

New South Wales South Coast: Bermagui

We believe the south coast of New South Wales is very special place: mountains covered in eucalyptus rainforests, rolling green farmlands; breathtaking coastline made up of stunning beaches and pristine lakes; and sleepy heritage villages and coastal towns. There are four national parks and a nature reserve in the region.

This tour is based in luxurious accommodation, a private retreat that is a short drive south of Bermagui on the NSW south coast. The beautifully appointed house is in the middle of an eighty acre eco-paradise, bounded by the Mimosa Rocks National Park and a pristine stretch of coastline. It has a swimming pool and is a short walk from the beach. Based here for six nights, we'll explore the best this exceptional area has to offer.

The first half of this seven-day tour will head north, exploring the farmlands, forests and lakes around Central Tilba and Narooma. It includes a spectacular walk up Mt Gulaga, the sacred mountain that overlooks charming Central Tilba; a long ramble through spotted-gum forest to Narooma inlet; and a boat trip out to Montague, followed in the evening by a cooking lesson in Bermagui. For the second half of the tour we head south to do a beautiful loop walk through the Mimosa Rocks National Park. The tour finishes with a lovely walk up the rugged coastline of the Bournda National Park, finishing with lunch at the historic Tahtra Hotel.

The accommodation:

We will be staying in luxurious accommodation surrounded by unspoilt bushland and pristine beaches. The well-appointed bedrooms have en suite bathrooms. There is a large living area, generous verandah, a BBQ and beautiful gardens. There is a swimming pool and the beach is a ten-minute walk away.

"Words cannot describe this retreat. Four couples stayed here and we were all gob smacked! It's amazing how Andrew and Janine have built this heaven on earth together. Thank you so much."

The food:

The food on this tour is a highlight. This special region is rightfully very proud of its produce including the cheeses and dairy products of Central Tilba; the rock oysters of Narooma inlet; the freshest seafood; and the locally grown fruits and vegetables. The tour includes a hearty breakfast each morning served on the verandah; lunches and several dinners prepared by a gifted local caterer; as well as visiting some of the region's excellent restaurants. We will also enjoy a fabulous cooking lesson, conducted by the chef behind the River Cottage TV series.

The walks:

The walks are walks, not hikes. They range from 14 kms to 9 kms. They include a beautiful, long climb to the top of Mt Gulaga; a long ramble through spotted gum forest; a walk along the spectacular coastline. They are not hikes but you will need to have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy them. Boots aren't necessary but we'd recommend good quality walking shoes and poles, if you use them. See the itinerary for more details on the individual walks.

New South Wales South Coast Summer itinerary

Day 1:

You'll have the afternoon to enjoy the lovely facilities that our accommodation has to offer, including a swimming pool and the nearby beach. In the evening we'll have drinks on the deck before an in-house dinner prepared by a local chef.

Day 2:

This morning, we do an extraordinary walk through the neighbouring National Park to the summit of Mt Gulaga. The shaded trail climbs up through magical rainforest with a wide variety of birdlife. Mt Gulaga, the Mother, is central to many stories and connectedness to the land of the local Yuin people. Along the walk, our guide will introduce us to some of their history and traditions. **13 kms, 4 hours.** We will have a lazy picnic lunch. In the afternoon, we will have the time to explore the gorgeous heritage-listed village. Dinner will be at a lovely Italian restaurant in Bermagui.

Day 3:

Our day starts with a visit to the gorgeous heritage town of Central Tilba. From here we pick up an unsealed road that dips and climbs through forest and farmlands before coming down on Wagonga Inlet, a deep tidal estuary where some of Australia's finest oysters are farmed. We will have a gourmet picnic on the banks of the inlet before being picked up in a small boat and being taken to Narooma. We will have a privately catered dinner at our accommodation. **13 kms, 4 hours.**

Day 4:

Today we drive back to Narooma to take a boat out to beautiful Montague Island, nine kilometres off shore. Known as Barranguba, the errant son of Gulaga, this small island was a place of great significance for the Yuin people and is closely connected to the story of Mt Gulaga. Today it is a nature reserve and home to hundreds of seals and over ninety species of birds. Our visit will include a guided visit led by the National Parks Wildlife Service, a visit to the lighthouse and a fascinating walk around the island. We will return to our base via Tilba Winery, which has been operating for over forty years. After a light lunch at the winery, we'll drive back to our base. We will have a privately catered dinner at our accommodation.

Day 5:

We will then walk down to the beach where we'll have a gourmet picnic lunch before heading back to our base. **7 kms, 4 hours.** On the way home, we'll detour to visit Ivy Hill Gallery, a bright and airy space set in farmland which features the work of significant contemporary artists, both emerging and established, many of whom live and work in the region.

In the evening, we will explore the culinary heritage of the region with a visit to nearby Bermagui, where we will have a private seafood cooking lesson from a local chef who, apart from an extensive cooking career in Australia and abroad, worked as food producer for River Cottage, Australia. Dinner will be the result of the cooking lesson.

Day 6:

Today we take a challenging walk along Bournda National Park's rugged coastline, spending the day exploring the pebbly beaches, sandy bays, pockets of rainforest and cliff-tops sections that this wonderful hiking route offers. We will have the opportunity to swim at one of the secluded beaches along the way. **9 kms, 3 hours** The walk finishes at Tathra, a charming coastal sandwiched between two national parks. We'll have lunch at the famous Tathra Hotel and then spend the afternoon in the town.

Day 7:

After breakfast, you'll be free to continue your holiday.

