

## **Free things to do in Hobart, Tasmania.**

As the most southern of Australia's capital cities, Hobart in Tasmania does seem a long way from anywhere and almost forgotten about when you are considering your next travel locations or even where to study.

Can I suggest you move it to the top? I know I am so thankful I did a few years ago and have now visited often...with one of my daughters even moving there to study based on a visit!

Your body seems to enjoy the pure, crisp air that has travelled across the clear oceans from Antarctica. Did you know Tasmania's air is considered some of the cleanest in the world? You will want to get out and about and enjoy the sights and breathe in this wonderful city.

If you are on a budget here are a few places to spend your time without spending a cent...though the coffee and food are A M A Z I N G in Hobart and you may find you cannot resist spending a little to savour the experience.

The Salamanca Markets are world renown. They are held on Saturday mornings on the historic cobbly streets in the area known as Salamanca. You don't need to spend a cent as you stroll through the stalls, soak up the atmosphere while you enjoy the historic setting with pockets of buskers and music located along the path. It might be difficult not to walk past a coffee booth though, Hobart people know how to make a perfect coffee!

Once you have strolled through the markets continue walking around the area and down onto Constitution Dock. If the name sounds familiar its because this is the finish line to the famous Sydney to Hobart yacht race that starts December 26th every year. Depending on the time of year you are visiting this will be bustling with summer yachting or will be in peaceful winter serenity.

Either way it is an enjoyable walk, where you will find a few quirky historic sculptures to enjoy. Keep an eye for ships on the water too – this is one of the main spots for mooring research vessels that make the trek to Antarctic oceans. Oh, and the cafes along this area sell heavenly fish and chips - I did you warn you!

Just above the harbour area are a host of historic buildings that help tell the story of early Hobart. Treasures such as the Town Hall, Parliament House, Australia's oldest theatre – the Theatre Royal, Customs House Hotel, Court House and churches are all within walking or riding distance of the harbour. If you are keen photographer these have some intriguing features to capture as well.

Keeping the historical theme - Kelly's Steps should be added to your list. Built in 1840 by a guy named Kelly (who would have guessed!), they join Salamanca with the Battery Point area. They have an inscription stone dated 1840 with the initials JK, referring to Captain James Kelly. Fun fact ~ with Thomas Birch, James Kelly circumnavigated Tasmania (then Van Diemen's Land) in a whale boat and discovered Port Davey and Macquarie Harbour.

If it is glorious day in Hobart pack a picnic basket and head out to the Botanic Gardens. There are loads of grassy spaces to roll out a picnic rug and soak up the sun rays, and clean air. Take a stroll through the magnificent flora or just hang out under the natural coverings. It will be a relaxing few hours.

The Cascade Brewery is worth a visit too. While they do have tours, you can visit for free and stroll around the buildings, learn about the history of the brewery and its beer making without having to spend money. You may feel the need to sit at their bar and taste a beer though, just to savour the moment.

Pop south of the city and visit Mt Nelson Signal Station for some magnificent views of the harbour and the Derwent River. There are information panels and some short bushwalks to enjoy from this spot too. Check out some of the sneaky beaches on your way back to the city, but beware the water will be cold, even at the height of their summer.

And finally, don't leave Hobart without visiting the summit of Mount Wellington, or *kunanyi*. The temperature is about 10 degrees colder than in the city at the top, so take a warm jacket, even in summer. There are a number of different bush walks for all fitness levels. Consider the Organ Pipes track – an intermediate track that takes you from The Chalet (1000 metres) to the base of the Organ Pipes cliff face. Take your camera for some spectacular pics too.

I am sure you will be surprised at what Hobart can show you. You will enjoy the country town feel in a city setting. It will be a place you will want to stay, or will return. I promise you that.