

Dinner Plain Track Notes



Dinner Plain
Pure High Country

Montane Walking Track & Montane Loop



Montane Walking Track, Grade 3 Walking Track

Just a short step from Dinner Plain, yet offering a great sense of remoteness, this walking track offers a fantastic snapshot of a sub-alpine environment. It can be tackled in short or long stages, traversing varying landscapes and a range of habitats - scenic Snow Gum forests and mature Mountain Tea Tree bushland, snow grass plains, wetlands and alpine rivers and streams. Along the way there are many great places to stop for a picnic or rest or simply to enjoy the fresh mountain air.



The Common Wombat - *Vombatus ursinus*
Image courtesy Parks Victoria Photo: Christian Pearson

Section 1 - 3.3km to Slippery Pinch

The **Montane Walking Track** is one of four tracks that start at the Forest Walks trailhead on the northern side of the Great Alpine Road from Dinner Plain. The others are *Room with a View* and *Dead Timber Hill* see separate track notes, and the fourth, the **Montane Loop**, an easy 1km gravel track which splits off after 400 metres to begin the Montane Walking Track at Turnaround Rock.

The first section of the Montane Walking Track extends 3.3km below the Great Alpine Road through State Forest in an eastern semi-circle from Dinner Plain to Slippery Pinch. It traverses open woodlands dominated by Snow Gum - *Eucalyptus pauciflora*, with an understorey of grasses and shrubs including the Grass Trigger-plant - *Stylidium graminifolium*, Alpine Pepper - *Tasmania xerophila*, Mother Shield Fern - *Polystichum proliferum* and Tasman Flax-lily - *Dianella tasmanica*. The track crosses a number of drainage lines where Mountain Tea Tree - *Leptospermum grandifolium* thrives. In places granite rocks can be seen protruding out of the soil. The Common Wombat - *Vombatus ursinus*, is found throughout this area.

The first part of the walk offers fine views of the Bogong High Plains and the 1837m Mt. Cope. About 1.5km along from Turnaround Rock the tree canopy becomes more open with two sloping plains dropping gradually to the 1400m contour level where regrowth from the 2003 fires becomes more evident. From here the track passes through a small stand of mature Snow Gums which are up to 25 metres tall. The rock type in this area changes from basalt lava remnants to even older granite. There is a fine example of a large 'split apple' boulder right beside the track.

Dinner Plain Village

The final stretch of this section where the track passes through a number of natural drainage lines, the vegetation is mainly Black Sallee - *Eucalyptus stellulata* - and Mountain Tea Tree. From here walkers can return by the same route to Dinner Plain village or continue to the Victoria River and back to Dinner Plain via a further 5.8 km Montane-Precipice Plain trail loop.

Section 2 - Slippery Pinch to Dinner Track 3.2 km

At this point the track crosses the Great Alpine Road. A small gate in the fence allows walkers to pass through. This section of walk is under a grazing lease and cattle can be seen in the area during the summer months. The track meanders through Snow Gum-dominated woodlands along the top side of the old cattle yards - built by high country graziers in the early part of the 20th century - before dropping down to sub-alpine grassland and the Victoria River. A wooden boardwalk passes through a wet area dominated by Black Sallee and Mountain Tea Tree. Few trees grow in the sub-alpine grasslands - instead, the area is dominated by grasses and forbs, and the occasional stunted shrub. Plants found in this area include the Small-fruit Hakea - *Hakea macrocarpa*, Fen Sedge - *Carex gaudichaudiana* and the Swamp Tea Tree, *Leptospermum myrtifolium*. The trail crosses the grasslands following the edge of the Victoria River before crossing over at a timber bridge and heading back into the sub-alpine woodlands through the picturesque river valley. It then climbs to the drier side of the mountain via the Dinner Plain 4WD Track.



Tasmania xerophila subsp. xerophila Alpine Pepper
Image © M. Fagg, Australian National Botanic Gardens

Section 3 - Dinner Plain Track to Dinner Plain Village 2.6km

On reaching Dinner Plain Track it is an easy 2.6km walk along the track back to the village. Passing through the catchment of the Victoria River, this route was walked for thousands of years by the Gunaikurnai and other indigenous peoples who, during the warmer months, followed the ridgeline to access the High Country from the valleys below.

Post-European settlement, the Victoria River was used to feed one of the first electric turbines in the district, at Victoria Falls. From 1907-09 a hydro-electric station was constructed to provide power for the Cassilis Mine, the electricity used to drive the machinery at the mine treatment plant. Today, Dinner Plain Track is maintained as a strategic firebreak by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries and is used in the control of wildfires that originate in the remote Dargo river headwaters.



Montane Loop 1.1km, Grade 2 Walking Track

The Montane Loop is an enjoyable and easy walk following a one km formed gravel track. It begins at the Forest Walks trailhead on the northern side of the Great Alpine Road from Dinner Plain village. This walk is suitable for most ages and fitness levels and offers places to pause for a picnic as well as some great views along the way.

Follow the gravel track to the boardwalk that crosses a small alpine bog. From here the trail heads east across a grassy area which makes up the northern edge of the Dinner Plain plateau. A short boardwalk crosses a drainage line before the track gently descends down into the sub-alpine woodlands where small weathered granite outcrops can be seen.

Turnaround Rock, where the Montane Walking Track intersects with Montane Loop, is located about 400m along. At this point the track swings around and heads northwest. The dead Snow Gums in this area are a reminder of the effects of bush fires, although some are showing signs of regrowth.

Along this section of track look out for the Alpine Pepper – *Tasmannia xerophila* - with its hot, peppery leaves making it an ideal bush tucker plant. A further 400m along is a picnic table and continuing on is another boardwalk which crosses an alpine peatland to return to the start of the walking track loop.

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

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.

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



Alpine Shire

