

Dinner Plain Track Notes



Dinner Plain

Pure High Country

Discover the tracks & trails of Dinner Plain

At 1500m above sea level and built on a narrow plateau that straddles the Great Dividing Range, Dinner Plain is an alpine village about 12 km south east of Mt Hotham. It is surrounded by national park, state forest and historic pastoral properties.

Snow-covered in winter and a haven for cross-country skiers, Dinner Plain has much to offer visitors throughout the year as the jumping off point for a number of excellent walking trails including the *Hotham-Dinner Plain Trail*, *Carmichael Falls walk*, *Room with a View*, *Dead Timber Hill*, *the Montane Walking Trails*, *Tabletop Walk* and *Precipice Plain*. Separate track notes are available for each.

History

The Gunaikurnai people travelled to the High Country during the warmer months. Their Dreaming stories and culture ensured on their knowledge of the flora, fauna, geography and seasonal conditions was passed down through the generations. Many different indigenous groups met in the area to feast on the plentiful Bogong moths and hold ceremonies. European settlement of the area began with the arrival of pastoralists from the 1830s. It is believed that Dinner Plain was named by early cattlemen who stopped there on the grassy plains for their midday meal. Rich gold discoveries in the area in 1852 attracted large numbers of diggers who mined the ancient gold-bearing river systems for decades. Evidence of the gold history of the area can be seen on a number of the walks around Dinner Plain, in particular the Brandy Creek Mine to Cobungra River and the Cobungra Ditch walks.

The alpine environment

The area is home to many species of birds, mammals, frogs, reptiles, insects, fungi, orchids, alpine wildflowers and other flora including beautiful forests of Snow Gums, open grassy plains and extensive alpine bogs containing important Sphagnum Moss beds which play a critical role in alpine water catchment, regulating water flow from the mountains to the valleys below thanks to their ability to absorb, hold and filter huge quantities of moisture.



Kunzea ericifolia Yellow Kunzea
Image - © M. Fagg, Australian National Botanic Gardens

The Dinner Plain area is dominated by eucalyptus forests and open sub-alpine grasslands. Heathlands and fragile alpine bogs also feature in areas of poor drainage or exposed weather providing habitat for a number of threatened species of flora and fauna. At lower elevations these communities are replaced with Montane Forest dominated by Alpine Ash (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*). Threatened plant communities such as Montane Grassy Woodland are dominated by Snow Gum (*E. pauciflora*) and Mountain Gum (*E. dalrympleana* subspecies *dalrympleana*), with a grassy understorey. Significant flora occurs in this specialised habitat including the Shining Anchor Plant (*Discaria nitida*) near Cobungra Station and an endemic eucalypt – Omeo Gum (*E. neglecta*) that occurs locally.



Alpine Tree Frog - Image Arthur Rylah Institute (Photo, Nick Clemann)

From the narrow plateau on which the Dinner Plain village sits are the beginnings of many creeks and rivers which ultimately feed both the Murray Darling River system and the Gippsland Lakes. Just 1km below the village are the lovely Carmichael Falls which flow into the Dargo River and the Gippsland Lakes, while on the eastern side of Dinner Plain Track is the start of the Victoria River water catchment area. Across the Great Alpine Road from Dinner Plain village is the Cobungra River catchment. Both of these rivers are part of the Murray River system.

Much of this area was burnt in the 2003 Alpine fires that totalled 1.1 million hectares in Victoria and, more recently, the 2013 fires. To assist regeneration in the area, Parks Victoria has undertaken extensive re-seeding of Alpine Ash areas by helicopter.

Dinner Plain village circuit walk (1hr return, easy)

A gentle circuit walk around Dinner Plain via Fitzzy's Cirque, Collectors Cirque and the Dinner Plain Track offers visitors a great introduction to a variety of alpine landscapes as well as highlighting the unique architecture of the village. The trails take in Snow Gum woodlands with understories of flowering shrubs, open grassy plains, wildflower meadows and wetlands.

Starting from Dinner Plain Hut, walk across to the replica cattlemen's shelter – Crisps Hut – and follow Fitzzy's Cirque to the top of the ski run where it links with Collectors Cirque and downhill to Scrubbers End. Cross the road and continue along the path, keeping the village to your right. At the southern end of the village the path meets the Dinner Plain 4WD track. To the left is the border of the Alpine National Park and sweeping views across open grasslands to the Dargo High Plains.



Orange Everlasting daisy *Xerochrysum subundulatum*
Image courtesy Rebecca Read, Victorian Alps Nursery

From Dinner Plain Track a side walk back toward the village is available through the Alpine Bog area across a steel boardwalk. One of the most ecologically significant areas of Dinner Plain, this heath-covered wetland shelters a population of the critically endangered Alpine Tree Frog *Litoria verreauxii alpine* as well as another highly threatened species, the Alpine Bog Skink.

Return to the Dinner Plain Track and turn right at the trailhead of the Hotham-Dinner Plain Trail at the Great Alpine Road to complete the Dinner Plain village circuit. The last stretch of the walk, through stands of Snow Gums, is a blooming field of wildflowers and orchids during warmer months.

Look out for

There are the many species of flora and fauna to look out for along the Dinner Plain circuit walk. A few are listed here. Visitors are encouraged to take binoculars and field guides to help with identification.

Birds: Gang Gang Cockatoo, Australasian Pipit, Banded Lapwing, Magpie, Flame Robin, Grey Fantail, Yellow Faced Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Lyrebird, Crimson Rosella, Currawong, Little Raven, Boobook, Barn Owl

Insects & Spiders: Mountain grasshopper (look for the vivid red and blue colouring) Bogong Moths, Orb Spiders, Wolf Spiders

Reptiles & amphibians: White lipped snake, Highlands Copperhead Snake, Tiger Snake, Alpine Skink, Alpine Tree Frog

Shrubs, herbs & orchids: Alpine Pepper, Grass Trigger plant, Alpine Grevillea, Yellow Kunzea, Mountain Hovea, Pale Vanilla Lily, several varieties of native daisies, Sphagnum Moss, Alpine Snow Grass, Mountain Tea Tree

Mammals: Wombats, Brush Tailed Possum, Dusky Antechinus

Lichens & fungi: Starfish fungus

Weeds of the area

Pest plants and animals present an ongoing threat to native species and habitats and a challenge to land owners and managers of the area. Weed species are always linked to land disturbance of one kind or another – building, cattle grazing and road construction are key causes. Visitors are encouraged to be aware of pest species which include apple trees (often arising from well-meaning walkers!), Ox Eye daisies, (often confused with native daisies), willows, Paterson's Curse, Twiggy Mullein and the Sweet Briar (wild rose). Blackberry continues to pose a major challenge throughout eastern Australia.

Be prepared!

Walkers should be aware that weather conditions can change rapidly in alpine areas. Snowfalls and blizzards can be experienced any time of the year. Be prepared with; wind and waterproof jackets, warm clothing, hat, gloves, sturdy footwear, map, compass, first aid kit, sunscreen, insect repellent and carry plenty of water. Most importantly, let someone know before you go. Be aware that venomous snakes are a natural part of the Australian environment and are active during warmer months. Never attempt to pick them up – quietly wait for them to pass.

Please respect the environment. Stick to the paths to avoid trampling the delicate habitats of the alpine area.

Please Note

The maps contained in this brochure may not be suitable for navigation purposes for all walks. It is advised that the appropriate Parks Victoria Park Notes and/or Land Victoria topographical maps be obtained prior to undertaking any of the listed walks within the Alpine National Park.

Days of Code Red Fire Danger

Please note on days of forecast Code Red Fire Danger Rating, the Department of Environment & Primary Industries and Parks Victoria will close parks and forests (including State Forests and National Parks) in the relevant weather district for public safety. For bushfire information please call the Bushfire Enquiry Line on 1800 240 667.

Visitor Information Centre

Dinner Plain Visitor Information Centre
6 Big Muster Drive, Dinner Plain
Ph. 1300 734 365
www.visitdinnerplain.com.au

Contact Numbers:

Emergency	
Police, Ambulance, Fire	000
SES	132 500
VicRoads - Road Closures	131 170
The Bushfire Enquiry Line	1800 240 667
Parks Victoria	131 963



Alpine Shire



Department of
Environment and
Primary Industries

