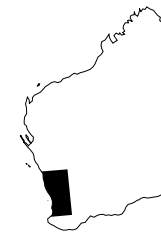


# Around Perth



While Western Australia (WA) is huge, you don't really have to travel too far from the capital to treat yourself to a little slice of peaceful beach or bush. In around 45 minutes – about the same time it'll take you to master the kayak – you'll be frolicking with wild dolphins at Shoalwater Marine Park, crunching through John Forrest National Park or clambering up the crest of the Darling Range, with views of city and sea spread out below.

Travel a little further out to destinations like Mandurah or Dwellingup, and you'll be scooping brilliant-blue crabs out of the estuary or snaking your way down the handsome Murray, canoe paddle in hand.

For pioneering heritage, head to the Avon Valley and historic towns such as Toodyay and York, classified by the National Trust. North of Perth, Lancelin is a world-renowned windsurfing wonderland and the Yanchep National Park is great for wildlife and walking trails.

If that's all too much trouble, just jump on the ferry to Rottnest Island. In 25 minutes you'll have set foot on a turquoise and white-sand playground. Wobble your bicycle around the island and choose your own bright-blue bay. And you won't *have* to lie on the beach all day: there's some of the best diving, snorkelling, surfing and fishing out here too.

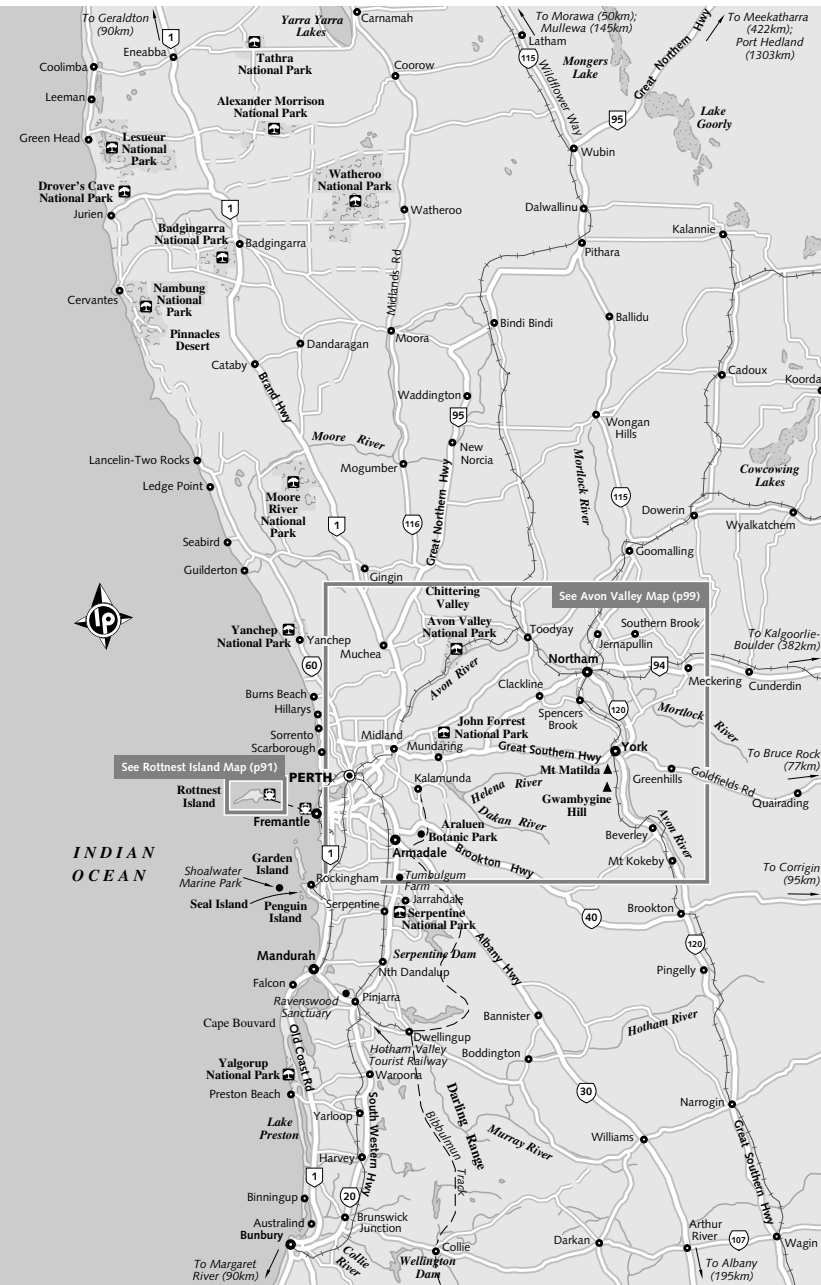
Wherever you decide to go, you will probably arrive at the same conclusion: no wonder the locals spend every waking moment outdoors.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Play with scores of charismatic wild dolphins in **Shoalwater Marine Park** (p94), near Rockingham, September to May
- Snorkel along the trail of underwater plaques through coral reef at **Little Salmon Bay** (p92), Rottnest Island
- Crack the legs of the freshly cooked blue-manna crab you caught yourself in the **Mandurah Estuary** (p95)
- Fling yourself into the handsome old Murray River, one eye peeled for the perfect picnic spot, at **Dwellingup** (p96)
- Picnic in seclusion at **Walyunga National Park** (p98), alongside the impressive Avon River
- Hike around enormous, bird-filled wetlands at **Yalgorup National Park** (p97)
- Enjoying jazz on the atmospheric streets of heritage-listed **York** (p101) in October



**AROUND PERTH**



AROUND PERTH

**ROTTNEST ISLAND**

📍 08 / pop 475

When it comes to **Rottneest Island** ([www.rottneest.wa.gov.au](http://www.rottneest.wa.gov.au)), opinions swing one of two ways: some see the island as a carefree, clear-water paradise; others insist it's overrated. It's the former, of course – those who think it's overrated must have gone in bad weather. (It's unpleasant when the wind really kicks up.)

Rotto, as it's known to the locals, is ringed by secluded tropical beaches and bays, about 19km from Fremantle. Swimming, snorkelling, fishing, surfing and diving are the island's *raison d'être*. And cycling round the 11km-long, 4.5km-wide island is a real high-

light; just ride around and pick your own bit of beach to spend the day.

Rotto is also the site of annual school leavers' and end-of-uni-exams parties, a time when the island is overrun by young people partying night and day. Check the calendar.

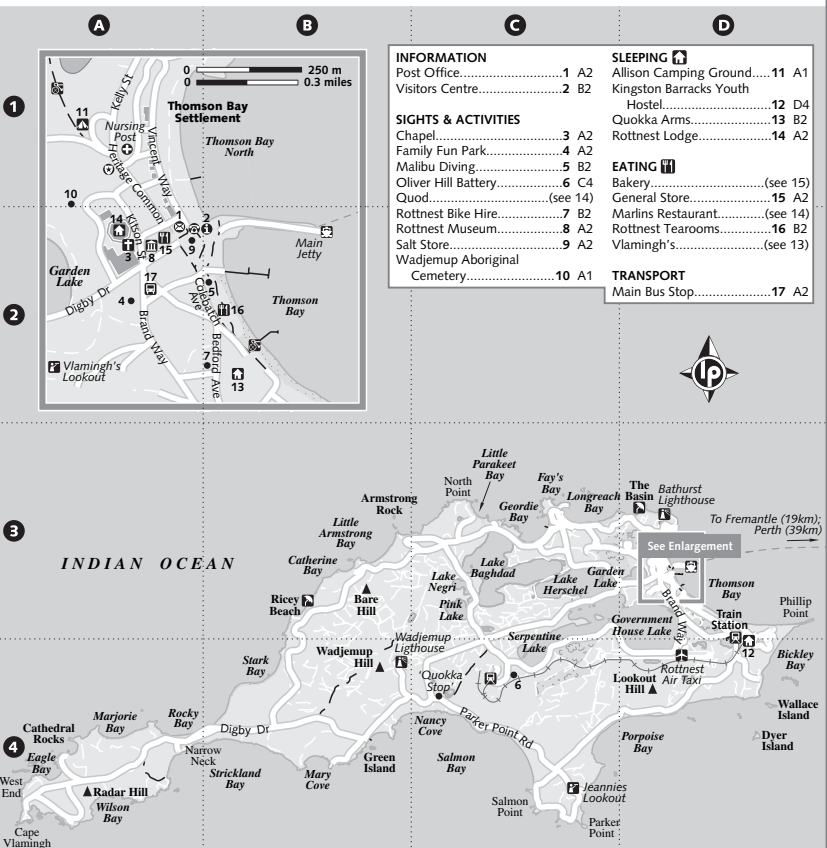
Car-free Rottneest generates its own power and water, so it's very important to use it sparingly.

**History**

There are signs of Aboriginal occupation on Rottneest dating from 7000 years ago, when a hill on a coastal plain became the island after being cut off by rising seas. It was, however, uninhabited when Europeans arrived. Dutch explorer Willem de Vlamingh claimed

AROUND PERTH

**ROTTNEST ISLAND**



discovery of the island in 1696 and named it Rotte-nest (rat's nest) because of the numerous king-sized 'rats' (which were actually quokkas) he saw there. The Noongar tribe knew it as Wadjemup.

The Rottnest settlement was originally established in 1838 as a prison for Aborigines from the mainland. Although there were no new prisoners after 1903, the existing prisoners had to serve out their sentences until 1920. The island is a sacred site to the Noongar because hundreds of their people died there. For more, see opposite.

## Information

At the settlement, behind the main jetty, there's a shopping area with ATMs, a general store and a bottle shop.

**Post office** (☎ 9am-1pm & 1.30-4pm Mon-Fri) Inside the gift shop.

**Ranger** (☎ 9372 9788, after hours 0419 951 635)

**Visitors centre** (☎ 9372 9752; ☎ 7.30am-5pm Sat-Thu, 7.30am-7pm Fri) At the end of the main jetty.

## Sights

To learn about the island's history (including its dark past of shipwrecks and Aboriginal incarceration), visit the **Rottnest Museum** (Kitson St; admission by gold coin donation; ☎ 10.45am-3.30pm), in the old hay-store building.

The photographic exhibition at the 19th-century **salt store** (Colebatch Ave) deals with a different chapter of local history: when the island's salt lakes provided all of WA's salt. You can also wander around the **convict-built buildings** such as the octagonal **Quod** (1864), where the prison cells are now hotel rooms and part of the Rottnest Lodge hotel. Not far away from Thomson Bay is **Vlamingh's Lookout**

### QUOKKAS

The quokka was known to the Aborigines as the *quak-a*, which was heard by Europeans as 'quokka'. Quokkas were once found throughout the southwest but are now confined to forest on the mainland and a population of 8000 to 12,000 on Rottnest Island. You will see several during your visit. Don't be surprised if one comes up to you looking for a titbit – many are almost tame. But don't feed them, as this can make them sick, and hot chips don't make for a very well-rounded diet.

(unsigned) on Lookout Hill. Go up past the old cemetery for panoramic views of the island. Also of interest is the **Oliver Hill Battery**, 3.2km from the settlement. This gun battery was built in the 1930s and played a major role in the defence of the WA coastline and Fremantle harbour.

## Activities

The family-friendly **Basin** is the most popular beach, though there are many smaller secluded beaches such as **Little Parakeet Bay**. Hire bikes from **Rottnest Bike Hire** (multigear/single-gear bike per day \$24/17, bond \$25; ☎ 8.30am-4pm).

Surfers like the breaks at Strickland, Salmon and Stark Bays. Try **snorkelling** at the Basin, Little Parakeet Bay, Longreach Bay, Geordie Bay and Little Salmon Bay (where there's a snorkel trail of underwater plaques); **fishing** at Little Salmon Bay and Ricey Beach. Much depends on the weather, though, so check [www.seabreeze.com.au](http://www.seabreeze.com.au) and make sure you don't pick a windy spot.

Some of Rottnest Island's shipwrecks are accessible to snorkellers, but getting to them requires a boat. Marker plaques around the island tell the sad tales of how and when the ships sank. The gift shop sells the knowledgeable *Snorkellers' Guide to Rottnest Island*, which covers 20 bays.

Snorkelling and diving equipment, surfboards and bodyboards can be hired from **Malibu Diving** (☎ 9292 5111; [www.rottnestdiving.com.au](http://www.rottnestdiving.com.au); Thomson Bay), which also runs daily snorkelling trips and open-water, four-day scuba diving courses (beginners \$395).

Rottnest is ideal for **bird-watching** because of the varied habitats: coast, lakes, swamps, heath, woodlands and settlements. Coastal birds include cormorants; bar-tailed godwits; whimbrels; fairy, bridled and crested terns; oyster-catchers; and majestic ospreys. For more, get *The Birdlife of Rottnest Island* by Denis Saunders and Perry de Rebeira from the gift shop.

The **Family Fun Park** (☎ 9292 5156; putt-putt adult/child \$8/5, trampolines per 10min \$2.50; ☎ 9am-4pm) is the spot for putt-putt (mini-golf) and trampolines.

## Tours

From the Salt Store you can join a volunteer guide on one of the **free daily walks** (11am, 1pm and 2pm) that take in the settlement's historic buildings, the **Wadjemup Aboriginal cemetery**,

the sea wall and boat sheds, the **chapel** and the Quod, or the lighthouse or quokkas.

Hour-long **Indigenous Heritage Tours** (adult/child \$11/5; ☎ 1.15pm) explain the Noongar's connection with Rottnest and include the Quod, where many died, the cemetery, and stories from the Dreamtime. These excellent tours leave outside the visitors centre, also the place to buy tickets.

A two-hour **bus tour** (adult/child \$24.50/12.20) leaves from the visitors centre at 11am, 1.30pm and 1.45pm. There's also the **Oliver Hill Train & Guns tour** (adult/child \$16.60/8.30; ☎ 1.30pm), which takes you by train to the 9.2-inch-diameter gun and tunnel on Oliver Hill (departs from the train station), and one-hour **Wadjemup Lighthouse tours** (adult/child \$15/6; ☎ 10.45am & 11.45am), which depart from the bus station.

From November to March, **Capricorn Kayak** (☎ 6267 8059; [www.capricornseakayaking.com.au](http://www.capricornseakayaking.com.au); half-day tours \$99) runs sea-kayaking tours around the Rottnest coastline.

Enjoy the reef and wrecks from above the water in the semi-submersible boat, the **Underwater Explorer** ([www.underwaterexplorer.com.au](http://www.underwaterexplorer.com.au); adult/child \$20/13). Forty-five-minute tours leave from the main jetty four times daily September to May; contact the visitors centre for times. Underwater Explorer also runs **snorkelling cruises** (90min cruises adult \$28; ☎ from 12.30pm Nov-Apr).

## Sleeping

Rottnest Island is wildly popular in summer and school holidays, when ferries and accommodation are booked out months in advance.

**Allison camping ground** (☎ 9432 9111; Thomson Bay; camp sites per person \$8.50) Camping is restricted to this leafy camping ground, which has barbecues. It's known as Tentland by the surfers and students who colonise this patch of Rotto. Be vigilant about your belongings.

**Kingston Barracks Youth Hostel** (☎ 9432 9111; dm \$24; ☎ ) If you stay in these old army barracks, you might find yourself fighting with school groups for a spot in front of the potbelly stove. Check in at the accommodation office at the main jetty before you make the 1.8km walk, bike or bus trip to Kingston.

**Rottnest Island Authority Cottages** (☎ 9432 9111; 4-bedroom oceanfront villas Sun-Thu/Fri-Sat \$170/200, 4-bedroom oceanfront cottages Sun-Thu/Fri-Sat from \$210/260) There are more than 250 villas and cottages – some that have magnificent beachfront positions – for rent around the island. Linen

provided. Note that there are off-season discounts; accommodation was refurbished late 2006.

**Rottnest Lodge** (☎ 9292 5161; [www.rottnestlodge.com.au](http://www.rottnestlodge.com.au); Kitson St; d/f from \$170/240; ☎ ) It's claimed there are ghosts in this comfortable complex, which is based around the former Quod and boys reformatory school. If that worries you, ask for one of the cheery rooms with a view in the new section fronting onto a salt lake.

**Quokka Arms** (☎ 9292 5011; [quokkaarms@rottnestisland.com](mailto:quokkaarms@rottnestisland.com); 1 Bedford Ave; s/d \$180/200) This beachfront building (1864) was once the gubernatorial summer holiday pad, but these days it's Rottto's most popular watering hole. The rooms are clean but nothing fancy; some have water views.

## Eating

There's no exceptional dining to be had on the island; in general, self-catering is your best option. The general store is like a small supermarket.

**Rottnest Bakery** (☎ 9292 5023; Thomson Bay shopping mall) Next to the general store, this is the place to pick up your pie.

**Rottnest Tearooms** (☎ 9292 5171; Thomson Bay; mains \$17.50-30) Grab an oceanfront table on the veranda and keep the kids happy with a burger (if that fails, try the playground). Water views.

**Vlamingh's** (☎ 9292 5011; Quokka Arms, 1 Bedford Ave; mains \$17.50-30) After a sunset drink at the pub, wander a few metres over to this beachside restaurant, serving dishes like mushroom, pumpkin and fennel risotto.

**Marlins Restaurant** (☎ 9292 5161; Rottnest Lodge, Kitson St; mains \$23.30-32) Marlins is the other higher-end option on the island, focused on seafood-inflected risotto and pastas. The surroundings may be a bit dated, but it's intimate and relaxing nonetheless.

## Getting There & Away

Besides points of departure, all the ferry services are basically the same. Return trips adult/child start at \$51/21 from Fremantle (25 minutes) and \$66/28 from Perth (1½ hours). There's an extra evening service on Friday. Check the websites for exact departure times, as these change seasonally.

**Boat Torque** (Rottnest Express; [www.rottnestexpress.com.au](http://www.rottnestexpress.com.au); Fremantle ☎ 9335 6406; Northport ☎ 9430 5844; Perth ☎ 9421 5888) departs Fremantle (C Shed, Victoria Quay) about five times daily; and



Northport terminal, Fremantle, about four times daily. There's a thrice-daily service from Perth. Secure parking is available at Northport, and you can arrange bike hire.

**Oceanic Cruises** (☎ 9325 1191 Perth, 9335 2666 Fremantle; www.oceaniccruises.com.au) departs Perth about three times daily. From Fremantle, there's a service from the East St jetty once in the morning and from the B Shed about four times daily.

**Rottnest Fast Ferries** (☎ 9246 1039; www.hillarysfastferries.com.au) runs trips from Hillarys Boat Harbour to Rotto three times daily from September to June.

**Rottnest Air-Taxi** (☎ 1800 500 006; www.rottnest.de) has a same-day return fare from Jandakot airport in Perth starting at \$240. Extended return is \$300. This price is for a four-seat plane (three passengers), so it can be a good deal.

### Getting Around

Bicycles are the time-honoured way of getting around the island. Rottnest is just big enough (and with enough hills) to make a day's ride good exercise. Hire a bike from one of the ferry companies or Rottnest Bike Hire (p92). Helmets (compulsory) and locks (bicycles are often stolen) are provided.

There are two bus services. A free shuttle runs between the main accommodation areas and the airport, departing from the accommodation office roughly every 20 minutes, with the last bus at about 7pm. The Bayseeker (day pass adult/child \$7.50/3.80) is a jump-on, jump-off service that does a loop around the island. From Geordie Bay to the bus stop, it's free.

## SOUTH OF PERTH

### Getting There & Away

The new train lines from Perth to Rockingham and Mandurah should be running by mid-2007. In the meantime, get to Rockingham bus station on bus 866 (\$5.70) from the Esplanade busport. Buses 920 and 126 run to Rockingham from Fremantle train station. Then from the Rockingham bus station you can catch buses 112 or 113 to the visitors centre and cafés.

For Mandurah, catch the Transperth express bus 867 (\$8.20, 65 minutes) from the Esplanade Busport in Perth. You'll arrive at Mandurah bus station, from which the 164, 165 or 169 bus will take you into town.

Be aware that most of the above-mentioned bus routes will have changed once the train line is operational.

**Transwa** (☎ 1300 662 205) operates a number of bus services that pass through Mandurah and stop at all the towns between Mandurah and Bunbury.

From Armadale, 29km south of Perth, the South Western Hwy skirts the Darling Range then heads south to Bunbury via Pinjarra. Transwa runs services that stop at all towns along the South Western Hwy in this section. The *Australind* train travels to Pinjarra (\$12.90, 1¼ hours) from East Perth bus station.

### ROCKINGHAM

☎ 08 / pop 81,000

The quiet seaside town of Rockingham, some 47km south of Perth, was founded in 1872 as a port, although over time this function was taken over by Fremantle. Today, a number of British migrants call Rockingham home.

Rockingham itself doesn't have much to offer travellers. The nearby Shoalwater Islands Marine Park, by contrast, is one of the greatest highlights of the region. Here you can play with dolphins, sea lions and fairy penguins in the wild in a pristine, beautifully preserved environment.

The **visitors centre** (☎ 9592 3464; 43 Kent St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) has plenty of information.

### Sights & Activities

**Shoalwater Islands Marine Park** includes Penguin and Seal Islands. **Penguin Island**, home to about 1200 fairy (little) penguins and less than 700m offshore, is a well-run eco-tourism destination: no food is sold on the island, toilets are composting, and the island is closed for bird breeding much of the year. Apart from bird-watching (pied cormorants, pelicans, crested and bridled terns, oystercatchers), you can swim and snorkel in the crystal-clear waters. **Seal Island**, a conservation area for the Australian sea lions, is off-limits to the public (sea lions are viewed nearby from the water). Pack your own lunch and water. The naval base of Garden Island can be reached only by private boat.

**Rockingham Wild Encounters** (☎ 9591 1333; www.rockinghamwildencounters.com.au) organises a lot of the marine park activities. You can join a **dolphin swim tour** (\$185 from Wellington St coach stand, Perth, or Val St jetty, Rockingham; ☎ tours Sep-May, 7am

from Perth, 7.30am from Rockingham) – there are some 180 bottlenose dolphins out here. Travellers rave about these tours. The dolphins aren't fed and don't perform tricks; they play with small groups of swimmers for the fun of it. Perth hotel pickup is available for an extra \$20. Alternatively, there are two-hour **dolphin-watch tours** (adult/child \$75/38 from Wellington St coach stand, Perth, \$55/28 from Val St jetty, Rockingham; ☎ tours Sep-May, 7.45am from Perth, 8.45am from Rockingham), where you cruise around with the dolphins. If you're lucky you'll see some pale-skinned baby dolphins.

Combine all three on the **dolphin, penguin and sea lion day tour** (adult/child \$111.50/65.50 from Wellington St coach stand, Perth, \$91.50/55.50 from Val St jetty, Rockingham; ☎ tours Sep-May, 7.45am from Perth, 8.45am from Rockingham). These tours include dolphin-spotting, a cruise to Seal Island to observe sea lions lolling about on the sand, and Penguin Island, where you can observe the fairy penguins in the wild and see them feeding at the discovery centre. You're then free to walk around the island, about 97% of which is a bird sanctuary.

There's also the **penguin and seal island cruise** (adult/child \$31.50/22.50 from Mersey Point, Rockingham; ☎ hourly, 10am-4pm), which takes in both islands over 45 minutes. Or you can simply hop over to Penguin Island on the **ferry** (adult/child \$15.50/12.50; ☎ hourly 9am-3pm). The ferry ticket includes entry to the penguin discovery centre. Tours depart from Mersey Point jetty, also the spot to buy tickets. To get to Mersey Point from Rockingham bus station, catch bus 113. **Sea kayaks** (single kayak per day \$80) and sea-kayaking tours are available too.

**Capricorn Seakayaking** (☎ 6267 8059; http://capricornseakayaking.com.au; \$139 from Perth and Fremantle) runs sea-kayaking tours around Penguin and Seal Islands, November to March.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Beachside Apartment Hotel** (☎ 1800 888 873; beachside@inet.net.au; Rockingham Beach Rd; 1-bedroom apt \$160, 2-bedroom apt with ocean view \$190, 2-bedroom apt \$180; ☎) Right on the esplanade, these apartments are spacious, sunny and secure. There are discounts for stays longer than seven nights. Reception is located at 58 Kent St.

**Peel Manor House** (☎ 9524 2838; www.peelmanorhouse.com.au; Fletcher Rd, off Stakehill Rd, Baldivis; d \$180) This large English-style manor (built some ten years ago) has about 16 double rooms. Sited on enormous grounds with a quiet garden out

back, it feels like a restful country retreat, if a little contrived. Tastefully furnished rooms are almost as big as Buckingham Palace. No kids.

**Thai by the Sea** (☎ 9591 1989; 224 Safety Beach Rd; mains \$14.90-21.50; ☎ dinner) Not far from Mersey Point, this is a friendly and popular spot.

**Betty Blue** (☎ 9528 4228; 3-4 The Boardwalk; mains \$15-24; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) The salty-sea-air vibe here is casual, the menu focused on seafood.

**Anna's** (☎ 9528 4228; 8 The Boardwalk; mains \$36; ☎ dinner Wed-Sun) Anna's is the local fine-dining experience, and it has an excellent reputation. European-style dishes include braised rabbit pie with wild mushroom and potato mash.

### MANDURAH

☎ 08 / pop 70,200

Sited on the calm Mandurah Estuary 75km from Perth, Mandurah was originally a beach resort, dormitory suburb and retirement haven, often the butt of gibes from Perth residents who felt the city was beneath them. These days, Mandurah has really come into its own, and is a quietly bustling, developed spot that's relaxed and decidedly unaffected. It's one of the best places in the region for fishing, crabbing, prawning (March to April) and dolphin-spotting. Life down here is lived out on the water.

The **visitors centre** (☎ 9550 3999; 75 Mandurah Tce; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat & Sun), on the estuary boardwalk, is well-informed.

### Sights & Activities

Take a dolphin-spotting cruise through the estuary, Peel Inlet and Murray River with **Mandurah Ferry Cruises** (☎ 9535 3324; www.mandurahferrycruises.com; Estuary Boardwalk; adult/child \$15/8; ☎ hourly 10.30am-3.30pm summer, 10.30am-2.30pm rest of year). You can also do a half-day trip, adult/child \$52/24 with lunch on board. These depart at 10am; bookings recommended.

You don't need your own boat to go **crabbing** and **fishing**. Simply bring your own gear down and head to the accessible estuary for blue manna crabs and fish; you can also fish on the beach (ask local fishermen where's good on the day). **Tuckey's Tackle** (☎ 9535 1228; 152 Mandurah Tce) sells fishing and crabbing gear (scoop net, bucket, measurer). Crabbing and fishing gear is relatively cheap and simple (\$15 to \$30 for a flick fishing rod, less than \$20 for crabbing gear), which is why no-one bothers to hire it out.

There's a designated, boat-free **swimming** area on the far side of the estuary, just north of Mandurah Bridge. Here dolphins have been known to swim up to unwitting kids for a frolic.

The regional **Mandurah Performing Arts Centre** (☎ 9550 3900; www.manpac.com.au; Ormsby Tce) is next to the **Reading Cinema** (☎ 9535 2800; 7 James Service Pl) on the boardwalk.

The only historic building open to the public is **Hall's Cottage** (Leighton Pl, Halls Head; ☎ 1-4pm Sun), built in the 1830s.

## Sleeping

Mandurah becomes congested with holiday-makers during summer and school holidays; you may need to plan ahead.

**Yalgorup Eco Park** (☎ 9582 1320; www.ecopark.com.au; 8 Henry Rd, Melros Beach; powered/unpowered sites \$45/40, 2-person chalets \$160; ♿) Yalgorup Eco Park is a high-end caravan park on Melros Beach, great for fishing. Environmentally friendly practices include the use of grey water and chemical-free cleaning products, but otherwise that's about as far as 'eco' stretches. There's a range of accommodation from campsites to couples' cabins to family-friendly villas. From Mandurah, take the Old Coast Rd south and follow the signs.

**Atrium Hotel** (☎ 9535 6633; www.atriumhotel.com.au; 65 Ormsby Tce; d from \$119; ♿) The Atrium was once Mandurah's premier hotel. These days it's looking dated and faded, but it's still functional good value if you can get a good rate. There are two swimming pools, including an indoor number in the atrium.

**Quest Mandurah** (☎ 9535 9599; www.questmandurah.com.au; 20 Apollo Pl; 2-person studio \$138, 2-bedroom apt \$202, 2-bedroom apt waterfront \$228, 3-bedroom apt with courtyard \$228; ♿) With light-blue weatherboards and white-painted gutters, the self-contained apartment complex backs directly on to the estuary. Rooms are clean, spacious and bright, and the three-bedroom apartments 51 and 52, with courtyards and estuary views, must be pick of the bunch.

## Eating & Drinking

**Miami Bakehouse** (☎ 9534 2705; Shop 6, Falcon Grove Shopping Centre, Old Coast Rd, Miami; pies \$4-4.90; ☎ until 8pm) This celebrity of a bakery has about as many awards as the state's top show pony, including ribbons from the Perth Royal Show. Connoisseurs will not regret the 10km hike to get here – the pies are incredible.

## BONZER BACKROADS – PLEASURES OF THE POOLE

Head south of Dwellingup on 2WD-friendly River Rd for 10km until you reach **Lane Poole Reserve**, on the banks of the Murray River. It's a wonderful place to stop for a barbecue, picnic, bushwalk or (in summer, when the waters are calmer) swim. The best spots for swimming are Island Pool and near the Baden-Powell water spout.

**Cicerello's** (☎ 9535 9777; 73 Mandurah Tce; mains \$10.50-26.40; ☎ lunch & dinner) If you don't have fish and chips on the waterfront, it's just not the quintessential beach holiday. Cicerello's is big and laid-back; choose your calamari, battered fish, fish burger or chilli mussels and take it all in slow over the estuary.

**Brighton Hotel** (☎ 9534 8864; 10-12 Mandurah Tce; mains \$16.50-28.50; ☎ lunch & dinner) The locals treat this big curvaceous number as their local watering hole. Watch the sun set over the estuary with a glass of wine.

## SOUTH WESTERN HIGHWAY Jarrahdale & Serpentine National Park

☎ 08 / pop 440  
Established in 1871, Jarrahdale is an old mill town. It's very small and sleepy, and that's part of its charm. The town's old post office, built in 1880, serves as a **visitors centre** (☎ 10am-4pm Sat & Sun). Walk trail maps are available here.

The area of forest running between Serpentine and Jarrahdale, 50km south of Perth, includes Serpentine National Park. At the base of the park are **Serpentine Falls** (car \$9; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), which can be accessed from Falls Rd, south of the Jarrahdale turn-off on South Western Hwy. There are walking tracks and picnic areas near the Serpentine Dam, off Kingsbury Dr.

Picturesque **Millbrook Winery** (☎ 9525 5796; Old Chestnut Lane, signed off Jarrahdale Rd; mains \$19-39; ☎ lunch Wed-Sun) is an excellent lunch choice. The expansive two-storey facility overlooks a small lake and surrounds. It's tranquil, and the food – like beef fillet with a sweet onion compote, garlic roast chats and Millbrook winery jus – is jolly good. Book ahead.

## Dwellingup

☎ 08 / pop 550  
Dwellingup is a small, forest-covered township with character. Primarily it's a base for

hiking, cycling, swimming, and canoeing on the Murray – the surrounding area is filled with adventure. It's 97km south of Perth.

The **Bibbulmun Track** (www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au) passes through this timber town on its journey southwards, and the **Munda Biddi** (www.mundaiddi.org.au) bike trail passes through here to Collie (and will eventually reach Albany). The **Hotham Valley Tourist Railway** terminates here from Pinjarra. See the **visitors centre** (☎ 9538 1108; Marrinup St; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun) for more information.

Don't waste any time getting out to the beautiful Murray. **Dwellingup Adventures** (☎ 9538 1127; www.dwellingupadventures.com.au; 1-person kayaks & 2-person canoes \$28 per day; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) is the place to hire bikes, kayaks and canoes. Or join a paddling tour (half-day, one-person kayak, \$50); white-water rafting tours are available June to October and start at \$98.

The **Forest Heritage Centre** (☎ 9538 1395; Acacia St; adult/family \$5/10; ☎ 10am-5pm) is an interesting architect-designed rammed-earth building in the shape of three gum leaves. There's a woodwork gallery and three trails leading off from the centre.

**Millhouse Café & Chocolate Company** (☎ 9538 1122; McLarty St; mains \$9-18; ☎ lunch Thu, lunch & dinner Fri-Sun) is a good spot to reboot yourself with a glass of wine and café-style treat such as the Millhouse chicken-and-mushroom pie.

## Pinjarra & Around

☎ 08 / pop 6640  
Pinjarra, 86km south of Perth, was once the site of a bloody incident in 1834 (whether it was a massacre or battle is a matter of debate between historians – and Noongars and the local council). Settlers here launched a reprisal on members of the Bindjareb Noongar tribe for raids and the killing of a servant. Many Noongars were killed, though accurate figures are difficult to find.

These days, it's a quiet town sited on the banks of the Murray River. The **visitors centre** (☎ 9531 1438; cnr George & Henry Sts; ☎ 9.30am-4pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) is in the historic building Edenvale, with **tearooms** (☎ 9531 2223; cnr George & Henry Sts; coffee or tea & scone \$4.50; ☎ lunch) out the back. Behind the historic mud-brick post office is a lovely grassed picnic area and **suspension bridge** over the river. Fat geese and ducks quack below. St John's Church, built 1861 to 1862 from mud bricks, is over beside the original 1860 schoolhouse.

Northwest of Pinjarra on Pinjarra Rd is the popular **Peel Zoo** (☎ 9531 4322; info@peelzoo.com; Ravenswood Sanctuary, Sanctuary Dr, off Pinjarra Rd; adult/child \$13/5), overrun by a bunch of local ducks, kangaroos, wombats, reptiles and parrots.

From May to October, the **Hotham Valley Tourist Railway** (☎ 9221 4444; www.hothamvalleyrailway.com.au; adult/child \$34/18; ☎ Wed-Sun) runs steam trains from Pinjarra to Dwellingup through blooming wildflowers and jarrah forests. Trains leave Pinjarra at 11am.

About 4km south of Pinjarra is the **Old Blythewood Homestead** (South Western Hwy, south of Pinjarra; adults \$4; ☎ 10am-4pm Sat & Sun), an 1859 colonial farm.

## Yalgorup National Park

About 112km south of Perth, this **national park** (ar \$9) is famous for its coastal lakes lined by **thrombolites** – rocklike structures built by micro-organisms. Thrombolites existed in the oceans 600 million years ago. To view the thrombolites, go to the Lake Clifton viewing platform, on Mt John Rd off Old Coast Rd.

If you enjoy wetlands, Yalgorup is an excellent place to hike and camp. The two main hikes down here are the **Lake Pollard** trail (6km) and the **Heathlands** walk trail (4.5km), also signed as the **Lake Preston** trail. The Lake Pollard trail begins about 8km down Preston Beach North Rd (not Preston Beach Rd, as marked on some maps). The pleasant Martins Tank Lake campground is just to the right of the trail's entrance. The trail takes in tuart, jarrah and bull banksia to the lake, which is also known for its black swans (October to March).

The Heathlands trail to Lake Preston starts at the information bay on Preston Beach Rd (before the turn-off to Preston Beach North Rd) and explores the tuart woodland. Further along Preston Beach Rd is Preston Beach.

Enter Yalgorup from Preston Beach Rd off Old Coast Rd.

## THE DARLING RANGE

The Darling Range – commonly known as the Perth Hills – boasts great picnicking, barbecues and bushwalks. Forest winds across hills for miles up here, and the distinct landscape provides a sense of escapism. Kalamunda is the bigger township with a secluded vibe; Mundaring's feature is its weir.



## Getting There & Away

Transperth buses 296, 299 and 799 (\$4, one hour) travel from Perth's Esplanade Busport to Kalamunda bus station. (Buses 282 and 283 also run but take slightly longer.) To Mundaring, catch a Transperth train to Midland train station and then bus 318, 320 or 330 to Mundaring (\$5.70, 70 minutes).

## MUNDARING

☎ 08 / pop 35,500

Mundaring's a laid-back spot with a small artistic community 35km east of Perth. It's also a stop-off before going down to **Mundaring Weir**, a dam built some 100 years ago to supply water to the goldfields more than 500km to the east. The reservoir has an attractive setting with walking tracks.

The **visitors centre** (☎ 9295 0202; 7225 Great Eastern Hwy; www.mundaringtourism.com.au; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, call to check Sat & Sun times) is in the Old School. Across the road is the **Mundaring Arts Centre** (☎ 9295 3991; 7190 Great Eastern Hwy; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun), which exhibits and sells the work of local artists.

The **Perth Hills National Parks Centre** (☎ 9295 2244; www.naturebase.net/nearerontature; Mundaring Weir Rd), run by DEC, hosts a series of kids programs like 'frog forage' and 'meet the marsupials'. Book ahead. The centre is also a well-set-up campground, with showers, and the Bibbulmun Track passes through here.

Freshwater **Lake Leschenaultia** (admission per car \$6; ☎ 8.30am-dusk) is a picturesque lake complete with pontoon. Robert Coover's *Quenby and Ola, Swede and Carl* echoes out here. North of the Great Eastern Hwy, near Chidlow.

The 16-sq-km **John Forrest National Park** (admission per car \$9), near Mundaring, was the state's first national park. With protected areas of jarrah and marri trees, native fauna, waterfalls and a pool, it's long been a favourite.

From November to April, kick back in a deck chair and watch a movie at the open-air **Kookaburra Cinema** (☎ 9295 6190; Allen Rd), just off the road to Mundaring Weir.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Djaril Mari YHA Hostel** (☎ 9295 1809; Mundaring Weir Rd; dm \$23, linen \$4, self-contained cottage per person \$21) This hostel is in a quiet bush setting close to the weir, about 8km south of town. Choose from dorms or a self-contained cottage that sleeps 12 (you'll need a minimum of six people to stay here).

**Mundaring Weir Hotel** (☎ 9295 1106; Mundaring Weir Rd; d Sun-Thu \$100, Fri \$115, Sat \$125; ☎) This rambling place has seen better days, but is still popular with Perth escapees. The separate units overlook a pool.

**Loose Box** (☎ 9295 1787; www.loosebox.com; 6825 Great Eastern Hwy; fixed-price menu \$135; ☎ dinner Wed-Sat, lunch Sun) A French fine-dining restaurant with provincial décor, Loose Box has enjoyed a good reputation for many years. The impressive menu shows off regional produce like Manjimup truffles.

## KALAMUNDA

☎ 08 / pop 50,000

Kalamunda is a quiet township on the crest of the Darling Range. The area had its beginnings as a timber settlement, but it's since become a haven for those keen to enjoy the seclusion of the hills – and still be close to the city. (It's a 30-minute drive.)

From **Zig-Zag Dr**, just north of Kalamunda off Lascelles Pde, there are fantastic views over Perth to the coast. Even if you're just passing through, the trip up here is worth it.

At **Kalamunda National Park** you can walk and picnic in beautiful surroundings. There are also a number of wineries (like Hainault Vineyard and Darlington Estate) nearby.

South of Kalamunda, just off Brookton Hwy, is **Araluen Botanic Park** (☎ 9496 1171; www.araluenbotanicpark.com; adult/child \$8/4; ☎ 9am-6pm). It's quite a gem. Originally constructed in the 1920s by the Young Australia League (YAL) as a bush retreat, the park was neglected for years and became overgrown. Recently, excavations have revealed elaborate garden terraces, waterfalls and an ornamental pool. July to October, the famous tulips are in bloom. Get here via Croydon Rd, Roleystone.

**Stirk's Cottage** (admission free; ☎ 1.30pm-4.30pm Sun), built of mud brick and shingle in 1881, is on Kalamunda Rd.

At **Le Paris-Brest Café Patisserie** (☎ 9293 2752; 22 Haynes St; mains \$16.90-23.90; ☎ breakfast & lunch Tue-Sun) in Kalamunda, all you have to do is find a spot underneath the replica Eiffel Tower and await your French-style pastry.

## WALYUNGA NATIONAL PARK

The Avon River cuts a narrow gorge through the Darling Range at **Walunga National Park** (car/motorcycle \$9/3; ☎ 8am-5pm) in Upper Swan. Walunga is a great place for hiking and picnicking, the river much like a handsome

carpet python winding through the range. This 18-sq-km park is off the Great Northern Hwy, 40km northeast of Perth.

The bushwalks include a 5.2km return walk to Syd's Rapids as well as a 1.2km Aboriginal Heritage Trail. The best trail is the 10.6km Echidna Loop, which has tremendous views over the Swan and Avon Valleys. The park has one of the largest known camp sites of the Noongar people; the camp site was still in use in the late 1800s. The area may well have been occupied by Aborigines for more than 6000 years.

## AVON VALLEY

The lush green Avon Valley – with its atmospheric homesteads with big verandas, rickety wooden wagons and moss-covered rocks – was 'discovered' by European settlers in early 1830 after food shortages forced Governor Stirling to dispatch Ensign Dale to search the Darling Range for arable land. What he found was the upper reaches of the Swan River, but he presumed it was a separate river, which

is why its name changes from the Swan to the Avon as it crosses the Great Northern Hwy. The valley was very soon settled, just a year after Perth was founded, and many historic stone buildings still stand proudly in the towns and countryside in the area. The picturesque Avon River is popular for picnics.

## Getting There & Away

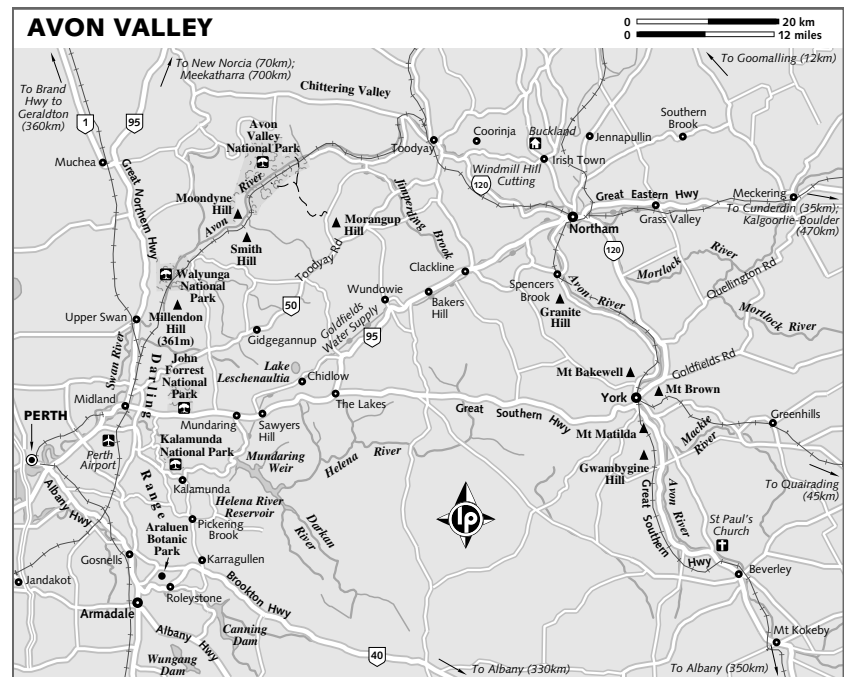
The best way to explore the valley is by car as this gives you the flexibility to make stops along the way.

**Transwa** (☎ 1300 6622 05) runs buses twice a day to York (\$13, one hour) and Northam (\$17, 90 minutes), and a train once a day to Toodyay (\$14, 75 minutes) from East Perth.

## TOODYAY

☎ 08 / pop 674

Tiny historic Toodyay, only 85km northeast of Perth, is a popular weekend destination for city folk who like to while away an hour or so browsing the bric-a-brac shops and having a beer on the veranda of an old pub. As you'd expect of a town classified by the National



Trust, it has scores of atmospheric heritage buildings and charm oozes from its old stone bricks. Originally known by the name Newcastle, Toodyay (pronounced '2J'), came from the Aboriginal word *duidgee* (place of plenty), and was adopted around 1910.

A **gourmet food festival** is on in August and a lively **jazz festival** is held here during the last weekend of October.

There is also a **visitors centre** (☎ 9574 2435; visitorscentre@toodyay.wa.gov.au; 7 Piesse St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun).

### Sights & Activities

Next to the visitors centre is the restored stone 1870 **Connor's Mill** (adult/child \$2.50/2). Grab a copy of *Historic Toodyay: Stirling Self Guided Tour* to get the most out of your visit.

The **Old Newcastle Gaol Museum** (☎ 9574 5053; www.toodyay.com; 17 Clinton St; adult/child \$2/1; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun), built in the 1860s, has a Moondyne Gallery, telling the story of bushranger Joseph Bolitho Johns (aka Moondyne Joe; see the boxed text, below), while historic **St Stephen's Church** (1862) is also worth a look. But the best way to spend your time in Toodyay is just wandering the streets.

**Coorinja** (☎ 9574 2280; Toodyay Rd; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat), 6km west of town, is the oldest inland **winery** in WA, having started in the 1870s.

It now specialises in fortified wines so buy a bottle of port.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Toodyay Caravan Park** (☎ 9574 2612; Avon Banks, Railway Rd; camp/caravan sites \$17/21; 🚻) If you're staying overnight – most people don't – this caravan park has shady sites on the banks of the Avon.

**Victoria Hotel** (☎ 9574 2206; 116 Stirling Tce; s/d \$55/90) This hotel has renovated rooms. Also does counter meals (\$11 to \$26).

**Cino's on the Terrace** (☎ 9574 4888; 102 Stirling Tce; meals \$7-16; ☎ 9am-9pm) Cino's brings a bit of big city sophistication to this country town with delicious breakfasts, a global menu that stretches from Thai to Turkish, great coffee and scrumptious cakes.

**Cola Café & Museum** (☎ 9574 4407; 128 Stirling Tce; snacks \$5-14) Coca-Cola memorabilia runs amok here. Order a cola spider (remember, those? Coke with a scoop of ice-cream for those who missed out!) and a big burger and play 'guess the 1950s tune'.

If you're after a counter meal, you won't go hungry at the **Victoria Hotel**.

### AVON VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Featuring granite outcrops, forests and wonderful fauna, this **national park** (car/motorcycle

\$10/5) is accessed from Toodyay and Moran-gup Roads. The Avon River flows through the centre of the park in winter and spring, but is usually dry at other times.

The Avon Valley National Park is the northern limit of the jarrah forests, and the jarrah and marri are mixed with wandoo woodland. Bird species that make use of the forests included rainbow bee-eaters, honeyeaters, kingfishers and rufous treecreepers. Animals and reptiles live in the understorey: honey possums and western pygmy-possums hide among the dead leaves, and skinks and geckos are everywhere.

There are **camp sites** (☎ 9574 2540; \$14) with basic facilities (eg pit toilets and barbecues).

### NORTHAM

☎ 08 / pop 6227

Northam, the major town of the Avon Valley, is a busy commercial centre on the railway line to Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The line from Perth once ended here and miners had to make the rest of the weary trek to the gold-fields by road.

Northam is a likable country town with some fine heritage buildings but there's little here to interest travellers.

The **visitors centre** (☎ 9622 2100; www.northam.com.au; 2 Grey St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) is in a corrugated-iron building on the banks of the Avon River where you can book transport and get lots of regional information. Pick up the *Experience the Avon Valley* brochure with lots of info and maps.

### Sights & Activities

**Morby Cottage** (☎ 9622 2100; adult/child \$2/1; ☎ 10.30am-4pm Sun), built in 1836 as the home of John Morrell (founder of Northam), has been restored and now houses various Morrell family heirlooms and other early Northam memorabilia. The **Old Railway Station Museum** (☎ adult/child \$2/50c; ☎ 10am-4pm Sun), housed in a National Trust-registered building (1836), has a large collection of railway memorabilia.

Annual events in Northam include the **Vintage on Avon** vintage sports car rally (March), and the **Avon River Festival and Descent** (August), a gruelling 133km white-water rafting event for powerboats, kayaks and canoes, which starts from the visitors centre.

The skies above Northam, and other areas in the Avon Valley, are popular with flying, paragliding, skydiving and hang-gliding en-

thusiasts. **Windward Adventures** (☎ 9621 2000; www.windwardballooning.com; weekday/weekend flight \$225/275) offers champagne balloon flights at sunrise, breakfast and sunset.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Avon Bridge Hotel** (☎ 9622 1023; www.avonbridgehotel.com.au; 322 Fitzgerald St; s/d \$65/88; 🍷) While most travellers don't stay overnight, if you get the urge this stylish hotel has comfortable rooms with all mod cons. The gourmet restaurant, bar and café (meals \$11 to \$32) are the spots of the moment, popular with locals and visitors alike.

**O'Hara's Restaurant** (meals \$15-31) A casual, popular eatery.

**Rivers Edge Café** (☎ 9622 8500; 1 Grey St; meals \$10-17) The verandas of this big corrugated iron building on the river (home to the visitors centre) are a wonderful place to soak up the sun and river views over a slice of scrumptious cake and good coffee.

### Drinking

**Shamrock Hotel** (☎ 9622 1092, 112 Fitzgerald St) A good spot for a beer.

### YORK

☎ 08 / pop 3200

Charming York is the most atmospheric spot in the Avon Valley and is a wonderful place to while away a couple of hours on a Sunday, when it's at its liveliest. A stroll down the main street, Avon Terrace, with its restored old buildings, is a real step back in time – so much so that the whole town has been classified by the National Trust.

Only 97km from Perth, York is the oldest inland town in WA, first settled in 1831, just two years after the Swan River Colony. The settlers here saw similarities in the Avon Valley and their native Yorkshire, so Governor Stirling bestowed the name York on the region's first town.

Convicts were brought to the region in 1851 and contributed to the development of the district; the ticket-of-leave hiring depot was not closed until 1872, four years after transportation of convicts to WA ceased. During the gold rush, York prospered as a commercial centre, servicing miners who were heading to Southern Cross.

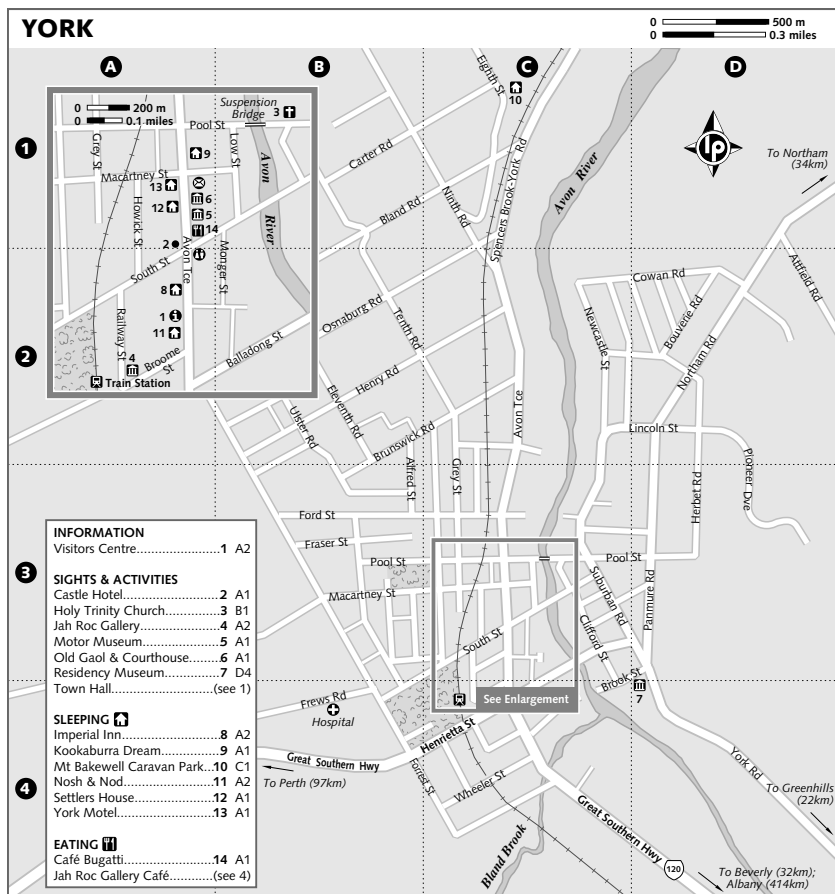
These days, York is a festival town – catch the **antique and collectables fair** at Easter, plus York's vibrant **jazz festival** in October.

### THE MYTHOLOGY OF MOONDYNE JOE

It's perhaps odd that while the state of Victoria's most famous outlaw, Ned Kelly, is known for his gun battles with the law, Western Australia's most illustrious bushranger, Moondyne Joe, is famous for escaping. Over and over again.

Joseph Bolitho Johns (1828–1900), sent to Western Australia for larceny, arrived in Fremantle in 1853 and was granted an immediate ticket of leave for good behaviour. This good behaviour lasted until 1861 when he was arrested on a charge of horse stealing, but Johns escaped that night from Toodyay jail on the horse he rode in on, sitting snugly on the magistrate's new saddle. He was recaptured and sentenced to three years imprisonment. Between November 1865 and March 1867 he made four attempts to escape, three of them successful. When eventually captured he was placed in a special reinforced cell with triple-barred windows in Fremantle. He didn't need to escape from this, because in 1867 he managed to escape from the prison yard while breaking rocks. He served more time in Fremantle prison when recaptured and was conditionally pardoned in 1873. After release he worked in the Vasse district and kept his nose relatively clean, but suffered from poor mental health later in life until his death in 1900. You can see his grave at Fremantle cemetery.

While Moondyne Joe was a criminal, these days it pays to be in the 'Moondyne Joe' business. Three books, including the latest, a prize-winning juvenile fiction novel called *The Legend of Moondyne Joe* (by Mark Greenwood), have been written about him; a Moondyne festival is held in Toodyay on the first Sunday of May; a cave in Margaret River is named after him; not to mention a pub, caravan park and who knows what else. Let's hope he doesn't escape his final resting place and start asking for royalties...



The **visitors centre** (☎ 9641 1301; www.yorktouristbureau.com.au; Avon Tce; ☎ 9am-5pm), in the old town hall has lots of info on the town, including a free visitors guide and map.

### Sights & Activities

There are delightful 19th-century buildings on Avon Tce, in the centre of town, such as the **town hall**, **Castle Hotel**, **police station**, **Old Gaol & Courthouse** and **Settlers House**.

Built in 1858, the interesting **Residency Museum** (☎ 9641 1751; Brook St; adult/child \$3.50/1.50; ☎ 1-3pm Tue, Wed & Thu, 11.30am-3.30pm Sat & Sun) houses some intriguing historic exhibits, ranging from an antique egg rack and a butter churn, to beautiful old black-and-white photos of York.

The **Holy Trinity Church** (Pool St), by the Avon River, was completed in 1854 and features stained-glass windows designed by WA artist Robert Juniper, and a rare pipe organ. The **suspension bridge** across the Avon was built in 1906.

York's characterful **Motor Museum** (☎ 9641 1288; 116 Avon Terrace; adult/child \$7/3.50; ☎ 9.30am-3pm) is a must for vintage-car enthusiasts.

The wonderful **Jah Roc Gallery** (☎ 9641 2522; 7-13 Broome St; ☎ 10am-5pm), housed in a converted flour mill, exhibits and sells stunning jarrah furniture, art and craft by local artisans.

York has earned a reputation as the state's **skydiving** centre; the drop zone is about 3km from town. Contact Perth-based **Skydive Express** (☎ 1800 355 833; www.skydive.com.au) for more info.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Mt Bakewell Caravan Park** (☎ 9641 1421; Eighth Rd; unpowered/powerd sites \$19/21) You can pitch your tent in a bush setting here.

**Kookaburra Dream** (☎ 9641 2936; 152 Avon Tce; dm/s/f \$22/29/85; ☎) If you decide to stay the night, this is the best budget option. It's an excellent centrally-located backpackers in a restored old building dating to 1890. Travellers loved the laid-back vibe, barbecue facilities and big continental breakfasts. You can also get good discounts on skydiving and hot air ballooning.

**Imperial Inn** (☎ 9641 1010; 83 Avon Tce; hotel d \$45, motel d \$90) In a beautiful stone building on the main street, the Imperial offers quaint basic rooms in the old hotel and standard motel units out the back.

**York Motel** (☎ 9641 1010; 10 William St; d \$90; ☎) The friendly, accommodating owner of this modern, comfortable motel with well-equipped renovated rooms will help you get a room elsewhere if her popular motel is full.

**Settlers House** (☎ 9641 1096; 125 Avon Tce; d from \$130; ☎) Originally a staging post and guesthouse for goldfields travellers and once home to WA's first provincial newspaper, staying in this historic building is like a step back in time. The characterful bar is also popular.

**Nosh & Nod** (☎ 9641 1629; www.noshnod.com.au; 75 Avon Tce; d \$95-125, mains \$12-28) Has a delightfully cluttered and eclectically decorated restaurant specialising in comfort food (from hearty portions of lasagne to traditional bangers and mash), and comfy self-contained rooms with spa out the back.

**Jah Roc Gallery Café** (☎ 9641 2522; 7-13 Broome St; snacks \$4-12 ☎ lunch) Pleasantly set in a leafy courtyard, Jah Roc is a lovely spot for a leisurely coffee and scrummy cake.

**Café Bugatti** (☎ 9641 1583; 104 Avon Tce; mains \$12-24; ☎ lunch Wed-Mon, dinner Fri & Sat) is equally as popular with locals as it is tourists who head here for big portions of delicious Italian food and a great kids' menu.

## NORTH COAST

The coast road north of Perth leads to some popular spots, each with a unique drawcard. Within an hour's drive of the city centre, Perth's outer suburbs give way to the bushland oasis of Yanchep National Park, with plenty of wonderful wildlife and walking trails.

The coastline ranges from tranquil bays at Guilderton, which are good for swimming and fishing, to windswept beaches at Lancelin, with excellent conditions for windsurfing and kite-surfing, attracting water-lovers from around the world.

### YANCHEP & AROUND

**Yanchep**, 50km north of Perth, is best known for its national park of bushy woodlands and wetlands that are home to hundreds of species of fauna and flora. The town is generally referred to as 'Yanchep Two Rocks' because of the closeness of neighbouring town, Two Rocks. There are also plenty of activities outside the park, including surfing and fishing on its beautiful beaches.

**Yanchep National Park** (☎ 9561 1004; www.naturebase.net; per car \$10; ☎ visitors centre 9.15am-4.30pm) has the rare claim of having an inn within its boundaries, but it's the easy walking trails through natural bushland that are the main attraction. The free map you get upon entry details the shorter walks (around 2km, one hour) but for longer walks, you will need to purchase trail guides from the visitors centre. The park features splendid underground caves (which can be viewed on daily tours), an abundance of wildlife, including cuddly koalas, kangaroos, emus and cockatoos, and the lovely wetlands area of Wagardu Lake. Local Noongar guides run excellent Aboriginal tours on indigenous history, lifestyle and culture, including didgeridoo and dance performances. You can buy wonderful artefacts and art from the gift shop also.

**Yanchep Inn** (☎ 9561 1001; Yanchep National Park; hotel s/d \$28/60, motel d \$90; ☎) has basic rooms with shared facilities. The attached motel rooms are more comfortable with en suite, air-con and TV. The restaurant serves counter meals (\$9 to \$27), or you can focus on drinking in the views and a beverage from the veranda.

Rooms are fashionably boho-chic at the lovely **Mariska B&B** (☎ 0412 040 035; www.mariska.com.au; 14 Oldham Way, Yanchep; per person Sun-Thu \$35, Fri & Sat \$40), and open out to a wide, encircling balcony slung with hammocks. You can prepare your own breakfast in the modern kitchen, or have it made for you.

**Yanchep Sun City** (Two Rocks) is a marina with a supermarket and a few takeaways. You can't miss it: it's just beyond the giant carved bust of King Neptune.



## GUILDERTON

📞 08 / pop 150

Some 43km north of Yanchep, Guilderton is a popular family holiday spot. Children paddle safely in the mouth of the Moore River while adults enjoy the excellent fishing, surfing and sunbathing. A number of shipwrecks off the coast lend weight to the staid brown-brick lighthouse that oversees the coast. It's said that the *Vergulde Draeck*, part of the Dutch East India Company fleet, ran aground nearby in 1656 carrying a treasure of guilders. And that's how the settlement was named, though older generations still know it as Moore River.

The **Guilderton Caravan Park** (📞 9577 1021; 2 Dewar St; 2-person unpowered/powering site \$16/19.50, 4-person chalet \$80-104) is the holidaymakers' hub in this laid-back town. Cabins are self-contained, but you'll need your own linen. The park has a general store selling essentials, as well as takeaway-style food.

The **Moore River Roadhouse** (📞 9577 1023; Mullins St; meals \$5-18) fries up burgers and fish and chips – perfect for a post-swim pig out. Basic ingredients are also available for self-caterers.

## LANCELIN

📞 08 / pop 800

What do you do when the beach is windy? Harness yourself to a really big kite and strap yourself to a surfboard, of course! Afternoon offshore winds and shallows protected by an outlying reef make for perfect kite-surfing and windsurfing conditions at Lancelin. The town (130km north of Perth) plays host to action-seekers from around the world in summer for its consistently windy conditions. In January it's a veritable festival of wind-worshippers during the **Lancelin Ocean Classic** race, which starts at Ledge Point.

Head to the beach and watch the wind- and kite-surfers whoop it up. **Werner's Hot Spot** (📞 9655 1553) offers windsurfing (\$20) and kite-surfing (\$70) lessons. Werner also hires out gear from his Kombi parked at the beach from October to March (phone at other times and he'll meet you). There are gentle waves at the main beach for traditional surfing.

The mountainous soft, white dunes out the back of town are a playground for sandboarders. You can hire a board from **Have a Chat General Store** (📞 9655 1054; 104 Gingin Rd) and from **Offshore** (📞 9655 2828; Hopkins Rd). It'll cost you \$10 for two hours, plus 10 minutes of arduous climbing for a few seconds of thrills.

The dunes are also home to the 32-seat American school bus on enormous monster-truck wheels that takes delighted travellers on a wild ride through the sand; contact **Desert Storm Adventures** (📞 9655 2550; www.desertstorm.com.au; adult/child \$35/25). More dune action can be had by hiring an **off-road motorbike** (📞 0417 919 550; 2-4-wheel bike per hour \$65/70).

## Sleeping & Eating

There are two supermarkets and takeaways along Gingin St.

**Lancelin Lodge YHA** (📞 9655 2020; www.lancelinlodge.com.au; 10 Hopkins St; dm \$23, d/f from \$60/80; 📺 📶) This award-winning hostel is well equipped and welcoming, with wide verandas and lots of communal spaces to spread about. Catering mainly to windsurfers, the excellent facilities include a big kitchen, barbecue, wood-fire pizza oven, decent-sized swimming pool, ping-pong table, volleyball court and free use of pushbikes and boogie boards!

**Windsurfer Beach Chalets** (📞 9655 1454; kateandkim@bigpond.com.au; 1 Hopkins St; d \$110, extra person \$15) A great choice for groups of friends and families (each chalet sleeps six), these self-contained two-bedroom units look a lot better from the outside (a very stylish contemporary design) than they do inside, but this is the closest accommodation to the windsurfing beach. They're functional and well-equipped and have a sun terrace that backs onto a grassy area. There's also a communal barbecue area.

**Lancelin Caravan Park** (📞 9655 1056; Hopkins St; unpowered/powering site per person \$10/12; on-site vans \$35) Sailborders love camping out at this neat park – not for the facilities and amenities, which are rudimentary, but more for the location. This place is about as close to the beach as you can get.

**Offshore Café** (📞 9655 2828; Hopkins Rd; meals \$5-16; 🍷 lunch) Decent burgers and sandwiches.

**Endeavour Tavern** (📞 9655 1052; 58 Gingin Rd) A classic beachfront Aussie pub with a beer garden overlooking the ocean, and pool table, darts and a TAB. The casual eatery serves decent seafood, and the speciality is crayfish with chips and salad for \$35.

## Getting There & Away

**Catch-a-bus** (📞 9655 2020) is the only bus service to Lancelin; it's a private shuttle service run by the YHA Lancelin Lodge. It offers drop-offs and pick-ups between Perth and Lancelin (\$25) on demand.

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