

Western Australia

The Big picture



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The Real Thing

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The Big picture

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Dolphin Bay, Esperance



In an ideal world, every country would have more than enough space for its people, and then some. The skies would be perpetually blue, with only enough rain to sustain life but not a bad mood.

And everyone would have easy access to unspoilt beaches where they could swim, fish, play, relax and wash away any stresses of the day. Unfortunately, we can't all live in an ideal world. But Western Australians would love you to come and visit it.

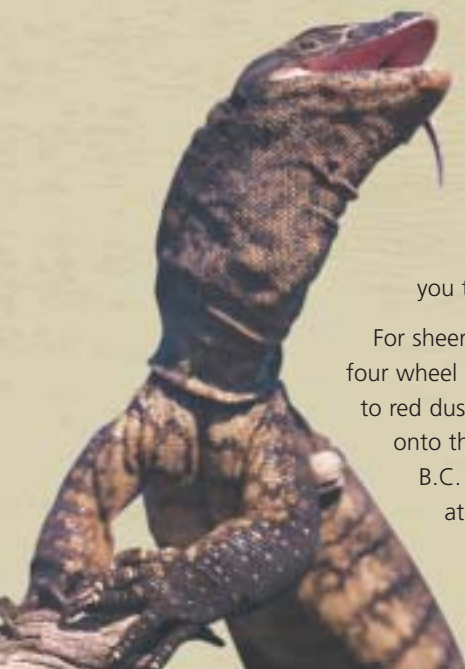
For sheer adventure commandeer a four wheel drive. As bitumen gives way to red dust, you'll think you've stumbled onto the set of One Million Years B.C. As if to confirm it, the gorges at Karijini National Park seem to peer right into the belly of

the Earth. Ancient Aboriginal rock art reminds you that everyone else here is a relative newcomer. And not even Raquel Welch in a fur bikini can compete with the thrill of swimming alongside an 18 metre long whale shark.

When you do stumble upon civilisation, you'll find it's extremely civilised. There are some very talented winemakers in the South West corner producing world-class wines (maybe that's why most of the population is clustered down there?). WA's splendid isolation has resulted in a vibrant, original music and arts scene - and locals that welcome visitors with open arms.



Picnic among the wildflowers



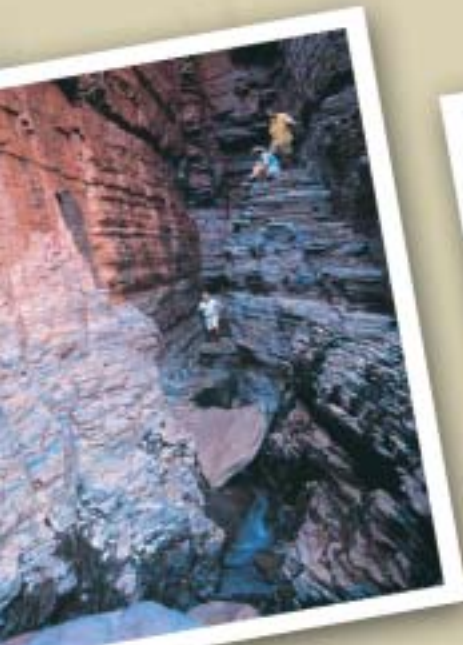


Sailing on the Swan River

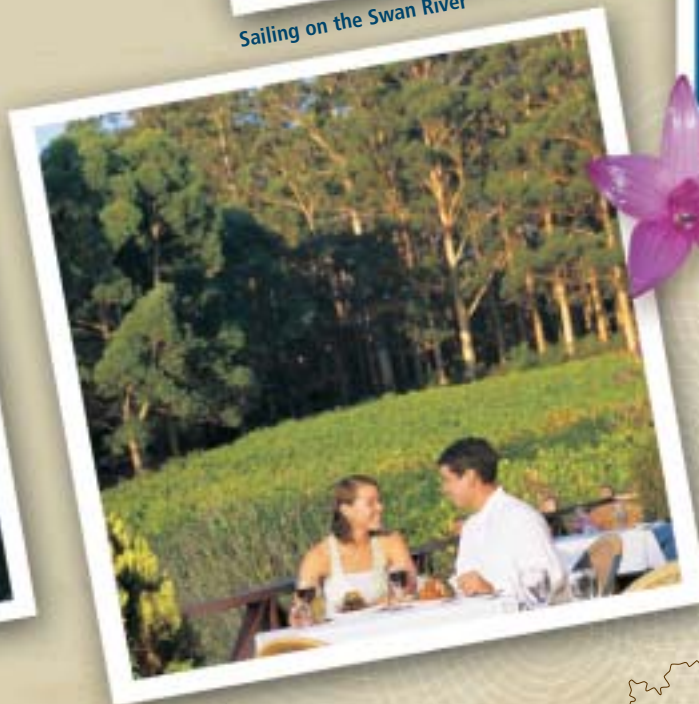
as bitumen
gives way to
red dust...



swimming alongside an
18 metre long whale shark



Exploring Karijini National Park



Alfresco dining

when you do stumble upon
civilisation you'll find it's
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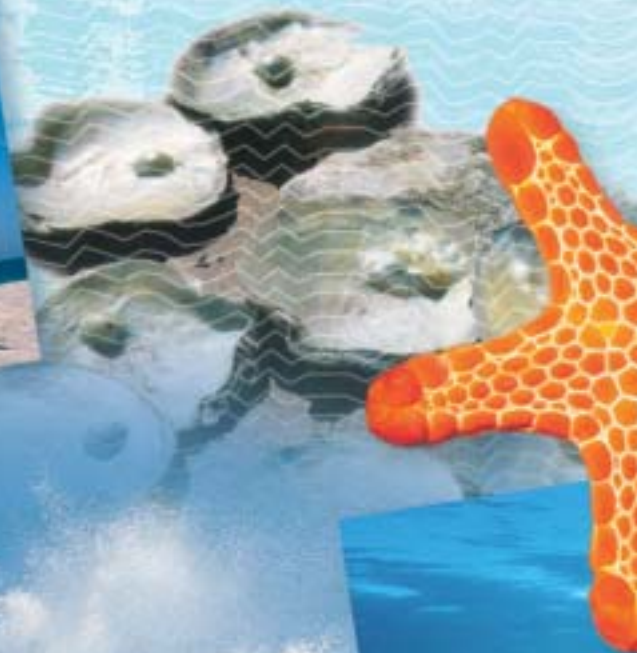
Western Australia, Australia's largest
State is 2,525,500 sq km, about the
same size as Western Europe.



Life's a BEACH

It is absolutely criminal to visit Western Australia and not indulge in some sort of activity in, on or around the water.

Beach volleyball





Snorkelling



Underwater diving

Sunset fishing



To conclusively prove you look nothing like a beached whale, head north to Ningaloo Reef. After swimming alongside mighty, 18 metre long whale sharks and the magnificent flying-carpet-like manta rays, you'll feel like a minnow. Luckily whale sharks prefer plankton.

This area is teeming with so much marine life, including whales, dolphins, turtles, dugongs and Nemos by the thousand, that your holiday videos will look like Jacques Cousteau documentaries.

But if it's more of a Baywatch moment you're after, hit Perth's metropolitan beaches. Each has its own vibe and personality (Cottesloe and Scarborough

have the highest Pamela Anderson count). Whether it's a surf beach, nude beach or dog beach, all are pristine, with plenty of space to spread out and relax.

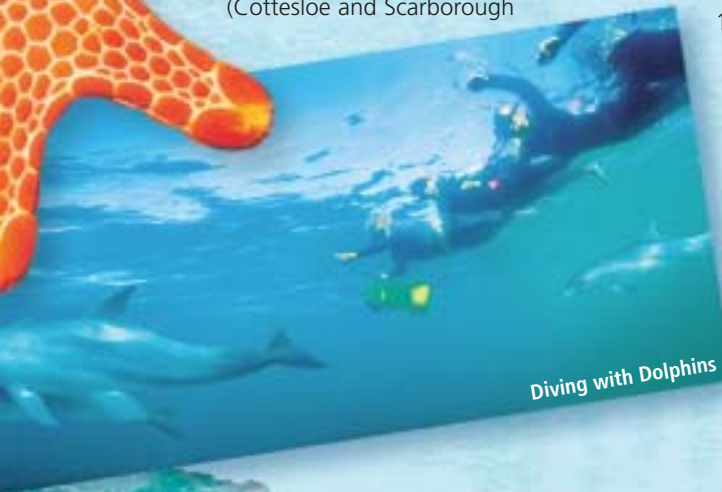
Most summer afternoons, Perth is visited by the 'Fremantle Doctor' – a deliciously refreshing onshore sea breeze. Why is it called the Doctor? Maybe because it makes everyone chill out, and leads to an epidemic of windsurfing, kite surfing, wave jumping, hang gliding and sailing?

You could sail all the way to Rottnest Island (and thousands swim the 19 kilometres there in the annual Rotto Swim) but it's easier to grab a ferry. This rustic holiday island, with its intimate coves and no cars policy, holds a sentimental place in every West Aussie's heart. It's where half the

populace met their first love, and the other half was conceived.

Further afield, more beaches abound. The title of longest beach (and beautiful sunsets) has to go to the 22 kilometre long Cable Beach in Broome. For world-class surf, visit Margaret River in Australia's South West. Make sure you wear sunglasses on Esperance's beaches - the sand is unbelievably white and the water crystal clear. And for the downright unusual, visit Shark Bay World Heritage Area's Shell Beach along Australia's Coral Coast, which is covered in millions of tiny white shells instead of sand. As for WA's best beach? We'll let you be the judge of that.

As the sun goes down, every WA beach turns into a seafood restaurant - the only proviso being you have to catch and cook your own dinner. Don't think of it as 12,500 kilometres of coastline, but rather, one giant seafood platter.



Diving with Dolphins



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Panning for gold

Camel riding at Cable Beach



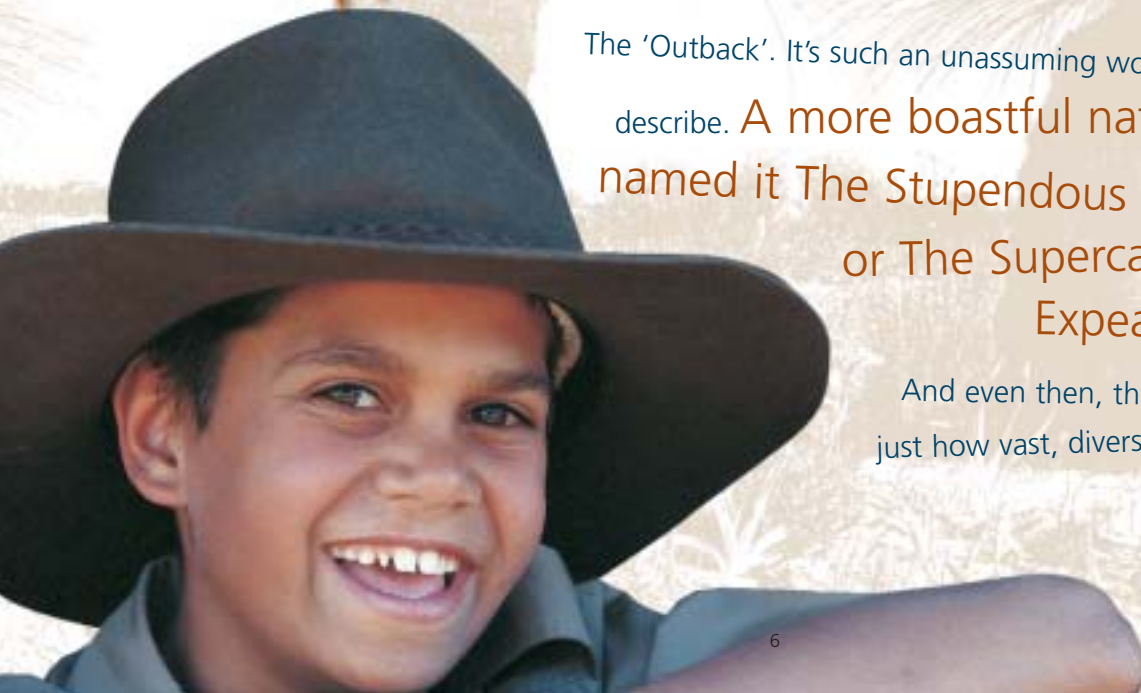
Mitchell Falls, Mitchell River National Park



Take an inner journey in the Outback

The 'Outback'. It's such an unassuming word for what it's trying to describe. A more boastful nation would have named it The Stupendous Red Wilderness or The Supercalafragalistic Expealidocious Interior.

And even then, they'd be failing to convey just how vast, diverse and moving this landscape is.



Cooling off in Karijini National Park



Bungle Bungle Purnululu National Park



Antony Gormley's sculptures, Lake Ballard

To really appreciate its scale, hire a four wheel drive. You'll be clocking up some serious kilometres, but that's part of the outback's hypnotic charm.

Karijini National Park near Tom Price, is a must see. Here, the red earth suddenly opens up to reveal dramatic gorges, secret canyons and enticing rock pools. Each striation in the rock hints at the Earth's history. For the indigenous people of the area's version of events, stop by the Interpretative Centre as you enter the park.

As you explore this untouched wilderness, it's easy to believe you are one of the few people on Earth to have visited the area. That is, until you stumble across ancient rock art. The Bradshaw paintings near the Gibb River Road are so old, it is thought they date back to the last ice age. And given the amount of rock engravings that adorn The Burrup Peninsula (10,000 plus and counting), the area must have been downtown Bedrock in a past life.

But the prize for oldest artwork of all goes to the Bungle Bungle Range in the World Heritage listed Purnululu National Park. Mother Nature spent 20 million years eroding these huge orange and black 'beehives' into a state of perfection. (And she's not about to let Father Nature forget it!)

The Bungles reveal another angle to their beauty from the air. Also worth seeing from the air is Wolfe Creek Crater. There was no Hollywood hero to stop this meteor hitting earth, and the result is a massive impact zone 850 metres in diameter.

If you prefer your croc with Krug and barrumundi with Bolly, a luxury cruise is a great way to explore the Kimberley coast, rivers and gorges. Make sure you include the Buccaneer Archipelago on your itinerary. The fishing is amazing, and the Horizontal Waterfall makes for good Down Under jokes.

Closer to Perth you can explore lunar-like landscapes at The Pinnacles, be swept away by the uniqueness of Wave Rock, and peek into our pioneering past and mining present in the historic town of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Exploring the State's interior is easy. There are a number of driving tracks and trails that take you through gold rush towns, ghost towns, farming regions, wildflower areas and national parks. Or this being Western Australia, you can follow in no one's footsteps and blaze your own trail.

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A good drop

If you regularly conduct your own "research" into the benefits of wine, you'll know the Margaret River Wine region has truly restorative powers.



Hikers in Warren National Park

The latest medical findings suggest a glass of red wine a day can decrease your chance of a heart attack. For purely medicinal purposes, we suggest you visit at least one of WA's renowned wine regions.

Heart in need of urgent attention? The Swan Valley is just 25 minutes from Perth. Some of the wineries back on to the Swan River, so why not take a boat cruise? It also allows you to Chardonnay, Shiraz and Sauvignon Blanc your way around without having to worry about WA's drink driving laws.

If you regularly conduct your own "research" into the benefits of wine, you'll know the Margaret River Wine region has truly restorative powers. The local winemakers are more than happy to show you how they transform humble grapes into nectar of the gods.

Fancy yourself as a bit of a cool customer? Then you'll love the Southern wine region. Nestled among the karri, marri and jarrah forests are some deliciously memorable cool-climate vineyards.

Once you've found your favourite drop, it's tempting to make a beeline for the nearest luxury retreat (after you've picked up a supply of local cheeses, chocolates and ice cream of course) and cocoon for the weekend. But do pull yourself away from the log fire; there are some amazing natural sights right on your doorstep.

With 75 top class surf breaks, the blue crush rivals the wine crush. Prefer a beach that doesn't double as a washing machine? Head to drop-dead gorgeous Meelup or Bunker Bay.

For a walk on the wild side, amble through the luminous grey karri trees of the Boranup Forest. And if you think you spot an elf in the undergrowth, wait until you visit Lake, Jewel or Mammoth Cave. With their chandeliers of stalagmites, they must be pixie palaces.



Outdoor indulgence



Dining in style

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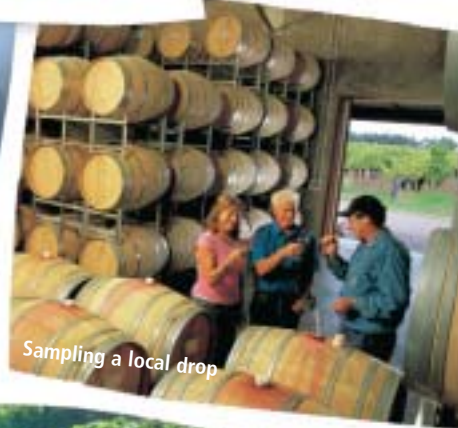


Taking it easy at dusk

By now you should have worked up an appetite. Forget about the Atkins, South Beach, Zone or whatever other diet you've been on. WA's wine regions are also home to some of our best restaurants. There is serious indulging to be done. And if you can't decide between the crème brûlée and sticky dessert wine, or the cheese platter and port, take both. After all that swimming, surfing, walking and exploring, you've earned it.



Autumn vines



Sampling a local drop



Tree Top Walk

Hiking the Bibbulmun Track



Hiking the Bibbulmun Track is also another great way to enjoy wildflowers in situ.

Be nurtured by nature

Do flowers have the power to lift your spirits, reduce anxiety and cure depression? Dr Edward Bach, creator of the Bach Flower Remedies, certainly thought so. And after a visit to Western Australia during wildflower season, we think you'll become a believer too.

From July to November, the State is awash with the colour of 12,000 species of wildflowers. The King's Park Wildflower Festival, held each September, is a great introduction to what grows where and why.

However for sheer jaw-dropping- isn't-nature-magnificent-let-me-

hug-a-tree-now impact, nothing beats sitting in the middle of a country field, surrounded by a colourful sea of gently swaying everlastings, featherheads or parakeelya. Make sure your camera has a macro zoom because up close these flowers are works of art.





Native grass trees

Flower Power

From July to November, the State is awash with the colour of 12,000 species of wildflowers.

Hiking the Bibbulmun Track is also another great way to enjoy wildflowers in situ. There are hikers' huts along the way if you want to camp overnight. But as the track spans 1,000 kilometres, no one will label you a quitter if you don't finish it.

Instead, grab a car or coach and rejoin the track in Pemberton as it winds its way through 300-year-old karri forests. For a truly natural

high try climbing the Gloucester Tree (61 metres) or Dave Evans Bicentennial Tree (75 metres) – both were fire lookouts in the 1940s. If you prefer to get your thrills at ground level, there are over 300 kilometres of freshwater streams for you to try your luck trout fishing in.

Further south in Walpole, the forests are also home to the grand daddy of them all, Red Tingle

trees, that are up to 450 years old and 24 metres in diameter. The Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk is the perfect way to get a dinosaur's eye view of this ancient landscape.

And if all that natural beauty makes you want to toast Mother Nature, the cool climate vineyards of Denmark and Mt Barker are just down the road.

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Shopping for a bargain

Just as with wine, climate and region
play a big part in determining
the character of people.
What other explanation can there
be for West Aussies' warm, friendly
and laid back approach to life?

...It must be all that sunshine.

No worries mate

Western Australians know they can make
plans to catch up for a round of golf,
see an outdoor movie, picnic by the
river, or bike through the hills and the
weather will be perfect.



Cappuccino strip, Fremantle



Family fun, Rottnest Island

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A real Australian shower



Sandboarding

Just as with wine, climate and region play a big part in determining the character of people. What other explanation can there be for West Aussies' warm, friendly and laid back approach to life? It must be all that sunshine.

Western Australians know they can make plans to catch up for a round of golf, see an outdoor movie, picnic by the river, or bike through the hills and the weather will be perfect. Local clouds are taught from birth not to rain on a beer garden while a Sunday Session is in full swing (for the

The only time that laid back attitude to life takes a back seat is during the winter football season. The passion and atmosphere within Subiaco Oval is contagious. You'll catch football fever as soon as the game starts.

The WA social calendar is as varied as the landscape. Culture vultures are well catered for with the annual Perth International Arts Festival, and regular performances by the WA Opera, Ballet and Symphony Orchestra.



Surfing at Margaret River

uninitiated, that's an afternoon of cold beer, hot bodies and pumping music) and when it does rain, it's hardly a wash out.

The highway between Perth and Fremantle abounds in art galleries, there are quirky shopping precincts throughout the city and suburbs, and you'll find hundreds of excellent restaurants whose wine lists can see you through the longest of lunches.



Getting away from it all

The most 'dahling' events of the year are the Leeuwin Estate Concert in Margaret River and the Perth Cup horse race on New Year's day. Other sporting highlights include the Hopman Cup tennis and the Margaret River Masters world surfing event. After all that, you won't have to visit the outback to feel bushed.

Five regions to explore. One holiday of a lifetime.

Experience Perth

The greater Perth region is like a microcosm of the whole State. The Swan Valley and Darling Range are dotted with superb vineyards, fantastic restaurants (including one with a Michelin star chef), and romantic boutique hotels and guesthouses.

There is plenty of coastline for extreme marine. You can swim with dolphins in Rockingham or fish for dinner at Rottne. Adrenalin junkies can windsurf, wave jump, and water-ski, while the couch potatoes unwrap their

fish and chips and watch the sunset over the Indian Ocean.

For virgin bush, Boab trees and the occasional bridal party, head to Kings Park – 400 hectares of park and bush land, devoted to WA flora, overlooking the city and Swan River. It is an unofficial law that you can't leave Perth without a photo of yourself standing among the park's lemon-scented gums, with the city skyline in the background.

For history head to New Norcia, Australia's only monastic town. But if you really want to get close to heaven, try ballooning or skydiving in the Avon Valley.

Hungry for nightlife? Northbridge, Leederville, Subiaco and Fremantle are full of bars and restaurants, pubs and clubs.

While you're there, you can also get your fill of culture. The Art Gallery of WA features a permanent collection of some of Australia's most famous artists. Their indigenous art collection in

particular, is one of the best in the world. Meanwhile, the household names of tomorrow are busy working away in their Fremantle studios today. With hippies, artists, fishermen and financiers all choosing to live side by side in Freo, they're never short of subject matter.

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Australia's Coral Coast

Ningaloo Reef is the crown that sits atop Australia's Coral Coast. Unlike some coral reefs, there's no great barrier to getting to it. You literally walk off the beach and swim onto the reef. Within seconds, you are surrounded by an entire underwater city populated with turtles, manta rays, whale sharks (late March to June) and a rainbow of fish. Pristine waters make visibility excellent, and WA's delicious weather means you hardly ever need a wetsuit.

The entire Coral Coast is like every great marine story brought to life. See Flipper at Monkey Mia in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area. Snorkel with every cast member from Finding Nemo on Ningaloo Reef. Learn about WA's own version of Mutiny on the Bounty that took place on the Abrolhos Islands. And spend an Endless Summer chasing waves and wind off Kalbarri or Geraldton.

Inland, the wildflowers rival the coral for colour. With over 12,000

species on show between July and November, flower power is alive and well in Western Australia.

For the ultimate rock show, stop by the Pinnacles near Cervantes. These limestone pillars will grab you with their rugged beauty.

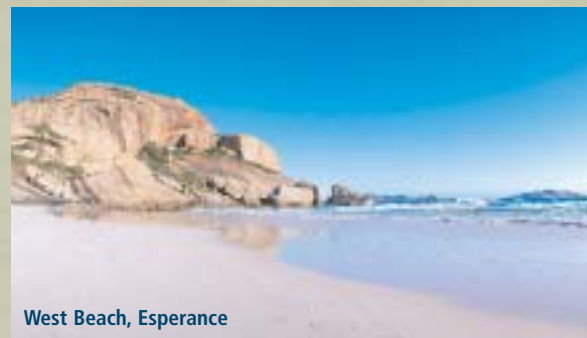
Australia's Golden Outback

For history, heritage and high adventure, head to the Gold Rush country of the 1890s. You can explore mines and museums, and pan for gold. If you don't strike gold, you'll always find the liquid variety in one of Kalgoorlie's historic pubs.

For an outsider's view of Australia, check out world-famous sculptor Antony Gormley's life size figures contemplating the salt flats of Lake Ballard. Mother Nature likes to decorate the outback with her own artwork too. During wildflower season, Australia's Golden Outback is covered in an artist's palette of colour.

And for brilliant white beaches, bush and bunking down under the stars, head south to Esperance – a place so laid back even the kangaroos sun bake on the beach.

The really Australian way to see the real outback is by four wheel drive. And if you want to meet some locals as well as wildlife, make sure you include a pub stay, farm stay or station stay along the way.



West Beach, Esperance

And for brilliant white beaches, bush and bunking down under the stars, head south to Esperance - a place so laid back even the kangaroos sun bake on the beach.



Monkey Mia Dolphin, Shark Bay World Heritage Area



*You think to
yourself, life
can't get any
better than this.
But it does.*

Australia's South West

Down here, life is a cabernet. The locally grown wines are amazing, the fresh produce prolific, and the chefs and winemakers who combine the two, are legends in anyone's lunchtime. You think to yourself, life can't get any better than this. But it does.

Because this gourmet's paradise is smack bang in the middle of a natural paradise. There are forests to explore and Bluff Knoll to climb. Wild surf beaches alternate with secluded bays. You can paddle

down peaceful rivers or search for whales at sea.

Needless to say, a place this beautiful attracts artists and craftsmen by the combi van full. Stop by the local galleries to admire their work.

And when it comes time to rest, accommodation ranges from rustic wood cabins in the middle of the forest, to 5 star resorts along millionaire's row. Like the wine, there's something to suit everyone's taste and budget.



Bluff Knoll, Stirling Range National Park



Five regions to explore. One holiday of a lifetime.

Australia's North West

Man has trod gently upon this part of Australia. The region is one vast wilderness area begging to be explored.

The Gibb River Road area is why four-wheel drives were invented. Open from May to October, this 600 kilometre red dirt track takes you through some of the most stunning scenery in Australia. The going can be tough, but you'll be rewarded with numerous gorges, ranges, lush waterholes and plentiful wildlife.

Twenty million years in the making, The Bungle Bungle Range manages to be both overwhelming in size and intricate in detail. The 'phwoar' factor continues everywhere you look in Purnululu and Karijini National Parks. Forget the stereotype of the Australian outback being an endless desert. These parks are packed full of dramatic gorges, spectacular waterfalls, amazing vegetation and secret rock pools.

The coastline is equally breathtaking. With 22 kilometres of white sand, kissed by warm,

Fishing on the beach, Dampier Peninsula



crystal waters, Cable Beach, Broome is justifiably world famous. To appreciate the drama of the tidal plains at Derby, take to the air. While the Horizontal Waterfall at Talbot Bay in the Buccaneer Archipelago has to be seen to be believed.

Whether you choose to travel by four wheel drive, charter plane or luxury cruiser, this ancient landscape will leave you feeling both inspired and humbled.

*The coastline is equally breathtaking.
With 22 kilometres of white sand, kissed
by warm, crystal waters, Cable Beach,
Broome is justifiably world famous.*



Western Australia - Fast Facts

- Western Australia, Australia's largest State is 2,525,500 sq km, about the same size as Western Europe.
- The population is around 2 million. About 1.5 million live in the capital city, Perth.
- Western Australia's climate is varied and ranges from arid tropical in Australia's North West region to cool temperate zones in the south. Perth enjoys a true Mediterranean climate with long hot summers (December - February) and mild cool winters (June - August).
- Perth has incredibly blue skies and more hours of sunshine than any other Australian capital city (around 8 hours a day).

Getting Here

- Western Australia is Australia's western gateway and a major hub for international air services from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the United Kingdom and Europe.
- Domestic airlines operate daily services to Western Australia from the eastern states. There are also regional services to many destinations within the State.

Getting Around

- Perth Airport is 20 kilometres east of the city. Taxis are available from both the domestic and international terminals. (20 to 30 minute journey)
- Perth and Fremantle are serviced by an efficient public transport system as well as a free shuttle service, the Central Area Transit (CAT).
- Fremantle is 20 kilometres from Perth or 20 minutes by taxi.
- Perth's beaches are some of the best in Australia, just 15-20 minutes by taxi from the city.
- The State's large size makes self-drive vehicles or flights a sensible way to get around.

Visas

All people, except Australian and New Zealand passport holders, require a visa to enter Australia. For information concerning different visas available, contact your Australian consulate in your home country.

Sun Smart Tips

The Western Australian sun is very strong. To avoid sunburn;

- Wear a hat, shirt, sunglasses and broad spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen, especially between 10am-3pm.

Driving

- Visitors to Western Australia may drive on a valid overseas driver's licence for the same class of vehicle.
- Vehicles travel on the left hand side of the road and the wearing of seat belts is compulsory for all passengers.
- Western Australia's paved roads are among the best in the world, however there are many gravel roads throughout the State, which pose challenges to drivers. The best way to drive safely is to drive more slowly.
- Visitors travelling in remote areas of Western Australia should take care, notify authorities and ensure they are prepared for all situations. Alternatively join a coach or escorted convoy tour.

**For more information
on Western Australia visit
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