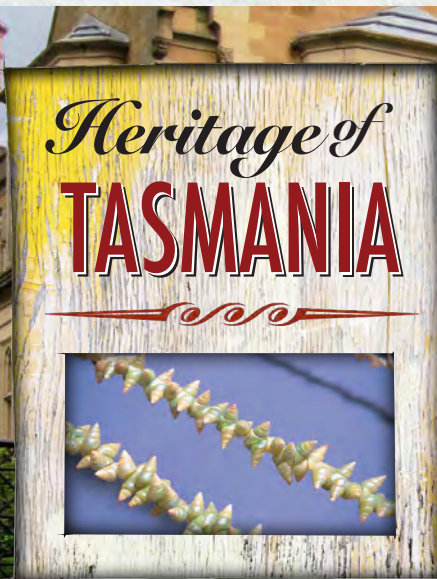


# Tasmania

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Government House inset with Aboriginal necklace



## History and Heritage

Aboriginal people have lived in Tasmania for about 30,000 years, well before the last Ice Age. They were separated from the Australian mainland about 12,000 years ago when the seas rose to form Bass Strait and flooded the landbridge.

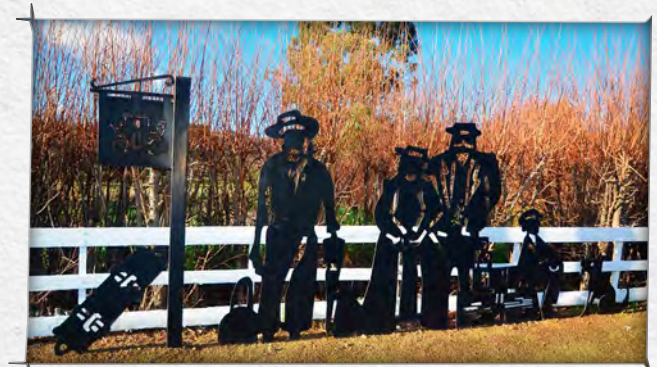
Tasmania was originally named Van Diemen's Land by the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman in 1642. The island was settled by the British as a penal colony in 1803 and the name was changed to Tasmania when convict transportation stopped in 1853.

Tasmania has preserved a rich legacy of heritage, including Australia's oldest continuously operating theatre, the Theatre Royal in Hobart; the country's first Jewish Synagogue, still in use in Hobart; and its oldest golf course, in the historic town of Bothwell. The nation's oldest bridge and church are at Richmond, and on the corner of Murray and Macquarie streets in Hobart, the only remaining Georgian intersection in the country. Many colonial dwellings are in use as private homes or tourist accommodation.

## Convict Heritage

Tasmania was originally known as Van Diemen's Land and some 73,500 convicts were shipped from Britain during the transportation period. The convict prisons were built for those convicts who reoffended in Van Diemen's Land. Largely, it is from the prisons in which the stories of convicts and brutality stem.

- Port Arthur Historic Site – Port Arthur was established to contain and punish convicts who reoffended after



Heritage Highway sculptures

being transported to Van Diemen's Land. The peninsula landscape provided a natural prison with only a narrow strip of land (Eaglehawk Neck) connecting it to the rest of the island. Today the Port Arthur Historic Site includes over 30 restored buildings (including a brutal solitary confinement jail) and convict ruins through guided tours, galleries, audio tours, and evening ghost tours.

- Tasman Peninsula Convict Trail – takes in seven locations in an area where Tasmania's convict history is most concentrated. They include Eaglehawk Neck, site of the famed Dog Line – a line of dogs chained across a narrow isthmus to deter prisoners contemplating escape – and the Coal Mines at Saltwater River where convicts were made to cut coal to feed the fires of the gentry. The Trail includes spectacular land formations along the coastline of the Tasman National Park.
- Sarah Island was one of the first prison settlements established to punish reoffending convicts and to harvest the valuable Huon pine from the unyielding wilderness. The island eventually developed into one

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Shene stables

of the largest shipyards in the British Empire. Convicts eventually turned out more than 80 vessels, the last of which was used for a daring escape. Today, visitors can enjoy guided tours of Sarah Island on their cruise to the Gordon River.

- Hobart Cascades Female Factory – considered to be the female equivalent of Port Arthur. Hundreds of women were jailed here in abhorrent conditions of poor hygiene, inadequate nutrition and backbreaking work. The jail was in operation from 1828 until 1877.
- Richmond is famous for Australia's oldest freestone bridge, built by convict labour in 1823, and Australia's oldest Roman Catholic Church (mid-1830s). Richmond Gaol, built in 1825, housed many prisoners including the famous bushranger Martin Cash. Many of the town's beautiful Georgian buildings are now home to art and craft galleries, restaurants and shops.

## Built Heritage

The grand sandstone Georgian buildings of Salamanca Place were once colonial warehouses, rowdy taverns and maritime workshops. The warehouses have been reinvented and are now restaurants, cafes, bars, artisan studios and galleries.

In nearby Battery Point (the name is derived from a gun battery stationed there) workers' cottages and grand stone homes help make this the best preserved colonial-era suburb in Australia.

Tasmania's Parliament House, designed by lauded colonial architect John Lee Archer, was convict-built circa 1840. Hobart also has Australia's oldest operating theatre, the Theatre Royal (circa 1834) and historic pubs brimming with colourful tales. Some of these, like Knopwoods in Salamanca, were serving rum before Melbourne was even conceived.

- Launceston – Australia's third oldest city behind Sydney and Hobart was established in 1806 and gazetted in 1888. It contains some of the country's best examples of Edwardian, Victorian and Federation architecture.

- Midland Highway – links the northern city of Launceston to Hobart in the south. Travel the highway to historic villages like Evandale (home of the annual National Penny Farthing Championships); Ross, which has Australia's third oldest bridge, built in 1836 by convict stonemasons who carved 186 figures into the arches; and Oatlands, reputed to have the largest concentration of heritage-listed buildings in Australia.
- Bothwell – this central highlands village, with a population of about 300, has more than 50 buildings of heritage value. It also boasts the oldest golf course in Australia and the Australasian Museum of Golf.
- Heritage properties – Wealthy graziers built some of Tasmania's finest homes, including Brickendon (1824) at Longford, one of Tasmania's oldest farming properties and farmed continuously by seven generations. Woolmers is a gracious property held by one family for six generations. Entally House (1819) is regally furnished and includes landscape paintings by celebrated colonial artist John Glover. Clarendon Homestead (1838) is one of the great Georgian houses of Australia and was built at Evandale for a wealthy woolgrower. Built beside the South Esk River it has extensive formal gardens and parklands. These grand period homes are all located close to Launceston.

## Wooden Boats and Maritime Heritage

As an island, Tasmania has developed a strong maritime culture. Historically boats were constructed from unique local timbers such as Huon pine – a timber prized for its resistance to rot.

- The Maritime Museum of Tasmania in Hobart helps preserve Tasmania's rich maritime heritage. The museum's collection of historic relics, paintings and ship models are a fascinating insight into the exploits of early explorers, the whaling industry, stories of trading barges and ferries in the everyday life of days now gone, and the central role of sailing ships and steam ships in the export of apples, minerals and timber.



Huon Pine boat



Beaconsfield Mine & Heritage Centre

- The Australian Wooden Boat Festival, held biennially in Hobart, celebrates traditional skills and craft and showcases modern, historic and replica ships from around the world.
- The Wooden Boat Centre School of Boatbuilding was founded in 1991 and trains students from around the world in construction of traditional wooden boats. The centre is in Franklin, on the banks of the Huon River, south of Hobart.

## Forest Heritage

The timber industry, dating to a time when bushmen felled trees with an axe and hauled the logs from forests with bullock teams, is a significant part of Tasmania's heritage. The forest heritage lives on in a thriving crafts industry where renowned furniture makers and artists use unique local timbers.

- Strahan Visitor Centre tells the story of the hardy 'piners', the men who cut Huon pine in dense rainforests and floated the logs down river to Strahan.
- Geeveston Forest and Heritage Centre, in the Huon Valley south of Hobart, features displays and interpretation from pioneer timber days, speciality timbers and quality woodcraft as well as on site wood-turning instruction.

In the north-west of the state, the Water Wheel Creek Timber Experience recreates how pioneers worked in the forests: there is a museum with loggers' old tools of trade, a bushman's hut, shingle cutting displays and a 300-metre bush tram line with timber and steel rails that runs over log bridges. It is reportedly the only operational bush tram in Tasmania.



Strahan

## Mining

Tasmania has a rich mining legacy. For the most part it centres on the mid-west coast where boom and bust mining shaped nineteenth century frontier towns.

- Zeehan – stroll historic streetscapes of this west coast town, visit the West Coast Pioneers Museum and drive through the narrow 'Spray Tunnel'.
- Often overlooked Queenstown has a fascinating history. Part of it is told on the historic West Coast Wilderness Railway that runs from Queenstown, through the west coast's mountainous hinterland, to the World Heritage Area gateway of Strahan. There are tours underground with the Mt Lyell mine tour. The Art Deco Paragon Theatre was built in 1932 as a product of the town's underground riches. The 1,150 seat picture theatre – with the motto 'The city theatre in the country' – was for many years the town's main contact with happenings in the rest of the world. It re-opened in 2009 after extensive renovations.

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