

Martins Lookout Loop Walk

Location: Start at Martin's Lookout. This can be reached by going to the end of Farm Rd in Springwood. From here the road becomes a gravel road and continues for 1.7kms into the Blue Mountains National Park and finally to a parking area.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Grade: Moderate with steep sections. Medium level of fitness required.

Features: creek, overhangs, lookout

Trip Notes:

We make a bee-line for the beautiful lookout even though this walk starts before reaching it. This is arguably the best view in the Lower Blue Mountains and wanting to savour every opportunity, we watch the morning sun lighting up the cliff faces opposite. Instead of taking the obvious path down from the lookout, our first leg of this loop walk starts back near the information board. It is not sign posted (the old sign was burnt some years ago) but the track is easy to find, and starts to descend quickly.

Old rock steps lead down the escarpment past interesting shelves of stone. The view is still impressive and we catch a good glimpse of it before walking along the edge of a drop. The track descends again with stone steps weaving between rock shelves. In some parts the path is lined by blocks of stone, spring flowers are sprouting between the cracks and we can hear the call of whips birds way down below at the creek. The trail descends for the most part with some flat sections to ease the jarring on our knees. Throughout this walk fascinating rock formations, caves and overhangs emerge amongst the vegetation. Soon a long descent starts and the vegetation begins to change as ferns appear and plants become more lush. Sounds of families enjoying the view from the lookout above, echo around as children cooee across the valley. As we near the bottom, the track gets steeper and there are a few big rock steps to negotiate before nearing the immense turpentine tree at the base where we meet the main track. A sign board clearly indicating the routes before us, shows the way and an old sign on a tree opposite points to the track we just came down on. Half burnt, it seems to read "Martin's Lookout Short Track".

We turn left onto the main track, the sign indicating it is 1.3kms from here to Martin's Lookout. (Turning right would take us alongside Glenbrook Creek to join up with other Springwood walks). Our trail winds its way parallel to the creek and soon a short side track goes down to a large pool with an interesting rock to perch on. Continuing along, the vegetation is thick in some places and there are lovely sounds of birds about with the bubbling stream on the right. New spring flowers, grevilleas and bottle brush bloom around and a spectacular stand of Waratahs emerge not far away. We start to catch more glimpses of the creek as the water flows around some gigantic boulders, and the leaf-littered path weaves by mossy green rocks to bring us to a sandy clearing at the water's edge - a great place for a rest and even a cool dip if you feel like it. Here we stop and have a snack while watching the lizards sunbaking on the rocks opposite.

The track continues parallel to the creek and reaches a sign which points the way back up to Martin's Lookout. This is our return route, but before going up we take the cute set of steps down to

Glenbrook Creek to explore its rocky shores. This picturesque waterway looks spectacular with the steep escarpment on both sides and there are many great spots to sit and relax and observe . Eventually we have to draw ourselves away to start the dreaded ascent. (On another day we may choose to cross the creek and venture further to Saint Helena Ridge). It's only a 700m ascent to Martin's Lookout and some locals use it as an exercise route, jogging up and down the track so it can't be too bad! We return back to the sign post and then start ascending the rock steps, zig-zagging up past eroded overhangs with striking orange hues. In some places there are steps carved in the rock, while in other parts rock slabs have been placed to help walkers. We ascend quickly and soon we have views through the trees. The track flattens out and a nice overhang provides a good shelter for a rest. Among the quietness of the bush we hear a familiar scratching and get a great view of a lyrebird. He (it was a male with the fancy tail) took no notice of us and busily scratched along the track and its edges while we enjoyed the display.

The track continues to ascend winding up the escarpment, with one slightly tricky part to climb. Eventually we get to the top and the rewarding view at Martin's Lookout. Here a plaque on a rock tells us about the white cross we can see on the cliffs opposite, which was placed to honour Rev Br GE Raymer "who often led hiking parties through the valleys in this district". We spread out on the rocks catching the breeze to cool us down - a lovely way to end this walk at such a spectacular view.