NSW beach and coastal lifestyle

*The State’s coastline stretches 1590km with a grand total of 892 beaches, including Sydney’s beaches and seven of Australia’s National Surfing Reserves.*

New South Wales has some of the best beaches and most accessible coastline in Australia, best explored by following one of the State’s coastal drives. While Bondi is Australia’s best-known beach, there are plenty of other classic stretches of sand around Sydney and along the North and South coasts.

With all that choice, you’re bound to find just the right beach for a surfing weekend, a surfing road trip or a fun-packed beach holiday with the kids. World-famous surf breaks attract keen surfers from around the globe but there are also plenty of beaches where you can learn to surf with an accredited surf school.

**North Coast: The Legendary Pacific Coast**

Beginning at Newcastle (just under two hours’ drive north of Sydney), this North Coast drive takes in beautiful national parks and reserves, subtropical rainforests and lush countryside. Charming beachside villages are found along the Legendary Pacific Coast offering a wide variety of accommodation as well as great food and wine. North Coast beaches include some of Australia’s best known in Byron Bay, Lennox Head and Ballina, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie, Port Stephens and Newcastle.

The new Hunter Expressway (M15) has reduced the drive from Sydney to the Hunter Valley to just under two hours; it’s just an hour’s drive from Port Stephens. The Hermitage Road exit leads to the **Hunter Valley Resort** which has updated day-tour options including a candy-making class, grape-stomping and a wine theatre (with Chinese translation).

Newcastle is another coastal highlight in this region. Perched between a busy, working harbour and beautiful beaches, Newcastle is an exciting city bursting with creative activity as well as great dining destinations. The excellent surf beaches are linked by an easy coastal walk, the **Bathers Way**.

**Yoga Loft Newcastle** has launched Yoga For Surfers. Designed to improve balance, flexibility and strength, the sessions help surfers to improve their performance, both physically and mentally.
Tackle the vast sand dunes of Stockton Beach, north of Newcastle, by 4WD with Sand Dune Adventures. Stockton Beach has Australia’s largest mobile sand dunes, up to 40 metres high. Owned and operated by the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council, Sand Dune Adventures uses guides who can share local Aboriginal culture with visitors on Cultural Quad Bike Riding adventures.

With 26 golden beaches, a vast blue bay and many beautiful inlets, Port Stephens is an idyllic coastal getaway. The family-owned and -operated Tamboi Queen Cruises offers dolphin and whale watching cruises as well as private cruises in Port Stephens. You can now combine your wildlife experience with adventure on land – choose from quad biking, 4WD and sand boarding activities.

Port Stephens also has a new coastal walk, a new kayak trail and a new food and wine trail incorporating farm gate products and tours, which are supported by restaurants using local produce.

Further north, Coffs Harbour is a coastal city, surrounded by lush forests and national parks. One of the most beautiful walk on the east coast of NSW is the Solitary Islands Coastal Walk which links a string of idyllic golden beaches, rocky headlands and lush rainforest. Wooli Deep Sea Tours runs diving and snorkeling tours to explore the coral formations and fascinating reef marine life of the Solitary Islands Marine Park.

Coffs City Skydivers has a package targeted at backpackers and adventure seekers in the Coffs Harbour region. Visitors can skydive over the coastline with Coffs City Skydivers, scuba dive within the Solitary Islands Marine Park with Jetty Dive, swim with dolphins at Dolphin Marine Magic, learn bush survival skills with Adventure Tag Tours, stand up paddle board and learn to surf with Lee Winkler’s Surf School.

Some of the State’s most pristine, least crowded waves can be found on the north coast. Surfing at least one of the southern hemisphere’s three most famous point breaks - Lennox Head, Crescent Head, Angourie - should be included in any north coast surfing safari.

Beginners can learn to surf year-round at one of the many accredited surf schools along the coast.

Yamba-Angourie Surf School provides lessons on surf safety, surf awareness and rules of the surf, and what surfboard is best for you. Surfing Byron Bay offers surf lessons from the beginner to the elite and focuses on surf safety, fun, fitness and surf skills.

Don’t miss the town where surf culture first took hold in Australia, Byron Bay, is a must. The Byron at Byron Resort & Spa is a five-star, all-suite resort with restaurant and day spa; the resort is surrounded by coastal rainforest and is just a short stroll to Tallows Beach.

The mountain summit of Wollumbin-Mount Warning, the remnant of an ancient volcano, is an iconic landmark of the Northern Rivers region. Wollumbin is the first place on the Australian mainland to see the morning sun. Follow one of the many walking trails to enjoy this World Heritage environment.

Green Cauldron Tours offers tours that uncover the ancient and modern culture of the Wollumbin Mount Warning region. Highlights include exclusive access to the property where Yaru Water, the first Aboriginal water brand now exporting to the world, is bottled.

South Coast: Grand Pacific Drive and the South Coast

From Wollongong (an hour’s drive south of Sydney) to Eden, the South Coast of NSW beckons with spectacular scenery and many adventure experiences.

The region is made up of many holiday destinations that include Wollongong, Kiama and Shellharbour, Jervis Bay and the Shoalhaven, Batemans Bay and the Eurobodalla, and the beautiful Sapphire Coast region.

To experience the best of the region, South Coast Scenic Tours offers day tours highlighting the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions. Three different day tours are available, plus airport and cruise ship transfers from Sydney to Wollongong. For those who love to cycle, Australian Cycling Holidays offers self-guided multi-day tours, and includes all equipment. The tour combines a love of cycling with stunning scenery and accommodation.
The coastal escarpment and beautiful beaches around Wollongong and nearby towns make it a perfect destination for outdoor adventures. A highlight along Grand Pacific Drive, south of the Royal National Park, is Sea Cliff Bridge, an engineering marvel that swerves out from cliffs over the ocean.

Experience one of Australia's beautiful rainforests while taking in the stunning views over the countryside at the Illawarra Fly Treetop Walk. The gentle walk starts on the rainforest floor, continuing higher into the canopy and onto a walkway that allows you to capture the beauty of the region. Further south, The Rainforest Loop Walk in Minnamurra Rainforest, part of Budderoo National Park, provides a rewarding introduction to coastal rainforests.

Kiama is a classic Australian beach town, most famous for its dramatic rocky blowhole. Enjoy stunning scenery along the 22km Kiama Coast Walk, which begins at Minnamurra and takes in headlands, rivers, beaches and bays before arriving at Werri Beach near Gerringong. Sky Blue Sport and Leisure Tours has a new tour of the region, including stops at the Kiama Blowhole, Saddleback Mountain, Boneyard and Cathedral Rocks, Seven Mile Beach, Jamberoo Village and Minnamurra River.

Segway Tours South Coast has launched an eco-adventure tour in Killalea State Park near Kiama. The 90-minute experience consists of an environmental tour of lagoons, forests, and sand dunes.

The Jervis Bay and Shoalhaven region is another stunning stretch of coastline, home to many beautiful beaches and bays such as Hyams Beach. White Sands is a luxurious beachfront property located at Hyams Beach, reputedly the whitest stretch of sand in the world. Dolphin Watch Cruises has a new Eco Explorer which is the best way to explore Jervis Bay, discover the many dolphins that inhabit the bay, the magnificent sea cliffs and the brilliant, white-sand beaches.

Further south, the surf action is concentrated at beaches around Mollymook and Ulladulla. Learn to surf with Walking On Water and Ulladulla Surf Schools; coaching is available for beginner, intermediate and competition levels.

Just 9km offshore from Narooma, Montague Island Nature Reserve is a natural treasure that's the breeding ground for the State's largest colony of fur seals, as well as thousands of little penguins and 15 bird species. National Parks and Wildlife Service runs day and overnight eco tours throughout the year.

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