

NSW Short Breaks

SYDNEY SURROUNDS HOLIDAY PLANNER



Destination
NSW

ZONE LEGEND

Freeway/Highway		
Main Road		
Railway		
Airport		
Metropolitan area		
National Park		NP

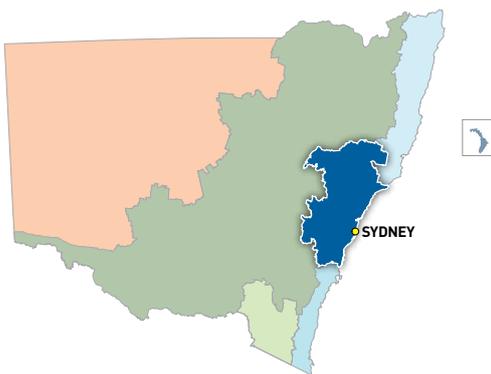
SCALE

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cover: Audrey Wilkinson's Winery, Hunter Valley (Anson Smart).

above left to right: Unwinding at Milton Park, Bowral (Anson Smart); Travelling by seaplane to Berowra Waters Inn on the Hawkesbury River (Ross Honeysett).

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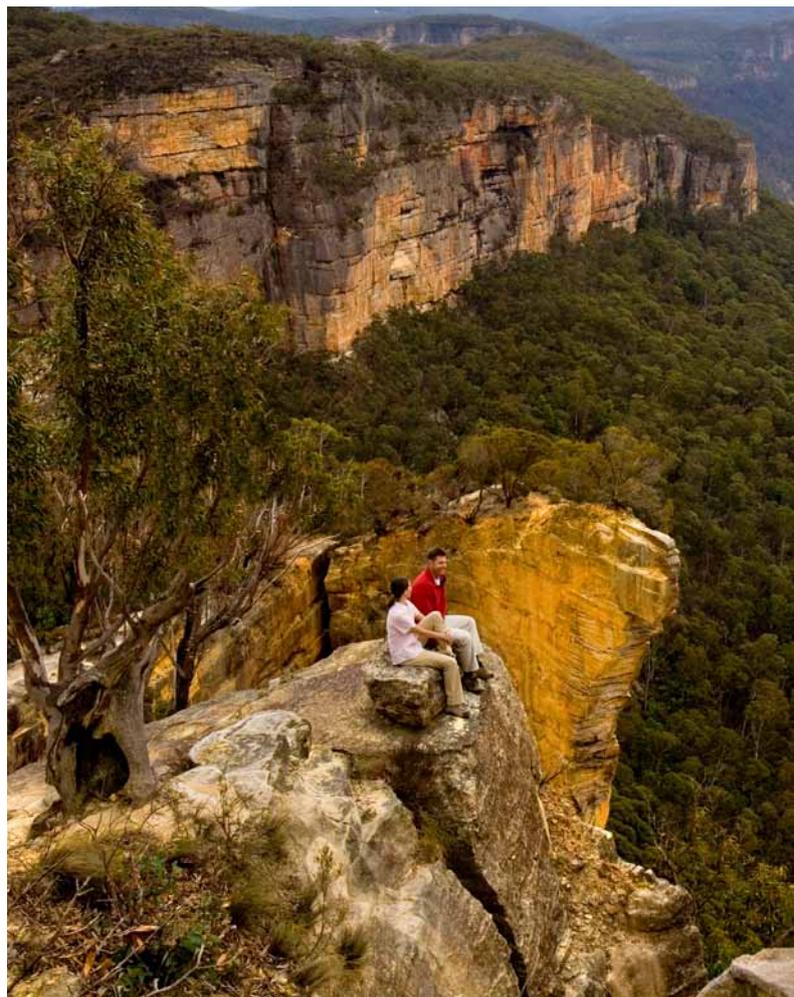
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NSW Short Breaks

Amazing places...

You'll never be short of things to see and do on a Short Break to Sydney's surrounds. Find a deserted stretch of sand, climb a mountain, go fishing in a stream, finish that book you've been reading, watch the sunrise with someone special, treat yourself to a day spa or simply catch up on sleep.

Discover 10 great 'Short Breaks' from Sydney. You'll be inspired to pack the car and leave your everyday world behind.



above left to right: Couple sitting across from Hanging Rock in the Blue Mountains (Chris Jones); Spa indulgence at Milton Park, Southern Highlands (Anson Smart).

below left to right: Wine tasting in the Hunter Valley (The Legendary Pacific Coast); Delight in exploring rock pools, Kiama (Anson Smart); Jumping of the Wangi Wangi Jetty, Lake Macquarie (Paul Foley).



...amazingly close





Central Coast

Just to the north of Sydney, the Central Coast offers splendid beaches, national parks and hinterland as well as great dining and stylish accommodation.



Great escapes

The Central Coast, a region delineated by Brisbane Water and Broken Bay to the south and the lakes between The Entrance and Newcastle to the north, has been attracting holiday-makers since the railway from Sydney came through in 1887. While Gosford remains the main centre, picturesque villages along the coastline – such as Pearl Beach, Ettalong, Avoca Beach, Terrigal, Bateau Bay, Toowoan Bay, The Entrance, Norah Head, Toukley and Forresters Beach – have become destinations in their own right.

The quaint boarding houses and bungalows that traditionally accommodated holiday-makers have given way to a diverse range of retreats and resorts. You now have a choice – for example, exclusive beachfront villas at Kim’s, overlooking Toowoan Bay, or an indulgent spa break at one of the luxury resorts. For a country getaway, stay in the cottages at Dooralong Valley Resort, nestled at the foot of the Watagan State Forest.

Find your wild side

The Central Coast’s national parks and reserves protect native wilderness, Aboriginal heritage areas and pristine waterways and are popular with bushwalkers.

Brisbane Water National Park contains the Bulgandry Aboriginal engravings and the magnificent Somersby Falls. At the northern entrance to Broken Bay, Bouddi National Park, with its series of small beaches and lush forest

is magnificent. Crackneck Lookout in Wyrribalong National Park, which extends to both sides of The Entrance, is a great vantage point to view whales on their annual migration.

Animal antics

The whole family will enjoy a close look at native wildlife at the Australian Reptile Park at Somersby, 10 km west of Gosford. Here you can see Australia’s largest collection of reptiles.

About 20 km west of Gosford, is the Australia Walkabout Wildlife Park on Peats Ridge Road near Calga, the place to head if you’re interested in Aboriginal culture and Australian wildlife. The day’s program includes bush tucker demonstrations and guided walks to Aboriginal carvings and cave paintings. Observe a feeding frenzy on the foreshore at The Entrance, where hundreds of pelicans congregate for the daily feeding at 3.30pm.

Action stations

There’s an activity for all tastes and fitness levels – take a trail ride on horse back, try laser skirmish or go quad biking at Glenworth Valley near Peats Ridge. Go for a surf at Lakes Beach just off Scenic Drive on the Budgewoi peninsula, or play golf at venues such as the Springs Golf Club, Kooindah Waters or Terrigal Memorial Country Club. Hire a bicycle at The Entrance, or for more adventure, skydive at Warnervale Airfield or take a tandem microlight flight from Somersby Airfield.

MUST SEE AND DO

Tour Norah Head Lighthouse and learn about the trials and tribulations of manning a remote lighthouse in the early 1900s. Stay overnight in the keeper’s cottage.

Take in spectacular coastal scenery from a walking track in one of the national parks. During the migration season (June to November), keep an eye out for whales.

Dine in relaxed waterfront restaurants with spectacular ocean views.

above left to right: Pelican feeding at The Entrance (The Legendary Pacific Coast); Australian Reptile Park (The Legendary Pacific Coast); Beachside dining in Avoca (The Legendary Pacific Coast); A beach all to yourself, Terrigal (Hamilton Lund).

below right: Aerial view of Bobbin Head (Hamilton Lund).



Explore the waterways

The Central Coast boasts superb waterways. Here you can take reef- and game-fishing charters from Ettalong and Terrigal or hire a sailboard, kayak, catamaran or pedal boat on Tuggerah Lake. At Avoca Lake surf skiing, kayaking or pedal boating are options. Take surfing lessons from world champion Sandra English at Soldiers Beach.

You can catch a ferry across Broken Bay (from Ettalong to Palm Beach), or another on Brisbane Water (from Woy Woy to Davistown). Explore the waterways of the Wyong River, Ourimbah Creek and Tuggerah Lake on

morning tea, lunch or sunset cruises departing from The Entrance.

When it's time to refuel, a splendid seafood lunch on a Crab 'N' Oyster cruise from Brooklyn is a great option.

Cultural treasures

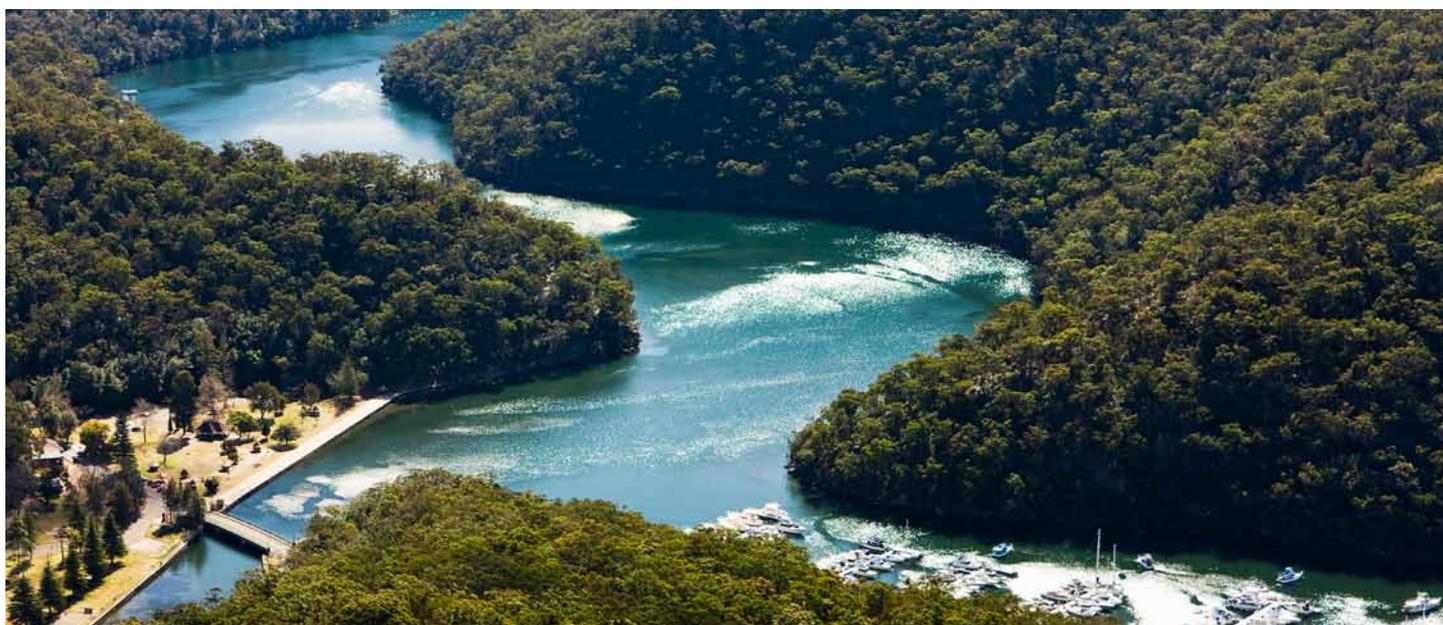
From galleries to gardens, the Central Coast offers visitors a great range of cultural treats. Landscape photographer Ken Duncan has a gallery in the Erina Fair shopping complex, or head to Erina Heights to watch artist Neale Joseph work in his Fine Art Gallery. The Mount Penang Gardens at Kariong, about 5 km from

Gosford, display more than 1,000 native plants in a series of 12 garden 'rooms'. Enjoy lunch or coffee at the Waterfall Café overlooking the aquatic garden, which comprises more than 6 hectares of waterways and water features.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitsw.com or contact

Central Coast Visitor Centre on 1300 132 975

The Entrance Visitor Information Centre on (02) 4334 4213





Lake Macquarie

The gateway to the North Coast is blessed with stunning beaches, a mountain wilderness and a vast deep blue lake, only 90 minutes drive north of Sydney.



So much more than a lake

Nestled between the Central Coast and Newcastle, Lake Macquarie is the largest coastal saltwater lake in Australia: at 24 km long, it's four times the size of Sydney Harbour.

Hire a boat, jet ski, canoe or yacht, or even a houseboat, and explore this unique body of water. Throw in a line while you're out there, and you may catch your own dinner. The lakeside is ideal for scenic walks along Greenpoint Reserve, Wangi Wangi Flora and Fauna Reserve, Warners Bay and Toronto – just perfect for a morning stroll.

Visitors are gradually discovering that Lake Macquarie is a relaxed escape from the hectic pace of Sydney and some of the busier tourist destinations along the east coast. With its great variety of accommodation, long stretches of sandy beach, natural coastline and idyllic lake, this is a destination worth discovering and rediscovering.

Relaxed lifestyle

Linking the beaches, lake and mountains are more than 90 villages dotted throughout the Lake Macquarie area. Quiet beachside suburbs, bustling lakeside communities, key town centres and sleepy mountainside villages all combine to give the area a relaxed feel.

On the eastern shore, Belmont and Swansea lie between Lake Macquarie and the beaches. On the western shore, Toronto and Morisset enjoy the scenic backdrop of the Watagan Mountains, while at the northern end, Warners

Bay is a thriving village with restaurants, galleries and a foreshore cycleway.

Stay and play

Lake Macquarie provides the visitor with a surprisingly varied choice of accommodation. Choose from absolute waterfront boathouses and beach-side cottages, peaceful mountain retreats, cosy guesthouses and charming B&Bs. For tourist park holiday-makers, modern cabin accommodation and campsites provide the perfect getaway, ideal for family holidays.

Eat, drink and enjoy

With a great range of waterfront dining on offer – from cafés and lakeside restaurants to bistros, pubs and clubs – you can choose a dining experience to suit your mood. If you feel like delicious fast food, pick up some fresh fish and chips and enjoy them lakeside.

More or less

Your stay in Lake Macquarie can be as relaxing or as energetic as you want it to be.

Laze on the beach or by the pool with a good book, enjoy a picnic in the Watagans or bask in the glow of a stunning sunset as you dine at a lakeside restaurant. Round out the day by seeing a movie in old-fashioned comfort at the Boolaroo Cinema, north of Toronto.

Once you're feeling rejuvenated, indulge in some retail therapy and browse in the region's boutiques, markets and shopping villages.

MUST SEE AND DO

Bushwalk, horse-ride, 4WD or ride a bike in the Watagan Mountains.

Explore the historical villages of Cooranbong and Catherine Hill Bay.

Jump aboard a luncheon cruise around Lake Macquarie and appreciate the size of this vast blue waterway.

Enjoy the Pacific Ocean as you walk along Nine Mile Beach from Blacksmiths to Redhead.

Visit the quirky gallery 'The Block' in the Mandalong Valley, where the Neal Family's creative sculpture, tapestry and art pieces will amaze.

above left to right: Morisset Rodeo (Lake Macquarie Tourism); Lakeside dining at Milano's on the Lake, Pelican Marina (Andrew Monger); Spectacular twilight at Croudace Bay (Paul Foley); Set your spinnaker flying, Lake Macquarie (Paul Foley).

below right: Belmont Jetty (The Legendary Pacific Coast).



Mountains to the sea

The Watagan Mountains provide a superb backdrop to the western side of the lake, and divide Lake Macquarie from Cessnock.

The unspoilt bushland of the Watagan Mountains National Park, managed by both State Forests and National Parks, is home to many native species – including wallabies, pademelons, bandicoots and koalas – which you might encounter on guided night walks.

During the day, there are lots of graded walks suitable for nature lovers of all fitness levels. See the giant pine trees along The Pines Trail, enjoy the stunning views from Heaton Lookout or take a walk along Boarding House Dam to the moss wall. Other activities include kayaking on Dora Creek and horse-riding in the Watagans.

Lake, sea and surf

The city of Lake Macquarie is edged on one side by long stretches of pristine sandy beach. Frolic in the water at the patrolled beaches of Redhead or Blacksmith, or explore picturesque Caves Beach – at low tide, the wind-sculpted sea caves are wonderful.

There are outstanding settings for swimming and surfing at Catherine Hill Bay, a coastal village 120 km from Sydney. The southern headland of Catherine Hill Bay provides several dive sites at a variety of depths, and here you can swim under one of Australia's longest coal-loading jetties. It is no longer in use, but the site is very popular with divers.

Catherine Hill Bay also has a number of shipwrecks. Divers enjoy exploring the SS *Wallarah*, the *Lubra* and the *Shamrock*. 'Catho', as locals call it, also has a historic 130-year-old pub that has retained its original character. Well known for its charming atmosphere, it serves generous, hearty counter lunches.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Lake Macquarie Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 802 044

TOP THINGS TO DO

Explore the lake's inlets on a yacht, houseboat, cruiser or catamaran.

Visit notable Australian portrait painter Sir William Dobell's residence and studio at Wangi Wangi.

Discover popular spots for water-skiing, jet-skiing, fishing, sailing and snorkelling.

See the latest exhibition at the award-winning Lake Macquarie Art Gallery.

Or explore the lakeside sculpture park and enjoy lunch at Awaba House Café.





Newcastle

Perched between a working harbour and beautiful beaches, Newcastle is a vibrant cosmopolitan city, bursting with energy and creative activity.



MUST SEE AND DO

Take a dip in the Merewether Ocean Baths – the largest ocean baths in the southern hemisphere offer spectacular views out to sea.

Treat yourself to some serious retail therapy in the stylish boutiques at The Junction, where you'll find high fashion, homewares and unique jewellery.

Get friendly with the locals in one of the many stylish bars along Queens Wharf. The Beaches Hotel overlooking Merewether Beach is a Newcastle institution. You can also discover one of the city's older-style pubs, which are full of character.

above left to right: Merewether Ocean Baths (Newcastle Tourism); Beaches that stretch for miles, Newcastle (Mike Newling); Merewether Beach (The Legendary Pacific Coast); Inspiration, art and fun at Newcastle Regional Art Gallery.

below right: The Civic Theatre Newcastle (Newcastle Tourism).

Hit the water

Discover Newcastle's renowned surfing beaches on foot by taking the Bathers Way, a scenic 5 km coastal walk stretching from Nobby's Lighthouse to Merewether Beach. Look for the yellow information signs, or pick up your free guide and map from the Visitor Information Centre in Hunter Street.

Five of the city's pristine beaches are on the eastern side of the promontory. Furthest north is Nobbys Beach, Newcastle's best known beach and a favoured spot for kite surfers and those learning to surf. Opened in 1922, the Art Deco pavilion of Newcastle Ocean Baths, south of Nobbys, is one of the city's outstanding historic landmarks and also a popular open-air studio for amateur photographers.

South of Newcastle Beach is the Bogey Hole, a unique hand-hewn ocean rock pool carved out of a cliff face by convicts during the early 19th century. It's popular with swimmers seeking a tranquil bathing spot only minutes from the city centre.

Bar Beach is the ideal family beach, featuring a sheltered rock pool for children. It's also a great place to watch hang-gliders take off from nearby Strzelecki Lookout. Dixon Park Beach is a popular surfing spot for locals, many of whom head out for an early morning surf.

Merewether is the beach where four times world champion surfer Mark Richards learnt to surf. Nearby you'll find the Merewether Ocean Baths, home to the Merewether Mackerels Winter Swimming Club, whose hardy members

have been known to toss blocks of ice into the pool to lower its temperature!

Just north of the city is Stockton Beach, only a ferry ride away from Newcastle Harbour. Offering sweeping views across the Stockton Bight to Port Stephens, it's an excellent beach for novice surfers.

Café culture

Newcastle has become a vibrant cosmopolitan city with an emerging food scene and a strong arts focus. On Newcastle Harbour you'll find Honeysuckle, where the former industrial wharves have been transformed into The Boardwalk with open plazas surrounded by restaurants, cafés and bars. Diners can sample fresh local produce prepared in a variety of styles as they watch the activity on the harbour.

In nearby Cooks Hill, a leafy terrace suburb renowned for its cafés and galleries, you'll find Darby Street with excellent coffee and eclectic boutiques. Beyond Cooks Hill is The Junction, a popular shopping district with designer clothing, jewellery and homewares as well as first-class cafés and restaurants.

Beaumont Street in Hamilton is a Newcastle institution, long established as a popular dining precinct. Here you'll discover a variety of delicatessens, restaurants and cafés with a distinct Mediterranean feel.

Natural assets

Newcastle has several natural habitats that are easily reached from the city centre.



Artistic bent

Newcastle is a city that embraces and nurtures creativity, and holds local arts practitioners in high esteem.

The Hunter Wetlands Centre at Shortland, 12 km north-west of Newcastle, is where you can hire a canoe and explore a network of ponds that is home to a diverse range of waterbirds – pick up a bird guide before you start. The centre also has a pleasant café with panoramic views.

Stockton Sand Dunes, 20 minutes drive or a short ferry ride north of the Newcastle city centre, is the largest moving sand dune system in the southern hemisphere. Take a tour by quad bike or 4WD and explore the 33 km of dunes, where you'll also see the *Sydney*, the largest shipwreck on the Australian coast.

At Blackbutt Reserve, 10 minutes drive south-west of the city centre, you can explore a range of habitats and ecosystems and see koalas, kangaroos, emus, wombats and a wide variety of bird species.

The 5.5 km Fernleigh Track follows a regenerated former railway corridor from Adamstown to Whitebridge (a 10 minute journey by car or train from the Newcastle city centre) via beautiful parks and historic suburbs, passing through a heritage railway tunnel en route.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Newcastle Maritime Visitor Centre
on 1800 654 558

A creative spirit

Newcastle has a thriving cultural scene that has launched many talented artists, actors, singers, dancers and comedians. Just a few of the city's creative exports include artist William Dobell, actor Miranda Otto and the band Silverchair.

There are no fewer than 30 galleries in and around Newcastle, and more than half are in Cooks Hill and the city centre.

Newcastle Region Art Gallery, in Laman Street, is acknowledged as one of the country's best regional galleries. Visitors can view works of local, national and international importance.

The Field Contemporary Art Space, in King Street, is an artist-run exhibition space showcasing experimental art forms.

You can buy art works at The Newcastle Art Bazaar, where local artists and artisans sell ceramics, jewellery, watercolours and fashion. It's held in Laman Street on the first Saturday in December. At any time you can explore the private art galleries in the leafy back streets of Cooks Hill.

Novocastrian artists tend to be innovative and resourceful. One of their successes is The Shoot Out Film-Making Festival, where professional and amateur filmmakers have to produce and screen a short film in 24 hours. The festival has been so popular it's been exported to New Zealand and the United States.



For the latest trends in arts and new media, catch This Is Not Art (TINA), a national festival held on the October long weekend. The program includes Electrofringe, National Young Writers' Festival and Sound Summit.

Newcastle also has a long tradition of community and amateur theatre. The Civic Theatre Newcastle is Australia's premier regional theatre, an Art Deco treasure where you can enjoy national, international and regional performances, ranging from ballet and Shakespeare to big-name comedy acts.



Hunter Valley

From fine wines and gourmet food to luxury accommodation and stunning scenery, a Hunter Valley getaway offers a true taste of the good life.



MUST SEE AND DO

Experience the fresh local produce – olives, first-press olive oils, handmade wash rind and white mould cheese, spicy grape sauce and pickled grapes.

[Dine in any of the valley's cafés, bistros and restaurants.](#)

Fly high in the Hunter – take a flight in a Tiger Moth or a helicopter, or enjoy the panoramic view from a hot-air balloon while you sip a glass of champagne.

[Bargain hunt in the historic villages of Wollombi, Morpeth and Broke.](#)

above left to right: Chefs of Hunter Valley wine country; Superb dining, Roberts Restaurant, Pokolbin (Anson Smart); Spa sensation at Golden Door Health Retreat – Elysia; Border Gardens, Hunter Valley Gardens.

bottom right: Waterfall, Hunter Valley Gardens.

Country hospitality

There's more to the Hunter Valley than the wine for which the area is so famous. The real beauty of the Hunter Valley is that, although it's one of Australia's most sophisticated weekend getaways, and only two hours drive from Sydney, it retains an authentic country charm.

Whether you're being pampered in one of the valley's day spas or teeing off from one of its three championship 18-hole golf courses, you'll enjoy a warm, genuine country welcome.

Fine food and wine

The Hunter Valley is home to some of Australia's iconic wines. However, most visitors are surprised by the number of wine areas in the valley.

From Pokolbin and Rothbury to Mount View and Wollombi, Broke and Lovedale, there are more than 120 wineries and many offer complimentary tastings. Why not tour the wineries in a chauffeur-driven car or a horse-drawn cart and indulge your sense of taste with a tempting array of local wines, produce and handmade deli goods?

For something more substantial, the region's many superb restaurants will ensure that you enjoy a memorable dining experience.

While visiting the Hunter Valley, you can educate your palate by signing up at a gourmet cooking school or coffee-making class. You can also attend a wine appreciation seminar. Various classes are held throughout the year across the valley.

Accommodation

With nearly 200 properties, including five-star resorts, secluded cottages, cabins and B&Bs you'll find the perfect escape from the city.

Heritage towns

Notable among the valley's historic towns are Wollombi, Maitland and Morpeth. Discover Wollombi's convict-built guesthouses and bridges. For a glimpse into the area's colonial past, tour the notorious Maitland Gaol.

National Trust-classified Morpeth has a number of galleries, antique and speciality stores. Delight in the town's heritage-listed main street stores, and visit the ginger-beer factory and Morpeth's famous bakery.

In Singleton, the Royal Australian Infantry Corps Museum, which contains Australia's largest collection of small arms as well as some interesting artillery pieces, is a must.

In the centre of the Hunter Valley, on the edge of Yengo National Park, lies Broke-Fordwich, a distinct viticultural sub-region and one of the oldest wine-growing areas in Australia. You'll find about 70 boutique vineyards, many of these producing trophy-winning wines.



Hunter Valley Gardens

Four years in the making, Hunter Valley Gardens is a tribute to the great gardens of the world.

FOOD AND WINE FACTS

Taste the Hunter Valley's signature wines on their home turf. Discover why James Halliday, one of Australia's most respected wine critics and judges, calls the fresh, crisp Hunter semillon 'a true national treasure, with no equivalent anywhere'. Jancis Robinson, the British journalist and international wine expert, has called it 'Australia's unique gift to the world'. Savour what is probably Australia's most famous red, the Hunter Valley shiraz – a wine that matures to a soft, earthy red.

Meet the wine bluebloods – renowned dynasties who have been creating quality wines for six generations. McGuigan, Tyrrell, Tulloch and Drayton are just some of the names to know.

Meet celebrity winemakers of the future – the Hunter remains a proving ground for wine 'young guns' such as Jane Turner (Bimbadgen Estate), Scott Stevens (Tower Estate), Usher Tinkler (Pooles Rock Wines) and Michael De Iuliis (De Iuliis Wines).

Learn at a food and wine matching course why semillon goes well with seafood and why shiraz works with barbecued beef or kangaroo.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism Visitor Information Centre on (02) 4992 0900

Maitland Visitor Information Centre on 1300 652 320

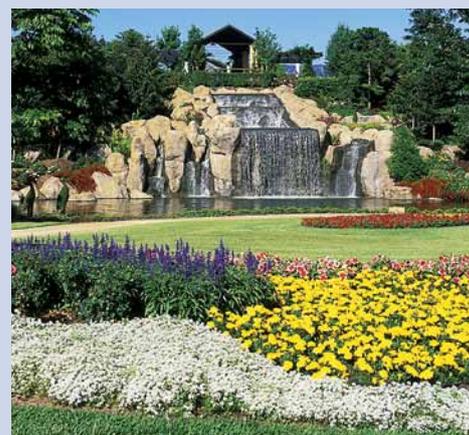
Located at the foot of the Brokenback Ranges at Pokolbin, Hunter Valley Gardens features 12 separate theme gardens over 25 hectares. There's also accommodation, a gift shop, a restaurant, a conference centre and a chapel.

Each garden evokes a different mood. The serene Oriental Garden, a tribute to Marco Polo, the celebrated 13th century Venetian explorer of the Orient, is inspired by Japanese and Korean gardens. Featuring lantern towers, curved bridges and a Japanese pagoda, it also contains the largest planting of Korean zoysia grass in the southern hemisphere.

To enter the Indian Mosaic Tea Garden, you'll walk through antique Indian elephant gates to find yourself transported to another world. Sit in the 180-year-old Indian teahouse and soak up the seductive scent of ornamental curry plants.

Kids will love the fairytale characters in the Storybook Garden, while rose fanciers will be enchanted by the 8,000 roses on display in the Rose Garden. Nicknamed the Grandmother's Garden, it also features bronze statues of the owner Mrs Imelda Roche and her 12 grandchildren.

Other gardens include the Italian Grotto and the Chinese Moongate Garden, all connected by 8 km of paths.



Every season offers a change of mood with different coloured blooms and fragrances, from the blazing gold of 30,000 spring daffodils to the flaming colours of autumn foliage.

Hunter Valley Gardens also gives you a rare chance to view one of the greatest botanical discoveries of the millennium – the prehistoric Wollemi pine, which has survived more than 17 ice ages.

For more information, contact Hunter Valley Gardens, (02) 4998 4000, or visit hvg.com.au



Upper Hunter Country

Endowed with lakes and pristine forests, this is an area with a stirring history, a passion for all things equestrian and a taste for the good life.



MUST SEE AND DO

Follow the Upper Hunter Wine Trail and discover some of the boutique labels that you won't see in your local bottle shop.

Pack your fishing rod, hitch a boat on the back of your car and spend a day out fishing or exploring on Lake Glenbawn or Lake St. Clair.

Visit Burning Mountain Nature Reserve, about 20 km north of Scone, where the coal seam has been smouldering for more than 5,500 years.

above left to right: Belltrees Estate, Scone (Anson Smart); Horse-riding, Upper Hunter Country; The Vintage Resort Golf Course.

below far right: Wollumbi General Store (Anson Smart).

Pleasures from the past

The rich farmlands along the river systems of this region were among the first to be settled during Australia's pioneering period. Many of the towns that grew up to service these early settlements have a wealth of churches, hotels, gaols and courthouses dating from those early years. Some of the churches from this era are particularly well preserved. Take a look at St Alban's in Muswellbrook, St Luke's in Scone and the magnificent chapel in the Mercy Sisters Convent, next to Singleton's St Patrick's Catholic Church. Ask for a heritage walking tour brochure at the visitor information centres in Murrurundi, Merriwa, Scone, Muswellbrook and Singleton, and be sure to check out the local museums.

The antique shops found in these country towns are a treasure trove for collectors of bric-à-brac and rustic antiques as well as old farming implements and tools.

Life and style

Nestled in a pretty valley enclosed by hills to the east and west, Scone calls itself 'the Horse Capital of Australia', and the manicured horse studs all around the town do give it a rather gentrified air. The region's thoroughbred industry is said to be second only to Kentucky in size and value, and several wealthy international racing syndicates maintain stables here. Many of these substantial horse studs can be seen from the New England Highway, and some offer stable tours.

Regional art galleries and many art festivals and exhibitions throughout the year showcase

a wide variety of high-quality photography as well as landscapes, portraits and still lifes. The Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery has a fine collection of works by regional artists, while the Norville Art Prize in Murrurundi, the Banool Art Prize in Scone and the Singleton Art Prize attract the best of the local talent.

The region has a long tradition of eating well, and local markets – a regular fixture in towns such as Aberdeen and Murrurundi – are a great place to shop for fresh local produce. Look for olives, fruit, macadamia nuts, jams, honeys and soft cheeses. Keep an eye out for Hunter Belle Cheeses, and don't miss Pukara Estate's olive oil. The estate is open for tastings at Denman Road in Muswellbrook.

Call of the wilderness

Surrounded by some of our finest national parks, the region is a natural paradise for lovers of the great outdoors. Wollemi National Park, Barrington Tops and Mount Royal National Park have excellent networks of hiking tracks suitable for every level, from short rainforest strolls to multi-day hikes through challenging country. For mountain bikers looking for a real adventure, the Mount Royal Road loop is highly recommended.

Amateur botanists will find rare and precious delights in the wet alpine forests of the Barrington Tops, while birdwatchers can spot turquoise and king parrots, kingfishers, rosellas, wedge-tailed eagles and glossy black cockatoos – just some of the spectacular birds that can be seen in these national parks.



Golf in the Hunter

A 30-km drive north from Singleton takes you on a winding road that climbs through forested hills to Lake St Clair, penned behind the walls of Glennies Creek Dam. The 1500-hectare lake has campsites and powered sites for caravans, barbecue areas and a boat ramp, while the lake is stocked with bass, perch and catfish. Beyond the lake lies Mount Royal State Forest, which can be accessed only by 4WD vehicles.

Lake Glenbawn State Park, 14 km to the east of Scone, is a lovely spot for a day out water-skiing, swimming, sailing, canoeing or sailboarding. Created to regulate the flow of the Hunter River and also to supply irrigation and domestic water, the lake is known for its freshwater fishing.

In Goulburn River National Park, south-west of Merriwa, a walking track leads to Lees Pinch Lookout, where you can enjoy spectacular views from the escarpment. There's a fee-

free camping ground on the main Barrington Tops Forest Road that makes a great base for exploring the area. In the northern section of Barrington Tops National Park, a 200-m trail leads to Devils Hole Lookout, which offers a panoramic view across thickly forested mountain ranges that topple into deep canyons.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Singleton Visitor Information & Enterprise Centre on 1800 449 888

Muswellbrook Visitor Information Centre on 1800 065 773

Scone Visitor Information & Wine Centre on (02) 6540 1300

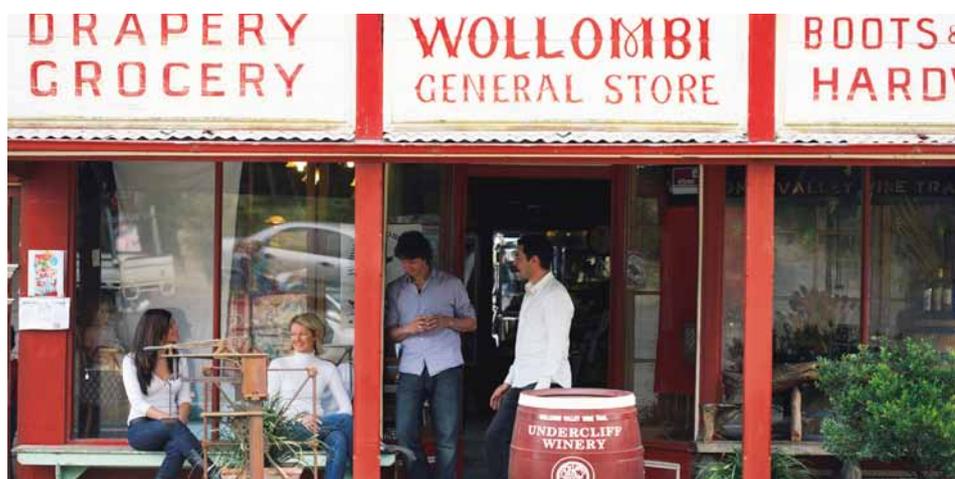
Merriwa Visitor Information Centre on (02) 6521 7046

If you're keen to perfect your golf swing, visit the Hunter Valley and tee off in style. The Hunter has a number of premier championship golf courses with panoramic views over the valley's vineyards and surrounding mountains.

Test your skills on the 18-hole golf course at The Vintage Resort, Rothbury, designed by Greg Norman, or visit the newly revamped Hunter Valley Golf and Country Club, Lovedale. There are wide fairways for beginners as well as lakes and undulating greens to test more experienced players. Skilled professionals are on hand to help you improve your game, while the nearby day spas offer a welcome opportunity to unwind.

Add luxurious course-side accommodation, and you have the perfect golf getaway.

For more time on the greens, play Cypress Lakes at Pokolbin, an 18-hole, par 72 Championship course that is ranked among the top resort courses in Australia.





Barrington Tops

Escape, relax and explore the lush rainforests and ancient beech forests of the World Heritage-listed Barrington Tops, one of the state's premier wilderness destinations.



MUST SEE AND DO

Explore the World Heritage-listed Barrington Tops, enjoy scenic drives and spectacular views.

Fill the boot of your car with fine produce from the Farm Gate Trail or discover the boutique wineries of the northern Hunter at Gresford and Stroud.

Visit St Anne's 19th century church at Gresford and look for Dr Henry Lindeman's grave.

Dine alfresco at charming cafés and restaurants in historic country towns.

above left to right: Giant snowgums at Thunderbolt's Lookout, Barrington Tops National Park (Hamilton Lund); Flowers, (Hamilton Lund); Small church in Barrington (Hamilton Lund); Breathe in the Barringtons (Hamilton Lund).

below far right: Snow on mountain, Barrington Tops National Park.

Natural wonders

Barrington Tops is a 25 km long plateau, surrounded by more than 20 valleys. It covers over 120,000 hectares of unspoilt wilderness where visitors can set up camp, go horse-riding or mountain-biking, or explore the area by 4WD.

Barrington Tops National Park

Wander through forests of subtly striped snowgums, covered in snow in winter, or discover the complex ecosystem of the subtropical rainforest, where the native flora includes delicate orchids, fleshy elkhorns and staghorns, and gigantic bird's nest ferns.

In the woodlands and the moss swamps, the ground is dotted with bluebells, paper daisies and delicate rice flowers.

Amid the leaf litter, you may be lucky enough to see scrub turkeys and lyrebirds, satin bowerbirds, wallabies and pademelons. Sharp-eyed visitors may catch a glimpse of koalas and quolls, or even platypus diving and ducking in a mountain stream.

Staying in the wilderness

Even when you're in the middle of the Barrington Tops wilderness, you needn't leave creature comforts behind. While there are many well maintained campsites, those who prefer conventional accommodation can choose from mountain resorts and retreats, B&Bs, cottages, rustic farm stays, units and bunkhouses.

Historic towns

Many of the towns in the area were settled in the early 19th century and can trace their

origins to the timber industry, gold prospecting and even ship-building. While you're exploring, why not sample the local specialties? Pick up a Farm Gate Trail map from the visitor information centre and look for farm gate producers selling products as diverse as alpaca wool, perch, wine, cheese and lavender.

And wherever you go, dine at charming cafés and restaurants in historic country towns such as Paterson, Barrington, Gloucester, Clarence Town, Gresford, Vacy and Stroud.

Gloucester and Dungog

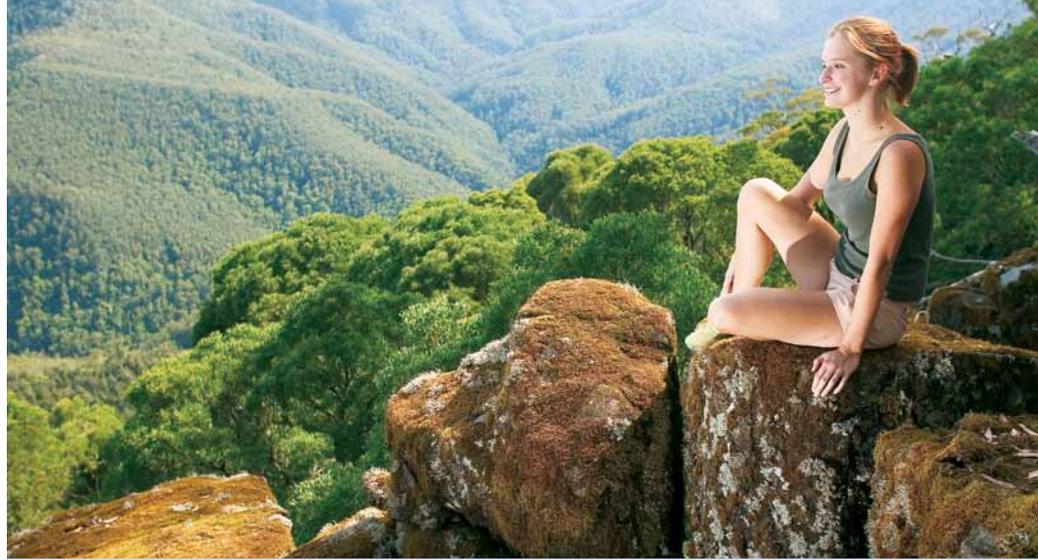
The towns of Gloucester and Dungog are at the centre of outdoor activities in the Barrington Tops. When the snow melts, trickles from the high peaks form into wild rivers and become plunging waterfalls in fern-lined gorges. Picnic riverside or, for something more adventurous, sign up for a whitewater rafting expedition or a skydiving adventure, a 4WD tour or mountain-bike riding.

At Gloucester stroll along the streets and stop to chat with local shopkeepers – some stores have been owned by the same family for more than 130 years. Take time to enjoy a cup of tea.

i For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Dungog Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 130 647

Gloucester Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 130 647



Barrington Tops National Park

Covering 95,000 hectares, the parks and reserves in the Barrington Tops complement rainforest parks born from an

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

Try your hand at trout fishing.

Ride a mountain bike and experience the sights, smells and sounds of country roads.

Go skydiving and admire the magnificent scenery.

Hit the trail and go on a guided motocross adventure through Chichester State Forest.

Take the challenge and walk to Careys Peak at 1,544 m, on the edge of the Barrington Plateau via the Link Trail, one of the many superb walking tracks.

NATURE EXPERIENCES

Lunch with the llamas at the Lavender and Llama Farm, Wallarobba, midway between Paterson and Dungog.

Experience a night under the stars. Go spotlighting for wildlife in the State Forests and National Parks, listen for frogs or just marvel at the Milky Way.

Watch out for the many species of endangered wildlife along the walks in the State Forests and National Parks of Barrington Tops.

Meet the goats at Capparis Cheese near Gloucester and chat with the makers. Three styles of cheese are available.

Look out for platypus in the pools in the Williams and Barrington rivers, or along the Blue Gum Loop Track in the Barrington Tops National Park.

Natural habitats

Ranging from subtropical rainforest to subalpine snowgums, the lush valleys, high plains and extinct volcanic peaks of the Barringtons provide a habitat for a range of plants and animals – more than 52 mammal, 278 bird, 42 reptile and 18 frog species, although eastern grey kangaroos, wombats and swamp wallabies are more common.

Declared a World Heritage Area in 1986, the park has three sections, each offering something different.

In the southern section there is a variety of rainforest walks, rivers and a long, difficult climb from Lagoon Pinch to Careys Peak. Although you'll be rewarded with wonderful views along the way, especially from The Corker, it's a steep 9 km ascent.

The eastern section is the place for camping on a sheltered river bank. Take the 90 minute drive over gravel roads from Gloucester to Gloucester Tops and soak up the spectacular views. Drive along the Barrington Tops Forest Road, where you can experience four different types of rainforest and a 2000-year-old Antarctic beech forest.

The northern section is reached by a scenic loop drive across the Barrington Tops Plateau, where camping, picnicking, lookouts and a range of walks can be enjoyed in a subalpine setting. Explore Barrington Tops on foot – there are a number of walking tracks to enjoy, suitable for all fitness levels.



The park offers campers a great range of habitats, from subtropical rainforests to subalpine meadows, but the range of altitudes means you should be prepared for changeable weather. Camping areas include Polblue Swamp and Devils Hole (both accessible by car via Barrington Tops Forest Road) and Little Murray and Junction Pools camping areas (accessible by 4WD or foot via the Barrington Trail).

Whether you're driving or hiking, take a picnic lunch and relax by fast-flowing streams. Some wonderful picnic areas include Honeysuckle and Gummi in the northern section of the park, and Williams River, Williams Top and Lagoon Pinch in the south. With so much to discover, you'll come back again and again.

For further information, contact the **National Parks and Wildlife Service** on (02) 6538 5300, or visit nationalparks.nsw.gov.au



Port Stephens

Just a few hours north of Sydney, Port Stephens' beautiful bay, unspoilt beaches and national parks offer lots of opportunities for holiday adventures.



MUST SEE AND DO

Try a new way to get wet – book some surfing lessons or a sea-kayaking tour, or try a ride on a jet boat or jet ski.

Walk up Tomaree Headland to enjoy striking views of Nelson Bay and the offshore islands.

Discover the underwater world of Fly Point Marine Park, with its sea caves, walls, sponge gardens and shipwrecks.

Visit the koala colony at the picturesque Tilligerry Peninsula, 30 minutes drive west of Nelson Bay.

Play a round of golf at one of the area's 18-hole golf courses.

above left to right: Parasailing over Shoal Bay; Relaxing at Fingal Bay (Hamilton Lund); Surfing at Zenith Beach (Hamilton Lund); Dining out at Nelson Bay (Hamilton Lund).

below far right: Snorkeling with Imagine Cruises (James Pipino).

Fun on the water

With 26 sandy golden beaches, a bay that's two and a half times the size of Sydney Harbour, and many beautiful inlets, Port Stephens is the perfect place to laze away a holiday. There is also plenty to keep you busy, from water sports and horse-riding to scenic drives and fine dining.

Explore the delights of Port Stephens by trying parasailing, jet skiing, surfing or snorkelling in this magnificent waterway.

Scuba diving

The diversity of Port Stephens' marine life makes it a great place to try scuba diving for the first time. You'll be enchanted by the magnificent underwater world of fish and colourful corals that lie beneath the bay's tranquil surface. Famed sites such as the aquatic reserves at Fly Point and Halifax Park are easily accessed from land.

If you feel like venturing further afield, there's a variety of diving cruises that explore the underwater sponge gardens, wrecks and chasms at spectacular dive sites such as the famous Looking Glass.

Sea kayaking with dolphins

At Nelson Bay or Soldiers Point, take a tour with a difference – kayaking with dolphins. There are tours for beginners and also more able paddlers. You can camp overnight or take a romantic sunset tour, sipping champagne. With experienced guides on hand, even novices will soon find their paddling rhythm and throw themselves into the adventure.

Whale-watching

From late May to early November, the waters off Port Stephens are host to the magnificent acrobatic displays of migrating humpback whales, some weighing up to 48 tonnes. Watching these magnificent mammals is an unforgettable experience.

Whale-watching cruises departing from Nelson Bay provide a ringside seat, but the shoreline around Fingal Bay and Anna Bay, just south of Nelson Bay, are also great viewing spots.

Beachcombing

With so many beautiful beaches in the area, it's hard to know where to start. Of the dozen within 10 minutes drive of Nelson Bay, One Mile, Birubi and Stockton beaches are all good for swimmers, while Nelson Bay and Boat Harbour beaches are perfect for young families.

Surfers will find good waves at One Mile, Birubi, Stockton, Kingsley and Samurai, while first-timers can pick up some tips at the surf school at Anna Bay.

If you prefer more secluded beaches, try Zenith, Wreck or Box beaches. Surrounded by bush, you'll feel as if you're miles away from civilisation. Clothing is optional at Samurai Beach, while the long curving beach at Shoal Bay is a perennial favourite with holiday-makers.

Dolphins

Port Stephens is rightly regarded as the dolphin capital of Australia. With 160



bottlenose dolphins calling Port Stephens home, it's no wonder they're sighted so often.

Board one of the many cruises departing from Nelson Bay and you'll do much more than just spot dolphins – listen to them on the hydrophone, watch them on the underwater video or get down to dolphin level with an exhilarating ride in the boat's boom-net.

Fishing

Join the locals and try your luck at catching your own dinner. Choose from beach fishing, game fishing, charter trips to the reefs and islands, or just throw a line off one of the jetties or rock walls. The coast off Port Stephens is now part of the Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park, which boasts a huge diversity of marine life, including dolphins, turtles and fish.

Fun on land

There are many different ways to discover Port Stephens and its surrounds. Historic Raymond Terrace, 23 km north of Newcastle, is a great base for exploring this beautiful region. Tomaree National Park, a 20 km strip of coastline between Anna Bay and Shoal Bay, offers a range of bushwalking trails and stunning views from the lookout at Tomaree Headland. During spring, wildflowers burst into bloom, carpeting the area with a colourful display.

Coastal desert wilderness

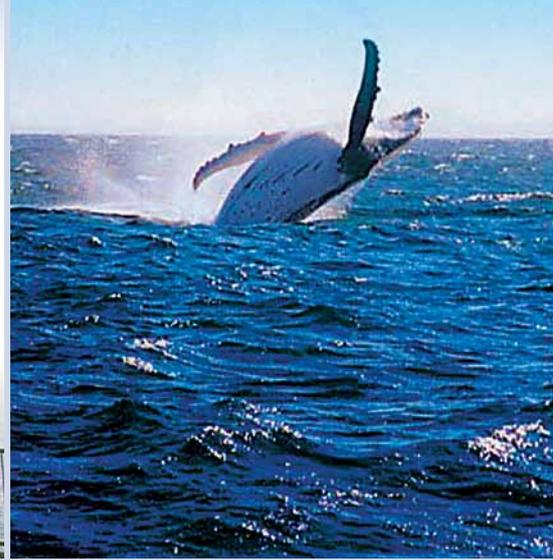
Port Stephens is home to a unique playground: the coastal desert wilderness of Stockton Sand Dunes. It is ideal for 4WD adventuring, whether on your own or with a tour. You can

also join a tag-along tour to master 4WD techniques. There are regular departures on a variety of four- and six-wheel-drive vehicles from Anna Bay and Williamtown. There's also the option of quad-biking down 30 m dunes or even sand-boarding. Tour bookings and information are available from the visitor information centre in Nelson Bay.

Horse-riding

A horse-riding adventure is a fun way to get around. Whether you're cantering through the bush or galloping through the surf, you can enjoy the local landscape on a horseback tour. Tours depart from Anna Bay, Williamtown and Salt Ash, 20 minutes drive from Nelson Bay.





Taste and tiddle

It's well known that Port Stephens offers delicious freshly caught seafood, but the rich soils also produce macadamias and healthy grape vines.

With locally grown produce and picturesque surroundings, it's no wonder that so many award-winning chefs choose to call Port Stephens home.

Meals with a view

The area's main dining precincts are all located conveniently close together. From Corlette through Nelson Bay to Shoal Bay, you can sample the finest local fare in a variety of settings, including casual cafés, pizzerias, bistros and restaurants.

With views of the elegant boats rocking gently in the marina, Nelson Bay is the place for seaside dining. You can also visit the Seafood Co-op in Nelson Bay and enjoy a plate of local oysters or some freshly caught seafood, accompanied by a glass of local wine.

Soldiers Point, 9 km west of Corlette, is a superb location for enjoying a delicious meal while watching a spectacular sunset.

There's a wonderful range of cuisines available – choose from Indian, Thai, Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Mexican and Malaysian.

The good drop

Of course, the best way to enjoy a good meal is with fine wine, and here too you'll be spoilt for choice.

At Port Stephens you can buy a wide variety of independent boutique wines as well as quality wines produced by local wineries.

Head to Bob's Farm, 15 minutes from Nelson Bay, to taste some of Port Stephens' best local wines, or visit Wonganella Wines, where you can also enjoy a delicious meal at the adjoining restaurant. Try the vintages at Divers Luck Boutique Family Vineyard and Winery.

Look and book

Use the online booking and reservation system to book your Port Stephens getaway. Just go to portstephens.org.au to get all the information you need on the area, view available places to stay and make any booking online, including dolphin-watching tours, a quad-bike ride or a 4WD tour.

EVENTS

March: Jazz at the Winery. Take a picnic to Bob's Farm, near Nelson Bay, for cool jazz on a warm day.

April: Trailerboat Sportfishing Tournament, Nelson Bay. Watch the experts battle the big fish.

June: Festival of the Whales, Port Stephens. Celebrate the whale-watching season.

November: Tastes of the Bay Food and Wine Festival, Nelson Bay. The best of local food and wine on the foreshore.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Port Stephens Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 808 900

above left to right: Headland, Tomaree National Park (Hamilton Lund); Whale ahoy – humpback breaching off Port Stephens.

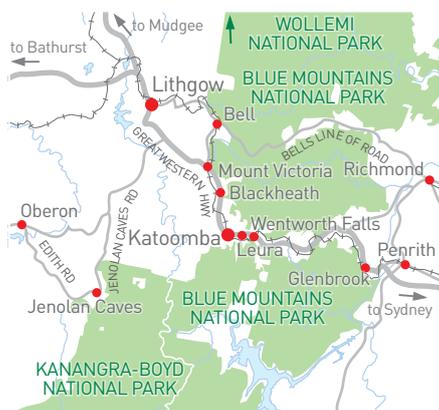
far right: Family at Fingal Bay beach (Hamilton Lund).





Blue Mountains

Satisfy your senses in the Blue Mountains region, more than one million hectares of World Heritage area, only 90 minutes west of Sydney.



MUST SEE AND DO

Walk on air 270 m above the valley of the Kedumba River – the glass panel in the floor of the Scenic Skyway ensures panoramic views.

Listen to live music in an underground chamber, or get goosebumps on a ghost tour in the Jenolan Caves.

Embrace the breathtaking views on a walking track in the greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area.

Time travel and admire a stand of the Jurassic-Era Wollemi Pine at Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens.

above left to right: Dining at Silvermere Guesthouse, Wentworth Falls (Anson Smart); Couple admiring the view at Kanangra Walls (Chris Jones).

World Heritage landscape

Right in Sydney's backyard, the vast 1000 m sandstone plateau of the Blue Mountains forms a wilderness of spectacular blue-hazed beauty, with dramatic cliffs and escarpments, deep canyons, valleys, rainforests, plunging waterfalls, heathlands and eucalypt forest. In an area that embraces Lithgow and Oberon, you can enjoy clean fresh mountain air and four distinct seasons, from winter snow to spring blossoms.

For an introduction to this Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, watch *The Edge*. This custom-made 70 mm film showcasing the grandeur of the Blue Mountains is screened at The Edge – a six-storey cinema screen in Katoomba.

When you've seen the film, admire the beauty of the area from Govetts Leap Lookout – one of the best vantage points in the mountains.

The Blue Mountains teem with life. About 400 species of birds, reptiles and mammals have been recorded, 40 listed as rare or endangered. Huge numbers of plants – including botanical rarities such as the Wollemi Pine, a tree dating back 150 million years that was only discovered in 1994 – reflects the enormous diversity of habitats in the area.

Relax and recharge

Whether you want to reward yourself after a long bushwalk, re-energise or simply relax, there is a range of spa treatments and natural therapies in the area. For extended pampering, retreat to one of the Blue Mountains'

star-studded resorts. There is a range of accommodations, including heritage-listed guesthouses, B&Bs, rustic cabins and modern eco-lodges. The area also has quality budget motels and backpacker hostels.

Entice your palate with some of the Blue Mountains' outstanding produce. Sample boutique wines and chocolate, enjoy rich, flavoursome coffee at one of the cafés in Leura and Katoomba, and savour 'slow food' at a number of outstanding restaurants.

Artists' colony

The City of the Blue Mountains – a string of 26 villages and townships with a population of about 74,000 – forms a vibrant cultural community. One of Australia's largest populations of artists, writers, composers, sculptors and performers flourishes here. Discover the local talent in galleries and museums, craft and antique shops, displaying works ranging from etchings and sculptures to spectacular photography and hand-crafted jewellery.

Ask the friendly staff at one of the bookshops scattered throughout Leura and Katoomba about the works of local authors.

Enjoy three days of live folk, roots and blues music at the Blue Mountains Music Festival in March. Celebrate spring during the Open Garden season with festivals, including the Leura Garden Festival and the Oberon Daffodil Festival.

Adventure

If you are looking for thrills, you can abseil over towering cliffs or plunge into a dim chasm in one of the canyons in the Blue Mountains and Wollemi national parks.



above to right: Three sisters at Echo Point, Blue Mountains (Sally Mayman); Browsing through the shops of Leura (Adam Taylor).

below left to right: Mountain biking in the Blue Mountains (Chris Jones); Mountain Heritage Hotel in Katoomba (Chris Jones); Canyoning in the Claustral Canyon, Blue Mountains National Park (Don Fuchs).

Delve into the majestic Jenolan Caves, 74 km south-west of Katoomba or, for a real mountain high, 4WD through rugged and picturesque terrain in the Lithgow area. You can also experience the splendour of the mountains on horseback or explore some of the fire tracks on foot or on mountain bike. Choose from gentle strolls around the escarpment, hikes or multi-day trekking adventures.

Rich heritage

Indigenous rock art, early convict roads and engineering masterpieces such as the Zig Zag Railway all form part of the rich heritage of the Lithgow-Oberon-Blue Mountains Region.

Follow in the footsteps of the explorers Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth, who, in 1813, were the first Europeans to find a way to the western plains. You can also travel the road built by William Cox, who used convict labour to create the first road across the mountains in 1815.

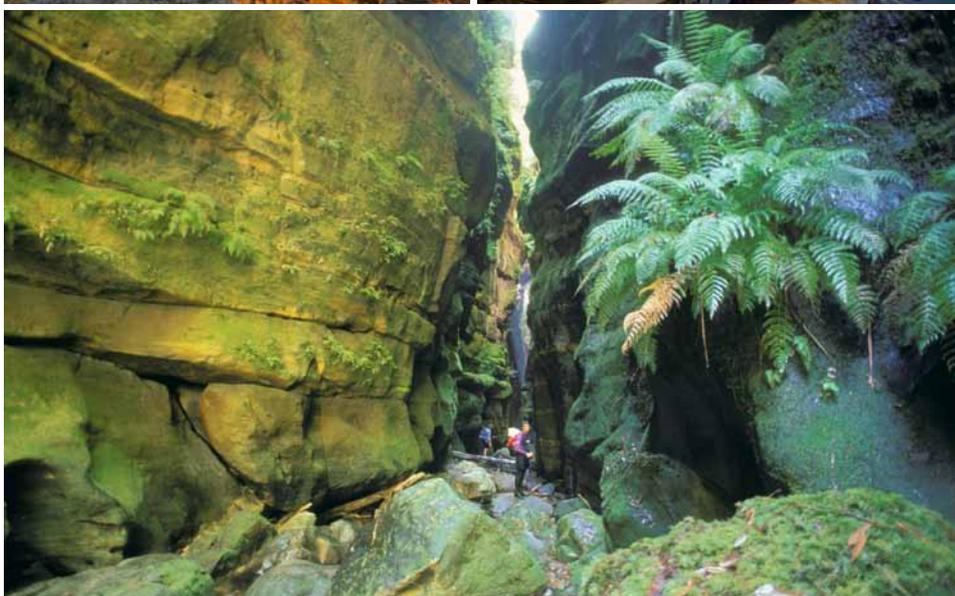
 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 653 408

Echo Point Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 653 408

Lithgow Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 760 276

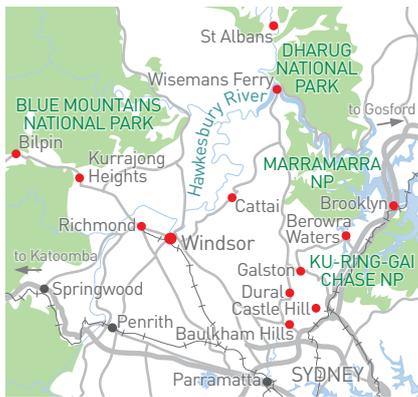
Oberon Visitor Centre on (02) 6329 8210





Hawkesbury River

The quiet hamlets and farms in the Hawkesbury Valley contrast with the activity of cruisers and houseboats, ferries and various water sports on the river.



MUST SEE AND DO

Visit Australia's oldest operating church, Ebenezer Uniting Church, built in 1809 by Scottish settlers.

Tour Roughley House at Dural, which belonged to the same family from 1856 to 2002. There is jazz in the grounds on the third Sunday of each month except in December, January and winter.

Explore the Farm Gate Trail and bring home edible souvenirs, including citrus fruit, free-range eggs, chestnuts and walnuts, ducks and boutique wines.

Take a hike along the Great North Road and imagine what it was like for convicts to construct the route with 6 kg leg irons attached to their ankles.

above left to right: The glorious Hawkesbury River; Tizzana Winery, Ebenezer, Hawkesbury Valley (Paul Blackmore); Exploring the Convict Trail on the Great North Road (James Pipino); Houseboat family getaway on the Hawkesbury River (James Pipino).

far right: Having a picnic at Hawkesbury River with Sydney Seaplanes (Sydney Seaplanes).

River of life

An hour's drive north-west of Sydney, the Hawkesbury region follows Australia's longest eastward flowing river, from the edge of the Blue Mountains to Broken Bay. The Hawkesbury links the settlements of Kurrajong, Bilpin and Mount Tomah with the historic townships of Richmond and Windsor, and the riverside villages of Lower Portland, Ebenezer, Pitt Town, Colo, Wisemans Ferry, St Albans and Brooklyn.

From the early 1790s, the farms of the Hawkesbury River Valley were crucial to the colony's early survival. Even today, the valley produces a sizeable share of NSW's fruit and vegetables. Visitors are rewarded with a fascinating mix of country life, a great choice of dining and accommodation, natural attractions and, of course, lots of opportunities for exploring the river and its tributaries.

Cruising and touring

An essential transport route since the early days of settlement, the Hawkesbury River is navigable from Windsor down to Brooklyn.

You can join boat cruises at Windsor, Wisemans Ferry and Brooklyn. Take a Crab 'N' Oyster cruise or tour the river with Australia's Last River Boat Postman on his weekday mail run. Both of these leisurely tours leave from Brooklyn Public Wharf. Alternatively, hire a houseboat for a few days and sample river life.

Check out the roads less travelled by taking your car on one of five ferries that still operate

on the river, linking back roads and byways. The cable-operated Wisemans Ferry punt provides access to St Albans, the Hunter Valley and Gosford. If you're feeling energetic, simply paddle your own canoe.

Living history

Wherever you go on the Hawkesbury, you'll find reminders of the region's convict and pioneering history. Windsor, first settled in 1794, boasts many historic buildings, including St Matthew's Anglican Church (1817), designed by convict architect Francis Greenway. The former forger was also responsible for the Windsor Courthouse (1822). You can even walk sections of the Great North Road, built by convicts in the early 19th century to link Sydney and the Hunter Valley.

If you fancy sleeping in historic settings, head for St Albans and the convict-built Settlers Arms Inn (1844), the newly restored Price Morris Cottage (1837) or the self-catering St Albans Court House, where the bathrooms are located in the original gaol cells. The Macquarie Arms (1815) is the oldest hotel in NSW. Enjoy dinner, bed and breakfast at Tizzana Winery's vineyard and olive grove (1822), a little bit of Tuscany.

Although substantially altered since it was built in 1826, the Wisemans Ferry Inn contains parts of the original building and is a popular spot for lunch and a drink. Take a guided tour of Rouse Hill estate, a Georgian sandstone mansion built between 1813 and 1819 by Richard and Elizabeth Rouse.



The great outdoors

More than 80 per cent of the Hawkesbury River Valley is national park or reserve.

The Botanists Way touring route, linking the Hawesbury and Lithgow, connects many of the botanical attractions in the area. Among the many walking trails are the Finch's Line section of the Great North Road in the Darug National Park, and the Buralow Rainforest Walk in the Blue Mountains National Park.

The good life

Close to Sydney, the Hawkesbury is an easy getaway, and there are plenty of B&Bs and self-catering cottages to choose from. You can dine in riverside cafés and bistros in historic

pubs, or in elegant riverside restaurants such as Peats Bite and Cottage Point Inn, which are accessible only by water transport or seaplane.

The region's reputation as Sydney's food basket is supported by roadside stalls in the towns of Galston, Kenthurst and Dural. Buy produce, jams, preserves and hand-crafted items. Take the time to explore the local nurseries. There are specialists devoted to crepe myrtle, roses, geraniums and helleborus. At the Grose Vale end of the Hawkesbury, at the foot of the Blue Mountains, you'll find Enniskillen Orchard, where you can sample apples, plums, figs, passionfruit, nectarines and European and Asian pears.

Enjoy lunch or a coffee in the café, then wander through the herb garden where the plantings are arranged by theme.

i For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitsw.com or contact

Hawkesbury Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 362 874

Rouse Hill Visitor Information Centre (Mungerie House) on (02) 8814 6909





The Illawarra

Take a day or two and discover the seaside villages, beautiful beaches and natural wonders in this thriving coastal region.



MUST SEE AND DO

Enjoy a bird's eye view of the Illawarra: tandem hang-glide at Stanwell Park, take a joy flight over the coast or freefall at 250 km/hr on a skydive.

Grab a board and catch a wave at 'The Farm' in Killalea State Park, Shellharbour.

Walk the spectacular 665 m Sea Cliff Bridge, part of the Grand Pacific Drive.

Get your thrills on high-speed rides or bucking rapids, and test your race-car skills at Jamberoo.

Sip a locally brewed beer and some tasty bar food at Five Islands Brewery in Wollongong.

above left to right: Wollongong, surf city; Friends at Kendalls Beach in Kiama (James Pipino); Minnamurra rainforest, Jamberoo; Driving over the Sea Cliff Bridge, Grand Pacific Drive.

Grand vistas

Unwind at your own pace in the Illawarra, which includes Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama. Just an hour's drive south of Sydney, the area is easily accessible via the new Grand Pacific Drive, a spectacular 140 km coastal road.

Cruise through the area's coastal villages, past the farmlands of the Southern Highlands and then continue on to Canberra.

Wollongong

Once known for its steelworks industry, in recent years NSW's third largest city has reinvented itself as a great weekend escape. Enjoy a dash of culture in the local art galleries, visit the nearby village of Mount Kembla, or meditate in the landscaped gardens of Nan Tien Temple, the largest Buddhist temple in the southern hemisphere.

The coastal villages in this seaside region offer many opportunities for enjoying bays, beaches and lakes with water sports to entertain kids big and small. Rock pools (great for a paddle), fishing, sailing and surfing are all on offer. For an exhilarating coastal tour, hop on the back of a Harley and let your guide show you the best sights.

Whether you're craving the buzz of a good café, a gourmet meal or a simple lunch of fish 'n' chips on the beach, make your way to one of the award-winning eateries in the area. Wollongong's Keira, Corrimal and Crown streets and Endeavour Drive and Cliff Road are all renowned for their restaurants and cafés.

Head to the award-winning Symbio Wildlife Gardens, located on Lawrence Hargrave

Drive between Helensburgh and Stanwell Park. This zoo has Australia's most loved native characters as well as some of the most fascinating creatures from around the world, including meerkats and red pandas.

Shellharbour

This pretty holiday town is nestled between Wollongong and Kiama. Thanks to its harbour, ocean pool and proximity to Lake Illawarra, it is perfect for a relaxing escape.

Enjoy lunch at any of the alfresco cafés and restaurants in the village. Wander through the shops, play golf on one of the major courses or explore the many parks and reserves that offer sweeping ocean and lake views. Bushranger's Bay, a Marine Aquatic Reserve at Bass Point, two minutes drive south of Shellharbour Village, is perfect for snorkelling and scuba diving.

For an insight into the area's aviation history, visit the HARS Aviation Museum at Illawarra Regional Airport at Albion Park. You can also take a microlight or scenic flight over the coastline. On the southern side of the airport, visit the Illawarra Light Railway Museum, where the restored 1917 locomotive named Kiama is one of many fascinating pieces of railway history on display.

Kiama

Kiama's Blowhole – a natural spout of water that shoots up to 60 m – is just one of the attractions in this seaside village. Accommodation available in the area, includes B&Bs, country cottages, serviced apartments and even cabins perched above Kiama's sparkling harbour. Many of the



Grand Pacific Drive

Sydney to Wollongong and beyond...this coastal drive winds past sparkling beaches and through lush rainforests and seaside villages.

specialty shops and restaurants are clustered around the main street.

It's tempting to soak up the sun on one of Kiama's surf beaches, but there's lots to do inland. Fifteen kilometres from Kiama, Minnamurra Rainforest, in Budderoo National Park, has sensational elevated boardwalks – a great way to experience the rainforest habitat. South to Gerringong, the Crooked River Winery has a cellar door and restaurant that offers great local food and wine with panoramic vistas of mountain ranges, vineyards and the ocean.

Jamberoo

For many the town of Jamberoo, only 90 minutes drive south-west of Sydney, is synonymous with the excitement of Jamberoo Action Park. There's more to discover in the Jamberoo Valley, where the Minnamurra River drops from the highlands into the picturesque Budderoo National Park.

At Jamberoo Village, you can browse specialty stores, or sip a pint in the 150-year-old pub. The Carrington Falls, west of the village, tumble over the Kangaroo Valley escarpment, making a stunning backdrop for a picnic.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Wollongong Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 240 737

Kiama Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 654 262

Shellharbour Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 656 169

Take to the road

Nothing beats a great road trip, and NSW's new 140 km Grand Pacific Drive is one of Australia's spectacular driving routes.

The route begins in the Royal National Park, which was established in 1879, making it the second oldest national park in the world. Continue south for 10 minutes past coastal rainforests to Stanwell Park, a popular hang-gliding spot and the first town on Lawrence Hargrave Drive. Here, the Bald Hill Lookout boasts great views down to Wollongong and beyond.

View from a bridge

From the lookout, it's a 10 minute drive south on Lawrence Hargrave Drive to the 665 m Sea Cliff Bridge, located between Coalcliff and Clifton. Boasting outstanding views, the Bridge is a great spot to break your journey.

From Clifton, head into the Illawarra's charming Northern Wollongong Coastal Villages, famous for their beautiful beaches, arts and crafts and fishing spots. Grab a gelato at Austinmer or enjoy a paddle at Thirroul before driving 30 minutes south into Wollongong, the bustling hub of the Illawarra.

Wollongong and beyond

NSW's third largest city lures visitors who are keen to enjoy its clean beaches, cultural landmarks, award-winning restaurants and variety of accommodation styles. And there are lots of fun things to do – from fishing, boating and swimming to extreme sports.

More holiday havens

After a leisurely 20 minute drive into picturesque Shellharbour, enjoy fine dining, a stroll along the streets, browsing in the many interesting shops, or explore Killalea State Park, a natural coastal park with a great surf beach, known as The Farm.

Next, take the Princes Highway to Kiama, about 15 minutes drive from Shellharbour. Famous for its natural blowhole, Kiama is a favourite weekend getaway for urbanites thanks to its cafés, unique shopping and range of accommodation.

Another 25 minute drive south along the highway, you'll reach the lovely seaside villages of Gerringong, Gerroa and historic Seven Mile Beach, where in 1933 pioneering aviator Sir Charles Kingsford Smith used the beach as a runway when making the first commercial flight between Australia and New Zealand. 'Smithy' made the flight at 2.30am and flares were lit on the beach to mark out a runway.

The Grand Pacific Drive officially ends north of Bomaderry near Nowra, but that doesn't mean your road trip must too. The Shoalhaven, the greater South Coast, the western region of the Southern Highlands and Canberra all await you...

For further information, contact **Illawarra Tourism** on (02) 4229 5802 or go to grandpacificdrive.com.au



Hit the road

Cruise the Grand Pacific Drive, a 140 km coastal road taking you from Sydney to Wollongong and beyond.

Day 1

National parks, beaches and coastal vistas

Morning: Begin your journey at the entry to the Royal National Park. Take a left off Princes Highway at Loftus into Farnell Avenue and drive through the park, stopping at Audley, Otford and Bald Hill lookouts to admire the spectacular views to Wollongong. If the conditions are right, you'll also see hang-gliders and para-gliders.

Afternoon: Head south along Lawrence Hargrave Drive, explore the Northern Wollongong Coastal Villages and walk across the Sea Cliff Bridge. Continue south along Grand Pacific Drive (via Lawrence Hargrave Drive and the Princes Highway). At Bulli, turn left onto Point Street and continue onto Blackall Street and Trinity Row before following the Tourist Drive 10 signs into Wollongong. Visit beautiful Wollongong Harbour and lighthouse, the beaches and Flagstaff Hill, and stay the night in one of Wollongong's many hotels and guesthouses.

Day 2

Temples, villages and the famous Blowhole

Morning: Drive south along Marine Drive (turning left into Corrimal Street). Turn right into Five Islands Road and left into Glastonbury Road to visit the Nan Tien Temple, the largest Buddhist temple in the southern hemisphere.

Continue along this road, turn left onto Northcliffe Drive and follow the signs to Shellharbour Road. Turn left into Mary Street, and then walk through Shellharbour Village, browsing specialty stores. Follow the signs to Bushranger's Bay, a Marine Aquatic Reserve at Bass Point, where you can snorkel or scuba dive.

Return to Shellharbour Road and head south towards Kiama via the Princes Highway. Check out the Blowhole and enjoy lunch before travelling south towards Gerringong and Gerroa via Crooked River Road. Round out your morning with a swim at Seven Mile Beach.

Afternoon: Crooked River Road will take you near Shoalhaven Heads and into Bomaderry/Nowra. From here, you can continue to the greater South Coast or west to the Southern Highlands and Canberra.



above left to right: Hang-glider over Stanwell Park; Exploring Royal National Park.

right: Nan Tien Temple, Wollongong (Adam Taylor).

far right: Wollongong Harbour lighthouse (Anson Smart).





Southern Highlands

The hills and forests of the Southern Highlands offer sophisticated living and the best of country charm – a world away from your hectic lifestyle.



MUST SEE AND DO

Enhance your sense of wellbeing with a European-style spa at Bowral's magnificent Milton Park Estate.

Sample the flavours of local Highland produce at regular farmers' markets.

Enjoy a Guinness at the Surveyor General in Berrima, Australia's oldest continually licensed inn.

Celebrate Scottish heritage at the Bundanoon Highland Gathering held in April each year.

Delight in the beauty of 100,000 stunning tulips at Bowral Tulip Festival, held annually in September.

above left to right: Ye Olde Bicycle Shoppe, Bundanoon (Tourism Southern Highlands); Fossick through stores at Berrima (Anso Smart); Corbett Gardens, Bowral (Susan Wright); Peppers Manor House, Sutton Forest (Paul Blackmore).

below far right: Relaxing poolside at Milton Park, Bowral (Anson Smart).

Unwind, relax, revitalise

Take a break from the city and relax among the gentle, rolling green hills of the Southern Highlands. Just 90 minutes drive from Sydney via the (31) South Western Freeway or an hour's drive inland from the South Coast, the Southern Highlands is a great destination for a short break and you'll feel as though you're a world away. Slow down and enjoy genuine country hospitality, whether it be in a grand country manor, a cosy B&B, a country motel or a self-contained cottage.

Old-world charm

Collectors and antique buffs will delight in shops filled with treasure – furniture, china and estate jewellery. But those in search of retail therapy needn't restrict themselves to antiques. Book lovers will discover the region's delightful bookstores and attractions by following the Booktrail, available from the visitor information centre in Mittagong, while keen shoppers will enjoy discovering the many specialty stores selling everything from lavender furniture polish to needlepoint supplies and alpaca-fleece jumpers.

Gourmet treats

There are 14 cellar doors offering local specialty wines, so pick up a guide from the visitor information centre and follow the Food & Wine Trail. Taste some of the crisp cold-climate wines produced around Sutton Forest, Berrima, Mittagong and Bowral.

Of course, fine wine complements good food, and as you explore the area you'll discover

an astonishing range of fine foods and fresh produce: why not choose some charcuterie treats, traditional pies, Scottish shortbread, seasonal berries and a few bottles of wine, then head for a beautiful picnic spot?

Heritage towns

Berrima (about 10 minutes drive south of Mittagong) was established in 1831 and is the only example of a well-preserved Georgian colonial town in Australia. Pick up a map from the visitor information centre, and explore the town that was once chosen by Governor Bourke as the administrative centre of the County of Camden. Tour the Courthouse (1838), now a working museum, view the 1839 gaol (still an operating gaol) and the Surveyor General Inn (1835), Australia's oldest continuously licensed inn.

Step back in time and visit Joadja, 31 km north-west of Mittagong. Hidden in a valley, this once thriving shale-mining village is now a historical attraction. Tours must be pre-booked; details are available from the visitor information centre.

Time to browse

Cricket fans can learn more about 'The Don' at the Bradman Museum in Bowral, while those inclined to cultural pursuits can admire the artistic skills of the Highlanders – a Highlands gallery trek can include paintings, embroidery and needlework. Try your hand at photography, ceramics, sculpture or basketry at the Sturt Craft Centre in Mittagong, or just browse through the extensive gallery.



Show gardens

The cool climate, rich soil and altitude of the Southern Highlands create a suitable environment for glorious gardens in the English style. Many private gardens and grand estates in the area are open to the public at special times of the year, and you'll find inspiration in the herbaceous borders, woodland plantings and formal themed gardens.

Natural wonders

With Morton National Park forming part of the Southern Highlands, outdoor activities are an integral part of experiencing the region. Visitors of all ages can access the magnificent

Fitzroy Falls – take the boardwalk stroll from the National Parks and Wildlife Service Visitor Information Centre.

Enjoy an easy ride on the Bong Bong Cycle Track, along the Wingecarribee River, or follow the Gibbergunyah Forest walk from Bowral to Mittagong – it leads straight to a cellar door.

A sporting chance

Golfers can tee off at one of the 'first class' public and private golf clubs and courses or practise their swing at a driving range, while horse types can choose from a number of equestrian activities – dressage, polo and polocrosse. Events are held throughout the year.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitsnw.com or contact

Mittagong Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 657 559





Events

Every month

Jenolan Caves Concerts, Blue Mountains
A concert series held in the spectacular Jenolan Caves. Performances are held in the Cathedral Chamber of the Lucas Cave where sensational acoustics and visual splendour combine to delight the senses.

January

International Amateur Golf Championships, Belmont, Lake Macquarie
The current and future stars of golf compete in this internationally recognised tournament at Belmont's distinguished 18-hole course. Built in 1952, one of the State's first courses has kept pace with course technology.

Leura Shakespeare
The Leura Shakespeare Festival in the Blue Mountains opens at the magnificent Everglades Gardens in Leura and plays for three weekends before travelling to the historic Norman Lindsay Gallery, Faulconbridge for three special performances.

February

Oberon Show, Oberon
Oberon's annual show features fireworks, a sideshow alley, bull rides, line dancing, ring events, championship dog show, snake show, puppet show and other activities.

March

Central Coast Country Music Festival, The Entrance
More than 40 artists perform country music classics and new toe-tapping material at more than 20 venues around the coast. Many of these events are free.

Blue Mountains Music Festival of Folk, Roots & Blues, Katoomba
For three days the Blue Mountains will be the centre of the universe for folk, roots and blues music lovers.

Kiama Jazz & Blues Festival, Kiama
A weekend of music played in restaurants and other venues. The program includes a free concert in the park on Sunday.

Annual Jazz at the Winery, Bobs Farm, near Nelson Bay
Bring a chair or rug and relax to the sounds of great Australian jazz in a natural amphitheatre on the winery's picnic grounds.

Burton Toyota Surfrest, Newcastle
The longest running international surf competition in Australia, this is NSW's only competition for men and women endorsed by the Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP).

Waterfest, Lake St Clair
Lake St Clair, near Singleton, hosts Waterfest, a biennial festival that celebrates all things aquatic, including wakeboarding, barefoot waterskiing and dragon-boat racing.

April

Bundanoon is Brigadoon, Bundanoon
One of the world's largest Highland gatherings, this annual event features pipe bands, Scottish country dancing, Highland dancing, caber toss and lots more.

Hawkesbury Fiddle Festival, Hawkesbury
A three-day festival celebrating the fiddle. International artists, fiddlers and violinists from all over the country gather to perform.

Ironfest, Lithgow
The Blue Mountains enter a time warp with jousting, medieval performances, art and film exhibitions, all celebrating the middle ages.

Hunter Valley Steamfest, Maitland
This is Australia's premier festival of steam featuring steam and vintage diesel train excursions, traction engines, a display of miniature steam engines, market stalls, entertainment and family events.

Hunter Semillon and Seafood Festival, Tyrrell's Winery
Discover why the Hunter's exquisite semillons are a perfect match for fresh seafood. There are also cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs, exhibitions and entertainment.

Trailerboat Sportfishing Tournament, Nelson Bay
Hosted by Shoal Bay Fishing Club, this is one of Port Stephens' largest and most popular annual fishing competitions.

above left to right: Jenolan Caves Concert Series, Blue Mountains; Corbett Gardens during the tulip festival, Bowral (Jann Tuxford); Blue Mountains Music Festival, Katoomba; Lovedale Long Lunch.



May

Lovedale Long Lunch, Lovedale

For more than 10 years, this progressive lunch has attracted visitors who wine and dine their way around the seven participating wineries, enjoying gourmet food and wine, fabulous music, art and entertainment.

Shakespeare on Avon Festival, Gloucester

For lovers of Shakespeare, this event brings the Bard to life with a village fair featuring market stalls, music, wine, food, medieval jousting and children's rides.

Treasures of the Orient,
Hunter Valley Gardens

Explore everything Asian, from bonsai, origami and lotus-lantern making to tea ceremonies and Asian cooking demonstrations. See kimono displays, martial arts and music performances.

June

Whales and Blues Festival, Port Stephens

This three-day festival coincides with the northern migration of whales and showcases the area's beautiful waterways.

Hunter Valley Food & Wine Month,
Hunter Valley

Discover intimate Hunter Valley food and wine events held throughout the region including Pokolbin, Lovedale, Broke, Fordwich, Singleton and the Upper Hunter wine areas.

July

Shoot Out Film-Making Festival, Newcastle

A short-film competition where competitors make and screen movies in less than 24 hours.

July – September

Festival of the Flowers,
Hunter Valley Gardens

See the gardens aglow with 250,000 annuals and 30,000 bulbs.

August

International Half Marathon, Lake Macquarie

An international-standard half marathon held on a two-loop waterfront course.

Rodeo, Gresford

A rough-riding rodeo circuit followed by live entertainment.

September

Pedalfest, Dungog

Take a casual country ride or a mountain-bike, challenge.

Australian Springtime Flora Festival,

Mt Penang Parklands, Kariong
Five hectares of brilliant landscape displays, arts, crafts, street theatre and entertainment.

Feast of the Olive, Hunter Valley

At this annual celebration of all things olive you can follow the olive trail through the Pokolbin wine district and participate in olive-oil master classes.

September – October

Bowral Tulip Time, Bowral

With more than 100,000 tulip bulbs planted each year, this 18-day festival celebrates spring in the Southern Highlands. A wonderful annual event featuring garden fairs, private garden tours and entertainment for all ages.

October

Jazz in the Vines, Pokolbin

Enjoy funky jazz in a relaxed atmosphere and fantastic food from many of the area's restaurants and producers as well as wines from some of the valley's finest wineries.

Hawkesbury Canoe Classic, Hawkesbury

Using only paddle power, competitors must tackle the 110 km stretch of the Hawkesbury River from Brooklyn to Windsor.

Sculpture in the Vineyards, Wollombi

Sculpture in the Vineyards is a month-long festival where sculptures are displayed in the vineyards of the Wollombi Valley and the town of historic Wollombi Village. Amongst the sculptures, the festival also includes a number of events to attract visitors to the region including workshops, tours, food and wine fair to name a few.

November

Festival of Flight, Stanwell Park, Wollongong

A showcase of music, art and surfing, with markets, circus acts, performers and concerts.

Highland Fling, Bundanoon

This 100 km circuit mountain bike marathon winds through the forest tracks, dirt roads and farmlands of the Southern Highlands.

December

Peats Ridge Sustainable Art and Music Festival, Peats Ridge

A socially inclusive camping festival that combines sustainable living, art and music for all ages.

Traveller Information

Find out more on the web



Looking for information about holidaying in NSW?

To help plan a great trip to any part of NSW, visit our website visitnsw.com

More than 5,000 accommodation choices are listed, from boutique hotels and resorts to beach getaways and country retreats. The best attractions in NSW are here – the museums, art galleries, wineries, zoos and national parks

that add so much to your trip. And there are 500 tours to help you get out and explore the best of NSW with the experts.

At any time of the year there are great local events to enjoy, from wine shows, music festivals, rodeos and campdrafts to whale-watching and sporting and cultural celebrations. Check the events section on the website for all the details.

And if you want to plan a driving holiday, then follow our driving directions to plan your travel route around NSW.

Sign up for the latest deals

To keep up with the latest travel tips and best holiday deals in NSW, become an Escapes member. Not only will you receive our monthly e-news bulletin, but you'll also have the chance to win some great travel prizes.

visitnsw.com

Visitor safety tips

Driving and motorcycle riding
In NSW, wearing seatbelts is compulsory as are child restraints and baby capsules. It is illegal to leave a child unattended in a vehicle. For motorcyclists, crash helmets are mandatory. The signposted speed limit is the maximum driving speed allowable. Reduced speeds at school zones, road works and other special areas may apply. The blood alcohol limit for drivers is 0.05% and zero for L- and P-plate drivers. A major cause of death and injury is driving while fatigued. Ensure you are well rested before undertaking a long trip and always take a break every two hours.

The road conditions in NSW can vary from multi-lane motorways to single-lane roads. Some roads may be gravel or compacted earth, with narrow or unstable edges. Drive slowly on narrow bridges and be aware of hazards, such as flooded roads, which may have a current capable of sweeping your vehicle away. Don't take the chance. Use an alternative route.

Watch out for kangaroos, livestock and other animals on the road. Apart from the suffering you may cause the animal if you hit it, even a wallaby can seriously damage your car and injure you and your occupants. The most active time for kangaroos and wallabies is

sunrise and sunset. If a kangaroo crosses in front of you, reduce speed but do not swerve suddenly because you may roll your vehicle.

Water safety

Check if the beach is patrolled by lifesavers before swimming. Swim only between the red and yellow flags. Many surfing spots have strong currents, called rips. If caught in a rip, don't panic. Swim along with the rip, not against it, and raise your hand. Be very careful when swimming in isolated locations in rivers, creeks and waterholes, especially if you have children with you. Do not dive off rocks into natural pools which may be too shallow and can cause permanent spinal injuries. Avoid

swimming or surfing after dark, or under the influence of alcohol.

In the bush

Before going on a bushwalk, always tell someone your plans and be prepared for weather changes. Check the degree of difficulty of your walk: the scale is from 1–5, with 5 being the most challenging. Don't bushwalk alone and always take plenty of water with you. Limit your use of fire and seek information on weather conditions from the Ranger Station or visitor information centre. Carry a mobile phone if you're within range of a network.

In an emergency, telephone 000.

Accredited Visitor Information Centres

When you are on the road, look for the information symbol . Call into a NSW Accredited Visitor Information Centre for advice on all you need to know about places to stay and things to see and do in the local area. Opening hours are 9 am to 5 pm, every day.

Central Coast

Central Coast Visitor Centre
Telephone: 1300 132 975
52 The Avenue,
Mt Penang Parklands, Kariiong
visitcentralcoast.com.au

The Entrance Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 4334 4213
Marine Parade, The Entrance
theentrance.org

Lake Macquarie

Lake Macquarie Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 802 044
228-234 Pacific Hwy, Swansea
visitlakemac.com.au

Newcastle

Newcastle Maritime
Visitor Centre
Telephone: 1800 654 558

Hunter Valley

Hunter Valley Wine Country
Tourism Visitor Information
Centre
Telephone: (02) 4990 0900
455 Wine Country Dr, Pokolbin
winecountry.com.au

Maitland Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 652 320
Cnr New England Hwy & High St,
Maitland
maitlandhunervalley.com.au

Upper Hunter Country

Singleton Visitor Information
& Enterprise Centre
Telephone: 1800 449 888
24 Maitland Road, Singleton
visitsingleton.com

Muswellbrook Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 065 773
87 Hill Street, Muswellbrook
muswellbrook.org.au

Scone Visitor Information
& Wine Centre
Telephone: (02) 6540 1300
Cnr Kelly & Susan Streets, Scone
upperhuntertourism.com.au

Merriwa Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6521 7046
34 Vennacher St, Merriwa
upperhuntertourism.com.au

Barrington Tops

Dungog Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 130 647
Cnr Dowling & Brown St, Dungog
barringtontopstourism.com.au

Gloucester Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 130 647
27 Denison St, Gloucester
barringtontopstourism.com.au

Port Stephens

Port Stephens Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 808 900
Cnr Victoria Pde & Teramby Rd,
Nelson Bay
portstephens.org.au

Blue Mountains

Glenbrook Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 653 408
Glenbrook Park,
Great Western Hwy, Glenbrook
visitbluemountains.com.au

Echo Point Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 653 408
Echo Point Road, Katoomba
visitbluemountains.com.au

Lithgow Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 760 276
Great Western Hwy, Lithgow
tourism.lithgow.com

Oberon Visitor Centre
Telephone: (02) 6329 8210
48 Ross Street, Oberon
oberonaustralia.com.au

Hawkesbury River

Hawkesbury Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 362 874
Ham Common, Hawkesbury
Valley Way, Clarendon
hawkesburytourism.com.au

Rouse Hill Visitor Information
Centre (Mungerie House)
Telephone: (02) 8814 6909
16 Bellcast Rd, Rouse Hill
hmart.com.au

The Illawarra

Wollongong Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 240 737
F 6, Southern Freeway, Bulli Tops
visitwollongong.com.au

Kiama Visitors Centre
Telephone: 1300 654 262
Blowhole Point Rd, Kiama
kiama.com.au

Shellharbour Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 656 169
Lamerton House, Shellharbour
City Centre, Shellharbour
tourismshellharbour.com.au

Southern Highlands

Mittagong Visitor
Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 657 559
62-70 Main Street, Mittagong
southern-highlands.com.au

back cover, top row: Relax on a houseboat (Paul Blackmore); Aerial view of Bouddi National Park (Hamilton Lund); Roberts Restaurant, Pokolbin (Anson Smart).

middle row: Parasailing over Shoal Bay; Breathtaking wilderness, Blue Mountains (Don Fuchs); Grand Pacific Drive, Illawarra.

bottom row: Peppers Manor House, Sutton Forest (Paul Blackmore); Giant snowgums at Thunderbolt's Lookout, Barrington Tops National Park (Hamilton Lund); Pelican's paradise, The Entrance (Hamilton Lund).

