ExperiOnce International

Inspire the world to evolve being the 1rst involved

Hiking the Overland Track
A journey through Tasmania
6 days one-way - 65km - Grade 4
Go out of your comfort zone
Disconnect to reconnect
Experience_Once in a lifetime

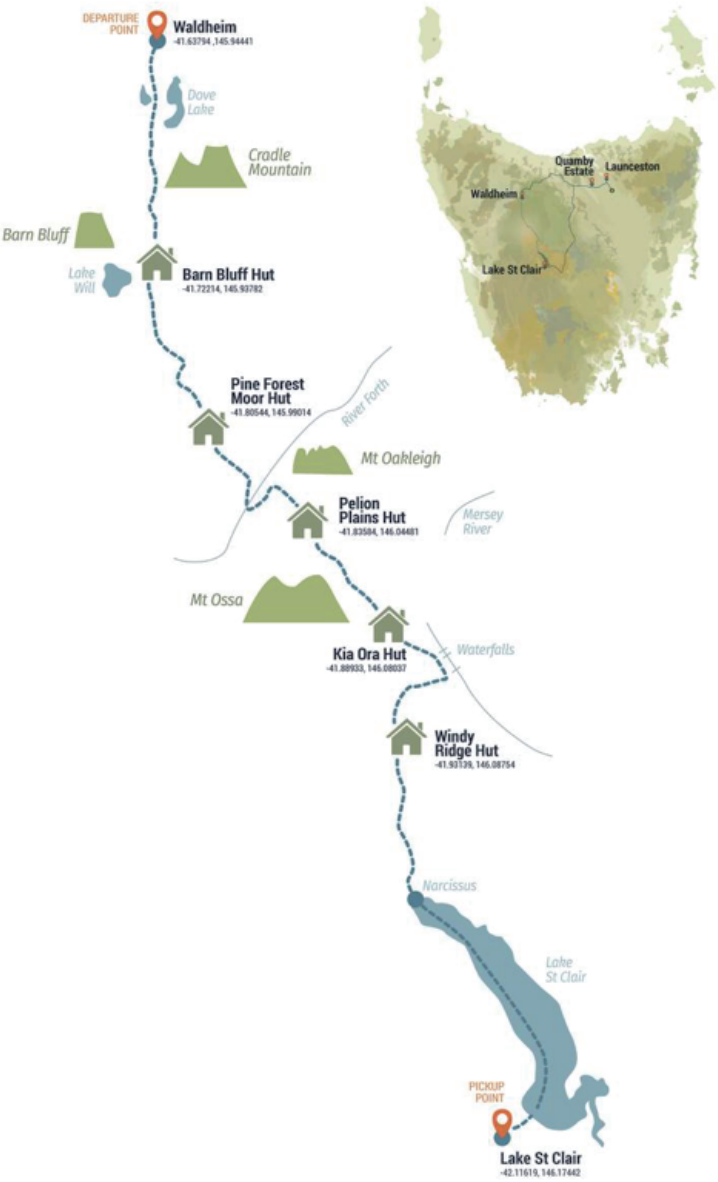
My name is Delphine. Passionate, curious, versatile human being, I have a background immersed in the outdoors to an international level, always connected with human experiences.

I have been hiking from a young age, exploring the French Pyrénées and Alps with my parents. At that time, I used to complain at each of my steps and was miles away to think that hiking, cycling and travelling would become my life.

I believe nature allows us to find inner balance, reflect going back to basics, reconnect with ourselves and others. As studies show, bringing nature and meaningful human connexions into our daily lives is important for our mental and physical wellbeing. Remember we are nature.

Don't stop reading here! I just got started. I am a simple human being just like you! I take each challenge one step at a time. From 2013, I have been doing some research, supporting the tourism industry and human life experiences. In parallell of researching for ways to reduce the impacts of tourism in tourism destinations while giving the best life exerience to the visitors as much as the locals, from 2017, I started intensive researches and experiments regarding how to keep the 'spark' of travel in our daily lives avoiding 'post travel blues'. *(Check out my biography at the end of this document)*

Through this storytelling, I wish to transport you into one of my best travel memories, inspiring you to always go out of your comfort zone. I often read or watch documentaries retracing amazing stories about expeditions and travel adventures; however they can be extreme and it can be difficult to identify yourself in it. So, through my personal story, I hope I will light up your spirit, get you excited to join my tribe at least once in a lifetime. Along your reading, you will find many tips and tricks really useful for hiking and for anticipating the post 'travel blues'. Have a good read.



Source : Tasmanian walking company
https://www.taswalkingco.com.au/overland-track/

Why the Overland Track ?

The Overland Track is one of the top tourism attractions in Tasmania. "T*he Overland Track is Australia's premier alpine walk. This exhilarating and life-changing journey attracts walkers from across the globe. Beginning at the iconic Cradle Mountain and ending at Australia's deepest lake – Lake St Clair, this 65 kilometre, six-day trek takes you through the heart of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, part of the magnificent Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.*" Check their website out https://parks.tas.gov.au/explore-our-parks/cradle-mountain/overland-track

The Overland Track was my first multiday trek over 3 days. Beforehand, as you can read in my biography at the end of this document, I experimented solo multi-days hikes but never of that length and not accompanied by anyone. (Also, read my article about why I practice solo hiking on my website experiencegimat.com).

Two men (who I am going to call Lucas and Théo) agreed in joining me in this adventure. Lucas is a hiker however he never self-managed a multiday-hike. Théo has never done any multi-days hikes before but is used to long days hike.

The main challenges around this track were to manage food, water, carry 15kg on my back for 6 straight days. The idea didn't stop there, I wished to analyse how immersing into a remote area, hiking and conscioulsy disconnect with new technologies for a week, would influence my mental health, sleep, mood and social interactions.

Also as I mentioned in the first page, the research didn't stop there. Regarding the fame of this track, the local authorities had to adapt, finding ways to regulating the fluxes of people with the purpose of reducing the impacts on the environment while giving the best experience to its visitors. As one of my specialities and research is related in managing and reducing the fluxes of people in destinations knowing a high frequentation rate. Just like Lake Louise in Canada, this place was part of my top places to get inspiration from. It was an opportunity to analyse how Tasmania organised and developed their offer around this famous track and how they manage the fluxes of people in this National Park.

Process of the experiment

Along the journey, I wrote a diary, took pictures day by day; checking the evolution of my thoughts and emotions getting as much insight from the evolution of my personal state of mind, interacting with nature and other hikers (strangers included) in a remote area.

Today It has been 3 years that I did this experiments so I can also analyse how powerful it is to read notes and look into pictures reviving memories and dreams in times of lockdown. In this text you will be able to retrace my experience. I also give some hiking tips along the way.

Personal diary
from the 6th to the 14th of November 2017

Monday 6 of November (Melbourne - Launceston)

We woke up at 3 am and filled up Lucas little car with our 3 Osprey backpacks. I was that excited to go into this adventure that I didn't sleep that much. You know this feeling you can have sometimes when expecting something, as you can't wait for the time to go faster and be where you want to be.

Here we were on the way to Melbourne airport. We took the plane from Melbourne and flew to Launceston. My bag was 14,40kg without water; it was not too bad in the end as the average is 16kg to do the Overland.

At the airport, Lucas was surprised by the way I packed my backpack ready for the plane. *(1)*

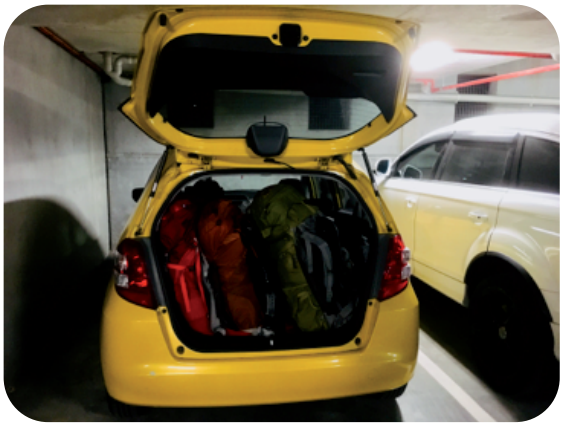
As it was an "internal" flight we didn't have to show our ID or our passport, they didn't even checked our names going on the plane ticket. Anybody could have taken my place; it was weird. I was next to the window. I am so lucky as it is my favourite place. I put 'Kiara' music from the artist Bonobo, (2) watching us takingb off going up into the thick clouds. When we were above them it looked like we were on the top of a huge land of cotton, really fluffy and light... like in the dreams ... The journey went really fast as we all slept.

When we landed at Launceston airport, the view changed, compare to Melbourne. There were not as many buildings . It was green. It felt fresh. Also, it was the first time that I could see for real the design of the crops watered in circle. It looked nice to observe them from above.

When we got out the airport, we had to find a way to reach the town centre, located15 minutes drive away. I offered the boys a challenge; hitchhiking. They didn't really fancy the idea of it, but I tried anyway. The first person I found was happy to take me but as he had a little car, the 3 of us were too many. So I had to let him go! I was really tempted to let the boys here and meet them later in the city. You know like 'Pekin Express' French travel series.

As there were not a lot of people around, we decided to catch a bus. On the way, Lucas realized that today was a public holiday called "Recreation day". So ... we ended up with no bus... He checked for an Uber, but no Uber in Launceston! So here we were back to my option! Hitchhiking. We could have called a taxi but I dragged them into my adventure mode.

Walking back to the airport entrance, I saw a woman who dropped a man. She also dropped something on the floor; this was my chance! I could see she had enough space for the 3 of us and seemed really nice. I approached her, giving her back what was on the floor and we connected. I asked her if it was possible to bring us to town. She agreed with no hesitation!! Alleluia! Launceston wasn't on the way to her house but she was happy in bringing us. So nice of her! I sat in the front seat and on the way we had a chat.



Lucas tiny car ready to go.

Tip(s)

(1) When you take any transport, put the rain cover over the back of your backpack to secure your straps. It is a good way to save them. The only problem is that the rain cover can be ripped off... but I think it costs less to break your rain cover than your backpack. The best way, if you travel often, is to buy a light bag to put your whole backpack-in. You can also have spare rain-cover, as it is less heavy than a spare bag.

(2) Listen to a music while having experiences so when you listen to it again and close your eyes, you can recall the moment later on. Kiara from Bonobo recalls me the first flight I took going to Thailand during my first solo travel. Now I often listen to it when the plane takes off.

Our driver was from New-Zealand. She shared all her information and feelings about Launceston and Tasmania. The boys couldn't believe the kindness of this woman. As I said to them, there are a lot of nice people out there who are that way, more than we think! Traveling taught me this. They are both introverted and It was funny to watch their faces along the way over the mirror.

The lady finally dropped us off at a little port in the centre. It was a nice place, with the view over the river and some boats. It was sunny, the birds were singing and the nice smells of flower were tingling our noses. At that point, Lucas randomly decided to roast some bread on the 'barby' for breakfast. We stayed here for a while looking around, waiting to get some news from our AirBnB host named Libby. She finally got in touch and offered us to come around the house earlier instead of 4pm (it was 10am). It was great news as it would have been difficult to visit around with our heavy backpacks on. So here we were walking on the way to her house.

We crossed nice little gardens full of blossoms. Spring is here. I love spring! Everything comes alive again, like a rebirth and new beginning.

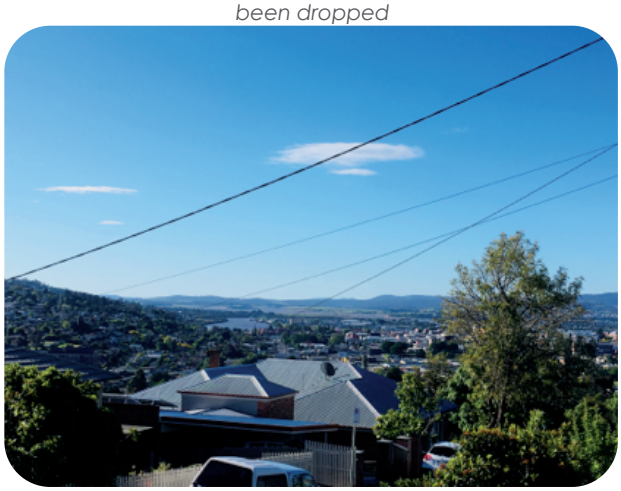
After some time walking, we thought we reached the good address. However it felt weird, as we were sure the house was located outside the city centre and we were still surrounded by streets and houses. I laugh as for once I let go of the map, thinking I could trust those two, joking about the fact tomorrow we are supposed to start a 65km hike in remote area. I promised myself to be the one in charge of the orientation. In the end, we realised that we put the wrong address in the sat-nave ! The real address was 45 min walk away from us and up hill.

Lucas contacted Libby again to tell her that we would not be there before one hour. We were walking with our heavy backpacks on. The road went steeper and steeper. We all shared the same thought that it could have been great if Libby offered to pick us up. It was like she heard us! She called and offered to come to pick us up. Relief! Here she came; a really nice and shining woman. When we were sitting in the car and saw the road, we felt lucky that she came, as the road didn't stop going was up hill a long way. Believe me, you would not go ride your bike up there; it looked like 45 degrees angle. In the winter it should be really dangerous.

Libby is a sweet women. When we reached our final destination for the day, she gave us a warm welcome in her house. She really made us comfortable. Her home is really nice with an amazing view on Launceston. She has a friendly cat named 'Articus' who joined Théo for a nap. Today was a resting day to get ready for the big hike tomorrow. I read and finished my book "Le jour où j'ai appris à vivre" from Laurent Gounelle" and went for a little walk in the neighbourhood. We played cards, cooked pasta (pasta is one of the best meal to get before big physical adventures) and we chatted with Libby.

Libby shared her story with passion. She is a schoolteacher. In her class, she has a majority of refugees' children. She is really impressed by their motivation to learning with the purpose to getting ready to go back to their country with good qualifications. She is also passionate about photography and creates her own photo books. I really love this idea. (3)

Little port in Launceston where we have been dropped



Views from Libby living room over Launcetson.

Tip(s)

(3) A photo book is always really nice to look at. It gives another life and perspective to the memories, they keep them alive. It is also a pleasure to watch them on paper and not on a computer. This is another idea to keep in mind. Create your own travel memory book for yourself and to share with others.

Tuesday 7th of November (Launceston)

This morning we walked early to go to town and visited Cataract gorge. Walking in this little town, this nature, made me feel like Saint George de Luzecon, a little village in the South of France where my grand father lives. The city is built on a hill. We wondered in the calm streets, surrounded by nature, a lot of flowers, different smells and fresh air... It is a dream. I really enjoy Launceston, even if in a touristy perspective, there is not a lot to visit here. Three gorges are the main spotlights. After around 45min walk along the river we discover a free paradise with a "lake" and access to a swimming pool hidden in the middle of nowhere. The footpath also gave us an amazing view on the gorge. The grass was green welcoming us to have a sit. From that spot we could observe the swimming pool, barbecues and a view on an old suspended bridge.

After this little break, we carried on walking toward the bridge, along the river. On the way we saw our first echidna. It is a cute animal. Lucas explained that he was looking for ants in the rocks. This wildlife attraction was magic. It feels like when I was a child, ignorant with sparks in the eyes. I could not wait to share this discovery. Then, we went up a hill to have a closer look to impressive Rhododendrons. Compared to the ones in France or England, here they are just huge; like big shrubs. As I was a landscaper/gardener, seeing those plants in a new habitat is really fascinating. Around this spot we also spot around 6 or 7 peacock. They were wandering freely in the grass. On the way back to town, we passed some gardeners planting Fern trees; it gave me the envy to work with them. It would be interesting to work as a gardener here and plant the vegetation I used to take care of in my greenhouse back in Europe. It is interesting how my brain associate memories and feelings from the past. We also walked along big rocks reminding me the good times we had in France when we used to jump from rocks into the water or the idea that one day, if I end up having a house, I would love to live close by to a river or a lake and design an area with a swing rope to be able to jump into the water.

Arriving in the village again, Lucas had the urge to get a burger. Théo took his phone and found a place named "Burger soul". The burgers were really tasty. I recommend it. With a full belly we ended up at the City Park to see the monkeys. Those monkeys were given by a Chinese twin city of Launceston. There were few newborn, it was nice to see them playing around and taking care of each other's. When I was observing them, I thought, that they act just like us really!

We then, finally we went back home to have a rest as tomorrow the big walk will start.

What I will remember is that Launceston is a really nice little town. I felt at my place here with all this hills around and not too much crowd. The people are really nice; Libby house is an amazing place to stay in an AirBnb. The gorges were worth to visit, just Launceston is a one-day visit not more.

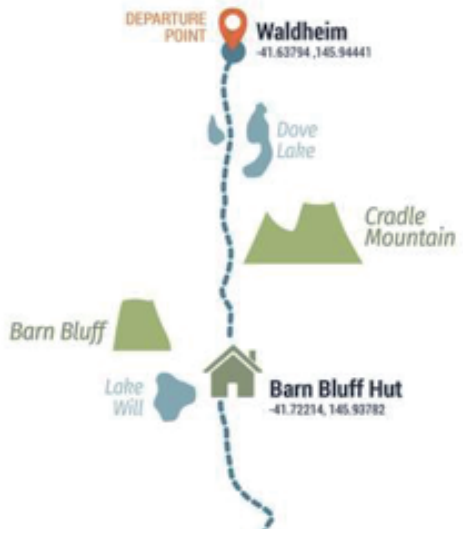
Swimming pool hidden into the gorge.

Suspended bridge

View over the gorges

View on the gorges and the rocks reminding me some good times jumping into the water

Day 1 :Wednesday 8th of November (Launceston - Craddle Mountain)



Today we woke up at 6.30 am, packed everything, and took a nice last warm shower and breakfast before going ahead the first hiking day. We were lucky as Libby dropped us to the bus station with our big backpacks. We had last chat and shared a warm hug before she left.

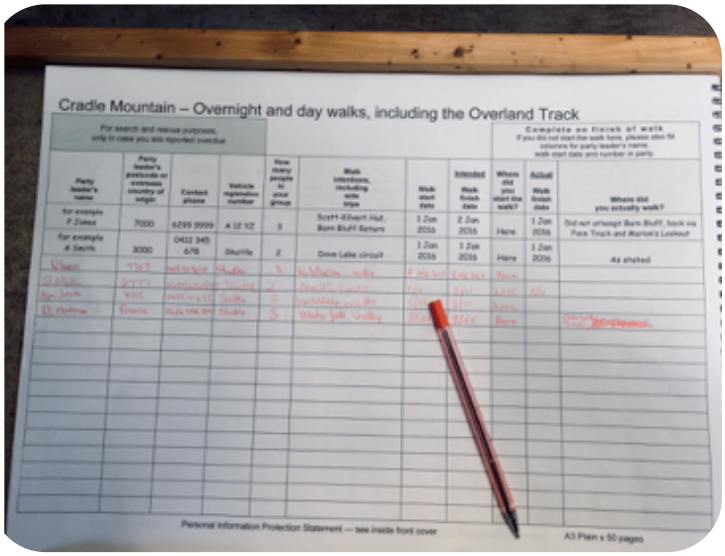
Our three backpacks ready to go

While waiting for the bus, I had a chat with a French gentleman who lives in Japan. He is going to do the Overland as well but will start tomorrow. 8.20am, it was time to go! After 3h of bus ride and two stops on the way to Cradle Mountain, we finally reached the visitor centre where we registered and got our hiking passes.

When queuing, Lucas became disappointed to see two Chinese person who would be on the same departure as us. I laugh at him as his wife is Chinese. He shared his past experiences, hiking alongside Chinese people or advising them while working in outdoor shops, to explain himself. He is not racist at all it is why that's the funniest thing. In the end, the ranger announced them they will leave tomorrow! Lucas hearing this news escaped a little "yes" from his mouth! He is funny.

After a meal and a last stop to the toilets, we took a mini bus durection the start of the track. Here we were! We registered ourselves in a book located in a little hut.

After few pictures in front of the Overland Track sign, we finally started at 1pm.



Registration form for safety reason.

Our 3 backpacks loaded, ready for the departure.

Day 1 : Wednesday 8th of November (Waldheim - Barn Bluff hut)

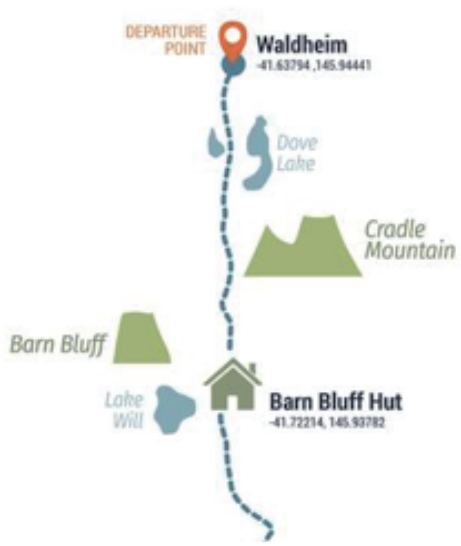
As mentioned before, my goal for those 6 days is No phone allowed until Lake Saint Clair. It is going to be hard.

This first day was really nice. The weather was just perfect! The sun shined, not a single cloud in the sky. The only thing I would say is that it didn't feel really natural and fun walking almost on boardwalk only. However, I guess it is really handy when it is raining or when there is some snow. It is also a good way to preserve the fauna and flora, a strategy to avoid as much as possible the erosion phenomenon in this highly used area. They even positioned some chicken wire on them so the hikers don't slip when it is wet. Also, on the way, for now, the track is really well indicated using woodboards. I am quite impressed.

The view was just magnificent. I felt like being in the Alps back in France, except for the vegetation and animals. Again, I notice that I compare a lot which is interesting. The landscapes are composed by many lakes, tropical plants, black lizards, wombats, butterflies, frogs... It was nice to enjoy those new smells and sounds. We crossed some rivers and a nice little waterfall. At first there were a lot of people on the track as we where close from the road and the park entrance. However, in the last hours of the day, we were only the 3 of us in the middle of nowhere. I really loved this sensation of being alone into the wild with only the wind and the sounds of the animals around.

At some point we arrived to the "heart beat" (a joke we made meaning "hard bit") of this first day. It was a rocky part of the path, really hard as it was inclined and we had 15kg on the back. We had to use a chain to get up there! Afterwards, the track was pretty easy. During the journey we occupied ourselves. Théo is not used to walk for long distances so I tried to make the journey attractive. As you read before, I tried to make some jokes... bad ones of course... I taught them how to recognize the North using the Lichen plants in the trees. (Well, at least it is a way to recognise the North back in Europe). Lucas tried to play baseball with some dry wombat poo using his hiking pole. We had a real laugh. We also did a little fight with Théo on the boardwalk, trying to make each other's fall with our heavy backpacks on with Lucas in the background whispering "fight, fight"! You should have been there to feel the atmosphere. Then at some point, we reached some snow. They both played like kids. It was one of the first time for Lucas to walk in the snow. It was funny to watch him recording himself while walking in it. We talked about different things and today, I discovered that in fact I could lock the tube from my Camelback... When you read this you might not get it but I can tell you that after 3 years I had it, having few terrible leaks in Thailand, it was an incredible discovery! Of course Théo couldn't help to take the mickey out of me all the way after that one! Anyway...

On the way, we also had the surprise to cross a little hut, which in fact were dry toilets. They were well maintained. The only unexpected thing is that undred of flies escaped when we opened the door! They were trapped in the toilet! I can tell you that it was quite scary to have them going in my face as I didn't know if they were bees or flies.

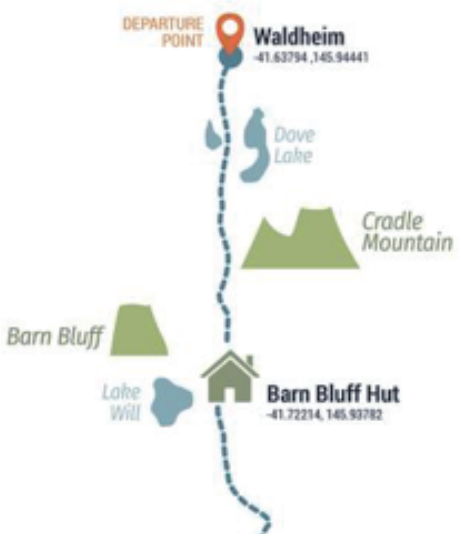


Well maintained and indicated wooden sign post along the track.

The 'Heart beat' where a chain helped us going up

View on Craddle Mountain

Day 1 : Wednesday 8th of November (Waldheim - Barn Bluff hut)



After 5h walking, we finally reached the first hut. A ranger sitting outside in the sun welcomed us. We had the choice to sleep in one of the 2 huts that were there or to camp. As in the first hut there were only 3 people, we decided to join them. We were impressed by how well maintained the hut was! A common dormitory built with wood.

We settled for the night, cooked our first dry dinner "Thai green curry" and a chocolate bar as dessert! Chocolate is the basics for me!!! My blood is only made out of chocolate. I am really happy that I am still able to move that well and to carry a 15kg pack with all I eat.

We saw wallabies and a strange big bird. We watched the sky turning into a light pink... It was beautiful and really peaceful! A dream !!

After dinner (tea as they say in Australia), I had a chat with one of the men who was looking at his map. His name is Nick. He is Welsh. He wishes to try to accomplish the Overland in 5 days.

We finished the day playing Gin Rummy card game with Théo. Now I am going to close my eyes and try to have a little sleep... I might look at the stars later.

The view from the first hut

Our first rehydrated meal.

Day 2 : Thursday 9th of November (Barn Bluff - Way to Pelion hut)

A bird that crashed himself into the window at 7am woke us up. It was a sunny day again! Amazing really! We are really lucky as the legend says (joke) the Tamsanian weather can be quite unpredictable. I had a nice night of sleep. After a little breakfast, I went for a little walk observing the nature around. All those mountains and those birds who were singing, it was magical. I have even recorded the sounds of that moment to remember this time of meditation later on.

Today we started hiking at around 8.30 am. On the trail again to the next hut and "Lake Windermere". I am impressed I remember that one! The landscapes were just wonderful, changing at every step. On the way we crossed an intersection where we could go for a 30 min side track to a lake. Before we decided what to do, we had a little snack, and a rest. In the meantime a couple from New South Wales arrived. They were really friendly but 5 minutes after a group of accompanied girls arrived! They were that noisy, the couple went off and abandoned to join us for the lake Mill. We let go the group of girls and decided to do the sidewalk. We left our bags well covered at the crossing point on a wooden platform and went to the lake. It felt so good to walk without the pack!! (4) Freedom, lightness! It is only the first day... When we arrived at the lake, Théo was quite disappointed. However, I thought that it was amazing to watch the mountains reflecting into the water. (I don't want to spoil too much so I won't put a picture). The little beach area was also nice to take a break. Lucas offered us a massage. What a treat for our shoulders. However, he didn't really enjoy mine in return. Apparently my fingers are too strong for him.

Afterwards, we walked back to our backpacks and went off. We arrived to Lake Windermere. A nice lake but crowded by the group of girls. We decided to go a little bit further to avoid their noises. We stop there for our lunch: couscous and "French saucisse" or "French salami" that Théo brought back for me straight from France. Heaven! It was months that I didn't have charcuterie! The French and their food… I am guilty.

When the girls left, we went to soak our feet in the lake. I tried to have a swim but really it was too cold. Also, it would have been too long to dry our clothes. It felt so good for our poor little toes. A little nap in the sun just after was the most welcomed initiative. We then walked further for10min and already arrived to the hut. It was quite early, 2.30pm. Théo was afraid of boreding and wanted to carry on. Lucas and myself didn't mind, as the next hut was 5h away. After a little discussion we decided to go to the next hut, skipping that one.

The track went up and down. The landscape changed several times. New mountains at every corner. Just amazing !!!! After a while, we wondered if the hut wasn't too far... Théo started to have pain to his back and Lucas to his knees! What a team!! I tried to look up on the map to see where we were but as I didn't looked at it since the beginning, it was not easy and the map wasn't that precise… I thought we were closer to the hut than what it was in reality. At some point we arrived in the woods. The track was full of mud. It was getting darker and darker because of the vegetation.

Each morning I took a picture of my watch as reminder.

Tip(s)

(4) Leave your bag in a safe place when doing side-tracks to give a rest to your shoulders and hips. Don't forget to cover it with your rain-cover (so it makes it more difficult for the wildlife to open it and grab the food. It is also safe if it rains.). If you can, put the bag on a dry area out of the mudd.

Day 2 : Thursday 9th of November (Barn Bluff - Way to Pelion hut)

I finally decided to turn on my electronic Garmin hiking sat-nave. When I got signal, I realised that we were far away from the next hut... I whispered the news in French to Théo, so I did not distract Lucas who was in physical pain. I asked Théo to walk further ahead to look if somewhere we could pitch the tent for the night. In the meantime, I walked behind Lucas, motivating him, ready to grab his backpack in case he would have fallen over... After around 1h walk in the mud and few breaks, we finally found the perfect spot to sleep for the night. The place is on the side of the track, close to a river, in the woods, to be protected from the wind. Perfect!! We pitched our tents in 2 minutes and had a great wild dinner (chocolate as a treat of course) A wallaby for company. It is the first wild camping for Lucas and we could say the same for Théo. (Now you might notice the title of this day... 'Way to Pelion' as we didn't reach it)

The only shame is that, again, the clouds don't allow us to look up at the stars... but it is so nice to be in the tent, safe with the sound of the animals and the river around. I am pretty sure the boys will remember this day: almost 10h walk and 25km in the mountains with the backpacks on! That is fine, they don't seem to hate me for it yet. They are pretty happy to experience wild camping in the middle of nowhere.(5)

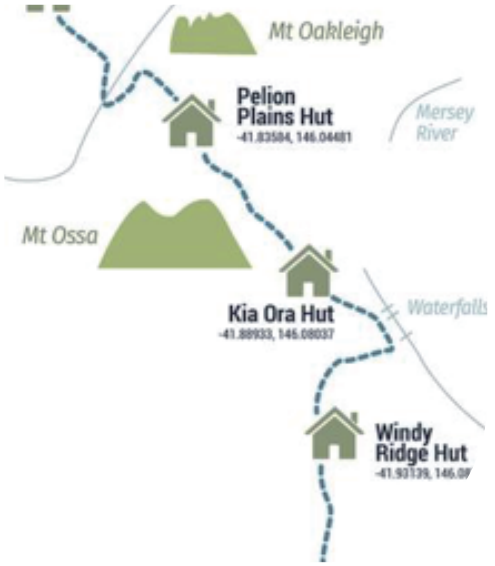
Our wild camping spot on the side of the track

Tip(s)

(5) - When you run out of water, take some fresh water from the river where there is the running part and always upstream, before any bridge if you can. If you have a filter or some tables to kill the germs it is even better.

- When you feel tired and realise the next hut or camp is too far, find a safe spot not far from water, secure from the wind and close to the track. It is not ideal. Please avoid to place your tent on some plants. Normally we should have stayed to the previous hut or anticipate Lucas physical condition. However as it is a remote area, it is important to look after each other's, stay safe and listen to the body and be honest between each other's as the journey is still long. Don't forget to put your food up in your tent or up in a tree to save it from the animals.
- Always stick together and motivate each others.
- Always bring with you a topographic paper map, if possible waterproof. If possible as well, buy or rent an electronic hiking sat-nave, a compass or a beacon for emergencies. The Overland is a busy hike regularly hiked by rangers but we never know. (Check out the gear list on the National Park website.
- When you go to the toilet into the wild, dig a hole or hide your excrement under stones or a piece of wood. Take the toilet paper into a plastic bag. Warn your friends to do not go in the area.
- Use your tent thin ropes or your shoe laces to hang the wet clothes. Or just hand them into the trees.

Day 3 : Friday 10 th of November
(From the middle of nowhere to Pelion hut)



It was a peaceful night into the woods. Silence is a luxury. As we were tired, we went early to bed. I woke up at 7 am with the singing of the birds. As I was the first one, I went for a walk around to observe the animals and take a fresh 'shower' into the river. The water was really cold but it felt so good! Nice for the blood and the smell…Hum... how can I say this... it wasn't enough to remove all the smell but well... When the boys woke up we took our breakfast, packed out tents and went off for our 3rd day. We left at 9.25am.

It took us 1h30 min to get to the next hut, where we should have arrived yesterday night. This last part was into the woods; the shadows of the trees and shrubs were playing around. It was perfect to take some pictures. We were happy to have decided to stop last night.

Today hut is huge, we can sleep at 20 people. We have an amazing view on the mountains and a little valley. Lucas was tired so he decided to have a break for the day wishing to be fresh and ready for tomorrow challenge : the highest peak of Tassie, Mt Ossa (1617m).

In the meantime, with Théo we dropped our backpacks and went off to climb Mt Oakleigh (1386m). (6) It should have taken us 4 to 6 hours return but we did it in 3h and half. The track was pretty abrupt, almost 45 degrees up hill : mud, roots everywhere into the woods. It was worth the challenge! The forest was beautiful and the view at the end was just magnificent. The cherry on the cake is that the sun was out again. At the top we took a little break enjoying the view on the valleys and mountains around.

View from the hut to Mt Oakleigh.

View from Mt Oakleigh to the hut

From this view, I remembered what Brian (my little Australian brother) once said; "hiking is so boring..." At this point I thought to myself :"you don't know what you miss little Brian, I will never exchange your PlayStation for this view!!!"

Trekking is an escape for me. Out there into the wild I feel alive and free. Every step I carry all the people I miss in my head. I focus on the present as it is a demanding sport and everything is okay. The journey is all about exploration, sharing with other hikers and the beauty and danger of the wilderness. Being on the top of a mountain, I can breathe. Each summit remember me how small we are as human being, that was have no control over nature and that there is so much to discover in this world. After each hard climb there is a reward.

Tip(s)

(6) Always take a bottle of water to add water into the camelback and also to take along for sidewalks.
If you purshase a Osprey backpack, some of their design, like my 65L ariel, offers a converted top as small heap bag / crossbody bag. If you don't have any, I advise you DIY buying a belt strap in an outdoor shop.

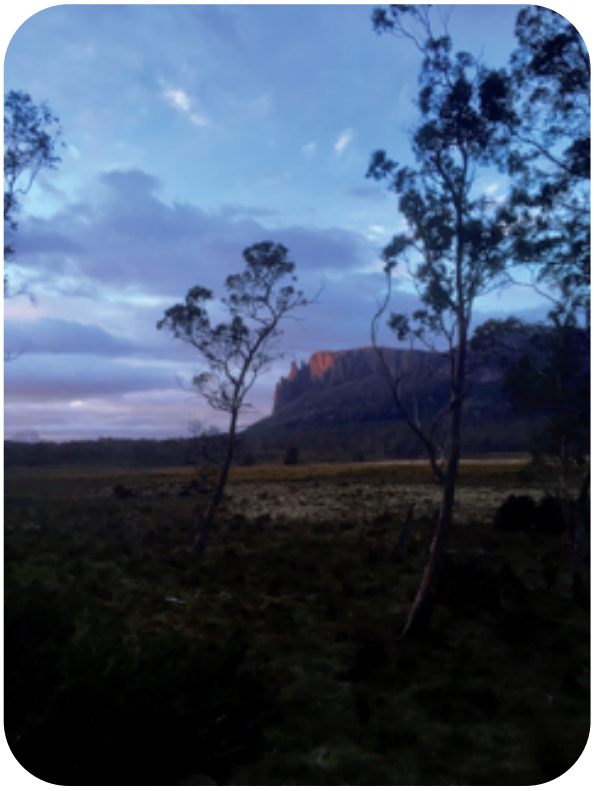
Day 3 : Friday 10 th of November
(From the middle of nowhere to Pelion hut)

When we came back to the hut, Lucas did his washing and had a nap. We played cards with him, taught him a new game : "Bataille corse". He was lost as it is a fast paced game. We had a good laugh. An Australian couple we met yesterday arrived and saw us playing the game. They have almost the same one in Australia, so the men came along to play. It was fun!! (7)

To finish the day, with Théo we tried to go to the lake we spotted from the top of Mt Oakleigh. It ended up that we couldn't ... The reason was that we went there wearing flipflops! Yes, you read well, in tongs, in the middle of nowhere in Tasmania. (8) On the way back we stopped at a little suspended bridge, and played with stones in the river. I taught Théo to do 'ricochets' (skim stones in english) properly. We had fun. We also found some fossil stones. I took them with me to show Lucas and the others hikers. In fact when we arrived at the hut the ranger was there. I showed him the stones. He was really knowledgeable and told us about them. He is a geologist. We had a good chat with him and the others hikers around. Afterwards we got our dinner and went to chill, getting ready for tomorrow as it will be a big day.

We watched a beautiful sunset, which reflected on the mountain in front of us. Just amazing with the wallabies running around in front of us!! Lucas used his 360° camera set to record this memory.

Fossils found into the river



Sunset view on Mt Oakleigh from Pelion hut

Techniques to dry the shoes, giving them some fresh air.

Tip(s)

(7) Bring a card game and some chocolate with you! They are really handy to bond with others and share a fun moment with people around. Some cards games are internationals even if their name change.

(8) Flipflops are the best alternatives to give some fresh hair to the toes, cool down and go out to the toilets when you camp. Lightweight, they are easy to carry. Bear feet is also an option but when you can't wash your feet, it is not ideal.
In the meantime, hang the dirty shoes on a branch to dry them, giving them some fresh air!

Day 4 : Saturday 11 th of November (Pelion to Kia ora hut)

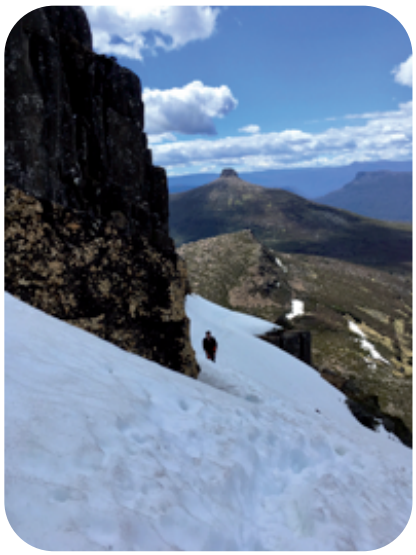
Last night I didn't sleep well at all... The boys kept turning around on their mattresses. It was too noisy! I should have brought along some airplugs. Adding to that several nightmares, I can tell you I was not really fresh this morning! Trying to wake up myself and feel fresh, I decided to go skinny dipping in the river nearby. It was 7am, no one was around, blue sky and the sunshine! I found the perfect spot to be in peace! I can share to you that I didn't care about the cold. I really needed a proper washing! As you will noticed on one of the next pictures, the flies are starting to flying around my face even if we use baby wipers... Yes, always take baby wipers with you, they are life-saver.

After, a little breaky, a nice chat with the French who lives in Japan and the ranger, we went off for the big day. It was 8.25am. We walked in the rainforest for quite a while. I saw 2 tiger snakes again. I can tell you that I wasn't feeling proud... Yesterday night chatting with the ranger, I learnt that all the snakes in Tasmania are deadly... sweet! On the way, two times I had a nice surprise for my nose. Smells of sweet caramel came from the woods. It recalled me a tree we had at my old job in the UK. I don't know where the smell was from but it remembered me nice memories.

2h walk later, we finally arrived to the key point; the junction to get to Mt Ossa. The boys dropped their bags and protected them from the wildlife. I left what I didn't need in their bags keeping water and snacks for us in my bag.

We then went off in this crazy sidewalk adventure. On the way we crossed other hikers coming down. They warned that two parts of the path were covered with snow but the view was worth the effort at the top. Indeed there were two parts of snow located nearby quite a deep cliff. We also had a rock-climbing part. It was a real adventure full of adrenaline. Again, It was only the second time for Lucas to walk into the snow. He acted like a child. I really envied him remembering myself this feeling of new discoveries! Watching him and sharing that moment was unique. On an other side, I was concerned about him and his knees. Théo fought his fear of high and did really well to reach the top.

Walk into the woods surrounded by typical native fauna



Abrupt pathways into the snow.

Day 4 : Saturday 11 th of November (Pelion to Kia ora hut)

Focusing one step at a time and team support, we all went out of ourcomfort zone and made it safe to the top! It was just a breath-taking, wonderful 360 degrees landscape, full of mountains. My idea of a dream place. In those situations, I always wish I could create a machine to teleport myself, and someone I would like to be with to come back when ever to this moment!

360 rewarding view from Mt Ossa.

At that point, the boys turned they phone on getting signal. Lucas called his wife to share this moment with her while Théo had his phone keeping ringing. As we didn't get reception for 4 days, it was quite intense. That time was cchallenging for me… I asked him to turn the sound off, so I would be less tempted to turn on mine on to check WhatsApp. Even if it was hard, I am proud of myself as I have resisted. I focused on the present moment, creating memories that I could recreate and share later. (Like I am doing right now) (9)

On the way down, we slided on our bottom in the snow. It was a real fun!! We tried to avoid the holes, the stones breaking with our feet just in time to do not fly off the cliff! Even if we got wet and cold pants it was so worth it !!!

Fortunately we brought spare socks and trousers. However, I will avoid the details regarding the look of our outfit! Some flies kept us company around our heads. What a style! Who cares? The wombats? It is part of the adventure. Nothing stopped me to hang my underwears on my backpack to have them dry while wearing a flashy blue legging to carry on the walk. (10)

After those 5 hours walk, we packed our stuff and carried on to the next hut. On the way we crossed a young man who was going up Mt Ossa. It was 4pm and the black clouds were coming. He was in sneakers shoes, ready to go all the way up! We thought he was a little bit unconscious but why not?
1h30 later, we arrived at the next hut. We caught up with the same hikers. It is nice because we start to really bond with each other's. I love this "hiker - traveller spirit". We went to the river to see a nice waterfall that on one of the hikers advised. It was nice and peaceful.

My dear friends the flies...
They thought I was a taxi.
Well, at least some are appreciating my odour.

Tip(s)

(9) When you access to a unique space, turn off your devices, stand still, tall and grounded, take a deep breath to memorise the smells. Observe all the details from the environment surrounding you taking mental pictures (take 1 real one to activate your memories later on), Touch with your fingertips and/or bear feet what is around to memorise the 3D touch memory. Record the sounds or silence of that moment. (Those tools will help you in creating your personnalised first Aid Kit post experience)

(10) Take an extra carabinier to hang your wet clothes or shoes to your backpack

Day 4 : Saturday 11 th of November (Pelion to Kia ora hut)

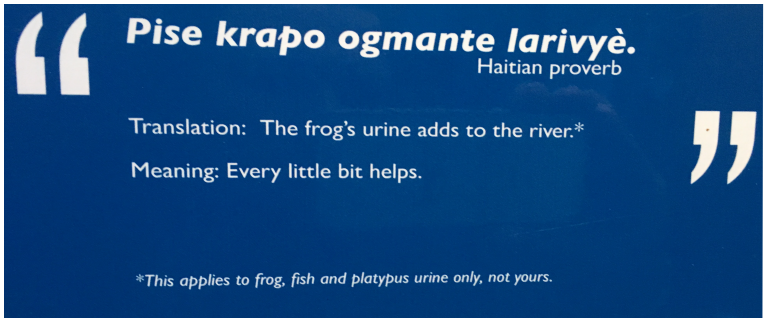
Tonight the boys have decided to camp. Regarding the black clouds, I personally decided to sleep in the hut with the others. The time they put their tent up, the young man we crossed at Mt Ossa came back! He arrived only 45 min after us. It was impressive. I had a chat with him to make sure he made it to the top curious to know if he got the rain. I can't believe he went up and down in 2h (as it took us 5h). He even skipped a hut on the same day. He promised he didn't run, with his 16kg backpack! Respect really! His goal is to make the full trek in 4 days. Of course, he wishes to catch up the same bus as us to go to Hobart. His name is Michael he is an engineer from Poland. He explained that he took a gap year in his work, travelled all around South America doing treks after treks! Impressive! He ate with us so we could have a chat. After, we joined all the others hikers who were chatting at the table nearby the hut. It was nice.

As every night, we watched a nice sunset on the mountains becoming gold. We also saw a wallaby and his little baby in the pocket. So cute! It is a shame the boys are quite shy and not too chatty. Learning from people stories is one of the best things. But well, we are all enjoying different things.

Tomorrow I would have loved to walk another side-walk : the Alpine Valley but we won't, as I feel bad for Lucas and his weak knees. We will see but I think we won't push further or we are going to have to carry him. I am so happy he came with us. Hiking in a group involved making compromise and communicate. (11)

Tip(s)

(11) Like in any relationship, communication and compromises are important. In my opinion, while hiking, you make a commitment. It is always important to stick together from the begining to the end of the adventure for safety reasons. Always be honest with each others and listen to the body.



Intertaining quotes and facts in the huts

Day 5 : Sunday 12 th of November (Kia Ora to Windy Ridge hut)

After a good night sleep and a weird dream, I woke up around 7am. We took our breaky in the sun and went off around 9am.

The footpath was running into the forest. For hours we were surrounded by trees, roots, trees... Oh! and did I mentioned trees? At some point we ended up to a hold hut built in 1920. It was crazy to think that some people came up here with all their heavy gears to built an amazing hut. It was well maintained by the National Park.

Duncane hut built in 1920

We carried on walking in the forest, mud, roots, mud, trees, trees, trees... AGAIN and arrived to an amazing waterfall.

Walking into the woods

The first waterfall.

Day 5 : Sunday 12 th of November (Kia Ora to Windy Ridge hut)

After a quick look at this first waterfall, we carried on to the second one to have our lunch. We found the perfect spot. We also went for a little « bird swim » as said the American girl we met advised. It was really refreshing. It felt so good! Then, we took 1h break to nap, "lézard" in the sun to dry. As we still had few hours to walk in the bushes, we hang our wet stuff on our backpacks.

On the way, a snake passed me gain ... Brrrr I am not really comfortable with those reptiles. Few minutes later we reached an other waterfall. This one was not really interesting. It was a big one but we couldn't see all of it as it was in a sort of a valley. We looked around to see if we could see more and met the French man again. He skipped and other hut. We all really have different ways and paces to experience that trek. It is nteresting.

After a long walk into the woods (did I just mentioned woods again?) we finally ended up to the next hut. This part of the track was nice but quite a redondant landscape.

The hut we are tonight is huge. It looks like a hostel or school camp. I don't really like big huts. I rather when it is comfy and friendly. However, the view is just beautiful. Tonight I decided that I am going to join the boys camping, as it is a nice weather. I chose the perfect spot to have the mountains in front of me when I open the door of my tent. I still cannot believe tomorrow is our last day of walk. It went too fast!!! However, I look forward for a shower, a beer and a burger. This is a personal ritual after each hike but shushhh. ;-) While I was walking into those woodlands, I dreamed about an ice cream. It was an ice cream like a ball with inside a fresh coulis of mango, covered by a caramel and chocolate sauce! Slurpppppppp It is crazy how the mind can wonder when the scenery is always the same.

Walk into the woodlands.

The evening we chatted with all the hikers outside in front of this amazing view. We had our sleeping bags out, shared a tea. It was interesting to listen the French man living in Japan. He is a businessman travelling the world. When he can, he just go for hikes like this one. He shared that on the top of Mt Ossa, as we had signal, he checked his emails and worked a little. Hiking in remote spaces like here allows him to disconnect and recharge. He goes in those adventures by himself, as his wife and kids doesn't hike. He is passionate about snakes and tried to find some on the track. I can't believe he didn't see any! I feel they all waited for me. He explained how he normally catches them to analyse them… Even if they are the deadly ones… Brrrr

While they all went to sleep, with Théo we played Gin rummy card game again until it was pitch black. We finally watched the stars, as tonight for the first time, there are no clouds. We didn't see the Milky Way but I saw one shooting star and made a wish. There is something special about the dark sky and the stars. After a while, it started freezing and our eyes were closing by themselves, so we went in the tent. We could have slept outside but I didn't really want to wake up with a wallaby, a snake or a spider on my face! I promised myself once again that one day I will try sleeping underthe stars without any tents.

Day 6 : Monday 13 th of November (Windy ridge to Lake St Clair)

Today was the last day of walk. We woke up at 7am. I did a weird dream again involving friends from France. I really miss them. it might be even more when I cannot contact them over the phone to share those moments. Anyway. Sunny day again! We are so lucky as accomplishing this track with a nice weather all the way is a luxury apparently!

After our last breakfast with the calm and the view on the mountains, we went off on our last day on the track. This journey was pretty boring... When it does happen, I lose myself into my thoughts. At some points, I even forgot to waiting for the boys and had to wait almost 30min for them. Daydreaming is a thing... Nice thoughts.

A last snake on the way scared me again!! This time I took a picture ! (12)

Little sneaky brown snake

Tip(s)

(12) Tap heavily on the floor with your boots or hiking pole when you go through high herbs. Look behind each rocks and logs before eventually stepping on a snake. They normally won't attack you if you don't step on them.

Open landscapes and the river along the way

Day 6 : Monday 13 th of November (Windy ridge to Lake St Clair)

The end of the path was along a river, going up to our last point, the Lake Saint Clair. At the last stop, while waiting for the water taxi, we took our last dry meal and went off for a swim in the cold river.

We could have walked the last part along the lake however we were not sure in terms of timing so we didn't take the risk.

All the hikers who didn't do the walk around the lake were there. Two german girls were skinny-dipping. I can tell you the boys around were really happy. I personally I kept my underwear this time as too many eyes were around and jumped into the water!!! At first it was freezing but it was so refreshing!!

Around 1.20pm the little water taxi came to pick us up to crossing the lake (30min) toward the final point.

The skipper explained all the mountains located around. He also showed us an old water house that someone has converted as a posh accommodation. Then we finally arrived at the end line and took a last picture. We still have the smiles on! ;-) We signed off the last record to refer that we arrived safely.

The boys were happy to find signal again on their phones. I am happy that I managed really well 6 days without my phone but I was quite sad to do not have signal as I checked .... I will have to wait tomorrow to be on the bus then!! Extension of the challenge accepted. I could have asked the boys to share their connexion but didn't.

Last pucture and final signature of the track record at the end of the track.

Meeting point to catch the water taxi to reach Lake Saint Clair.

Water-house, accommodation over the lake

ExperiOnce

Day 6 : Monday 13 th of November (Lake St Clair)

To celebrate our wonderful adventure, we shared a beer with some French fries. As a memory, I bought a headband for hiking covered by all the mounts located along the Overland track. We took a free hot shower !!! I can tell you that we enjoyed it.

We caught up with the US/Australian young couple. We had a nice chat while eating all together a chicken burger. This burger was a real laugh! We got the beacon for free, a luxury after 6 days of dry food. I still wonder how many litres of water we drank.

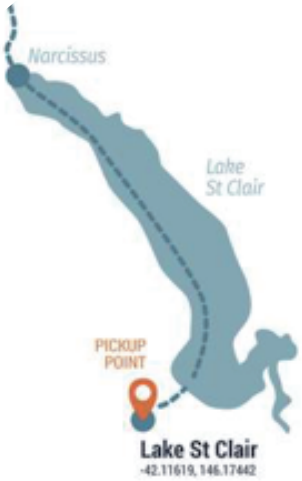
Now we are at the last campsite nearby the lake. We had a the evening on a little beach with the view over the mountain and the lake. Here the flies are a nightmare and same with the mozzies.... They just stick on your face and this time we had a proper shower.... Note to myself, we will have to invest in a net when we will go on our road trip around Australia. (13)

Happy belly, happy face

Tip(s)

(13) Use Tiger bum balm to calm the hitchy mosquitoes bites.
Buy a net, that are normally used to protect the trees from the birds in a garden centre to protect yourself from the flies while eating. Or buy one of those typical Australian hats.

Day 7 : Tuesday14 th of November (Lake St Clair - Hobart)



Today was the last day in the Craddle Mountain -Lake St Clair National Park. Sunny day again! Sweet as! We packed our stuff, went to the visitor information centre for another shower and a little breakfast (capuccino and chocolate muffin). While we were waiting for the bus we chatted with the hikers we met and looked for a free campsite around Hobart. (14)

We took the TassieLink bus, a kind of minibus with a trailer to go to Hobart. The driver was really nice but drove really fast for a bus with a trailer in the mountains !

As always I am in a transport, I put my music on! It was Miike Snow that made me think of my friend and colleague El. from the UK. It gave me a good mood! It felt nice to listen to some music again after 7 days.

By the ways as there was no signal in Lake Saint Clair, I ended up doing 7 days and an half without phone. I can tell you that on the way to Hobart, at the first village where I got internet I was so happy to check the news from my friends and tell them we finished the track safely !!!

On the way, I have been quite disappointed by the landscape... It was similar to the main island... A lot of water pipes, electrical centre… The only thing that I loved was to see the Fern trees with the new leaves coming out! Curly!

When we finally arrived to Hobart, the bus dropped us off near the harbour, in the city centre. We said goodbye to some hikers but the young couple from oz/us joined us for a meal. I really wanted mussels. We went to eat in a boat located in the harbour. I asked for my mussels but it is not the season ... Instead I had a ginger beer and a plate with 3 different fishes. They were so fresh!!! Hummm

Tip(s)

(14) - Download on your phone WikiCamps app. It cost few dollars but it is one of the best investment for travelling in Australia.

- Download Here and Maps.me as offline satnav. Maps.me has been my life-saver while hiking.
- Track down your journey to remember yourself later on the sensations and this unique adventure.

Conclusion about this particular hike

The overland Track is an amazing trek! I found It as a quite easy trek if you don't do the side tracks. It is a real good exercise to manage your food and water, be alert of the signs of your body. The path is really well indicated and safe, if you prepare yourself. It was ideal for our first long trek in remote areas. As shared along this text, this hike is also really accessible for solo hikers and in the end notice that you are never really alone.

It is quite an investment to do it as in high season you pay a minimum of 230$ fee but keep in mind :

- all the hut were clean with high level of maintenance,
- thre track well maintain,
- the team of rangers really friendly and knowledgeable. 17 people are hired every summer in this National Park. The customer service is really well with friendly and welcoming people.
- they have to bring the material by helicopters to maintain the tracks.
- the showers at the end were free.
- only 60 people can go on the track in high season to protect this world heritage and we can really see why when we are on the tracks.

All of this is designed to give the best experience for everyone while reducing the impacts on the ecosytem so the next generation can also enjoy them.

Take away from this experiment

After reflecting on this experiment, I can share that :

- Preparation is the main key to safety.

- If you hike with others, communication and compromises are really important. Remaining calm, support and respect each other's needs is important.

- Listen to the body. Don't over-do it. Be aware of your own limits.

- Beneficial digital detox. Not having access to technologies has been an incredible experience. It had a real positive impact on my sleep, my moods and my awareness.

- Managing my food has been revealing regarding its impacts over my physical condition.

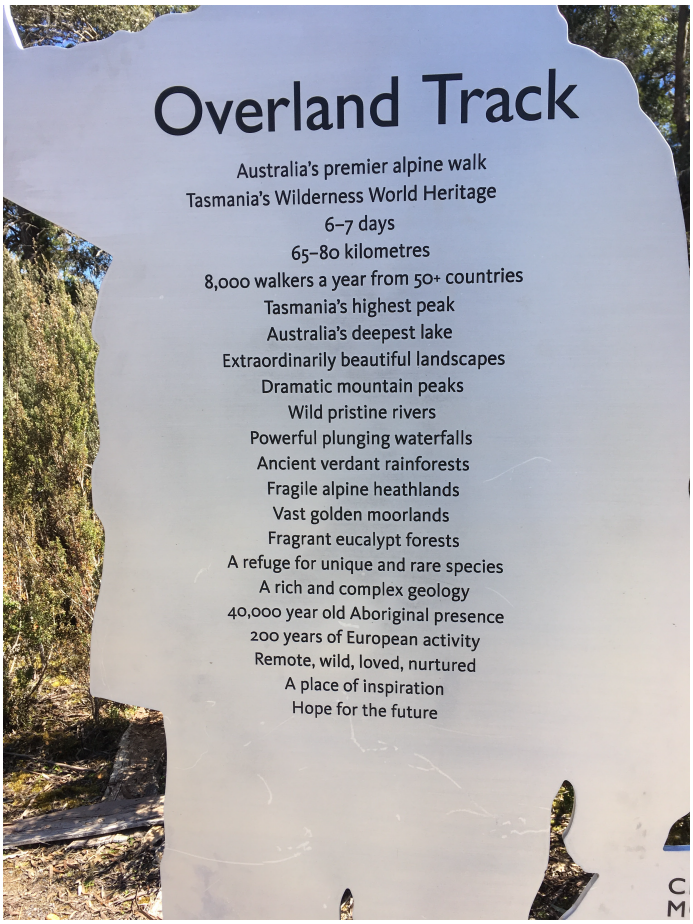
- The immersion activated all of the senses that helped to focus and challenge myself in the present.

- The connection with nature is calming, regenerative.

- The social aspect is really interesting. We bonded really well with other hikers and in the end no one was ever alone. We always wondered at the next hut where the others were.

- We also bonded really well the three of us as a team, even if we had different levels and vision regarding this experience.

- Three years later, the tools I gathers on the way are useful to recall vividely this experience, just I was there. I can recreate the emotions and environment in times of lockdown, getting excited about it.



Biography

Delphine GIMAT
Hike It Out Co-founder
Research & Development
Resilience and sustainable tourism Consultant focus on the human experience
Instagram : Experience_Once
experiencegimat.com
gimatd@icloud.com
(+61) 424 556 751
French fluent in English with a splash of spanish

I have always been immersed into nature, living in many parts of France and the world, exploring some of the most incredible places. I am used to organising travels and outdoor trips for people. I also volunteered planning outdoor activities such as "Les sensations sevenoles" and participated in different related competitions.

From 2017, I practice overnight solo travelling and trekking while empowering new hikers to follow my steps into nature going out of their comfort zone. Both are pathways to learn, grow, challenging yourself. #bethechangeyouwishttoseeintheworld Project.

From farmer to resilience and sustainable tourism specialist, (via landscaper/gardener, visitor experience specialist and sales representative for outdoors shops), I have acquitted a global understanding of how to design, maintain, bring dynamics and promote hiking and cycling paths (slow tourism). I also do my best to empower, giving the best experience to people who want to explore those activities and spaces safely.

2010, Assistant cycling instructor. College Albert Camus. (France)
2012, Offered mountain biking path network in the Pays Vignoble Gaillacois (France) that opened and labelled quality FFC in July 2015.
2014, Worked on different project related to sustainable mobilities, hiking events, itinerant activities in the UK alongside the Chilterns Tourism Network.
2015, Offered sustainable mobilities including hiking paths connecting areas in Les baux de Provence (France).
2017, as leader, I greeted and organised days trips, including hikings around Victoria in Australia.
Summers 2012 (France), 2018 (Lake Louise, Ca), 2019(Picton, NZ), Worked for visitors centre, located in remote areas, specialising myself into advising and organising travel experiences related to outdoor activities and slow tourism.
2017 and 2019 Worked for Mountain Design and Fjallraven outdoor shops (OZ), advising hiking and travel gears; giving some tips, personalizing each experience regarding their project and profile.

From 2017: Research about :
- How to bring the "spark" we have while we travel into our daily routine to avoid post travel blues.
- How can we compensate for the lack of those experiences in situations of physical immobility such as lockdown or personal restrictions ?
I have been experimenting solutions toward human well-being and natural respect and balance with the ecosystem.
From there in 2020 (Oz) the start up sustainable lifestyles project including the proram 'Hike it Out' with two collaborators Carolyne Hubert and Chloé Favre was born.

Solo overnight trek :
2018 - 2 days : The Surf Coast Walk (Oz)
2018 - 3 days : Wilson Promontory loop (Oz)
2019 - 2 days : Angelus hut (Nz)
2020 - 5 days : The first part of the Grampians Peaks Trail (Oz)

Group overnight trekking :
2017 - 6 days : Overland track (Tasmania)
2018 - 2 days : Abbot Pass (Canada)
2019 - 3 days : The Queen Charlotte Track (NZ)

Many hikes in the Canadian Rockies, Europe (France, England), Morrocco, New-Caledonia and New-zealand as leader or solo.

Cycling :
- Road cycling competition : FFC Albi club
- 6 years mountain biking X country competition
- 3 days team raid competition
(Multi outdoor activity)
- 2012 : FFC cycling instructor certificate

How can I help ?

- Plan and organise the adventure : choose the gears, health and safety, food, etc.
- Unique hiking experience in a transformative and sustainable way : behaviours, nature and mental health tips, DIY, physical experience, endurance, breath, stretching, read a map, orientation.
- Assistant hiking and cycling instructors
- Hiking leader and coordinator

- Tools to anticipate the post travel experience
- Create and develop hiking events
- Create and develop sustainable hiking or cycling paths in tourism destinations