

River camping is a shoe-in



To find the Fitzroy River turnoff, look for the shoes...

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[/dropcap]HE MOUTH of the **Fitzroy River**, between Tyrendarra and Portland, is a wonderful spot that is hard to find, so it is best to look for the shoes.

Some kind and obviously quirky people who live in the farmhouse right across from the turnoff to the river on the Princes Highway have very helpfully decorated their front fence with what looks like every pair of shoes they have ever worn.

Or maybe they found them on the roadside.

Either way, the shoes provide a handy visual marker for the gateway to what is a lovely, yet wild, camping spot for those who like to rough it a little...and bring their dogs.

The “shoe turnoff” is in fact Thompsons Rd which winds its way

for a short distance to the coast and the river mouth.

The roughly 4km trip takes you through some lovely farmland dotted with abandoned buildings built by the early settlers in the area.



Remnants of life from another time can be found on the drive to the river mouth.

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[/dropcap]he first stop at the [Fitzroy River campground](#) area is the boat ramp where you can wander out on the wooden jetty and watch the river surging its way to the sea.

Drive a little further on to find the start of the campground area, which is essentially a patch of open grass with several trees for shelter.

This area is quite protected from the southerly winds that can whip through the south-coast with ferocity (there are wind farms in this area for a reason!).

Another 200m along and you come to the riverbank where camping

is also permitted, but there is less protection from the elements.

Part of the appeal of Fitzroy River is that it remains bush camping, with no power or facilities beyond a new, long-drop toilet block, and a basic picnic and barbecue area.

Camping is free, except for peak times, when an onsite caretaker will collect a small fee; so don't expect a Big 4 – or the crowds that come with it.

Instead, in the off-season particularly, you will most likely have the place to yourself.



Barney, the Bluestone cocker spaniel, does the water test in the estuary.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] I [/dropcap]t is a wonderful area to explore, with a short walk along the estuary taking you right down to the foreshore of the wild ocean.

Information signs indicate that at least two tall ships came

to grief in the area in the 1800s, including the *Julia*, the remains of which are apparently still visible as a dark patch in the surf, visible from the hilltop.

Dogs are welcome, but plovers nest in the area (it is a great spot for bird watching) so remember to bring a leash...



Basic facilities at Fitzroy River mean peace and quiet, particularly, in the off season.



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