

Preparing For Your Overnight Hike Grampians National Park

Bushwalkers looking for the excitement and challenge of overnight hiking will find plenty of scope in Grampians National Park. Only fit, well-prepared and experienced walkers should undertake these recommended hikes.

Before Your Trip

- **Research your trip** – use topographical maps, guidebooks, advice from experienced bushwalkers, visit www.parks.vic.gov.au or contact Brambuk – The National Park and Cultural Centre in Halls Gap.
- **Understand the environment** you are entering and the risks associated with it.
- **Plan for the unexpected** – extreme weather, bushfires, medical emergencies and becoming lost.

Book campgrounds and hiker camps

Many campgrounds and hiker camps in Grampians National Park need to be booked in advance. Visit www.parks.vic.gov.au or call Brambuk on (03) 5361 4000 to find out where you need to book.

Register your trip

- A compulsory “Trip Intention” registration system applies for all overnight hiking in Grampians National Park.
- Your Trip Intention Form needs to be lodged to Brambuk well in advance of your departure.
- At the conclusion of your trip you must contact Brambuk to inform them that you are safe and have completed your walk.
- Group sizes must not exceed 16 people (including leaders).

Be safe, be prepared

- **Know your limitations:** Plan your route according to your group’s ability and experience.
- **Water:** Ensure all group members carry at least 3-4 litres per person per day. Water in creeks is not usual available during summer and autumn.
- **Food:** Carry enough food for every meal on your trip plus extra in case of an emergency.
- **Clothing:** Pack clothing suitable for a wide range of weather conditions, including waterproof rain jacket and pants, warm layers and clothing to protect from the sun – weather conditions can change quickly.
- **Equipment:** Use the equipment checklist provided at the end of this document
- **Navigation:** Each member of the party should carry the latest topographic map and a compass, and know how to navigate with them. GPS devices can be useful – but these should not be relied on as the primary navigation method, make sure the datum corresponds to the map you are using.
- **Wilderness First Aid:** Carry a first aid kit that is equipped for use in a wilderness environment and know how to use it. Depending on your location, it may be many hours before help can reach you. You must be self-sufficient and capable of providing first aid in a dynamic wilderness situation.
- **Emergencies:** Call 000 in an emergency. Have a plan for emergency situations and know when and how you will contact help. Do not rely on mobile phones as service is limited in the Grampians. Service **may only** be available from higher elevations or at the top of mountains. Prior to your trip consider installing the Emergency+ smartphone app available from www.triplezero.gov.au. Carry a PLB (personal locator beacon) or a satellite phone.

Know the weather

Always check weather conditions prior to your walk; total fire bans are common during summer and autumn. Carry a small AM/FM radio or mobile phone to check condition updates while on your walk. Weather conditions can vary considerably at any time of year – be prepared for both extreme heat and cold weather.

Summer

Hot and dry conditions – many creeks will have no water. Temperatures can exceed 40 degrees Celsius with a high likelihood of bushfires and extreme heatwaves.

Autumn

Milder temperatures with sporadic hot days; typically drier weather – many creeks will still have no water.

Winter

Wet and cold conditions are common. Higher elevations may receive snow and sub-zero temperatures during the day and overnight. Creeks and streams typically have water.

Spring

This is the best season to go overnight bushwalking in the Grampians. Milder temperatures and drier conditions are common, with water typically available in creeks.

On Your Trip

Minimal impact guidelines

Please respect our environment and culture

- Stay on track and prevent trampling vegetation.
- Carry it in, carry it out; don't bury or burn it.
- Leave campsites as you find them.
- Use toilets where available, otherwise dig a hole 15-20 cm deep, 100 metres away from water sources, campsites and walking tracks. Make sure you refill the hole with soil.
- Respect Aboriginal heritage by not camping in caves or rock shelters.
- Leave all artefacts undisturbed.

Be fire ready – stay safe

- The Grampians National Park is located in a high fire risk area. Code Red is the highest fire danger rating and on days of Code Red Fire Danger this park will be closed for public safety.
- If you are already visiting and hiking in the park you should attempt to leave as soon as possible; this may require you to change or retrace your route.
- You may not receive a warning if the park is closed. For up-to-date information on fire conditions call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667, visit www.parks.vic.gov.au or carry a small AM/FM radio and listen to ABC local radio 594 AM or 94.1 FM.
- During summer and autumn Total Fire Bans are common; this means no fires are to be lit, however you still may use a gas stove.
- Being aware of Total Fire Bans or high fire risk weather is your responsibility.

Walking track conditions

- Walking track conditions may change due to storms, bushfires or other environmental events.
- ALWAYS check current conditions when you register your walk with Brambuk.
- Walking tracks may involve rock steps, uneven and slippery track surfaces, water crossings and rock hopping.
- There are high cliffs and steep slopes throughout the Grampians, please be careful and supervise children at all times.
- Report any damage or safety concerns at the end of your trip to Brambuk.

Campsites and campgrounds

- Please only camp in designated bush camps and established campgrounds.
- Reduce your impact by only using fuel stoves - campfires are not permitted in hiker or bush camps.

Water Treatment

Remember to treat any water collected from creeks, streams and other bodies of water. Bring the water to a rolling boil, and then cool it before drinking. If boiling is impractical other treatment methods include chlorine and iodine tablets, handheld UV units, micro-filters, and purifiers. More information can be found on the Parks Victoria website at <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/safety/be-safe-plan-ahead/drinking-water>.

What to do if lost

- Stop, think and remain calm
- Recheck your map and try to locate your position using surrounding terrain and features
- If practical, back-track a short distance to your last known point
- Gaining some height to see better may help assist you with orientation
- If the above does not help STAY WHERE YOU ARE
- Attempt to contact emergency services
- Find shelter, stay warm and dry
- Attempt to make your position visible to searchers on the land and in the air
- If you are in a group, stay together and do not separate
- It may take considerable time for rescuers to reach you. Make it your priority to remain warm and dry, and ration your food and water

Overnight Hiking Equipment Checklist

It is essential that walkers are well-prepared and self-sufficient when overnight hiking in Grampians National Park. Please use the following list as a guide when preparing for your walk.

Prior to undertaking any overnight hike in the Grampians you must complete a Trip Intention Form. Information can be found by visiting www.parks.vic.gov.au and by contacting Brambuk – The National Park and Cultural Centre in Halls Gap on (03) 5361 4000 or info@brambuk.com.au

Hiking/Camping

- Backpack – 65 Litres or larger
- Pack liner – this will help keep everything inside your pack dry
- Tent – 3 season
- Sleeping bag – appropriate for the season – it can get very cold in the Grampians during winter
- Sleeping mat
- Topographical map and compass
- Torch and spare batteries

Clothing

- Hiking boots/shoes
- Waterproof rain jacket and pants
- Walking clothes – lightweight, quick-drying and appropriate for the season and weather. Avoid cotton; cotton clothing provides no warmth when wet
- Camp clothes – clothes that you keep dry to wear at night and to bed
- Gaiters – these help to protect from snakes and scratches
- Wide-brim sun hat
- Sunglasses
- Beanie – during colder months

Water, Food and Cooking

- Water bottles and water - prepare to carry at least 3-4 litres of water per person per day
- Food – for every meal, plus extra for in an emergency
- Stove and fuel
- Cooking pot(s)
- Pocket knife
- Utensils – fork, spoon, knife, mug, plate or bowl
- Waterproof matches and lighter

Safety and Hygiene

- A Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) is recommended for use in an emergency situation
- Mobile phone – please note mobile phone service in the Grampians is limited
- Toiletries
- Toilet paper and hand trowel
- Whistle – to attract attention in an emergency
- Wilderness first aid kit and medications
- Water treatment method – tablets, filter, boiling

Extras to Consider

- Trip intention form submitted to Brambuk – The National Park and Cultural Centre in Halls Gap
- Handheld GPS
- Satellite phone
- Portable AM/FM radio for keeping up-to-date with weather and fire conditions
- Install the Emergency+ smart phone app. <http://www.triplezero.gov.au>
- Camera
- Binoculars
- Camp shoes