



CRUISING: Bruce Sigal, of Bundeena Kayaks, leads tourists into Port Hacking's South West Arm.

About a year ago, at the urging of his first unofficial trekking clients (i.e. friends and family), he set up a business offering single and multi-day walking and camping through the park, focusing on the 26km Coast Track, which stretches along cliffs, beaches and escarpments from Bundeena southwest to Otford.

At the time of writing this, TripAdvisor.com ranked Ian's walking tours No.4 of 399 attractions in Sydney, and it's easy to see why. For one, the scenery is absolutely stunning, with lofty headlands, an incredible hermit cave from the 1930s with walls still intact, Aboriginal rock

engravings (not part of the Coast Track but included on many of Ian's walks) and a set of dazzling white sandstone cliffs (known as The Balcony, The White Cliffs of Marley, or Wedding Cake Rock), 64m above the ocean.

You'll take in all these sights on Ian's 12-21km day walk; if you join his 28km two-day adventure, you'll make camp at Wattamolla, a prime whale-watching spot, continue on past other whale-watching vantages and heritage-listed 1930s shack communities and earn the right to brag that you've completed this Sydney walking gem in its entirety.

One of the main things that would entice me to tag along on Ian's version of the entire Coast Track is that his clients only have to carry their own snacks (provided), clothes and water. Since the track is blessed with access points, Ian's support crew transfer the supplied camping equipment, any belongings you think you might need, as well as provisions for an evening meal fit for a queen – marinated leg of lamb (a vegetarian option is available), grilled veggie skewers, salad, beer and wine. Alcoholic libations aren't included on day walks, but a hessian shoulder bag, stuffed with water, trail mix, fresh fruit and an energy bar, is.

By late afternoon, I'm drunk on sunshine, happily exhausted from the day's adventures. The ferry back to Cronulla chugs past Burraneer's tiny palaces as I reflect on the park's rugged beauty, calm and relative proximity to Sydney. A plane overhead delivers me back to the world and I smile, realising that the next time I find myself occupying one of those decisively common window seats in skies over Sydney, I'll gaze down towards the park's dramatic cliffs and recall my encounter with sharks and royalty.

Kara Murphy travelled courtesy of Tourism New South Wales.

Wish you were here

Go

Royal National Park (\$11 a vehicle a day) is about 32km south of Sydney; Bundeena is another 23km drive. From Sydney, travel south along the Princes Highway and turn off at Farnell Ave. If you're only visiting Bundeena or Maianbar, a vehicle pass isn't required.

A more scenic alternative is the ferry (\$5.70 an adult one way, \$2.85 a child), which operates regularly between Cronulla (29km south of Sydney) and Bundeena.

See www.cronullaferries.com.au for timetables.

Explore

Bundeena Kayaks operates out of the Bonnie Vale Picnic Area in Bundeena. The 2.5 to 3-hour Royal Kayak Tour (\$77 adults, \$44 children) runs at 9.30am on Sundays as well as other days on request. Kayak hire is also available. Phone 9544 5294 or visit www.bundeenakayaks.com.au

Royal Coast Walks offers several single (from \$79) and multi-day (from \$239) adventures in Royal National Park. For details, phone 0424 546 921 or visit www.royalcoastwalks.com.au
More: www.environment.nsw.gov.au