

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.



Australia's Great Road Trip



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A ROAD TRIP FOR THE AGES

The Great Southern Touring Route is much more than a legendary road trip. The central loop from Melbourne through western Victoria brings together three fabulously diverse regions: Great Ocean Road, Grampians and Ballarat, plus the spa region of Daylesford. Each brims with its own brand of stunning natural assets, must-do experiences and intriguing characters.

This is where making life long memories comes naturally. Where the keepers of 40,000 years of indigenous culture rub shoulders with groovy young gourmet chefs. Where show-stopping scenic icons get photo-bombed by surprise wildlife encounters. Where one minute you're panning for gold like it's 1859, and the next you're soul-deep in a thermal tub at a spa retreat. Where you can hike ancient peaks, tiptoe through a fairy rainforest or poke around a restaurant's kitchen garden – all on the same day. Where 'getting real' means connecting with local growers and makers bringing a bounty of food and booze to life.

You can plan every element of your journey ahead – or wing it and let things unfold organically. Whatever your style, the Great Southern Touring Route is all about finding your own adventure, your own unexpected highlights, both on and off the road less travelled.

GETTING AROUND

Drive in: A great road network puts you within easy reach of anything on or around the route. Self-driving is perfect for those who love exploring at their own pace. Book a Hertz rental car and hit the road. Or sort transport and accommodation in one stop with Maui Motorhomes.

Cruise in: Searoad Ferries' Queenscliff-Sorrento passenger and vehicle service connects the Great Ocean Road with the Mornington Peninsula, and Melbourne's eastern suburbs, every hour, every day. While you're here try TARRA Queenscliff, a beachfront dining experience at the sparkling new Queenscliff Ferry terminal.

Travel in style: Leave the driving to some else and explore the Great Southern Touring Route with a friendly and knowledgeable local. Some of the best tour operators include Oceania Tours & Safaris, Acacia Tours or Autopia Tours.

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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, Port Fairy's Merrijig Kitchen, The Coast at Anglesea, Warrnambool's Pavilion Café or ride The Q Train, Australia's premier rail restaurant.

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 Railway Shed 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: Succumb to the tranquility of the Grampians by staying a few nights in a bushland oasis, options include DULC, Grampians Getaways or D'Alton's Studios, or on a property with magnificent views to the mountains over the infinity pool such as Meringa Springs Luxury Lodge. Try glamping at Halls Gap Lakeside Tourist Park, a winery at Pomonal Estate or a working station such as Mount William Station, each has their own unique version of rest and relaxation.

Glamp it up: Immerse your senses in the great outdoors with luxury camping in a fully appointed tent with all the bells and whistles. 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, Seppelt Great Western, 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.

Ballarat



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. (The Art Gallery of Ballarat is undergoing interior upgrades and will remain closed until early 2026).

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: Babae at Hotel Vera Ballarat, offers a stunning 26-seater dining experience championing creativity, provenance and seasonality. Local producers, providores and an in-house team of kitchen farm gardeners inspire culinary director Tim Foster's distinctive produce driven menu.

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.