



Pure Shores

Flaunting 60,000 kilometers of sun-kissed coast, Australia is awash in beaches. Those in the know don't need to share the sand—**Jenny Hewett** offers a few seaside secrets.

BRONZED AND BAREFOOT, Australians descend on their sparkly shores with an innate sense of purpose. For most, the beach is more than just a destination; it's a way of life. With ribbons of golden sand unfurling along the hypnotic coastline, the salt, sand and sea have become a cherished place of worship. Australia's beach culture is now the single most defining part of its identity. But beyond the buzz of iconic Bondi and Byron Bay lies a slew of under-the-radar beaches with fewer crowds. In places where camping was once the only way to stay, a trickle of luxury lodgings has opened up lesser-known shores to a new generation.

Cabarita Beach
viewed from
Norries Headland.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Cabarita Beach, Tweed Coast

Laying low between the Gold Coast and Byron Bay, this laid-back beach straddles a small headland, with two idyllic coves to the north. On the edge of the fertile “food bowl” region known as the Tweed, the region around Cabarita Beach has tropical fruit and native finger limes in abundance. Once a retro motel, the 21-room **Halcyon House** (halcyonhouse.com.au; doubles from A\$650) is now the jewel in Cabarita's crown, with Capri-style interiors, a sanctuary-like spa and a hatted (Australia's answer to the Michelin star) restaurant, **Paper Daisy** (three-course set menu A\$95). Walk to Norries Headland to spot whales, then drive half an hour inland to the acclaimed **Margaret Olley Art Centre** (artgallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au) in Murwillumbah, where the entire contents of the late artist's home are impressively on display. Still hungry? Back on the coast, beachfront, Greek-inspired **Taverna** (taverna.net.au; mains from A\$32) in nearby Kingscliff serves up the best honey-drizzled haloumi this side of the equator.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Greens Pool, Denmark

A sheltered natural pool fringed by white silky shores, this jeweled paradise in Denmark, named by early European explorers, lies within William Bay National Park. Located in the southern region of Western Australia, a series of giant granite outcrops rise from the shallows here to form a protected swimming and snorkeling area. With perfectly framed panoramas of the Great Southern Ocean and rolling countryside, the self-contained **Parry Beach Breaks** (parrybeachbreaks.com.au; doubles from A\$230) nearby offers a stylish escape immersed in nature. If you want to explore further, **Walk Into Luxury** (walkintoluxury.com.au; tours from A\$3,350) tailors four- and six-day self-guided walking itineraries along the famous 1,000-kilometer Bibbulmun Track, which passes through here. Gourmet hampers, luxury stays, wine-tasting and a private chef can all be included.

CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW: Paper Daisy at Halcyon House; White Sails overlooks Robe's Guichen Bay; the upscale camp at Bay of Fires Bush Retreat.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

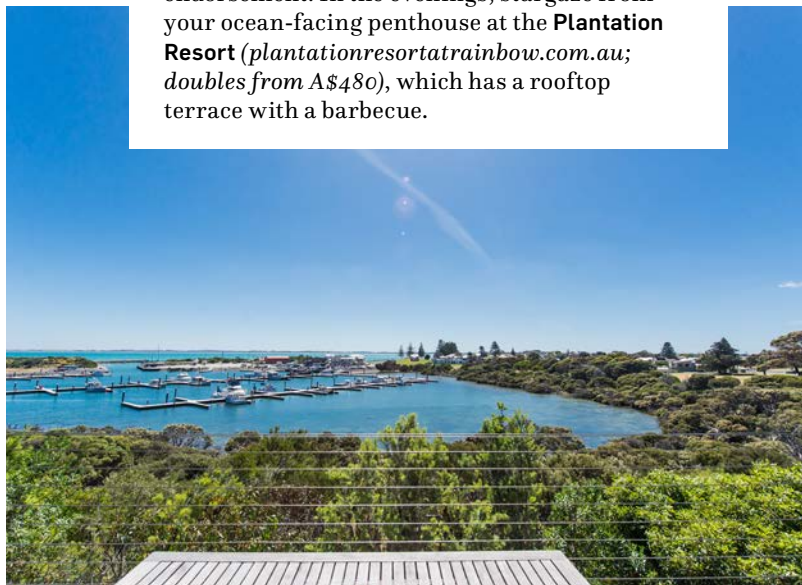
Long Beach, Robe

The small fishing town of Robe on South Australia's idyllic Limestone Coast is in proximity to a handful of beaches, including the 4WD-friendly Long Beach. Stretching for 17 kilometers, this sweeping shoreline attracts surfers and families alike. Sample local craft beers at **Robe Town Brewery** (robetownbrewery.com.au), then drive an hour inland to the UNESCO-listed **Naracoorte Caves** (naracoortecaves.sa.gov.au), one of the world's richest fossil sites. From here, drive 25 minutes to taste wine at **Wynns Coonawarra Estate** (wynns.com.au), before heading back to Robe to dine on freshly caught southern rock lobster at **Sails** (sailsatrobe.com.au; mains from A\$28); book the shellfish ahead. With its timber deck pointing directly at Guichen Bay, the cozy **White Sails** (robelifestyle.com.au; doubles from A\$275) holiday rental is the perfect rejuvenation.

QUEENSLAND

Rainbow Beach, Sunshine Coast

The 70s called; they want their beach town back. With a population just over 1,000 and a shoreline oozing adventure, this hippy village in the Sunshine Coast is the archetype Aussie throwback. A gateway to the World Heritage-listed Fraser Island, the world's largest sand island, Rainbow Beach is better known for its colorful, towering sand cliffs. Shoot them from the Carlo Sand Blow sand mass at sunset and ride horses along the shore with **Rainbow Beach Horse Rides** (rbhr.com.au; from A\$150) the next morning. Chris Hemsworth once dined at the town's **Arcoboleno on the Beach** (fb.com/arco.on.the.beach; mains from A\$25), but its wood-fired pizzas don't need any extra endorsement. In the evenings, stargaze from your ocean-facing penthouse at the **Plantation Resort** (plantationresortatrainbow.com.au; doubles from A\$480), which has a rooftop terrace with a barbecue.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF HALCYON HOUSE; LOUISE AGNEW; ADAM GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Walk Into Luxury explores the coast of Western Australia; Taverna's haloumi, in Kingscliff, is legendary; inside Naracoorte Caves.



VICTORIA

Squeaky Beach, Gippsland

One of five secluded beaches in Wilsons Promontory National Park, Squeaky Beach does exactly what it says. Three hours south of Melbourne, the porcelain-like sand is so fine it creaks under your feet. With pristine beaches, 25 bushwalks, and emus, kangaroos, echidnas, koalas and wombats roaming wild, this is the closest thing Australia has to Jurassic Park. Andrew from **Great Southern Escapes** (greatsouthernescapes.com.au; tours from A\$230) knows the wildlife like clockwork and runs bespoke tours here, complete with a lunch platter and afternoon tea. Just 15 minutes from the entrance and set in lush farmland, luxe museum-like homestay **The Church House** (thechurchhouse.com.au; doubles from A\$450) makes a cozy base to explore "the Prom." Expect nightly canapés and champagne, three-course meals cooked with ingredients from the garden, plus Sidney, the giant standard poodle, at your service.

TASMANIA

Binalong Bay, Bay of Fires

Boasting one of the most scenic coastal landscapes in the state, Tasmania's crystal-clear Bay of Fires will spark something in you. With its powder-fine stretch of beach and orange-flecked rocks, Binalong Bay lies on the southern end of this conservation area and the water is invigoratingly cool. All the



more reason to snuggle up at the **Bay of Fires Bush Retreat** (bayoffiresbushretreat.com.au; doubles from A\$165) when night falls. Set deep in the natural scrub, this stylish hideaway offers glamping and lodging options as well as dinners and breakfast on request. **Lichen** (lichenrestaurant.com; mains from A\$27) at Binalong Bay showcases local squid and fish in modern platings, or drive 15 minutes to St. Helens to slurp freshly shucked oysters straight from the shell at takeaway-only **Lease 65** (61-3/6376-1736; Shed 2, Binalong Bay Rd.; A\$18 per dozen). 📍

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF WALK INTO LUXURY; COURTESY OF TAVERNA; MIKE HAINES