



# 5 GREAT DAYS OF NATURE AND WILDLIFE

5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS

Get ready for five magnificent days of awe-inspiring natural beauty and adorable local wildlife. Waterfalls, walks and wallabies await as you journey into diverse landscapes from picturesque gardens to rocky mountain ranges and rugged coastline.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

- One of the world's most iconic coastal drives - the Great Ocean Road
- Discover the Grampians landscape and ancient culture at its heart
- Incredible native flora and fauna at every point along the journey

## DAY 1

### Melbourne to Ballarat

Depart: Melbourne

O/night: Ballarat

Distance: 159.1 km

Travel time: 2 hrs 4 mins

#### Morning

It seems unbelievable that less than an hour and a half from the hustle and bustle of Melbourne, you can get to **Daylesford**. As you wind through the picturesque towns of **Lyonville** and **Trentham** on the journey, you can feel the city stress melting away. Daylesford, at the foothills of the Great Dividing Range of Victoria, is known as the Australian spa capital. This is because it has the highest concentration of natural mineral waters in the country. To immerse yourself in local natural beauty, take a 1.5 hour walk from **Tipperary Springs** to **Bryce's Flat**.

If you're hungry as well as thirsty, Wombat Hill House is just the place. Enjoy locally sourced, seasonal food - then walk it off and explore the lush greenery of 10.4 hectares of **Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens**. Established in the 1860s, it's regarded as one of Victoria's finest regional destination gardens, a must-visit on a sunny day.

#### Afternoon / evening

You've had flora, but what about fauna? Sit back, relax and put **Ballarat Wildlife Park** into the GPS. You'll see kangaroos, meerkats, penguins, tigers and even the most enormous saltwater crocodiles! But the highlight is getting up close and personal with the cuddly koalas... they actually clamber up to their keepers for a cuddle when it's time for gum leaves... quite simply the cutest thing ever!

So you've gloried in plants and animals, but you're looking for something a bit more... mineral? You can go panning for gold with **Gold Prospecting Adventures**. Who knows, maybe you'll be able to use the nugget you find to pay for the night's accommodation. Take your pick from **Craig's Royal Hotel**, the oldest luxury hotel, and **The Provincial Hotel**, an amazing boutique experience in the heart of Ballarat. But before you hit the hay, there's plenty of delicious wine and craft beer to try at Mitchell Harris Wine Bar or Hop Temple.



Ballarat Wildlife Park

## FAST FACTS

Time:	5 days
Distance:	857.9 km
Nearest major city:	Melbourne
Price:	\$\$

## HASHTAG

#ballarat #grampians #12apostles  
#greatoceanroad #geelong #gstr  
#roadtrip

## DAY 2

### Ballarat to Halls Gap

Depart: Ballarat

O/night: Halls Gap

Distance: 141.5 km

Travel time: 1 hr 43 mins

#### Morning

Time to leave this heritage town for the rugged splendour of The Grampians. But do make a wine tasting stop or two along the way, as the region is home to some of the world's oldest vines. **Blue Pyrenees, Fallen Giants, Grampians Estate** and **Mount Langi Ghiran**, and **Seppelt Great Western** all have excellent shiraz and sparkling – the varietals the region is famous for.

Now head to Halls Gap and check in to your accommodation. **Halls Gap Lakeside Tourist Park** is a great base. Glamp under the stars with a view of the Grampians, and best of all, make friends with your neighbours... hundreds of kangaroos! Or you may enjoy **Aquila Eco Lodges** in the south of the park who have four beautifully built and sustainable lodges set amongst bushland.

Other Choices: D'Altons Resort, Country Plaza Halls Gap

#### Afternoon / evening

Time to get out into the natural beauty The Grampians is famous for. Head out for a guided walk along the **Grampians Peaks Trail** with the guys from **Absolute Outdoors**, or go chasing waterfalls – **Mackenzie Falls**, to be precise. One of the largest waterfalls in Victoria, it's also the only one in the Grampians that flows all year 'round.

If you've been blessed with good weather, there's one thing you don't want to miss, a Grampians sunset. Head up to **Reed Lookout** and walk the 1km to reach **The Balconies**. There you'll enjoy epic, panoramic views of Victoria Valley and the surrounding ranges in beautiful, golden hour light.

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Great Southern Touring Route  
AUSTRALIA

## DAY 3

### Halls Gap to Warrnambool

*Depart:* Halls Gap

*O/night:* Warrnambool

*Distance:* 161.2 km

*Travel time:* 1 hr 54 mins

#### Morning

It's time to wave goodbye to your kangaroo friends and head for the coast! Do keep an eye out for more wildlife as leaving Halls Gap, especially curious koalas and emus.

If you'd like some incredible food to go with that fur, travel to the adorable town of **Dunkeld**, where you'll find the **Royal Mail Hotel**. This two hatted, icon of regional dining has a bistro, **Parker Street Project**, and a fine dining restaurant, **Wickens at Royal Mail Hotel**. If you haven't tasted enough wine, Royal Mail Hotel also has an award-winning, 25,000 bottle wine cellar, so cheers to that.

#### Afternoon / evening

In just over an hour, you'll reach **Tower Hill Reserve**. Tower Hill is an inactive volcano and major natural landmark just outside Warrnambool. Enjoy a 90-minute, interactive tour with an experienced local guide. Lose yourself in the incredible landscape as you learn about traditional Aboriginal lifestyles and meet even more furry and feathered friends like emus, kangaroos, wallabies, echidnas and black swans.

Next, check into your accommodation in the lovely seaside town of **Warrnambool**, and the **Lady Bay Resort** is a great choice. The first Hot Springs Hotel in Victoria is next door the **Deep Blue Hotel & Hot Springs**, it's the perfect place to relax, rejuvenate and replenish. There are 15 hot spring bathing experiences as well as massage Day Spa services, so you'll come out feeling like new.

## DAY 4

### Warrnambool to Point Lonsdale

*Depart:* Warrnambool

*O/night:* Point Lonsdale

*Distance:* 290 km

*Travel time:* 4 hrs 13 mins

#### Morning

If you're lucky enough to be here between June and September, Warrnambool's wild coast is famous for whale watching. Every year, magnificent female Southern Right Whales return to the waters of **Logans Beach** to calve. Otherwise, why not head to Middle Island to see the colony of Little Penguins. And don't be alarmed by the Maremma dogs, in a world-first, these amazing animals have been trained to protect the penguins during breeding season!

The amazing natural beauty continues as you drive from Warrnambool to the epic **12 Apostles** in **Port Campbell**. The 12 Apostles are epic limestone rock stacks that rise majestically from the Southern Ocean. There's a viewing platform to see them and take amazing photos from, and you can also wander down **Gibson Steps** to the beach to see them from a different angle.

Explore the gorgeous and historic **Loch Ard Gorge**, before you go on to **Apollo Bay**. On the way make a stop at **Wildlife Wonders** for a 75-minute, guided walk through the magical **Otways**. Your conservationist guide will share the secrets of the plants and animals that call this bushland home. And it's wonderful to know that this is a sustainable wildlife experience, with all profits go directly to conserving the unique plants and animals in the area.

#### Afternoon / evening

If you've walked up an appetite, head to the Apollo Bay Fish Co-Op for lunch, where you can enjoy fish and chips with a view, and even try the Southern Rock Lobster the Co-Op is famous for. Then hit the drive to rival any other, the Great Ocean Road. Make sure you drive carefully, and stop frequently at the amazing lookouts along the way, like **Teddy's Lookout** and **Mount Defiance Lookout**. If you're travelling between June and October, you might even see whales! If you feel like a little pampering after a big day on the road, break your journey at the exclusive **Lon Retreat** in Point Lonsdale. Lon Retreat features seven luxurious suites and a mineral spa - the perfect place to relax and unwind in style. Or try **BIG4 Beacon Resort** in Queenscliff, a pretty seaside town.



Deep Blue Hot Springs, Warrnambool

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Great Southern Touring Route  
AUSTRALIA

## DAY 5

### Point Lonsdale to Melbourne

Depart:	Point Lonsdale
O/night:	Melbourne
Distance:	106.1 km
Travel time:	1 hr 38 mins

#### Morning

You've made new animal friends on land, but what about at sea? The **Sea All Dolphin Swims** experience is waiting for you in Queenscliff. The friendly and experienced crew will take you out onto Port Phillip Bay for 3.5 hours, where you'll swim with baby fur seals and look out for playful dolphins along the way. If you're lucky, they'll swim with the boat, and if the crew judges that they're in a particularly playful mood, you can jump in and swim with them too. It's a truly unforgettable experience to round out your incredible Great Southern Touring Route Journey.

#### Afternoon / evening

From Dolphins to Rabbits, well, **Jack Rabbit Vineyard** in **Bellarine** to be exact. Here you'll find amazing local food and wine with unrivalled views across the bay to Geelong, the You Yangs and Melbourne. Make sure you ask to sit outside if the weather is fine! When you can bear to tear yourself away from the view, head into **Geelong** for a stroll along the sparkling waterfront. If the sun's still out, take a dip at **Eastern Beach** or a ride on the Giant Sky Wheel. Then, pop into the **Café Narana** for a coffee. It's a café that incorporates indigenous and non-indigenous ingredients and the painted ceiling speaks the stories of the Dreamtime.

Werribee Open Range Zoo is a fitting way to finish your five days by going on an African Safari, just 30 minutes from Melbourne. With over 200 hectares of beautiful natural surrounds that are home to giraffes, zebras, rhinos and much more, a fun way to end your Great Southern Touring Route nature and wildlife adventure.



Port Phillip Bay



Eastern Beach

