

A SNAPSHOT OF AUSTRALIA'S SOUTH WEST



Granite Skywalk, Porongurup National Park

From ancient mountain ranges and rugged coastal cliffs, to towering karri trees and seaside bliss – explore the very best of Australia's South West during this 6- to 8-day itinerary.

LEG ONE: TWIN PEAKS

Perth > 4hr30min/400km > Stirling Range National Park > 35min/47km > Porongurup National Park > 41min/47km > Albany

The beginning of this whirlwind South West journey starts with an introduction to some of Western Australia's most incredible, diverse and otherworldly landscapes – specifically a living patchwork of green and gold fields, and two ancient mountain ranges that seemingly touch the sky and stars.

ENROUTE

Self-drive travellers will start their journey via Albany Highway, which links Western Australia's capital city, Perth, to the Great Southern.

The bitumen stretches more than 400 kilometres southeast to the coastal city of Albany, passing through small farming towns along the way.

We advise travellers to take rest break at the **Williams Woolshed** in Williams, and your first stop at **The Kodja Place** cultural centre in Kojonup. This is where Aboriginal and settler cultures come together and includes a gallery, Australian Rose Maze and gardens, cafe and gift shop.

Here bitumen roads are replaced with orange gravel, farming land gives way to native bush, and skyscrapers are traded for some of the world's oldest mountain peaks.

Approximately half an hour south of the Stirling Ranges, via Chester Pass Road, lays the Porongurup Range – another awe-inspiring mountain range known for its giant granite boulders, including Castle Rock and the adjoining Granite Skywalk.

Due to the remote nature of both ranges, visitors should be prepared for adverse conditions, rugged terrain and limited phone reception. We recommend clients dedicate a day to explore each one of the ranges, and overnight in Albany.

Chester Pass Road will take travellers from the Ranges straight into the heart of Albany (via South Coast Highway), where there'll find plenty more to see and do.

Head to Mount Clarence to learn about Albany's pivotal role in World War I and the Australian New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) legend, then watch the sun set over Albany's King George Sound while dining on moreish shared bites and cocktails at **Garrison Restaurant and Bar**.

Alternatively, guests can spend the rest of the afternoon/evening strolling along the picturesque Middleton Beach, before having dinner at **Hybla Tavern**.

MUST-DOS

For a comprehensive guided tour of the Porongurup National Park and its iconic Granite Skywalk, hop on board Busy Blue Bus, who also happen to run boutique wine tours through the Great Southern Wine region.

Discover the incredible stories of ANZAC service people during an immersive tour of the National Anzac Centre, located atop Mount Clarence.



RECOMMENDED



SUGGESTED TRIP LENGTH
6 - 8 days



TOTAL LEGS
6



NUMBER OF TOWNS
19

NEED-TO-KNOWS

- We recommend travellers spend one to two days enjoying each leg of this itinerary, which can also be experienced in reverse.
- The easiest way to travel to Australia's South West is by flying to either Perth Airport, the Busselton Margaret River Airport (Jetstar flights depart from Melbourne and Sydney to the Busselton Margaret River Airport each three times a week) or the Albany Airport (via Rex).
- For Perth Airport transfers, we recommend Australian Pinnacle Tours, My Driver, Australian Transit Group (ATG) and South West Coachlines.
- For Albany Airport transfers, clients can hire a taxi or organise a charter with Busy Blue Bus.
- Clients interested in caravanning or camping can hire four-wheel-drive campers from Red Sands Campers and camper and caravan packages from Crikey Camper Hire
- Options for multi-day tours are available through McLeod Tours, Southern Forests Experiences, My Driver, Matter of Taste and Australian Pinnacle Tours.
- Tourists are advised to check for alerts and road/park closures before commencing their travel on www.emergency.wa.gov.au and alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au.
- Most of Western Australia's national parks have entry fees; we suggest buying a multi-park pass prior to travel.

AUSTRALIA'S

SOUTH WEST
REGIONAL
TOURISM
ORGANISATION



Click here for Australia's South West's full trade-ready list.



The Lake House, Denmark



Orca (killer whale), Bremer Bay

MUST-STAYS

Conveniently located opposite a shopping centre and down the road from Albany's main street, **Dog Rock Motel** features comfortable and homely motel-style accommodation, plus a restaurant, bar and a convention centre.

Ibis Styles Albany offers 50 spacious hotel rooms to suit all needs and budgets, as well as free wifi and parking, just a short distance from the centre of Albany.

Hilton Garden Inn Albany is located on Albany's waterfront, providing modern facilities and only a short walk into town.

For a great, family-friendly accommodation provider with different accommodation options, try **Big 4 Middleton Beach Holiday Park**.

Quality Banksia Gardens Albany offer award-winning, clean, modern apartments, reliable and perfect for all ages.

LEG TWO: COAST TO COUNTRY

Albany > 20min/18km > Torndirrup National Park > 51min/67km > Denmark

The Great Southern coastline is equal parts wild and wondrous, as travellers will discover during the second leg of this Australia's South West journey.

From the weather-beaten cliffs of the Torndirrup National Park, to the calm natural swimming pools of Denmark – this part of the itinerary focuses on the Great Southern's stunning coastal enclaves, before winding through towering trees and beautiful inland scenery.

ENROUTE

The Torndirrup National Park is just a 20 minute-drive from Albany's city centre and can be reached via Princess Royal Drive, then Frenchman Bay Road.

The park is located on the Torndirrup Peninsula and is home to must-see natural attractions The Gap and Natural Bridge – granite rock formations that showcase the power and might of the Southern Ocean – as well as some beautiful coastal walks and hikes that present unparalleled views of the ocean and peninsula.

Between October and January travellers will see the national park blooming with wildflowers, and if travelling between May and October, can watch the occasional migrating whale swimming in the sea.

Denmark is the next town on this Australia's South West route. Nestled by the Wilson Inlet and Denmark River, Denmark is renowned for its towering trees, picturesque valleys, cool-climate wines and beautiful bays.

Follow South Coast Highway from Albany to the laidback, tree-and-sea town, stopping at local brewery **Boston Brewing** for a family-friendly lunch first.

After exploring the boutique shops along the town's main street, it's then on to William Bay National Park, where popular swimming spot Greens Pool is located. Elephant Rocks – a small, protected cove with giant elephant-like boulders – is right next door and well worth a visit.

Close by is **The Dam Denmark** – a modern Australian restaurant and hemp distillery offering a delicious seasonal menu and pretty cocktails.

On the way back to town clients should make a detour down McLeod Road, then on to the Mt Shadforth Scenic Drive, which weaves through pastured farmland and magnificent karri forest, past wineries and providores, and up above the town of Denmark, boasting sweeping views of the ocean and Wilson Inlet below.

MUST-DOS

Visiting the Great Southern between January and April? Jump on board one of **Whale Watch Western Australia** or **Naturaliste Charters's** full-day orca tours and get up close and personal with wild pods of killer whales out at Bremer Canyon. Note: Bremer Bay is approximately two hours northeast of Albany.

Big and little kids will love exploring the decks and cabins of the landlocked Cheynes IV Ship, learning about Albany's whaling history or marvelling at the size of a sperm whale skeleton, at **Albany's Historic Whaling Station**.

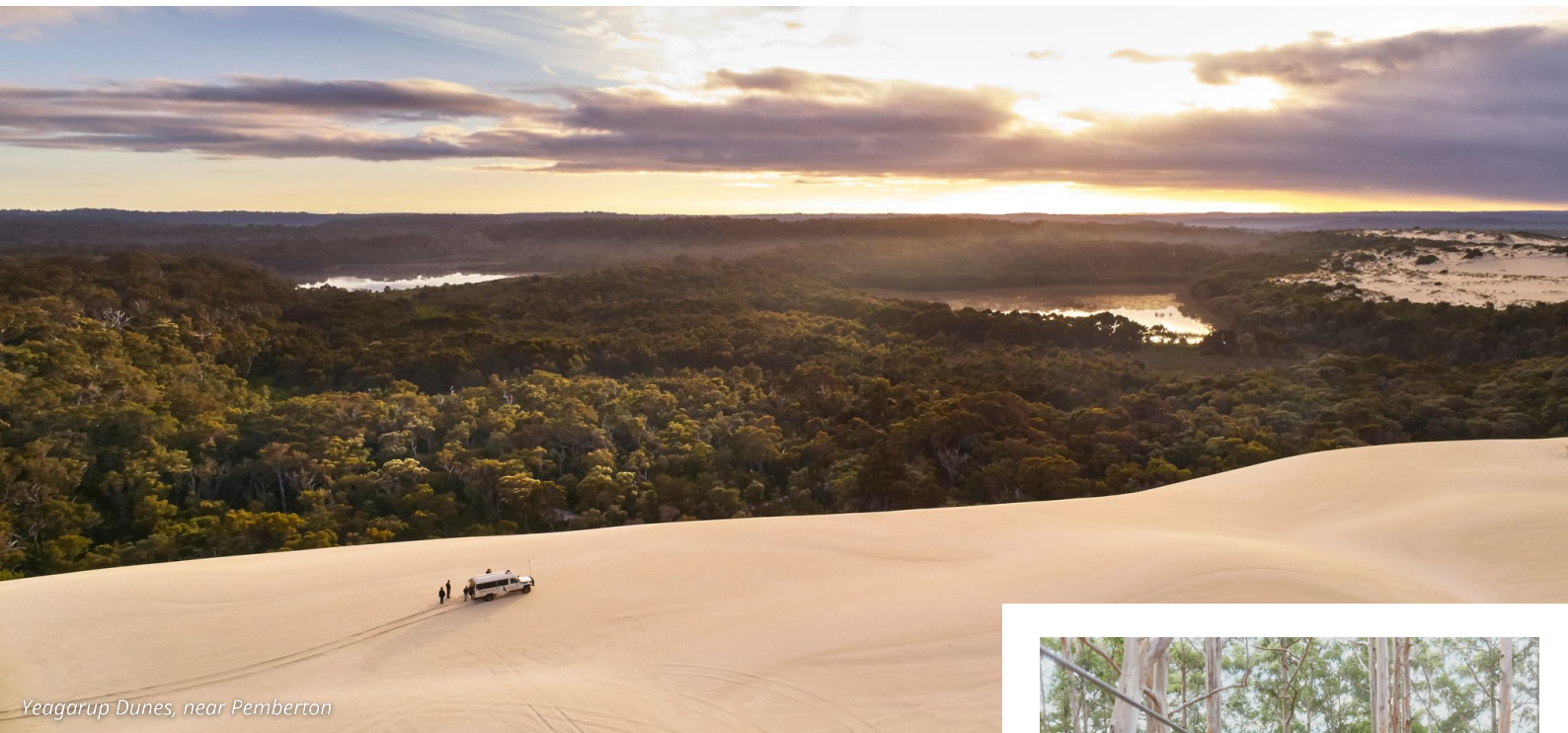
Take a walking tour along Albany's York Street and learn all about the rich history of the town, or tour any of the attractions with local tour operator, **Albany Tours**.

Sip beautiful cool-climate wines and enjoy a lavish tasting platter by the lake or vines at **The Lake House Denmark**.

MUST-STAYS

Guests will find the secluded, private retreat of **Cape Howe Cottages** and its 4-star, self-contained properties enroute to Denmark.

For the best of forest views and cosy, cabin-style comfort, opt for **Karma Chalets'** cedar chalets.



Yeagarup Dunes, near Pemberton

LEG THREE: COAST TO COUNTRY

Denmark > 50min/67km > Walpole > 1hr6min/98km > Northcliffe > 25min/30km > Pemberton

Light-dappled forest, tranquil inland waterways and charming country towns – welcome to the Southern Forests and Valleys, and the next leg of the Snapshot of Australia's South West itinerary.

First, walk between the treetops at the **Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk**, which features a 40m-high suspension bridge suspended between tall tingle trees. Then, get a last look at the south coast at Peaceful Bay and Conspicuous Cliffs near Walpole, or Windy Harbour and the D'Entrecasteaux National Park, renowned for its volcanic rock columns, massive inland dune system and large freshwater lake.

Explore the **Understory Art and Nature Trail** in Northcliffe, then head to Pemberton for the night.

ENROUTE

It's a picturesque drive from Denmark to Pemberton, with most of South Coast Highway lined with towering trees, native forest and farmland. Make sure to venture down the Valley of the Giants Road, which leads to the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk via skyscraping forest.

Follow the road back to South West Highway, which then passes Walpole and turns into the South Western Highway.

Northcliffe and Pemberton are about half an hour apart, so if clients want to explore more of Northcliffe's coast or the bordering D'Entrecasteaux or Warren National Parks, we suggest heading to Pemberton to set up base first.

At the **Pemberton Mountain Bike Park**, try fishing for trout, marron or perch in the Warren River, and/or take a brisk dip in Pemberton Pools or Lake Beedelup.

Pemberton's town centre is dotted with quaint timber cottages and some hidden foodie gems, including **Jaspers Bar**, which, among other things, is home to one of the finest selections of whisky and bourbon in the South West, and **Treehouse Tapas and Wine Bar**, a cosy food and wine joint located on the main street.

MUST-DOS

Discover a 135-million-year-old Lava flow and Basalt columns at Black Point in the D'Entrecasteaux National Park, during a full day tour with **Margaret River Exposed**.

Go off-road and explore Warren National Park's old growth forest and the largest landlocked sand dunes in the Southern Hemisphere, the Yeagarup Dunes, with **Pemberton Discovery Tours**.

Zipline through the ancient karri and marri forest at **Aerial Adventure Pemberton**.

MUST-STAYS

Love the idea of camping, but don't have the equipment or time to set up and back down? **WA Wilderness** do, and can provide a full camping experience for guests in the tranquil Warren National Park near Pemberton.

RAC Karri Valley Resort is a family-friendly accommodation option set on the banks of Lake Beedelup. It features multi-room chalets, lakeside ensuite rooms and a range of caravan and camping sites.

Surrounded by the majestic Donnelly River and Easter National Park, **Ampersand Estates's** beautifully renovated, country homestead-style luxury residences overlook the river, forest and/or vines. There's also a winery, cellar door and distillery onsite.



Aerial Adventure, Pemberton



Understory Art and Nature Trail, Northcliffe



Fonty's Pool, Manjimup

LEG FOUR: RIVER TO RIVER

Pemberton > 22min/32km >
Manjimup > 26min/36km >
Bridgetown > 20min/26km > Balingup
> 35min/40km > Nannup >
50min/72km > Margaret River

Picturesque, tree-lined drives are replaced by endless rows of orchards in Manjimup, then green hills and valleys in Bridgetown, Balingup and Nannup.

The Blackwood River twists and loops through these three towns like a ribbon, before making its way down to Augusta's Flinders Bay, where it eventually flows into the Southern Ocean.

ENROUTE

While there are quite a few towns mentioned in this leg of the journey, they are in fairly close proximity to one another. The easiest way to Manjimup from Pemberton is via Vasse Highway and South Western Highway. Follow this route and expect to be in Manjimup in under half an hour.

Manjimup is regarded as the food bowl of Western Australia thanks to its rich, fertile lands that grow everything, including truffles and juicy red apples.

Its farmers market, held at Manjin Park most Saturdays, is a must-visit for the freshest, farm-picked produce in the state.

In town, visitors can expect to find boutique shops, quirky cafes and delicatessens brimming with local produce.

A little further out, they can explore museums, native bushland, playgrounds and walking trails at the Manjimup Heritage Park, or enjoy a swim and a picnic at Fonty's Pool, Donnelly River or Glenoran Pool.

In need of a toilet break? The Giblett Street public toilets are modern and incredibly clean.

North of Manjimup is Bridgetown, the only heritage-listed town in WA. Located on the banks of the Blackwood River, this town features a number of old buildings as well as quirky shops and country cafes.

Balingup is next, home to the Golden Valley Tree Park, a 60-hectare landscaped park filled with an impressive and visually stunning collection of trees that, in autumn, turn every shade of yellow, orange and red.

Travellers can then head over to Nannup, known for its rolling green hills, mountain biking trails and beautiful country gardens, some of which are open to the public during the annual Nannup Flower and Garden Festival.

Margaret River is then just a 50-minute-drive from Nannup. To really embrace this beautiful part of the world and its diverse characters, we recommend spending a night or two in Nannup or Balingup, before heading to Margaret River.

If guests are time poor, they can cut straight across to Margaret River from Pemberton, via Vasse Highway and Stewart Road.

MUST-DOS

Uncover prized Périgord truffles during a truffle hunt at **Truffle Hill**.

Harvest spiky chestnuts (in-season) and find out how they're farmed on the beautiful **Chestnut Brae** farm

Float down the actual Margaret River on **Margaret River Discovery Co's** Margaret River Sunset Canoe Tour

Fix any sweet tooth cravings by stocking up on chocolate at the **Margaret River Chocolate Company**.

Make your own lip balm or perfume at **Vasse Virgin**, or test out their beautiful, all-natural, olive oil-based skincare range.

Margaret River may be renowned for its wine, but its spirits are well worth a try, too.

MUST-STAYS

Holberry House is an English manor-style guesthouse with seven guest rooms, set on 4.8 acres of beautifully landscaped gardens.

The Forest Lodge Resort is a quiet, secluded and stunning property which is conveniently located on the edge of Pemberton township.

High in a hilltop forest above the mist line sits **Balingup Heights Hilltop Forest Cottages** – a magical 46-acre natural bushland property with six cosy bush cottages.

For travellers making a beeline for Margaret River, we recommend booking a modern, self-contained studio or apartment at **Margaret's In Town Apartments**, located right in the heart of the Margaret River township.



Blackwood River, Bridgetown



Point Picquet, Dunsborough



Windows Estate, Yallingup

LEG FIVE: BETWEEN TWO CAPES

Margaret River > 30min/45km > Augusta > 1hr/78km > Yallingup > 10min/11km > Dunsborough > 25min/23.5km > Busselton

The Margaret River region is home to some of Australia's most remarkable wines and spectacular vineyards, as well as ancient forests, picture-perfect coastlines and world-class surf.

Set between two capes (Cape Leeuwin and Cape Naturaliste), Margaret River can be split into three distinct sections – Busselton, Dunsborough and Yallingup in the north; Margaret River (the town and river) in the middle; and Augusta in the south.

ENROUTE

The majority of towns within the Margaret River region are linked together by two main roads – Bussell Highway and the iconic Caves Road. No Margaret River trip is complete without a drive down Caves Road, which runs parallel to (but not along) the coast.

We recommend taking this way to get to Augusta. While it's a slower drive, it is also more scenic, and travellers can expect to see native bush, plenty of wineries and the majestic Boranup Forest along the way, before the road links back to Bussell Highway and on to Augusta.

In Augusta visitors will find a quiet seaside township that gives way to coastal scrub and white sandy bays speckled with granite rocks. Right at the end of the Cape stands the Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse, the tallest mainland lighthouse in Australia. Visitors can climb to the top and soak in views of the Southern and Indian Oceans (and the occasional whale).

The Blackwood River seeps into the Indian Ocean at Flinders Bay, a tranquil picnic and/or fishing spot. It's a quick, 30-minute-drive back to the Margaret River township via Bussell Highway. We love browsing the different shops along the town's main street, and going for walks along bush tracks that snake through national park and by the Margaret River.

Heading north, again via Caves Road, travellers will pass wineries, restaurants and providores tucked between native bush, rolling vines and grassy green pastures, before making their way to the surfing town of Yallingup and its ancient granite rock formations, surf breaks and pristine beaches.

Do stop at Canal Rocks to see a series of natural rock canals that have been carved out by the sea over millions of years, or to sunbake (please remember to slip, slop, slap) and swim at Smiths Beach.

Part of Yallingup's charm is that it doesn't have a major town centre – just a general store, divine German bakery (the aqua and pink-painted weatherboard house at the start of Yallingup Beach Road) and one restaurant and coffee kiosk.

As such, we suggest stocking up on any main provisions needed in Dunsborough. A short drive from Yallingup is Dunsborough and then Busselton, both of which hug the picturesque Geopraphe Bay.

Not surprisingly, these two towns boast some of the best, crystal clear waters and white sandy beaches this side of the equator.

Cape Naturaliste Road leads to a few of our favourites, including Meelup Beach, Eagle Bay and Bunker Bay.

Right at the end stands another lighthouse, Cape Naturaliste, which visitors can also climb.

In Busselton, the Foreshore offers a central hub for family, friends and groups to hang out. Take a dip in the bay or try stand up paddle boarding when there aren't any waves (which is most of the year).

Grab a coffee or a bite to eat at one of the restaurants, cafes or breweries along the foreshore (Cue: **Shelter Brewing Co.**), or watch the kids play on one of three playgrounds and/or a large skatepark.

Head into town for more places to eat, drink and shop.

If time warrants, we recommend guests spend a day or two exploring each section of the Margaret River region.

MUST-DOS

Discover a world full of stalactites and stalagmites at Western Australia's largest show cave, **Jewel Cave**.

Experience the crème de la crème of Margaret River wine at **Leeuwin Estate**, **Vasse Felix** and **Voyager Estate** – three Ultimate Wineries that offer bespoke and exclusive wine experiences that go above and beyond your average wine tasting.

Swing into **Swings and Roundabouts** for their Swings Backyard Stories cellar door experience that allows guests to explore the winery's vineyard before enjoying a shared grazing feast (and wine, of course) while swinging on the venue's insta- worthy swing seats.

Gallop through native bushland and towering forest during a horse riding tour with **Jesters Flat**.

Experience the Wadandi and Bibbulmun country through the eyes of the South West's traditional owners on one of **Koomal Dreaming's** cultural tours.

Walk or ride (via electric train) to the end of the 1.8km-long **Busselton Jetty** and see what lives 8m underwater in its underwater observatory.



Wellington Dam Mural, Collie

MUST-STAYS

Seeking a private, stylish and sophisticated retreat? **Cape Lodge's** lavish country estate cottages are sure to please.

Overlooking the beautiful Caves House heritage gardens, **Seashells Yallingup** is a hotel that offers both self-contained apartments and spa rooms designed to help guests unwind.

Smiths Beach Resort presents luxury beachfront apartments situated opposite the white sand of Smiths Beach.

RAC Busselton Holiday Park offers family friendly chalet-style accommodation and caravan and camping sites just a short walk from the waters of Geographe Bay.

LEG SIX: OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Busselton 40min/53km >
Bunbury > 15min/15km >
Ferguson Valley > 38min/52km >
Collie > 2hr10min/200km > Perth

This might be the last leg of our Snapshot of Australia's South West itinerary, but when it comes to outdoor adventure, we're just getting started.

From swinging between trees and swimming with dolphins, to appreciating larger-than-life artworks and paddling through crystal clear waters – adventure awaits in Bunbury Geographe.

ENROUTE

It's an easy drive from Busselton to Bunbury via Bussell Highway. Once in Bunbury, head to Koombana Bay where more often than not, wild dolphins can be seen playing in the ocean.

The Koombana Bay Foreshore features a brand-new playground that's perfect for the kids, while the **Dolphin Discovery Centre's** interpretive centre has giant aquariums and a touch pool.

Find top-notch eateries like **Market Eating House** and **Froth Craft Bunbury** along Victoria Street.

And don't forget to visit the IKEA of grocery shops – **Bunbury Farmers Market** – for a browse and to pick up some mouth-watering sweet treats (try the salted caramel cheesecake).

Set in front of a backdrop of rolling green hills dotted with black and white cows, the Ferguson Valley is an agricultural hinterland full of boutique wineries, art galleries and quirky attractions including Gnomesville – a village of miniature gnomes hidden between the trees.

Just 15 minutes from Bunbury, Ferguson Valley also offers a smaller, more condensed wine tour option than its Margaret River counterpart. Stop by **Green Door Wines** for Spanish-style food and wine tastings, and **Saint Aidan Wines** for sweeping bush views and a hearty lunch.

Travellers can then head down Pile Road, which eventually passes through Wellington National Park. An adventure lover's paradise, Wellington National Park features some of the best walking and mountain biking trails in Australia.

We suggest the Mount Lennard Trails, the Wellington Dam Loop and the Arklow Trail Network (which includes around 36km of mountain biking trails). Bikes can be hired from **Crank'n Cycles** or the Wellington Dam Kiosk.

Don't forget to check out **Adventure Connections** or **Forest Explorers** for extraordinary tours on foot or pedal.

Visitors will also stumble upon the world's biggest dam mural, painted by artist Guido can Helton, at Wellington Dam. It joins 39 other murals in and around Collie that form the Collie Mural Trail.

Black Diamond Lake, a former coal mine-turned-turquoise blue lake, is located just 5km west of Collie, and is a great place for a picnic, swim, walk or Instagram photoshoot.

Stockton Lake, 8km east of Collie on Piavanini Road, features the same turquoise blue waters, as well as waterside camping sites.

Outdoor adventure shouldn't be reserved to an hour or two a day – we recommend at least half a day to experience each of the towns covered in the last leg of this journey.



Wild bottlenose dolphin, Bunbury

MUST-DOS

Zipline through towering Tuart trees on **Forest Adventures'** high ropes adventure course.

Join **Dolphin Discovery Centre** out on Koombana Bay and get the chance to swim with wild dolphins in their natural environment (swim tours run from November through to April).

MUST-STAYS

Just 20 minutes from Bunbury, **Evedon Lakeside Retreat** features self-serviced cabins and apartments overlooking an idyllic lake.

Soak up the peace, beauty and tranquility of the Ferguson Valley's native forest from the balcony of one of four private studios at adults-only bed and breakfast, **Peppermint Lane Lodge**.

Discovery Parks Koombana Foreshore is a great option for families, thanks to its kid-friendly facilities that include a bike track, pool, splash pad and more