

# *Beautiful* TRAVEL

DREAM DESTINATIONS AND INSPIRING PLACES NEAR AND FAR

# Holiday at HOME

FROM THE TOP END TO TASSIE, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN, DISCOVER 10 OF AUSTRALIA'S BEST TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

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If you're dreaming of an exotic, international escape this year, take this as your sign to reconsider. Australia's vast expanse means there's something for everyone on domestic shores, no matter the temperature outside. The tropical north is at its best in the mid-year dry spell, while quaint country escapes and seaside sojourns are appealing in every season. Take advantage of shorter travel times and more manageable jetlag while trying something new. From a list of endless possibilities, we've found the 10 most worthwhile destinations and experiences this vast continent has to offer.



On the southern tip of The Eyre Peninsula, Eyre Way's 'Maldhi' cabin (this page & opposite top left) offers views of Sleaford Bay. Opposite middle: Bendigo's Hotel Vera. Opposite, right: W Sydney's 2AM: Dessert Bar.



## 1 EYRE PENINSULA South Australia

**Where:** Taking in a vast area flanked by the Spencer Gulf to the east, Great Australian Bight to the west and Gawler Ranges to the north, the Eyre Peninsula is best seen by road. The largest town, Port Lincoln, is a seven-and-a-half-hour, or 650 kilometres, drive from Adelaide. **Visit for:** Breathtaking national parks, sand dunes, pristine beaches and world class seafood. [southaustralia.com](http://southaustralia.com). **Eat:** Enjoy the 'Seafood Frontier' by heading out on an oyster farm tour at Coffin Bay. Fresh oysters are paired with local wines or a bloody mary oyster shot for a one-of-a-kind dining experience. [oysterfarmtours.com.au](http://oysterfarmtours.com.au). **Stay:** Escape the hustle and bustle and go off-grid at Eyre Way Tiny Abodes. Choose between one of two eco-friendly tiny homes that are nestled into the rugged surrounds of Sleaford Bay. [eyreway.com](http://eyreway.com). **Shop:** Little Brown Goose in Port Lincoln has a great selection of natural, locally made artisan soaps plus home and body care products. [littlebrowngoose.com.au](http://littlebrowngoose.com.au). **Do:** Take a once-in-a-lifetime chance to swim with Great Whites in their natural habitat at Neptune Islands Marine Park. [sharkcagediving.com.au](http://sharkcagediving.com.au).

## 2 GOLDFIELDS Victoria

**Where:** An area that is steeped in rich history, the Goldfields, located in central Victoria, grew around the regional cities of Ballarat and Bendigo during the 1850s gold rush. From Melbourne, Ballarat is a 110 kilometres, 90-minute drive. **Visit for:** Australia's only UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, Bendigo and its surrounds are heaving with wineries, restaurants and distilleries, plus plenty of memorable, unique foodie experiences. [bendigogastronomy.com.au](http://bendigogastronomy.com.au). **Eat:** Baking since 1854, Maldon Bakery's repaired original Scotch oven churns out a constant stream of traditional country classics. [maldonbakery.com.au](http://maldonbakery.com.au). **Stay:** A boutique hotel housed in the town's oldest bank, the Bendigo Ernest Hotel tells the tale of Bendigo's heady, pioneering past. The Ernest's sister establishment, Hotel Vera in Ballarat is equally elegant. [hotelbendigo.com.au](http://hotelbendigo.com.au). **Shop:** At The Mill Castlemaine, more than 40 local businesses sell their wares in an 1870s mill. [millcastlemaine.com.au](http://millcastlemaine.com.au). **Do:** Distil your own signature gin at Kilderkin Distillery or take a pottery class at Bendigo Pottery. [kilderkindistillery.com.au](http://kilderkindistillery.com.au); [bendigopottery.com.au](http://bendigopottery.com.au).

## 3 SYDNEY New South Wales

**Where:** The capital of New South Wales and located on the south eastern coast, this metropolis famously straddles Sydney Harbour. The airport is a short 12 kilometres from the CBD. **Visit for:** The best of a buzzing city and relaxing beaches. [sydney.com](http://sydney.com). **Eat:** Enjoy produce-driven dining at Neil Perry's Margaret, where sustainable, wild-caught Australian seafood is the hero. It recently won the Good Food Guide's 2024 Restaurant of the Year. [margaretdoublebay.com](http://margaretdoublebay.com). **Stay:** W Sydney's wave-like exterior is complete with views of Darling Harbour. Don't miss a late-night visit to the tasty 2AM: Dessert Bar, which was created in collaboration with Singaporean dessert queen Janice Wong. [marriott.com](http://marriott.com). **Shop:** The Intersection in Paddington is a style destination, home to an edited selection of Australia's finest fashion labels. [theintersectionpaddington.com.au](http://theintersectionpaddington.com.au). **Do:** Get 360 degree views of the city with a Sydney Harbour Bridge climb. If heights aren't your thing, take a behind-the-scenes tour of another landmark, the Sydney Opera House. [bridgeclimb.com](http://bridgeclimb.com); [sydneyoperahouse.com](http://sydneyoperahouse.com). >

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT & OPPOSITE PAGE) LAUREN PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE, TOP MIDDLE) LEON SCHOOTS (THIS PAGE, TOP RIGHT) W SYDNEY

## Beautiful PLACES



### 4 FREMANTLE *Western Australia*

**Where:** Walyalup, Fremantle or 'Freo' is Perth's historic port city that's well worth exploring. It's a 30-minute drive from Perth CBD and Perth Airport.

**Visit for:** This maritime city has it all; beaches, culture and plenty of heritage sites including Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle Markets, the National Hotel, the Round House (once used to house convicts) and the World Heritage-listed Fremantle Prison, which is a must-see for any visitor. [visitfremantle.com.au](http://visitfremantle.com.au); [fremantleprison.com.au](http://fremantleprison.com.au).

**Eat:** Cafe culture is strong in this city and you're spoilt for choice when it comes to dining options. For lunch, try popular tapas restaurant Sailing for Oranges, and for dinner head to Vin Populi for pasta and an impressive wine list. [sailingfororanges.com.au](http://sailingfororanges.com.au); [vinpopuli.com.au](http://vinpopuli.com.au).

**Stay:** The new boutique Warders Hotel is a row of limestone cottages filled with character that were once home to the local prison warders. These days it has all the luxury mod cons including sparkling water on tap. [wardershotel.com.au](http://wardershotel.com.au).

**Do:** The best way to see and learn about this vibrant city is by booking a walking tour with the excellent Fremantle Tours. [fremantletours.com.au](http://fremantletours.com.au).



### 5 BYRON BAY *New South Wales*

**Where:** Noted for its pristine beaches and lush hinterland, Byron Bay is a 30-minute drive from Ballina Byron Gateway Airport, on NSW's northeastern coast.

**Visit for:** As the easternmost point of mainland Australia, Cape Byron Lighthouse is the first place to witness the rising sun each morning. It's well worth the early start. [byronbay.com](http://byronbay.com).

**Eat:** Head to Light Years for fun Asian fusion dishes, delicious cocktails, and equally delectable interiors with a great soundtrack. [lightyearsasiandiner.com.au](http://lightyearsasiandiner.com.au).

**Stay:** Gaia Retreat & Spa is a boutique wellness escape nestled into the tropical hinterland. Fully customisable packages range from two to seven nights and include spa treatments, gourmet meals and yoga. [gaiaretreat.com.au](http://gaiaretreat.com.au).

**Shop:** Discover the best local arts and crafts at the Byron Bay Twilight Market every Saturday evening from October to April. [visitbyronbay.com](http://visitbyronbay.com).

**Do:** The iconic Raes on Wategos spa has collaborated with cult skincare label Rationale, creating a series of pamper packages for optimal skin health and glowing radiance. [raes.com.au](http://raes.com.au).

## 6

### FREYCINET *Tasmania*

**Where:** Covering an area of 65 square kilometres, the Freycinet Peninsula is a dramatic formation on Tasmania's east coast known for its white sand beaches and pink granite mountains. A good base is Coles Bay, which is a two-and-a-half hour drive north-east of Hobart.

**Visit for:** The Hazards, the peninsula's mountain range, which dominates the local topography, framing the beaches and she-oak forests. [parks.tas.gov.au](http://parks.tas.gov.au).

**Eat:** Enjoy local produce and spectacular views at Lure Wine Bar Restaurant in Coles Bay. Book via [agfg.com.au](http://agfg.com.au).

**Stay:** Immerse yourself in nature at Freycinet Lodge, where a series of pavilions nestle into the coastal bush setting. [freycinetlodge.com.au](http://freycinetlodge.com.au).

**Do:** Enjoy views of Wineglass Bay with an 11-kilometre bushwalk loop through Freycinet National Park and appreciate the Hazards up close. Alternatively, enjoy views from a Wineglass Bay cruise. [parks.tas.gov.au](http://parks.tas.gov.au); [wineglassbaycruises.com.au](http://wineglassbaycruises.com.au). >



Freycinet Lodge has stunning views over Great Oyster Bay in Tasmania. Opposite, left: Warders Hotel in Fremantle. Opposite, right: Gaia Retreat & Spa in Byron Bay.

WORDS (FREMANTLE) VICTORIA KINGSBURY PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE LEFT) BEN YEW (THIS PAGE RIGHT) HAYLEY NEDLAND (OPPOSITE PAGE) DIANNA SNAPE STYLING (THIS PAGE LEFT) JAPPALIN MANNING DESIGN (OPPOSITE PAGE) LIMINAL STUDIO

Surprisingly close to the crowded Gold Coast, Wander's 'Moy' cabin in the Scenic Rim is a bushwalker's paradise. Opposite, top left: Osborn Hotel in NSW's Southern Highlands. Opposite, middle: Maguk in Kakadu, NT. Opposite, right: Steam: Vintage Train Carriage in Forrest on the Great Ocean Road.



## 7 SCENIC RIM Queensland

**Where:** The Scenic Rim is a rural area characterised by the lush mountaintops of the Flinders Peak Group. The region's gateway town, Beaudesert, is an hour's drive west of Surfers Paradise.

**Visit for:** Australia's most accessible World Heritage-listed rainforests. [visitscenicrim.com.au](http://visitscenicrim.com.au).

**Eat:** Fertile volcanic soil makes for a unique wine-growing region; sample minimal intervention wines at Witches Falls Winery while enjoying local

artisanal preserves, charcuterie and cheeses. Dairy and gluten-free options available. [witchesfalls.com.au](http://witchesfalls.com.au).

**Stay:** Choose from five secluded, off-grid, almost zero-waste WanderPods surrounded by 1600 hectares of bushland looking over Lake Wyaralong on The Overflow Estate 1895. [wander.com.au](http://wander.com.au).

**Do:** Home to six national parks with diverse local wildlife, the region's prehistoric landscape is best seen on foot with loads of bushwalking and rock climbing for all abilities. [visitscenicrim.com.au](http://visitscenicrim.com.au).



## 8 SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS New South Wales

**Where:** A region of rolling green hills and cute heritage towns, the Southern Highlands is a 130-kilometre, two-hour drive south-west of Sydney.

**Visit for:** Known for its bucolic scenery, the region's cool temperate climate makes its gardens a real drawcard. Corbett Gardens in Bowral is one of the oldest, and prettiest, in the region. [visitnsw.com](http://visitnsw.com).

**Eat:** Visitors can't go past the historic Burrawang Village Hotel with its old-world charm and picturesque grounds. [burrawangvillagehotel.com.au](http://burrawangvillagehotel.com.au).

**Stay:** Designed by famous international designer Linda Boronkay and Sydney's Alan McMahon of MAC Design Studio, the exquisitely restored Osborn House has 15 suites, seven luxury cabins and a day spa adorned like a contemporary country manor. [osbornhouse.com.au](http://osbornhouse.com.au).

**Shop:** Lydie du Bray Antiques in Braemar is loved by interior designers and antique lovers alike, and it's the standout pick of the region's plethora of antiques dealers. [lydiedubravyantiques.com.au](http://lydiedubravyantiques.com.au).

**Do:** Whisky lovers won't want to miss a trip to Joadja Distillery. Established in 2014 on the site of an 1870s abandoned kerosene mining town, the single malt distillery is one of only a few in the world growing their own barley on site. [joadjadistillery.com.au](http://joadjadistillery.com.au).



## 9 KAKADU Northern Territory

**Where:** At 19,816 square kilometres, Kakadu is one of Australia's largest National Parks as well as a UNESCO World Heritage-listed site. Located 151 kilometres south-east of Darwin, the drive is three hours on sealed roads.

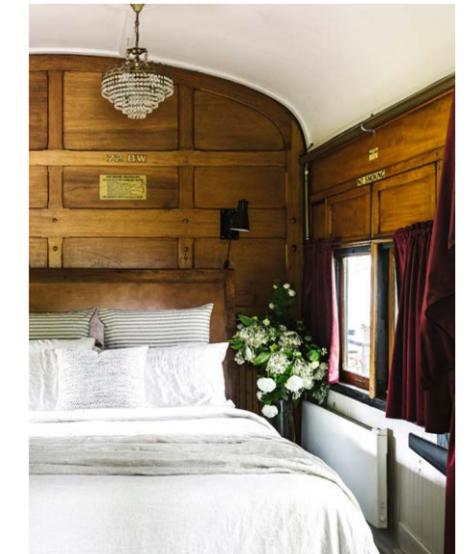
**Visit for:** Wetlands filled with lily pads, beautiful teeming birdlife and thundering waterfalls during the wet season (November to April) and guided tours through ancient rock art sites such as Burrungkuy (Nourlangie) during the dry season (May to October). [northernterritory.com](http://northernterritory.com).

**Eat:** Time your visit to coincide with the annual Taste of Kakadu to learn more about the unique flavours of the region and sample native-inspired delicacies. [parksaustralia.gov.au](http://parksaustralia.gov.au).

**Stay:** On the edge of Kakadu National Park, safari-style accommodation at Bamurru Plains caters for guests seeking total immersion in the local ecosystem and the chance to disconnect from the everyday in style. [bamurruplains.com](http://bamurruplains.com).

**Do:** Watch the sky light up in shades of pink and orange during a sunset flight over Kakadu's attractions. Alternatively, enjoy the park's native flora and fauna onboard a Yellow Water Cruise exploring the inland billabong. [kakaduai.com.au](http://kakaduai.com.au); [kakadutoursandtravel.com.au](http://kakadutoursandtravel.com.au).

## Beautiful PLACES



## 10 GREAT OCEAN ROAD Victoria

**Where:** From Torquay to Allansford, the Great Ocean Road is a heritage-listed 240-kilometre stretch of coast along the south-eastern corner of Victoria. Torquay is a 90-minute drive from Melbourne.

**Visit for:** The majestic 12 Apostles aren't to be missed and they're all the more unforgettable if you plan your visit for sunrise or sunset. [visit12apostles.com.au](http://visit12apostles.com.au).

**Eat:** Sample fresh southern rock lobster, the flagship dish at the local institution, Apollo Bay Fishermen's Co-op. [apollobayfishcoop.com.au](http://apollobayfishcoop.com.au).

**Stay:** Away from the crowded coast, step into the past at Steam: Vintage Train Carriage, a lovingly restored 1920s first class steam carriage. Winner of the Best Unique Stay at the 2023 Airbnb Host Awards. Book via [airbnb.com.au](http://airbnb.com.au).

**Shop:** Warrnambool's bustling markets are a must. The Fresh Market showcases some of the finest producers, creators and designers from the region on every Sunday in January and on the first and third Sunday on other months. [visitscenoceanroad.org.au](http://visitscenoceanroad.org.au).

**Do:** Take to the sea for a classic Aussie pastime. A plethora of surf schools litter the coast with options for everyone from beginners to experienced surfers wanting to hone their skills at surf camp. [gorsurftours.com.au](http://gorsurftours.com.au) or [honuhoni.com](http://honuhoni.com). 🏄

PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP LEFT) ALAN JENSEN (MIDDLE) TOURISM NT (RIGHT) MARNIE HAWSON (OPPOSITE PAGE) KRISTA EPPELSTUN ART WORK 'THE PEACOCK FLOWER' BY JAI VASICEK