



THE ULTIMATE SOUTH COAST OYSTER TRAIL

When it comes to unspoilt destinations, the NSW South Coast is postcard perfect. This meandering drive south from Sydney unearths an astonishing range of local wines, cheeses, vegetables and seafood – plus oysters as the star ingredient!

Local hero: oysters

The pristine lakes, rivers and ocean found here form a large chunk of Australia’s 300 km-long Oyster Coast – with farms sprinkled across the Shoalhaven and Crookhaven rivers, Clyde River, Wagonga Inlet and the lakes at Tuross, Wapengo, Merimbula, Pambula and Wonboyn. Local oyster farmers are committed to ensuring that these estuaries are among the most environmentally sustainable oyster-growing regions in the world. The local specialty is the Sydney rock oyster, one of the few indigenous oysters still being farmed anywhere in the world and prized for its intense and tangy flavour.

DAY 1: SYDNEY TO MOLLYMOOK

Morning

Starting from Sydney, travel south along the coast past beautiful beaches around Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama to the Shoalhaven Coast wine region.

The breathtaking beauty of the countryside, the beaches and towering escarpment ensure that the vineyards here are among the most beautiful in Australia. Each of the 18 vineyards in the region has cellar doors where you can try a wide variety of red and white styles.

Visit Gerringong’s **Crooked River Wines** which takes in a landscape that literally stretches from the mountains to the sea; **Two Figs Winery** that sits proudly overlooking the Shoalhaven River and offers a simply breathtaking view; and **Coolangatta Estate** near Berry to taste their award-winning semillon. It’s fascinating to walk among the remains of the village built on this site by convicts in 1822. **Silos Estate** is a short drive from Berry, at Jaspers Brush, bringing diners award-winning cuisine in an amazing setting nestled amidst rolling green hills.



TOP/MIDDLE: RICK STEIN AT BANNISTERS. BOTTOM: DISASTER BAY CHILLIES.

Lunch

The beautiful rural town of Berry is famous for its pretty gardens and trees, local art galleries and craft shops, antiques, markets and food. Stock up on fabulous fare from **Milkwood Bakery**, sibling to the renowned **Berry Sourdough Bakery**, or visit **South Coast Providores** for one of Carole Ruta's free-range chunky chicken pies and a jar of handmade preserves. The gelato at **Il Locale** is made by a local dairy, The Pines Kiama.

Continue south, passing through Nowra to meet Australia's champion oyster opener, Jim Wild, at **Greenwell Point**. Taste the sublime Greenwell Point rock oysters or Pacific oysters which are grown in the estuary of the Crookhaven and Shoalhaven rivers.

Jervis Bay is your next destination for swimming, snorkelling and a dolphin-watching cruise. **Hyams Beach Café** is perfect for a coffee break before heading south again, to Mollymook.

Dinner

Poised on a headland overlooking the ocean, **Rick Stein at Bannisters** couples Mediterranean seafood cuisine with an inspired touch of Asian cooking. After a delicious meal, enjoy the sumptuous accommodation at Bannisters.

DAY 2: MOLLYMOOK TO BERMAGUI

Morning

On the banks of the beautiful Clyde River at Batemans Bay, you'll find **The Oyster Shed** and **Pearly Oyster Bar and Farm**. Enjoy shucked Sydney rock oysters and the 'Angasi' (a native flat oyster) while admiring the spectacular setting.

Drive a short way inland to Mogo, a one-time gold-mining village that's now home to **Mogo Zoo**. Dedicated to the preservation of rare and endangered species from around the world, the zoo has exotic species including red pandas, golden lion tamarins and Bengal tigers.

Lunch

After a swim at Broulee Beach, head to **On the Pier** at Batemans Bay for its fine seafood or **The River at Moruya** which has a sensational menu sourced from local seasonal produce.

Later, hire a boat at **Tuross Boatshed and Café** for a relaxing afternoon spent fishing on the lake. Alternatively, kick back and snack on fresh local oysters by the river.

This region, known as the Eurobodalla, is one of the oldest dairying regions in NSW and has been producing quality cheeses since the 1870s. At the 1950s-style **Bodalla Dairy Shed**, south of Tuross, fresh milk comes in from the dairy every morning to make rustic cheeses with native flavours, as well as traditional milkshakes, great coffees, yoghurt and ice-creams.

Just 9 km off the coast at Narooma is **Montague Island**, a haven for marine and birdlife. Join a guided tour of the island to get up close to the sleek fur seals and little penguins that inhabit the pristine waters and watch out for peregrine falcons, crested terns and silver gulls swooping.

Further south, sample more beautiful cheeses and even join a cheese-making course taught the traditional old-fashioned way at the **ABC Cheese Factory** in Central Tilba. Visit **Tilba Valley Wines**, just south of Narooma, to try their fortified wines.

Dinner

Stay in a local bed and breakfast in this small fishing village which has a big reputation for deep sea fishing. Dine at **Il Passaggio** where Italian cuisine using fresh local seafood is served with flair from the fisherman's wharf.

DAY 3: BERMAGUI TO EDEN

The Bega Valley is another historic town with a proud tradition of cheese making. Visit the **Bega Cheese Heritage Centre** to learn about the history of dairying and Bega Cheese as well as sampling from a wide range of Australian cheese.

This stretch of coastline is oyster heaven with a long list of opportunities to taste them freshly-shucked at a wharf or oyster shed, at markets, and in cafés and restaurants.

At **Tathra Oysters** try fresh Sydney rock oysters grown in the pristine waters of Nelson's Lake in **Mimosa Rocks National Park**. This national park is a 17-m strip of coast, known for its sea caves and towering rock stacks. Take some time to explore this beautiful



TATHRA OYSTERS.



landscape with many spots for fishing, swimming, bird watching and snorkelling.

Stop for a coffee at **Bar Beach Kiosk** near Merimbula and lap up the views with the regulars who'll be checking out the waves.

Lunch

At **Wheeler's Seafood Restaurant** in Pambula, take a guided tour of a state-of-the-art oyster factory. You'll get insider tips on the art of fuss-free oyster shucking and sample the results, either fresh in the shell with a squeeze of lemon or cooked.

This pristine environment is home to a series of welcoming oyster farms, including **Broadwater Oysters**, **Hazeltown Oysters** and **JJ Oysters**, all selling Pambula Lake oysters.

Keep an eye out for local produce at markets and farm gates in this region. Gourmet produce not to miss includes **Disaster Bay Chillies** in Eden, **Towamba Station Olives** also near Eden, **Sandy Creek Olives & Finger Limes** at Bemboka in the Bega Valley, **Brogo Permaculture Gardens** north of Bega and fine olive oil from **Savelle Farm** also near Bega.

Finish this tranquil escape in Eden, once known for its whaling industry and now for its whale-watching cruises.

For more information go to visitnsw.com



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