

GREAT SOUTHERN TOURING ROUTE

Australia's GREAT Road Trip

THE GREAT SOUTHERN TOURING ROUTE IS AUSTRALIA'S GREAT ROAD TRIP, AN ADVENTURE FULL OF EXPERIENCES THAT WILL DELIGHT AND INSPIRE EVERY TRAVELLER.



Geelong & The Bellarine



A TRUE REGION OF CONTRASTS, FLOWING EFFORTLESSLY FROM EDGY BAYSIDE PRECINCTS TO EARTHY RURAL CHARM AND LAID-BACK COASTAL VIBE BEYOND.

MUST DO EXPERIENCES

Glorious golf: Curlewis Golf Club ranks in Australia's Top 100 golf clubs. Lock-in practice time at the state-of-the-art 18-bay driving range. Or tee off while taking in scenic panoramas over Corio Bay – rolling fairways will challenge you throughout the par 72 course.

Hungry for lunch: Try Claribeaux on The Bellarine at Curlewis Golf Club. Their signature restaurant, will delight with its' creative structural form and culinary options – French influence, contemporary fusion and a keen focus on sustainable local produce.

Ferry tales: Board Searoad Ferries' passenger and car vessel at Queenscliff and cross spectacular Port Phillip Bay to Sorrento and back.

The Q Train: All aboard The Q Train, Australia's premier rail restaurant on the historic Bellarine Railway. Enjoy a delicious gastronomical journey – an on-the-move degustation of fresh local produce, set against stunning views of Swan Bay and the Bellarine Peninsula.

Dyed in the wool: Geelong was once the wool centre of the world. Step into the National Wool Museum, housed in an 1872 bluestone woolstore to discover a timeless wool story, from the sheep's back to the clothes rack.

Waterfront wonders: Head into Geelong for a stroll along the sparkling waterfront. If the sun's still out, take a dip at Eastern Beach or a ride on the Giant Sky Wheel. While you're here, meet one of the 104 brightly painted bollards along the foreshore walking/cycling track from Rippleside Park, through Waterfront Geelong to the Botanic Gardens.

Local tipples: The Bellarine Peninsula is dotted with family-owned vineyards, boutique wineries, magnificent gardens and breathtaking views. Soak them up at Jack Rabbit Vineyard with fantastic views across Corio Bay.

Dive right in: From the lush green vines to the deep blue sea, the next stop is Sea All Dolphins Swims in Queenscliff. First, you're kitted out with all the swimming gear you need: flippers, a snorkel and a heavy-duty wetsuit, then... it's anchors away! The friendly and experienced crew will take you out onto Port Phillip Bay for 3.5 hours, where you'll swim with baby fur seals and look out for playful dolphins along the way.

Finish your day right: After all the ocean swimming, you deserve a good night's sleep. Check into the Rydges Geelong. The perfect base from which to seek out one of Geelong city's amazing restaurants.

Great Ocean Road



WHERE YOUR ROAD TRIP COMES INTO ITS OWN – A BUCKET-LIST OF DRAMATIC COASTAL SCENERY, BIG NATURE AND EPIC ADVENTURE.

MUST DO EXPERIENCES

Aboriginal culture: Budj Bim Cultural Landscape Tourism operates the Tae Rak Aquaculture Centre on the UNESCO World Heritage listed Budj Bim Cultural Landscape. See evidence of one of the world's oldest aquaculture systems, learn of a vibrant Indigenous culture through shared stories, and see the landscape through Gunditjmarra eyes.

Hot springs: Warm to a deep sense of relaxation with natural geothermal water bathing at Warrnambool's Deep Blue Hot Springs. Journey through open air pools, delve into caves and bathe in the shallows of the reflection pool.

Wonderous wildlife: Discover Australia's natural beauty at Wildlife Wonders. Guided by a conservationist you will encounter unique wildlife living freely in a stunning bushland environment overlooking the ocean at Apollo Bay. Learn about the ecology of the spectacular Otway Ranges and the current research projects saving the Great Ocean Road's threatened species.

Surf city: Fittingly located at Torquay (Australia's surfing capital), the Australian National Surfing Museum celebrates the story of surfing with the National Surfing Hall of Fame, hands-on displays, intriguing exhibits and an extraordinary collection of surfcraft and surfing memorabilia.

Ride a wave: If actual surfing is more your thing, and you have a few days to stay, Honu Honi Surf Camp is an all-inclusive surf camp experience which will allow you to surf some of the best breaks on the Great Ocean Road.

Beacon of hope: Amazing views and amazing history await at Cape Otway Lightstation. Explore Australia's oldest surviving mainland lighthouse, meet the lightkeeper and ogle Southern Ocean panoramas.

Maritime magic: At Warrnambool's Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum and Village, time-travel into a 19th century seaside community teeming with stories of the hundreds of ships, their crew and passengers lost on the Shipwreck Coast. Don't just learn about history, experience it in a living museum with spectacular sound and light shows.

Glorious food: Make dining a discovery experience with a multitude of flavours, cuisines and stunning locations on offer including Brae at Birregurra and Port Fairy's Merrijig Kitchen.

Timboon treats: Home of famously fine ice cream and single malt whisky, this timber town is clearly a foodie haven. Schedule a stop at the Timboon Distillery to tap into a menu of gourmet delights.

Grampians



EXPERIENCE LIFE UNLEASHED. ESCAPE TO A NATURAL PLAYGROUND PERFECT FOR ADVENTURE AND ENLIGHTENMENT.

MUST DO EXPERIENCES

Nature's playground: The vast Grampians National Park is a sacred landscape perfect for delving into ancient Aboriginal culture. It's also a giant, natural playground ideal for rock climbing, abseiling, mountain biking, road cycling, guided 4WD tours, trekking and trail walking.

Feel the serenity: Retreat to the tranquility of the Grampians at D'Altons Studios – a delightful bush location in the heart of Halls Gap. Take your pick of family cottages, studio cottages and spa studios (perfect for a romantic retreat).

Glamp it up: Immerse your senses in the great outdoors with luxury camping in a fully appointed tent with all the bells and whistles. Halls Gap Lakeside Tourist Park offers an inspiring variety of glamping options. Just remember to take the time to say hello to your friendly neighbours... the hundreds of kangaroos who are permanent residents of the park!

View from beyond: Look no further than Dunkeld's Royal Mail Hotel for a deluxe, architecturally-designed room, with sweeping vistas of the majestic Grampians National Park. Book a package including dinner at the two-hatted Wickens restaurant and enjoy destination dining at its best.

Wine wonder: The Grampians, Pyrenees and Henty wine-making regions are known for award-winning reds and vibrant whites. Visit local cellar doors, meet the makers and tuck into tastings at: Grampians Estate, Mt Langhi Ghiran, Best's Wines, Pomonal Estate and more.

Chasing waterfalls: Get up with the local cockatoos and rosellas and out into the natural beauty the region is famous for. Join a guided walk along the Grampians Peaks Trail with the guys from Absolute Outdoors, or go chasing waterfalls – MacKenzie Falls, to be precise. One of the largest waterfalls in Victoria, it's also the only one in the Grampians that flows all year round.

Golden hour: One of the best places to see the sunset in the Grampians is Reed Lookout. Just walk 1km from the car park to The Balconies, where you'll see the most incredible, panoramic views of Victoria Valley and the surrounding ranges.

Sleep time: Now head to Halls Gap and check in to your accommodation. Grampians Getaway Resort is a great base. Eco-accommodation with a view of the Grampians or you may enjoy DULC which offers funky designer cabins nestled amid the beauty of the Grampians National Park.

Ballarat Goldfields



WHERE OLD MEETS NEW – A HERITAGE BACKDROP FLAUNTING A MISCELLANY WORLD OF ART, CULTURE, DINING, WINING AND IMPRESSIVE ATTRACTIONS.

MUST DO EXPERIENCES

Lamplight tour: See Sovereign Hill in a whole new light with an eerie evening lamplight tour. Delve into the dark side of goldfields life with special access to intriguing places and compelling characters.

Wild creatures: Get up close and personal with native creatures at Ballarat Wildlife Park. Book ahead to meet 'Crunch' – a five-metre-long super croc – and 'Lava Claw', Victoria's only Komodo dragon, along with koalas, kangaroos, dingoes, snakes, wombats and more.

Big ol' gallery: Australia's oldest and largest regional gallery, the Art Gallery of Ballarat, boasts a collection built up over 130 years. Works of old masters hang alongside emerging artists in spaces spanning grand and elegant 19th Century rooms through to striking contemporary zones.

Lake hang-outs: Lake Wendouree, an oasis at the centre of town, is a popular hang-out spot. Chill out at with a picnic, let the kids hit the playground and watch rowers and sail-boaters ply the shallow lake waters.

Paddock to plate: A destination in itself, The Provincial is 1909 on the outside and modern on the inside – with buzzing European restaurant Lola and luxe accommodation available. The menu is locally sourced and seasonally driven. The wine list is creative and extensive. It's a boutique experience in the heart of Ballarat, and the rooms look just as good as the food tastes.

To market: From farmers markets to design markets, from swap meets to community markets, this region comes alive come market day – think food and produce, contemporary designers, makers and bakers, art and craft, collectables and second hand treasures. Check local guides and bring along your empty basket.

Walk it out: Download an online brochure and step into the past. On Ballarat's Historic Streetscapes Walking Tour, delve into self-guided discovery of grand architecture and heritage. Ready for more? Ballarat's Historic Statues Walking Tours showcases a wealth of stories set in stone along Sturt Street's grand boulevard.

Spend the night: Take your pick from Craig's Royal Hotel, the oldest luxury hotel, or the stunning Hotel Vera Ballarat. But before you hit the hay, ensure you book a table at Hotel Vera Ballarat's signature restaurant Babae for a memorable night of food and wine.