

# DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF PORT FAIRY: A FAMILY ADVENTURE AWAITS

*Spend a Long Weekend in Port Fairy and surrounds...*



# SELF-DRIVE ITINERARY

3 DAY / 2 NIGHT PORT FAIRY LONG WEEKEND GETAWAY



## PORT FAIRY

### DRIVE

#### GEELONG

Port Fairy is approximately 215–220 km from Geelong, with a typical drive time of around 2.5 hours, depending on traffic. Travel via the Hamilton Highway (B140) through Mortlake for a scenic inland journey or follow the Princes Freeway (M1) before continuing onto the Princes Highway (A1) via Camperdown.

#### BALLARAT

Port Fairy is approximately 190–200 km from Ballarat, with a similar drive time of around 2.5 hours. The Hamilton Highway (B140) via Mortlake offers a direct and easy route.

### TRAIN & BUS

#### GEELONG

Travel with V/Line by train to Warrnambool, then connect with a coach service to Port Fairy. (3 hours, depending on connections.)

#### BALLARAT

Travel by V/Line train to Ararat, then transfer to a coach service to Port Fairy. (4–5 hours, depending on service schedules)

### II PAUSE STOP

When self-driving, plan regular rest breaks to stay refreshed. TAC and VTIC [Pause Stop sites](#) operate at selected Visitor Information Centres throughout the year, providing convenient places to stretch your legs and recharge before continuing the journey.



# PORT FAIRY

## FAST FACTS

- Port Fairy became Victoria's first municipality in 1852 and was proclaimed a borough in 1863.
- Port Fairy takes its name from the vessel Fairy, which called here in 1828. In 1843, Irish settler James Atkinson purchased 5,120 acres and named the settlement Belfast, before a local plebiscite saw it officially renamed Port Fairy in 1887.
- The Port Fairy Folk Festival began in 1977 and has grown into one of Australia's most loved music festivals, transforming the town each Labour Day long weekend with world-class artists and a vibrant community atmosphere.
- The streets of Port Fairy tell a rich heritage story, with more than 60 National Trust-classified 19th-century buildings, from charming cottages to grand civic landmarks.
- Just offshore, Griffiths Island has a layered history, once used for whaling in the 1830s, later an Aboriginal mission, quarry and shipbuilding site, and now home to its iconic lighthouse and thriving wildlife.
- Port Fairy has been recognised as the World's Most Liveable Community (2012) and named Top Tourism Small Town of Victoria in 2021 and 2022.
- Today, around 3,300 people call Port Fairy home, contributing to its strong sense of community and coastal charm.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS

*We acknowledge the Eastern Maar and Gunditjmara people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which Port Fairy and the Moyne Shire are situated. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognize their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture, and we are committed to working together to create a future that embraces and respects the rich cultural heritage of this region.*



# DAY ONE

DIVE INTO HISTORY & COASTAL CHARM

# MORNING

*Start Your Adventure*



As you arrive in Port Fairy, take a moment to slow the pace and ease into the adventure. A visit to the Port Fairy & Region Visitor Information Centre is a natural starting point, where friendly staff and volunteers share local knowledge to help shape your stay. Pick up maps for the [Port Fairy Heritage Trail](#) and [Griffiths Island Trails](#), which guide families through the town's stories, landscapes and coastal charm.

Before heading out, browse the gift shop for locally made produce, products and small keepsakes, perfect reminders of time spent exploring Port Fairy together and a chance to take a little of its character home with you.

*Hot Tip: [Book a guided Historic Walking Tour](#) of Port Fairy through the Visitor Information Centre.  
Cost: \$15 per adult, children free.*

*Railway Place, Bank Street, Port Fairy*

## MORNING

*Step Back in Time*

Set out on foot or by bike and let children lead the way through Port Fairy's wide historic streets, shaded by Norfolk Island pines and lined with beautifully preserved 19th-century cottages. The walk naturally draws families toward the historic Port of Port Fairy, where fishing boats line the wharf and fresh local seafood is often available, including southern rock lobster when in season.

Following the wharf path, energy builds as the route reaches Martins Point, where the playground offers space to climb, swing and pause before continuing on to the Griffiths Island causeway.

*Accessibility: The wharf walk is flat and accessible for prams, bikes and mobility aids. The Martins Point playground includes inclusive play equipment, soft-fall surfaces and a Liberty Swing (key available from the Visitor Information Centre), ensuring all children can take part in the fun.*

*Historic Wharf & Martins Point, Gipps Street, Port Fairy*



# DAY ONE

DIVE INTO HISTORY & COASTAL CHARM

# MORNING

Explore Griffiths Island: Wildlife Walks & Lighthouse Views



A short walk across the causeway from Martins Point leads families onto Griffiths Island, where winding coastal paths and open scrub invite exploration at a child-led pace. Children range ahead, spotting swamp wallabies in the grasses, pausing for seabirds overhead, and searching the sand for small clues of hidden life along the way.

The path naturally draws everyone toward the striking basalt lighthouse at the island's eastern tip, where wind, salt air and sweeping ocean views set the scene for stories of storms, shipwrecks and lighthouse keepers. Griffiths Island is also home to seasonal shearwater seabirds, nesting in burrows beneath the sand. Keeping to the marked tracks helps protect this special habitat and turns exploration into an early lesson in caring for Country.

*For the kids: How many wallabies can you spot?*

*Accessibility: The island circuit is 2.9 km and takes approximately 50 minutes to complete. For a shorter option, it's around 25 minutes to reach the lighthouse via the formed riverbank. A limestone track provides accessible access for prams, bikes and mobility aids, while outer tracks are sandier and depend on tide conditions.*

[Griffiths Island](#), Ocean Drive, Port Fairy

## LUNCH

### ***Picnic with a Past***

With fish and chips in hand, follow the foot bridge across the wharf to Battery Hill, where lunch and history meet. Children climb among the old cannons, inventing stories and watching the sea, while parents settle onto the grass to enjoy sweeping coastal views.

It's a simple, playful pause, where good food, big skies and shared imagination turn Battery Hill into a memorable family moment.

*History: Established in the 1800s, Battery Hill's cannons and fortifications were built to protect Port Fairy from the perceived threat of Russian warships, today offering a striking picnic spot that blends history with panoramic coastal scenery.*

**Battery Hill, Griffiths Street, Port Fairy**



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**I AM PORT FAIRY** *Great Ocean Road*

# DAY ONE

DIVE INTO HISTORY & COASTAL CHARM



The afternoon unfolds at an easy pace as families explore Port Fairy's creative heart with the Port Fairy Art Map as a guide. Colourful galleries, quirky shops and local makers invite browsing, while adults linger over handcrafted jewellery and homewares and children gravitate toward ice creams at Rebecca's Café or sweet treats from Port Fairy Confectionery. It's a gentle, curiosity-led wander that captures the town's relaxed, artsy charm.

*Rebecca's Café, Sackville Street, Port Fairy (\$-\$\$)*

*Port Fairy Confectionery, Sackville Street, Port Fairy (\$-\$\$)*



# AFTERNOON

Discover Local Creativity in the Heart of Town



## AFTERNOON

### Rockpool Ramble & Marine Life

Next, make your way to Pea Soup Beach, one of Port Fairy's most picturesque spots. Children lead the search along the rocky foreshore, peering into rockpools and spotting tiny marine creatures hidden among the stones. Each discovery sparks new excitement, turning a simple walk into a shared moment of wonder.

*Hot Tip: Pea Soup Beach is perfect for swimming and snorkelling safely, as it fully protected by the basalt reef.*

*Pea Soup Beach, Ocean Drive, Port Fairy*



# DAY ONE

DIVE INTO HISTORY & COASTAL CHARM



Southcombe Park Deluxe Villas provide a relaxed and well-located base for families exploring Port Fairy. Positioned beside the Skate & Play Precinct at Russell Clarke Reserve and close to South Beach, the villas keep families connected to outdoor play and coastal walks in a safe, walkable setting.

The Deluxe Villas accommodate up to eight guests, with full kitchens, multiple bedrooms and private decks that suit families travelling together. An accessible Deluxe Villa is available, ensuring comfort and inclusion for guests of all abilities.

*Hot tip: Just steps from Southcombe, the Skate & Play Precinct features a skate park, pump track and playground, perfect for an easy afternoon of family fun.*

**Southcombe Caravan Park, James Street, Port Fairy (\$-\$-\$)**

# ACCOMMODATION

Southcombe Caravan Park Deluxe Villas



## DINNER

**Family-Friendly Dining at The Victoria Hotel**

As the day winds down, families gather at The Victoria Hotel, an easy walk from accommodation and a familiar local hub. Children burn off the last of the day's energy in the play area while parents relax nearby, sharing an easy meal where stories from the day unfold and dinner feels like a natural part of the holiday rhythm.

**The Victoria Hotel, 42 Bank Street, Port Fairy (\$-\$)**



# DAY TWO

FOOD & WINE, ANCIENT CULTURE AND BIG NATURE

# BREAKFAST

Morning Indulgence at Bank St + Co



Start the day with a relaxed breakfast at Bank St + Co, a local favourite in the heart of Port Fairy. Families settle into the outdoor seating as the town gently comes to life. Fluffy pancakes and indulgent milkshakes are a hit with younger travellers, while fresh, flavour-driven dishes and exceptional coffee appeal to all ages, an easy start that allows everyone to refuel and plan the day ahead.

**Bank St + Co, 28 Bank Street, Port Fairy (\$-\$\$)**



## MORNING

### Market Treasures & Local Delights

Continue along Bank Street to Railway Place, where the Port Fairy Markets bring colour, flavour and creativity into the heart of town. Families wander between stalls discovering fresh produce, handmade treats and unique local crafts.

Children linger over sweet snacks and small treasures, while adults browse for ingredients to take back to the villa or a keepsake to remember the day. It's an easy, social wander that reflects the relaxed rhythm of Port Fairy life.

*Hot Tip: Saturday markets alternate between the Farmers Market and the Community Market, with the larger Community Market running every weekend in January.*

**Railway Place, Bank Street, Port Fairy**



# DAY TWO

FOOD & WINE, ANCIENT CULTURE AND BIG NATURE

# AFTERNOON

Journey to Budj Bim & Lake Surprise: Where the Land Tells the Story



“Ngatanwarr wartee pa kakay teen Gunditjmara mirring” –  
Welcome brothers and sisters to Gunditjmara Country. The Traditional Owners ask that you take the time to look, listen and feel the Country.



Leaving the coast behind, the drive inland marks a gentle shift in pace as Port Fairy’s shoreline gives way to an ancient volcanic landscape. Around 50 minutes from town, Budj Bim reveals itself as a connected cultural Country, where lava flows, wetlands and waterways link the dormant volcano with Tae Rak (Lake Condah).

Here, the land tells the story of the Gunditjmara people, who engineered one of the world’s oldest known aquaculture systems. Stone weirs and channels were used to sustainably farm kooyang (eels) for more than 6,600 years, an achievement recognised through Budj Bim’s UNESCO World Heritage listing.

A gentle walk at Budj Bim National Park invites families into the heart of a dormant volcanic crater. The Lake Surprise Walk loops quietly around the crater lake, framed by tall gums and lava canals, creating space to slow down, children tracing the water’s edge while parents linger at viewpoints.

**Budj Bim National Park, Mt Eccles Road, Macarthur**

## LUNCH

***Taste of Culture at Tae Rak Café***

Lunch at the Tae Rak Aquaculture Centre and Café becomes part of the experience. Families enjoy modern dishes prepared by a local Gunditjmara chef, featuring regional produce and native bush flavours, with the option for curious diners to try kooyang (eel) sourced from these waters. Views across the calm shores of Tae Rak (Lake Condah) and open space nearby make this a relaxed break before the afternoon unfolds.

**Tae Rak Aquaculture Centre and Café, Vaughans Rd, Breakaway Creek (\$-\$\$)**



# DAY TWO

FOOD & WINE, ANCIENT CULTURE AND BIG NATURE

# AFTERNOON

Ancient Aquaculture



With energy restored, families join a Gunditjmara-led cultural tour across the wetlands of Tae Rak. Stories unfold step by step, creation narratives, eel lifecycles, birdlife and seasonal knowledge, bringing meaning to the channels and stone structures visible across the landscape.

Walking side by side, families begin to see the landscape differently, sharing moments of curiosity and quiet understanding as knowledge is passed on, not just heard, but experienced together.

*For the kids: Look for where water gathers, flows and slows, and imagine how people worked with the land rather than against it.*

***Tae Rak (Lake Condah) Guided Cultural Tour, Vaughans Rd, Breakaway Creek (\$-\$-\$-\$)***



## DINNER

***Gourmet Pizza at Coffin Sally***

After a full day of discoveries, the drive back to Port Fairy offers time to wind down together. Dinner at Coffin Sally on Sackville Street keeps the relaxed rhythm going, with fresh, wood-fired pizzas topped with local produce, shared around the table in a fun, lively space tucked behind its historic frontage. The atmosphere hums with energy as conversations flow and favourite moments from the day are relived, making for a satisfying and easy end to the day before heading back to rest and recharge for tomorrow's adventures.

***Coffin Sally, 33 Sackville Street, Port Fairy (\$-\$)***



# DAY THREE

**SURF, WILDLIFE AND IRISH CHARM**

# BREAKFAST

*Market Fare Breakfast*



## MORNING

### *Ride the Waves with a Morning Surf Lesson*

With wetsuits zipped and boards on the sand, families ease into the morning with friendly instructors guiding the way. A few simple beach exercises build confidence before everyone heads into the gentle, waist-deep surf together.

Out on the water, first waves bring big smiles, some smooth rides, and joyful tumbles all met with cheers and laughter. The session wraps with salty smiles and a quick group photo, sealing an ocean experience families will talk about long after the boards are packed away.

Who will catch the very first wave? And who will laugh the loudest when they fall off?

*Hot Tip: Wear a swimsuit or boardies, bring a towel and plenty of sunscreen. Everything else you need is provided.*

**Go Surf School (\$-\$-\$) | Port Fairy Surf School (\$-\$-\$) Beach Street, Port Fairy**



Whip up a delicious breakfast with your local fare, collected from yesterday's market. The fully equipped kitchen provides everything you need to create a hearty and fresh morning meal before you check out.

## LUNCH

### *Beachfront Dining at Charlie's on East*

After the surf session, head to Charlie's on East for an easy refuel by the bay. Set right on East Beach, it's a relaxed spot where families can share a meal, watch the ocean and take in views of the lighthouse on Griffiths Island before continuing the day.

**Charlie's on East, 4 Hughes Avenue, Port Fairy (\$-\$)**

# DAY THREE

**SURF, WILDLIFE AND IRISH CHARM**

# AFTERNOON

**Wild Encounters at Tower Hill Wildlife Reserve**



For one final burst of adventure, a quick detour leads families somewhere truly remarkable. Tower Hill Wildlife Reserve, set within an ancient volcanic crater, offers one last moment of discovery among wetlands, bushland and wide skies.

Families follow gentle tracks, children scanning for movement as emus stride past, kangaroos pause in the grass and koalas are spotted high in the trees. As the landscape unfolds, Tower Hill's story quietly reveals itself, a once-cleared place now carefully restored, showing how nature returns when given time and care.

*For the kids: How many animals can you spot before reaching the lake?*

*Fun Fact: Tower Hill Reserve was declared Victoria's first National Park in 1892.*

**Tower Hill Wildlife Reserve, 105 Lake View Road, Tower Hill**

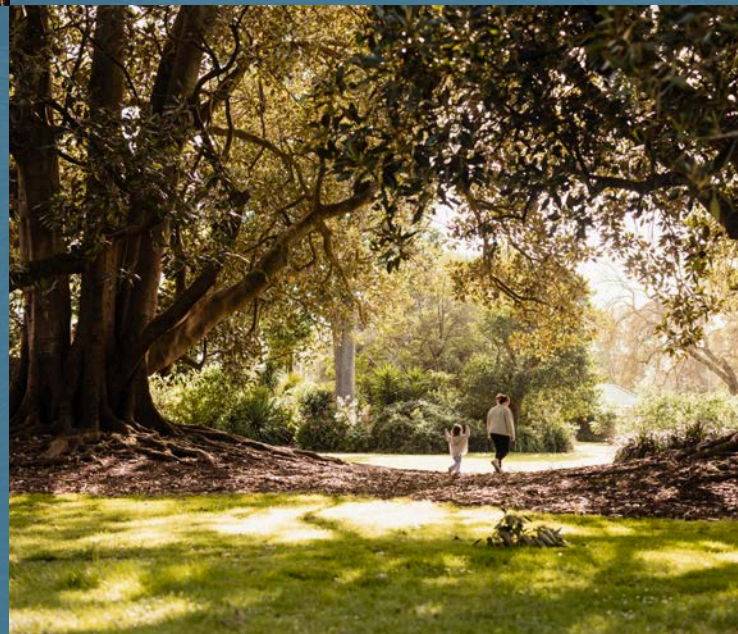


# AFTERNOON

**Explore Koroit's Irish Heritage & Botanic Gardens**

Before heading home, the nearby township of Koroit offers a relaxed final chapter to the day. Heritage streets and welcoming cafés invite families to wander and slow down, before time is spent in the Koroit Botanic Gardens, designed by renowned landscape gardener William Guilfoyle, where wide lawns and towering trees create space to run, play or rest together beneath the shade.

**Koroit Botanic Gardens, High Street**



# AFTERNOON

**Treasured Memories for the Journey Home**

Reflecting on your incredible three-day adventure in the charming town of Port Fairy, your family is set to head home with a treasure trove of unforgettable memories. With hearts and bellies full, you've experienced the rich culture and captivating history of this beautiful destination. Embrace the lasting impact of your journey and carry that appreciation with you as you travel home. Safe travels, and until your next adventure!

# ACCOMMODATION & SEASONALITY

Port Fairy offers a wide range of accommodation options to suit families and budgets of all kinds, with many operators providing off-peak specials that make staying here appealing year-round. Throughout the seasons, the town comes alive with community-led events, from the Port Fairy Folk Festival in March to summer celebrations like Moyneyana, and cooler-season highlights including Winter Weekends, the Marathon, Jazz Festival and Spring Music Festival, ensuring there's always something to enjoy, whenever you visit.

Southcombe Park Deluxe Villas provide a spacious and relaxed family stay just moments from South Beach. The modern villas sleep up to eight guests and feature multiple bedrooms, full kitchens and private decks with coastal views. A fully accessible villa is available, ensuring comfort for guests of all abilities.

(\$\$-\$\$\$)

Seacombe House offers a range of family-friendly accommodation options, including historic cottages, guest house rooms and motor inn suites. Centrally located on Sackville Street, it's within easy walking distance of shops, cafés and attractions.

(\$\$-\$\$\$)

Hearn's Beachside Villas sit right on the beachfront, offering ocean views, generous living spaces and modern comforts well suited to families. With direct access to the sand and close proximity to town, it's an easy base for coastal adventures.

(\$\$-\$\$\$)



PHOTO CREDIT: BOB MCPHERSON

## WINTER WHALE TRAIL

During winter, Port Fairy and its surrounds become a prime spot for whale watching. From May to September, Southern Right, Humpback, and occasionally Blue, and Orca whales migrate to the warmer waters of the Southern Ocean to breed and raise their calves. Warrnambool, Port Fairy, and Portland offer excellent vantage points to see these magnificent creatures up close. Beyond whale watching, the region's stunning coastal scenery and charming towns make it a perfect winter destination.

[Download your copy of the Winter Whale Trail.](#)



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