Sydney to Adelaide: Down Under Wonders

Mountains and lagoons, caves and lakes, galleries and gardens, 'big things' and little towns, the lengthy Sydney to Adelaide road trip is one that can at one moment be busy and bustling, and the next be serene and calm. It will take you through New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, and South Australia, and it will give you a veritable platter of scenic and cultural highlights along the way.

The only question is: How soon can you get started? Picking up a motorhome rental in Sydney is the ideal beginning to your adventure, giving you room to travel at your own pace and to the beat of your own drum. Take as much time as you can to see everything that unique Australia has to offer along the way - now #LetsGoMotorhome!

Stay safe on the Aussie roads with our Australia driving guide, created especially for motorhome
The drive from Sydney to Canberra will take you from one of Australia’s biggest and most well-known cities directly to another bustling hub. Along the way, however, you’ll discover endless lush forests and walkways, small and historic townships, and mysterious yet mesmerising natural attractions such as the enigmatic Lake George.

Don’t be fooled into thinking that just because some of the attractions are only small townships, you won’t want to spend much time there. You’ll need a couple of days to do this leg justice, as you’ll be charmed and enamoured at every stop.

**Sydney**

Before you race out in your Sydney motorhome to start your big adventure, don’t forget that there’s a reason why this city is internationally renowned for its culture and attractions – many, many reasons, in fact. Spend a day or two wandering the sites such as the famous markets, the **Sydney Opera House**, **The Rocks** at the waterfront, and the several museums in the heart of the city. Be sure to check the events calendar in Sydney for the time you arrive as well, as barely a week goes by without a fantastic show or festival in the city.

**The Royal National Park**

Only a little south of Sydney is the **Royal National Park** (also known as the Nasho or the Royal), which is the second oldest of its kind in the world. Make a stop here for a nature walk, and be sure to bring your binoculars if you visit between June and November during the **whale migration**, as
you may spot some of these majestic creatures from your high vantage point overlooking the ocean. When you leave the National Park area, take the Grand Pacific Drive route to your next stop at the city of Wollongong.

**Wollongong**

Known to locals as simply 'The Gong', this city is a major stop along the scenic Grand Pacific Drive and is a beautiful place for a meal or an overnight stay. Some of the best attractions here include the picturesque Botanic Gardens, the Wollongong Head Lighthouse (which is perfect for picnics), and the Nan Tien Temple, which is the largest Buddhist temple in the southern hemisphere.

**Goulburn**

Take a turn away from the coast and drive inland to Goulburn, a trip that should take a little under two hours. Goulburn is a small, historic town that feels much further from the big cities than it really is. Check out the history of the area with a visit to the Sts Peter and Pauls Old Cathedral, then see the contrast with that magnificent structure and that of Pye Cottage, an original slab hut on the main street that has been kept in its original state since 1886. You’ll find more history at the Rail Heritage Centre and the Rocky Hill War Memorial and Museum. The town is also rich in outdoor areas, so make the Belmore Park and Bugonia State Conservation Area priorities on your to-do list. Plus, Goulburn is home to one of Australia’s 'big things', so don’t forget to stop at the 'Big Merino' for a photo for the album.

**Lake George**

On the last stretch of the leg between Goulburn and Canberra you’ll pass by the beautiful Lake George as the highway runs alongside it for most of its length. It’s known as ‘the disappearing lake’ as it rises and fills with water, then mysteriously empties again. Lake George stretches for 25 kilometres and is 10 kilometres wide, so if you pass by when it’s full, you’d be forgiven for thinking it is always a brimming water feature. It was named after King George in 1820 and these days is something of a sight to behold for birdwatchers, historians, and curious travellers alike.

**Leg 1 Highlights**
From the capital to a city on the banks of the Murray River, the drive from Canberra to Albury is one of history, culture, politics, and the vastness of Australia’s great outdoors.

This leg will take you through some of Australia’s most prominent museums and galleries, and will set your feet on one of the most historic and adventurous walking tracks in the country. You might like to stay a night or two in Canberra to see the sights, and Wagga Wagga will take a good day to enjoy all it has to offer.

*If you want to start your trip in Australia’s capital, it's easy to pick up a [Canberra campervan rental](#).

**Canberra**

As Australia’s capital, Canberra is a smorgasbord of culture, history and attractions. The National Museum of Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, and the National Portrait Gallery are all found here, as well as the National Science and Technology Centre, which is a fun, bright building known as the Questacon. One of the best reasons to visit Canberra, however, is Capital Hill. It’s open daily from 9am to 5pm, and you can enjoy a guided tour to see the House of Representatives and the Senate chambers, as well as a stop on the roof of Parliament House for an incredible view of Canberra itself.

**Hume and Hovell Walking Track**

When you leave Canberra, you’ll take the A25 up towards Yass. Yass itself is a lovely township with plenty of attractions, but it’s often the Hume and Hovell Walking Track that brings in the crowds. This track runs for a massive 440 kilometres between Yass and Albury as it follows the path taken by early explorers William Hovell and Hamilton Hume on their journey to Port Phillip almost 200 years ago in 1824. Take a look at the starting point at Cooma Cottage on the edge of Yass – then
jump back in your vehicle for a much easier trip to the next town!

**Wagga Wagga**

After Yass, you’ll continue on to Wagga Wagga, the largest inland city in the state, and a place where you have your pick of history, nature, culture and more when it comes to the attractions. The **National Art Glass Collection** is here, offering exquisite sculptures in a breath-taking exhibition throughout the year. Get outside and take a stroll through the **Botanic Gardens** and take a picnic down to the edge of the **Murrumbidgee River** on which the township sits. You also have the choice of the Museum of the Riverina, the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, and the RAAF Wagga Heritage Centre if you’re after a serving of culture and history.

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**Leg 2 Highlights**

![Capital Hill](image1)

![Hume and Hovell Walking Track](image2)

![Wagga Wagga](image3)

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**Leg 3  Albury to Melbourne**

Getting from Albury to Melbourne could take you just a few hours, or it could take you a few days. The road is peppered with small towns that will invite you in for teas and coffees, as well as a few attractions that demand to be visited.

Before you make a start on this leg, be sure to visit the Albury highlights of Lake
Hume dam and the Murray River, then prepare to indulge in plenty of wine samples at the vineyards around the lush Euroa area. And finally, before you reach Melbourne, make a stop at one of Victoria’s best National Parks for views that will steal your breath away.

**Albury**

Albury – or Albury Wodonga – is a small town that is known as a fantastic pit stop on a journey from Melbourne to Sydney (or vice versa). While you’re in town, be sure to check out the two aquatic attractions – Lake Hume and the Murray River. The former is a lake that holds six times as much water as Sydney Harbour, is a playground for fishing and boating enthusiasts, and boasts a massive dam that supplies water for irrigated agriculture in the surrounding communities. The Murray River, on the other hand, is an iconic piece of the geography, and you might even like to see it by exchanging your campervan for a boat for a short tour up and down its banks while you’re in Albury.

**Euroa**

Dubbed ‘the gateway to north east Victoria’, Euroa is a quaint town at the edge of the Strathbogie Ranges that you’ll find perched between Sevens Creek and Castle Creek. While you can easily while away an afternoon wandering through the Victorian era architecture and shops, a main attraction of this area is its wineries and cellar doors. Much of Victoria is dotted with vineyards, so Euroa is a great place to spend a day enjoying tastings to match this surreal beauty of the views. Around Euroa, there is Fowles Wine, which won the RACV Victorian Tourism Award for best winery and comes complete with a great little café just 20 minutes out of the township. There is also Garner’s Heritage Wine, Maygars Hill Winery and Cottage, and Mitchelton Wines, so be sure to make a stop or two if you’re looking to sample and stock up on the crème de la crème of Australian vinos.

**Kinglake National Park**

After you continue along the M31 towards Melbourne, you’ll come across the Kinglake National Park on your left only 65 kilometres out of the city. There are more than 22,000 hectares of forestland, walking tracks, fern gullies, hills and more throughout this park, making it an ideal stop before you arrive in a bustling city hub. As it largely sits across the edges of the Great Dividing Range, it’s a perfect spot for sight-seeing, as you can easily get a view of the Yarra Valley, the Melbourne skyline, and Port Phillip Bay from up amongst these hills. There were major fires in this area in 2009, but since then, nature has reclaimed the park, which now blooms with fantastic mosses, lichens and fungi in winter, and a kaleidoscope of wildflowers in spring.
Leg 3 Highlights

Murray River
Euroa Cellar Doors
Kinglake National Park

Leg 4  Melbourne to Portland

As you drive from Melbourne to Portland you'll get to cruise along the final section of one of the country's most famous routes – the Great Ocean Road. It finishes up in the small town of Allansford, but only after you've spent some time checking out the arts scene in Melbourne, snacking on fresh strawberries straight from the farm at Geelong and sampling delicious cheese platters at Warrnambool.

The coastal views and historic township of Port Fairy are simply the cherry on top of this serene leg of the drive.

*Those who want to start their trip in the cultural capital of Australia can easily book a Melbourne campervan rental.*

**Melbourne**

Melbourne’s reputation is one of art and culture, and with an arts precinct, the Arts Centre, and the National Gallery of Victoria, that reputation is well and truly earned. A tour on the city tram is a must for a relaxing look around the city, Werribee Mansion is a great place for history buffs to experience 19th century Australia, and cricket fans will love the chance to check out the famous MCG. The Block Arcade makes for a luxurious stroll through boutique shops, and the State
Library of Victoria is worth a visit just for the architecture alone. Only a little south of the central business district is Australia’s busiest port – Port Phillip, which is where you’ll find the famous St Kilda Pier.

Geelong

Take the M1 out of Melbourne and drive just one hour to arrive at picturesque Geelong. A little less busy than the big city, but still with plenty of things to do, Geelong is a great place to stop to spend some time on the Eastern Beach, in the Botanical Gardens or to visit the beautiful old vintage carousel on the waterfront. Geelong is also where you will find the National Wool Museum, and a fantastic bike track along the Bellarine Rail Trail. If you’re there between October and March, a trip to Wallington to pick your own strawberries at Lomas Orchards is a must-do, as these sweet fruits are some of the best in the country and it will leave you with tasty red berries to snack on throughout the rest of your drive.

If surfing is of interest, whether you are a complete newbie or experienced shredder, several great spots are within short driving distance from Geelong. Popular local spots include Torquay, Anglesea, Ocean Grove and Lorne. Go Ride a Wave offer surf lessons as well as Kayak, Paddleboard and other gear hire. Get in touch with them by heading to the link below.

Well worth the detour out of Geelong is a dolphin swimming experience in Queenscliff. Dolphin Swims Queenscliff gives you the opportunity to swim with wild dolphins and seals at one of the worlds highly regarded diving and snorkelling sites - Pope's Eye marine park. The half day cruises are suitable for all abilities and ages, with several swimmers being first time snorkellers and inexperienced swimmers.

Allansford

Allansford is one of the final stops along the Great Ocean Road, so makes for a good rest break, even if there isn’t terribly much there! The Hopkins Falls are a scenic sight along the Allansford River, and the Allansford Cheese World a little further down the road at Warrnambool is the ideal place to sample your favourite cheeses and stop for a meal at the licensed restaurant on-site.

Port Fairy

Considered to be the ‘official’ end of the Great Ocean Road by Visit Victoria, this old fishing village should definitely be a stop on your trip. Port Fairy is on the waterfront, and the 1850s wharf is a huge part of the town’s history. Similarly, Battery Hill offers a dose of history with old cannons left here from fortification in 1887, and you can wander up to see it yourself (and the fantastic view) by crossing the bridge across from the harbour. While you’re out wandering around the town, check out Griffiths Island at the meeting point between the ocean and the Moyne River, as it makes for a superb hour-long walk and rewards you with swimming spots in warmer weather a mutton-
bird colony from October to April.

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**Leg 4 Highlights**

Melbourne | Geelong | Port Fairy

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**Leg 5  Portland to Kingston SE**

388 km  Total Distance  04:20:00  Est Driving Time

As you cross from Victoria into South Australia, you’ll enter a world of ancient history, some somewhat more recent history, and one phenomenal natural feature after another. This is definitely a stretch of road made for history buffs, and one that will turn an ordinary road-tripper into an avid history fan, too.

You’ll cruise down the Limestone Coast taking countless pictures, and you’ll be floored by the immense beauty of both Mt Gambier and the 800,000-year-old Naracoorte Caves.

**Portland**

Portland is everything you could want in a small Victorian town. Make your first stop in Portland the information centre where you can pick up a self-guided walking tour map for all the historic buildings and locations in the town. **History House** on the waterfront dates back to 1863 and is home to a local museum, while the cable car runs just four times per day and is from 1886 (although it runs on diesel power today). For car enthusiasts, a stop at the **Powerhouse Motor** and **Car**
**Museum** is a must, with vintage cars and motorbikes on display from the 20s.

**The Limestone Coast**

As soon as you cross over the Victorian border into South Australia, you'll be driving along what is known as the Limestone Coast. It extends for more than 250 kilometres from here up to the Coorong National Park (more on that later), and is known for its **vineyards**, **history**, and stunning views.

**Mount Richmond National Park**

Mount Richmond is only a half hour drive from Portland, and is a wonderful geographic attraction. It is in fact an **extinct volcano**, so you can drive to the top for great views of the area. This is particularly worthwhile in spring when the **wildflowers** are making themselves seen.

**Mount Gambier**

There are certain locations around the world that have to be seen to be believed, and Mount Gambier is one of them. It’s known around the world for its **Blue Lake** that fills one of the craters of an **old volcano**. The colours of the lake change throughout the year, appearing as a bright azure blue from November to February, before darkening to a deeper blue, then returning to a greyish tinge around April. There’s a 3.6-kilometre walking track around this lake to get the best views, or you can take a tour to hear more about the history and mystery of the lake. This town is also known for its **Umpherston Sinkhole**, the **Tantanoola Caves Conservation Park**, and the **Centenary Tower** for a good walk and unbeatable views.

**Naracoorte Caves**

To see the Naracoorte Caves, you’ll have to take an inland detour away from the coast on your drive to Kingsland SE. Unless you’re in a real hurry, don’t be tempted to skip this stop, as the Naracoorte Caves are hands down one of the most fascinating, overwhelming and ancient natural attractions you will ever see. At more than 800,000 years old, these caves are South Australia’s **only World Heritage Listed site**, recognised in 1994 thanks to the fossils found there. There are 21 known fossil deposits here, and amongst them, there are bones of megafaunas that became extinct around 60,000 years ago. Set aside some time to take a tour of this **magnificent piece of history**, and refuel at the café on site.
Leg 5 Highlights

The Limestone Coast  Mount Gambier  Naracoorte Caves

Leg 6  Kingston SE to Adelaide

For the final leg of the drive from Sydney to Adelaide with your campervan, you can look forward to seaside towns, and example of just how diverse and incredible Australia can be, another crossing of the Murray River, and the final arrival at the capital of Adelaide.

This stretch of road offers a nice, easy drive up the coast with plenty of stops along the way where you can jump out to snap a few final photos of your journey.

*Those who want to swap the journey around and go west to east have the option of picking up an Adelaide campervan rental.*

**Kingston SE**

Another seaside town along the coast of South Australia, Kingston SE is a place where you can stop for a short tea break and end up staying the whole day. It’s home to one of just eight sundials in the world where you can use your own shadow to tell the time, it’s where you’ll find another of Australia’s ‘big things’ – the Big Lobster. You can climb to the top of the restored lighthouse, and you can take a stroll through the Morant and Sons Gallery to see glassware and other trinkets.

**Coorong National Park**
The Coorong National Park is a testament to just how diverse Australia’s landscape can be. The park is a mix of salt pans and soaks, making up a massive lagoon that stretches along the coast for almost 140 kilometres and holds evidence of thousands of years of Aboriginal habitation. Birders will adore the two hundred varieties of birds here, and you can get up close with this natural wonder with a boat cruise from various points on the lagoon. If you’re looking to stay in the park overnight, be sure to book in advance, as there are limited spots that tend to fill up quickly.

**Murray Bridge**

If you didn’t get the chance to spend time along the Murray River in Albury, the city of Murray Bridge is a great place to take that opportunity. The city is built around the river itself, and as you might guess, features an impressive bridge straddling its banks. Stop for a coffee break or stop for a day to take a Murray River cruise.

**Adelaide**

After Murray Bridge, it’s a short trip along the M1 to Adelaide, the capital of South Australia and the final stop on this road trip. Before you hand over the keys to your vehicle however, you might like to check out a few of the sites that make this city a favourite. Shop at the Central Market, swim with the dolphins at Glenelg, ponder the pieces at the Art Gallery of South Australia, visit the animals at Adelaide Zoo, and finish the trip in style with an aromatic, delicious stop at the National Wine Centre of Australia. Plus, keep an eye out for the date you arrive, as Adelaide features a packed social calendar throughout the year with the Fringe Festival, WOMADelaide, the Adelaide Festival, and so much more.

**Leg 6 Highlights**

Coorong National Park  
Adelaide  
Glenelg