

Budj Bim National Park

Visitor Guide



A truly fascinating place, Budj Bim is one of several places in this area's rich cultural landscape formed by powerful ancestral creation forces. This World Heritage-listed area encourages many visitors return to learn about the outstanding cultural values, explore or relax in the tranquil surrounds.



Getting there

Budj Bim National Park is 330 km south-west of Melbourne. Take the Hamilton-Port Fairy Road to Macarthur and then travel west along the sealed Mt Eccles Road.

Welcome to Country

"Ngatanwarr wartee pa kakay teen Gunditjmara mirring"
- Welcome brothers and sisters to Gunditjmara Country.

Our spirit is in this Country, its land, trees, rocks, plants and sky. It flows from Budj Bim to Tyrendarra and beyond to Koonang (the sea). It is a part of us and who we are, and we ask that you care for it when you visit.

Gunditjmara Country is a flowing and connected cultural landscape of special places: forests, mountains, lakes, streams, eel traps, rocks and pathways all woven together to form our Country.

The Aboriginal Traditional Owners welcome you to Budj Bim. We are happy and proud to share this special place with you and ask that you take the time to look, listen and feel the Country. The Creation Ancestors gave us a kinship system linking people to all things and the cultural responsibility to look after them all.

We have always understood the biodiversity of Country and our traditional ancestral knowledge is a vital part of managing this rich environment." – Gunditjmara Elders.

Budj Bim National Park is Victoria's first co-managed national park. The partnership between Gunditjmara Traditional Owners and Parks Victoria was formalised with the establishment of the Budj Bim Council. The Council forms part of the *2007 Native Title Settlement Agreement* between the Gunditjmara and the Victorian Government bringing them together to manage the area's significant landscape.

Budj Bim is the source of the Tyrendarra lava flow which extends over 50km to the southwest. It is central to the history of the Gunditjmara people.

Enjoying Budj Bim - things to see and do

The park is rich with birdlife, animals and plants and interesting volcanic features to discover on walks. Expect to hear koalas calling at night with their unruly grunting, groaning and squealing. Quiet visitors may be rewarded on walks with a range of sightings and bird sounds from parrots, honeyeaters, kookaburras, wrens, hawks and eagles.

Walking

All walks start from the picnic area or the Lake Surprise Lookout carpark. Ensure you have good shoes for the uneven terrain. A hat, water and sunscreen are essential.

You may encounter wildlife including snakes on these walks, as this is where they live. They are protected here. If you see a snake on the track leave it alone and wait for it to leave.



1. Natural Bridge – 3.2km, 2 hours return, or drive and park for a 200m walk. Grade: Moderate

This short walk leads to the Natural Bridge, a lava canal, and a cavern which you can enter and explore. Carry a torch and wear appropriate shoes as the cavern is dark and slippery.

This walk can also be commenced after driving along the Natural Bridge Road to the Natural Bridge carpark. A 200m walk from the carpark leads to the Natural Bridge cavern.



2. Lake Surprise – 2km, 1 hour circuit Grade: Moderate

As the name suggests, this lake is a little surprise. Starting at the lookout, this easy walk ventures down and around the lake edge. Lake Surprise is not suitable for swimming.



3. Crater Rim – 2.6km, 2 hour circuit Grade: Moderate

This trail is like the Lake Surprise walk but it offers a different perspective as you travel higher up along the crater rim.

Tunnel Cave, which is a remnant of a lava flow, is 250m along the Crater Rim Walk. A torch is recommended for the cave.



4. Lava Canal – 6.5km, 3 hour circuit Grade: Moderate

A longer, more challenging loop walk, uneven underfoot as it follows a lava flow channel. This walk includes the Tunnel Cave, Lava Blisters and Natural Bridge.

Camping and picnicking

The Picnic Area offers a tranquil setting for day visitors. Facilities include picnic tables, barbecues and toilets.

The campground is near Lake Surprise and adjacent to the picnic area. Sites are located in protected hollows between rocky ridges formed by ancient lava flows. Toilets, water (untreated, natural supply), hot showers and 10 shared fireplaces are provided. Most campsites can accommodate up to six people with provision for one vehicle.

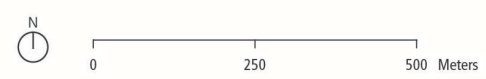
Budj Bim National Park

Lake Surprise Inset



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|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| P Parking | Picnic table | Caravan |
| Information | BBQ (Gas) | Caving |
| Disabled access | BBQ (Wood) | Self-guided walk |
| Toilets | Camping area | |

- Featured walks**
- 1** Natural Bridge (2 hrs)
 - 2** Lake Surprise (1 hr)
 - 3** Crater Rim (2 hrs)
 - 4** Lava Canal (2-3 hrs)



Budj Bim National Park



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|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Budj Bim National Park | Main road | Walking track |
| Reference area | Sealed road | Management vehicles only |
| State forest | Unsealed road | Budj Bim trails |
| Waterbody | 4WD | |

The campground has 22 campsites, some of which are suitable for small caravans and camper-trailers. Please take all rubbish away for disposal. Camp fees apply for all sites and bookings are required. For information and bookings, visit www.parks.vic.gov.au/stay

Cycling on the Budj Bim Trail

A range of tracks are open and available to mountain bikes to share in the national park. All Trail users should all be alert and watchful for each other.

Management Vehicle Only (MVO) tracks in the national park are closed to all vehicles including mountain bikes. They are however, open to walkers and offer quiet walk options.

Budj Bim Trail is a longer mountain bike track that extends beyond the national park area and can be attempted in one day or split over three days. Riders can find camping along the way at Allambie, Murphy's Hut and Lake Gorrie. These three camping areas are all outside of the national park on Gunditjmara managed land.

Booking for these three camping areas should be made with Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

Budj Bim Tours are a great way to discover the cultural landscape that is Budj Bim. Visit www.budjbimtours.net or call 03 5527 1699.

The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape World Heritage Area

Gunditjmara people have lived in the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape for at least 32,000 years and witnessed the last eruption of the Budj Bim volcano.

Around 30,000 years ago Budj Bim erupted and produced a huge river of hot molten lava stretching 50km to the coast at Tyrendarra. The lava flow is one of the largest on the SE Australian Volcanic Plain. This effectively dammed rivers and streams forming vast wetlands and swamps. Volcanic activity ceased here around 6,500 years ago.

The Gunditjmara people developed this landscape by excavating channels to bring water and young eels from Darlots Creek to low lying areas. They created ponds and wetlands linked by channels containing weirs. Woven baskets were placed in the weirs to harvest mature eels.

Dating back thousands of years, the area shows evidence of large, settled communities systematically farming and smoking eels for food and trade.

This area is considered one of Australia's earliest and largest Indigenous aquaculture ventures. This complex, sustainable enterprise took place in a landscape carved by natural forces and full of meaning to the Gunditjmara people.

These engineered wetlands provided the economic basis for the development of a settled society with villages of stone huts built using stones from the lava flow. Early European accounts of Gunditjmara describe how they were ruled by hereditary chiefs.

With European settlement in the area in the 1830s came conflict. Gunditjmara fought for their land during the Eumeralla Wars, which lasted more than 20 years. In the 1860s, as this conflict drew to an end, many Aboriginal people were displaced and the Victorian government began to develop reserves to house them.

Some Aboriginal people refused to move from their ancestral land and eventually the government agreed to build a mission at Lake Condah, close to some of the eel traps and within sight of Budj Bim.

The Mission was closed in 1919 but the Gunditjmara continued to live in the area and protect their heritage. The mission lands were returned to the Gunditjmara in 1987.

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation has been established as a representative body of the Gunditjmara to protect their traditional rights.

Gunditj Mirring directly manage a number of Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) around Budj Bim National Park and along the Tyrendarra lava flow. Together with the National Park, they are known as the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

In July 2019, the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape was added to the World Heritage list for the following reason:

For 6,000 years the Gunditjmara manipulated and managed the Budj Bim volcanic lava flow and creek flows to create and maintain an extensive hydrological engineering system of stone-walled channels and ponds that maintained water flow in order to trap, store and harvest kooyang (short-finned eels). This highly productive aquaculture system provided an economic and social base for Gunditjmara society.

Budj Bim Cultural Landscape Tourism

Visit and experience the unique Tae Rak Aquaculture Centre & Cafe on the shores of Lake Condah. Take a Gunditjmara guided cultural tour of this ancient World Heritage listed landscape. Visit www.budjbim.com or call 03 4504 2193.

Koala management program

Protecting the health of manna gum woodlands and the welfare of koala populations are the primary objectives of this program. To get the best results possible Parks Victoria and Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation have engaged extensively to gain the knowledge and support required. Program partners include DELWP, National Parks and Wildlife of South Australia, University of Melbourne, RSPCA and forestry experts.

Be prepared and stay safe

Check the latest park conditions at www.parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963. For emergency assistance call Triple Zero (000). If there is a green emergency marker sign near you, read the information on the marker to the operator. Budj Bim National Park is 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 at www.emergency.vic.gov.au, on the [VicEmergency smartphone app](#) or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226. No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban days. On Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating days this park will be closed for public safety. Warnings signs may be erected, but do not expect a personal warning. Check the latest conditions at www.parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963.