

Western Australia to South Australia

Across the Nullarbor

Departs 8th August 2024

Blue Dot Travel





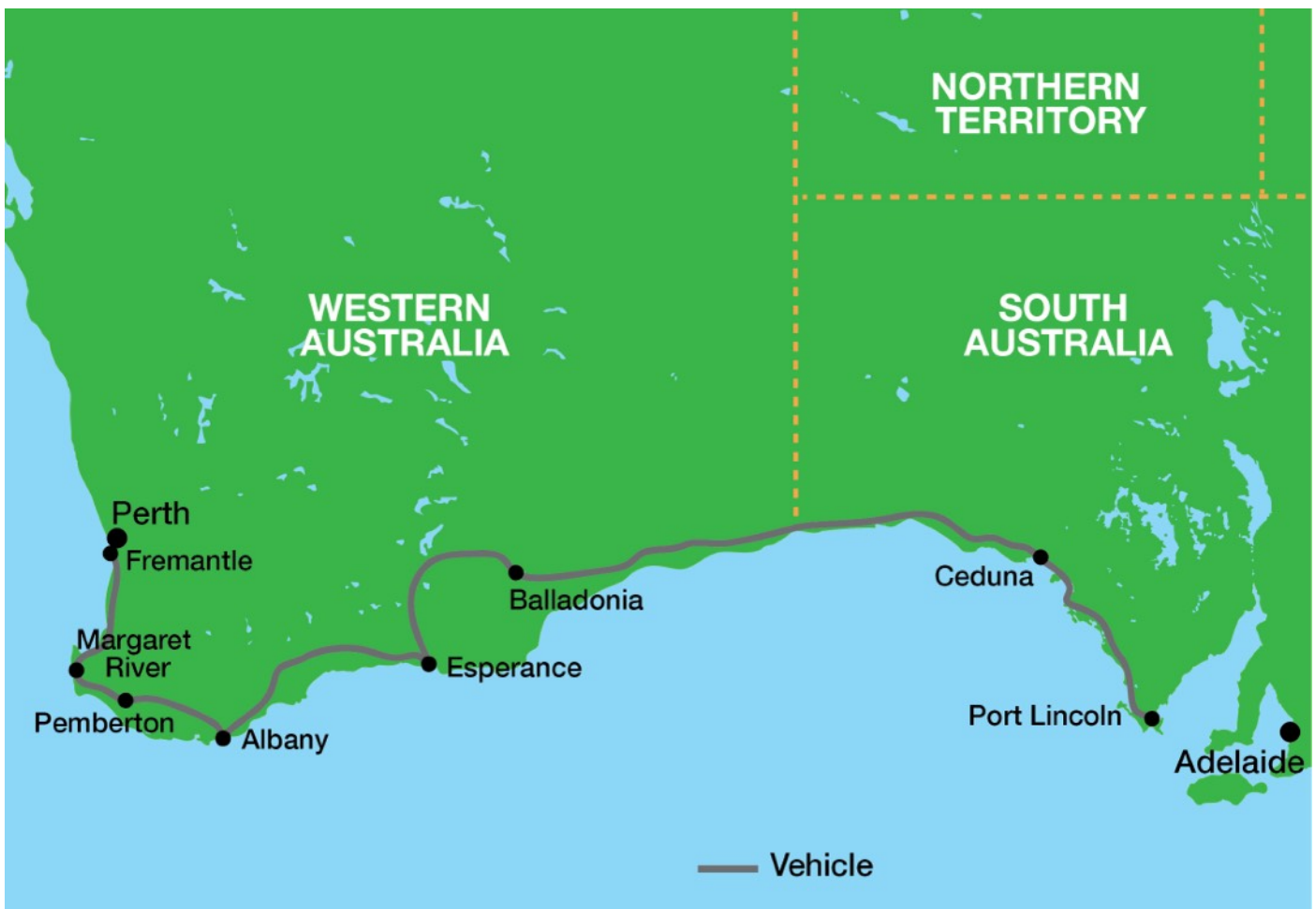
Western Australia to South Australia Across the Nullarbor, Port Lincoln to Fremantle

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 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.

When we reach the west edge of South Australia, the landscape changes. The drive between Norseman in Western Australia and Ceduna on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula 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 Balladonia and Caiguna. 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.



**Day 1, Thursday 8th August
PERTH TO FREMANTLE**

Arrive in Perth around lunchtime. For Sydneysiders, Qantas offers a 10.35 am flight, arriving in Perth at 1.40 pm. Bill will meet you at the luggage terminal at 2.30 pm. Look for Bill at the airport arrivals lounge. Alternatively, you can catch the train to Fremantle and meet at the hotel. We then travel to our hotel in the heart of historic Fremantle. In the evening, a welcome dinner at Emily Taylor Bar and Kitchen in Fremantle's West End heritage area. Our stay is at Hougoumont Boutique Hotel (or similar). *D*

**Day 2, Friday 9th August
FREMANTLE — MARGARET RIVER**

We'll set off for Margaret River (approx 300 km) today. On the way, we'll see the famous Busselton Jetty, the longest timber-piled jetty in the Southern Hemisphere and take a scenic route through the national forests. We'll travel through the largest remaining forest of Tuart trees, a tree species found only in Western Australia. Arrive in Margaret River for a two-night stay. Accommodation at Margaret's in town. *B/L/D*



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B/L/D

**Day 3, Saturday 10th August
MARGARET RIVER**

Staying in the heart of a celebrated wine region, we'll have the opportunity to sample wines and lunch at one of Margaret River's premier wine estates with 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 are expected to go on for most of the day. We will return to Margaret River for some free time and to source your supper if you are still hungry. Our accommodation is at Margaret's, in town. *B/L*



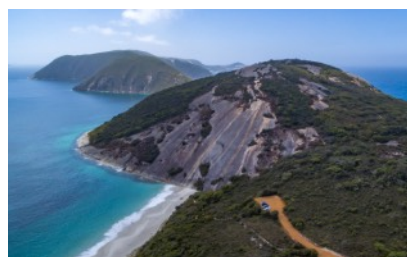
**Day 4, Sunday 11th August
MARGARET RIVER — PEMBERTON**

Today's route will be about 170km. After breakfast, depart for Augusta's Point Leeuwin lighthouse. Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse is 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). From Augusta, we travel away from the Margaret River region and into the Great Southern Forests region. Near Pemberton, 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. After the cruise, we will see 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. 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**

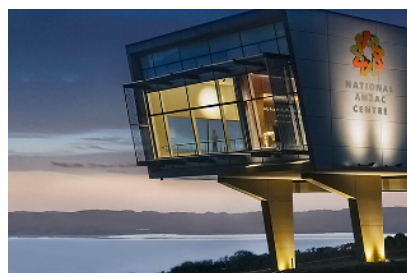
 **Day 5, Monday 12th August
PEMBERTON — ALBANY**


Pemberton to Albany is approx 300kms, including the Mt Shadforth Scenic Drive. Today we are driving through more incredible tall forest scenery of WA's towering Karri forests around Denmark and Walpole. Firstly our scenic drive takes us to 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. In the hinterland around Denmark, we will stop for wine and cheese tasting at Duckett's Mill Wines and Denmark Farmhouse Cheese before heading on to Singlefile Winery, where we will have a wine tasting and picnic lunch. After lunch, it is time for 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. Drive on to Albany, a historic port and whaling town, for another two-night stay. Dinner at the Earl of Spencer or similar and stay at the Spencer Suites (or similar). **B/L/D**



 **Day 6,
Tuesday 13th
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 WWI 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 lunch at the Garrison 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 7, Wednesday 14th August
ALBANY — ESPERANCE**

Albany to Esperance is approx 500kms. On the way, we visit Fitzgerald River National Park, which is within the Fitzgerald Biosphere and 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 to 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. We now head to Esperance on the south coast of WA, famous for stunning white beaches, turquoise waters and clear blue skies, for a two-night stay. Dinner at Fish Face. Accommodation at Island View apartments (or similar). **B/L/D**

 **Day 8,
Thursday
15th August
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 hr 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 33 Degrees or similar. *B/L/D*



**Day 9, Friday 16th August
ESPERANCE — CAIGUNA**

Esperance to Caiguna is approx 570km. In the morning, we will stroll along some of Esperance's coastal walks against the stunning backdrop of the Recherché Archipelago before driving along the spectacular Great Ocean Drive stopping at the many vantage points. After a coffee in Esperance (might be the last good coffee for a while), we will start our 2½ day road trip across the Nullarbor. We stop for lunch at the frontier town of Norseman and Balladonia for a break, then onto Caiguna Roadhouse. From Norseman at the western end of the Nullarbor, we start driving through Western Australia's Great Western Woodland. This woodland is special as it is the largest and healthiest temperate woodland on earth. 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. Accommodation at Caiguna Roadhouse (or similar depending on availability - they can book out in one go if a long-distance bus is scheduled). *B/L/D*



**Day 10,
Saturday 17th
August
CAIGUNA —
NULLARBOR
ROADHOUSE**

Caiguna to the Nullarbor Roadhouse is approx 540km. As

we cross the Nullarbor, we will have a couple of longish drives, but generally, they 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. Each pitstop we pass as we cross the Nullarbor has a golf fairway, which makes up 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. Lunch is at Eucla on the SA - WA border, where we take a short break to explore the ruins of the Eucla telegraph station. The transmission room was split into two: SA employees were at the eastern end of the room, and WA employees were at the western end. Messages from Perth would be received by the WA employees at Eucla, and handed to the SA employees, who would relay the message to Adelaide. After 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. We continue along the Nullarbor, passing classic Australian roadhouses that service these remote regions while watching the landscape and vegetation slowly change until the Nullarbor Roadhouse. Our afternoon scenic flight over the Bunda Cliffs will depart from the Nullarbor Roadhouse. We will also fly over the Head of Bight during the flight, allowing for some aerial whale spotting. *B/L/D*



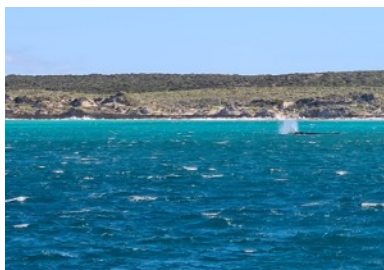
**Day 11,
Sunday 18th
August
NULLARBOR —
CEDUNA**

Nullarbor Roadhouse to Ceduna is approximately 300

km, with an extra 80 km to Fowlers Bay and return to Highway. Not far from Nullarbor Roadhouse, we stop at the Head of Bight whale-watching centre near Yalata. The 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. Then, onto Fowlers Bay for our 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. We may be lucky enough to observe these 70-tonne mammals mating (look for groups rolling around on the surface). By late August, mothers can be seen 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. 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 the Whale Baleen Plate, hold some very rare Ambergris and listen to real-time underwater acoustics. 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 or the lake's water level is low, 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, turning the water pink. These unique waters are why the Lake is also known as Watermelon Avenue. Accommodation and dinner at the Ceduna Foreshore Hotel (or similar). **B/L/D**



**Day 12,
Monday 19th
August
CEDUNA — PORT
LINCOLN**

Today we work our way down the Eyre Peninsula, following the seafood trail to

Port Lincoln (about 400km). We will travel down the coast to Streaky Bay and onto Venus Bay (our lunch stop). As we head south the scenery along this section of the Eyre Peninsula becomes increasingly 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 Talia Caves. 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. Accommodation is at the Port Lincoln Hotel, with dinner at Fumo (or similar). **B/L/D**



**Day 13,
Tuesday 20th
August
COFFIN BAY**

This morning, we headed to Coffin Bay cruise to sample more seafood.

Contrary to some beliefs, Coffin Bay isn't named after anything to do with burying the dead. Matthew Flinders named it after Resident Naval Commissioner Sir Isaac Coffin 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. 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 (at your own expense). After the afternoon cruise, we drove out to Coffin Bay National Park before returning to Port Lincoln, where, if we had time and energy, we could drive to the main harbour to do a leisurely walk around the tuna fishing fleet. We will have our farewell dinner at Sarrins Restaurant at our hotel. **B/D**



**Day 14, Wednesday 21st August
DEPARTURE**

This brings to an end our epic WA to SA tour. Bill will drop you at the airport after breakfast. Aim for a mid-morning flight. **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. Consider extending your stay in Adelaide. As our hotel is in the city's heart, you are within walking distance of many attractions.



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.