



Mornington Peninsula & Phillip Island

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Best Places to Eat

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- Captains of Rye (p240)
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- Red Hill Brewery (p245)

Best Places to Sleep

- Hotel Sorrento (p240)
- Island Accommodation YHA (p251)
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- Clifftop (p251)
- Royal Hotel (p237)

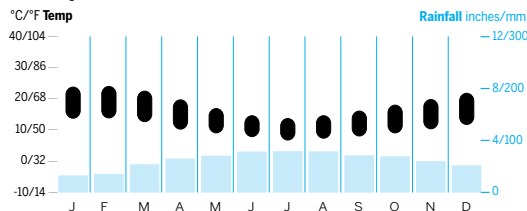
Why Go?

More a playground for locals than a lure for foreign travellers, Mornington Peninsula is a string of holiday communities that curls around Port Phillip Bay's eastern half. At the tip of the peninsula, a world of rugged ocean surf beaches, sublime links golf courses and coastal bushwalks opens up. Away from the coast, the peninsula's interior is a wine- and food-lover's paradise, with more than 50 cellar doors and some of Victoria's finest winery restaurants.

Away to the east, it's a short ferry ride to wild and isolated French Island and to Phillip Island, one of Victoria's premier attractions. Apart from the famous nightly parade of little penguins, Phillip Island is blessed with wonderful surf beaches, accessible wildlife and enough activities to keep you (and the kids) busy for a week.

When to Go

Phillip Island



Jan–Feb Phillip Island is one of the closest summer playgrounds to Melbourne.

Nov–Dec The best time to view seals and penguins at Phillip Island.

Mar–May, Sep–Oct Hit the beaches and wineries, after the holiday crowds have departed.



Mornington Peninsula & Phillip Island Highlights

- 1 Penguin Parade** (p248) Settling in at dusk for this famous wildlife spectacle at Phillip Island.
- 2 Red Hill** (p244) Treating yourself to a day of wine tasting, in between a long lunch and visits to cheesemakers.
- 3 Arthurs Seat Eagle** (p239) Taking in soaring coastal views from the Arthurs Seat gondola.
- 4 Nobbies Centre** (p248) Looking out to this spectacular viewpoint while learning about its waters at the Antarctic Journey centre.
- 5 Sea Kayaking** (p241) Paddling out from Portsea to visit a seal colony, with regular dolphin encounters en route.
- 6 Peninsula Hot Springs** (p239) Indulging in a long, relaxed soak at this mineral waters spa.
- 7 Point Nepean National Park** (p242) Cycling out to the peninsula's tip and historic military fortress.
- 8 Point Leo** (p244) Hanging out at this relaxed surf town while learning to catch a wave.
- 9 Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery** (p237) Being wowed by quality modern Australian art.

MORNINGTON PENINSULA

The Mornington Peninsula – the boot-shaped area of land between Port Phillip Bay and Western Port Bay – has been Melbourne's summer playground since the 1870s, when paddle steamers ran down to Portsea. Today, much of the interior farming land has been replaced by vineyards and orchards – foodies love the peninsula, where a winery lunch is a real highlight – but it still retains lovely stands of native bushland.

The calm 'front beaches' are on the Port Phillip Bay side, where families holiday at bayside towns from Mornington to Sorrento. The rugged ocean 'back beaches' face Bass Strait and are easily reached from Portsea, Sorrento and Rye; there are stunning

walks along this coastal strip, part of the Mornington Peninsula National Park.

The bay heads are so close that it's just a short hop by ferry across from Sorrento to Queenscliff on the Bellarine Peninsula.

i Information

Peninsula Visitor Information Centre (Map p238; ☎ 1800 804 009, 03-5987 3078; www.visitmorningtonpeninsula.org; 359b Nepean Hwy, Dromana; ☀ 9am-5pm) The visitor information centre can book accommodation and tours, and stocks an abundance of brochures.

i Getting There & Away

The fastest way to the Mornington Peninsula is via the tollway Eastlink (M3) and exit at the Mornington Peninsula Fwy (M11) via Peninsula Link. The Point Nepean Rd (B110) also feeds into