

Dinner Plain Track Notes

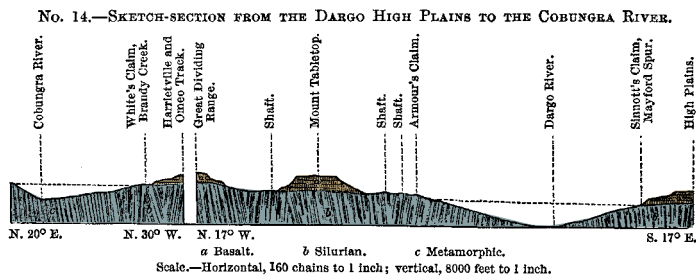


Tabletop Walk



14km return (5 hours), Grade 4 Walking Track

At 1593 metres above sea level, Mt. Tabletop is a distinctive flat plateau linked to the Great Dividing Range by a low ridge. In this untracked area at the headwaters of the Dargo River there is a distinct feeling of isolation. From JB Plain, about 1.5 km west of Dinner Plain village, walk south (following an old fence line) across the plains for 0.5 km. From here the route is marked by orange triangular markers. After crossing snow grass plains and Snow Gum woodland the route drops down to Tabletop Creek and then follows a long ridge up to the plateau. The track is marked to a rocky outcrop just below the summit. Return by the same route.



Geology

The plateau is a remnant of basalt lava that flowed out of small volcanoes in the area about 25 million years ago. Faulting and erosion has steepened the landscape and exposed the much older metamorphosed rocks beneath the basalt capping.

Some of the underlying rock was gold bearing and was worked by miners at the end of the 19th century. Mt. Tabletop was also known as Square Mountain.



Alluvial miners on the Upper Dargo River
Detail from lithograph, courtesy private collection

History

JB Plain was grazed under lease from Parks Victoria by Cobungra Station until the 2003 fires. Their lease was revoked in 2004.

Dinner Plain Village

Dinner Plain

Pure High Country

Mt. Tabletop was first worked for its deep lead deposit of gold from the 1860s. Gold was first found in the locality by Fred Box. In the 1880s the claim was worked by the Square Mount Hydraulic Sluicing Company. A number of water races were cut and the mine equipped for hydraulic sluicing. A significant mine camp formed at this time. The Peterson brothers worked the mine in the 1890s, and cut a low level tunnel into the lead which enabled them to work the claim during the winter months. The brothers were regularly known to use skis to get to the claim during periods of snow.

The mine was situated on a main route into the Upper Dargo Goldfield and the township of Mayford. The walking trail follows the first section of this old mining track.



Eucalypt seedling
Image courtesy Parks Victoria

The Walk

Tabletop Walk begins at the treeline on the south east corner of JB Plain about 0.5 km from JB Hut, beyond a solitary strainer post.

After a few minutes the trail emerges from woodland to a small grassy plain. In this area the remnants of log fencing and a gate are evident. Cattle were grazed here in the summer months for 100 years until 1989 when the Alpine National Park was created.

On the far side of the plain the track enters sub-alpine forest and drops steeply down to Tabletop Creek. Mt. Tabletop can be glimpsed to the south through the trees. From here the track rises slightly before skirting the southern edge of another grassy plain.

From here the walk follows the southerly spur that links the Great Dividing Range with Mt. Tabletop. This section of the spur was burnt in the 2003 bushfires and again in 2013. Some of this area has been aerially reseeded with Alpine Ash to help stimulate regrowth, some of it now 2-3 metres tall and quite dense in places. The final 0.5 km of track climbs steeply to the northern edge of the mountain. There are panoramic views in all directions from the summit.

Be Prepared

The best months for walking in the alpine environment are from November through to April, however, weather conditions can change rapidly, and snowfalls and blizzards can occur at any time of the year. (*The Bushwalking Season is from the November Melbourne Cup Weekend to mid May.*)

Be prepared with:

- Wind and waterproof jackets
- Warm clothing – hat, gloves, sunglasses, and strong footwear
- Food and water
- First aid kit and sunscreen
- Map and compass
- Check the weather forecast before departing
- Let someone know where you are going
- Mobile phone (reception in some areas)

Caution

Bushfires have damaged snowgums, which are now regenerating but dead branches are shedding with the new growth. High wind days may result in falling limbs and branches. It is not recommended to use the track on windy days. It is not recommended to use the track on windy days. Please be aware that snakes are active during warm months.



Tabletop Walk

Grade of Walk:	Grade 4, as per <i>The Australian Walking Track Grading System</i>
Distance:	14km return
Time:	5 hours
Gradient:	Mostly level with some gradual steep sections
Quality of Path:	Mostly formed track, with some obstacles
Steps:	Occasional steps
Experience required:	Bushwalking experience recommended

For more information on Dinner Plains Tracks & Trails, visit www.visitdinnerplain.com.au.



Alpine Shire

