

Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail

Essential Information - Independent Walkers



Thank you for choosing to travel with SeaLink South Australia.

Checking in to the trail

On arrival at the Flinders Chase Visitor Centre you will be welcomed by staff and provided with your walking pass, map and trail guide. You will then be shown a short safety video, and once the video is complete you are ready to start the walk. It is recommended that you are ready to start your walk by 1.00pm to ensure you make the Cup Gum Campsite before nightfall.

The 5 Day Trail Itinerary, an experience of a lifetime...

The Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail is a world class, 66 kilometre, 5-day walking experience giving you access to some of the most rugged, remote and spectacular coastlines in South Australia. The trail is located in the south west of Kangaroo Island and encompasses new and upgraded trails through Flinders Chase National Park, Kelly Hill Conservation Park and the Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area. Along with encounters with some of the island's most unique wildlife, the trail provides access to the iconic attractions of Remarkable Rocks, Admirals Arch, Weirs Cove, Hanson Bay and Kelly Hill Caves.

Day 1: Rocky River to Snake Lagoon

(4 hours, 12km)

Day one commences at the Flinders Chase Visitor Centre and takes you to the famous Platypus Waterholes. This shared section of the trail has plenty of interpretation and offers a great introduction to the park. When the path joins up with the Rocky River Trail you'll be immersed in dense eucalypt woodland that is home to a diversity of bird life and native animals. Reaching a lookout you will see the meandering Rocky River far below flowing out towards the Southern Ocean. You will then pass through riverbank and mallee habitats where wildflowers provide stunning arrays of colour all year around. Traversing your way down from

the ridge towards the river, you will come across the spectacular sight of the Rocky River Cascades. The day comes to a close at the peaceful Cup Gum Campground.

Day 2: Snake Lagoon to Cape du Couedic

(7 hours, 14 km)

Day two takes you along the Rocky River towards its mouth at the coast. Not long into the walk you'll be rewarded with your first breathtaking view of the mighty Southern Ocean. The trail then heads south along the island's wild and rugged coastline where birds of prey may be seen flying over the land and sea, while on the water, bottle-nosed dolphins often surface as they hunt for fish. If you're visiting between June and early October, you may even be treated to the majestic sight of Southern Right Whales. Upon reaching Maupertuis Bay you'll head down from the clifftop onto the bone white beach below where remnants of shipwrecks are still visible today. The Hakea Campground offers you protection from the relentless coastal winds for the night.

Day 3: Cape du Couedic to Sanderson Bay

(6.5 hours, 13km)

An early start is required if you wish to complete the optional side trip off the wilderness trail to view the popular sites of historic Weirs Cove, Cape du Couedic lighthouse and Admirals Arch. Walkers taking this option will also be able to view the enchanting antics of Australian and Long-nosed fur seals that visit this section of the coast. Back on the Wilderness Trail the track heads east towards Sanderson Bay and enters dense coastal mallee before breaking out to the awesome sight of the Remarkable Rocks. Continuing on, the trail hugs the coastline and offers cinematic views that inspire both awe and contemplation. At the end of the days walk, you'll find the Banksia Campground located in a sheltered area close to Sanderson Bay

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Day 4: Sanderson Bay to Grassdale

(6.5 hours, 13.5km)

Day four offers high energy coastal trekking at its best, with massive swells, towering cliffs and extended views along the coast. As the trail meanders inland you'll be treated to a dramatic change in vegetation from low coastal heath to tall, dense mallee and tea tree. Upon reaching the South West River you'll have the opportunity to use a punt to cross the river, marking the gateway to the Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area. An optional side trip off the wilderness trail includes the nearby Hanson Bay Beach and small settlement of Hanson Bay. Back on the wilderness trail you'll follow the winding river to Kelly Hill Conservation Park and the Tea Tree Campground, located adjacent to the historic Grassdale property.

Day 5: Grassdale to Kelly Hill Caves

(2.5 hours, 7.5km)

The final day's walk is somewhat more leisurely, but no less spectacular and beautiful. The trail passes through a diversity of habitats, from recovering woodlands to freshwater lakes and 'karst' cave systems. Reaching the stunning Wilderness and Grassdale Lagoons, birdwatchers will be rewarded with sightings of local and visiting woodland and wading birds. A relatively short walk through beautiful sugar gum woodland, rich with orchids and fungi in the wetter months, brings the trail to its conclusion at the famous Kelly Hill Caves. Here you can take a guided tour of the limestone caves and discover how the spectacular decorations are formed.

Be prepared

Take clothing and equipment to suit changeable weather and track conditions. Pack all your own food (including an extra day's worth) and first day's water supply. See our Packing List (below) for a suggestion of what you will need to take.

Know your limits

A good level of fitness is required to walk the trail. Some sections are long, rough and very steep and directional signage is at times limited. You can expect to walk between 3.5 and 7 hours a day, not including side trips. Walk durations will also depend on your fitness level, weather conditions, how much weight you are carrying, and how long you stop for breaks and wildlife viewing. If you need to build up your level of fitness prior to the walk, we recommend starting with a 30 minute daily walk and building up to 6.5 hours. Be sure to trial walking with the pack you intend to take so that you feel fully prepared. For your own safety, be willing to seek assistance if the walk is more difficult than expected.

Safety

Walk with a companion or a number of friends wherever possible. Make sure you let a reliable person know your plans before you go, including what to do if you fail to return as planned. Swimming is not recommended as conditions constantly change and marine mammal breeding colonies attract large predators including sharks.

Mobile phone reception

Mobile phone reception may be possible with a Telstra 3G or 4G phone services at some of the higher points along the trail, but it is not guaranteed. You should anticipate being out of contact with the outside world for the duration of the five-day walk unless you are carrying a satellite phone or a personal locator device such as an EPIRB (highly recommended).

Weather

Weather on the trail is changeable and certain times of the year have a higher risk of bushfire and dangerous ocean conditions. Be aware of the dangers and check the forecast and weather warnings before you go. Depending on the conditions, you may need to change or adapt your itinerary. Walkers should be aware that on catastrophic fire days the park will be closed and walkers will be required to leave the trail.

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Camping on the trail

There are four campgrounds along the trail (Cup Gum, Hakea, Banksia and Tea Tree). Each campground has the following basic facilities:

- 24 tent platforms (12 for independent walkers and 12 for tour group guests)
- Unisex pit toilets
- Rainwater in campground shelters (non-potable water, will require treatment prior to drinking)
- Shelter for food preparation
- Basic camp furniture

Independent walkers are required to provide their own tent and sleeping equipment. Walkers are only permitted to stay one night at each campground to ensure the next group of walkers have access to their booked sites and that there are adequate facilities available for all walkers on the trail.

Maps and guidebooks

Two products are essential for independent walkers (both are provided on registration at the Flinders Chase Visitor Centre):

- The Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail Map
- Trail Guide 'Walk the Wild Isle' produced by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources contains trip notes and interpretive notes on the landforms, flora, fauna, fungi and history of the island.

Download the audio tour app

The Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail Audio Tours mobile application includes over thirty guided audio tours to enjoy while you walk. Each tour is rich in immersive soundscapes and narration making the stories of the trail come to life. For each day, there is a geo-enabled map which offers walkers the ability to track your location even without an internet connection. Be sure to download the app and each of the five tours before starting your walk as internet connectivity is severely limited on the island. Available from GooglePlay and AppStore.

Top 10 Tips

1. Only take what you need on the track and avoid carrying more than 1/3 of your body weight for a safe and enjoyable walking experience.
2. Look after your feet! Break in your boots before your trip, invest in quality socks and if you're prone to blisters consider preventative measures such as blister blocks, foot lubricants (available from camping stores) or wrapping and taping pressure spots.
3. Know your water intake requirements and carry adequate water. Even in cold weather you need to stay hydrated, so stop for regular drinks.
4. Wear your clothes in layers for easy addition or removal. Cotton and denim clothing soaks up water and will make you cold in wet weather. Merino (woollen) or polypropylene clothing is recommended for walking.
5. Keep your sleeping bag and spare clothes inside leak-proof plastic bags ('dry bags'). It's impossible to warm up in wet clothes.
6. Use your spare clothes to form a pillow by rolling them inside your fleece or down jacket. Lightweight, compact travel pillows can be found at camping stores.
7. As you need to carry out what you carry in, it's a good idea to remove unnecessary packaging. Pack food in sealable containers or sturdy plastic snap-lock bags and take an extra snap-lock bag to contain any food scraps so that they don't spill in your backpack.
8. Keep your hat, raincoat, gloves, sunglasses and sunscreen in an accessible part of your pack and take them with you on any side trips. Wind, rain and sun regularly occur all at once – don't forget to protect your skin.
9. Keep something to eat in an accessible part of your pack or pocket so that you have food on hand in cold or wet weather.
10. Make sure you book your transfer from the end of the walk at Kelly Hill back to Flinders Chase Visitor Centre if required.

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Packing List

Packing the right equipment will help you have a great experience on the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail. When deciding on what gear to take remember that you are likely to experience a variety of weather conditions on the trail, so you'll need to be prepared for both sunny and calm conditions as well as wet and windy weather. We've made things easy by providing this packing list with all of your essentials.

Essentials

Backpack
Backpack liner and/or rain cover (to keep everything dry)
Hiking boots (water resistant, lace up with good ankle support and sturdy soles)
Sleeping bag (rated to 0°C)
Tent (opt for the best quality 3 season rating tent that your budget can accommodate)
Sleeping mat
Rubbish bag/s (all waste materials must be carried out with you)

Cooking

Liquid fuel or gas stove
Fuel (available from Kingscote or the Chase Café at Flinders Chase Visitor Centre)
Waterproof matches
Cooking pot(s) and utensils
Cloth/scourer and tea towel for washing dishes

Clothing

Rain jacket with hood (waterproof, windproof and breathable)
Overpants (waterproof, windproof and breathable)
Jacket (fleece or woollen/merino)
Walking trousers or shorts (quick-dry fabric)
Walking shirt (long or short-sleeved, quick-dry fabric)
Thermals (long-sleeved top and leggings - merino or polypropylene)
Good quality socks (several pairs)
Warm pants and jacket for night time
Lightweight footwear (thongs, sandals or crocs) for campsite
Underwear
Beanie & Gloves
Sun hat & Sunglasses

Toiletries

Travel towel (light and quick-dry Micro fibre)
Sunscreen and lip balm
Insect repellent
Ear plugs (snorers can be loud!)
Personal toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, moisturiser and sanitary items)
Toilet paper and trowel (in case of trackside toileting)
Antibacterial hand gel

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Food and water

Water bottles or water bladder to cater for your personal water intake (a minimum of 3 litres is recommended)

Water filter or purification tablets for treating rainwater supplied at campsites

Lightweight crockery and cutlery (e.g. bowl, plate, knife, fork, spoon, mug)

Pocket knife/multi tool

Adequate food supplies for the duration of the walk, including high energy snacks (e.g. dried fruit, nuts, muesli bars, chocolate) and hot drinks (e.g. tea bags, instant coffee/hot chocolate/soup)

A few meals that don't require cooking if travelling in Fire Danger Season (liquid fuel and gas stoves cannot be used if a Total Fire Ban day is called)

Safety

First Aid Kit, including band aids, blister packs, Elastoplast, gauze patches, compression bandage, triangular bandage, scissors, tweezers, emergency space blanket, medications (e.g. antihistamine, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic cream, paracetamol)

Personal medication

Handheld or head torch (with spare batteries)

Personal identification (licence or passport)

Whistle

Compass and topographic map

Optional (* denotes strongly recommended)

An extra day's supply of food

Mobile phone and solar charger (mobile phone reception may be possible with a Telstra* 3G or 4G phone at some of the higher points along the trail, but it is not guaranteed)

Personal Locator Beacon and or satellite phone*

Camera

Binoculars for bird and wildlife viewing

Day pack for side trips (should be lightweight and pack down to fist-size)

Dry bags for spare clothes and sleeping bag

Sleeping bag liner

Walking poles

Gaitors

Book/journal

What is provided

Campsites with tent pads/platforms

Rainwater (from shelter at each campsite)

Shelter for food preparation, eating and relaxing

Basic camp furniture

Unisex toilets

KIWT pass, map and 'Walk the Wild Isle' trail guide (provided at registration and induction at Flinders Chase National Park Visitor Centre)

Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail

FAQ's – Independent Walkers



What is the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail?

The Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail is a world class, 66 kilometre, 5-day walking experience giving visitors access to some of the most rugged, remote and spectacular coastlines in South Australia. The trail is located in the south west of Kangaroo Island and encompasses new and upgraded trails through Flinders Chase National Park, Kelly Hill Conservation Park and the Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area. Along with encounters with some of the island's most unique wildlife, the trail provides access to the iconic attractions of Remarkable Rocks, Admirals Arch, Weirs Cove, Hanson Bay and Kelly Hill Caves.

What are my walk options?

You can walk the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail as:

- An independent walker using the campgrounds provided (SeaLink 5 day package)
- A guided walker staying in private accommodation off of the trail (KI Odysseys 2 or 3 day package)

Do you offer packages that include the walk?

Yes, we have a selection of packages that include the full 5 day walk using the campgrounds each night as follows:

- Coach Transfer Option - Return coach and ferry transfers to Kangaroo Island, one nights accommodation in Kingscote, return transfers to Flinders Chase Visitor Centre and 5 day KI Wilderness Trail Pass
- Self-Drive Option – Return ferry transfers to Kangaroo Island (including a standard vehicle), one nights accommodation in Kingscote, 5 day KI Wilderness Trail Pass and transfer from Kelly Hill Caves to Flinders Chase Visitor Centre
- Build Your Own Option – Return coach and ferry transfers to Kangaroo Island, return transfers to Flinders Chase Visitor Centre and 5 day KI Wilderness Trail Pass. You can easily add any additional accommodation or touring to this option.

We also offer a 2 or 3 day Small Group Guided Tour package that includes return coach and ferry transfers to Kangaroo Island, personalised 4x4 touring, all entrance fees and special permits, full day tour with a delicious gourmet picnic lunch, one or two nights accommodation at the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Retreat including dinner and continental breakfast, plus one or two days guided walk along the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail. For more information on these tours please visit

www.kangarooislandodysseys.com.au.

Why do I need to book my walk?

The booking system regulates the number of walkers departing each day. This is to avoid overcrowding, to preserve the wilderness experience for everyone, to reduce our environmental impact and to ensure sustainable management of the track and campground facilities.

How many people are allowed to depart each day?

A maximum of 12 independent and 36 guided walkers (including guides) are permitted to depart each day.

What is included in the Walking Trail package and why is there a fee?

Maintaining a long-distance walking trail with facilities in a remote area is expensive. Your fee contributes to maintaining and servicing the Trail to ensure it remains an exceptional world class tourism experience. Included in the cost will be your National Park entry fee, Walking Pass, Trail Guide and Trail Map.

Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail

FAQ's – Independent Walkers



Do I need to pay a separate park entry fee?

No, the park entry fee has been incorporated into the charge for walking the trail.

What is the process for checking in to the trail?

On arrival at the Flinders Chase Visitor Centre you will be welcomed by staff and provided with your walking pass, map and trail guide. You will then be shown a short safety video, and once the video is complete you are ready to start the walk.

What level of walking experience do I need?

The Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail is categorised as a Grade 4 walking trail under the Australian Walking Track Grading System, meaning that some sections are long, rough and very steep and directional signage is at times limited. Bushwalking experience is recommended.

How fit do I need to be to walk the trail?

A good level of fitness is required to walk the trail. You can expect to walk between 3.5 and 7 hours a day not including side trips, depending on your fitness level, weather conditions and time taken for breaks and wildlife viewing. If you need to build up your level of fitness prior to the walk, we recommend starting with a 30 minute daily walk and building up to 7 hours. Be sure to trial walking with the pack you intend to take so that you feel fully prepared.

Is the trail suitable for children?

The trail is not recommended for children under the age of 10 due to the distances travelled, exposed coastal environment and often adverse weather conditions.

When is the best time to walk?

Every season on Kangaroo Island offers something different, so you're sure to have an amazing experience whenever you visit. Kangaroo Island's weather is variable year round and changes in temperature and conditions can occur suddenly and without much warning given the island's exposed location. You're likely to experience a bit of everything on your walk – sunshine, wind and rain. Walkers should be aware that on catastrophic fire days the park will be closed and walkers will be required to leave the trail. Some of the seasonal highlights include the following:

SPRING (September – November): the season of rebirth and a wonderful time to see the island's spectacular array of wildflowers, birds and mammals.

SUMMER (December – February): wildlife retreats to bushland habitat to shelter during the heat of the day, summer wildflowers and the new growth of native trees add colour to the landscape, fur seals start to breed and cool sea breezes provide relief on hot days.

AUTUMN (March – May): a time of transition with modest rainfall bringing waterways back to life and providing new growth for wildlife to feed on, newborn seal pups make their debut in the colonies along the coast, platypus sightings are easier to come by and sea winds are calmer.

WINTER (June – August): orchids and fungi are prolific, rivers are flowing, winter swells crash into towering cliffs providing a breath-taking spectacle, echidna's form 'mating trains', majestic Southern Right Whales pass the shores and high rainfall produces lush, green vegetation.

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FAQ's – Independent Walkers



What do I need to take with me?

Packing the right equipment will help you have a great experience on the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail. We've made things easy by preparing a packing list with all of your essentials.

What type of accommodation is provided on the trail?

There are four campgrounds along the trail (Cup Gum, Hakea, Banksia and Tea Tree). Each campground has the following basic facilities:

- 24 tent platforms (12 for independent walkers, 12 for tour group guests with some sites being doubled for small groups).
- Unisex pit toilets
- Rainwater in campground shelters
- Shelter for food preparation
- Basic camp furniture

Can I stay more than one night at each campground?

No. Walkers are only permitted to stay one night at each campground to ensure the next group of walkers have access to their booked sites and that there are adequate facilities available for all walkers on the trail.

What map/guidebook should I take with me?

Two products are essential for independent walkers (both are provided on registration at the Flinders Chase Visitor Centre):

- The Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail Map
- Trail Guide 'Walk the Wild Isle' produced by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources contains trip notes and interpretive notes on the landforms, flora, fauna, fungi and history of the island.

Is drinking water available along the trail?

Each campground has a rainwater tank which supplies non potable water so it requires treatment prior to drinking.

Is there mobile phone reception on the trail?

Mobile phone reception may be possible with a Telstra 3G or 4G phone services at some of the higher points along the trail, but it is not guaranteed. You should anticipate being out of contact with the outside world for the duration of the five-day walk unless you are carrying a satellite phone or a personal locator device such as an EPIRB.

Are there guided walks available?

We do offer 1 and 2 day guided walks along the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail. Guided walks of longer duration are also available subject to availability and minimum numbers. Our guides are experienced professionals who are passionate about Australia's native flora and fauna and knowledgeable about Kangaroo Island's wildlife and ecosystem. For more information on these tours, please visit www.kangarooislandodysseys.com.au.

Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail

FAQ's – Independent Walkers



Can I walk just one section of the trail?

Two sections of the trail are suitable for extended independent day walks: Flinders Chase Visitor Centre to Snake Lagoon and the Hanson Bay Hike (Hanson Bay to Kelly Hill Caves). Alternatively you can join one of the 2 or 3 day guided tours operated by Kangaroo Island Odysseys. For more information visit www.kangarooislandodysseys.com.au.

Can I organise for a group to walk the trail? (schools, community groups, and incorporated clubs)

Yes. For more information contact SeaLink Groups on (+61 8) 8202 8688.

How do I get to Kangaroo Island and where can I stay?

Planning your trip Kangaroo Island is essential. It can transform your experience from a great walk to a trip of a lifetime. SeaLink operate ferries daily between Cape Jervis and Penneshaw, and Regional Express Airlines fly into Kingscote twice a day. You can discover more about the Kangaroo Island experiences on offer, including where to stay, eat and play by visiting www.sealink.com.au or by calling 131301.

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What are my walk options?

You can walk the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail as:

- An independent walker using the campgrounds provided (SeaLink 5 day package)
- An independent walker staying in private accommodation off the trail (SeaLink 3, 4 or 5 day package)
- A guided walker staying in private accommodation off of the trail (KI Odysseys 2 or 3 day package)

Do you offer packages that include the walk?

Yes, we have a selection of packages that include the full 5 day walk as follows:

- **CAMPING ON THE TRAIL:**
 - Coach Transfer Option - Return coach and ferry transfers to Kangaroo Island, one nights accommodation in Kingscote, return transfers to Flinders Chase Visitor Centre and 5 day KI Wilderness Trail Pass
 - Self Drive Option – Return ferry transfers to Kangaroo Island (including a standard vehicle), one nights accommodation in Kingscote, 5 day KI Wilderness Trail Pass and transfer from Kelly Hill Caves to Flinders Chase Visitor Centre
 - Build Your Own Option – Return coach and ferry transfers to Kangaroo Island, return transfers to Flinders Chase Visitor Centre and 5 day KI Wilderness Trail Pass. You can easily add any additional accommodation or touring to this option.
- **ACCOMMODATION OFF THE TRAIL:**
 - Self Drive Accommodated Option 1 – Return ferry transfers to Kangaroo Island (including a standard vehicle), 3 or 4 nights accommodation at Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail, including 2 course dinner and continental breakfast daily, 3-5 day KI Wilderness Trail Pass, including daily transfers to/from each point of the trail and lunch packs on days 2, 3 & 4
 - Self Drive Accommodated Option 2 – Return ferry transfer to Kangaroo Island (including a standard vehicle), 5 nights accommodation at Western KI Caravan Park & Wildlife Reserved (Powered Site or 2 Bedroom Cabin), 5 day KI Wilderness Trail Pass, including transfers to/from each point of the trail

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