

REGIONAL NSW SHORT BREAKS

With cooler weather on the way, it's time to begin planning a short break in NSW during Autumn and Winter.



COLOURFUL SHORT BREAKS

The regions within three hours' drive of Sydney offer an inspiring list of experiences perfectly suited to a short break or easy getaway with the kids.

This beautiful time of the year is when cool-climate gardens in the Southern Highlands and the Blue Mountains are colourful and romantic, and bushwalks and cosy pub lunches are especially welcoming. Wander through weekend village markets that are packed with freshly-picked local food and artisan produce, join a chestnut picking tour or learn how to make jams and jellies from fresh seasonal fruit. In the Blue Mountains you can even celebrate Christmas in July with Yuletide fare and good cheer. Along the coast,

walking tracks and cycle paths can be enjoyed at a leisurely pace.

In Port Stephens and Jervis Bay, the resident dolphins share the limelight with migrating whales as they cruise along the NSW coast during their journey to warmer waters. It's also a good time of the year to get great accommodation deals at a desirable beach location from Wollongong to the Central Coast, Newcastle to Port Stephens. In the Hunter Valley, the vintage season is well under way, celebrated with a calendar of exciting food, wine and music events as clear blue skies, bare vines and colourful gardens turn the region into a photographer's dream.



NATURAL HIGHS

Wherever you stay on your short break, you're bound to be close to one of the State's 850 national parks or reserves.

Take your walking boots, a day pack or overnight gear, and head out in search of adventure; from idyllic day walks to soul searching multi-day treks, there's a walk for everyone. Great day walks include the stunning coastal track in Bouddi National Park on the Central Coast or the mammoth 250 km, 16-day Great North Walk from Sydney's Lane Cove to the Hunter Valley and Newcastle. Passing through several national parks, including Brisbane Water National Park (for 34 km), it's often described as one of the best walks in NSW.

Other inspiring walks include Belmore Falls Walking Track in Morton National Park and the National Pass Walk in Blue Mountains National Park, which takes you past waterfalls and scenic lookouts.

During Winter, you may be lucky enough to do some whale-watching from a coastal national park. In Port Stephens, the invigorating short walk to the summit of Tomaree Head offers unparalleled views of the region's waterways and coastline while the White Sands Walk at Jervis Bay is a beautiful, and easy, loop walk. Along the track, you'll be treated to serene bay views, seeing birds in the wild and dolphin-watching. For outdoor fun, take the kids to Hunter Wetlands National Park near Newcastle for a picnic and easy cycling or wander along the scenic trails of the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area, near Wollongong.



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FINE WINES

Why not explore the beautiful NSW wine regions close to the city?

Australia's oldest wine-producing region, the Hunter Valley, and one of its newest, the Southern Highlands, offer plenty of tempting food and wine experiences as well as a range of accommodation from five-star resorts to luxe guesthouses, B&Bs and country cabins. Sample local gourmet produce from olives to cheese, chocolate to coffee, pick berries fresh from the farm or meet the farmers and winemakers. You're bound to find something special in one of the 150-plus wineries, vineyards and cellar doors in

the Hunter Valley, while the Southern Highlands has 15 cellar doors in an idyllic country setting. Another wine region, the Shoalhaven, has 13 cellar doors with the majority located around Gerringong, Berry and Shoalhaven Heads. Medal-winning, cool-climate wines are now being produced at Coolangatta Estate, where Alexander Berry planted the first vines of the region in the 1820s. A local cellar door trail leads to some very enjoyable food and wine experiences ranging from French provincial in style to modern Australian.



EATING OUT

Chefs are making their mark on dining experiences in NSW by using fresh regional produce as the basis for terrific menus.

In the quaint villages of Katoomba, Leura, Wentworth Falls and Blackheath, you'll find a range of cosy cafés, restaurants, country pubs and wine bars to choose from. Popular Leura Garage is worth a visit for its Central Ranges wine list and hearty Italian-inspired menu – but for special occasions, hatted Darley's at Lilianfels, and Echoes restaurant, with its stunning views, are perfect. Beachside Newcastle is also a very appealing food and wine destination. Now, with hatted restaurants Subo and Restaurant Mason, the city has some serious food

credentials. Eating out in Newcastle has never been more enjoyable so check out the city's four distinctive dining neighbourhoods – The Boardwalk at Honeysuckle Wharf, Beaumont Street in Hamilton, Darby Street in Cooks Hill and The Junction.

Along the Central Coast, cafés and restaurants are dotted along beaches and inland from Pearl Beach and Erina to Hardy's Bay, Killcare and Terrigal. Wollongong also has some fantastic beachside eateries with sublime ocean views including a string of cafés and pubs along the scenic coastal drive from Stanwell Park to Austinmer, Thirroul and on, to Gerringong.



AWARD WINNERS

There are now so many seriously good places to eat out in regional NSW that your next short break could be all about the food! To help your planning, here's a list of restaurants that have recently won awards for their fine food, service and/or wine lists:

- › Blue Mountains – Darley's, Restaurant Como
- › Central Coast – Manfredi at Bells, Pearls on the Beach, Reef Restaurant, The Cowrie
- › Hunter Valley – Bistro Molines, Chez Pok, Muse Kitchen, Muse Restaurant, Restaurant Botanica, Roberts Restaurant
- › Newcastle – Carrington Place, Merewether Surfhouse, Subo, Restaurant Mason
- › Southern Highlands – Biota Dining, Eschalot, Horden's
- › Wollongong – Caveau.



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Why not take the kids to a farmstay or on a camping adventure during Autumn or Winter this year and enjoy beautiful weather in the great outdoors.

They'll have fun feeding the chickens, going for hayrides and exploring the countryside. It's also a great way for the whole family to relax and reconnect over a campfire or by discovering the stars together. And whether you enjoy travelling with your own caravan, staying in a cosy cabin or pitching your tent,

you'll find the perfect holiday park in a scenic location, many with million-dollar views. The other good news is that holiday parks offer a variety of styles of accommodation to suit every budget. You might like to set up in a private ensuite site in a pretty riverside location, pitch a tent by the beach or enjoy a touch of luxury in a five-star, self-contained cabin. Facilities are likely to range from swimming pools and tennis courts to landscaped gardens and BBQs.



FLYING GETAWAYS

A network of regional airports makes it easy to fly in for a short break at great locations around NSW.

Why not fly to Orange to explore food and wine trails, especially around Easter when Orange F.O.O.D. Week kicks off? The beautiful beaches of Byron Bay and surrounding World Heritage national parks are a 70-minute flight from Sydney; book in for a short break during Lismore's Opera in the Channon in July.

Other exciting events coming up during Winter include Deni Blues & Roots Festival in April (fly to Albury) and Coffs Harbour's Australian Surf Festival in August.

More short break destinations especially enjoyable during Winter include Byron Bay (fly to Ballina), the Snowy Mountains (Canberra), New England North West (Armidale) and Outback NSW (Broken Hill).



TARONGA WILD! RHINOS

Follow the colourful trail of rhinoceros sculptures that are dotted around Sydney, the Blue Mountains and all the way to Dubbo's Taronga Western Plains Zoo where you can see real rhinoceros up close. You can also get involved in this inspiring campaign to save the world's remaining wild rhinos at tarongawildrhinos.org.au



THE ADVENTURE CHECK LIST

Outdoor sports and activities are enjoyable at any time of the year.

- > Get your adrenalin pumping on a sand-boarding adventure on Stockton Beach sand dunes
- > Go caving, rock-climbing and abseiling in the Blue Mountains
- > Hire a bike and hit the mountain trails of Glenworth Valley
- > Get your thrills in Wollongong with hang gliding, paragliding, and sky diving onto the beach
- > Go mountain biking on dirt tracks to spectacular viewpoints in Morton National Park
- > Try tandem hang gliding or paragliding over the beaches and hinterland of Newcastle
- > Treetop Adventure Park let kids aged three and up explore the forests from flying foxes.