

# Self-Guided Walking in the Snowy Mountains



## Highlights

**A self-guided walking holiday in the Snowy Mountains, located halfway between Sydney and Melbourne. Spend seven days traversing some of the highest peaks on the Australian mainland, walking at a steady pace and staying in ski-type lodges.**

Australia may not be immediately famous for its mountainous areas, yet here is a tour in which you can take in the beauty of 2,000 metre snowy peaks without having to be an expert mountaineer! The Snowy Mountains (or Snowies, as they're affectionately known) are mainly located within Kosciusko National Park, the stage for your alpine adventure. If you've ever wanted to feel on top of the world but don't fancy training for months to tackle gigantic peaks, this tour will be right up your alley!

Kosciusko National Park, named after Australia's highest mainland peak (2,228m), is somewhat of a mecca for mountain tourists in search for epic scenery and views. Once you reach the top of these gentle slopes you'll be able to see far down into the stunning glacial lakes below. You'll also have the opportunity to chill your feet (or drinks) in these clear waters after descending the longest chairlift in Australia.

The tour is a self-guided trek through the Snowy Mountains, conducted at a leisurely stroll and leading you through the highest peaks on the mainland. This is a fine opportunity to see the country's scenery from spectacular heights, and there is all manner of alpine flora to discover once you're up there.

You will be staying in an array of ski lodge-type accommodation, and your luggage will be moved for you as you walk between each location so you aren't burdened with it during your walks.

Whilst enjoying your daily walking you'll get to travel the aqueduct trail and see how spring water is caught and brought down to the farmers on the dry plain lands.

Another memorable stop on the trip is the Blue Cow alpine ski resort, where you can climb up to Porcupine Rocks and see the great dividing range. Here visitors can also see the snowgum trees native to the region - these bizarre yet beautiful looking trees are part of the Eucalyptus family and are almost exclusive to the park. Once on the plains, you may also catch a glimpse of wild Brumby horses, also native to the region.

## Is it for me?

As a self-guided tour, the walking featured during the week can be as easy or as strenuous as you like since you will control the pace. In addition, you'll be provided with easy to follow maps and guidebooks so no orienteering knowledge is required.

Chairlifts are available for those who don't feel up to hiking to the top of Mt. Kosciusko. Although some level of fitness is required for the tour as a whole, there is no reason why anyone, young or old, would not enjoy a walking tour of the Snowy Mountains given a reasonable level of health.

It is also worth noting that while the views from Kosciusko are worth a visit to Australia alone, it is a very popular destination and your time here is not likely to be overly private.

Prices from

**1,238** GBP (7 days) per person

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## Accommodation

During your week you will be staying in a variety of alpine ski type lodges along the trail and a lakeside resort - a truly authentic way to enjoy your mountain experience!

The rooms are spacious and comfortable and all come with en-suite bathrooms. Your luggage is transported from lodge to lodge while you walk, which makes your day of hiking much more pleasurable. Most meals are included and consist of cooked or continental breakfast, lunch and dinner - beverages are also served with meals (with the exception of alcoholic drinks) and packed lunches are provided in insulated containers for days out.

## Itinerary

**Day 1:** The tour starts in Jindabyne with a meeting any time after 2pm. There is no walking scheduled for today but you are very welcome to embark on short walks around the lake shore.

**Day 2:** After a transfer high into the mountains, your walk begins with the easy Aqueduct Trail where you can marvel at one of the greatest engineering feats in the world - the mighty Snowy Mountains Scheme was built in the 1950s and 60s to change the direction of the rivers and provide water for farmers on the dry inland plains. The path meanders beside the scheme's aqueducts, rivers and dams that opened up this isolated country. Your walk will carry you to Guthega Alpine village, set on the banks of the Snowy River.

**Day 3:** The route today traverses through the Blue Cow alpine ski resort to Perisher Valley. Here you can climb to Porcupine Rocks for spectacular views of the Great Dividing Range and see ancient snowgum trees which are twisted and gnarled through centuries of harsh winters.

**Day 4:** Following a large breakfast, your morning's walk will feature views over vast glacial lakes which you'll see from high above the tree-line. You will also cross the famous Snowy River, walk through fields carpeted in wildflowers, stroll along high grassy ridges and chill your drink in an icy lake. Keep an eye out for sphagnum bogs - large mossy plants that hold six times their weight in water then slowly release it into the alpine streams.

**Day 5:** Today will see you walk to the summit of the highest mountain in Australia, Mt Kosciuszko, standing at over 2,000m. This mountain is a much-respected location for walkers and you'll share the summit with people from all over the world. You finish the day with an exhilarating ride down the country's longest chairlift. Alternatively, hardy walkers can choose to walk Merritt's Track steeply down through unique mountain ash forests and waterfall valleys.

**Day 6:** Today your walk descends through fields of alpine wildflowers and snowgum forests to the Thredbo Valley. Taking a peaceful walk in this pristine area may yield the sighting of a rare Brumby horse native to the region. You will finish the day with an easy stroll along the banks of the swift Thredbo River as it meanders down to the village.

**Day 7:** After breakfast you'll be transported back to Jindabyne marking the end of the trip.

## Details

### Getting there

Regular flights run to Canberra Airport where you can catch a daily coach service to Cooma. A short taxi drive will take you to Jindabyne. Alternatively, you can drive and leave your hire care in Jindabyne.

### Price includes

The price quoted is per person for the 7 day self-guided walk. Single supplement is \$340. Departs every day Monday to Thursday until Easter 2011.

Guided walk: 15 Jan 2012 \$1995 (single supplement \$295).

### Self-Guided Walk:

6 nights accommodation, 6 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners, luggage transfers, vehicle transfers required for the itinerary, chairlift rides, information booklets, insulated lunch bag, map case, National Park fees, walking notes, maps.

### Guided Walk:

Guiding, all transport from Canberra, 6 nights accommodation, 6 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners, chairlift ride, National Park fees, information booklets, insulated lunch bag, map case, maps.

### When is best

This mountain environment is about 10 degrees cooler than Sydney. January-February is usually warm and the alpine wildflowers are at their best. December & March are usually cool to mild.

### Available

Dec—Apr

### Typical Duration

1 week

### Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

**Experience required**

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed