



**The Weekend West**  
**Saturday 29/08/2020**

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Saturday, August 29, 2020

20-PAGE EDITION  
PULL OUT & KEEP

The West Australian  
**travel**  
A WORLD OF EXPERIENCE

# Scratch the itch

## HOLIDAY IN WA

**15-page Guide**





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# HOLIDAY IN WA

*In a travel world temporarily shrunk, WA's broad horizons are proving a natural antidote. We have borderless road trips. We have roads less travelled. We have places known and loved to revisit and reconnect to. And we have plenty of surprises. We have holidays for families, couples going quickly, couples going slowly, and solo travellers who want to be free and independent. We also have this moment. When WA is all ours. Before the world returns ...*

**STEPHEN SCOURFIELD**  
Travel Editor

## Perth (& surrounds)

At the heart of WA, our city of Perth glimmers on the banks of the Swan River, overlooked by Kings Park and Botanic Garden. Ask just about any international visitor about the place (and I've seen plenty of surveys) and they will tell you they love our big blue sky, our parks and green spaces, the river. "And it's so clean." "And it's so safe." (And those last two look even more important now).

This is just the sort of place many people crave to visit, and live in. But familiarity breeds contempt. When we travel, we crave new and different experiences. When we are at home, we often undervalue what we have. That's just human nature.

*Let's review with fresh eyes,  
refresh cultural ties,  
and reinvigorate our curiosity.*  
Think of the city a bit separately  
— Perth City, Northbridge, East

Perth, West Perth, Burswood.

Then do an odd thing. Pretend you've never been here before.

Take a tour, or dine at a restaurant you've never been to.

There are plenty of restaurants and bars to choose from, including those in hotels — particularly in the State Buildings next to St George's Cathedral, from fine dining at Wildflower to more casual Petition Kitchen (one of my favourites), to Pooles Temple jazz bar in the basement. There's Hearth at The Ritz-Carlton Perth, and plenty to choose from at Crown.

And there's entertainment at the State Theatre, Perth Concert Hall (WA Youth Orchestra, Beethoven 250), His Majesty's Theatre (from Dracula to the Nightingale and Cosi fan tutte) and comedy clubs around Perth. Or just wander in to the Art Gallery of WA, and enjoy the city's cultural precinct and Yagan Square.

Get educated by taking a tour, just as we might in other cities. For cultural tours, try Two Feet and A Heartbeat, GoCultural or Fremantle Tours. For something more active, GoGo Active Tours or Perth Waterbike Adventures. Walk and picnic in Kings Park, strolling through the Botanic Garden, past the big Kimberley boab and across the Federation Walkway. Take the kids (or

grandchildren) to Naturescape or May Drive Parklands, with its megafauna sculptures and play area, while you enjoy coffee at Zamia Cafe (another favourite).



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### FREMANTLE

With a European feel that comes from Fremantle's migrant heritage, there is coffee alfresco, great pubs and restaurants and plenty to see when you mooch about Fishing Boat and Challenger

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harbours and Bathers Beach. Such as the Kidogo Arthouse, Bathers Beach Art Precinct, and the WA Shipwrecks Museum, with its relics from ships trashed along WA's treacherous coast, including timbers from the Batavia, wrecked in 1629. Then walk on over to Victoria Quay in Fremantle Harbour.

### FREMANTLE ON THE LIST

Fremantle Arts Centre (with its good Found shop and Canvas cafe), Fremantle Prison tours, Fremantle Markets, Little Creatures Brewery, the Round House, the *other* WA Maritime Museum, in Victoria Quay, home to Australia II and the submarine HMAS Ovens.

### ROTTNEST ISLAND

The ferry takes us somewhere completely different.

Our little bit of overseas (without a passport). Yes, and Rottnest Island has that feel of being away from it all.

Ride your bike to a quiet bay, tuck in to a sunny nook and read a book. Stay in comfort and really feel you're on holiday.

### Perth (& surrounds)

From saltwater to fresh; from beach to estuary to river.

From kwongan sandplain to jarrah forest.

We have a strong mix of environments on our doorstep.

### MANDURAH

For people in Perth and its suburbs, Mandurah offers a classic "just-away-from-it-all" day trip, weekender, or holiday.

You don't have to go many kilometres to change the pace and point of view.

Environmentally, it's interesting, with ocean beaches one side, the Peel Inlet, and canals in between.

And there's a good chance to get a feel for that with boat cruises — but even, better, I think, by joining experts on the ground, on guided walks that teach about the wetlands and wildlife of the Peel-Harvey estuary.

After all, this estuarine system is the biggest in south-western Australia, covering more than 130sqkm, and is home to tens of thousands of birds.

It's 30 years since the Peel-Harvey Estuary was listed under the Ramsar Convention as an ecosystem and wetland of international significance.

There's a good variety of accommodation to chose from, too, from family-style self-catering to luxury apartments.

### SWAN VALLEY

Green is good. Winter is a treat in the Swan Valley. Food, wine, honey, mead, chocolate and plenty of green scenery at this time of year makes Swan Valley for day trips and short stays. I'd start with Swan Valley Visitor Centre — they're full of ideas. For a full day out, head to Whiteman Park.

### PERTH HILLS

National and regional parks take us into the jarrah and marri forest, with wandoo up on the gravel rises.

From Kalamunda (with its Zig Zag Cultural Centre) to Mundaring, there are places to stay and plenty to see and do.

Follow the Bickley Valley Wine

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A Vespa parked in Fremantle.



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The streets of multicultural Fremantle.

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St George's Cathedral and adjacent State Treasury Buildings, Perth. Pictures: Stephen Scourfield





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Trail, walk a bit of the Bibbulmun Track, or go mountain biking.

For national parks, start with John Forrest, but add Beelu, Gooseberry Hill National Park and Kalamunda National Park. Perth Hills Discovery Centre is a great place to begin.

For other parks, try Mundy Regional Park, Armadale Settlers Common, or Bungendore Park.

### South-West, Golden Outback, Esperance

Now we're on the road, heading further afield — heading inland; heading to the south coast — and this is where WA really starts to come into its own.

For, when we start to make choices, we start to see its

contrasts. And we start to see the contrast of WA's colours.

The South West is predominantly green (with colourful dabs of wildflowers at this time of year), with a fringe of gold sandy bays and frame of blue ocean.

The Goldfields have the red of

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#### FROM PAGE 5

earth and rock, and the flickering green and silver of the eucalypts of the Great Western Woodlands, Australia's biggest temperate woodland (between Hyden and Norseman).

But, down on the south coast, come pure colours.

Esperance is one of our most unusual holiday spots — isolated, independent, self-reliant; a connected community. It has a true "country town by the sea" feel. The coastline is incredible, with turquoise water and white sand that squeaks under your feet. There are remote spots within striking distance of the town itself.

And, nearby, Fitzgerald River National Park is full of floral treasures.

#### ESPERANCE ON THE LIST

Esperance Museum (love it), West Beach, the lagoon at Eleven Mile Beach, walk up Frenchman Peak, visit Lucky Bay Brewing, eat local seafood (maybe at Craig Adams and Nardiah Behsman's Fish Face).

#### FIVE DRIVES ON THE LIST

■ Fitzgerald River National Park near Hopetoun on the south coast.





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Rottnest Island from the air.

It's a nice run through Kalgoorlie, Norseman, Esperance, and then back through Bremer Bay, Albany, with its National Anzac Centre, and home. Mix and match stays in these places to suit your taste.

■ Taking Augusta as the end point, drive from Yallingup down Caves Road along the way. Caves Road is bitumen (and Boranup Drive, as part of the experience, is unsealed). It weaves through wine and agricultural lands, past beaches like Wilyabrup and Gracetown, Prevelly and Boodjidup, Redgate and Hamelin Bay.

■ The 48km Great Forest Trees Drive near Pemberton is good for any vehicle, even with its gravel

roads. Winter has its charm, but spring is brilliant in the karri forest in Shannon National Park. There are walk trails and camping at the campsites in the park, or good accommodation choices in and around Pemberton.

■ Stirling Range National Park and Bluff Knoll. The 42km Stirling Range Drive winds through the park, from the Western Lookout near Red Gum Spring to the Eastern Lookout below Bluff Knoll. It is on mostly unsealed roads, but suitable for two-wheel-drive cars. Stop at Central Lookout and picnic in woodlands at White Gum Flat.

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Royal hakea in Fitzgerald River National Park on the south coast.



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Caves Road, just south of  
Canal Rocks.



Beach on Twilight Beach Road, Esperance.



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Goldfields woodlands. Pictures: Stephen Scourfield



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■ Scotsdale Tourist Drive and Mount Shadforth Scenic Drive loop out of Denmark. Mostly

bitumen, though a bit of Scotsdale Road is unsealed, they suit any vehicle and are gourmet trails too,

with wineries, restaurants and local produce. Through winter the rolling hills are green, spring is full of life and summer is mostly cooler than Perth.

### **GOLDFIELDS DRIVES ON THE LIST**

■ Golden Pipeline from Mundaring to Coolgardie (then Kalgoorlie).

■ Golden Quest Discovery Trail covers 965km, in roughly a figure-of-eight shape north from Coolgardie to Ora Banda, Menzies, Kookynie, Laverton, Leonora, Gwalia, Snake Hill (Inside Australia, the Antony Gormley art site), Rowles Lagoon, Broad Arrow and Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

■ Granite and Woodland Discovery Trail between Hyden and Norseman cuts through one of WA's (and the world's, come to

that) best woodlands. Highlights are the big granite McDermid Rock, with its interpretive signs and camping area, and Lake Johnson, a beautiful natural salt lake. Autumn and winter are good, but spring (mid August to mid October) is great.

**FROM PAGE 7**

## **Indian Ocean Drive, Jurien and Geraldton**

We've got the Indian Ocean on our left shoulder; we're heading north. We're getting out of the city.

And immediately we have stepped into salty, beachside-town, remote-bay WA. This is the coastal essence of Western Australia — the narrow, beachy, sun-bleached strip north of the city, up Indian Ocean Drive to Jurien Bay. On to Dongara and Geraldton.

This is what holidays are made of, and at this time of year, the country looks particularly good, with many places having had recent rain, and the wildflower season looking late and long.

A highlight on the Indian Ocean Drive is, of course, the Pinnacles at Nambung National Park. Thousands of limestone pillars rise out of the yellow sand, some up to 3.5m tall. Composed of seashells in an earlier era rich in marine life, they may have taken thousands of years to form, but were exposed only a few hundred years ago. They're on the doorstep of Jurien Bay, which is a destination in itself, on our doorstep. It's a good place to stay, just two-and-a-half hours north of Perth, with great beaches, coastal walks, fishing, dunes and wildflowers. Jurien Bay Marine Park is home to Australian



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sea lions.

Then on to the pretty stop-offs of Dongara and Port Denison (and don't just bypass them).

These twin towns off the Brand Highway are a couple of charmers.

### **DONGARA ON THE LIST**

Fishermen's Lookout, South Beach, Granny's Beach and Nuns Pool, Illegal Tender Rum Co, Thungara Trails (six walk trails) and hang out at the Irwin River mouth.

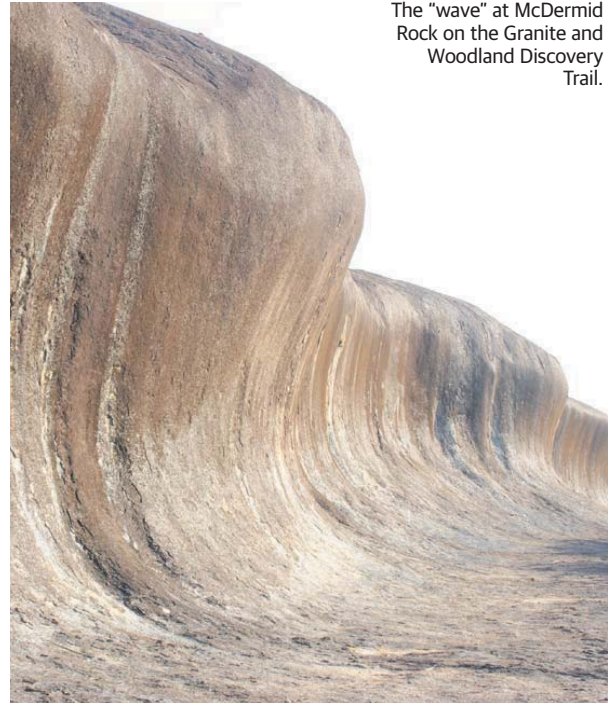
### **GERALDTON**

The town has a renewed energy. The foreshore has been reworked, there are nice coffee shops and cafes, and an artsy feel mixed in to the town's history. It has always been proud of its past, but now there's a real sense of the present and future.

### **GERALDTON ON THE LIST**

WA Maritime Museum, Batavia Marina, eat at Skeetas, Latitude Gallery, HMAS Sydney II Memorial, Geraldton Regional Art Gallery, Yamaji Art Centre, Cafe Fleur, Culinary HQ, Piper Lane Cafe, Salt Dish, Quiet Life Speciality Coffee.

## **The Coral Coast**



The "wave" at McDermid Rock on the Granite and Woodland Discovery Trail.







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From Geraldton, we head north, maybe with a side trip to Kalbarri or Shark Bay.

### KALBARRI ON THE LIST

Kalbarri cliffs, Murchison River estuary and rivermouth, Kalbarri National Park, with Nature's Window, Murchison Gorge, Skywalk and pelican feeding on the foreshore in the morning.

### SHARK BAY ON THE LIST

World Heritage Discovery and Visitor Centre in Denham, Shell Beach, stromatolites at Hamelin Pool, dolphins at Monkey Mia. The country has benefited from recent rain.

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## Carnarvon

Fruity Carnarvon is one of the food-bowls of WA and a great place to enjoy local produce.

At this time of year, the growers are producing vegetables including beans, capsicums, eggplant, kale, zucchini and sweetcorn. Fruits now include honeydew, rockmelon, watermelon, grapefruit and oranges.

And tomatoes, of course (fruits considered vegetables by nutritionists).

Nectarines, peaches and plums come through in September.

There's local produce at farm gates and, from now until October, at October at the Gascoyne Growers' Markets in the town centre every Saturday. It is run by the growers themselves — they often pick the produce the night before, sometimes even on Saturday morning. Look out for local jams, too.

Local plantation owner Jo Bumbak didn't like seeing up to 60 per cent of all fresh grown

produce in Carnarvon's horticultural district go to waste, and since 2017 has been rescuing fruit and vegetables deemed too visually unappealing for supermarket sale for her Bumbak's Preserves and Ice Creams.

While the town hangs off the Fascine (the name given to the bay formed by the south arm of the Gascoyne River), its coast has good beaches.

Head out to One Mile Jetty and its historical

precinct. The jetty put Carnarvon on the map in the 1890s, opening it up for trade.

Carnarvon is also the pivotal point of some dramatic WA landscapes. To the east, there is the Kennedy Range. To the north, Lake MacLeod and coastal station country — an intriguing bit of "salt and surf meets pastoralism" cusp that drives to the core of WA's story.

### CARNARVON ON THE LIST

One Mile Jetty Centre, Carnarvon Space and Technology Museum (including its Apollo Experience and planetarium), Gwoonwardu Mia Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre.

### COAST NORTH OF CARNARVON

From Carnarvon, I'm not going to head straight on up the highway to Minilya Roadhouse and then on up the North West Cape to Coral Bay and Exmouth.

I'm going to follow the coast for 75km up a sealed road to Point Quobba and Blowholes. This is where ocean swells force their way into sea caves and then explode through holes — the spray from these blowholes can reach 20m on



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certain tides. And the best time is when a high tide is coming in — before the tide is at its peak.

A kilometre south of the Blowholes is what locals call the “aquarium” — a lagoon filled with coral, fish and shells, set on a white, sandy beach.

A \$1 million spruce up for the

Blowholes, in this Quobba Coast tourism precinct north of Carnarvon, has just been announced. It will include reconstructing unsealed parking areas with disabled access, new walkways and viewing platforms, additional toilet facilities, an entry statement and interpretive signs.

To get a real feel for life on this bit of coast, at the southern end of the Ningaloo Reef, there’s nothing better than a station stay.

### **NORTH WEST CAPE**

Exmouth and Coral Bay have been busy this year — a real hub for West Australians holidaying at home. And why wouldn’t we?

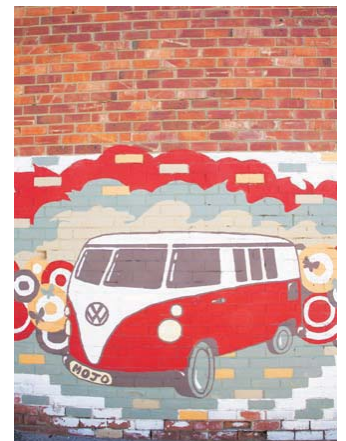
They both front the Ningaloo Reef — the world’s biggest fringing reef, which comes close to shore.

In fact, in Turquoise Bay, on the North West Cape, it comes right to the beach — you can easily snorkel out over it.

The west coast and Yardie Creek has the glamour, of course, but



Regional Art Gallery in Geraldton.



Wall art in Geraldton.

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don't forget to venture into the gorges of Cape Range National Park and walk along the shores of the Exmouth Gulf, on the east side of the cape.

### From islands to inland

When we travel from reef to range, we take a transect through WA — and not only its geography, but its human story.

And we can extend that journey even more, connecting offshore islands with the deep inland.

I draw a line from the heart of the Pilbara across its iron-ore-rich country and into the pastoral lands. I continue it to the coast at Onslow, then into the ocean, finishing up on the Mackerel Islands. (Carry on west and I'll run into Madagascar).

This line doesn't just connect contrasting environments, but very different stages and stories in the history and development of WA — from the Pilbara, pegged into some of the earliest crustal geological events of the planet, through its Indigenous past, to the stations that brought agriculture to the productive coast and ocean.

They all share a modern story in travel and tourism.

#### INLAND ON THE LIST

Karijini National Park, with Oxer Lookout, Weano Gorge, Handrail Pool, Joffre Falls, Knox Lookout, Dales Gorge, Fern Pool, Circular Pool, Fortescue Falls and Karijini Eco Retreat.

#### COAST ON THE LIST

Onslow's Goods Shed Museum, Hidden Treasures Onslow Tour,

Ashburton River. Ask at Onslow Visitor Centre. From now to October is the best time to be on the Pilbara coast, with daytime temperatures from 20-30C and cool evenings.

To drive from Perth to Onslow is about 1380km. Virgin Australia flies the two hours between Perth and Onslow.

#### ISLANDS ON THE LIST

There are 10 islands in the Mackerel Islands group, but Thevenard is the biggest.

Fish for Spanish mackerel, wahoo, marlin, sailfish, yellowfin tuna, red emperor, coral trout, giant trevally, queenfish, Rankin cod, crimson sea perch and

northwest snapper. The Mackerel Islands are a gazetted nature reserve, with flatback, hawksbill, loggerhead and green turtles. Thevenard has self-contained beachfront cabins.

### Pilbara

Over its 2.6 million sqkm, WA has nearly 190,000km of road — more than 20 per cent of all the roads in Australia, even though we West Australians represent only about 10 per cent of the population.

We have it all — smooth sealed highways, easily navigable all-weather gravel roads, red dirt

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### Road trip planning

#### **PILBARA DRIVE THE BIG QUESTIONS**

We have to start by answering some simple questions.

For a start — what are we driving? A light car, family saloon, SUV, or more heavy-duty four-wheel-drive? Are we towing a caravan or a camper trailer?

It sounds obvious, but it's good to be clear about what travellers are expecting from the trip. If you want good, fully powered sites for your big rig caravan, it will require a different plan to those free camping with light kit from the back of a small SUV.

Are you travelling as a couple, as a couple with another couple, as a family with strapping teenagers, little kids, solo but with a bunch of hardcore mates, or in a convoy?

Do you want to spend your time on the bitumen and staying comfortably in caravan parks; or largely on bitumen but then with lots of good gravel roads taking you to interesting places; or on good but remote tracks; or right out there, self-contained and having to sort any problems that arise yourself?

Somewhere in the matrix of answers that you create by sitting down (yes, even with a good old-fashioned piece of paper and a pencil) and pondering these questions, you will be steered more specifically towards the sort of adventure you are looking for.

In modern-speak I'm "managing your expectations with a view to an appropriate outcome".

In plain English, I'm suggesting you really work out what you want so that you don't end up frustrated, overspending, in the wrong place at the wrong time and wondering why you'd ever bothered. Yes, it sounds obvious — but it's a good conversation to have when you get out your maps or apps.

#### **PILBARA DRIVE HOW TO GET THERE**

Do you want to be mostly along the coast, or inland, or some sort of mix of both?

When I'm heading up to the top of the Pilbara or the Kimberley, I really like driving up the coast, and

back down the inside . . . North West Coastal Highway from Geraldton, perhaps a side stop at Kalbarri, Carnarvon, perhaps Coral Bay and Exmouth, Karratha and Port Hedland. Then on Great Northern Highway to Broome and into the Kimberley.

There's a chance to explore right on our doorstep. The Indian Ocean Drive is classic coastal WA, taking us from Yanchep to Lancelin, Cervantes, Jurien Bay, Green Head, Leeman, and out on to the Brand Highway, south of Dongara. It's an excellent sealed road with facilities and overnight stopping spots along the way. There's the curve of beach and the jetty in Lancelin, then the Pinnacles at Nambung National Park near Cervantes, where limestone pillars rise from the sand, some up to 3.5m tall. Lesueur National Park, north of Jurien Bay is an important conservation area. There's good accommodation along the way, so just take off in the family car, or enjoy some slow caravanning. Wildflowers are generally at their peak in August and September.

On the way south, come back down Great Northern Highway through Newman, Meekatharra, Cue, Wubin and Dalwallinu.

Up the coast — sensibly, for me, it's three days to Broome if I "just want to get there", stopping overnight at Carnarvon and Port Hedland.

#### **PILBARA DRIVE THE INDIGENOUS STORY**

For the local Indigenous Banyjima, Kurruma and Innawonga people, this place is part of the Warlu story. The Warlu is a snake creator being that left the North West Cape and carved its way north, through these gorges. Today, the Warlu Way is a signposted self-drive from Ningaloo to Broome, swinging in through the Pilbara, which connects some of WA's epic sites — Ningaloo Reef, Karjini National Park, Millstream-Chichester National Park, the Burrup Peninsula, Eighty Mile Beach and Broome. Essentially, for those heading north up the coast from the Perth metropolitan area, it encourages stops at Ningaloo, a but swing inland through the Pilbara and then back to the coast for the final leg to Broome.



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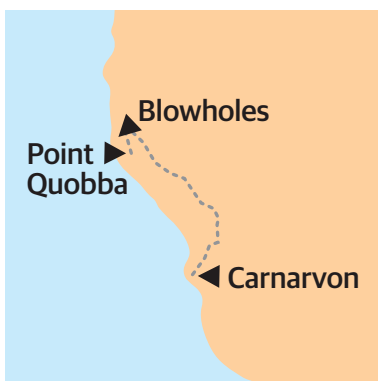


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Buying local produce in Carnarvon. Picture: Stephen Scourfield



Well prepared for driving in the Pilbara. Picture: Stephen Scourfield



Termite mound on North West Cape.



Paddling near the river mouth, Kalbarri.  
Pictures: Stephen Scourfield





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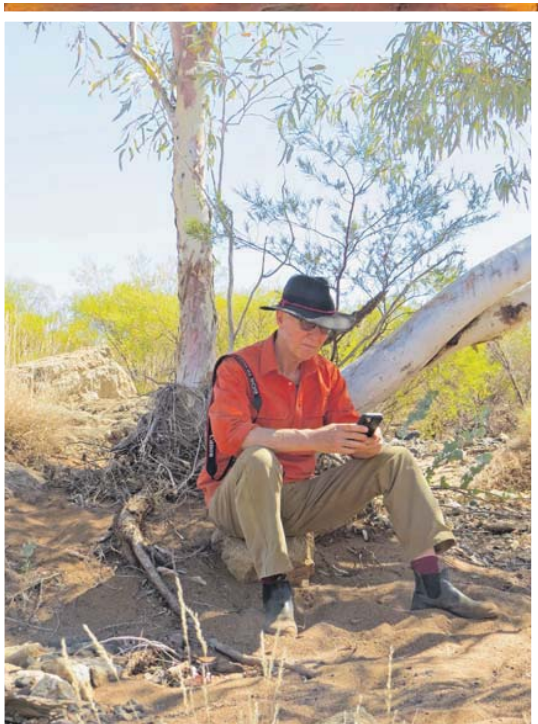
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Joffre Gorge, Karijini National Park.  
Picture: Stephen Scourfield  
Inset, Stephen Scourfield writing  
on his phone in the bush.  
Picture: Lesley Hammersley







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tracks, marked trails and “two wheel” limestone and sand trails.

Drive trips come into their own at this time of year, when it’s cool down south, dry and clear in the interior and dry season up north.

And for many, the Pilbara’s a perfect target. You can get there easily in two days’ drive, and it has many sealed roads, good unsealed roads, and tracks to explore.

Something for everyone.

### KARRATHA ON THE LIST

Look for petroglyphs on the Burrup, dig in to the history of nearby Cossack and Roebourne, hang out in Dampier, see a

movie at Red Earth Arts Precinct.

## Pilbara national parks

### KARIJINI

Karijini National Park covers more than 627,000ha just north of the Tropic of Capricorn in the Hamersley Range and has great gorges carved by 2500 million years of erosion. There’s camping and tented accommodation in the park. Expect warm and clear days, but nights can be cold and sometimes frosty.

■ Karijini is 230km from Newman, 70km from Tom Price.

### MILLSTREAM-CHICHESTER

For some, this place on the

Fortescue River is the resting place of Warlu. Indigenous legend says that the serpent was seeking two boys who had eaten the mulga parrot, gurdarnkurdarn — his sacred bird.

This is why he’d forced his way across the land. He swallowed them and Millstream is the spot where they finally cried out. For Yindjibarndi people, it is a parable about the consequences of flouting law and custom.

The park has some great spots. My favourites are Millstream

itself, a watery oasis where the original Millstream Homestead is now the Millstream Visitor Centre and museum, Crossing Pool and Deep Reach camp spots on the Fortescue River, and Python Pool.

■ Millstream is 130km from Karratha.

### KARLAMILYI

This is WA’s biggest and most remote national park — the desert dunes, spinifex plains, salt lakes and weathered plateau between the Great Sandy Desert and the Little Sandy Desert.

Though it is now Karlamilyi National Park, plenty will remember this 1.3 million hectare piece of rugged Pilbara as Rudall River. The main access is along the Telfer-Talwana Track, or the Kintyre track, which crosses the park from north to south. Travellers need to be well prepared.

The Rudall River’s banks are lined with tall coolibah and river gum trees . . . and yulbah, the bats wing coral tree.

■ Karlamilyi is 260km from Newman.

### BURRUP

Some of the Burrup Peninsula’s petroglyphs, or rock engravings, have been dated as old as 37,000 years — said to be the oldest in the world. It is a massive outdoor gallery. A chapter in human history.

Deep Gorge is a good spot to wander looking for petroglyphs.

The Burrup’s Murujuga National Park became WA’s 100th national park.

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The river in Millstream-Chichester National Park. Pictures: Stephen Scourfield



Red Earth Arts Precinct in Karratha, which opened in May 2018.



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The Burrup Peninsula is 20km from Karratha.

## Broome

Broome is an assault of colour.

Turquoise ocean, red pindan earth, white frangipanis, purple bougainvillea, green tin and red lattice.

And most of all, it is the dry season's big, blue sky.

Broome is laconic, tropical, thick shakes and fruit juices, cold beer and cappuccinos. It is wound into the culture of WA, and multicultural.

The town's history stretches out into the ocean. Indigenous people have lived around Roebuck Bay for tens of thousands of years, living off the fruits of the sea.

■ Explorer, adventurer, navigator and sometime buccaneer (or pirate) William Dampier first visited what he called "New Holland" in 1688. Dampier was also a chronicler, and the journal he kept during his sailing inspired the first "official" voyage of discovery, when he returned in 1699.

In his book *A New Voyage*

■ Round the World, Dampier told how he set off on an exploration of

"New Holland" on the ship *Roebuck*. And, in their book *A Pirate of Exquisite Mind*, Dianna and Michael Preston bring to vivid life the story and character of Dampier (1651-1715), who led the first recorded party of Englishmen to set foot on Australia.

Dampier's scientific observations would influence meteorology, biology and cartography for the next 200 years. His charts were still in use in World War II.

But, important in Broome's history, his journals focused interest on the area's beds of pearl shell. The *Pinctada Maxima*, found along the Kimberley coast is the biggest in the world, filtering 160 litres of water an hour. A grain of sand gets inside the shell and the bivalve mollusc, which then alleviates the irritation by secreting nacre to cover it. A pearl.

Koepanger, Malay, Chinese, Japanese, Europeans and Aboriginals searched the sea floor for the shells. By the late 1870s, there was a growing pearling industry and John Forrest selected the town site in 1883. It was named after the colony's governor, Frederick N. Broome.

Between 1889 and 1891, the price of mother-of-pearl shell went through the roof, and Broome became known as the Queen City of the North. At one point, there were 300 pearl luggers harboured in Broome.

But the pearling industry all but collapsed in the 1950s as plastic buttons replaced shell.

South Sea Pearls is recognised as among the best in the world and pearling remains a key element of Broome's modern life.

■ Another remarkable Englishman is also pivotal to

Broome's story. Lord Alistair McAlpine first visited the town in the late 1970s. At that time, Broome was pretty ramshackle, but he fell in love with the place, saw its potential, returned in 1981 and spent several months each year, and about \$500 million of his own money, transforming the place over a decade. It's the stuff of legend that he signed a deal on a beer coaster to buy land for the Cable Beach Club (now also "Resort & Spa"), which opened in 1988.

### **BROOME ON THE LIST**

Walk Cable Beach, visit Gantheaume Point, Pearl Luggers, Broome Museum, pearl shops,





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camel ride on Cable Beach, Matso's, plan to see Staircase to the Moon (as the full moon rises, its light reflects on the ruckled, exposed mudflats at extremely low tides), and learn more about the night sky. The Milky Way arches across the sky and stars and planets seem brighter than ever here. Broome gets more than 300 clear nights a year.

#### MARINE PARK ON THE LIST

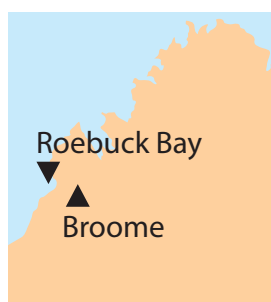
On Broome's doorstep, the massive sweep of Roebuck Bay is a great depository of bird, animal and human stories. Yawuru Nagulagun/Roebeuck Bay Marine Park is on the end of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, giving one of the greatest diversity of shorebird species of any site on the planet. Around 150,000 birds visit annually. There are preserved dinosaur tracks, which can be seen, set in rock, at low tide. And, of course, there are the stories of the Yawuru people, who for thousands of years have lived around and off this bay. There are



Gantheaume Point, Broome, with Cable Beach beyond. Pictures: Stephen Scourfield



Boab tree and Town Beach, Broome.



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The big drop of King George Falls  
in the Kimberley.

the wrecks of six flying boats from World War II, when aircraft were sunk by Japanese Zero fighters.

### Kimberley coast (& Horizontal Falls)

While the Kimberley is known for its bulldust, red rock and cattle station country, its coast is often described as one of the last wildernesses. It is reported as one of the most intact tropical marine ecosystems on Earth.

There are seagrass meadows, mangrove forests, oceanic mammal populations and seabird breeding colonies. It's a recognised biodiversity hotspot.

From sandstone coast with rocky headlands to prominent peaks, sandy beaches and dramatic drowned river valleys to offshore reefs and numerous islands, there is diverse landscape and marine life.

Along its 13,000km coast are some of the biggest tides in the world. Spring tide ranges of up to 12m in King Sound at Derby, are not far behind the world's highest tides of 15m in the Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia.

Big tides contribute to the drama.

#### SCIENCE AND THE COAST

The coast from the Buccaneer Archipelago to King George River was named for its outstanding heritage value in the Federal Government's West Kimberley



Place Report. A research group working for Murdoch University's department of environmental science said in a report in the Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia: "It is unlikely that there are many other regions

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elsewhere with the number and range and scope of sites of geoheritage significance found on the Kimberley Coast.”

#### CRUISE THE COAST

As remote expedition cruising along the Kimberley coast has developed and become more popular, so have travellers’ options. There are short trips, comfortable mid-range ships and high-end, luxury cruises.

And these are some of the classic spots on the Kimberley coast ...

#### KING’S CASCADE

In Cascade Creek, a tributary to the Prince Regent River, this fall of more than 25m is a classic “champagne cascade” waterfall down a stepped rock face.

#### RAFT POINT

The red ramparts of Raft Point dominate the southern entrance to Doubtful Bay. Walk up past boob trees to caves full of Indigenous art and a view over Foam Passage to Steep Island. The art depicts the local Wandjina story of the fish chase across the Kimberley. Raft Point was named after John Lort Stokes found tribal rafts at a camp here in 1838.

These traditional mangrove timber rafts were often made of two parts. They separated when a

dugong was speared, one part freed to trail behind the animal, tiring it.

The hunter was left on the other half, following. The big sandstone bluff is a massive landmark on the Kimberley coast.

#### HUNTER RIVER

The Hunter River twists past rock walls, then mangroves, and to the Hunter Falls and Donkin Falls. They are both nearly 100m tall.

The Hunter River is a snaking waterway emptying into the north-east corner of beautiful Prince Frederick Harbour.

I open a notebook and read again the words I wrote on one

visit there . . . “smooth, serpentine river . . . mangroves and muddy tributaries . . . tide pushing in . . . crocodiles and azure kingfishers, a sea eagle calling overhead . . .”

#### KING GEORGE FALLS

The twin King George Falls are spectacular. On the 112km long King George River, they have a drop of more than 50m and more than 50m of water depth beneath. The twin falls featured in Baz Luhrmann’s movie, Australia.

#### MONTGOMERY REEF

The 400sqkm of Montgomery Reef, 20km off the Kimberley Coast, appears to rise out of the sea as the



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tide falls. Fully exposed on a 10m tide, it is up to 80km long.

The reef, opposite Doubtful Bay, appears bizarrely mid-ocean, surrounded by deep, inky-turquoise salt water. And, as the ocean pours from it, it makes a tinkling sound.

### BERKELEY RIVER

The Berkeley River flows out to the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf and the Timor Sea, and has waterfalls and gorges. I've spent days up here on boats, seeing waterfalls, then driving underneath to shower in a natural, vertical spa.

## Day trips

### HORIZONTAL FALLS

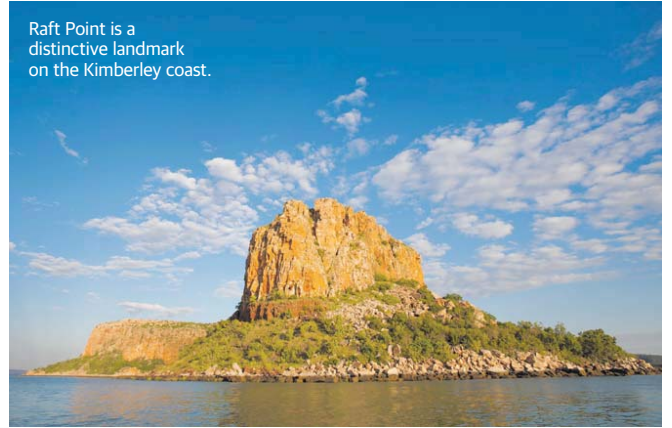
When the tide rises in Talbot Bay, sea water is pushed through two gaps, filling the big "bowls" behind. This creates the Horizontal Falls.

First it streams through the "Wide Gap", just 20m across, with water about 40m deep, and then the "Narrow Gap", further in and only 7.5m across, also with 40m of water below. Locals chorus that the bit between is called the "Middle Sea".

Just as these gaps are the only way for this huge amount of water to get in . . . so, there's only the same way out, and water rushes back through after high tide.

From the air, they do indeed look like horizontal waterfalls. Small boats from expedition cruise ships take visitors through the

Raft Point is a distinctive landmark on the Kimberley coast.



Walk up  
past boab  
trees to  
caves  
full of  
Indigenous  
art and a  
view over  
Foam  
Passage  
to Steep  
Island.



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Horizontal Falls, but now it's even more popular to fly out on a day trip in a float plane and take the trip through in a fast boat.

### **DAMPIER PENINSULA**

The Dampier Peninsula points north in a triangle, with Broome

and Derby at its two base points. At the top is One Arm Point and Cape Leveque.

There are places to stay at Kooljaman and Cygnet Bay Pearl Farm, where pearling is alive and visitors can also get out on fast-boat tours into the Buccaneer

Archipelago. It is just 80km from Horizontal Falls and 130km from Camden Sound, edged by Montgomery Reef. Cygnet Bay is named for William Dampier's ship Cygnet, in which he explored, in 1688, the coast of what would become WA.

## **On the land Kimberley highlights**

### **WINDJANA & TUNNEL CREEK, WEST KIMBERLEY**

■ The still waters of Windjana, backed by towering rock, are dotted with freshwater crocodiles. I sit in shade nearby and an Aboriginal woman sits near me, delicately fingering a fishing handline. Eroded by the Lennard River, Windjana Gorge is over 3km long with 300m-high walls. This was once under the sea — Windjana Gorge National Park is part of the 375 million-year-old Devonian reef system. It is also of great cultural importance to the Bunuba people and was the hideout for Jandamarra, an Indigenous outlaw who led a rebellion against European settlers in the 1890s.

■ Nearby, Tunnel Creek National Park has an old cave system, part of the same ancient Devonian reef, through which we can walk 750m, sometimes wading. There are stalactites and stalagmites. Windjana is 150km from Fitzroy Crossing, 145km from Derby.

### **PURNULULU, EAST KIMBERLEY**

■ The striped "beehive" formations of the Bungle Bungle Range in Purnululu National Park were laid as sediment 360 million years ago. They have weathered over the last 20 million years to the domes and gorges we see today. Iron in the sandstone oxidised to orange and cyanobacteria in layers with higher clay content discoloured to give the black banding. Purnululu is 290km from Kununurra, 150km from Halls Creek.



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Water begins to  
pour through  
Horizontal Falls.