



South Australia & Western Australia Ocean to Outback

Discover unforgettable wildlife experiences in South Australia and Western Australia, venturing from the coast to the bushland and beyond. Words: Amanda Smith



Clockwise from left: Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef, a luxury safari camp in Cape Range National Park, Western Australia; a safari across the Flinders Ranges, South Australia; Seal Bay Conservation Park, Kangaroo Island, South Australia

Home to some of the world's most astonishing wilderness, South Australia and Western Australia offer countless ways to experience the nation's unique wildlife — quokkas, emus, kangaroos and koalas are among the native animals that can be spotted on safari here. These special encounters can easily be combined with trips to world-class wineries, eating at farm-to-table restaurants and snorkelling in crystal-clear waters.

Using the state capitals of Adelaide and Perth as your bases, hike out into the Outback or hop on a ferry to learn more about the wild elements of Australia's ancient land, home to the world's oldest living culture.

ADELAIDE & SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide is one of Australia's most laid-back state capitals, surrounded by sandy beaches, historic wine regions and market-gardeners' farmlands. It's also just a 15-minute drive to the Morialta Conservation Park, a dreamy expanse of Australian bushland characterised by gorges and waterfalls and home to native wildlife including possums, echidnas, cockatoos, Cunningham's skinks and, of course, kangaroos.

Before venturing further afield, don't miss a jaunt to one of the state's renowned wine regions. As one of the 11 Great Wine Capitals of the world, Adelaide offers easy access to hundreds of cellar doors. For a historic experience, visit the Barossa Valley, one of Australia's oldest wine regions. Enjoy a long lunch at a winery, taste a tawny from your year of birth or join a private safari to meet the winemakers.

Five hours north of Barossa Valley is the Flinders Ranges, one of the world's most ancient landscapes. Marvel at the natural amphitheatre of Wilpena Pound and keep eyes peeled for yellow-footed rock wallabies, short-beaked echidnas, kangaroos, bearded dragons and wedge-tailed eagles exploring the striking red terrain and the skies above.

Make your way to Kangaroo Island via a 45-minute ferry ride from Cape Jervis or a 30-minute flight from Adelaide. One of the best places in Australia to spot wildlife, the island is home to kangaroos (including its own unique species of the western grey kangaroo), koalas, echidnas and an array of birdlife, as well as Australian sea lions. There's plenty more to explore, too: don't miss the geological phenomena of the Remarkable Rocks and the island's renowned local food scene.

PERTH & WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Australia's sounds are as memorable as its sights. Hear the call of the native kookaburra 'laughing' amid the birdsong chorus at Perth's Bold Park, a haven for wildlife and wildflowers close to the heart of Western Australia's state capital.

Thirty minutes by ferry from the city, Rottnest Island offers another wildlife encounter unique to this area — the chance to see Perth's famous 'locals', the native quokkas. The island measures just seven square miles, meaning the creatures are easy to spot as you roam. The surrounding clear waters, meanwhile, are ideal for snorkelling, swimming, sailing and surfing.

Further north lies Ningaloo Reef, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Swim a few strokes and you'll be floating over the world's largest fringing reef, a thriving ecosystem of coral, fish, turtles, manta rays and dugongs. Visit from April to October and you may catch a glimpse of whale sharks and humpback whales. Nearby, the red rocks of Cape Range National Park are home to emus, rare black-footed wallabies and spiny anteaters.

Northwestern Australia is ancient and raw, and a trip to the Kimberley region is one of its greatest adventures. Bilbies, bandicoots, dingoes and crocodiles are among the species that can be seen on safaris around the Horizontal Falls, the Buccaneer Archipelago, the Bungle Bungle Range and the Echidna Chasm. If anywhere's going to turn you into a naturalist and wildlife photographer, it's here.

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