

East Gippsland Rail Trail.

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SIDE TRIPS Add to your visit, extend your trip. Discover more of Naturally Magic East Gippsland.

Location 34. SIDE TRIPS: Fruit trees at Johnsonville, and the Tambo River

Johnsonville is on the Princes highway but easily accessible by bicycle from Bumberrah station ground (about 3 Kms) to the south.

This is the nearest part of the Tambo River as a 'real' river, as opposed to the sandy bed remnant at Bruthen (a sad consequence of gold dredging in times past which wrecked the upper reaches and started a sand 'slug' which relentlessly moves toward The Lakes). To reach the river and a pleasant picnic spot, cross the highway and proceed ahead for several hundred metres. A great surprise at Johnsonville is a most outstanding fruit orchard run by Elaine Jenkins and her husband Graeme. Elaine not only featured on the cover of the EG Telstra directory for 2008, but champions rare stone fruit including peaches varieties, and apples, and fantastic cherries in season. The orchard 'shop' is a celebration of East Gippsland productivity. Bottled condiments, jams and other goodies plus something of a local history lesson. Well worth a visit.

Map reference 35. SIDE TRIPS: Through the forest to Lake Tyres

There are many forest tracks to Lake Tyres but the most convenient can be accessed from the Jonson Road crossing. Head south across the highway and follow the gravel road. You will be heading roughly SW with some winding along the way. (more details?)

Map reference 36. SIDE TRIPS: Marlo and the 90 Mile Beach

This Trail ends at Orbost but the adventure continues. Although at this stage the road south to Marlo is narrow and must be treated by cyclists with great care, the destination is stunning - Victoria's 90 Mile Beach. This destination is best as a stop-over. Marlo is also en route to what in years to come will be the Great South Ocean Walk, a trail through Conran (camping, Parks Victoria cabins etc) and onward to the NSW border. And of course you have the 90 Mile Beach as Marlo's back yard!

Map reference 37. SIDE TRIPS: Riding challenges in the forests of East Gippsland

If forest track riding is your thrill, or just exploring the southern section of East Gippsland's High Country, try the north and east vastness from Orbost. Local enthusiasts have mapped many kilometres of roads, tracks and fire trails. www.orbstbikerides.net

Another option is the 'Great Triangle Ride' - taking in the Rail Trail, Orbost to Buchan, Buchan to Bruthen. What a challenge! Now just add a few more days to your East Gippsland visit, or make sure you schedule a return visit soon.

Map reference 38. SIDE TRIPS: Eagle Point and ancient Silt Jetties

Take a geology lesson and learn about river silt. Believe it or not, the thin, low and sinuous Mitchell River banks jutting out into Lake King are the product of thousands of years of silt brought down from the High Country hinterland. Second longest in the world and longest in the southern hemisphere, these Silt Jetties as they are known, barely a metre above sea level - yes, they do flood - support some farming activity and a number of holiday and permanent residents. Getting there requires heading south from Bairnsdale (the Paynesville Road) but taking a side road which goes to the base of the cliffs at Eagle Point. A cycling route to Paynesville is being developed but meanwhile check local maps for access details.

Map reference 39. SIDE TRIPS: Paynesville on The Lakes; sailing, Koalas, a ferry and the Island

Paynesville! Why stop at Number 38. Press on and discover the nautical centre of The Lakes. So much to see, to do, out on the water. Hire a day boat. Go kayaking. Sailing. Or just eat and drink while watching others have that sort of fun. Be really carried away and buy your get-away home. Or just jump on the ferry (free for bikes and walkers) and explore the sandy tracks of Raymond Island, Koala spotting and discover remote beaches on the far side of the Island. Several eateries, a pleasant wine bar (shop), bank, supermarkets, bakeries etc. Wonderful spot to just watch the passing boat traffic while eating fish and chips.

Map reference 40. SIDE TRIPS: Township of Metung; hills and nautical themes

Getting to Metung from the Rail Trail involves getting to Swan Reach (on the Tambo River) then using a rather narrow and in places hilly road but the destination has some interesting attractions (9.2 Kms from SR). There is a yacht club, an hotel with great views, several smart eating places and upper grade accommodation options. Shaving Point juts out into the Lakes, providing a narrow isthmus offering views west to Lake King and east across Bancroft Bay. Several water side board walks. Reputed to have friendly mossies but they don't like 'repellant'.

Further details about all these locations and more near the Rail Trail can be obtained from the local Visitor Information Centres and by way of web searches. The Rail Trail web site offers a number of links.