

It's about the

Experience

Blue Mountains to Mudgee

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DURATION: 4 Days

TRAVEL: 568.2KM

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ROAD TRIPPING THROUGH THE GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS TO THE FOODIE HAVEN OF MUDGEES OFFERS UP CLIFFTOP ADVENTURES, STUNNING SCENERY AND EVEN GLOW WORMS.

Dotted with pretty villages and towns, and boasting adventure, scenery and respite in equal measure, the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains in New South Wales have long been a retreat for Sydney city dwellers looking to get back to nature and breathe some fresh mountain air. Summer temperatures offer respite from the heat and humidity of Sydney, while the winter chill provides the perfect opportunity to cosy up in front of the fireplace.

The Central Tablelands town of Mudgee, meanwhile, has been steadily building up a reputation for being one of the best food and wine destinations in the country, with award-winning wineries, destination dining and an annual food festival that has the world watching.

Combining the two is the stuff that road trip dreams are made of.

STAGE 1: SYDNEY TO KATOOMBA

TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 1 Hour 30 Mins | 104KM

Heading out of Sydney, your ascent into the heart of the Blue Mountains passes by or through a string of quaint villages and towns. Plan to stop for morning tea in Leura, with its main street lined with interesting little shops and cafés including Red Door Cafe, with its menu of healthy brunch options. This is also a great place to stock up on road trip munchies, with The Candy Store crammed with sweet treats, and Josophan's Fine Chocolate offering up seriously indulgent cocoa creations.

From Leura it's a five-minute drive to the bustling town of Katoomba, the perfect spot for a little chocolate-burning action. Freeland Hiking Co. does organised day treks that take you off the well-worn walking tracks, while High & Wild Australian Adventures will have you abseiling down some of the most spectacular rock faces in the Greater Blue Mountains. If you like your adventure a little tamer, Scenic World's Scenic Railway plummets through the lush vegetation to the Jamison Valley below (you can adjust the incline of your seat to make it an even hairier ride).

Ride the Scenic Railway back to the top and then take a seat at Bar NSW at The Lookout at nearby Echo Point for the spectacular views.



WHERE TO STAY?

Katoomba Falls Tourist Park - (02) 4782 1835

STAGE 2: KATOOMBA TO CAPERTEE VALLEY

TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 1 Hours 10 Mins | 82.2KM

Set off from Katoomba for a 30-minute drive to the pretty town of Blackheath. Stop to browse the shops and pick up your morning coffee at Anonymous Cafe. Blackheath is also a perfect weekend getaway, so spend some more time here if you like, or make a mental note to return.

Take a 40-minute round trip detour down through lush rainforest to the Megalong Valley to enjoy morning tea at Megalong Valley Tea Rooms; the fluffy home-made scones alone are worth the journey.

From Blackheath, continue north along the Great Western Highway through Mount Victoria before the road weaves its way down the escarpment at Victoria Pass. Drop in to Hartley Historic Site to explore one of the best collections of historic buildings in the country, then head to the boardwalk next to the River Lett for the chance to spot an elusive platypus.



Hartley Historic Site

Forging on through Lithgow, head towards Wolgan Valley in order to reach Newnes Plateau and its magical glow worm tunnel; the walk through this former railway tunnel is like being surrounded by nature's own version of fairy lights.

Double back to the highway and it's an easy drive to Capertee Valley. Blanketed in World Heritage-listed nature, Capertee Valley is actually the second-largest canyon in the world after the Grand Canyon (it is slightly wider and longer, but not as deep). Encompassing three national parks – Wollemi, Gardens of Stone and Capertee – the valley has challenging walks (including to the top of the imposing Pantoneys Crown) and outstanding birdwatching.



Capertee Valley

WHERE TO STAY?

Capertee campground - 1300 072 757

STAGE 3: CAPERTEE VALLEY TO MUDGEES VIA RYLSTONE

TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 1 Hour 30 Mins | 113KM

On the drive from Capertee Valley to Mudgee, the dramatic landscape of the Greater Blue Mountains melts into the wide expanses of the Central Tablelands. Head off the highway and take the scenic route (Capertee to Mudgee direct takes an hour), stopping off for morning tea in the historic town of Rylstone. Given it is part of the Mudgee wine region, there's lots of delicious local produce to be sampled; you can take a tour of the family-run Rylstone Olive Press or check out the award-winning wines at De Beaurepaire Wines.



Your arrival into Mudgee is heralded by the wineries and farms that thrive in this fertile region. Mudgee has a reputation for its food and wine offering, as well as a social calendar of markets, events and festivals. Visit during spring to catch the Mudgee Wine & Food Festival, or opt to tour some of the 40 family-owned cellar doors to get a taste of the area, including Logan Wines' sleek architectural tasting room (try the light and fruity Hannah Rosé with a cheese plate) and Lowe Family Wine Co with its Zin House Kitchen Garden Monday Lunch. You can sample various local wines at Alby & Esthers with a share plate of roasted lamb shoulder or pork, fennel and chilli kofta.



WHERE TO STAY?

Mudgee Riverside Caravan & Tourist Park - (02) 6372 2531
 BIG4 Mudgee Holiday Park - (02) 6372 1090
 Mudgee Valley Park - (02) 6372 1236

STAGE 4: MUDGEE TO SYDNEY VIA BILPIN

TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 3 Hours 35 Mins | 269KM

Heading back through Lithgow, take the Bell's Line of Road and chart a course for the sleepy hamlet of Bilpin. This is apple country, and the perfect place to pick up some local produce to take home. Pick your own apples straight from the tree at one of the many family owned and run orchards in the area, including Bilpin Springs Orchard or Shields Orchard, or sip the products made from them; Hillbilly Cider offers up sweet ciders and wood-fired pizza, or drop in to Bilpin Cider for its Picnic on the Farm baskets (be sure to order ahead), which can be enjoyed sitting on the grass behind the cellar door.

While away your last afternoon horseback riding with Eden Equine, and prepare yourself for the drive back to Sydney the next day.



Bilpin Springs Orchard

This article was written in conjunction with Australian Tourism.

For more information about road trips in New South Wales, go to visitnsw.com.