

Dinner Plain Track Notes



Hotham - Dinner Plain Trail

Dinner Plain

Pure High Country



13km one way (4 hours), Grade 3 Walking Track

Walk or ride this wonderful multi-use trail that runs parallel to the Great Alpine Road through the Alpine National Park. Linking Dinner Plain to Hotham resort, the trail features panoramic views of the High Country. There are numerous areas to rest and picnic along the way. Starting from Dinner Plain Hut, follow Fitzy's Cirque west to the trail head at the boundary of the Alpine National Park. Return by the same route. A side walk - 2km return - to Paw Paw Plain is a must for the fine views of the remote Dargo River Valley and Mt. Tabletop.

Differing landscapes

From Snow Gum forests to open grassy plains to wetland bogs of national significance, the Hotham-Dinner Plain Trail offers great opportunities to experience a variety of alpine landscapes. These include the naturally occurring open plains, JB Plain and Paw Paw Plain, where only low-growing plants such as grasses, heaths and alpine bog plants are able to survive due the phenomenon known as cold air drainage.

Wetlands are a key feature of the landscapes along the trail. At JB Plain and Paw Paw Plain look for the Sphagnum Moss communities which form bright green hummocky mounds. These moss beds play a crucial role in regulating water flow from the mountains to the valleys below thanks to their ability to absorb, hold and filter huge quantities of moisture.



Stylidium graminifolium
Image courtesy Parks Victoria

Flora and Fauna

During warmer months wildflowers are abundant, including the remarkable Grass-leaf Trigger Plants – *Stylidium graminifolium* - with their spikes of pink flowers and unique styles which are cocked, ready for insects to trigger the pollinating mechanism. Along the way, you may also see Emus, which are resident at JB Plain. The flightless Emu - *Dromaius novaehollandiae* - is one of the world's largest, and Australia's tallest, native bird, standing at between 1.6 and 1.9 metres.

Emus breed during cooler months, females laying a clutch of large blue-green eggs which the males then incubate until the hatchlings are able to feed themselves.

History

Aboriginal tribes had seasonally been visiting the high plains for millennia. Despite squatting runs being taken up from the mid-1830s in the foothills throughout the region, the ranges of eastern Victoria were little explored by Europeans. Rich gold discoveries in the region in early 1852 on both sides of the range at Beechworth and Omeo attracted a large and industrious population in the district for the first time in history. Sections of the Hotham – Dinner Plain trail would have followed the route of these early diggers, though very little evidence remains of their early efforts. Numerous mining tracks and trails crossed the Great Divide throughout this region, accessing goldfields such as the Cobungra Diggings to the east and the Upper Dargo Goldfield to the west. At Paw Paw Plain a significant mining track accessed Morris's deep lead workings at Boiler Plain and the mining townships of Louisville and Brocket on the Dargo River. This route was in regular use during the 1860s and 70s and continued to be used to access the Boiler Plain mine into the 1890s.



Emu - Image courtesy Parks Victoria
Photo, Steven Wright

JB Hut

The trail provides an 1.8km easy walk to JB Hut, a cattlemen's post with remnants of yards built in the 19th century for catching wild horses. JB Plain was named after Jim Brown, who in the 1850s, brought cattle into the alpine region with partner, Jack Wells.

The present JB Hut was a forestry hut from the Swifts Creek forestry region and most likely came from a bush sawmill. It was moved to JB Plain in a joint effort between Cobungra Station and the Bairnsdale Scout Group in the 1970s. It was used as an outstation by Cobungra Station during mustering season well into the 1980s.

Be Prepared

The best months for walking in the alpine environment are from November through to April, however, weather conditions can change rapidly, and snowfalls and blizzards can occur at any time of the year. (*The Bushwalking Season is from the November Melbourne Cup Weekend to mid May.*)

Be prepared with:

- Wind and waterproof jackets
- Warm clothing – hat, gloves, sunglasses, and strong footwear
- Food and water
- First aid kit and sunscreen
- Map and compass
- Check the weather forecast before departing
- Let someone know where you are going
- Mobile phone (reception in some areas)

Caution

The 2003 bushfires have damaged snowgums, which are now regenerating but dead branches are shedding with the new growth. High wind days may result in falling limbs and branches. It is not recommended to use the track on windy days. Please be aware that snakes are active during warm months.



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Grade of Walk:	Grade 3, as per <i>The Australian Walking Track Grading System</i>
Distance:	13km one way
Time:	4 hours one way
Gradient:	Mostly level with some gradual steep sections
Quality of Path:	Good compacted gravel surface
Steps:	Elevated walkway at Paw Paw Plain
Experience required:	No bushwalking experience required

For more information on Dinner Plains Tracks & Trails, visit www.visitdinnerplain.com.au.



Alpine Shire

