

# Water by Nature (Tasmania)

## Franklin River Tasmania Wilderness Rafting

### 5, 7 & 10 Day Expeditions

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## TOURS

### 5 Day Itinerary

This five day wilderness adventure explores the lower forty kilometres of the Franklin River World Heritage Area. As well as some exciting rafting, you enjoy days of easy paddling and the chance to take in the serenity of this unique region.

#### Meeting Point

We meet at 12 midday at the Astor Hotel, First Floor, 157 Macquarie Street, Hobart (03) 6234 6611. Individual river bags (60 litres) and paddling gear will be issued here. Excess gear may be stored at the Astor if you are staying there, otherwise we can secure it in our equipment container. It is possible to meet at Queenstown by prior arrangement.

#### Time of Return

We expect to return to Hobart by early evening. Please note that very occasionally delays can be caused by extreme weather conditions. It is not normally possible to fly out of Hobart on the last day of the trip.

#### Grade and Fitness

Moderate - A reasonable level of fitness is important and should improve your enjoyment of this trip. Rapids range from Grade One to Grade Five, though most are Grade Two or Three. The most difficult level run on most trips is Grade Four and it is possible to walk around most of these rapids should you choose. You should feel confident swimming in a buoyancy vest should you fall out of the raft.

#### Itinerary

This is a guide only and may alter with river levels.

##### Day 1

After issuing equipment we head off to lunch by the Derwent River. We then follow the Lyell Highway over the Central Highlands, past the King William Range and descend to the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park. Here we may take a short walk to Donaghy's Hill and expansive views of Frenchmans Cap and the south west. A short drive takes us to Queenstown and our accommodation.

##### Day 2

Following an early breakfast we board our 4WD vehicle for an exciting and spectacular trip over Mt. McCall to the river. A steep descent of ~350 metres down a foot track leads us to our rafts. After packing the rafts and a safety talk we head down Propsting Gorge and through the exciting Trojans rapids before arriving at Rock Island Bend and the Pig Trough, with its delightful waterfall cascading into a fernlined grotto. Safety dictates that we portage the actual Pig Trough rapid before we round the bend to tackle the famous Newland Cascades. This section will have everyone whooping with delight as we plunge through a maelstrom of spray and whitewater. At rapids'-end is a place for a deserved break. On the bank, natural overhangs provide the ideal shelter. Echoing cliffs and plumes of spray add to the magnificent setting. We sometimes spend a day here.

##### Day 3

The river abruptly leaves the quartzite gorges of the Middle Franklin and enters the limestone country of the lower reaches. Tranquil pools are broken by the occasional large rapid - 'Little Fall' is a great spot for action photography! Slowly the river increases in volume. The Jane River enters from the left just above our midday

break on Flat Island, a beach of polished river stones dominated by the impressive Elliot Range. We then continue to our evenings camp under a canopy of ancient trees by the deep pool at Blackmans Bend. We may be lucky enough to get a visit from the local platypus.

#### **Day 4**

The thick rainforest which clings to the banks is punctuated by limestone cliffs and strange rock formations. The river widens and now flows quietly. There is time to reflect; to conjure up visions of Aboriginal peoples hunting the Ice Age plains before the forest spread to claim the open country. Today we will carefully show you some of the unique limestone caves which sheltered these people some 14000 years ago. Later in the day we will tackle the unexpected 'Double Fall' before making our final camp, perhaps on one of the lower river's many sandy beaches.

#### **Day 5**

Almost immediately we encounter the last step down in the rivers bedrock, 'Big Fall'. It's a deceptive rapid which we portage easily and quickly. Around the corner is the gaping Pengana Cave, a towering vault in the cliffs. We enjoy our last lunch near the junction of the Franklin and Gordon Rivers. Our final few hours are spent drifting along this mighty river, carried along by the huge volume of water that makes the Gordon Tasmania's largest waterway. Soon we reach the picturesque Sir John Falls where our 'Wilderness Air' seaplane will meet us for the return flight over Macquarie Harbour to Strahan on the west coast.

A bus trip back to Hobart completes our journey.

**WATER BY NATURE**

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