



# Welcome • to Victoria

*Australia's great ocean state, home to a remarkable coastal drive*

**A** compact state on the southern tip of the Australian mainland with a mind-bending diversity of aquatic adventures, in Victoria you'll find the famous Great Ocean Road, alongside a series of spectacular ocean beaches, wildlife-rich islands, gourmet getaways with easy beach access, water-rimmed wildernesses and the best mineral springs in the country.

Victoria is also home to Melbourne, voted the world's most liveable city for the fifth time in a row this year, with its edgy inner-city laneways beside the Yarra River and chic, bay-side streets of St Kilda and Brighton. From here you can drive to one of the world's best coastal drives, the aforementioned Great Ocean Road, where you'll discover rugged cliffs, spectacular beaches,

ancient rainforests and pretty coastal towns. But don't stop there. Be sure to visit the little penguins and other iconic Aussie wildlife on Phillip Island, plunge into the wilderness of Wilson's Promontory, immerse yourself in spa country around Daylesford, and plumb the good life of great wine, food, golf, beaches and more on the Mornington Peninsula.

Victoria is also recognised as the home of Australian cool, where hipster sensibilities, reclaimed wood and minimalist design are part of the aesthetic in the state's many artisan cafés and designer restaurants – so pack your fanciest clothes as well as your laid back attire, for you just might need both. Sounds like the perfect holiday to us. [visitmelbourne.com](http://visitmelbourne.com)



## GETTING THERE

■ Fly into Melbourne to join a tour or rent a car (just remember to keep to the left-hand side of the road!). Everything is within a one- to three-hour drive – from the Great Ocean Road (p60) to Phillip Island (p68), Wilson's Promontory (p63) and all the hedonistic pleasures in Daylesford (p64) and the Mornington Peninsula. (p66) Just don't rush – there's too much to enjoy.

## EATING THERE

■ The multifaceted foodie scene that put Melbourne on the map is very much in evidence throughout Victoria. As for wine, craft beer and boutique distilleries, Victoria has it all. Coffee aficionados can also rejoice for you'll savour the world's best coffee everywhere you go, from trendy Melbourne cafés next to the Yarra River (p62) to beachside hangouts in Lorne, Sorrento, Phillip Island and more.

## STAYING THERE

■ Melbourne offers a terrific selection of grand and boutique hotels, as well as a huge selection of terrific Aussie beach houses along the coast (such as those on p61). Country resorts and spa retreats are appealing options in Daylesford and the Mornington Peninsula, while back-to-nature safari-style tented camps are the best way to enjoy Wilson's Promontory.

## WHEN TO GO

■ Unlike most of Australia's states, which arguably enjoy only two obvious seasons (summer and winter), Victoria's four seasons are quite distinct – but surprisingly mild. Average temps from June to August are a very reasonable 15–16°C, while sublime summer from December to February sees the mercury rise to around 35°C – perfect for aquatic adventurers of every stripe.

# Soar like a seabird above the Great Ocean Road

Not the 'okay' ocean road or the 'good' ocean road, Victoria is home to the Great Ocean Road, one of the world's most spectacular coastal drives, offering 243km of driving nirvana starting just over an hour southwest of Melbourne. There are plenty of ways to experience this area – which we'll get to in a moment – but let's start with the most spectacular.

Soaring above the scene, high in a fluorescent-hued sky in a thrumming, wide-screen cockpit offers a sense of freedom that's hard to do justice with mere words. But if a picture speaks a thousand of them, just imagine

what this scenery will produce in real time – at the very least, you'll leave with some particularly special snaps of this marvel of human ingenuity, which winds through a landscape equally majestic, sculpted as it is by the roaring Southern Ocean.

Happily, there are actually several options available to those seeking a bird's eye view: take a scenic helicopter ride ([12apostleshelicopters.com.au](http://12apostleshelicopters.com.au)) and you'll see the majestic limestone stacks called the 12 Apostles (pictured). Depending on how long a flight you choose, you can also get jaw-dropping vistas of the Bay of Islands and London

Bridge (no, not the one on the other side of the world but a natural arch of limestone here in Victoria), or marvel at the entire Shipwreck Coast, where more than 600 ships have run aground on this treacherous stretch along Bass Strait.

You can also fly over the Great Ocean Road from Torquay in an historic Tiger Moth biplane ([tigermothworld.com.au](http://tigermothworld.com.au)), or take a small plane or helicopter flight from Apollo Bay ([apollobayaviation.com.au](http://apollobayaviation.com.au)) at the other end of the road (read more on both towns overleaf). Whatever you decide you won't miss out – all options offer remarkable views.

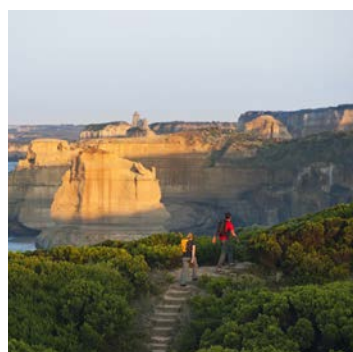




## EXPLORING

**...or explore it on foot**

● Immerse yourself fully in this landscape via the Great Ocean Walk. It traverses the tallest cliffs in mainland Australia, plunges into hidden fern forests, and passes by waterfalls shimmering down limestone walls, wide windswept beaches, ancient shipwrecks, Aboriginal middens and manna gums with resident koalas. It's all beautifully arranged for you to enjoy on the fully catered and guided four-day, three-night 12 Apostles Lodge Walk with superb eco-retreat accommodation. [12apostleslodgewalk.com.au](http://12apostleslodgewalk.com.au)



# Road trip the Great Ocean Road

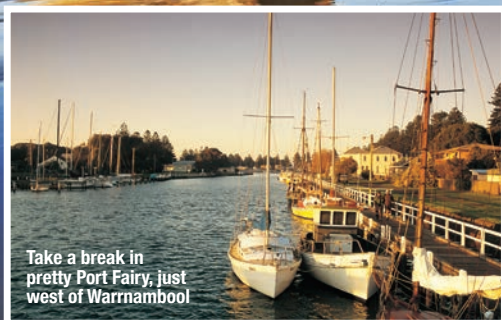
One of Australia's must-do experiences, it's a key entry on the country's National Heritage List not only for its astonishing coastal panoramas but also because it was created as a monument to all those who died in World War I. In fact, it is the world's largest war memorial and was an historic public works project employing more than 3,000 World War I veterans who carved this engineering marvel with picks and shovels. Here is a three-day itinerary to savour all its pleasures. [visitgreatoceanroad.org.au](http://visitgreatoceanroad.org.au)



From the road or the air, the Great Ocean Road will impress



The ultimate goal of the Great Ocean Walk: the 12 Apostles



Take a break in pretty Port Fairy, just west of Warrnambool

DAY 1

## A beautiful bay, the birthplace of surf brands and a buzzy seaside resort

MELBOURNE TO LORNE

There are two ways to get to the Great Ocean Road from Melbourne. The direct route to Torquay via the M1 motorway is fast but offers little in the way of views on its 75-minute route. Or you can start your adventure the way we recommend: by driving the Point Nepean Road along the Mornington Peninsula coastline, past the best vistas of aquamarine Port Phillip Bay, one of the largest bays in Australia. (For more to do on the Mornington Peninsula, see p65–67.)

It'll take you about 90 minutes to get to the upmarket beach resort of Sorrento, from where you can board a car ferry ([searoad.com.au](http://searoad.com.au)) to cross the entrance of Port Phillip Bay. The ferry crossing offers dress-circle views of the cliff-top mansions at Portsea, one of Australia's most affluent beachside communities and a prime position for spotting dolphins and seals. Arrive across the bay at the historic town of Queenscliff on the Bellarine Peninsula, a gateway to bay side wineries and fresh mussel farms.

Drive on to Torquay, Victoria's surfing capital and the birthplace of iconic brands Rip Curl and Quiksilver. Check out the Surf World

Surfing Museum ([surfworld.com.au](http://surfworld.com.au)) before heading to Bells Beach, Australia's spiritual home of surfing, to view local pro surfers in action.

Take a break from the drive to rent canoes in the estuary at pretty Anglesea before going for a walk along nearby Fairhaven Beach, right past the tourists ogling the Memorial Archway over the Great Ocean Road. Airey's Inlet's Split Point Lighthouse is worth a look here, and for a serious insider tip – on summer weekends, you can sign up on the spot to become an honorary member of the Fairhaven Surf Lifesaving Club ([fairhavenslsc.org](http://fairhavenslsc.org)), and enjoy drinks and dinner with the locals at their beachfront clubhouse with a squillion-dollar view of the longest beach on the Great Ocean Road. Then, stay the night in Lorne ([lovelorne.com.au](http://lovelorne.com.au)) – a buzzy seaside town chockablock with cafés, boutiques and restaurants. It's a great place for a swim and the nearby lush hinterland hides a short walk to the stunning Erskine Falls, which cascade into a fern gully (great for photos!). Foodies may want to take a short drive inland to Birregurra to dine at Brae ([braerestaurant.com](http://braerestaurant.com)), one of Australia's top gourmet restaurants.

# 3

## of the best

### BEAUTIFUL BEACH RETREATS



If you want to feel like a local along the Great Ocean Road, hire a local holiday house, like these:

- Pole House**  
 One of Australia's most photographed homes, this one-bedroom nook is suspended 40m above Fairhaven Beach. Accessed via a glass-balustraded walkway straight out of the cliff top, this sleek eyrie has an open floor plan with the bed perched by the windows over the ocean. [greatoceanroadholidays.com.au](http://greatoceanroadholidays.com.au)
- Ocean House**  
 This remarkable five-bedroom pavilion above the beach in North Lorne blends wilderness with contemporary minimalism to create three sophisticated entertaining areas including a rooftop terrace and bath with panoramic ocean views. [oceanhouse.com.au](http://oceanhouse.com.au)
- Rotten Point House**  
 This open-plan, four-bedroom, house on 100 acres near Johanna Beach features a double-sided wood fireplace and floor-to-ceiling windows to soak up the views of the Southern Ocean, rolling farmland and The Great Otway National Park. [rottenpointhouse.com](http://rottenpointhouse.com)



Kayak tour of the Marengo Reefs Marine Sanctuary



Pause for the views at the iconic Cape Otway Lightstation

#### DAY 2

## Koalas, kayaks and oh so many curves

### LORNE TO CAPE OTWAY

Today you'll enjoy the drive's most spectacular curves and there are terrific viewpoints for picture taking all the way to Apollo Bay, a lovely seaside village and fishing port located on a wide arc of family-friendly beach. Here, you'll find Apollo Bay Surf and Kayak ([apollobaysurfkayak.com.au](http://apollobaysurfkayak.com.au)), which offers guided trips to the Marengo Reefs Marine Sanctuary, surfing, Stand-Up Paddle lessons and more. Next, wind inland through ancient temperate rainforests in the Great Otway National Park ([parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://parkweb.vic.gov.au)). Make sure you stroll the Maits Rest track – a pretty 800m circuit walk surrounded by fern gardens and huge 300-year-old rainforest trees.

Take a detour to the coast via Lighthouse Road (where along the road you'll often see koalas snoozing high in the gum trees) to visit the Cape Otway Lightstation, the oldest surviving lighthouse on mainland Australia. Stay nearby at the Great Ocean Ec Lodge ([greatoceanecolodge.com](http://greatoceanecolodge.com)), home to an Australian wildlife conservation centre, where you can enjoy a guided walk to see koalas and kangaroos and maybe even feed the sugar gliders.

#### DAY 3

## A fabulous finale

### CAPE OTWAY TO WARRNAMBOOL

Day three offers a drive through pretty rolling farmland and a stop at wild Johanna Beach for some beachcombing (just don't jump in – it's too rough for swimming here). From there, it's under an hour to your fabulous finale: the stunning 12 Apostles. Actually, these iconic limestone stacks number only eight these days, thanks to wind and sea erosion, but that hasn't diminished their spectacular form.

There are other startling rock formations to be discovered here too, like Loch Ard Gorge, the Grotto, The Arch, London Bridge and the Bay of Islands. You can even follow the Historic Shipwreck Trail, where 25 wrecks have been recorded with information plaques overlooking the cliffs where they met their fates. Drive on to busy Warrnambool to find Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village ([flagstaffhill.com](http://flagstaffhill.com)), which – despite its name – is actually a museum, filled with the histories of over 180 wrecks. Then you can either turn back to Melbourne – roughly a three-hour drive – or continue on to Adelaide (p69) via one of South Australia's most stunning seaside towns, Robe, and the sumptuous wine region of the Fleurieu Peninsula (p78).

Republica  
cafe, St Kilda



## Sip on a seaside latte

Australians are thoroughly invested in their coffee and nowhere is this passion for caffeine more evident than at the nation's cultural heart, Melbourne. It's estimated that an average 30 tonnes of coffee beans arrive daily to meet the city's demands. Whether you're wandering designer stores in the city centre's riverside laneways, watching the laid-back locals at trendy St Kilda beach or wandering the Botanic Gardens, you'll soon notice that everything is better with a Melbourne coffee in your hand. It doesn't matter whether you enjoy yours as a short black, long black, latte or flat white, or experiment with aeropress, cold drip or nitro coffee – just as long as you enjoy it. There are over 2000 cafés dotted across this trendy city, so if in doubt, ask for a local's recommendation: they're sure to have a strong opinion on the best cup in the hood. Join a coffee walking tour to get an insider's view of the city's café culture. [visitmelbourne.com](http://visitmelbourne.com)

## Melbourne aquatic

Riverside cafés and art galleries, bike rides along the bay and big-city kayak paddles: whether you're shopping for designer clothes by the Yarra or swimming by Brighton Beach's colourful bathhouses, Melbourne offers an edgy yet laid back ambiance that seduces all who visit. The Melbourne Arts Centre ([artscentremelbourne.com.au](http://artscentremelbourne.com.au)) is smack bang on the river, while iconic music venues like the Esplanade or Espy ([espy.com.au](http://espy.com.au)) and the Palais ([palais theatre.net.au](http://palais theatre.net.au)) are right across from the beach in St Kilda. Here are other ideas:

- Indulge in some seriously gourmet dining alongside water views. Shannon Bennett's superb Vue du Monde ([vuedemonde.com.au](http://vuedemonde.com.au)) offers a panorama over the Bay and the winding Yarra from the 55th floor of the Rialto Tower, while more intimate river views are on the menu at Fatto ([fatto.com.au](http://fatto.com.au)) or Taxi Kitchen ([taxikitchen.com.au](http://taxikitchen.com.au)).
- Rent bikes in St Kilda ([St Kilda Cycles](http://StKildaCycles.com); +613 9534 3074) and ride trails behind the beach all the way to the colourful Victorian bathing boxes in Brighton, or rent bikes at Federation Square ([rentabike.net.au](http://rentabike.net.au)) to meander along the Yarra River where you'll get close-up views of Melbourne's famous rowing crews in action.
- Take one of a host of cruises up the Yarra River or from the Melbourne city centre across the bay to the pretty waterside town of Williamstown ([melbcruises.com.au](http://melbcruises.com.au); [tramboat.com.au](http://tramboat.com.au)).
- Go swimming at the saltwater pool at the ornate St Kilda Sea Baths – they have an award-winning day spa on-site, too. [stkildaseabaths.com.au](http://stkildaseabaths.com.au)
- Stroll along the beach front between St Kilda and Albert Park to take in the roller bladers, kite surfers, summer volleyball tournaments and sail boats, stopping for a drink or bite at one of the beach front cafes.
- Watch the world go by from dozens of al fresco bars and restaurants lining the Yarra River from Southgate and Crown Entertainment to South Wharf.
- Take a kayak tour along the Yarra River, taking in Docklands and continuing right through the city centre, and enjoy a fish and chips pit stop en route. [kayakmelbourne.com.au](http://kayakmelbourne.com.au)

St Kilda Pavilion  
waits for you at the  
end of St Kilda Pier



Ponyfish  
Island,  
Southbank

# See the unspoilt beach where the pure sand squeaks

Framed by granite headlands and sweeping beaches, the national wilderness park of Wilson's Promontory ([parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks](http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks)) sticks out like a hitchhiker's thumb from the southernmost tip of mainland Australia. Known as 'The Prom' by locals, this 50,000-hectare wonderland offers a spectacular back-to-nature sojourn with mountains to climb, eucalypt forests to admire, fern gullies

to hike, pristine beaches to explore and lots of Aussie animals to see in the wild. (Keep an eye out for emus at the aptly named Emu Plains!)

But the crowning beauty here is a beach so named because its talcum white sand squeaks underfoot as you walk. Squeaky Beach is a natural playground, fringed by the cerulean waters of the protected marine park, and red-orange lichen-covered boulders

that cry out for photographs – or dare you to climb them. Bring a picnic and spend the day here, before heading back to your nearby retreat – there are several places to stay, but we love Wilderness Retreats' luxury tents ([wildernessretreats.com.au](http://wildernessretreats.com.au)), which come complete with sundecks, timber furniture and private en-suite bathrooms – you're almost sleeping under the stars. [visitpromcountry.com.au](http://visitpromcountry.com.au)



The superb view from Pillar Point, Wilsons Promontory

Catching a stiff breeze at Lakes Entrance, East Gippsland



## EXPLORING

### Submerge yourself in a natural wonderland

#### ● See wildflowers and wombats

Go for a short walk along the Lilly Pilly Link Track with commanding views of Norman Bay and Tidal River. In spring there are spectacular wildflowers in the coastal heathland. Take the short Prom Wildlife Walk to view kangaroos, wallabies, emus and wombats.

#### ● Watch birds in the bush

Tidal River is the hub of Wilsons Promontory, where you can find out about guided walks at the visitor centre and stock up on supplies. It is also surrounded by bird-filled wetlands which offer countless opportunities for bird watching and bushwalking.

#### ● Walk further afield

Enjoy a longer day-hike to Oberon Bay with great coastal views or, if you're feeling more ambitious, try overnight hikes to beautiful Sealers Cove, Little Waterloo Bay and the historic Wilsons Promontory Lightstation, where you can stay in the comfortable lighthouse keeper's cottages.

#### ● Catch a movie under the stars

Believe it or not, every summer at Tidal River you can sit back under the Southern Hemisphere night sky and watch movies at an outdoor cinema. They even provide beanbags... and popcorn.

#### ● Discover the Gippsland Lakes

Australia's largest inland waterway system, the Gippsland Lakes are teeming with wildlife and surrounded by wilderness. Hire a boat or take a tour, go fishing or enjoy the surrounds.

For all these and more: [visitpromcountry.com.au](http://visitpromcountry.com.au)



One of the many beautiful churches dotted around Daylesford



Mineral Spa with a view at Peppers Springs Mineral Retreat



Hepburn Bathhouse and Spa



Local ingredients at Argus

## Retreat to spa country

If you're in need of a real holiday, you'll find it here: Australia's spa country is the perfect place to relax and just be. Just 80 minutes northwest of Melbourne, this charming region is full of rolling gum-covered hills, paddocks of sheep and cattle, and small towns dotted with interesting pubs and boutiques set up by Melbourne's 'tree changers'. There's a whiff of Swiss-Italian heritage due to migration in the mid-1800s, and a small but noticeable lean towards alternative philosophies. Both blend well with all that water therapy.

The two key spa towns of **Daylesford** and **Hepburn Springs** ([visitdaylesford.com.au](http://visitdaylesford.com.au)) are in the centre of the highest concentration of mineral springs in Australia. They're also in one of Australia's strongest gourmet regions, awash with wineries and trout farms, sausage makers and egg layers, cheese makers and truffle hunters. Check out **Daylesford Macedon Produce** ([dmproduce.com.au](http://dmproduce.com.au)) to see what's in season, where the local markets are, and to discover boutique growers and provedores down winding country lanes.

If you can rouse yourself from your daybed or picnic blanket, opt for a spa treatment. First head to the beautifully restored and reimagined **1895 Hepburn Bathhouse and Spa** ([hepburnbathhouse.com](http://hepburnbathhouse.com)) situated above several mineral springs in an historic preserve with terrific walking trails. The best option is the private mineral bath for one or two people, which is run with 100% mineral water, while the view from the relaxation pool through large glass windows

into the bush is sublime. There are all manner of facials, scrubs and massages, too.

**The Lake House** ([lakehouse.com.au](http://lakehouse.com.au)), a member of the exclusive Luxury Lodges of Australia – alongside other illustrious retreats like *qualia* (p21), *Southern Ocean Lodge* (p70) and *Saffire Freycinet* (p82) – is a stand-out. Its *Salus Spa* offers exquisite treatments – but the highlight is a long soak in one of their circular wooden tubs, perched in stilt houses high in the branches of the willow trees overlooking Lake Daylesford. Its remarkable gourmet restaurant has won every food and wine award in Australia in the past three decades (chef and owner Alla Wolf Tasker is a legend in these parts.)

Alternatively, stay at the pretty Art Deco-style **Peppers Springs Mineral Retreat** ([mineralspa.com.au](http://mineralspa.com.au)), which offers mineral water baths overlooking tranquil gardens, as well as an exceptional spa with delightful treatments such as soft-pack flotation beds – the only ones of their kind in the Southern Hemisphere. Dive into the terrific seasonal produce at its **Argus Restaurant**, which like all restaurants in these parts sources everything locally.

If you're feeling adventurous, walk around **Lake Daylesford**, which is gorgeous in autumn when red and gold leaves are reflected in the tranquil water, or head over to see the 32-metre *Trentham Falls*, the longest single drop waterfall in Victoria. Nearby **Kyneton** offers a charming array of provedores, restaurants and boutiques in a quaint row of bluestone buildings on historic Piper Street. Pick up some picnic supplies to enjoy the restful setting of Kyneton's pretty botanic gardens on the Campaspe River. [visitdaylesford.com.au](http://visitdaylesford.com.au)



RELAXING

## Watch a global game

The nearby city of Melbourne regularly hosts prestigious international golf tournaments. Those who love watching golf as much as they enjoy playing it should make note of the following upcoming events (exact dates to be announced at a later time):

### ● World Cup of Golf, 2016

This men's-only tournament, held annually or biannually since 1953, has an upper limit of just two competitors per country. The result is an exciting competition where diverse styles and a global audience converge on a fabled international golf course to witness the skills of world-class golfers such as Jack Nicklaus, who has won the cup several times. This will be the fourth time Melbourne has hosted.

### ● The President's Cup, 2019

No international venue has hosted a Presidents Cup more than once except Melbourne. (Royal Melbourne GC has held this event twice in previous years, in 1998 and 2011). The upcoming return of the tournament promises to be yet another exhilarating competition, with championship golfers selected to compete based on their Official World Golf Ranking or, for US team members, their official PGA Tour earnings. [presidentcup.com](http://presidentcup.com)



The Sands, Torquay

## Relax into the swing of things

Just over an hour southeast of Melbourne by car, you'll find a bucolic regional area named Mornington Peninsula, where some of Victoria's loveliest restaurants, wineries and producers (read more overleaf) have made their homes among a selection of excellent golf courses. The 'Cups Region', as it's known, is widely recognised as Australia's number one golf destination, and offers the perfect terrain for links-style courses, with 15 clubs and 20 outstanding courses (three of which are in Australia's

top ten). Many have gorgeous water views.

Of particular interest is the National Golf Club, which is arguably the finest piece of golf real estate in Australia. Three world-class, 18-hole championship golf courses are found here, including one designed by Australian golfing legend Greg Norman, the 'Moonah', and each offers magnificent views of the surrounding sand and sea, atop classic links-style terrain. When you've completed your game, there is a private clubhouse to retreat to –

despite being a members-only organisation, the National Golf Club ([nationalgolf.com.au](http://nationalgolf.com.au)) does open its doors to select groups.

Further inland – across the state at the border between Victoria and NSW in fact – you'll also find another terrific waterside golfing destination: the Murray River Region. Its more than 40 courses are blessed with expansive river views, spectacular scenery, giant eucalypts and countless friendly kangaroos. [murrayriver.com.au/golfing](http://murrayriver.com.au/golfing)



The Flinders Golf Club



All Seasons houseboat on The Murray near Mildura

## Holiday on a houseboat

Spoiling yourself with a cruise holiday is one thing, but a cruise where you're the captain? That's a trip to remember. Floating houseboat holidays are popular in Victoria for good reason: Australia's longest river, The Murray meanders through the land here, and it's a bucolic place for a holiday: silvery waters edged by rich, red earth, trailing willow trees, and a thriving arts culture at the water's edge town of Mildura.

Plus, when your temporary floating home comes with all the mod cons (split system air conditioning, state of the art sound system, even the option of a rooftop spa) it's hard not to relax. Once you've chosen your boat – there are all kinds, from basic to all-out luxury – things get really easy: you simply pull up your anchor and float down (or up) the river, to any tranquil spot you like. [allseasonshouseboats.com.au](http://allseasonshouseboats.com.au)

# Plumb the good life on the Mornington Peninsula

With its alleys of pines and acres of vines, the Mornington Peninsula feels a little like a Mediterranean-style Middle Earth – except with brilliant beaches beckoning from the bottom of just about every lane. This is the secret stomping ground of well-heeled citysiders, and you'll certainly feel like you've tapped into the mother lode of the good life as you savour the wines, the food and the views over a long lazy lunch at a vineyard restaurant. [visitmorningtonpeninsula.org](http://visitmorningtonpeninsula.org)



Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove is just one of more than 50 wineries with cellar doors on the Mornington Peninsula



Morning Peninsula icon, Merricks General Wine Store



Dining at Stringers Store, Sorrento

## EXPLORING



Ever taken a dip with a sea lion? Cross it off your bucket list in Mornington

## Tick off the Mornington treasure trail

### Wave a fin at dolphins and sea lions

- Swim with playful dolphins and whimsical sea lions in Port Phillip Bay. [moonrakercharters.com.au](http://moonrakercharters.com.au)

### Commune with the sea dragons

- Grab a snorkel or join a local tour to encounter beautiful weedy sea dragons, Victoria's state marine emblem. [bayplay.com.au](http://bayplay.com.au)

### Swill, smell and savour over the sea

- Spend the day tasting Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Grigio at one of the many pretty cellar doors and visit cheese makers, orchards (where you can even dive in

and pick your own fruit!), olive groves, chocolatiers, and organic farms – the Mornington Peninsula Wine Food Farmgate Trail gives you all the insider tips. [winefoodfarmgate.com.au](http://winefoodfarmgate.com.au)

### Experience the pointy end of things

- Enjoy the walking and cycling trails at Point Nepean National Park on the very tip of the Peninsula (bike rentals available) with spectacular views of Port Phillip Bay and the Southern Ocean. [parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://parkweb.vic.gov.au)

### Bathe in bliss

- Relax in the indoor and outdoor natural hot springs at Peninsula Hot Springs

where you can indulge in more than 20 globally inspired bathing experiences, including a cave pool, reflexology walk and Turkish steam bath, and enjoy a diverse range of spa treatments. Be sure to soak in the hilltop pool for 0-degree views over the peninsula to the coast. [peninsulahotspots.com](http://peninsulahotspots.com)

### Peek into the waterside estates of Victoria's elite

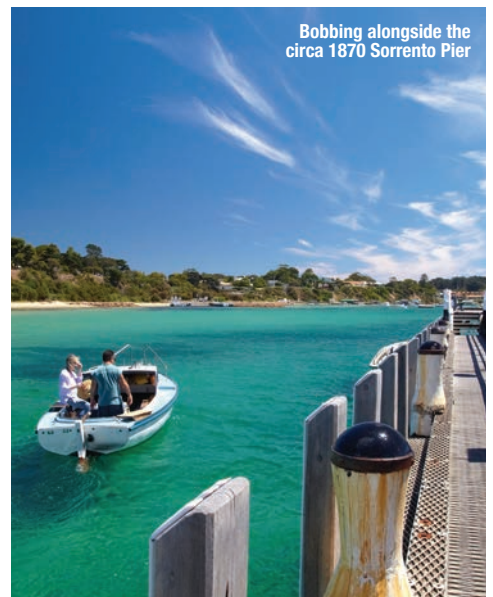
- Enjoy a cliff-top stroll along the Millionaire's Walk in ritzy Sorrento where you can ogle immaculate estates with their private bathhouses and piers over the turquoise waters of Port Phillip Bay. [visitmorningtonpeninsula.org](http://visitmorningtonpeninsula.org)



Victoria's state marine emblem, the weedy sea dragon



Bathing Boxes at Mount Martha on the Mornington Peninsula



Bobbing alongside the circa 1870 Sorrento Pier

WEEZY SEA DRAGON: BAYPLAY; SORRENTO PIER: EWEN BELL, VISIONS OF VICTORIA; SEA LION: SHUTTERSTOCK



## Go wild for the wildlife aquatic

Phillip Island – a two-hour drive from Melbourne – owes its fame to its most diminutive residents: its popular little penguins. But visitors who come to watch their nightly parade along the beach will discover a relaxed coastal spot with unspoiled beaches, great surfing and fishing and plenty of family-friendly outings.

The Phillip Island Penguin Parade takes place on Summerlands Beach each dusk. From boardwalks you can witness extremely cute little penguins waddling from the ocean to their burrows in the dunes. You can even see them at eye level from an underground penguin-viewing bunker. Other wildlife treats are in store at the Koala Conservation Centre and the free Nobbies Centre where, from boardwalks overlooking the wild waters of Bass Strait, you can watch Australia's largest fur seal colony cavorting. The Nobbies Centre is also home to the brand new *Antarctic Journey* multimedia experience, Australia's first ever World Wildlife Fund-branded attraction. Not enough wildlife for you? You can get even closer on a Wild Oceans EcoBoat Tour and may also spot whales and dolphins. [penguins.org.au](http://penguins.org.au)



Phillip Island is even more spectacular from the air

## Ogle the island's beaches from above

Take a helicopter flight ([phillipislandhelicopters.com.au](http://phillipislandhelicopters.com.au)) to get the full measure of Phillip Island's spectacular coastline. The wide golden strand of Cape Woolamai Beach is a popular surfing spot and a safe place to swim because it's patrolled by surf lifesavers during the summer months. Be sure and follow the walking trail to see the remarkable Pinnacles rock formations. Sheltered Kitty Miller Bay also offers great snorkelling.

## Take your time on Phillip Island

What an island! From the family-friendly holiday towns of Cowes (below) and Rhyll to the historic splendour of Churchill Island Heritage Farm, the Koala Conservation Foundation, and of course the ever-popular Chocolate Factory, you'll need more than just a day trip to discover everything Phillip Island has to offer. [visitphillipisland.com](http://visitphillipisland.com)



Family fun along the Cowes Foreshore