



SEVEN DAYS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Perth – Geraldton – Denham – Carnarvon – Perth

Western Australia makes up around one third of the Australian land mass. Yet it is sparsely populated, with around 2.1 million inhabitants. Almost 75% of these live in the state capital, Perth.

Being so large you might expect to travel long distances between the major attractions. While this can be true, there are plenty of places you can see in a week.

AT A GLANCE



- › Perth – Geraldton (4.5 hours)
- › Geraldton – Denham (5 hours)
- › Denham – Carnarvon (4.25 hours)
- › Carnarvon – Exmouth (4.5 hours)

DAY ONE

Spend some time exploring Perth today. This friendly, relaxed city offers river walks and beaches, and a sunny Mediterranean-style climate. You might want to rent a bicycle to explore the city and the pathway that follows the lovely Swan River.

Art lovers should pop into the Art Gallery of Western Australia to see its Aboriginal art collection. The Aquarium of Western Australia specialises in sea life found along the state's coast. A highlight is Australia's largest walk-through aquarium, with its giant sharks and rays.

A trip through Kings Park & Botanic Gardens is a nice way to discover local flora. The spring wildflower displays here are at their peak between August and October.

There are plenty of beautiful beaches in and around Perth, Perth's most fashionable beach is Cottesloe, which is graced by Edwardian buildings, including the local teahouse.

You could spend a whole day in the heritage port precinct of Fremantle. Make sure you visit the decommissioned Fremantle Prison, which was built in the 1850s. You can spend time in prison cells and underground tunnels created by prisoners sentenced to hard labour. Then, board a replica convict punt to explore submerged passageways too.

- › Rent a bicycle and join the locals cycling along the Swan River
- › See local flora and great views over Perth from Kings Park & Botanic Gardens
- › Discover local marine life at The Aquarium of Western Australia
- › Explore the heritage port precinct of Fremantle, fish and chips at fisherman's wharf are a must!
- › Swim, Surf and Snorkel from Perth's most iconic beach Cottesloe



DAY TWO

You could head south to the wineries and tall forests of the Margaret River region today, or west into the Outback for a visit to the unique Kalgoorlie Gold Fields. But this time we head north along the coast. Between August and November the wildflowers along the route are a visual treat.

First stop is the Pinnacles Desert, three hours from Perth. You can walk among thousands of eerie limestone formations scattered over vast rippled sand dunes.

Have a late lunch at the nearby township of Cervantes, renowned for its seafood. Afterwards, relax for a while on the pure white sand, and look out for bottlenose dolphins in the turquoise water.

Continue north to Geraldton, the windsurfing capital of the world. You can stay the night here.

- › Follow the scenic drive or walking trail through the moon like landscape of the Pinnacles
- › Head to the Pinnacles Desert Discovery Centre to find out how the curious landscape took shape
- › Enjoy fresh seafood straight from the ocean in the cay fishing town of Cervantes
- › Freshen up with a swim or snorkel off one of Cervantes white sand beaches

DAY THREE

Directly across the sea from Geraldton are the mysterious Houtman Abrolhos Islands the scene of the famous Batavia mutiny. It's also one of nature's most spectacular marine areas. If you had longer you could dive or snorkel above spectacular coral gardens.

You can learn more about the Batavia mutiny in the WA Museum Geraldton. Aboriginal history and local animals and birds are also featured.

Continue north along the spectacular coast for lunch in Kalbarri. Spend some time walking in the Kalbarri National Park, located on the lower reaches of the Murchison River. Expect magnificent gorges and dramatic sea cliffs.

Head now to the township of Denham, the main town in the Shark Bay World Heritage area. Visit Shell Beach, a long stretch of snow-white beach made entirely out of shells and bordered by aqua blue ocean waters.

- › From July to October Geraldton is the gateway to spectacular wildflower country
- › Visit the Western Australia Museum – Geraldton for an insight in to the intriguing Indigenous, maritime and Spanish missionary history
- › Take a scenic flight over Abrolhos Islands and Kalbarri National Park
- › Walk to lookout points of Murchison River gorges in Kalbarri National Park



DAY FOUR

It's definitely worth spending at least two nights around here, especially if beautiful beaches, warm sea, superb fishing, camel rides, and fascinating wildlife whet your appetite.

Another local natural wonder is the hyper-saline water of Hamelin Pool, where the rocks are actually alive. The pool houses the best examples in the world of living marine stromatolites. These are slow growing organisms that have existed for at least 3.5 billion years.

Then there's Monkey Mia, where wild bottlenose dolphins swim around your legs just off the beach. It's one of Australia's most talked about destinations.

In the heart of the World Heritage Listed Shark Bay is Francois Peron National Park. This is part of Project Eden, designed to reintroduce native marsupials to the arid red-dirt country and eradicate feral animals such as cats and foxes.

- Hand-feed wild dolphins from the shore at Monkey Mia
- Join a scuba diving trip, the wreck of the 'Godrun' is one of the best sites with brightly coloured fish and corals
- Relax on one of the white sand beaches looking out to the turquoise waters
- Fishing enthusiasts can join boat trips or simply throw in a line from the shore

DAY SEVEN

You could travel onwards to the pearling town of Broome and its long stretch of sand called Cable Beach. From here you could head into the rugged Outback of the Kimberley.

Otherwise, you could drive back to Perth (approximately 9 hours), or drop off your hire car and fly back from Exmouth. (one way car rental fees apply)

DAYS FIVE & SIX

Travel further up the coast today to Carnarvon for another great local seafood feast, stay overnight here before continuing to Exmouth, gateway to Ningaloo Reef.

Ningaloo Reef stretches for some 260 kilometres (161 miles) and protects a shallow lagoon, where fish swim between your legs. It's one of the only places on earth where you are able to walk from the beach straight onto a true coral reef.

Hire a kayak to explore, go scuba diving, or take a cruise boat across the reef. Look out for manta rays, turtles, dolphins, whales and even dugongs.

From April–June you can snorkel or dive with whale sharks one of the best animal adventures in the world. The whale shark is a slow moving filter feeding shark and the largest living fish. It can grow up to 18 metres (60 feet) long.

- Swim with whale sharks, the biggest fish in the world (April–June)
- Join a boat cruise across the reef look out for dolphins, whales, turtles, manta rays and dugongs
- Walk straight off the beach and snorkel over the coral reef
- Anglers will love the big game fishing available

USEFUL LINKS

Aquarium of Western Australia
www.aqwa.com.au

Kings Park & Botanic Gardens
www.bgpa.wa.gov.au

Fremantle Prison
www.fremantleprison.com.au

Margaret River
www.margaretriver.com

Geraldton
www.geraldtontourist.com.au

WA Museum
www.museum.wa.gov.au

Shark Bay World Heritage Area
www.sharkbayvisit.com