Day 1 – Melbourne to Apollo Bay

Depart Melbourne via the West Gate Bridge and follow the Princes Freeway towards Geelong. The historic Werribee Park Mansion and Point Cook National Aviation Museum are both accessible from the freeway or stop at Serendip Sanctuary, situated near the township of Lara. Over 150 species of birds have been recorded in the sanctuary and visitors can view this native wildlife at close range.

Spend some time in Geelong visiting the National Wool Museum, which is housed in a century-old bluestone Woolstore, and documents Australia’s wool industry from fleece to completed garments. Other features of this provincial city are the restored art deco Eastern Beach Baths Complex, and its newly developed waterfront and unique bollard sculptures.

Travelling on from Geelong you may detour along the Bellarine Peninsula and visit Port Lonsdale and Queenscliff. This historic town combines 19th century Victorian architecture with fisherman’s cottages and is home to Australia’s largest best preserved military fort. Breathtaking views of Port Phillip Bay can be seen from the "Rip" lookout at Point Lonsdale. From here it is a short drive to Torquay where the surf world Museum documents surfing history in the region. Along Bells Beach, Torquay is recognised among the world’s premier surfing locations.

Continuing along the Great Ocean Road, and as it moves inland, you may wish to take a short detour and follow the signs to Cape Otway. This 13km drive winds through thick forest canopies to reveal waterfalls, native Australian animals and spectacular coastal views from the headland.

Back on the main road, the stretch of road from Lavers Hill onward is a highlight. It traces limestone cliffs along the "Shipwreck Coast" aptly named as more than 50 ships have run aground or struck reefs and sunk. The limestone rock formations have been carved away from the mainland over thousands of years. These natural monuments from a stunning panorama and include the Twelve Apostles, Loch Ard Gorge and London Bridge. Viewpoints are signposted with information boards, boardwalks and parking.

Nearing Port Campbell, the road passes by wetlands and estuaries which are inhabited by various species of birdlife. At Peterborough, you will ding other frock formations, such as the Bay of Martyrs and Bay of Islands.

Continue on to the city of Warrnambool, a one time whaling centre which now attracts visitors to observe the large mammals. Southern right Whales appear each year between May and September, and can be viewed from Logans Beach. Flagstaff Hill Museum is worth visiting to discover the town’s maritime history. It is then a short drive to Tower Hill Nature Reserve, a dormant volcano, now a beautiful haven for koalas, emus and kangaroos. Visit the Worn Gundidj Visitor Centre. Final stop for today is Port Fairy, one of Victoria’s earliest whaling ports. Many buildings date from the 1840s. The National Trust has classified dozens of them.

Apollo Bay to Port Fairy: 200km approx drive time 2 hrs 30 mins
Day 3 – Port Fairy to Robe

Continue along the coastal route to Portland. At Tyrendarra, just prior to Portland a stop off at the Budj Bim Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area to learn about the fish traps and permanent homes, believed to be 6,700 years old. Linking Portland and Nelson is the Great South West Walk - a bushwalking trail suitable for most ages and abilities. The Walk comprises short 2 hour loop walks through to extended hikes. This unforgettable experience winds around 3 National Parks, hardwood forests, the pristine Glenelg River, aboriginal heritage sites, sandy bays and beaches, the Cape Nelson Lighthouse and a diversity of natural fauna and flora.

Cape Bridgewater and the Petrified Forest are a must on this coastal trip, before continuing across the South Australian border.

Visit Mount Gambier, which sits on an ancient extinct volcano and is circled by crater lakes including the Blue Lake that mysteriously changes colour from a dull grey to a vivid blue each November for a few months.

Day 4 – Robe to Victor Harbor

From Robe, drive through the Mount Benson wine area and on to Kingston SE. From here the highway skirts the Coorong National Park, a long narrow stretch of shallow lagoons separated from the ocean by a long peninsula: it’s a waterbird habitat of international importance. On the way, stop at Camp Coorong or Coorong Wilderness Lodge for fantastic views of the Southern Ocean and to learn about the local Aboriginal culture.

Follow the highway through Meningie to Wellington where you cross the Murray River.

Travel to Strathalbyn, a mecca for those who love antique shopping. From Strathalbyn, head towards the coast. Either Goolwa, Port Elliot or Victor Harbor make for a good overnight stay.

Day 5 – Victor Harbor to Cape Jervis (64km) then ferry to Kangaroo Island

Spend time exploring the Fleurieu Peninsula. Join a river cruise that takes you to the mouth of the Murray River and into the Coorong. Learn about this unique ecosystem, its wildlife and the Aboriginal heritage of the area. Surf, fly kites and spot Southern Right Whales between June and September in Middleton. Take a horse drawn tram to Granite Island to see the Little Penguins or watch for migrating whales in Encounter Bay.

Continue along the coast to the historic fishing ports of Beachport and Robe. Robe is a picturesque village beside a lovely sheltered harbour and a perfect place for an overnight stay. Indulge in fresh seafood and explore the stunning surf beaches and rugged coastlines.

Port Fairy to Robe: 346km approx drive time 3 hours 45 minutes
Day 6 – Kangaroo Island

Boasting wildlife, wildlife and more wildlife, Kangaroo Island is like a zoo without fences, with rare bird life, sea lions, little penguin colonies, tammar wallabies, short-beaked echidnas and plenty of kangaroos and koalas.

Discover parks with unparalleled experiences, heroic lighthouse legacies, marvel at magnificent towering natural landmarks and underground adventures. Witness the spectacular naturally sculpted granite boulders of Remarkable Rocks. Explore Kelly Hill Conservation Park’s extensive cave system.

The best way to the spectacular and diverse coastline and gorgeous hidden coves is on a tour. You can take it at your own pace with a self-guided audio tour or join a coach journey, boat trip or fishing charter for something different.

Kangaroo Island is considered to be one of the last unspoilt wonders of the world. It has friendly people, stunning beaches, geological wonders and a flourishing boutique food industry.

Discover the delights of the Kangaroo Island Farm Gate and Cellar Door Trail which introduces you to producers and products at their source. All the local establishments are small – quantity is not the concern. These small industries flourish because of the quality of their produce: free-range eggs, olive oil, native berry jams, smoke fish, regional yoghurts and cheeses, marron (fresh water crayfish), breads and biscuits. The Island is renowned for its honey, all of it produced from pure strain Ligurian bees.

There are loads of accommodation options from simple lodgings to breathtaking luxury.

Day 7 – Kangaroo Island to Adelaide

Take the passenger and vehicle ferry from Penneshaw back to the mainland at Cape Jervis. Discover the attractions of the Fleurieu Peninsula on your drive to Adelaide. Fish from the Cape Jervis jetty or hike part of the Heysen Trail along the coastline of Deep Creek Conservation Park. The Park is one of the best places on the Peninsula for wildlife with abundant Western Grey kangaroos plus less obvious inhabitants worth seeking out such as the Short-beaked echidna, Ring-tailed possum and Yellow-footed antechinus.

Urimbirra Wildlife Park near Victor Harbor is another good place to experience local wildlife, home to more than 400 Australian native animals and bird species. Stroll amongst the kangaroos, enjoy Koala shows and snake handling displays or pat farm animals in the children’s farmyard.

Travel through the rolling green hills of Mount Compass to the McLaren Vale wine region. Visit galleries and taste wine in some of the 45 cellar doors. A great way to explore is to follow the Cheese and Wine Trail – starting with a cheese hamper from Blessed Cheese. Stock up on olives, oils, cheeses, almonds and berries from roadside stalls and orchards before driving in to Adelaide.

Wander Adelaide’s cultural boulevard of North Terrace, walk and bike ride through the expansive parklands and enjoy the seaside ambience of Glenelg and Henley Beach.

* Distances and times do not include detours or stops