

8 Days: Great Ocean Road Circuit

Melbourne – Lorne – Johanna – Port Fairy –
The Grampians – Sovereign Hill – Daylesford – Melbourne

TWELVE APOSTLES,
VICTORIA

Embark on an unforgettable journey from Melbourne / Narm, along Victoria's stunning Great Ocean Road, through charming coastal towns, and into the heart of regional Victoria. This itinerary guides you from iconic sights like the Twelve Apostles and the tranquil beaches of Johanna to cultural experiences at Tower Hill and Budj Bim Cultural Landscape Tourism and the historic Goldfields at Sovereign Hill.

Savour regional delights in the Macedon Ranges and unwind in luxurious stays at Lake House, Daylesford, and Drift House, Port Fairy. An optional extension into the King Valley and Rutherglen offers immersive winery experiences, making this the ultimate Victorian adventure.

The Journey

Duration
8 days

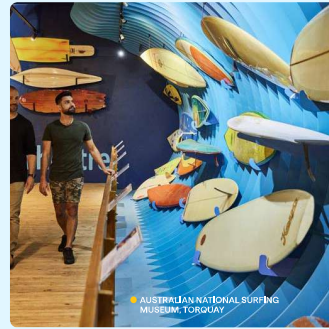
Nearest major city
Melbourne / Narm

Transport
On Foot, Car



Aussie Specialist
Program

Signature
EXPERIENCES OF AUSTRALIA



Day 1

Start your journey along the Great Ocean Road with a drive from Melbourne to Lorne.

At Torquay, Australia's surfing capital, explore the fascinating **Australian National Surfing Museum** and dive into the history of surfing culture. Then, head to Bells Beach, one of the world's top surfing destinations known for its powerful surf.

Stop by the **Great Ocean Road Chocolaterie & Ice Creamery** to enjoy hand-crafted chocolates and refreshing ice creams. Arrive in Lorne by late afternoon and unwind with a leisurely stroll along the foreshore.

For dinner, the **Lorne Hotel Bistro** offers fresh seafood and ocean views. Spend the night at the **Mantra Lorne**, or one of the town's other excellent accommodations.

Highlights

- Dive into the history and culture of surfing at the fascinating Australian National Surfing Museum.
- Watch skilled surfers tackle impressive waves at Bells Beach.
- Indulge in delicious, hand-crafted chocolates and ice creams.



Day 2

Begin with breakfast at the charming **Swinging Bridge Café**, then head to Erskine Falls, where water cascades into a lush, fern-lined gully. Continue to Sheoak Falls before visiting the Kennett River Koala Walk, a fantastic spot to see koalas in the wild.

Pass through Apollo Bay, then make a detour to Cape Otway for sweeping views and a break at the **Cape Otway Lightstation**.

End your day with a sunset at Johanna Beach, then unwind overnight in Johanna, where farm stays and cottages offer peaceful, scenic retreats.

Highlights

- Explore the beautiful Erskine Falls, surrounded by lush rainforest.
- Take a unique opportunity to see koalas in their natural habitat at Kennett River.
- Discover the historic Cape Otway Lightstation with sweeping ocean views.

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THE RAZORBACK, GREAT OCEAN ROAD

Day 3

Start with a visit to the iconic **Twelve Apostles**, where towering limestone stacks rise dramatically from the ocean, creating one of the most awe-inspiring sights along the Great Ocean Road. Stop off at other historic sites, including **The Razorback**, **Loch Ard Gorge**, **London Bridge** and **Sparks Gully**.

Take a lunch break in Port Campbell, then head inland to Timboon, where foodies can enjoy creamy treats at **Timboon Fine Ice Cream** and sample whisky at the **Timboon Railway Shed Distillery**.

Arrive in Port Fairy by evening and settle in at the stylish, boutique hotel **Drift House**. For dinner, don't miss **Coffin Sally**, a cozy pizzeria offering delicious wood-fired pizzas.

Highlights

- Witness the breathtaking Twelve Apostles and other dramatic coastal formations along the Great Ocean Road.
- Savour local flavours in Timboon, including creamy ice cream and a whisky tasting.

Day 4

Take a serene morning walk to the **Port Fairy Lighthouse** on **Griffiths Island**, where you can enjoy coastal views and spot local wildlife. Follow up with a cozy brunch at one of Port Fairy's inviting cafés.

In the afternoon, join the 2-hour **Indigenous Culture and Nature Tour** with **Worn Gundidj @ Tower Hill**. Led by Indigenous guides, this tour offers a unique chance to explore the natural habitat of iconic Australian animals like koalas, emus, and kangaroos. You'll also learn about traditional Aboriginal practices, including identifying native plants for food and medicine.

For dinner, head back to **Drift House** and enjoy a meal in their dining room, offering Spanish-inspired modern Australian dining.



WORN GUNDIDJ @ TOWER HILL,
WARRNAMBOOL

Highlights

- Take a scenic coastal stroll to spot native wildlife.
- Explore Aboriginal culture and Australia's unique wildlife with Worn Gundidj @ Tower Hill.

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BUDJ BIM CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
TOURISM, MACARTHUR

Day 5

Start with a **Tae Rak (Lake Condah) Guided Cultural Walk** at **Budj Bim Cultural Landscape Tourism**, exploring ancient volcanic landscapes and gaining insights into the Gunditjmara people's unique aquaculture systems. Take a rare look at the traditional lifestyle and deep connection to the land that has sustained the Gunditjmara people for thousands of years.

Next, head to **Dunkeld**, stopping for lunch at the historic **Royal Mail Hotel**, once a vital link for the Cobb & Co Royal Mail Service. Continue to the **Grampians**, a stunning mountain range with dramatic sandstone peaks, panoramic lookouts like **Boroka** and **Reed**, and the impressive **MacKenzie Falls**. Spend the afternoon exploring and spotting native wildlife before settling in for an overnight stay at a local lodge or eco-cabin.

Highlights

- Discover the ancient landscapes and aquaculture systems of the Gunditjmara people.
- Enjoy a meal at the storied Royal Mail Hotel in Dunkeld.
- Experience the breathtaking beauty of the rugged Grampians.



SOVEREIGN HILL, BALLARAT

Day 6

Depart early for **Sovereign Hill** to fully enjoy your **24 Hours at Sovereign Hill** experience, immersing yourself in the sights and sounds of the 1850s Goldfields.

Begin with an underground mine tour, where you'll learn about life beneath the surface during the Gold Rush. Take a ride on a horse-drawn coach through the lively streets, and don't miss the exclusive, hands-on, sweet-making session that gives you a taste of the past. In the afternoon, savour a **Devonshire Tea** at the historic **New York Bakery**, soaking up the vintage atmosphere.

In the evening, retire to a **luxurious Governor's Room**, just steps away from the bustling Goldfields.

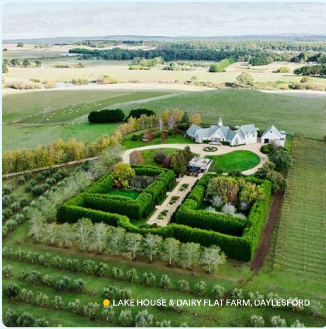
Highlights

- Discover life beneath the surface during the Gold Rush on an immersive mine tour.
- Enjoy a classic coach ride and experience a hands-on sweet-making session.
- Bed down in a Governor's Room situated amidst the Goldfields.

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Day 7

Depart Sovereign Hill and make your way to Ballarat and enjoy breakfast at one of the city's inviting cafés. Visit the **Art Gallery of Ballarat**, Australia's oldest and largest regional gallery, then take a leisurely stroll through the Ballarat Botanic Gardens.

Continue to Daylesford and check in at the luxurious **Lake House & Dairy Flat Farm**, a stunning lakeside retreat. Enjoy a relaxing walk around Lake Daylesford to take in the peaceful surroundings.

For dinner, indulge in a gourmet meal at the two-hatted **Lake House Restaurant**, regarded as one of the best restaurants in Australia.

Highlights

- Explore Australia's oldest and largest regional gallery, showcasing an impressive art collection.
- Indulge in a gourmet dinner at the two-hatted Lake House Restaurant.

Day 8

Start your day with a relaxing walk through the beautiful Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, then enjoy a coffee at the charming **Wombat Hill House Café**.

Return to Melbourne via the Macedon Ranges, known for its vibrant culinary scene and fresh, local produce. Towns like Woodend, Mount Macedon, and Trentham offer farm-to-table dining, boutique food stores, and artisanal treats.

Don't miss regionally inspired ice cream at Corner Store Merchants in Woodend.

Highlights

- Enjoy a delightful breakfast in the peaceful setting of Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens.
- Discover the Macedon Ranges' vibrant food culture with stops in charming towns.

Trip extension recommendation: King Valley, Mildura and Rutherglen regions.

Journey through the King Valley and Rutherglen wine regions, where wineries like **Stanton & Killeen**, **Brown Brothers**, and **Pizzini Wines** offer immersive experiences beyond the cellar door, with warm hospitality and stunning vineyard views.

