cave and Broken Head.

Port Campbell Discovery Walk – 4.4km return, 1.5hrs

A spectacular undulating, one-way return walk passing through cliff-top heathland with storyboards. Start from Port Campbell Beach by crossing the mouth of Campbell's Creek or drive up to the Town Scenic Lookout and start from there. Views above the small harbour.

Peterborough Walking Track – 4km return, 1hr

This spectacular cliff-top heathland walk goes from Peterborough township near the Golf Course through to Bay of Martyrs. Numerous coastal lookouts. Dogs on leash are permitted along this track.

Great Ocean Walk – 104km one way, 7 days. Long distance.

Starting from Apollo Bay and ending at the Twelve Apostles, sections of the walk can be done to suit your schedule. Plan properly to stay safe. For information visit www.greatoceanwalk.com.au

Wildlife watching

These two coastal parks provide important habitat for a wide range of wildlife; some rare, threatened or endangered. Snakes and other wildlife live here in their home. Enjoy your park visit and respect the nature of the parks. Do not climb over barriers - stay on tracks.

Many small beaches are nesting grounds for the endangered Hooded Plovers. These, shy beach nesting birds are vulnerable to disturbance and need your care to survive. Please observe signs.

The range of birds found here ensure excellent birdwatching.

A resident rarity in the park's heathland is the Rufous Bristlebird, often seen dashing across walking tracks and carparks.

Fairy Penguins come to shore in the evenings just after sunset. Viewing platforms at the Twelve Apostles and London Bridge. Do not climb over barriers – for your safety, stay on tracks.

Hundreds of Muttonbirds (short-tailed shearwaters) can be seen returning to their burrows on Muttonbird Island (Loch Ard Gorge). Evenings from September to April - peak viewing January-February.

Swimming and diving

When the sea is very calm there is excellent wreck and reef diving off Port Campbell National Park. Diving opportunities are also available in local marine national parks and marine sanctuaries. Marine park visitor guides provide more information. Please remember that all wrecks and artefacts are protected by law. Visit www.parks.vic.gov.au for further information.

Many beaches are exposed to unseen dangers such as ocean currents, rips and reefs. Parks Victoria recommends swimming only on beaches patrolled by lifesavers. Obey safety warning signs.

Fishing

Curdies Inlet and Gellibrand River are suitable for fishing. Ocean fishing at Newfield Bay, Clifton Beach and the Port Campbell jetty.

Fishing is not permitted in marine national parks and marine sanctuaries. See marine park visitor guides for protected area boundaries and activity guidelines and boundaries.

Obtain a Victorian Amateur Fishing Licence before you fish.

Canoeing

The Gellibrand River and Curdies River are great for canoeing. Access points are located at the inlets.

For further information

Parks Victoria

Call 13 1963

Visit www.parks.vic.gov.au

Photography



Excellent photography opportunities from lookouts and walking tracks across these two parks offer spectacular views. For your safety and to preserve the plants and animals living here stay on tracks. Use of drones is not permitted in these parks.

Facilities

Twelve Apostles kiosk and visitor area

Kiosk is open 09.30am to 5.00pm daily. (Kiosk hours may extend up to 8pm during holiday periods). The kiosk sells a range of items including tea, coffee, cold drinks, confectionery and a small range of hot/cold food. Sunscreen, hats and insect repellent are also sold.

Wheelchairs are available for short term loan to use on site.

Toilets and parking are available here at this location.

Accessibility

Many of the viewing platforms, pathways and car parks are accessible to people with limited mobility. Accessible toilets can also be found in Twelve Apostles and nearby towns including Princetown, Port Campbell and Peterborough.

For further information about access here please visit www.parks.vic.gov.au or Port Campbell Visitor Information Centre.

Caring for the park

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

- Please take rubbish with you for recycling or disposal
- Sleeping overnight in the park or carparks is not permitted
- Dogs and other pets are not permitted in the national park, except in cars on main tourist roads and sign-posted areas.
- Dogs are permitted on a leash in sections of the Bay of Islands Coastal Park - from the Peterborough Golf Course to the Bay of Martyrs Carpark and at Sandy Cove.

Be prepared and stay safe

Crumbling cliffs: Stay away from cliff edges and the bottom of cliffs - they can collapse at any time without warning. Keep to designated walking tracks and lookouts.

Mobile phone reception: you may not be in network range in some areas of the park.

Fire Awareness: Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park are in the **South West** fire district. Bushfire safety is a personal responsibility. Anyone entering parks and forests during the bushfire season needs to stay aware of forecast weather conditions. Check the Fire Danger Rating and for days of **Total Fire Ban** online at www.emergency.vic.gov.au or call

VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban days, however gas cookers can be used for preparing food. On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days this park will be closed for public safety. Closure signs will be erected but do not expect an official warning. Check the latest park conditions at www.parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963.

For emergency assistance call Triple Zero (000). If a green emergency marker sign near you, read the information on the marker to the operator.

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Visitor Information Centres

Port Campbell Visitor Information Centre

Port Campbell, Victoria 3269

Tel: (03) 5598 2500

Warrnambool Visitor Information Centre

Flagstaff Hill, Merri St

Warrnambool Vic 3280

Tel: (03) 5564 7837