

head for the hills

ADELAIDE HILLS SCENIC DRIVES AND TAILOR-MADE TRAILS OFFER SOME OF THE BEST TOURING ROUTES IN THE STATE WITH BEAUTIFUL SCENERY AND GREAT GOURMET FOOD AND WINE EXPERIENCES, ALL WITHIN AN EASY DAYTRIP. BY MARY TAYLOR.



Echunga

The roads around the Adelaide Hills may be winding and at times precipitous, but they reveal exciting new vistas and diversions at every turn.

Its cool summer climate makes the Hills the perfect destination to explore roads less travelled, follow the region's boutique food and wine trails, shop at local markets, discover its attractions and be part of community events.

Whether you want to give your engine a run in the fresh air, stretch your mind or your legs, you can while away an afternoon or a day and feel a million miles from it all.

Classic drives

Angas River Scenic Drive Stirling to Strathalbyn, approximately 40 kilometres

Starting in Stirling and winding its way along leafy Mt Barker Road to Aldgate, the Angas River Scenic Drive takes in Mylor, Echunga, Macclesfield and then on to historic Strathalbyn, following the Angas River as it meanders through picture-book farmland and towering gums.

Before you really get out on the open road, it's worth pulling up for coffee at the new Aldgate Providore and Café, or perhaps planning a visit to Warrawong Wildlife Sanctuary as you pass through Mylor. Where the road forks at Echunga, you can spontaneously divert to Meadows

and either turn left and take the beautiful Bull Creek Road to Ashbourne to buy fresh fruit and vegetables at roadside stalls, or pull in at Paris Creek to visit the new B.-d. Farm Paris Creek Café for biodynamic and organic dairy products. Or, if you turn right at Meadows, you can cruise through the Kuitpo Forest to visit Prospect Hill Museum (open Sundays, 2 – 5pm) and K1 Wines by Geoff Hardy (open weekends 11 – 5pm).

However, if you're armed with shopping bags and ready for lunch, stay on route to Macclesfield and head straight to the Battunga Country Growers' Market for local produce (open Sundays 10 – 3pm) or the Three Brothers Arms Hotel.

From Macclesfield, it's a short drive to Strathalbyn, for antique shops and the Swedish-inspired Argus House Patisserie for breakfast, lunch, morning and afternoon teas.

Old Norton Summit Road Magill to Lobethal, approximately 28 kilometres

Head straight up Magill Road from Adelaide and you will find yourself on the Old Norton Summit Road that takes you all the way to Lobethal through vineyards and apple and cherry orchards.

On the left-hand side, before you reach Norton Summit, keep your eye out for Cowlings Cherries, where during cherry season (November to January) you can

buy the finest export-grade organic cherries and delicious limited release cherry vinegar from the shed door.

At Norton Summit you can turn off towards the award-winning Sinclair's Gully Wines, the only eco-certified winery and cellar door for Twilight Tastings and Wildflower Walks and take the Adelaide Hills Hand Crush Wine Trail (www.adelaidehillswinetrail.com) for hand-crafted boutique wines.

If you stay on route and continue on through Ashton, Basket Range, Forest Range and Lenswood, there are many apple sheds along the way where you can purchase new season locally grown apples and taste the difference.

From Lenswood, Lobethal is a short drive, passing the enchanting Fairy Land Village and new-look Adelaide Hills Market at the Old Woollen Mill on your left before stopping at the Lobethal Bierhaus to try the popular boutique beers and enjoy a great lunch.

However, with 365 bends, the Adelaide – Lobethal Road is not for the gastrically challenged.

Onkaparinga River Scenic Drive Verdun to Birdwood, approximately 45 kilometres

The Onkaparinga River Scenic Drive starts at the Verdun interchange, just off the South Eastern Freeway Hahndorf exit and follows the Onkaparinga Valley Road



Heart of the Hills Market, Lobethal



past vineyards and farmland through the towns of Balhannah, Oakbank and Woodside to the historic town of Mt Torrens before arriving at Birdwood, home of the National Motor Museum.

If you want to get a birds-eye view of where you're heading, turn right at Balhannah towards Hahndorf, passing Nepenthe, Shaw + Smith and Hahndorf Hill wineries and pull in to The Lane Vineyard for a fantastic lunch and the most beautiful views of the Adelaide Hills towards the north east.

Back on the road towards Birdwood, there are a couple of roadside orchard shops between Verdun and Balhannah where you can buy locally grown fruit and freshly baked pies and you can actually take in part of the Fabulous Adelaide Hills Food Trails, stopping at Cocolat for tastings of delicious gelato, Johnston Cordials for traditional cordials and Baylies of Strathalbyn, Woodside Cheese Wrights, Melbas Chocolates and Confectionery and Bird In Hand for a selection of gourmet biscuits, artisan cheese, chocolates, sweets, olives and wines.

Located on the site of the old Birdwood Flour Mill is the National Motor Museum, which tells the history of motoring in Australia and has an excellent collection of classic and vintage vehicles. The National Motor Museum is open daily and is a must-see for all children and adults.

**Torrens Valley Scenic Drive
Houghton to Birdwood,
approximately 28 kilometres**

Starting in Adelaide's north eastern suburbs, the Torrens Valley Scenic Drive winds its way past Houghton, Inglewood and the Chain of Ponds reservoirs, bordered by vineyards, pine forests and bushland. Plan to stop at picturesque Gumeracha to visit The Toy Factory, home of the biggest rocking horse in the world, or stop for lunch or a regional produce platter and wine tasting at Chain of Ponds Wines before continuing on to Birdwood.

Timeless trails

The Adelaide Hills isn't just home to some of the best walking and cycling trails in the state (Pioneer Women's Trail, the Waterfall Gully Walk, The Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens and the Yurrebilla, Heysen and Mawson trails), but also a number of food and wine trails to nourish the soul.

The Adelaide Hills Hand Crush Trail covers 10 small boutique wineries of the Norton Summit to Balhannah region, including Ashton Hills, Barratt and Basket Range wineries. Around half of these cellar doors are 'by appointment', so you will need to phone in advance. www.adelaidehillswinetrail.com

The Adelaide Hills Cheese and Wine Trail hosted by Udder Delights Cheese Cellar and Café is a self-drive four

course progressive picnic that includes Udder Delights artisan cheese matched specifically to a wine offered for tasting at four different Adelaide Hills cellar doors. www.udderdelights.com.au

The Fabulous Adelaide Hills Food Trails, including the Yummy Adelaide Hills Food Trail for Kids, the Taste the Adelaide Hills Food Trail and the Experience The Adelaide Hills Food Trail, offers opportunities to enjoy complimentary tastings of regional produce and a guide to the best restaurants, cafés and cellar doors that showcase food produced from the Adelaide Hills. www.adelaidehillsfood.com.au

The Hills Short Wine and Food Trail lists 12 wine, food and beer producers and is arranged as a trail starting in Woodside and finishing in Gumeracha. All producers are within 15 minutes drive of each other and the trail allows visitors to experience delicious offerings by often very small, but high quality, producers. There are also staging posts for coffee, breakfast, lunch and dinner. Email james@tilbrookestate.com.au for a copy of the trail.

The Cherry Map is a seasonal guide to locating and enjoying fresh South Australian cherries, most of which are grown in the Adelaide Hills region, by purchasing direct from the grower. www.cherriessa.com.au



Another good reason for a drive...

The festive season in the Adelaide Hills is a great time to visit as there are many local events offering hours of fun and entertainment for all the family...

Stirling Christmas Pageant and Fireworks Display

28 November

Hundreds of locals participate in this much loved pageant down the main street of Stirling followed by bands and stalls on the Stirling Oval, starting at 6.45pm. The night ends with a fantastic fireworks display. Call 0417 882 131 or email stirlingapex@internode.on.net

Lobethal Lights

14 – 31 December

The town of Lobethal creates a spectacular display of Christmas lights with celebrations including the Christmas Tree Festival, market stalls, living nativity and choirs. www.lightsoflobethal.com.au

Strathalbyn Cup Day

11 January

One of South Australia's prettiest country racecourses again hosts its annual

Strathalbyn Cup Day with hospitality packages and entertainment for kids. Contact the Strathalbyn Racing Club for marquee bookings and other information on (08) 8536 2248 or go to www.racingsa.com.au for more details.

Tour Down Under

18 – 25 January

Last year the Adelaide Hills villages of Hahndorf and Stirling hosted section starts and finishes for the Tour Down Under offering great venues and views of competing cyclists. www.tourdownunder.com.au

Crush 09

25 January

Escape the city and experience the region's signature wines at the Adelaide Hills Wine and Food Festival. There's no better way to spend Australia Day than by celebrating Australian Sauvignon Blanc with clusters of individual wineries presenting local food and wine and opportunities to learn more about the key wine varieties produced in the Adelaide Hills. www.adelaidehillswine.com.au

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