

Five Day Itinerary

FOOD & WINE

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Day One:

Begin your foodie adventure in the stunning Yarra Valley with a wine trail, following the footsteps of wine legend James Halliday. Download the James Halliday Hand Picked Yarra Valley map and indulge in the Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and cool climate Shiraz that the Valley is famous for. Or, expand your knowledge of the local varietals tasting sparkling, rosé and Pinot Grigio. There's more than enough choice for a full day of touring, including visits to

Dominique Portet, TarraWarra and Yarra Yering. But you'll need sustenance as you go... so linger over lunch at Oakridge, visit the Graceburn Wine Room in Healesville to mix the boutique wines of Mac Forbes with excellent bar snacks, or indulge in the degustation menu at Ezard @Levantine Hills. If you'd rather hunt and gather, stop in at the Yarra Valley Dairy or the Yarra Valley Chocolaterie and collect provisions for pre-dinner nibbles on your balcony at Yering Gorge Cottages, before heading to Meletos or Innocent Bystander for excellent local pizza.



Day Two:

This morning, experience the thrill of driving through the Black Spur just beyond Healesville, a winding road through a cathedral of towering Mountain Ash trees and giant tree ferns, as you head to Buxton and the Buxton Trout Farm. Fish for a fresh trout or salmon, have it cooked on a BBQ for lunch, and take home a selection of dips and smoked fish to enjoy later. Had enough wine yesterday? Then spend the afternoon enjoying a different beverage range, with the Yarra Valley Cider and Ale Trail. Visit Napoleone Brewery and Ciderhouse, Coldstream Brewery and Hargreaves Hill Brewing Company to get a taste of the new wave sweeping the Valley. And be sure to visit Four Pillars Gin to see how Australia is influencing this classic spirit, using local native botanicals to create a distinctive flavour. Ramp up the fine dining experience with dinner at Eleonores at Chateau Yering before another great night's sleep.

Day Three:

The Dandenong Ranges await, with their abundance of fruit and berry growing, pick-your-own farms – try for strawberries, raspberries and cherries in the height of summer, or visit Rayners Orchards for stonefruit, citrus and quinces as the season cools. Lunch must be at Burnham Beeches, a hidden treasure tucked away in Sherbrooke Forest run by Vue de Monde's Shannon Bennett. It's home to the emu farm that provides the eggs for – you guessed it – emu egg omelettes, as well as the herb and vegetable gardens that supply Shannon's Melbourne restaurants. From here, head south to the beautiful Mornington Peninsula, and settle into a late afternoon wine tasting at Port Phillip Estate, watching the shadows lengthen over the vines. If you're here late in the week, be sure to visit one of the Peninsula's awarded restaurants for dinner – 10 Minutes by Tractor or Paringa Estate perhaps. Stay overnight in the gourmet village of Flinders at the Flinders Hotel.

Day Four:

Explore the Wine Food Farmgate trail on the Peninsula, with visits to Main Ridge Dairy (say hi to the goats!), Sunny Ridge Strawberry Farm, Green Olive at Red Hill or Mornington Peninsula Chocolates. If you'd rather have someone else do the driving, take a tour with MP Experience and meet the locals behind the sensational produce. Schedule a late lunch at Max's at Red Hill Estate and watch over far-off Phillip Island across the water, or at Montalto, combining a walk through their sculpture park and olive groves with a stunning meal overlooking the vines. After perhaps a little more wine tasting, wind your way to the pointy end of the Peninsula and take the ferry from Sorrento to Queenscliff with Searoad Ferries. Head straight for Geelong and your accommodation at the Vue Apartments, and top off a day of spectacular eating with dinner at Igni, Geelong's (and possibly Victoria's) hottest new restaurant.

Day Five:

The Bellarine Taste Trail will direct you around this beautiful region, with berry, olive and tomato growers, farmgates and farmers' markets. Be sure to include a visit to Advance Mussel Supply in Portarlington, where you can purchase fresh-off-the-boat mussels, Angasi oysters and abalone. Lunch at Jack Rabbit Vineyard overlooking Corio Bay is a must, with an afternoon spent exploring some of the other fine vineyards of the Bellarine, including Oakdene, Leura Estate and McGlashan Wallington Estate. If you've exhausted your wine palate try Flying Brick Cider House, or Little Creatures Brewery in Geelong, before heading back to Melbourne late afternoon.

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