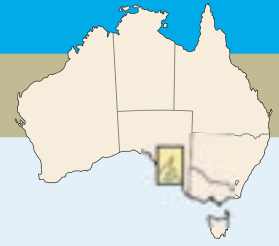


Your great Australian journey starts here

SOUTH AUSTRALIA LOOP



Length: 8–14 days Fly/drive option: Adelaide, Kingscote

Combine two smaller loops into a fun-filled figure of eight as you drive north from Adelaide through the wineries of the Barossa and Clare valleys before following the Flinders Ranges to Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary. Return to Adelaide through the historic copper-mining town of Burra and then continue south to Kangaroo Island for a wildlife treat. Here, you can watch little penguins wander through the town of Penneshaw, find eucalypts crowded with koalas and join a colony of 500 sea lions on Seal Bay.

Travel tips

SA is the 'Festival State', with an extensive cultural calendar. If you want to combine your tour with a festival or three, begin your research at www.southaustralia.com.

Winter is an ideal time to visit, with wild ocean sights across the south coast and daytime temperatures in the Flinders Ranges averaging 13–19°C. Winter nights, however, can be biting cold. Conversely, summers in the Flinders Ranges can be fiercely hot – Arkaroola averages 34°C in January.

Websites

- www.southaustralia.com
- www.visitburra.com
- www.barossa.com
- www.tourkangarooisland.com.au
- www.clarevalley.com.au
- www.fleurieupeninsula.com.au
- www.flindersoutback.com

South Australia Loop – Travel Times		
Route	Distance	Duration
Adelaide – Hawker	387 km	5hrs 10mins
Hawker – Leigh Creek	156 km	2hrs
Leigh Creek (via Blinman) – Quorn	408 km	5hrs 30mins
Quorn – Adelaide	329 km	4hrs 30mins
Adelaide – Cape Jervis	106 km	1hr 10mins
Cape Jervis (via Victor Harbor) – Adelaide	173 km	2hrs 20mins



A to B Adelaide to Barossa Valley

Head north out of Adelaide (www.adelaide.southaustralia.com) to Gawler, turning onto the Barossa Valley Way and into one of Australia's premier **wine regions** (www.barossa.com).

Before tasting your way through the Barossa's 60 cellar doors, there are a couple of worthwhile diversions. Out of Sandy Creek, visit the dam known as the Whispering Wall, its acoustics such that you can whisper at one end and it'll be heard at the other, around 150 m away. In Lyndoch you can get a flavour of the Barossa's German heritage with a stop at the popular Lyndoch Bakery.



From Lyndoch the scenery is both great and grape and you head through a corridor of vineyards to Tanunda and Nuriootpa, where you'll find that wine is not the only thing on the menu. The Barossa has a thriving **gourmet food** culture, and there's a wonderful selection of German-inspired cuisine (www.foodbarossa.com). Pick up picnic supplies from Maggie Beer's Farm Shop (www.maggibeer.com.au). The Barossa Wine Centre in Tanunda will guide you through the region's history and wines.

From Nuriootpa, drive north to Kapunda (www.kapundatourism.com.au), SA's first copper-mining town. The **Kapunda Museum** is one of the finest in regional SA. Take an interactive look through history at Bagot's Fortune.

More contemporary is the surrounding region's starring role in the television series, *McLeod's Daughters*. Tours taking in locations from the series are operated by McLeod's Country (www.mcleodscountry.com.au).

B to **C** Barossa Valley to Quorn

At Tarlee, follow the Main North Road into the Clare Valley (www.clarevalley.com.au) for more food and wine treats.

This smaller **wine region** has around 40 cellar doors, complemented by a great selection of **gourmet food** producers. If you're feeling guilty about all this indulgence, you can pedal it away by **cycling** between wineries on the 27 km Riesling Trail (www.railtrails.org.au).

Take the time also to visit Mintaro, where the 1880s Martindale Hall mansion (seen in the film *Picnic at Hanging Rock*) is set amid a collection of historic village buildings. **Art lovers** will also enjoy Murray Edwards' studio (www.murrayedwards.com.au) in Watervale.

Stay with the Main North Road as it travels beside the southern Flinders Ranges. The major peak of the southern ranges is Mt Remarkable, rising above Melrose, the Flinders' oldest town. **Climb** the mountain from Melrose, or simply enjoy the town's historic buildings.

From near Wilmington, it's worth veering away to Mt Remarkable National Park's (www.parks.sa.gov.au) most spectacular feature, the rust-red cliffs of Alligator Gorge. Wander a short distance upstream and you'll find the Terraces, where ancient ripple marks remain from the time when this was a beach.

From Wilmington it's a short drive to Quorn and the quaint **Pichi Richi Railway** (www.prr.org.au), which follows the narrow-gauge old Ghan line into Port Augusta. It's worth wandering around Quorn's selection of **galleries** and historic buildings before heading into the Flinders Ranges (www.flindersoutback.com).

In a conservation park a short distance out of town is Dutchmans Stern, a bluff shaped as its nautical name suggests. **Walking tracks** lead to the summit, and there's basic **accommodation** at an old homestead at the base of the peak (www.parks.sa.gov.au).

C to **D** Quorn to Wilpena Pound

As you drive to Hawker, take a peek at the homestead ruins of Kanyaka, where a single palm has outlasted the sprinkling of buildings.

About 10 km before Hawker there are older human reminders in the Yourambulla Caves (www.flindersranges.com), with a variety of Aboriginal **rock paintings** and etchings.

At Hawker (www.hawkersa.info), take a sampler of the mountain scenery ahead by visiting the Wilpena Panorama, a landscape painting showing a 360-degree view from atop St Mary Peak, the highest mountain on the rim of Wilpena Pound.

From Hawker it's a short drive into one of the classic sights of the outback: **Wilpena Pound**, the basin-shaped amphitheatre that's the centrepiece of the Flinders Ranges National Park. To fully appreciate the pound's circular shape you need to see it from the air. **Scenic flights** can be arranged through Wilpena Pound Resort (www.wilpenapound.com.au), and can range out as far as Lake Eyre. The resort also offers the pound's only **accommodation**, from beautifully appointed rooms to the kangaroo-grazed campground. There are also luxury eco-villas, units and camping sites at Rawnsley Park (www.rawnsleypark.com.au), just outside the pound.

A wide choice of **walks** at the pound (www.parks.sa.gov.au/flinders_ranges) include the climb to Mt Ohlssen Bagge and the short walk to Hill's Homestead, a settler's home from the early 20th century. Rawnsley Bluff, another of the pound's mountain tips, can be climbed from Rawnsley Park.

Outside the pound walls is Arkaroo Rock, a hollowed boulder sheltering rock art that tells the Adnyamathana people's story of the pound's creation. **Rock climbers** gravitate to the cliffs behind Arkaroo Rock for some of the finest routes in the country.

There are some great **short drives** near the pound: head to the Bunyeroo Valley Lookout for spectacular dawn views; and into Brachina Gorge for a possible glimpse of rare yellow-footed rock-wallabies. The 20 km drive along the Brachina Gorge Geological Trail will reveal both great scenery and a remarkable and rocky natural history.

D to E Wilpena to Arkaroola

The sealed road ends at Wilpena, but it's a good-quality dirt road through to Blinman, SA's highest town, where you'll find gourmet **bush tucker** at the welcoming Blinman Hotel and the Wild Lime Cafe & Gallery.

The journey towards Arkaroola, at the northern end of the Flinders Ranges, offers wonderful **mountain views**. En route, it's worth the small detour into Chambers Gorge to view **rock etchings** or to simply wander through the gorge.

As you approach Arkaroola the road passes through remote and mountainous **Vulkathunha–Gammon Ranges National Park**. The park has six campgrounds, and you can find evocative outback lodging in Grindell's Hut, Nudlamutana Hut or Balcanoona Shearer's Quarters (www.parks.sa.gov.au). Grindell's Hut is worth a visit for its spectacular location. Other park highlights include Bunyip Chasm and Italowie and Weetootla gorges.

North of the national park, **Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary** (www.arkaroola.com.au) protects some of SA's most rugged and beautiful land, and offers a wealth of experiences. **Bushwalk** or **mountain bike**, tour by **camel** or take a **scenic flight** over the sanctuary and the gleaming saltpan of Lake Frome. Gaze into space from one of Arkaroola's three observatories, or take the sanctuary's trademark Ridgetop Tour, rolling across the hilltops to stunning Sillers Lookout.

E to F Arkaroola to Parachilna

Backtrack from Arkaroola to the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park headquarters at Balcanoona, and turn through Italowie Gorge to Iga Warta (www.igawarta.com), a cultural centre operated by the Adnyamathana people. Tours from the centre take in otherwise off-limits **rock-art sites**, **bush tucker** and Adnyamathana story sites. You can also join a campfire evening at the centre.

The drive out from the Flinders Ranges takes you west to the attractive town of Copley, anchored by the large Leigh Creek Hotel and famed for the **quandong pies** at the Quandong Cafe.



Wilpena Pound

ADAM BRUZZONE/SATC



Prairie Hotel

Just south of Copley is Leigh Creek, servicing the open-cut coal mine about 20 km north. There's a viewing area over the mine off the Lyndhurst road, or you can delve into the gaping coal mine on tours that leave daily from Leigh Creek.

South from Leigh Creek is Parachilna, pinched between the walls of the Flinders Ranges and the saltbush plains that stretch away to Lake Torrens. Parachilna's **Prairie Hotel** (www.prairiehotel.com.au) is a classic among outback pubs, noted for the beauty of its location and its 'Flinders Feral Food': kangaroo, camel, goat or emu may grace the menu, sweetened by a dessert of wattleseed pavlova.

In the evening, drive into Parachilna Gorge to see the setting sun deepening the already spectacular colours of the Flinders Ranges.

F to G Parachilna to Cape Jervis

The drive south from Parachilna passes beneath the walls of Wilpena and back into Hawker. Take the turning for Peterborough. For a quirky stop, visit Magnetic Hill, where an optical illusion can make your car appear to roll uphill.

Peterborough (www.peterboroughsa.com.au) was once a hub for railways from across the State, with three different gauges converging here. The rail memories live on in **Steamtown** (www.trainweb.org/mystation/steamtown.htm). At the designated historic town of Terowie, join the Barrier Highway, following it south to the former copper-mining town of Burra (www.visitburra.com), a place rich in heritage. Wander its cottage-lined streets and visit the lookouts over the mines. To delve far deeper into history, you can walk the interpretive trail at Red Banks, where the fossils of megafauna have been found.

There's great adventure to be had with Burra Trail Rides (www.burratrailrides.com), trekking through the outback landscape on **horseback** for anything from one hour to three days. After that thirsty work, pay a visit to **Thorogoods Apple Wines** (www.thorogoods.com.au).

Follow the highway back south into Adelaide, and continue through the city's southern suburbs onto the

Fleurieu Peninsula

(www.fleurieupeninsula.com.au). At McLaren Vale (www.mclarenvale.info) there's the chance to stock up on wine for the rest of the journey, selecting from among the 60-plus wineries in the region. If you're here in January take the chance to visit nearby Mount Compass for the Compass Cup (www.compasscup.com.au), Australia's only cow race.

The road south rolls across the tops of the coastal limestone cliffs, with the Star of Greece cafe in Willunga offering about the **best view**, and fine food to match.



Fleurieu Peninsula

BARRY SKIPSEY/FLEURIEU PENINSULA TOURISM

H Kangaroo Island

At Cape Jervis, board the SeaLink ferry (www.sealink.com.au) to cross to **Kangaroo Island** (www.tourkangarooisland.com.au), where you'll find both fine food and infinite wildlife.

Gourmet treats to sample on the island include eucalyptus drops from Emu Ridge Eucalyptus Distillery, cheese and yoghurt from Island Pure Sheep Dairy, and Ligurian honey from Clifford's Honey Farm (www.goodfoodkangarooisland.com).

The ferry docks in Penneshaw. Stick around until the evening to watch the **little penguins** march into town – view them at the Penneshaw Penguin Centre, or along the foreshore road. Do not use flash photography.

Kangaroo Island – or 'KI' as it's often called – is perfectly designed for a circular driving tour. Begin by driving towards Kingscote, SA's first settlement. You can view the remnants of the original settlement at Reeves Point and join the nightly pelican feeding session on Beares Point.

Out of Kingscote, the Playford Highway beelines across the island, though it's worth venturing onto North Coast Road for a more intimate look at the beaches around Emu Bay.

At the intersection with West End Highway, continue west on the unsealed Playford Highway to lonely Cape Borda, where there are daily tours of the lighthouse. The cannon is fired at 12.30 p.m. You can also stay in **lighthouse-keeper cottages** here (and also at Cape de Couedic and Cape Willoughby).

Drive south on West End Highway to Rocky River, the park headquarters for the wonderful **Flinders Chase National Park** (www.parks.sa.gov.au/flinderschase), one of Australia's great wildlife treasures: you'll undoubtedly see kangaroos and Cape Barren geese grazing the grass at Rocky River; **platypus** populate pools along the Platypus Waterholes Walk; **koalas** rest in the treetops; and there's a colony of New Zealand **fur seals** around Admirals Arch at Cape de Couedic.

Near the cape also are the aptly named **Remarkable Rocks**, one of SA's signature scenes. The lichen-coated boulders have been scoured and hollowed by the elements, and look as fragile as eggshells.

The island's south coast offers an equally remarkable selection of attractions. Stop at Kelly Hill Caves (www.parks.sa.gov.au), where you can wander the show cave or take an **adventure caving** tour. Duck away to the pearl-like **beaches** at Hanson Bay and Vivonne Bay – the latter was once named Australia's best beach – and if you haven't yet seen enough of the island's **koalas**, you can do so along the avenues of the Hanson Bay Sanctuary.

Just beyond Vivonne Bay is Kangaroo Island's most cherished wildlife encounter – **Seal Bay** (www.parks.sa.gov.au/sealbay), home to the country's third-largest and most accessible sea-lion colony.

G to A Cape Jervis to Adelaide

Back at Penneshaw, return to the mainland on the SeaLink ferry, turning east to amble along Fleurieu Peninsula's southern surf coast. Some of the best **bushwalking** near Adelaide is in Deep Creek Conservation Park (www.parks.sa.gov.au/deepcreek), while further ahead is the welcoming holiday town of Victor Harbor (www.victor.sa.gov.au). Victor's waters are on the winter migration path for **southern right whales**, and there are great viewing spots on the Bluff or along the cliff tops at Port Elliot. Enhance your viewing with a stop at the SA Whale Centre (www.sawhalecentre.com.au).

For more animal encounters, trundle out on a **horse-drawn tram** to Granite Island, where you can watch little penguins wandering ashore, or view sharks being fed at the Below Decks Shark Aquarium.

The drive continues east to Goolwa, but if you fancy a relaxing preview, ride the **Cockle Train** there from Victor. **Surfers** will gravitate to Port Elliot and Middleton, while there's a more sedate water experience in Goolwa, **cruising** to the mouth of the Murray River and the Coorong (www.coorongcruises.com.au).

Turn inland at Goolwa, heading through Strathalbyn and Mount Barker, ending the journey back in Adelaide. ■

Emu Bay



RICHARD SMYTH/SATC/K/TOURISM/MTG