

Kangaroo Island

Kangaroo Island was voted number one by a panel of experts as the world's best island in terms of its commitment to sustainable tourism and preservation of the environment! That's quite a huge honour for this humble island that boasts one of Australia's best natural wildlife sanctuary's, stunning scenery whether it be amazing beaches and bays, native bushland, bizarre rock formations or green pasture lands and delicious local produce, including the purest ligurian honey in the world.

Kangaroo Island is located 13 kilometres off the coast of South Australia and is easily visited from the capital city of Adelaide. It is this isolation from the mainland that has preserved Kangaroo Island to the point, that half the native bushland remains just as it was found when British navigator Matthew Flinders put a name to the island in 1802. Also Kangaroo Island's wildlife population has not been subjected to introduced European species and diseases that have had devastating results on the mainland, so the native flora and fauna has flourished here.

To visit Kangaroo Island you can take a ferry or fly in. The most popular way to travel here is by taking a 2 or 3 day tour from Adelaide, these often include all your accommodation or camping facilities, food, national park fees and all the amazing sights Kangaroo Island has to offer. The island does get very busy in the warmer months, so booking in advance is a smart idea.

Sights & Attractions

More than one third of Kangaroo Island is National and Conservation parks. These were protected from early on by the first European settlers, with more foresight than their counterparts on the mainland, they recognized the importance of preserving the unique flora and fauna species found on the island. Some of the wildlife you may encounter are kangaroos (though a smaller species of the ones found on mainland Australia), wallabies, sea lions, fur seals, Heath goannas, echidnas, koala's, possums, penguins, snakes, frogs and bandicoots. The beauty of Kangaroo Island is that you can often see these unique Australian animals in their own habitat where they should be, not in an enclosure.

Four of the main national parks to be found on Kangaroo Island are the Seal Bay Conservation Park, where you can walk among the only accessible colony (and the third largest in the country) of Australian sea lions. There's also Flinders Chase National Park, where you can capture a shot of the aptly named Remarkable Rocks, Admirals Arch and take a stroll along some fantastic walking trails. Kelly Hill Conservation Park boasts a beautiful system of caverns and sink holes, where a daily guided tour is on offer. Cape Willoughby Conservation Park is where you'll find the first lighthouse built in South Australia, tours are also on offer here.

Other famous attractions include seeing the little penguins make their nightly journey up the beach to their burrows around the Kingscote and Penneshaw areas, and tasting the gourmet local produce on offer, from fresh oysters, pure Ligurian honey, freshwater marron, olive oil to award

winning sheep's milk cheeses. There's even a developing wine region here to do some tasting if you're a wine drinker. Little Sahara refers to a spectacular series of sand dunes that rise out of bush land in the island's centre, fantastic for sand boarding and great photos. Vivonne Bay is another special spot on the island, that's been rated as one of the best beaches in Australia for its clear water, privacy and cleanliness, however most beaches on the island could easily compete in these categories. As is often the way, in places of great natural beauty, Kangaroo Island has become home to a growing community of visual artists, so there's plenty of local art on offer.

Climate

Kangaroo Island has a mild climate with cool and wet winters and warm, dry summers. Average temperatures during summer (December to February) are between 20 and 25°C, while winter (June to August), the average daily maximum is between 13 and 16°C. The wettest month on the island is July and on average it receives 450mm, year round. Accordingly summer is a popular time to visit this region, though Spring and Autumn are pleasant times also, though it's recommended to bring an umbrella and some warm clothes at these times.

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