



Melbourne & Victoria



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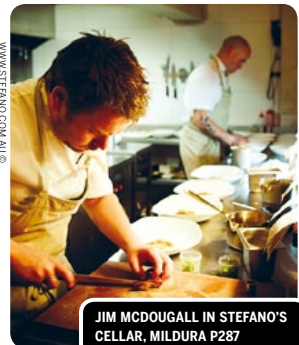
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JIM MCDUGALL IN STEFANO'S
CELLAR, MILDURA P287

Plan Your Trip

Itineraries



Melbourne & Around

Melbourne is the centrepiece of this itinerary, which combines day trips with some overnight stays. Dedicate at least two full days to Melbourne and then hit the road around the region, returning to Melbourne for the night between excursions.

Begin by heading southeast across the Mornington Peninsula and make for Stony Point, from where the ferry leaves for **French Island**. Stay overnight to really appreciate this special place where koalas abound and the clamour of modernity

seems a world away. The next morning, return to the mainland and journey inland to check out a couple of **Red Hill** wineries. Turn back to the coast and continue to the **Cape Schanck** lighthouse. Next stop is the refined town of **Sorrento** on your way back to Melbourne.

Early next morning, head to the Dandenongs, which offer a cool and leafy respite from the noise of the city. From the Burwood Hwy drive east to **Belgrave**, and climb aboard Puffing Billy for a steam-train journey through the mountains to **Gembrook**. Back at Belgrave, take Mon-





Alfred Nicholas Memorial Gardens, the Dandenongs (p131)

bulk Rd through the Dandenong Ranges National Park and head to **Sassafras** for its village atmosphere then past Olinda to explore **William Ricketts Sanctuary**. Round off the day by taking in the view from nearby **Mt Dandenong**, before returning to Melbourne for the night.

Start day six by heading from Melbourne along the Maroondah Hwy to antique-laden **Coldstream**. Indulge in some wine tasting in the **Yarra Valley**, before reaching **Healesville**, a lovely town with a fine animal sanctuary on the edge of the Yarra Ranges National Park. Eat at

the large winery, taste a beer at the brewery and enjoy the small-town charm. In the afternoon, head directly west via **Yarra Glen** and Dixons Creek to the Melba Hwy, then turn northwest to pretty **Kinglake**. Return to Melbourne via St Andrews.

With one day left, spend it in charming **Daylesford**. A favourite weekend escape for Melburnians, it has a verdant setting, fine restaurants, shops to browse and plenty of other reasons to linger. Leave time for a spa and massage at the bathhouse and spa at **Hepburn Springs**, and head back to Melbourne in a state of bliss.

2
WEEKS

Great Ocean Road, Grampians & Goldfields

PLAN YOUR TRIP ITINERARIES

The Great Ocean Road is one of the most popular touring routes in the country. Take a week to get the best from this region, then take another week to wind down via the Grampians and goldfields.

From Melbourne, take the Princes Hwy south-west to Geelong then on to **Queenscliff**, one of the state's most appealing seaside towns and a terrific place to spend a couple of nights. The Great Ocean Road begins in earnest at **Torquay**, one of the surf capitals of the world, and gateway to the legendary swells of **Bells Beach**. Further down the coast, look for kangaroos at the golf course in family-friendly **Anglesea**. Tour the lighthouse at **Aireys Inlet** before a beach walk at **Fairhaven**, then stop for the night in **Lorne**. With its fine beach, stunning waterfall and tasty eating options, you'll want to spend at least the following morning here before heading further down the coast to **Kennett River** for koala spotting. Chances are that it's close to sunset by the time you return to the coast and **Apollo Bay** for the night. On morning five, explore the koala and lighthouse zone of **Cape Otway**, then it's on to Port Campbell National Park and its famed **Twelve Apostles** and Loch Ard Gorge; spend at least a night in nearby **Port Campbell**. Look for whales off the coast of **Warrnambool** then continue west to quaint **Port Fairy**. Stay for a couple of nights to soak up its charm before heading to tiny but fabulous **Cape Bridgewater**, then go inland via Portland.

On the way to the Grampians, stop for a meal in tiny **Dunkeld** en route to **Halls Gap**, your three-night base for your time among the granite rock formations in the **Grampians National Park**. A loop through the gold-mining towns of **Maryborough**, **Castlemaine** and **Maldon** is a rewarding journey through the terrain that formed the basis for Victoria's prosperity – this story is told in the grand old buildings that dominate streetscapes across the region. Count on at least two nights in Castlemaine. Detour north to overnight in **Bendigo**, one of Victoria's rural towns to watch, before sweeping back down through book-rich **Clunes** to **Ballarat**, with its art gallery, antique stores and world-class Sovereign Hill historic park, for the final night of your tour.

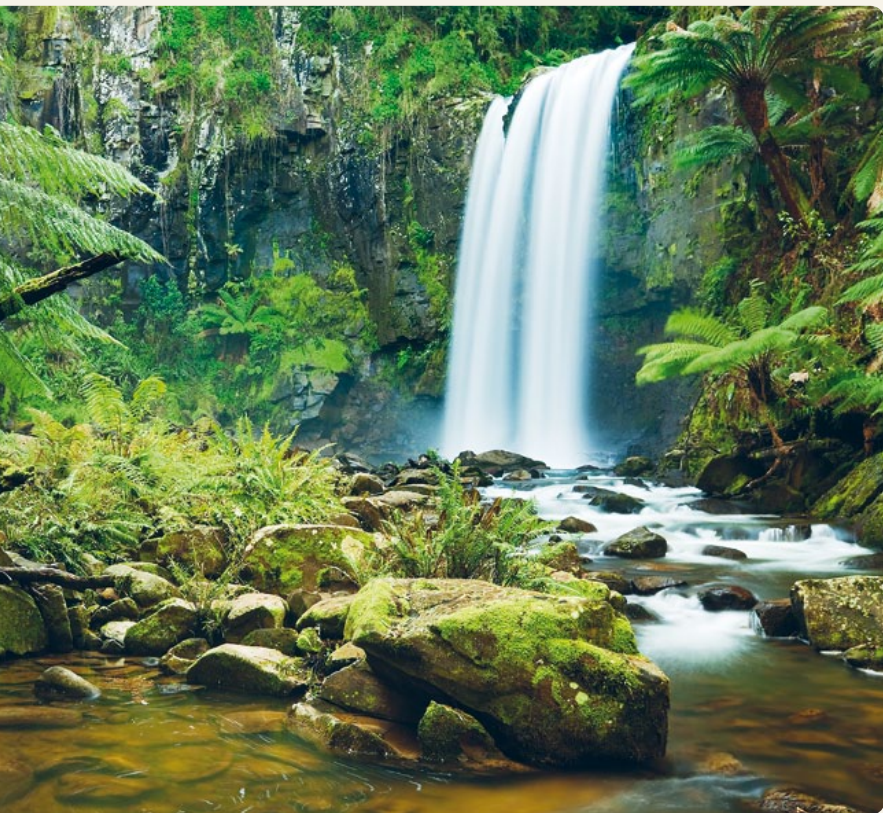
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THE ELEGANT PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES ©



Top: Hopetoun Falls (p173), near Cape Otway
Bottom: Loch Ard Gorge (p175),
Port Campbell National Park



2
WEEKS

The East

Eastern Victoria combines the state's thrilling coast with a mountainous and deeply forested interior – the unifying theme wherever you go is wilderness.

From Melbourne, it's a two-hour drive down to **Phillip Island**, a place that has so much going for it – cute little penguins, seals and surf beaches, even a motorsports race track – that you'll need a couple of days here. On your way southeast, sleepy seaside **Inverloch**, historic **Korumburra**, foodie-heaven **Koonwarra** and bohemian **Fish Creek** all warrant a visit as you head for **Wilsons Promontory National Park**. The Prom is utterly spectacular, as good for pristine beaches and wandering wildlife as for remote lighthouses and fine walking trails. Spending a couple of nights in the area is essential.

If you can tear yourself away, follow the coast to **Port Albert**, then rush for the north, passing through Traralgon as fast as you're allowed en route to **Walhalla**. To truly soak up the silence and blissful isolation of this time-worn and tiny little gold-mining town, spend a couple of nights here. On your way back to the coast, pass through Sale on your way to stunning **Ninety Mile Beach**, either from Golden Beach or Seaspray. Further east, **Paynesville** (reached via Bairnsdale) is a fine little detour, not to mention a gateway for the koala colonies of **Raymond Island**. Overnight in Paynesville or **Metung**, another lovely little seaside town. **Lakes Entrance** is perfect for boat tours, long walks and fine seafood at day's end.

From Lakes Entrance the next morning, head north to the caves at **Buchan**, then loop up through the gravel tracks of **Snowy River National Park** via McKillops Bridge, before detouring into the exceptional forests of **Erri-nundra National Park**. Camp overnight in one of the parks, then pass through Orbost on your way to **Cape Conran Coastal Park**, where the Wilderness Coast really earns its name – soak it up over a couple of days. As far east as you can go in Victoria, **Mallacoota** has a wonderful end-of-the-road feel to it, which is true up to a point – if you travel from here out into **Croajingolong National Park**, you'll really feel like you've fallen off the map. Stay three days; you'll never want to leave this wildly beautiful place.

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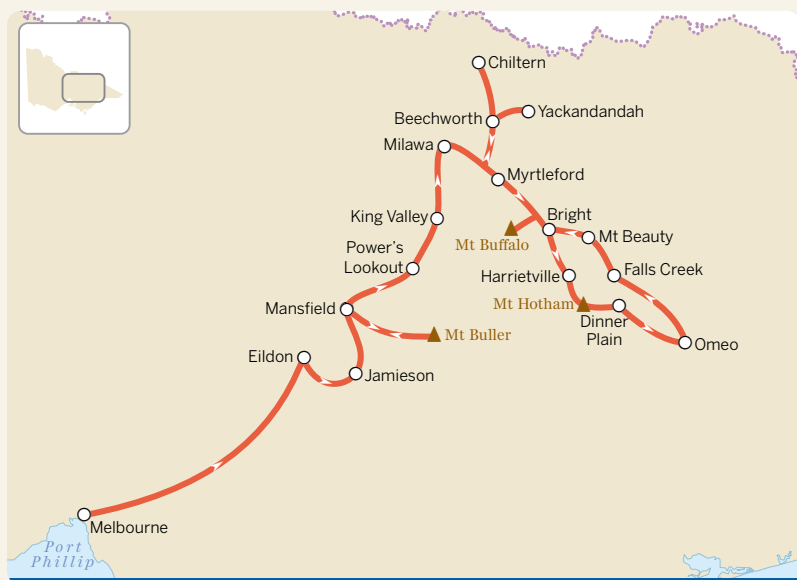
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Top: The Pinnacles, Cape Woolamai (p226), Phillip Island

Bottom: Eastern grey kangaroo, Buchan (p249)





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DAYS

High Country

Victoria's High Country is a fabulous place for car and motorcycle touring, especially outside the winter months, when even the highest roads are clear of snow. With historic towns, stirring mountain scenery and renowned gourmet regions to serve as focal points for your explorations, even 10 days may not prove sufficient.

Start your journey from Melbourne by heading up through the Yarra Valley, over the scenic Black Spur and up to **Eildon**, the base for fishing and houseboat holidays on Lake Eildon, and a good place to spend a couple of nights. From here, take the southern road around the lake to **Jamieson**, a quaint little former gold-mining town with a renowned brewery. Then it's on to the all-seasons adventure town of **Mansfield**, gateway to **Mt Buller** and a base for horse riding and mountain biking; stay a couple of nights. The utterly scenic Mansfield-Whitfield Rd winds up and over the ranges before plunging down to the King Valley – don't miss **Power's Lookout** about halfway along. Spend a few hours in the **King Valley** – an increasingly important wine region – before hitting the gourmet trail in earnest at **Milawa**, where wines, cheeses and mustards are all on offer. Nearby **Myrtleford** has a terrific butter factory in case your portable larder still has space.

As the sun nears the horizon on day five, head for gorgeous **Beechworth**, a stone-built village that glows golden close to sunset and that has wonderful restaurants, local honey and a brewery. Three nights is ideal here, with visits to the postcard-perfect towns of **Chiltern** and **Yackandandah** – both great places to nurture your love of antiques. Returning down the Great Alpine Road, detour up spectacular **Mt Buffalo**, and drop your bags off for a three-night stay in **Bright**, famous for its autumn colours and spring blossoms. From here, branch out to **Harrietville** and the winding, hairpin ascent of **Mt Hotham**. Enjoy the expansive alpine views from the summit before continuing to **Dinner Plain** and through alpine meadows to the historic town of **Omeo**. You could continue down into Gippsland, but we recommend looping up and over the mountains to **Falls Creek** on the summit and then down to **Mt Beauty** on your way back to Bright.



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Top: Hut on Mt Hotham (p278)
Bottom: Rodeo at Omeo (p280)



1
WEEK

Murray River

Victoria's Murray River is utterly unlike anywhere else in the state: soulful riverbank towns, drowned forests of eucalypts and the semidesert Mallee region not far away. It's hard to lose your way on this route: although roads in these parts don't always follow the river, it's never far away, and sticking close to it means you can't go wrong.

Begin by flying from Melbourne to **Mildura** at the top of the Murray. Mildura is a lovely town to get acquainted with and we recommend at least two nights; its food and wine are worth the trip alone. Out here, you feel like you're on the cusp of the outback. To get a taste of what we mean, pick up your rental car and head out to **Murray-Sunset National Park** for an over-night camping trip or do the same at **Hattah-Kulkyne National Park**, where you can camp alongside one of the Murray River's beaches.

Follow the river's path through the landscape southeast to overnight in **Swan Hill**, another important provincial centre by the river. There are some great eating options here, an attractive riverside park and other important landmarks; Swan Hill's Pioneer Settlement is a wonderfully evocative place to learn about the town's past. On your way to Echuca, **Gunbower National Park** boasts some of the most beautiful river red gum forests in the state and is well worth a detour.

Echuca is arguably the pick of the Murray River towns and deserves at least two nights. Apart from being a picturesque town in its own right – its main street is quintessential rural Australia – Echuca's working paddle steamers and historic port are where the Murray's historic role as lifeblood of Victoria's north really comes alive. Consider sleeping on a houseboat.

Sticking to the river, check out the drowned river red gums of **Barmah National Park** and continue on to **Yarrawonga**. Check out Lake Mulwala, and hop on a lunch cruise around this dammed section of the river to get among the sculpture-like remains of long-dead trees. Continue to engaging little **Wahgunyah** on your way to a night in **Rutherglen**, Victoria's home of fortified wines, before joining the Hume Fwy back to Melbourne.



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Top: Lake Mournpall (p289),
Hattah-Kulkyne National Park

Bottom: Pioneer statue and paddle steamer, Murray River



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Anthony Ham

Coordinating Author, Goldfields & the Grampians, Mornington Peninsula & Phillip Island, Gippsland & Wilsons Promontory, The High Country, The Murray River & Around Anthony was born in Melbourne, grew up in Sydney and spent much of his adult life travelling the world. He recently returned to Australia after 10 years living in Madrid. In this coastal odyssey he found a perfect fit for his passion for wild landscapes that reminded him just how much he missed the land of his birth. He brings to the book the unique perspective of knowing the land intimately and yet seeing it anew as if through the excited eyes of an outsider. Anthony also wrote Plan Your Trip section, Melbourne & Victoria Today, History and the Survival Guide chapters.

Read more about Anthony at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/anthony_ham



Trent Holden

Melbourne, Around Melbourne, Great Ocean Road & Bellarine Peninsula, Food & Drink, Fashion & Shopping, The Arts, Sport Melbourne born and bred, Trent's a proud Victorian who's certain he lives in the best city in the world. A rabid AFL footy fan (carn the Hawks!) and cricket tragic, he's an equally passionate supporter of Melbourne's underground rock 'n' roll scene. He's also spent several years living down the Great Ocean Road and has had a stint in country Victoria in Trentham. This is Trent's 15th title for Lonely Planet, covering destinations across Asia and Africa.



Kate Morgan

Melbourne, Around Melbourne, Great Ocean Road & Bellarine Peninsula, Food & Drink, Fashion & Shopping, The Arts, Sport Kate grew up in the southeastern suburb of Frankston before living for several years in the seaside suburb of St Kilda and finally crossing the river to the inner-north neighbourhood of Northcote. She's spent the past few years travelling the world writing guidebooks and has recently relocated to London as Lonely Planet's Destination Editor for West-

ern Europe. Kate loves coming home to Melbourne for a good coffee, the great live-music scene and trips down the Great Ocean Road.

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