

it's about the

Experience

# Indian Ocean Drive

Avida Daydreams > WA

**DURATION:** 7 Days

**TRAVEL:** 1168KM

**DOWNLOAD MAP**

## UNCOVER A WORLD OF WONDER THROUGH THIS AWE-INSPIRING JOURNEY FROM PERTH TO KALBARRI, CERVANTES, DONGARA AND GERALDTON.

Discover the rugged beauty this region is known for, transporting you from the cityscape of Perth to someplace much wilder, where the great outdoors works to soothe your soul, leaving you feeling both revitalised and reconnected.

### STAGE 1: PERTH TO CERVANTES

#### TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 3 Hours | 200KM

From Perth, drive north on the Indian Ocean Drive towards your first stop, Nambung National Park and the Pinnacles Desert. Here you can park up and walk among the shimmering sand dunes to explore thousands of towering limestone structures, formed more than 25,000 years ago.

Nearby Lake Thetis is another must-see while you're in the area, home to thrombolite fossils believed to be more than 3,000 years old. With an easy 1.5km walking loop around the lake, you can find out more about these fossils, as well as the lake's flora, fauna and indigenous culture by checking out the helpful signage. A more energetic option is available for those who want to take the longer beach and bush trail from Thirsty Point to Hansen Bay, with a detour into Lake Thetis. During wildflower season (July to October), this walk becomes even more impressive, as you walk surrounded by a stunning display of colour.

With no camping allowed in Nambung National Park, it's now time to drive to Cervantes. Cervantes is known as a crayfishing town, making it the perfect place to sample some seafood. With its pristine white beaches and turquoise waters teeming with marine life, Cervantes also appeals to those who like getting their feet wet, offering up swimming and snorkelling, diving and fishing. Round out the day with a tour of the town's rock lobster factory, Lobster Shack, then settle in for the night at one of the area's powered caravan sites to enjoy seafood so fresh, you'd swear it jumped straight out of the sea and onto your plate.



Thrombolite fossils, Lake Thetis

#### WHERE TO STAY?

RAC Cervantes Holiday Park - (08) 9652 7060

### STAGE 2: CERVANTES TO JURIEAN BAY & DONGARA

#### TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 3 Hours | 158KM

Heading back out onto the open road, you can enjoy panoramic views over native bushland, set against the Indian Ocean. While Molah Hill and Grigson's Lookouts offer a pretty remarkable view of the region – especially during wildflower season – if you want to get in amongst all that colour, take a detour through Lesueur National Park before you reach Jurien Bay. With more than 900 species of flora identified within the park, it is one of the most significant reserves for flora conservation in Western Australia. This riot of colour also attracts more than 100 species of birds, making it a great spot for some wildlife photography.

Just 15 minutes from Lesueur is Jurien Bay, one of the main breeding grounds for the rare Australian sea lion. Taking one of the sea lion tours out from Jurien Bay, you can spot hundreds of sea lions as they bask on the rocks just a few kilometres from land. If you're lucky, you may even catch a glimpse of dolphins or migrating whales as well.

Next up drive straight to Dongara, your overnight stop. The twin-towns of Dongara and Port Denison offer scenic coastal charm, with the Irwin River that meanders between the two towns making it a popular option for water lovers. If you prefer dry land, take one of the many walking trails to explore the bush or the beach, the river or the town.

For a little adult time, check out the cellar door at the Illegal Tender Rum Co, or treat the kids / grand kids to a movie at Dongara's historic drive-in.

Molah Hill Lookout



### WHERE TO STAY?

Seaspray Beach Holiday Park - (08) 9927 1165

BIG4 Dongara Denison Beach Holiday Park - 1800 600 776

Dongara Tourist Park - (08) 9927 1210

### STAGE 3: DONGARA TO GERALDTON

#### TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 1 Hour | 66KM

On your way to Geraldton today, make time to stop off in Greenough. A village known for its historic charm, Greenough offers plenty to explore, with beautifully restored heritage buildings, the picturesque Greenough River, and fascinating pioneering history. Head to Devlin Pool to try out some watersports, wander through Greenough Museum and Gardens, or check out Greenough Wildlife Park, a favourite for kids.

Ellendale Pool, Greenough River



On to Geraldton, a trendy seaside city filled with art galleries, boutique shops and cool cafés. Offering a warm, windy climate and perfect swell, Geraldton is the windsurfing capital of Australia – but, it's not just windsurfers who frequent these waters.



The opportunity to uncover cultural experiences is just as appealing for some. Whether learning more about the ancient culture of the local Indigenous Yamatji people, or the enthralling maritime history in the region, the brain will be kept as busy as the body on this overnight stop in Geraldton.



Pemberton's climbing trees

#### WHERE TO STAY?

Geraldton Belair Gardens Caravan Park - (08) 9921 1997

Geraldton Caravan Park - (08) 9938 1222

BIG4 Sunset Beach Holiday Park - (08) 9938 1655

#### STAGE 4: GERALDTON TO KALBARRI

##### TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 2 Hours | 155KM

Blue holes, pink lakes and a vibrant haze of colourful wildflowers await discovery as you drive north to Kalbarri today. Starting off in Kalbarri National Park, you will find yet another opportunity to get out into Western Australia's great outdoors as you try your hand at a range of adventure activities, such as canoeing, quad biking, abseiling or bush walking. But whether you trek or meander, you're sure to marvel at the park's dramatic sandstone cliff faces, impressive gorges and unforgettable vistas that await you at every turn.

Just south of Kalbarri is Port Gregory, where you can find Pink Lake – or Hutt Lagoon.



Pink Lake

While you may have seen this lake featured in an ad campaign or two over the years, seeing it in real life is an entirely different experience. Separated from the Indian Ocean by a barrier of sand, the lake is home to a type of algae that creates its vibrant shades of pink, ranging from lilac to red to bubble gum pink. If you want to see the lake at its best, check it out either at mid-morning or sundown.

Moving along the colour spectrum, it's time to visit Blue Holes. As part of an inshore coastal limestone reef system, Blue Holes features areas of reef that are permanently submerged, as well as those that are exposed at low tide. Renowned for its excellent snorkelling, the reef makes it easy to spot fish and other marine life, including various species of sponge, coral and crustaceans. Even if you're not keen on snorkelling, this protected spot is great for swimming, lazing around on the soft white sand, and letting the kids explore the rock pools.



#### WHERE TO STAY?

Kalbarri Anchorage Caravan Park - (08) 9937 1181  
Murchison River Caravan Park - (08) 9937 1005  
Kalbarri Red Bluff Tourist Park - (08) 9918 7100

#### STAGE 5: KALBARRI TO PERTH

##### TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 6 Hours 30 Mins | 589KM

After your overnight stay in Kalbarri, you can spend the morning checking out the surf at Jaques Point, having a relaxing swim in the clear waters at Chinaman's Beach, or feeding the resident pelicans on the foreshore. If the kids have some energy to burn off, be sure to introduce them to Kalbarri Nature Playground. Located on Kalbarri foreshore, the playground features some awesome play equipment including an impressive flying fox, with cafés located nearby for your morning coffee fix.

If it's time to drive back to Perth, you can take the Brand Highway (Route 1) and be back there in about six and a half hours.

**This article was written in conjunction with Britz.**

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