

Baw Baw National Park



Visitor Guide & Mount St Gwinear Winter Guide

Spectacular summer wildflower displays and snowy woodlands in winter highlight the changing beauty of Baw Baw National Park. Gnarled Snow Gums and Alpine heaths stretch across the Baw Baw Plateau, while majestic tall forests grow within the surrounding river valleys. Whether shooting the rapids on the Thomson River or skiing a cross country trail, Baw Baw National Park offers a wealth of natural experiences.

Location and access

Baw Baw National Park is situated approximately 120 kilometres east of Melbourne and 50 kilometres north of the Latrobe Valley.

The main access to the plateau is from the Mount Erica and St Gwinear carparks along signposted roads off the Thomson Valley Road, north of Erica. The Baw Baw Alpine Resort which adjoins the park can be reached from the Princes Highway at Drouin by following the Mount Baw Baw Tourist Road.

Drive

Roads throughout the area are narrow and winding but offer marvellous scenery with panoramic views. Care should be taken when driving as many of the roads are regularly used by logging trucks.

The road past Walhalla into the Aberfeldy River valley is unsuitable for caravans. Many of the tracks in the Thomson and Aberfeldy Valleys are suitable for 4WD vehicles only. Many roads and tracks are closed during the winter months.

The Mount St Gwinear Road is a declared hazardous road during winter (bus drivers require an appropriate licence). Snow chains must be carried during the declared ski season and fitted when and where directed.

Bicycles may only be ridden on formed roads and tracks open to the public. Cycling is not permitted on the Baw Baw Plateau.

Pack a picnic...

Two picnic areas are situated within the park; at the St Gwinear and the Mount Erica carparks. Tables and toilets are provided.

Facilities including gas BBQ's and picnic shelters are also provided at the nearby Silvertop Picnic Area at Thomson Reservoir and within the township of Walhalla.

Staying overnight

Dispersed bush camping is permitted on the Baw Baw Plateau. The Plateau is a fuel stove only area; therefore no solid fuel fires are permitted. The area falls within domestic water supply catchments, so care must be taken with the disposal of human waste.

The Aberfeldy River campsite is accessed via Walhalla or across the dam wall of the Thomson Reservoir. The Eastern Tyers Camping Area is the first overnight stop from Walhalla on the Australian Alps Walking Track.

Walking

There are many kilometres of walking tracks traversing pristine sub-alpine plant communities and unique landscapes.

1. Beech Gully Track - 400 m, 30 min return

Starting at the Mount Erica carpark, the Beech Gully Nature Walk provides an excellent introduction to the plants and wildlife of the Mountain Ash forests and cool temperate rainforests of the southern slopes.

2. Mount St Gwinear Track - 6 km, 3 hrs return

The walk to the summit of Mount St Gwinear winds through heathland and Snow Gum forest. The magnificent views, stretching across the valleys of the Thomson and Aberfeldy Rivers and into the Victorian Alps, are a perfect reward.

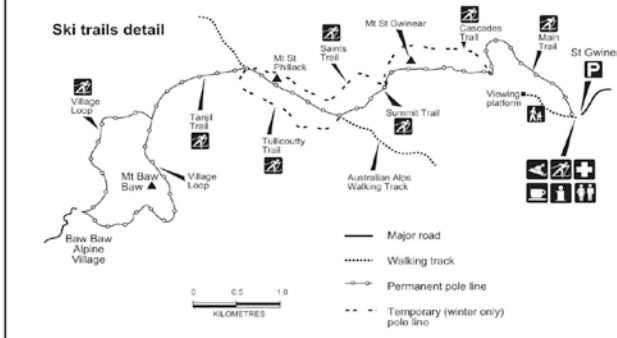
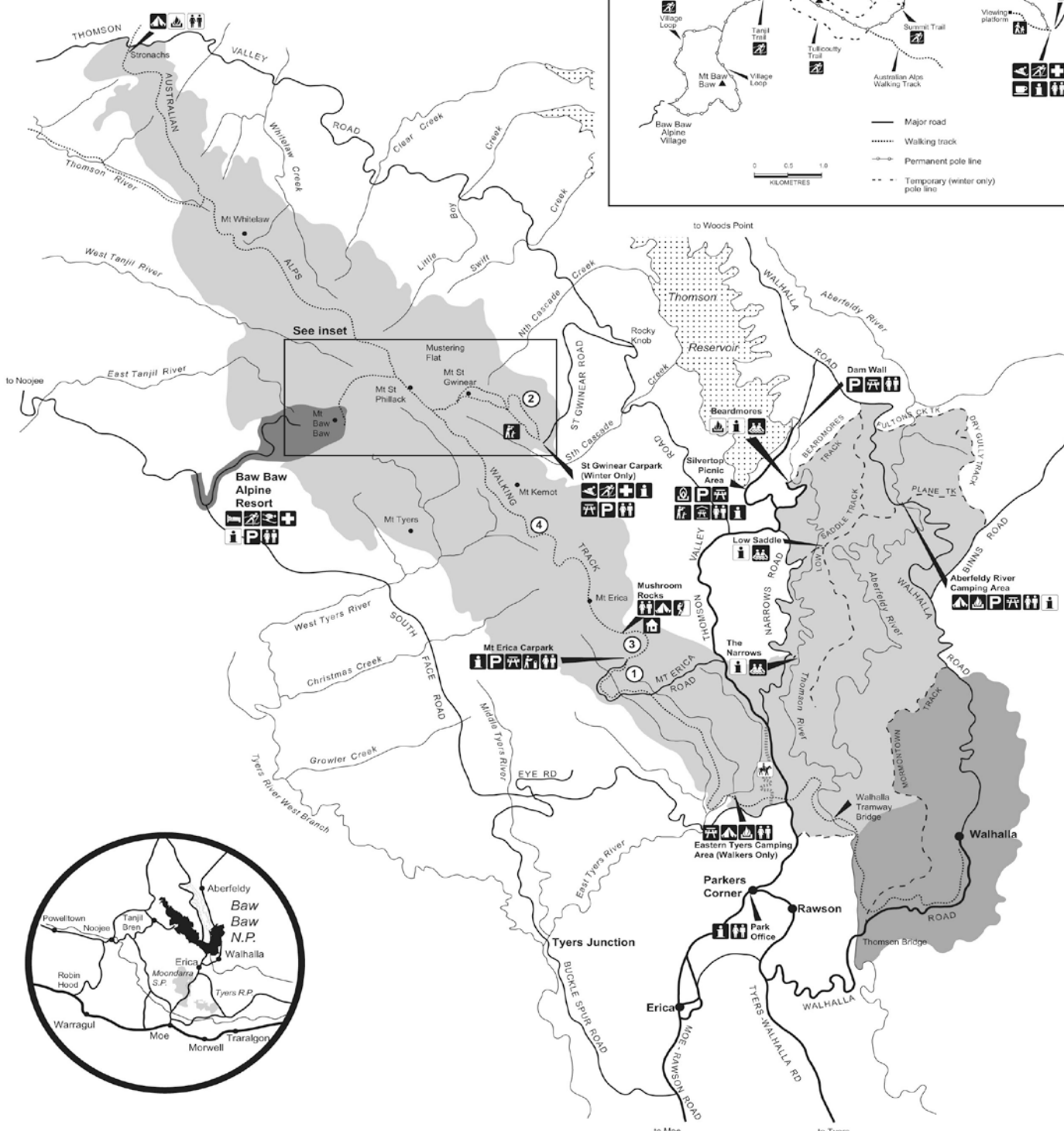
3. Mushroom Rocks - 3 km, 2 hrs return

Commencing at the Mount Erica car park, this popular walk along a section of the Australian Alps Walking Track leads to a maze of giant granite tors.

4. Australian Alps Walking Track

Beginning in the old gold mining town of Walhalla and ending near Canberra, the 650km trail embraces the best of the Alps; Australia's highest peaks, snow-capped mountains and plains, cattlemen's huts, tall forests, snow gum woodlands and many historic sites.





Baw Baw National Park

Legend

- Baw Baw National Park
- Walhalla Historic Area
- Baw Baw Alpine Resort
- Waterbody
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Vehicular track
- Walking track

Existing Recreational Facilities

- Camping
- Cross country skiing (winter only)
- Downhill skiing (winter only)
- Fireplace
- First aid (winter only)
- Gas barbecue
- Information
- Abseiling / rockclimbing
- Historic Hut
- White water rafting
- Tobogganing

Proposed Recreational Facilities

- Fireplace
- Information
- Horse riding track
- Toilet

Other Facilities Legend:

- Kiosk
- Lookout
- Carpark
- Picnic area
- Picnic shelter
- Self guided walk
- Toilets

Map Details:

- Scale: 0 to 2 Kilometres
- Cartography by Charles Walsh Nature Tourism Services 08/04
- Inset map showing Melbourne location

Walking in Winter

Please *do not walk* on the trails set aside for skiers at Mount St Gwinear or at the Baw Baw Resort. Foot prints present a real hazard to skiers and can lead to serious accidents.

A *track for walkers only* starts behind the information board at St Gwinear car park and leads to a viewing platform overlooking the Latrobe Valley. The walk takes about 45 minutes. Walkers are reminded to keep to the marked route and not to venture beyond the lookout area.



Canoeing

The Thomson River provides for canoeing and rafting on Grade 3 water. The best river levels depend on water releases from the Thomson Dam. Canoes can be launched at Beardmores Track, Low Saddle Track (4WD only) or at the Narrows. There are no facilities provided within the park for riverside camping.

Fishing

The Thomson and Aberfeldy Rivers are an excellent location to try your luck at fly fishing. Check your Fishing Guide for seasons and regulations and ensure that you hold a current Victorian fishing licence.

Hunting

The hunting of Sambar Deer only by method of stalking is seasonally permitted in a section of the park. Before undertaking this activity, seek further information from Parks Victoria or the Department of Sustainability and Environment and ensure that you hold a current Victorian game licence.

On horseback

Horse's may only be ridden on Low Saddle Track (seasonally) and the Old Tramway adjacent to the Thomson Valley Road. Horse riding is not permitted elsewhere in the park. There are a range of horse riding opportunities adjacent to the park within State Forest and the Walhalla Historic Area. Horse based camping is not permitted within the park

Remnants of history

In 1860, the renowned government botanist, Ferdinand von Mueller made the first recorded ascent of the Baw Baw Plateau. He named the peaks Mount Mueller and Mount Erica, after himself and a flowering plant of the locality respectively. Ferdinand used this expedition to further refine his theories about the relationship between Victorian and Tasmanian vegetation.

In 1906 the Public Works Department constructed a walking track between Warburton and Walhalla. The track gave access to the Beech forests and fern gullies of the upper Yarra, the spectacular Yarra Falls and the Baw Baw Plateau. Opened by the Governor of Victoria, the Yarra Track became one of Victoria's most popular walking routes.

Unfortunately the Black Friday fires of 1939 burnt the huts and most of the area traversed by the track. The track was never rebuilt, although bushwalkers can follow part of the original route by following the Australian Alps Walking Track between Walhalla and Mount Whitelaw.

A haven for plants and wildlife

The Baw Baw Plateau features extensive sub-alpine woodlands dominated by Snow Gum with a scrubby understorey of Mueller's Bush-pea, Alpine Pepper and Dusty Daisy-bush. Wet alpine heathlands and thick spongy beds of sphagnum moss surround clear pools of water. With such a diverse array of plants these heathlands provide a spectacular display of wildflowers in season.

The upper slopes of the range support tall open forests of Alpine Ash, Shining Gum and Tingaringy Gum. At lower altitudes tall forests of Mountain Ash, Messmate and Silver Wattle grow and are often shrouded in mist. Pockets of cool temperate rainforest with a lush understorey of ferns flourish within the sheltered gullies. Due to the rain shadow created by the Baw Baw's, the Thomson and Aberfeldy River valleys are dominated by dry forests of Silvertop, Messmate and Peppermints with an open understorey of small shrubs, grasses and bracken.



Silver Wattle

For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre
13 1963 or visit our
website on
www.parks.vic.gov.au

Parks Victoria Office
Thomson Valley Road
Parkers Corner
Erica VIC 3825

Latrobe Information Centre
Princes Highway
Traralgon VIC 3844
Phone: 5176 3030

For daily updated Snow and
Road conditions

www.vicsnowreport.com.au

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park
by following these guidelines:

All native plants and animals
in the park are protected

Please keep to designated
walking tracks to avoid
becoming lost

Bins are not provided within
the park. Please take your
rubbish home

Dredging and gold fossicking
are not permitted

Firearms are only permitted
in accordance with
Hunting Regulations

Vehicles including trail bikes
may only be driven on
formed roads open to the
public, and must be fully
road registered. All drivers
and riders must hold a
current licence

Cats and dogs are not
permitted within the park

Fires may only be lit in the
fireplaces provided. No fires
to be lit on days of Total
Fire Ban

This park is located in the
West & South Gippsland Total
Fire Ban District

Healthy Parks Healthy People

*Visiting a park can improve
your health, mind, body and
soul. So, with over four million
hectares of parkland available
to Victorians, why not escape
to a park today!*



Mount St Gwinear – Winter Guide

Snow can be expected from late June to mid September. The undeveloped Baw Baw Plateau provides opportunities for day cross country skiing on marked trails, ski touring, overnight camping and family play areas, including graded toboggan runs, at the St Gwinear car park.

The car park is at an altitude of 1280 metres, so weather conditions can be extreme. Warm clothing (preferably woollen), solid footwear and adequate wet weather gear is essential.

Location and access

The St Gwinear car park is just over one hour's drive from the Latrobe Valley or three hours from Melbourne via Erica. Roads are sealed apart from the last section of thirteen kilometres along the Thomson Valley and Mt St Gwinear roads. The road is regularly cleared of snow but is often icy or slushy.

Safety Tips

When visiting Mount St Gwinear in the snow season you are advised that it is compulsory to carry wheel chains at all times and to fit them where directed.

Bus drivers should note that 13km of gravel road leading to Mount St Gwinear is a 'Declared hazardous area' and drivers of vehicles with 12 seats or more must have a license with the appropriate VicRoads Hazardous endorsements.

Facilities

There are toilets, including disabled facilities at the car park. A toboggan hire service is available at the car park. Skis and toboggans can also be hired from Erica. Selections of wheel chains are available from Erica and Rawson.

Ski touring and camping

Ensure that an Intentions Form has been completed for your group. Forms and a box to register these are available at the car park. Do not venture out alone and be sure to carry a good map. The 1:25,000 VicMap is recommended and can be purchased from most outdoor shops.

Pole lines

A permanent pole line runs from the St Gwinear car park to the Baw Baw Village on the far side of the plateau. There are also three colour coded temporary lines for skiers during winter

Tobogganing

Tobogganing is fun but it can be very dangerous. Plastic bags, car tubes and metal or wooden toboggans are not permitted. Moulded plastic toboggans are preferred and only one person should ride on each. Kneeling is the safest way to ride. Tobogganing is only permitted on the runs adjacent to the car park.



Tobogganing CRA

Snowboarding

Snowboards are not permitted on toboggan runs or ski trails in Baw Baw National Park.

Fitting wheel chains

Road conditions are continually assessed by Parks Victoria rangers and wheel chains will only need to be fitted if there is ice or snow on the road. Wheel chains give your tyres greater traction on ice/snow, thus giving the driver improved vehicle control. So remember, wheel chains must be fitted to the vehicle's drive wheels (some modern cars are front wheel drive, not rear; please check with the hire company).

You will often be requested to fit wheel chains before any snow is encountered as chain fitting sites are chosen for the following reasons:

- They are the safest possible location;
- They are flat, with available parking space; and
- They are away from any snow clearing machinery.

When using wheel chains the following driving tips may be helpful:

- Do not exceed 40 kph;
- On steep descents, engage low gear and don't apply the brakes with any force;
- Vehicles travelling uphill generally have the right of way;
- Do not brake or steer erratically; and
- It is advisable to carry a large sheet of plastic as fitting wheel chains can be a muddy job.

Parking

When visiting Mount St Gwinear on weekends you will be met in the car park by a parking attendant. Here are some useful tips when parking in an alpine area:

- Leave the car in gear with front wheels pointing downhill;
- If adverse weather conditions are forecast, or it is snowing on arrival, it is advisable to fit wheel chains when parking as it is difficult to fit chains to a snowbound vehicle;
- Anti-freeze should be added to the vehicles radiator before leaving home;
- Lift windscreen wipers from windscreen to place in a plastic bag to avoid wipers from sticking to the glass;
- Clear all glass and mirrors of ice and snow before attempting to drive home.

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Healthy Parks
Healthy People®