

# Welcome to New South Wales

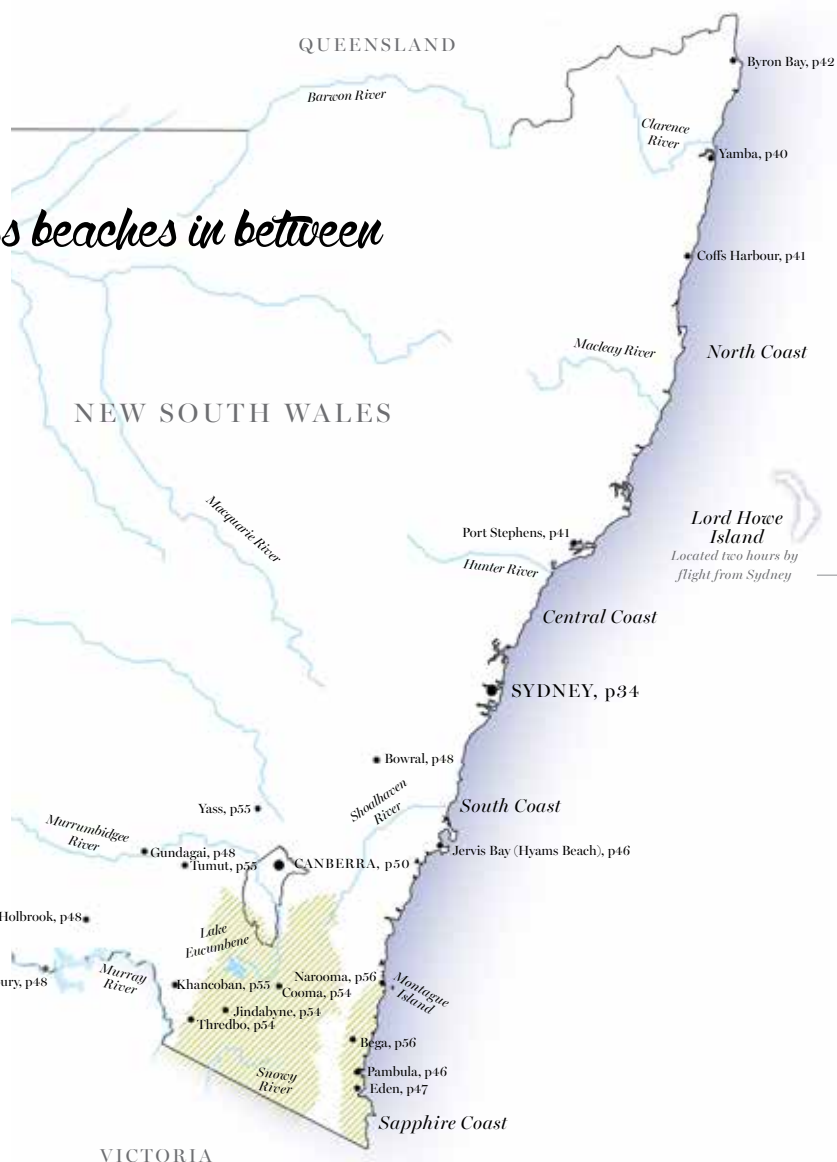


*Bondi, Byron Bay and countless beaches in between*

**I**t's a rare visitor who comes to Australia and doesn't spend time in New South Wales. Home to the lifestyle city of Sydney, where beach culture, superb weather and the undeniably spectacular harbour backdrop have all secured the city's international reputation, the state is blessed with a climate that makes it ripe for exploring all year round.

Yet Sydney is just the beginning of what New South Wales has to offer. To the west, just two hours' drive away, lies the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains, perfect for exploring on a day trip, over a relaxing weekend – or longer. Head north and you'll find spectacular secluded beaches, dozens of national parks and the most-loved beach town in Australia: world-famous Byron Bay. Go south (perhaps even in a Porsche or Ferrari) for a jaw-dropping coastal jaunt along Grand Pacific Drive, before enjoying the unspoilt beaches and small towns of the South Coast (p46).

But while there's plenty to do on the NSW mainland, including visits to six World Heritage-listed sites, one in particular is on the bucket list of many Australians: Lord Howe Island (p44). It may be pint-sized, but it never fails to leave visitors plotting a return trip. Don't say we didn't warn you. [visitnsw.com](http://visitnsw.com)



## GETTING THERE

■ Most visitors land in Sydney, then use the city as a blissful jumping off point for road trips up or down the coast. If you'd prefer to simply sit back and enjoy the views, trains also run partway along the coastline north and south from Sydney, and to many of the state's regional attractions.

## EATING THERE

■ From fine dining opposite the Opera House at restaurants such as Quay (p35), to arriving by seaplane for a luxury lunch on Palm Beach (p34), Sydney's dining options are internationally renowned. But the rest of the state has plenty on offer. Be sure to sample the local seafood up and down the coast as it's usually fresh off the boat that very morning.

## STAYING THERE

■ From luxury retreats on the Central Coast (p40), through to historic lighthouse keepers' cottages at Byron Bay (p41) or glamping on the serene South Coast (p46), New South Wales has accommodation options to suit every visitor. Don't miss Capella Lodge on Lord Howe Island (p45).

## WHEN TO GO

■ Honestly? Any time of year is great for visiting New South Wales – it all depends on what you love to do. July to September offers sunny but crisp days, with cool nights, and is best for whale watching. If you're planning a beach holiday, December to February just can't be beaten. Temperatures are moderate year round.



# Soar in for a seaside lunch

Everyone enjoys a stylish arrival but in Sydney, you can take that concept to extraordinary new heights by flying to lunch via seaplane, darling. Strap in to your seat at Rose Bay – a pretty harbourside suburb close to iconic Bondi Beach – and you'll be flown past the Harbour Bridge, Opera House and some of Sydney's most spectacular city beaches, before touching down outside one of Sydney's best waterfront dining experiences – of which there are many.

But which restaurant to choose? Should it be the multi-award-winning Sydney institution Cottage Point Inn, where you'll relax over a three-course meal on the edge of the Hawkesbury River with kookaburras and the afternoon sun for company? Or perhaps the recently reopened Berowra Waters Inn, where you'll dine on an innovative degustation menu, to views of the glittering waters in front of you, surrounded by gum trees? You might prefer a more relaxed meal at stunningly

popular restaurant The Boathouse Palm Beach (don't forget the champagne). Or maybe you'll fly to Jonah's at Whale Beach, home not only to an acclaimed restaurant but to Sydney's only Relais & Châteaux hotel. Dine here on some of Australia's best modern cuisine, and upon finding yourself feeling a little weary post-meal, you can retire to your luxuriously appointed suite nearby and drift off to sleep to the gentle sound of waves crashing against the nearby shore. Decisions, decisions...

TRY THESE: Sydney Seaplanes, [seaplanes.com.au](http://seaplanes.com.au) • Sydney by Seaplane, [sydneybyseaplane.com](http://sydneybyseaplane.com) • Seawing Airways, [seawing-airways.com.au](http://seawing-airways.com.au)

EATING OUT

## 3 of the best

### FIRST-CLASS DINING BY THE SHORE

Of course, you don't need to travel by plane to dine in style by the water – Sydney's harbour shores are dotted with incredible places to eat. We love:



#### Quay

● World-renowned chef Peter Gilmore's food is just one reason Quay is a mainstay on the prestigious S. Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants list. [quay.com.au](http://quay.com.au)

#### Benneelong

● The sublime menu here – showcasing Australia's best produce – is matched by its stellar Sydney Opera House setting (with billion-dollar views of the bridge for company). [benneelong.com.au](http://benneelong.com.au)

#### ARIA

● The upmarket offerings at celebrity chef Matt Moran's award-winning restaurant at Circular Quay come with glittering harbour views. [ariarestaurant.com](http://ariarestaurant.com)

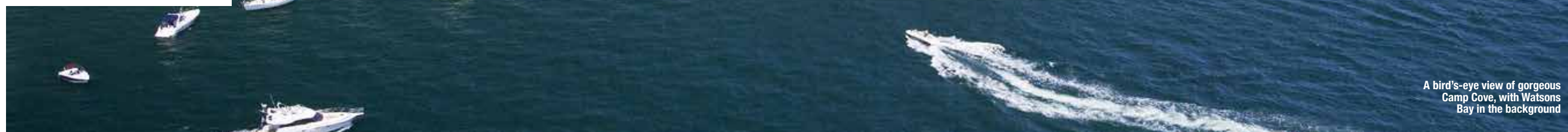
MAIN IMAGE BY DESTINATION NSW

INSET BY PRETTY STEVENS, DISCOVER NSW



## Hit the beach like a local

There are almost 100 beaches in Sydney – choosing just one can be difficult. Bondi is a must-see, but you can make like a local and follow the walking track (commonly referred to as ‘the Bondi to Bronte’, see p38) south to the handful of other gorgeous beaches within strolling distance – Tamarama, Bronte, Clovelly and Coogee among them. Same goes for internationally-renowned Manly Beach – a short walk around the cove you’ll find prized Shelly Beach, which locals have rated the best in the state (and that’s saying something). Further north of Manly there’s an entire peninsula of stunning sands, ending with chic Palm Beach. But if you’re not interested in venturing from the city we’ve got good news: the harbour is dotted with swimming spots, too. We’ve listed our favourites just to the right...



A bird's-eye view of gorgeous Camp Cove, with Watsons Bay in the background

### SWIMMING

## 3 of the best

### SYDNEY'S BEST HARBOUR BEACHES

Close enough to the city to see the skyscrapers, but far enough away to provide a seductive sense of seclusion, these sun-drenched swimming spots are kept secret for a reason!

● **Camp Cove** is a particularly lovely patch of sand in Sydney's eastern suburbs, popular with families, bathers and picnickers passing by on boats. (Check out that picture!)

● **Nielsen Park** is a quiet spot in the manicured suburb of Vaucluse. It has an adjacent restaurant, café and park and a particularly family-friendly beach, with crystal clear water and a netted pool.

● **Balmoral** This beautiful spot is hidden at the bottom of well-to-do suburb Mosman. Stroll the promenade, swim in the netted pool or pull up a chair at one of the pretty cafés and admire the view. [nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://nationalparks.nsw.gov.au)

## Submerge yourself in Sydney (life)style

Sydney's harbour is the centre of the city, around which residents enjoy countless activities – snorkelling, Stand-Up Paddle boarding, diving, kayaking and sailing among them. You can take a long, lazy cruise around her beaches, enjoy sunset cocktails on board an afternoon cruise or simply settle in to watch the ferries go by from one of the many public gardens. Here are a few of our favourite activities:



Royal National Park features wildly diverse terrain, from open grasslands to dramatic cliff tops

## Soak up three incredible parks

Sydney Harbour itself is ringed by a national park (called Sydney Harbour National Park, incidentally), but you'll find other unique national parks close to the city in almost every direction. To the west, Blue Mountains National Park is part of one million hectares of bushland, escarpments and waterholes, protected by a UNESCO World-Heritage listing, while one hour north you'll find the sandstone cliffs, eucalypts and waterways of Kuring-gai Chase National Park (take the 45-minute Aboriginal Heritage Track to see some amazing Aboriginal Rock Art for free). The world's second-oldest national park, Royal National Park (left), is an hour south of the CBD and, like its counterparts, offers opportunities for barbecues, fishing, bushwalking and birdwatching – as well as some whale watching, if you're lucky. [nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://nationalparks.nsw.gov.au)

LEFT: SYDNEY NATIONAL PARKS; ABOVE: HAMILTON LUND, DESTINATION NSW

## Sail the world's most famous city harbour

It's one thing to see the Harbour Bridge from land, but quite another to sail underneath it with your favourite icy cold drink in hand. Cruising Sydney Harbour is a much-loved local pastime and you'll understand why once you're on deck, as the afternoon sun warms your face and the salty breeze kisses your skin. All aboard.

### TWO OF OUR FAVOURITE SYDNEY SAILS

● **The Sydney Harbour Discovery cruise** takes in all the famous views, plus gives you the chance to jump in for a swim, with lunch afterwards. [ozwhalewatching.com.au](http://ozwhalewatching.com.au)

● **Eastsail** offers customisable experiences, from sunset cocktails in the harbour to dinner and an overnight stay on-board. [eastsail.com.au](http://eastsail.com.au)



HUGH STEWART, DESTINATION NSW



## Discover Sydney's pretty shoreline

Sydney is home to dozens of walking trails around its coastline; many of which are world class. Here are four of our favourites:

### Botanic Gardens to Mrs Macquarie's Chair

● Leaving from the Sydney Opera House, a short stroll along the foreshore into the Royal Botanic Gardens will land visitors at Mrs Macquarie's Chair. This historic seat, created from a sandstone rock ledge for Governor Lachlan Macquarie's wife in 1810, boasts one of the city's best harbour views (and makes for an amazing spot for a photo).

### Manly to Spit Bridge

● Take the iconic ferry ride from buzzing Circular Quay in Sydney's heart to beachside Manly, where you can hike this iconic 10km trail through pretty heathland past well-preserved Aboriginal rock art (signposted) and countless hidden beaches (definitely not signposted – keep your eyes peeled). The walk finishes at the Spit Bridge, where local buses will zip you back to the city. Pack a picnic and, if it's hot, your swimming costume and sunscreen too.

### Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

● Your guided walking tour begins deep in the heart of Sydney's iconic Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, home to one of the world's most concentrated collection of recorded Aboriginal Heritage Sites, and remarkably peaceful waterways. Experience an Aboriginal Welcome to Country ceremony and ochre painting on traditional lands. Guides will entice you with stories about shipwrecks, smugglers and escaped convicts. [sydneyoutback.com.au](http://sydneyoutback.com.au)

### Bondi to Bronte

● This local track, well loved by locals, international celebrities and everyone else besides, leads past buzzing Bondi Beach along dramatic sandstone cliffs to tiny Tamarama (often referred to as 'Glamarama', thanks to its popularity with the local socialite set) before arriving at Bronte Beach, where you can choose from several light-filled cafés for a revitalising cup of coffee (or continue on to several more beaches). Each spring this walk hosts the visual feast that is Sculpture by the Sea – but the people-watching is fantastic no matter the season. [sculpturebythesea.com](http://sculpturebythesea.com)

Pack sensibly for the 10km Manly to Spit Bridge Walk – it can take a good three to four hours

HAMILTON LUND / DESTINATION NSW

A multitude of public harbourside trails makes Sydney a haven for anyone who likes walking... or good views!

SYDNEY AND SURROUNDS NSW

### DID YOU KNOW?

Sydney's coastline is so extensive you could spend whole weeks walking it. One company, Auswalk, offers privately guided, multi-day itineraries covering the best of North to South Head as well as Middle Harbour, taking in picturesque beaches, Aboriginal sites and sandstone sea cliffs enroute. [auswalk.com.au](http://auswalk.com.au)

Bondi Beach is ideal for dedicated surfers and casual paddlers alike

Iconic Bondi Icebergs Club is a must-see during any Bondi Beach visit

## Splash out at Bondi

Sun, surf, sand and shopping all take place at Sydney's famous beachside suburb of Bondi. Learn how to ride the waves of Bondi beach with Let's Go Surfing's passionate and professional local instructors ([letsgosurfing.com.au](http://letsgosurfing.com.au)). Out of the water, designer fashion, organic eats and pop-up markets are all up for discovery; stop for a chie lunch at Icebergs ([idrb.com](http://idrb.com)) when it's time for a break. Don't miss Aquabumps photography gallery ([aquabumps.com](http://aquabumps.com)) – local artist Eugene Tan has created an international reputation for his pop-art style of beach photography, and his affordable pieces are on sale here. [sydney.com/bondi](http://sydney.com/bondi)

TOP: DESTINATION NSW; OTHERS: DANIEL BOUD X2



# Take a road trip along the Legendary Pacific Coast

Sydney is the starting point for one of Australia's most incredible – and incredibly picturesque – road journeys. Stretching 950km up the coastline to Brisbane, the Legendary Pacific Coast Drive ([pacificcoast.com.au](http://pacificcoast.com.au)) takes about 11 hours sans stops: but stop you must – this trip is a summer holiday tradition for Sydneysiders, and the journey offers dozens of memorable spots along the way.



Newcastle's newly renovated Merewether Ocean Baths are well worth a dip



Pretty Beach House is nestled on the Central Coast's Bouddi Peninsula



Head to Port Stephens for a memorable dip with dolphins

**D**on't miss a swim at Newcastle's historic Ocean Baths, or, a little further north, a stroll along the unbelievably beautiful beaches of Seal Rocks. At Port Macquarie you'll find 18 beaches to choose from, alongside a burgeoning gourmet scene (don't miss Cassegrain Winery for lunch). Further north you'll find the laid back surfing town of Yamba, a great last stop before fabulous Byron Bay (take a dip in the tea-tree stained Lake Ainsworth at Lennox Head if you've got time). Once you've explored Byron (p42), more beaches come thick and fast along the Tweed coastline, which stretches all the way to Queensland. Need more inspiration? Here are more highlights:

## Indulge in Central Coast luxury

It's so close to Sydney that some residents commute, yet the lakes, bays and beaches of the Central Coast feel a world away from Australia's largest city. Visit the golden sands of Avoca Beach, shop for pretty homewares in charming Hardys Bay or escape to the luxurious surrounds of Kim's Beachside Lodges, Pretty Beach House (above) or Bells At Killcare, all close by the tranquil surrounds of Bouddi National Park. [visitcentralcoast.com.au](http://visitcentralcoast.com.au)

PRETTY BEACH HOUSE: ANSON SMART X2

The Cape Byron Lighthouse awaits you at the end of a rugged headland walk



DESTINATION NSW

## Swim with dolphins at Port Stephens

Just north of the Central Coast – about three hours' drive from Sydney – guests of Dolphin Swim Australia fulfil a dream of many: a dip with wild dolphins. During this sunrise tour dolphins take the initiative, choosing to play and splash around with their delighted human swimming companions – an experience you'll never forget. [dolphinswimaustralia.com.au](http://dolphinswimaustralia.com.au)

## Dine on the jetty at Coffs Harbour

The beautiful beachside town of Coffs Harbour has a wooden jetty that's ideal for sipping a coffee or enjoying fish and chips at the busy marina. Afterwards, head inland to walk in the otherworldly rainforests of Dorrigo National Park, then rest your head at one of the many local beachside resorts before continuing on. [visitcoffsharbour.com](http://visitcoffsharbour.com)

## Picnic on a secret beach

There are so many beaches along this road trip you're virtually guaranteed of finding one for yourself. From Port Stephens, head up the highway to isolated Treachery Beach, a place of azure waters and powdery white sand (perfect for picnics), while further north on the Coffs Coast, sit at Emerald Beach's only restaurant in town and watch local surfers. Or simply pull over when you feel like it – which beach will you discover?

## Meet Australia's coolest beach town

Between tropical rainforest and a shimmering sea sits the bohemian town of Byron Bay, a place that – with its alluring mix of fabulous coffee, light-filled yoga studios and pristine natural surrounds – has long been a lure for surfers and style-makers. Walk barefoot along the beach and you might see dolphins playing in the sea, or slip straight into the sunset scene with a cocktail in hand. Turn over for more Byron-based ideas. [visitbyronbay.com](http://visitbyronbay.com)



Pack a seafood picnic and head to a secret beach



Zenith Beach lies just 15km east of Port Stephens



# 5 of the best

## IN BYRON BAY

### Sleep tight in a classic Australian beach house

● What's better than visiting an Aussie beach? Waking up just footsteps away from one. Byron Bay has an enormous variety of holiday houses for rent, from cute, shabby-chic shacks to glossy, multi-million dollar residences. Make sure you get up early at least one morning and say hello to the many local kookaburras – these curious birds are always up at sunrise. [byronluxurybeachhouses.com.au](http://byronluxurybeachhouses.com.au)

### Escape to the hinterland for a luxe retreat

● If you feel like spoiling yourself, you'll find several luxury spa retreats just outside of town. We love five-star The Byron at Byron ([thebyronatbyron.com.au](http://thebyronatbyron.com.au)), Gaia Retreat & Spa ([gaiaretreat.com.au](http://gaiaretreat.com.au)) and Escape Haven ([escapehaven.com](http://escapehaven.com)), a luxury yoga and surf retreat only for women. The exclusive Elements of Byron resort, meanwhile, is due to open in February 2016 ([elementsofbyron.com.au](http://elementsofbyron.com.au)).

### Watch the sun rise at our most easterly point

● As the furthest point east on the Australian mainland, the Cape Byron Lighthouse offers an iconic spot to start the day. Arrive early to watch the sun's first rays hit the continent... or visit at any time of day for a cracking view over the town and coastline.

### Order a piping hot latte at Top Shop

● Australians take their coffee very seriously, and at the Top Shop café – set in a renovated Byron homestead – you'll find the best brew for miles. Arrive mid-morning for a sunny spot on the lawn and ask for a latte – this milky, smooth coffee is an Australian favourite for good reason (+612 6685 6495).

### Spot the glittering beaches from a balloon

● Byron Bay is actually home to more than one bay – and definitely more than one beach! Jump into a hot air balloon and you'll spot up to two dozen – from patrolled Main Beach and celebrity hotspot Wategos, to family-friendly Little Wategos, Clarkes and the secret paradise of Whites. [byronbayballooning.com.au](http://byronbayballooning.com.au)



*“What's better than visiting an Aussie beach? Waking up just footsteps away from one...”*



MAIN IMAGE: MIKE NEWLING, TOURISM AUSTRALIA

MAIN IMAGE: DESTINATION NSW; BALLOON FROM LEFT: ALISA KATAN, ELEMENTS OF BYRON; DAVID YOUNG



Escape Haven



Elements of Byron



The Byron at Byron



EXPLORING

# 9 of the best

## THE LORD HOWE ISLAND BUCKET LIST



● Stay at six-star Capella Lodge, with stunning ocean views and surrounds. Also check out Arajilla Retreat and Pinetrees Lodge. [lordhowe.com](http://lordhowe.com)

● Take in the turtles from a glass-bottomed boat. If you're feeling adventurous, grab a snorkel to explore the island's coral gardens. [islandercruises.com.au](http://islandercruises.com.au)

● Find flora and fauna with a world-class naturalist. Author and photographer Ian Hutton's walks around North Bay are deservedly popular. [islandercruises.com.au](http://islandercruises.com.au)

● Feed fish by hand at Neds Beach. Get up close to the likes of mullet, wrasse, garfish and kingfish.

● Discover deep-sea fishing. Nearby Ball's Pyramid is so beset by fish it has earned the nickname Fisherman's Castle. [fishinglordhoweisland.com.au](http://fishinglordhoweisland.com.au)

● Rent a bike. Cycling is the island's most common form of transport. [lordhoweisland.info/services/wilsons.htm](http://lordhoweisland.info/services/wilsons.htm)

● Feast on a gourmet picnic. Accommodation providers such as Capella Lodge can suggest a spectacular location and provide the food to boot.

● Dive the world's southernmost coral reef. Lagoons, reefs and the nearby Admiralty Islands all offer excellent dive sites. [prodivelordhoweisland.com.au](http://prodivelordhoweisland.com.au)

● Hike through a palm forest. Most of Lord Howe is covered in rainforest or palms: the walk up Malabar Hill is a good way to appreciate both.



The view from Malabar Hill back towards Lord Howe Island's Mounts Lidgbird and Gower

## Land in paradise on Lord Howe Island

David Attenborough once described Lord Howe Island, two hours' flight from Sydney, as "so extraordinary it's almost unbelievable". And when you land on the single airstrip comprising the airport, it won't take you long to see why. This 12km-long stretch in the Pacific is a favourite of both Australian and international tourists, but visitor numbers are restricted to 400 guests a time – so it's never crowded. There are plenty of places to relax on this pristine patch of paradise (try Neds Beach, famous for its fish feeding, splash in what locals have dubbed the 'champagne surf' at Blinky Beach, or head to the more secluded Little Island), but the island's World Heritage listing means you shouldn't miss the chance to explore. As there are few cars on the island, most people get around by bike, jumping off to wander the palm forests and secluded beaches. [lordhoweisland.info](http://lordhoweisland.info)



Lord Howe Island offers some of the best snorkelling in the country

SNORKELS, JETTY AND COLOURED FISH BY NIKKI TO; OTHERS: DESTINATION NSW X3



Wade in just a little way at Neds Beach...



...and you'll find colourful sealife ready to nibble your toes!



### DID YOU KNOW?

The pristine waters of Jervis Bay are flanked by Booderee National Park. Offering some great bushwalking trails, the park is best known for its camping with both Greenpatch and Caves Beach sites having direct beach access. If you'd rather camp in comfort, try the well-appointed luxury safari tents at Paperbark Camp ([paperbarkcamp.com.au](http://paperbarkcamp.com.au)).

## Sink your toes into the world's whitest sand

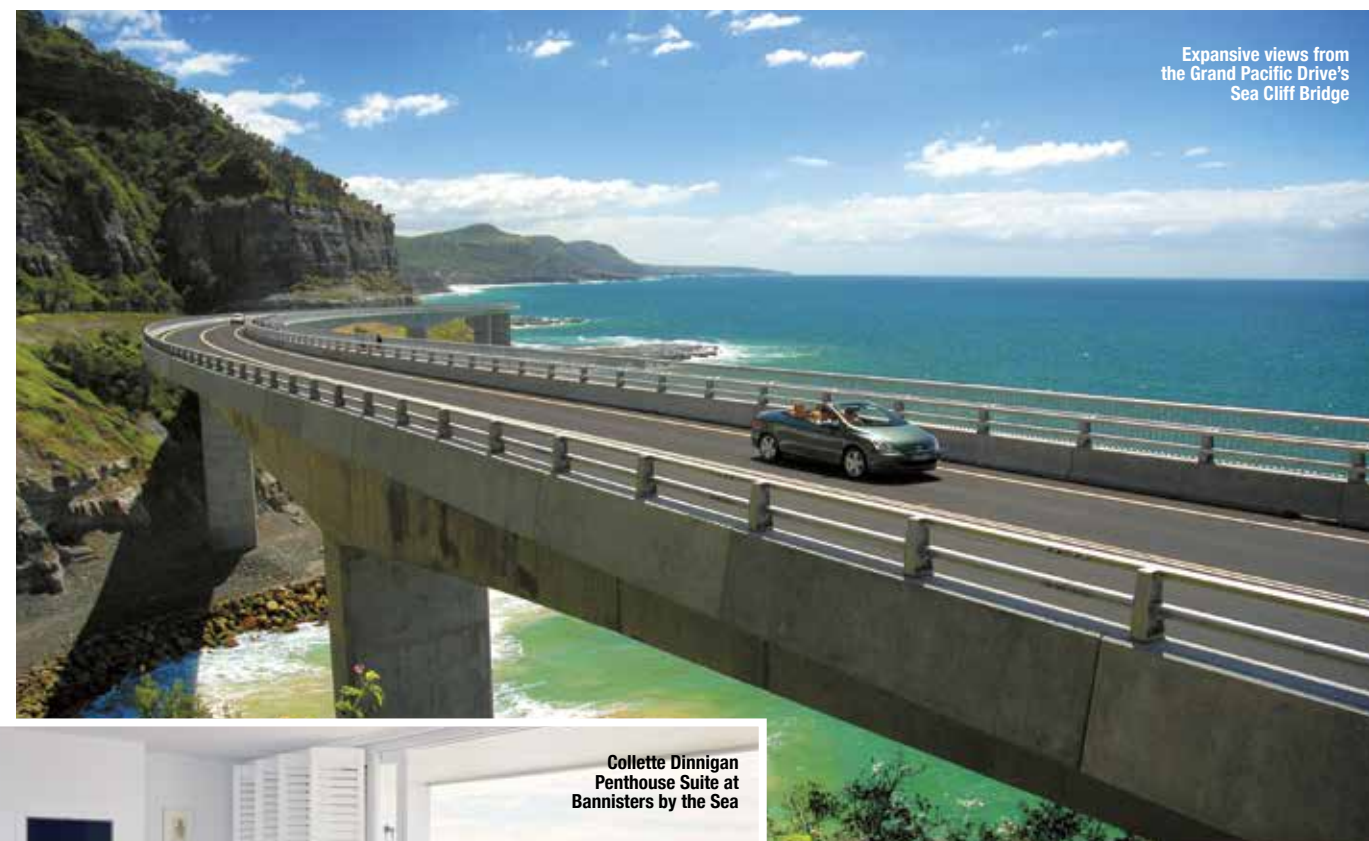
Boasting the whitest sand on the planet, Hyams Beach deserves its international reputation. The long beaches, calm waters and serene location on the southern shores of Jervis Bay, just three hours' drive south of Sydney, all combine to make Hyams a memorable spot on the stunning NSW South Coast. While swimming and snorkelling are perennially popular, staying out of the water can pay off too: visitors love Dolphin Watch Cruises' trips ([dolphinwatch.com.au](http://dolphinwatch.com.au)), and given their penchant for playing near the bow of the company's boats, so do the local dolphins. [visitnsw.com](http://visitnsw.com)

Heading to Hyams? Pack the sunglasses and prepare to be dazzled

Sheltered Jervis Bay boasts one of the longest whale-watching seasons in NSW



LEFT: DOLPHIN WATCH CRUISES, JERVIS BAY, DESTINATION NSW; ABOVE: SHUTTERSTOCK



Expansive views from the Grand Pacific Drive's Sea Cliff Bridge



Collette Dinnigan Penthouse Suite at Bannisters by the Sea



Wild kangaroos at Peppy Beach are famously friendly

## Cruise on a coastal road trip

**T**he NSW South Coast is home to some of the country's best seafood – ask a local, they'll tell you the fish practically jump onto your hook in these parts – fabulous artisan cheeses and some seriously good places to wine and dine, with water views to match. It takes around five spectacular hours to drive its length, from Wollongong (an hour south of Sydney) down to the southern tip at Eden – that is, if you don't stop to soak up some of these brilliant beachside activities on offer along the way:

- **Drive a Porsche or Ferrari** ([cliffcoast.com.au](http://cliffcoast.com.au)) along the 665m Sea Cliff Bridge. Part of the spectacular Grand Pacific Drive, this scenic stretch starts just south of Sydney and continues for 140km until Nowra, hugging sandstone cliffs much of the way. With views at almost every turn and plenty to see and do along the way it's guaranteed to be a road trip you'll never forget. [grandpacificdrive.com.au](http://grandpacificdrive.com.au)
- **Stay at boutique hotel Bannisters by the Sea** with its elegant Collette Dinnigan-designed penthouse suites and restaurant by celebrity chef Rick Stein, everyone's favourite TV seafood chef. Perched on a cliff top

overlooking Mollymook Beach, seaside getaways don't come any more stylish (or tasty) than this. [bannisters.com.au](http://bannisters.com.au)

- **Hop on the sand with a kangaroo.** On Peppy Beach in Murrumbidgee National Park, grey kangaroos inhabit a spectacular seaside home, and you'll often see them at the water's edge. Although they are used to people, they are wild so do exercise caution for this genuine only-in-Australia wildlife moment.

- **Dine on fresh oysters in Pambula.\*** Many locals believe the oysters here are among the world's best, so put their claim to the taste test. In fact there are so many oyster growers on the South Coast that it's been nicknamed the Oyster Coast – and Pambula is just one stop on the 300km-long Oyster Trail. [sapphirecoast.com.au](http://sapphirecoast.com.au); [australiasoystercoast.com](http://australiasoystercoast.com)

- **Visit Montague Island**, where little penguins from one of Australia's largest breeding sites come ashore at dusk. For a taste of island life, spend the night in the beautifully restored lighthouse keepers' cottage and wake up to simply extraordinary ocean views. [montagueisland.com.au](http://montagueisland.com.au)

- **Take an inland detour to the Canberra District**, one of Australia's most rapidly expanding wine regions, with more than 140 vineyards and 30 cellar doors. Many wineries are boutique family-run operations, so you won't find their labels in your local wine shop. You never know what new favourite you'll discover. [visitnsw.com](http://visitnsw.com)

- **Spot whales in Eden.** This small town offers superb viewing of the humpback whales that pass Twofold Bay every spring. The Killer Whale Museum has been fascinating visitors with whale tales for more than 80 years, and the nearby ruins of Davidson Whaling station is a fascinating look at a bygone industry. [visiteden.com.au](http://visiteden.com.au)

- **Drive on to Melbourne.** The town of Eden is only a short drive from the Victorian border (p57) and the highway continues to hug the coast all the way, so there's plenty more fun in the sun and beautiful beaches and waterways to discover. [sydneymelbournetouring.com.au](http://sydneymelbournetouring.com.au)

\*You can read more about driving the NSW South Coast via Canberra on p56.



## EXPLORE

# Follow the road to the nation's greatest river

Around five hours' drive southwest of Sydney is the thriving town of Albury, gracefully perched on the edge of the Murray River. Australia's most important waterway, the Murray traverses three states before linking with other river systems at the Snowy Mountains. It's here in this wonderfully diverse regional hub that you can – among other things – holiday on a houseboat (in fact you can do this at various points along the Murray; read about the houseboat holiday experience along the Victorian section of the Murray on p65, or see [murrayriver.com.au/albury](http://murrayriver.com.au/albury) for information on the Albury section in NSW). But the drive there from Sydney is filled with its own delights – here are six of our favourites:

## Fitzroy Falls

Take a side trip to Fitzroy Falls, where a wall of water plunges over the edge of the sandstone escarpment 80 metres to the valley floor below. Follow the boardwalk through the rainforest to a lookout with jaw-dropping views of the falls – it's fantastic in spring when the wildflowers are in bloom. [nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://nationalparks.nsw.gov.au)

## Country charm

The collection of cute-as-a-button villages in the Southern Highlands,

around 90 minutes to two hours' drive south of Sydney, are the perfect place for a pit stop. Browse the galleries, boutiques and antiques in Mittagong, picnic beside Lake Alexandra, take a stroll back through time in historic Berrima, enjoy some fresh air in Bowral's magnificent gardens, or step out on the Wingecarribee River walking track near Moss Vale. [southern-highlands.com.au](http://southern-highlands.com.au)

## The Dog on the Tuckerbox

No-one really knows why this bronze statue of a kelpie sitting on a lunchbox is an Australian icon, but it is, and it's every bit as famous among Australians as other national icons such as the Man From Snowy River. It's at the town of Gundagai, right beside the highway; you can't miss it. [thedogonthetuckerbox.com](http://thedogonthetuckerbox.com)

## Beached submarine

You see some strange things on country roads – like the beached submarine at the town of Holbrook. Given that Holbrook is at least 400km from the sea, you'd be forgiven for asking why! The answer goes back 100 years, when the town was known as Germanton and local lad, Lieutenant N.D. Holbrook, became the first submariner to receive the Victoria Cross (the highest military medal in the British Commonwealth) in WWI. The townsfolk celebrated by renaming

the town in 1915, and when they got their hands on the decommissioned *HMAS Otway* some 80 years later, they thought it would make a fitting memorial. There's now a submarine museum next to it ([holbrooksubmarinemuseum.com](http://holbrooksubmarinemuseum.com)) with two other subs and some fascinating exhibitions.

## Lake Hume

Built in the 1920s near Albury, this man-made lake with its massive dam wall was a modern marvel at the time, now overshadowed by the engineering feats of the Snowy Mountains Scheme up the road. It's a great place to fish and paddle, water-ski and sail, or just chill out on the beach with a book and a glass of local wine. Lake Hume Resort is practically on the water's edge. [lakehumeresort.com.au](http://lakehumeresort.com.au)

## Riverside relaxation

There are a myriad ways to relax with a water view in Albury. Hire a canoe, take a cruise, explore the 15km Murray River walking and cycle trail that meanders through a string of riverside parks – a highlight is Yindyamarra Sculpture Walk – check out the historic waterworks in Mungabareena Reserve, or just sit back and watch the world float past at The River Deck restaurant and café. [visitalburywodonga.com](http://visitalburywodonga.com)