

South Australia to Western Australia

Across the Nullarbor

Departs 24th July 2024

Blue Dot Travel





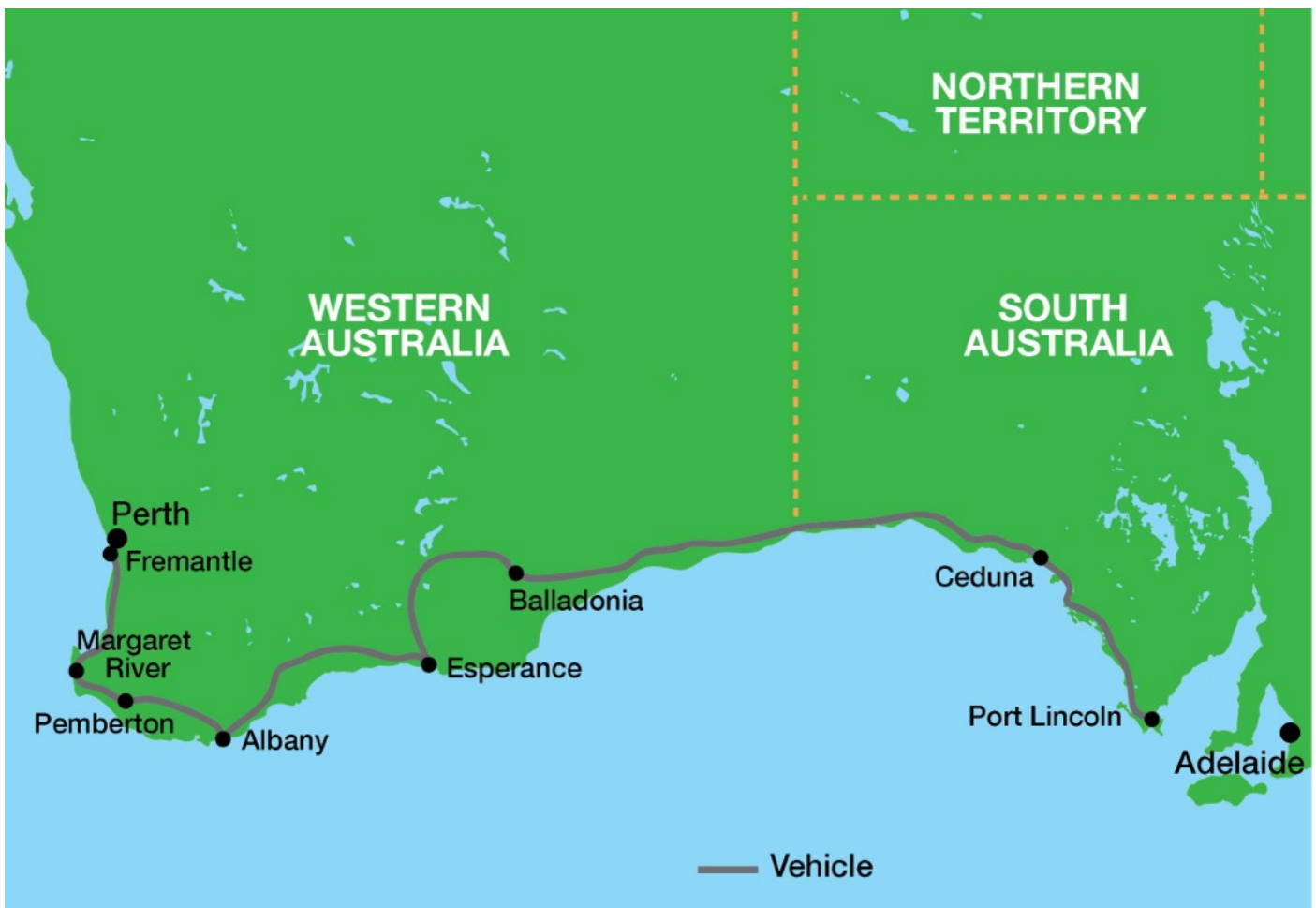
South Australia to Western Australia across the Nullarbor, Port Lincoln to Fremantle

Crossing the mighty Nullarbor is quite an experience. Vast, forbidding and raw, the land of 'no trees' is home to a plethora of limestone caves, soaring sea cliffs, and red sand desert... interspersed with indigenous and pioneering history.

The drive between Ceduna on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula and Norseman in Western Australia is around 13 hours, a distance of 1,200 kilometres, so we'll have a few stops along the way. We'll drive the world's longest straight bit of road, known as the 90 Mile Straight, 146.6 km between Caiguna and Balladonia. We are likely to meet a veritable host of characters. From the feral camels, kangaroos and wombats who call this desert home to the sunburnt holidaymakers, truckies, and adventure-seeking tourists on bikes, there'll be a smorgasbord of people watching on our journey. One thing is certain; we will surely be mesmerised by a thousand shimmering mirages. We'll also be able to watch whales and their calves frolic in the protected bays of the spectacular Great Australian Bight.

Once we reach the southern tip of Western Australia, the landscape changes. The Southwestern corner of Western Australia is a pocket of lush green forests, farmland, rivers and a rugged coastline contrasting the stark landscapes of the rest of the state. Fertile soils provide foodies with the best fresh produce and world-class wineries, while its waters are rich with marine life. A fascinating colonial history weaves its way through the charming towns along our route, and this part of the itinerary has several fabulous scenic drives.

Our tour ends in friendly Fremantle.



Day 1, Wednesday
24th July
ARRIVE PORT LINCOLN

Arrive Port Lincoln. For

Sydneysiders, the best option is Qantas flight QF731 departing at 6.40 am. Bill will collect you from the airport. We will head straight to the hotel to drop off your bags before heading to Port Lincoln National Park. For the next 2 nights, we will stay at the Port Lincoln Hotel overlooking Boston Bay. Port Lincoln and, more broadly, the Eyre Peninsula is Australia's seafood capital. Port Lincoln is renowned for its Southern Bluefin tuna, King George whiting, Spencer Gulf king prawns and Southern Rock lobsters. Port Lincoln is home to a very large tuna fishing fleet. We focus on eating seafood while we are on the Eyre. At Port Lincoln National Park, we will explore the vast dune system, rugged offshore islands and secluded white sandy beaches. The fit and willing can head off on a short hike to the top of the ridge for spectacular views of the coastline,


while the unwilling can wander the beach for an hour. Tonight we will have a welcome dinner at Sarrins, our hotel restaurant. Sarrins will feature local seafood (non-seafood options are available). *D*

Day 2, Thursday 25th July
EYRE PENINSULA

Awake, breakfasted and ready to explore at 8.30 am. Today we will take a drive along the Whalers Way Scenic Drive. Whalers Way is privately owned land on the tip of the Southern Eyre Peninsula, approximately 32 km from Port Lincoln, that offers some of the most spectacular, accessible and dramatic coastal views in the state. It is an explorer's wonderland of cliffs, blowholes, crevasses, caves and golden beaches. We will have a late lunch at The Seafood Factory, where you can select fresh local seafood (non-seafood options are also available). Later in the afternoon, we will drive to the main harbour to do a leisurely walk around the tuna fishing fleet (or you can have free time to wander the esplanade and town centre). Tonight we will reward ourselves with a special dinner at Peter Teakle Wines' Line and Label restaurant located at the

winery. The winery restaurant is an impressive lodge-style building with great views over the vines and surrounding districts. *B/L/D*



 **Day 3,
Friday 26th
July
CEDUNA**

Today we work our way up the west coast of the Eyre Peninsula, following the seafood trail to Ceduna. Along the way, we stop to take in spectacularly rugged coastal scenery and have a Coffin Bay cruise while sampling more seafood. Our first stop is Coffin Bay (contrary to some beliefs, Coffin Bay isn't named after anything to do with burying the dead. It is named after Resident Naval Commissioner Sir Isaac Coffin by Matthew Flinders in early 1802). Coffin Bay is a pretty coastal holiday area with beautiful bays and beaches. The highlight of Coffin Bay is the ruggedly spectacular Coffin Bay National Park and the spectacularly delicious Coffin Bay oysters. The oyster industry in South Australia was started not long after the colony was first established. Native Angasi oysters were wild-harvested and taken to Adelaide for sale. Overfishing caused the decline in catches and the cessation of the industry by the late 1800s. In the late 60s, Japanese Pacific Oysters were introduced, and the industry was rekindled. This morning we are joining Experience Coffin Bay Tours for their 10 am trip to the oyster farms on the water. Dress warmly; this tour is 3.5 hours. The tour is chilled and relaxed. You will experience all the beauty of the pure and pristine coastline, spot seals at "The Brothers" islands and enjoy the dolphins if they appear along the way. The Coffin Bay National Park surrounds the bay and farming land on the other. We'll motor out approximately 16km to the oyster leases to learn about farming the oysters and try our hand at harvesting fresh ones to open and enjoy. Can't get any fresher than that. If you want to immerse yourself in the experience, there is an option to walk around in the water in waders (waders are provided, but bring a towel). The waders have in-built boots, so wear a pair of warm socks. If you are still hungry after the oysters, we will

stop briefly at a cafe (own expense). After the boat tour, we drive up the rugged west coast. The scenery along this section of the Eyre Peninsula is rugged and spectacular. We'll stop at places like Cummins Lookout for amazing photo opportunities and see if the endangered osprey is nesting on the jagged top of the coastal cliffs. Like many stretches of the Eyre Peninsula coastline, this is a significant breeding habitat for raptors such as the southern osprey, white-bellied sea eagle and peregrine falcon. We will also stop at Lock's Well Beach, which reveals yet more dramatic coastline of the Eyre Peninsula, and Streaky Bay. Accommodation and dinner at the Ceduna



Foreshore Hotel (or similar). *B/D*

**Day 4, Saturday 27th July
THE NULLARBOR**

Ceduna to Nullarbor Roadhouse is approximately 300kms with an extra 80kms to Fowlers Bay & return to Highway. This morning we travel the short distance to Fowlers Bay for our 10 am whale-watching cruise. Southern Right Whales visit the upper reaches of the Great Australian Bight each year to give birth, mate and socialise.

They arrive in May and depart around October. They spend the rest of the time travelling to or feeding well offshore in the Southern



Ocean. Most of the whales you will see in June and July are adults. You may be lucky enough to observe these 70-tonne mammals mating (look for groups rolling around on the surface). By late August, you can commonly see the mothers swimming along the cliffs with their young calves at their side. There are often 70 or more whales in the area. By the time the whales leave in October, the calves have grown and have become strong enough to join their mothers on the long migration south. Our cruise will take in the rugged cliffs and magnificent little coves of Point Fowler. You're likely to see playful interactions with the Australian Sea Lions. Fowlers Bay is home to an abundance of endangered, vulnerable and protected species of marine mammals and oceanic bird life, including Southern Right

Whales, Humpback Whales, Common Dolphins, Bottlenose Dolphins, Australian Sea Lions, New Zealand Fur Seals, Little Penguins, Albatross, White Bellied Sea Eagles. In this interactive and informative cruise, you'll (expectedly, hopefully) see pods of whales, discover the fascinating yet brutal history of Fowlers Bay, learn about Whale Baleen Plate, hold some very rare Ambergris and listen to real-time underwater acoustics. Lunch at Fowlers Bay, and in the afternoon if we have been unlucky spotting whales or want to see more, we will head further west along the coast to the Head of Bight whale observation deck. After the cruise and cafe lunch (own expense), and only if the weather is fine, we will make a short detour to Lake Macdonnell. The lake is famous for its half-pink half green water. High in salt concentration, the lake gives the impression of a salmon-pink lake on clear days (if the weather is overcast, the colour does not stand out, making it a wasted trip). One side of the causeway is Pink Lake, the other is Green Lake, and Blue Lake is further down over the small bridge. The Pink Lake is caused by salt loving algae and halobacteria that secrete carotenoid red pigments, which turn the water bright pink.



These unique waters are why the Lake is also known as Watermelon Avenue. After lunch, we will head to the Head

of Bight whale watching centre near Yalata. Located near the Nullarbor Plain on the Far West Coast of South Australia, the Head of Bight Whale Watching Centre is one of Australia's most spectacular whale-watching sites. The Head of the Bight Interpretive Centre has an information centre, boardwalk and viewing platform. We end the day at Nullarbor Roadhouse Motel. *B/D*

Day 5, Sunday 28th July THE NULLARBOR

Nullarbor to Balladonia Roadhouse is approx 700km. Today is a long drive but it will go quickly as there are no towns to go through and nice straight roads - in fact it is the longest

straight road in Australia (146.6km)- nothing to slow you down. We will have a few great distractions, including a scenic flight over the Bunda Cliffs with some aerial whale spotting over the Head of Bight. Heading towards the WA border, the road travels close to the dramatic cliffs of the Great Australian Bight a few times, so we will make a couple of stops to take in the spectacular views. Lunch is at Eucla on the SA - WA border, where we take a short break to explore the old Eucla telegraph station. We continue along the Nullarbor, passing classic Australian roadhouses that service these remote regions while watching the landscape and vegetation slowly change. We will overnight at one of these roadhouses, most likely Balladonia but depending on availability (they can book out in one go if a long-distance bus is scheduled). For those old enough to remember Skylab falling to earth in outback Australia, it was near Balladonia, and there is a curious exhibition at the Roadhouse Museum. *B/D*



Day 6, Monday 29th July ESPERANCE

Balladonia to Esperance is approx 391 km. For something different, we can play a hole or two of golf on the Nullarbor Links, the world's longest golf course. Nullarbor Links is an 18-hole par 72 golf course spanning 1,365km with one hole in each participating town from Ceduna in SA to Kalgoorlie in WA. Each hole has a synthetic green but a somewhat outback rugged fairway. As we drive closer to the western end of the Nullarbor, we come to Western Australia's Great Western Woodland. This woodland is special as it's the largest and healthiest temperate woodland on earth. We are heading to Esperance on the south coast of WA, famous for stunning white beaches, turquoise waters and clear blue skies, for a two-night stay. In the afternoon, we will stroll along some coastal walks against the stunning backdrop of the Recherche Archipelago before driving along the spectacular Great Ocean Drive stopping at the many vantage points. Dinner is at 33 Degrees. Accommodation at Island View apartments (or similar). *B/D*

Day 7, Tuesday 30th July

ESPERANCE

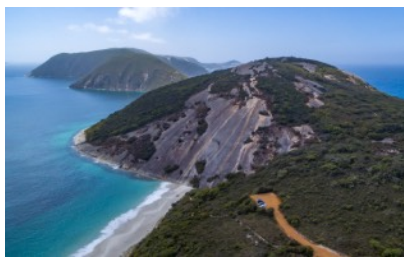
The stunning white sand contrasted against the clear turquoise waters are what will stay in your memory of the Esperance region. To get up close to this stunning landscape, we will take a 3½ hour scenic wildlife cruise through the various islands of the Recherche Archipelago (105 islands). Regular wildlife sightings on the cruise include NZ Fur Seals, Australian Sea Lions, Cape Barren Geese, Common and Bottle Nose Dolphins, White-bellied Sea Eagles and whales. The rest of the day is at your leisure to rest or explore Esperance. If you want something more active, we can do some short walks in the nearby nature reserves and national parks (there is also a replica of Stonehenge - an interesting story). Dinner is at Fish Face. Accommodation at Island View apartments (or similar). *B/D*



Day 8, Wednesday 31st July

ALBANY

Esperance to Albany approx 500kms. Drive to Albany, a historic port and whaling town, for another two-night stay. On the way



we visit Fitzgerald River National Park, which is within the Fitzgerald Biosphere, globally

significant as a biodiversity hotspot (i.e., it is one of the most biologically diverse places on the planet). The scenery on the drive the Fitzgerald River National Park is stunning. We will drive into Cave Point for dramatic views and take the short easy walk to the cliffs at the Point. We will also call in at Barrens Lookout, closer to the Park's entrance, with different yet dramatic views. The stunning walk here is less than 200m long. Dinner at the Earl of Spencer or similar and stay at the Spencer Suites (or similar). *B/L/D*

Day 9, Thursday 1st August

ALBANY

We explore two prominent aspects of Australian history, whaling and the ANZAC legend. First, we visit the Albany Whaling

Station Museum, which in 1978 was the last Australian whaling station to close. When the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company closed in 1978,



they put down their tools and walked away, which makes today's experience so authentic. Also left behind at the whaling station was an operating whaling boat which you can explore. En route to the whaling station, we will stop at the remarkable Gap and Natural Bridge. These are two natural features carved from granite by the forces of the ocean. The award-winning National ANZAC Centre on Albany's Mt Clarence with views to King George Sound from where WW1 troop ships sailed. The centre is quite poignant, and it will take you a couple of hours to wander around and take in the exhibits and the view. Before we enter the exhibition centre, we will have a large lunch at the garrison cafe and restaurant at the National ANZAC Centre. After the ANZAC centre, enjoy some free time to wander the interesting main streets of Albany and find yourself some supper. *B/L*



Day 10, Friday 2nd August

PEMBERTON

A scenic drive through sections of WA's towering Karri forests around Denmark and Walpole. Albany to Pemberton is approx 300kms, including the Mt Shadforth Scenic Drive We will stop for a wine and cheese tasting at Duckett's Mill Wines and Denmark Farmhouse

Cheese. Our last destination is Singlefile Winery, where we have a wine tasting and picnic lunch. After



lunch a little exercise at the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk where we experience the majestic height of these trees from above their canopy. Following our tree top walk, there will be more scenic drives and a stop at the giant Tingle tree (in November 2022, a controlled burn got out of hand and areas near the Tingle tree were badly burnt - we'll get an update

closer to the tour date to check whether it is still good to go). Tingle trees are a species unique to the Walpole area. After, we'll continue through more National Park forests to Pemberton, formally a timber-producing town and now a charming heritage village. We will eat and stay at the Pemberton Best Western Hotel. **B/L/D**



Day 11, Saturday 3rd August MARGARET RIVER

Pemberton to Augusta's Point Leeuwin lighthouse approx 150kms. Then approx 50kms to Margaret River from Augusta. First off, we visit the Gloucester Tree, a 58-metre-high karri. Once used as a fire lookout tree, you can still climb to the top via iron pegs hammered into the tree trunk (not for the faint-hearted). Back on the ground, we take a short Karri forest walk.



It is only a short drive to our next activity. We take a scenic cruise down the Donnelly River through the pristine

wilderness of D'Entrecasteaux National Park to a wild isolated beach on the Southern Ocean. Following the cruise, we set off for Margaret River for a two-night stay. On the way, we detour to Augusta and the Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse on the most south-westerly point of Australia. A lighthouse tour is a must, including climbing to the top, where you get a great view of the Indian and Southern oceans (the two oceans meet at Cape Leeuwin). We will eat at a local restaurant and stay at Margaret's in Town (or similar). **B/L/D**

Day 12, Sunday 4th August MARGARET RIVER

Staying in the heart of a celebrated wine region, we take the opportunity to sample wines and lunch at one of Margaret River's premier wine estates. We will have an in-depth tour, tasting and long lunch at Voyager Estate). Voyager Estate is one of Australia's most innovative certified organic producers of world-class Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. The building and landscaping are in a Dutch

colonial theme (the wine region is not old like the Barossa; early wine-making started in the 60s and 70s). The tour and lunch is



expected to go on for most of the day. We will return to Margaret River for some free time and to source your own supper if you are still hungry. Accommodation at Margaret's in town. **B/L**

Day 13, Monday 5th August FREMANTLE

Today, we set off to Fremantle, the last leg of our journey (approx 300 km).

On the way, we'll see the famous Busselton Jetty, the longest timber-piled jetty in the Southern Hemisphere. From here, we travel through the largest remaining forest of Tuart trees, another tree species found only in Western Australia. Our destination is in the heart of historic Fremantle, and in the evening, we celebrate our journey's end at a special farewell dinner. Stay at Hougomont Boutique Hotel (or similar) and dine at Emily Taylor. **B/L**

Day 14, Tuesday 6th August DEPARTURE

This brings to an end our epic SA to WA tour. Bill will drop you at the airport after breakfast at 10am. **B**

Note. The accommodation on this tour will offer the best level of comfort available. We stay at roadhouses when crossing the Nullarbor as this is the only accommodation available. You will have an ensuite bathroom at every stay.

You may consider extending your stay in Fremantle. As our hotel is in the heart of Fremantle, you are within walking distance of many Fremantle attractions, allowing you to soak up the atmosphere at your leisure. Within walking distance is the Port of Fremantle, with regular ferry services to Rottnest Island. The new airport train has opened, and it is easy to travel to Perth Airport; the maximum fare is only \$5. Walk to Fremantle Station and catch a Perth-bound train. At Claremont Station (several stations before Perth), change trains to the Airport Train that departs regularly from the same platform. If your flight leaves from terminals T1 or T2, alight at Airport Central Station, which is practically beneath the terminals. If your flight leaves from T3 or T4, alight at Redcliffe Station and hop on the bus to the terminals.



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.