



Great Ocean Road & Bellarine Peninsula

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Why Go?

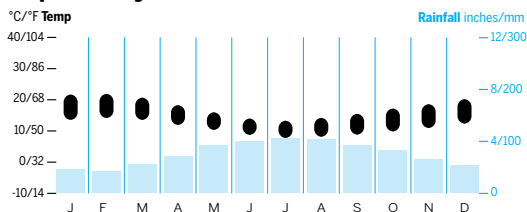
The Great Ocean Road (B100) is one of Australia's most famous road-touring routes. It takes travellers past world-class surfing breaks, through pockets of rainforest and calm seaside towns, and under koala-filled tree canopies. It shows off sheer limestone cliffs, dairy farms and heathlands, and gets you up close and personal with the crashing waves of the Southern Ocean.

Hunt out the isolated beaches and lighthouses in between the towns and the thick eucalyptus forests in the Otway hinterlands to really escape the crowds. Rather than heading straight to the Great Ocean Road, a fork in the road at Geelong can take you the long, leisurely way there, through the Bellarine Peninsula with visits to charming Queenscliff and wineries en route.

Day-tripping tourists from Melbourne rush in and out of the area in less than 12 hours but, in a perfect world, you'd spend at least a week here.

When to Go

Cape Otway



Mar Chill out to folk and roots tunes at the hugely popular Port Fairy Folk Festival.

Easter Head to Bells Beach during the Rip Curl Pro to witness spectacular surfing action.

Jul Visit coastal towns in mid-winter for bright seascapes, cosy cafes and whale watching.

GEELONG & BELLARINE PENINSULA

Geelong

POP 210,875

As Victoria's second-largest city, Geelong is a proud town with an interesting history and pockets of charm. While Melburnians love to deride their little cousin as a boring backwater, in reality few of the knockers have veered off its main thoroughfare enough to really know what makes the town tick. Geelong's new bypass means travellers can skip the city and head straight to the Great Ocean Road, but there are lots of reasons to make a stop here.

Geelong is centred around the sparkling Corio Bay waterfront and the city centre, where heritage buildings from the boom days of the gold-rush era and thriving wool industry have now been converted into swanky restaurants and bars. It's also a footy-mad town, passionate about its hometown AFL team, the Cats.

Sights & Activities

Geelong Waterfront

WATERFRONT

(Map p162; Beach Rd) Geelong's sparkling revamped waterfront precinct is a great place to stroll, with plenty of restaurants set on scenic piers, plus historical landmarks, a 19th-century carousel, sculptures, grand homes, swimming areas, playgrounds and grassy sections ideal for picnics. In summer you can cool off at popular **Eastern Beach**, with an art-deco bathing pavilion complete with diving boards, sunbathing area and toddler pool. Jan Mitchell's 100-plus famous painted **Bay Walk Bollards** are scattered the length of the waterfront.

Geelong Waterfront Carousel

HISTORIC SITE

(Map p162; ☎ 03-5224 1547; www.geelongaustralia.com.au/carousel; Geelong Waterfront; adult/child \$4.90/4.40; ☀ 10.30am-5pm) A prominent feature along Geelong's waterfront is this ornate 19th-century hand-carved carousel, housed within a slick 21st-century glass pavilion.

Geelong Art Gallery

GALLERY

(Map p162; ☎ 03-5229 3645; www.geelonggallery.org.au; 55 Little Malop St; ☀ 10am-5pm) **FREE** With over 6000 works in its collection, this excellent gallery has celebrated Australian paintings such as Eugene von Guérard's *View of Geelong* and Frederick McCubbin's 1890

A Bush Burial. Also exhibits contemporary works and has free tours on Sundays at 2pm.

National Wool Museum

MUSEUM

(Map p162; ☎ 03-5272 4701; www.geelongaustralia.com.au/nwm; 26 Moorabool St; adult/child/family \$9/5/30; ☀ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) More interesting than it may sound, this museum showcases the importance of the wool industry in shaping Geelong economically, socially and architecturally – many of the grand buildings in the area are former wool-store buildings, including the museum's 1872 bluestone building. There's a sock-making machine and a massive 1910 Axminster carpet loom that gets chugging at hourly intervals.

Powerhouse Geelong – City Precinct

GALLERY

(Map p162; ☎ 0418 526 640; www.powerhouse-geelong.com; 20 Brougham St; ☀ 9.30am-5pm) **FREE** In addition to the **street art park** (\$5; ☀ 10am-5pm) in the old power station in North Geelong are these galleries and studio spaces set within a 100-year-old brick wool storing house. Set above the **Brougham Street Markets** (☎ 03-5221 2490; www.facebook.com/broughamstreetmarkets; ☀ 10am-6pm), here everything is for sale and features the work of some 300 street artists from the area and beyond. Call ahead for street-art workshops (per hour \$25).

Old Geelong Gaol

HISTORIC BUILDING

(Map p162; ☎ 03-5221 8292; www.geelonggaol.org.au; cnr Myers & Swanston Sts; adult/child/family \$10/5/22; ☀ 1-4pm Sat & Sun, daily school holidays) Built in 1849, HSM Prison Geelong may have closed its doors in 1991, but this old bluestone jail remains as terrifying as ever. You'll see its grim cells set over three levels, plus the shower block, watchtowers and gallows. Each exhibit is accompanied by audio, explaining anything from contraband of crude homemade weapons to former cellmates such as Chopper Read (cell 39). **Ghost tours** (Map p162; ☎ 1300 865 800; www.twistedhistory.net.au; adult/child \$33/22) are also run here.

Boom Gallery

GALLERY

(☎ 0417 555 101; www.boomgallery.com.au; 11 Rutland St, Newtown; ☀ 9am-4pm Mon-Sat) **FREE** Down an industrial street off Pakington St, Boom's warehouse space in an old wool mill shows contemporary works by Melbourne and local artists. It sells great design objects