

10 Things You Need to Know Before Travelling to the Margaret River Region

Getting here, about the region, where to eat, drink and sleep in Margaret River



By
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Welcome to your personal guide “Travelling to Margaret River Region” Where you will find 10 essential tips on what you absolutely need to know when planning your next trip to this beautiful, unspoilt region of Western Australia.

Hello! I’m Debbie Noonan, and together with my husband Peter, we have lived and worked in Margaret River for over 7 years, running the historic “Margaret River Guest House” right in the heart of the region.

Margaret River Guest House has been operating for nearly 50 years and has welcome thousands of guests from all over the world. We look forward to meeting you soon and sharing not only our beautiful home but to introduce you to the wonderful wine region in Western Australia.

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This guide is designed to help you get the most out of your trip to Margaret River, so here's what you'll find inside:

1. Never just turn up
2. How to get to Margaret River
3. General driving rules and what to watch out for
4. What is the 'Margaret River Region'?"
5. What can we do or see?
6. How long should we spend in the Margaret River region?
7. Where to eat and drink
8. Opening hours in the region
9. Where to stay
10. Getting around the region/tours

1. Never just turn up

This is probably the most important tip.

Never just decide to travel to Margaret River or leave it to the last minute to find a great deal, because you may find yourself missing out all together.

Margaret River and surrounding towns are a very popular tourist and local destination and is often booked out. We are not seasonal so there is no quiet season. Plan ahead and always check there is nothing happening in the region or it could be a long drive down and back to Perth again.

Also be aware if Margaret River is booked out then you will find surrounding towns will more than likely be heavily booked too.

2. How to get to Margaret River

Margaret River is located in the beautiful south west region of Western Australia, situated 280 kilometres south of Perth or a three hour drive. Our region offers a huge selection of world-class wineries (approx 130 cellar doors). Gourmet food and boutique accommodation makes it the perfect destination for a romantic weekend, short break or tourist must do.

By Car

- **Main route:** The journey from Margaret River takes approximately three hours by car. Take the Kwinana Freeway out of Perth city, which eventually becomes Forrest Highway, and follow the signs to Bunbury, then Busselton – the main roads will bypass these towns but feel free to drop in. Margaret River is 50km south of Busselton. When you start to see vineyards – you're nearly there.
- **Alternative route:** South Western Highway is the inland route which is a little slower, but quite scenic. The South Western Highway guides you inland from the suburb of Armadale, Pinjarra, Waroona, Harvey, Brunswick Junction and on into Bunbury then Busselton and through to Margaret River.
- **Do I need an International Drivers Licence?** - An International Drivers Licence is desirable if you wish to hire a car, but it is not essential. Visit the [WA Department of Transport](#) website to find out more information on which countries require additional licences to drive on Australian roads.

By Air

- [Skywest](#) (operated by Virgin Australia) flies direct to the Margaret River Region (Busselton Airport) twice weekly from Perth.
- [Wild Blue Helicopters](#) are happy to accommodate transfers to and from Perth

By Bus

- Bus services between Perth and Margaret River operate daily through [South West Coach Lines](#) and [TransWA](#). Please note these times and prices are subject to change and should be checked.
- For more information or to make a booking with a tour operator, please contact Deb or Pete at info@margaretriverquesthouse.com.au we offer a free booking service for wine tours.

3. General driving rules and what to watch out for

Firstly, if you're not used to driving in Australia be aware we drive on the left hand side of the road, and if in doubt always give way to the right and pedestrians always have right of way.

Please be careful when driving in the South West of Western Australia. There are many long, winding roads, with other dangers such as kangaroos, sun shining through the trees and soft slippery gravel on the side of the roads. Remember, you won't get here any faster by speeding, you just may not get here at all. So sit back, relax and enjoy the drive down. Also you should never drive tired. If you are arriving into Perth after a long flight then it is safer to spend a night in Perth before driving on unfamiliar country roads.

Kangaroos are native to Australia and are found in large numbers throughout Western Australia. They are a constant risk along any rural road, including the major highways and main roads.

Kangaroos can grow up to 90 kilograms and if you collide with one, especially at high speed, it may result in loss of control of your vehicle, major vehicle damage, serious personal injury or even death. So please take care and be vigilant at all times.

A sign warning of kangaroos may be placed by the road where there is a known high risk of kangaroos gathering alongside the road or crossing the road at a particular locality. Drivers are advised to take heed of any such sign and drive carefully. However kangaroos are so widespread throughout Western Australia that the absence of a warning sign does not mean there is no risk. You must always be vigilant about scanning the road for kangaroos - especially at dusk and dawn.

Kangaroos, like all wild animals, are unpredictable and can move very suddenly and quickly and may be panicked by the sight and sound of a vehicle. They also tend to gather and travel in groups (mobs) and if you see one by the road or crossing the road, chances are there are others nearby. Do not just focus on the one you have seen watch out for others that may follow.

Kangaroos usually rest during the day and are most active between dusk and dawn. Traveling at high speeds at night on rural roads can significantly increase your risk of colliding with a kangaroo. Where possible, limit your driving to the daylight hours. If you must drive at night, place your headlights on high beam (but dip them for oncoming traffic), reduce your speed and constantly scan the edges of the road. If you see a vehicle in front of you which has slowed or stopped, the driver may have spotted a kangaroo or other hazard - slow down and be prepared to stop.

Please do not let this information deter you or put you off driving on our roads. There is every chance you will travel down here with out seeing a kangaroo at all.

Drink driving is a very serious offence in Australia, not to mention dangerous. Our cellar doors can be very generous in their tastings so for this reason we highly recommend you nominate someone to be the designated driver so you all enjoy your day and get home safely and without being fined or worse still arrested.

4. What is the “Margaret River Region”

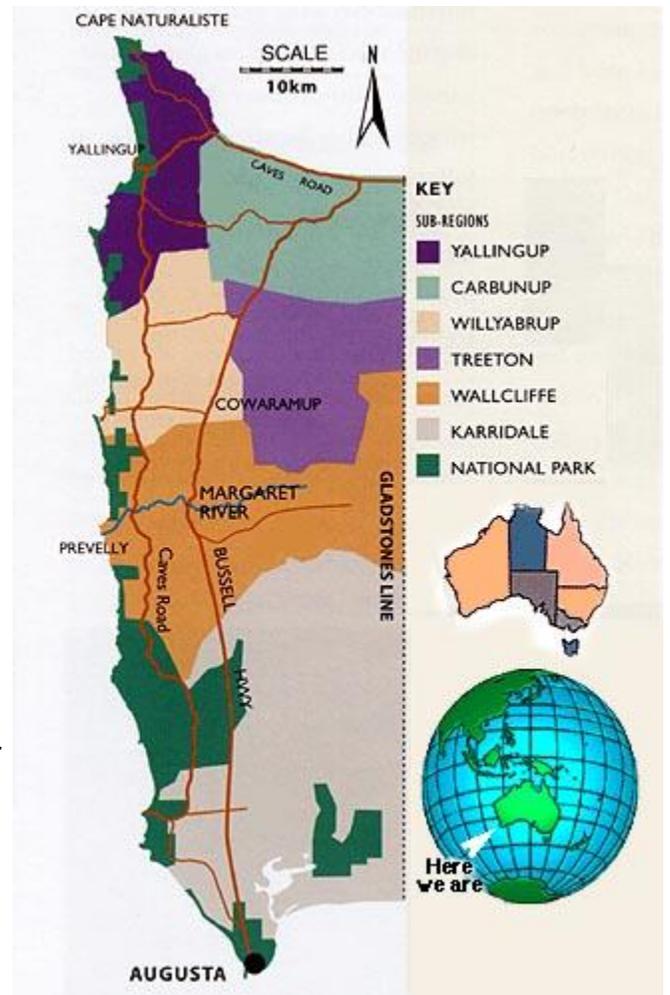
Geographically the Margaret River Wine Region is one of the biggest in Australia, stretching 120km from north to south and 30km west to east. Welcoming 1000's of travellers from around the world like no other destination in Australia, making it Western Australia's no1 premier holiday region.

Despite its size we produce just three percent of the nation's grapes, but we are responsible for more than 20 per cent of the nation's premium wines.

But don't be misled. The Margaret River region while famous for its wine is not just all about wine. There is something for everyone, even the non drinkers. Margaret River has some of the most enticing and pristine natural wonders, fine restaurants, world-class arts & crafts, dazzling beaches, world class surf and surfers, spectacular forests, warm and friendly locals and a charming persona all its own ensuring all year popularity with locals, interstate and overseas travellers.

Weather in Margaret River

The mild Mediterranean climate makes the Margaret River region a year round choice for holiday makers. In summer, temperatures rarely rise above 32 degrees centigrade (average 27deg). Although much wetter, winter enjoys mild temperatures that average around 16 to 18 degrees during the day and 9 to 11 degrees at night. Spring and Autumn average in the low 20s. Most rainfall occurs between the months of April and October with an annual average rainfall of 982mm. Each season reveals different aspects to appreciate. In summer the stunning beaches seduce swimmers and kite surfers. In winter, they're graced with a passing parade of whales. Autumn sees a flurry of arts and wine-inspired events. In spring, the wildflowers put on their own dazzling show.



5. What can we do or see?

Many maybe surprised to learn our first claim to fame wasn't through our production of grapes, but through our surfing community, who were the first to discover the beautiful coastline of this region. Today we are now on the world surfing circuit with many events held in and around our beautiful beaches. Some of the world's top surfers have come from here so don't be surprised if you see someone famous walking or dining in and around Margaret River (and not just the surfing variety).

For those that love the great outdoors our coastline boasts some wonderful walks and bike trails. A Trip along our coast will take you through some of the best scenery WA has to offer. As you travel south from the calm Geographe Bay region you will pass through some of the most spectacular Karri forest on the West Coast. Not to mention some amazing caves before arriving at the rough and treacherous coast around Augusta.

If you are unfamiliar with Margaret River then remember the key word here is "region". The town of Margaret River and our guest house are about half way between the north and south of the region.

To the north approx 40 minute drive is Busselton. Famous for its jetty that extends 1.8 kilometres across stunning Geographe Bay, the heritage listed jetty is the longest timber-piled jetty in the Southern Hemisphere.

Augusta is 40 minutes south of our town and is home to the Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse located on the most south westerly tip of Australia and where the Southern and Indian oceans meet. In season whale watching is available from both Augusta and Dunsborough.

Our guest house is approx an 8 minute drive to Prevelly beach. Our region has over 200 wineries with 130 of these having cellar doors (the closest is a 5 min drive) There are a number of fantastic boutique breweries, a distillery, a cheese factory, chocolate makers and shops, olive oil producers, coffee roasters, bakeries, restaurants and cafes...a wine and food lover's dream. Then as mentioned all our beaches, bush walks, forests, caves, art galleries, lighthouses, a waterfall or two...the options are seemingly endless. Have we got you interested yet?

Its important to remember business hours are generally between 10-5, but nature is open all hours, so it pays to plan somewhat if you want to fit a lot into a day, and we are always happy to suggest and help get the most out of your time here, no matter how long or short it is.



Lake cave

6. How long should we spend in the region?

We see so many unrealistic proposed itineraries for Western Australia and we understand holidays can sometimes be short on time, so when planning your Perth/south west holiday consider do you want quality or quantity? If you are short on time then trying to fit in all the southwest of Western Australia is probably not a good idea, as all you will see is roads and roadside scenery.

When planning your holiday please remember Albany & The tree top walk is another 5 hours driving time south and 6 hours direct drive back to Perth. This is not taking into account stopping time.

It is a daily sadness we hear our guests saying “they didn’t know the region was so big” or “we didn’t know there was so much to see and do”. Please also note the region is often booked out so deciding to extend your stay at the last minute often isn’t possible, not only with us, but anywhere in the region.

If possible we highly recommend a minimum stay of 3 nights. This allows you time to visit both north and south. Of course there is never enough time to see everything. Margaret River town itself makes a great base with fantastic restaurants and cafes and our guest house is just a 2 minute walk from the main street. If your time just won’t allow a long visit then never fear, we can point you in the direction to the “not to miss” places.



7. Where to eat and drink

With award-winning restaurants and cafes around every corner, on a trip to the Margaret River region you are spoilt for choice. From casual eating to first-class dining, the joy of eating out in Margaret River combined with a bottle of the region's best is one of those rare and exhilarating experiences one finds only too briefly in life. Many of the area's chefs have trained and worked in the great culinary capitals of the world and now use their skills to transform the region's fresh, flavorsome local produce into some of the best cuisine in the world.

Margaret River's passionate chefs have been winners at the prestigious Tasting Australia Regional Culinary competition and are recognised throughout the country for highly creative food and wine matching. Consequently the number of Gold-Plate Awards continues to grow; a tribute to those who are undeniably amongst the world's greatest. Reservations during peak period are highly recommended for many of the top wineries restaurants. Please contact us for more details.

Our main street offers a great selection of restaurants and cafes for evening dining and our guest house will set you up in the morning with a hearty breakfast. If you love your cakes and sweet treats then our afternoon tea will have you wondering all day what tasty treat awaits your return.

So come and get a taste of the Margaret River region - a gourmet paradise!

8. Opening hours in the region

Margaret River is a tourist region and as such operates 7 days a week, with most businesses operating from 10am till 5pm.

Lunches are generally available at restaurants and wineries between the hours of 12pm and 2pm. There are many popular venues where it is important to book in advance to avoid disappointment.

You will find that your dinner choices are generally available only in the town centre. While a couple of wineries closer to the town open for dinner on a Friday and Saturday night this is only available during the peak summer season and is something you must book well ahead of time as they are very popular and often booked out. You will find most restaurants will take orders for meals between 6pm and 9pm. So don't wait too late to eat as you may miss out. It's important to remember we are still a country town so not a lot happens after the restaurants or pubs shut.

We have 3 large supermarkets, Coles, Woolworths and IGA that open from 7am till 8pm where you can get almost anything you need.

If you need medical attention we also have this covered with many good doctors, chemists and a 24hr emergency hospital just around the corner from the guest house.

There are certain dates throughout the year when you will find the region closed. Christmas day 25th December is one of these days. Only a few properties will open for dinner or lunch and if you decide to stay in the region over this period we will certainly keep you informed.

You will also find wineries and some attractions shut on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Both these periods are peak time for the region with accommodation booked out months in advance, so if you are thinking to travel any time between August and May plan ahead otherwise you may find you're choices are limited.



Time Zones

Western Australia is eight hours ahead of GMT, the same time zone as Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. It is 1 ½ hours behind Adelaide and Darwin and two hours behind the eastern coast of Australia, except from October to March when most other states advance their clocks forward an hour to daylight savings time.

9. Where to stay

Margaret River is the name of our river, our town and our region - there are many small towns and sub regions within the Margaret River region. So you will find a diverse range of accommodation choices available. Whether you're looking for 5 star luxuries, camping or something in between you will find just what you are looking for in the Margaret River Region.

To narrow down your choices here are a couple of things to consider:

Do you want central town location so you can walk to the restaurants, café and shops?

Out of town locations mean you will need to drive to get your meals and look at shops.

Self contained so you do all the cooking?

Let some one else cook breakfast?

Pricing

Margaret River pricing is comparable to most accommodation in Western Australia.

You will find choices of

Hotels

Motels

Caravan Parks

Apartments

B & B's /Guest Houses

Self contained cottages

Backpackers

Resorts

Our property is a guest house with 6 bedrooms, each with their own ensuites. We are situated in the centre of town a short 2 minute walk to the main street with all the shops restaurants. For more details and availability please check out our website www.margaretriverguesthouse.com.au or email us on info@margaretriverguesthouse.com.au



10. Getting around the region/tours!

Explore the local area

Firstly we highly recommend having your own transport, but if you don't have your own transport or don't drive then there are several options to enable you to experience the diverse attractions of the Margaret River Region. You can choose from a range of organised or private tours and taxi services to help you discover our hidden treasures.

Daily wine & sightseeing tours

- There are many tours that run daily and pickup from our guest house. We have a list of preferred operators we know give good value for money and won't cancel if they don't have enough numbers. We also offer a free booking service and recommend you book ahead of time as during certain times of the year many operators are booked out and leaving it to the last minute can lead to disappointment.

Car Rental

- Rent a car through either of the local car hire companies, [Cape 2 Cape Car Rentals](#) or [Margaret River Rent a Car](#) (please note these are local services, and cars are to be picked up and dropped off in Margaret River).

Taxi

- In addition to standard taxi services, taxi companies in Margaret River can also organize tailored tours for singles or groups. A service to the iconic Lake, Mammoth and Jewel Cave is also available at reasonable rates. Contact Margaret River Taxi service or Taz's Taxi for more information.

Local Bus Services

- There are limited local bus services between Margaret River, Augusta, Dunsborough and Busselton - contact [South West Coach Lines](#) or [TransWA](#) for more information.

[The Chaffeur Bus](#) offers a variety of hop on-hop off services around the region - contact them for more information and when they are running

We hope this guide gives you some helpful information about your trip to Margaret River. Please do not hesitate to email or phone if you have any questions or we can help you with booking your accommodation, booking a tour or making a restaurant reservation.

For the best rate on your accommodation we highly recommend you book direct either via our website www.margaretriverquesthouse.com.au , email info@margaretriverquesthouse.com.au phone 08 97572349