



WELCOME TO

Marlo

Where the iconic Snowy River meets the vast Southern Ocean

You'll find Marlo—an unspoiled corner of East Gippsland that feels quietly set apart from the world. This is a village made for slowing down, breathing deeply, and rediscovering nature at its most untouched. Come and experience it for yourself—where relaxation comes naturally and the wilderness does the rest.

First Nations peoples have lived, travelled, and camped along the Marlo coastline for tens of thousands of years, drawn to the rich estuary where river, ocean, and land meet. Long before European settlement, this unique landscape provided food, shelter, and an important place of cultural connection.

Marlo's first permanent European settler in the township area was James Stirling, who arrived around 1875. He built a small bark hut on the bluff overlooking the river mouth, taking in a commanding view of the entrance where the Snowy River meets the sea. Over time, that humble shelter was enlarged into an accommodation house and later became the Marlo Hotel after a liquor licence was granted in 1886, establishing one of the township's earliest landmarks.

Marlo was officially proclaimed a township on 18 February 1889. During the late nineteenth century, it became an important river port with ships carrying supplies from Melbourne to the mouth of the Snowy River. Cargo was unloaded onto smaller boats and paddle steamers that continued inland to Orbost. Before reliable roads reached the district, this made Marlo a vital transport and trading point for the region.

INTO THE WILD

Day One

Morning

After a soothing first night at Marlo Caravan Park and Motel (www.marlocaravanpark.com), your day begins with a gentle walk along the edge of the Snowy River estuary. There is no need for the car; the water's edge is only metres away. Along the foreshore, you'll notice sculptures, pelicans, gulls, terns, and elegant wading birds. You may even spot the occasional seal. There is every chance of seeing a lyrebird crossing the track as you meander between the beach and the rare coastal rainforest along the Foreshore Track. The atmosphere feels hushed—an unmistakable sense of quiet that belongs only to places like this.

If you feel like something more energising, join a session with Tidal Fitness Marlo (www.instagram.com/tidalfitness2024) to stretch your muscles and get the blood flowing. You will have earned your morning coffee.

Settle in for breakfast with a quiet coffee and something homemade at a local café, where true country hospitality comes with generous smiles and fresh baking. At the Marlo Bait and Tackle Café (www.facebook.com/marlo.bait.tackle/), just on your left as you enter Marlo, you can browse an extensive range of fishing gear, quirky shirts, books, and local produce. Their homemade cakes are exceptional. This much-loved coffee spot captures the character of Marlo itself—delicious, welcoming, unusual, and entirely its own.

A packed picnic lunch from the cafe, and you're ready to head for your adventure to discover the Snowy River Mouth. Collecting your pre-booked bike at Pirate Park from Snowy River Cycling (www.snowyrivercycling.com.au/), you're ready for a gentle 3-4 kilometre cliff top ride on an off-road trail. MOTS beach awaits you. Ride the Snowy Estuary Track east, stopping at the Lovelock Lookout, be amazed at the wide vista of the Snowy River as it enters the Southern Ocean. A spectacular photo spot. Choosing a beach spot at 'MOTS' won't be easy; there are many little nooks and crannies. If the tide is low, you can wade over to the river mouth. This is pristine coastal wilderness, no footprints in the sand. Ask the locals for helpful hints. After an explore, shell collecting, and bird spotting, you'll be ready for a midday doze, the surf will lull your senses.

COASTAL DISCOVERY

Day Two

Morning

Wake to birdsong—Kookaburras, Wrens, and Magpies welcoming the morning. Today is for ocean beaches and breweries.

Wander down to The Local @ Marlo (www.instagram.com/thelocalatmarlo/) for breakfast. Sit on the deck, watch the town come to life, enjoy excellent coffee and one of Max's delicious breakfast offerings. Browse the shelves of local artisanal produce and perhaps take home a small indulgence to remember the trip. Another packed picnic lunch might feel like the perfect idea.

After breakfast, set out toward Cape Conran (<https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/cape-conran-coastal-park>), just a short 17 kilometre drive east hugging the coastline, also accessible by bike along the coastal road. At Salmon Rocks, West Cape, stand above the surf and take in the sweeping coastline shaped by time and tide. Surfers catch clean waves below while ocean fishers launch into open water. This land carries deep cultural significance, long known and cared for by the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (<https://gunaikurnai.org>).

Explore the rugged rocky capes—snorkel in clear coastal rockpools, wander boardwalks tracing the headlands, and search for shells tucked into quiet coves. At Cowrie Bay, you may even find a small cowrie shell as you wander.

Further along, the beaches stretch wide and untouched, a sanctuary for fragile coastal life. Walk slowly, watching for seabirds, dolphins, or even whales passing offshore on their long migrations.



The coastline near Marlo also carries a dramatic maritime history. Dangerous reefs, shifting sandbars, and the ever-changing river entrance made navigation difficult for even experienced captains. One of the most notable wrecks was the Neptune, lost near Pearl Point in 1889, reinforcing Marlo's reputation as both a beautiful and challenging coastal settlement. Today, Marlo remains one of the very few places in Australia where a major river — the Snowy River — flows directly into the Southern Ocean. The constantly changing meeting of fresh water, salt water, tides, and drifting sandbanks continues to shape the landscape, just as it has shaped the town's story for generations.

Settle into the rhythm of Marlo. Wander along empty, wind-swept beaches, trace the still edges of the estuary, and drift through bushland alive with birdsong and wildflowers. Days unfold gently here—beneath wide open skies, across fertile floodplains, and into nights filled with brilliant stars. Between explorations, enjoy thoughtfully prepared local food, rich coffee, a character-filled and internationally recognised brewery, and a welcoming pub where sunsets linger across river and sea.

The journey itself becomes part of the escape—a chance to begin unwinding and to let anticipation build for your wilderness retreat.

From Melbourne (~380kms) or southern New South Wales, the road winds through towering eucalypt forests before opening into the expansive Snowy River floodplain. Near Orbost, the landscape broadens, revealing the historic Snowy River Rail Bridge, the longest timber trestle bridge in the Southern Hemisphere—a reminder of the region's proud agricultural and timber heritage, and of a rural way of life shaped by hard work and healthy outdoors. As you follow the river the final few kilometres from Orbost to Marlo, the water widens into a spectacular estuary alive with birdlife and marine life.

Take a moment in historic Orbost to gather local insight and inspiration before following the river as it winds toward the sea. As you climb away from the river flats and cross the Brodribb River, you are greeted by the sea eagle sculpture at the crest of the hill: "Welcome to Marlo, where the Snowy meets the sea."

The salt air and sweeping river and ocean views begin to soothe the spirit almost immediately. Tranquillity settles in. You are stepping into a slower world—one of estuary calm, unique forests, clifftop and beach walks, remarkable birdlife, rare wildflowers, crystal-clear night skies, and untouched wilderness. A warm welcome greets you where the river finally meets the ocean—a meeting of currents, colours, and calm.

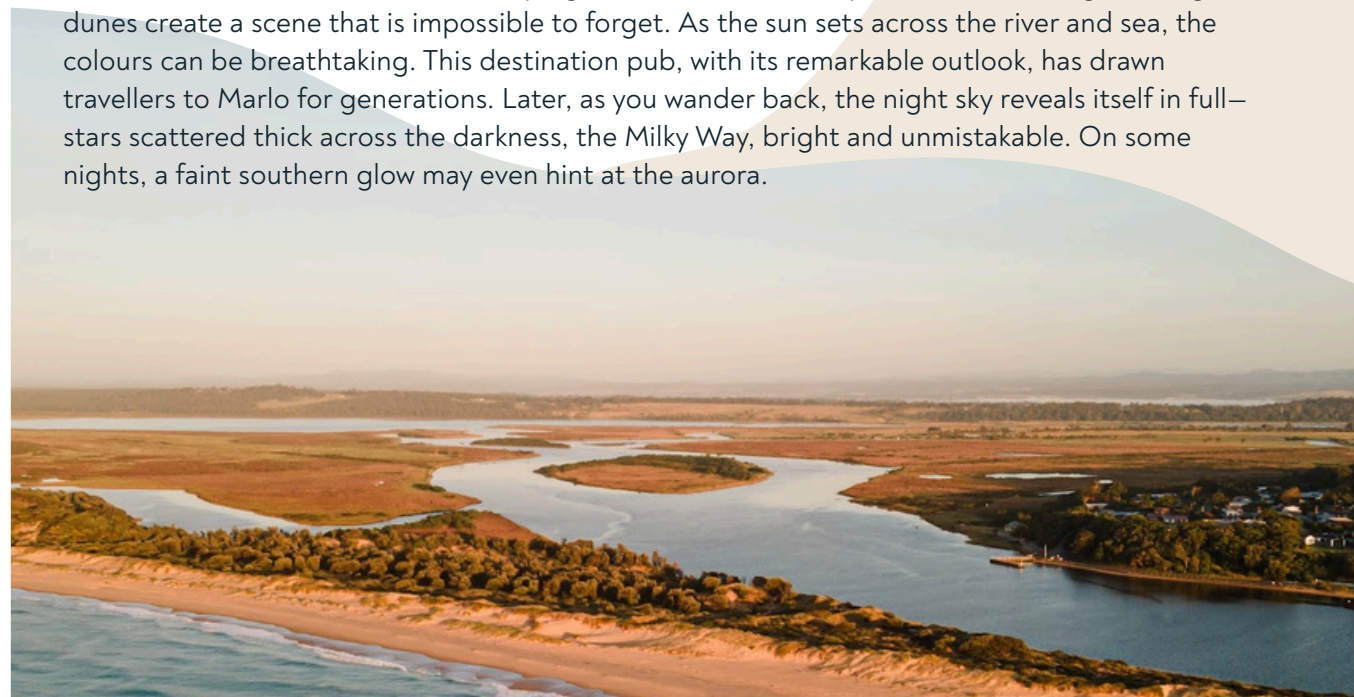
Afternoon

A gentle 800 metre stroll to Frenches Narrows leads across pristine dune and sedge flats via timber boardwalks and onto the endless sweep of Ninety Mile Beach. You may spot Emu or Fairy Wrens along the way, or if you're really lucky, a Sea Eagle; they are local residents. On the rarest days, a Flame Robin or Pardalotte may flash through the scrub. We hope you packed your binoculars.

The rare coastal rainforest along the foreshore invites you into its stillness—a place where sound softens and time slows. Climb to the tops of the dunes and take in the meeting of water and sky before walking out onto the endless beach. Here, it is just you, the wind, and the ocean.

Return to Marlo and settle into the peaceful sanctuary of Marlo Hideaway (www.marlohideaway.com.au/), another hidden gem with a tropical feel, adorned with distinctive art and sculpture. A cheeky session with Travel Saunas, co-located at Marlo Hideaway (www.travelsaunas.com.au), can provide the perfect end to a remarkable first day. Set against nature, the experience is simple yet deeply restorative, following the timeless rhythm of heat, rest, and cooling down.

As evening arrives, take a short walk to the renowned Marlo Hotel (marlohotel.com.au/) for a memorable dinner on the deck. Sweeping views over the estuary to some of the region's largest dunes create a scene that is impossible to forget. As the sun sets across the river and sea, the colours can be breathtaking. This destination pub, with its remarkable outlook, has drawn travellers to Marlo for generations. Later, as you wander back, the night sky reveals itself in full—stars scattered thick across the darkness, the Milky Way, bright and unmistakable. On some nights, a faint southern glow may even hint at the aurora.



Afternoon

By early afternoon, find a quiet place to pause—perhaps beside a river mouth or among ancient rock formations—and simply absorb it all. This is the essence of Marlo: unhurried, unspoiled, unforgettable.

From there, continue to East Cape and Sailors Grave (3-kilometre drive), where a newly built boardwalk wraps around the headland and reveals more rock pools and broad untouched sands—important breeding grounds for endangered Little Terns and Hooded Plovers. Keep watch for seals, dolphins, and whales in the water. In autumn and spring, migrating whales pass between Antarctica and the northern tropics.

Another option, if you still have energy, is an 8 kilometre return walk along East Cape Beach to the Yeerung River is unforgettable. Climb ancient lava rocks, pause to take in the view, and discover the marine sanctuary of Beware Reef, where marine life teems beneath the surface just 4 kilometres off the beach. Paddle quietly into the hidden reaches of the creek and discover a place that feels entirely your own—hidden, peaceful, extraordinary.

Distinctive, grounded, and memorable, it is time for a beer. On your way back to Marlo, call into Sailors Grave Brewing - Dunetown (<https://sailorsgravebrewing.com/>), for a tasting paddle and a few snacks. This boutique brewery, inspired by the local landscape, produces beautifully crafted beers that feel every bit as individual as Marlo itself—matchless and unmistakably local. And then, too soon, your wilderness escape draws to a close. As you leave Marlo, the feeling stays with you—refreshed, reset, reconnected—and quietly, almost without noticing, you will already be planning your return.

Options

If you're seeking a truly off-grid luxury escape, a night at The Little Drift (<https://thelittledrift.com/about-us/>) will immerse you in "a quiet place in nature, informed by the world beyond." Nestled along the coastline of far East Gippsland, The Little Drift offers a serene retreat between the rugged Ninety Mile Beach and the open farmland of the Marlo Plains — a place where refined comfort meets complete seclusion.

