

THE EYRE APPARENT

A WELL-EARNED REPUTATION FOR ITS OCEAN BOUNTY MAKES THE EYRE PENINSULA AUSTRALIA'S SEAFOOD FRONTIER - AND THE PLACE TO GO TO FEAST LIKE KING NEPTUNE.

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The Eyre Peninsula's scenery is as spectacular as the seafood.



Enjoy the freshest seafood with the tang of salty air on your tongue.



One of the great advantages of living in South Australia is the ease of access to a diverse range of natural environments. From the gently rolling hills of the Clare Valley to the stark wilderness of the Flinders Ranges, South Australia is a state of secrets waiting to be discovered.

Nowhere can this be better appreciated than on the Eyre Peninsula, otherwise known as Australia's 'seafood frontier'. With 2000 kilometres of coastline, dazzling views and seafood so fresh it almost jumps from the ocean to your plate, it is truly one of Australia's finest jewels.

To make the most of your trip, shorten the travel time from Adelaide and fly there. In 90 short minutes you can glide into the solitary tin shed that is Ceduna's airport. Then it's just a matter of picking up your (pre-booked) hire car and winding down your windows to enjoy the salty air as it blows in from across the Great Australian Bight, as you head south along the coast to Streaky Bay.

Although famed for its wide variety of seafood, the Eyre Peninsula's most indulgent offering is its abundance of oysters. Practically every town along the southern coast boasts oyster businesses, from the very small to the large-and-still-growing. The family-owned Evans Oyster Shed in Streaky Bay operates tours for interested parties, and proprietor Tom Evans is more than happy

to share his exceptional knowledge of the evolution of the oyster business with visitors.

There's nothing quite like standing around a salt-stained old bench as a maestro of the business cracks open fresh oysters for you to whet your appetite on, while the sound of the revolutionary weighing machine keeps a metronomic rhythm behind you. Much like wine, the taste of an oyster varies according to the characteristics of its environment: from an intense oceanic saltiness to a rich zinc infusion. Oyster connoisseurs will be fascinated by the varying tastes of this plump delicacy as the coastline stretches across the Bight.

In Streaky Bay, head to Mocean's Café for lunch. A new innovation in dining for the Eyre Peninsula, the café is the creation of chef Hardy Weyrauch and his partner Margii Caldwell and offers the freshest in seafood sourced from Streaky Bay Marine Products, another family-owned local business specialising in black and green-tipped abalone. Enjoy the calm vistas from Mocean's deck while dining on fresh King George whiting and a bottle of crisp sauvignon blanc.

From Streaky Bay, it's a pleasant drive south to Baird Bay and the Baird Bay Ocean Eco Apartments. Located in an almost desolately quiet enclave of the Eyre Peninsula, Baird Bay offers the utmost in calm tranquility: it's easy to unwind to the gently lapping waves on the shore of a bay teeming with ocean wildlife.

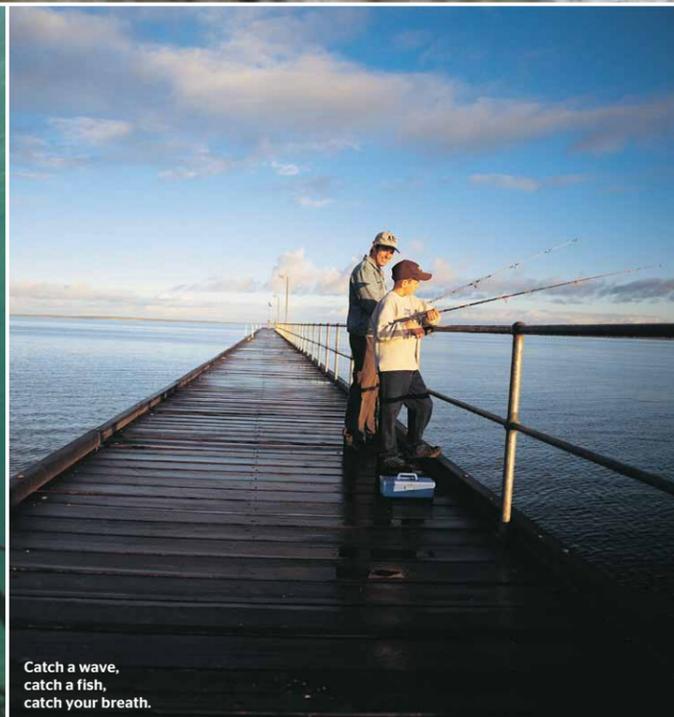
“There's nothing quite like standing around a salt-stained old bench as a maestro of the business cracks open fresh oysters for you to whet your appetite on.”



Life's a beach when you're this far from the madding crowd.



Swimming with sea lions at Baird Bay is an unforgettable experience.



Catch a wave, catch a fish, catch your breath.

“2000 kilometres of coastline, dazzling views and seafood so fresh it almost jumps from the ocean to your plate”

Spend the afternoon paddling about in the Bay's shallows while flocks of pelicans play on the beach a mere few metres away. Later, take advantage of the modern gas-powered kitchen to perhaps prepare a delicious chowder using Streaky Bay Marine Products' fresh-caught abalone.

Coffin Bay is one of the most famous producers of oysters in Australia, and it's not hard to see why. The oysters grown here are distinct in flavour and provide fascinating educational opportunities. You'll learn, for example, that oysters change sex every year, and the least favourable time to eat them is while they're spawning. Brenton Dutschke began the Coffin Bay Oyster Farm some time ago, and has recently begun producing spawnless oysters to avoid the invariable disappointment of yielding a crop while the product is 'in remission', so to speak.

In Coffin Bay, head to the Oysterbeds Restaurant. With a large selection of local South Australian wines, it's the perfect place to punctuate the calm of a seaside holiday with a boisterous dinner with friends and travelling companions.

More stunning scenery awaits you on your drive towards Port Lincoln. A town famous for its tuna industry, Port Lincoln roosts above the glittering expanse of Boston Bay and it's here you can visit one of the most beautiful wineries South Australia has in its arsenal. From its lofty cliff-top position, Boston Bay Wines produces a wonderfully zesty range of whites, and a spectacular selection of shiraz. If you have time to enjoy a meal prepared by Tony Love, you won't be disappointed - Love injects his renowned playful, sardonic humour into his food, and it shows.

Delacolline Estate Wines is also well worth a visit for wine lovers. Its restaurant serves generous and delicious platters of local seafood, including king prawns, oysters, blue fin tuna and Asian-inspired salads. Doubling as a lavender farm, the winery is a little smaller than Boston Bay Wines but no less charming. Purchase a selection of wines to take back to your holiday accommodation.

The Colebrook Luxury Log Home is just outside Port Lincoln; on a rambling road of deep red dust, it 'burns' at sunset and inspires a sense of intense connection with the landscape.

Before departing Port Lincoln, book a tour with Peter Dennis through Triple Bay Charters. A two-hour sunset cruise around Lincoln Cove Marina is accompanied by an intimate meal of fresh local seafood, including blue fin tuna sashimi, succulent kingfish sashimi, Coffin Bay oysters and a bottle of Boston Bay Wines' most tempting sparkling shiraz blends. There's truly no finer way to end your visit to this remarkable region.

Whether you visit Eyre Peninsula for a two-week holiday or an intimate mini-break, there's more than enough to keep you occupied: this seafood frontier is well worth conquering. ■

Tips

The **Ocean Eco Experience** is an absolute must-do while at Baird Bay. Run by Alan Payne, owner of the Eco Apartments, the Ocean Eco Experience takes you on a chartered trip out into the bay to swim with the local sea lions and dolphins. There are truly no words to describe the majesty of a close encounter with these other-worldly creatures, except that it seems to put all the frivolous concerns of daily human life into stark perspective. A vigorous swim will both clear your mind and work up an appetite for the day's feasting!

www.bairdbay.com

The **Coffin Bay Oyster Farm** also produces the famous king oysters. Grown for six years, the jumbo-sized 100g monsters are more an exotic challenge than a delicacy. However, if you have a spare \$100 lying around and a sense of whimsical fun, they're available only at the Port Lincoln Hotel.

www.coffinbayoysterfarm.com.au

Adventure Bay Charters is a must, particularly for those with families. Visit a tuna farm in Boston Bay to enjoy the opportunity to hand feed the blue fin tuna. Adventurous souls can even suit up for a swim with these bullet-fast fish!

www.adventurebaycharters.com.au

ALSO CHECK OUT

Cafes/restaurants

Blues Restaurant www.bluesrestaurant.com.au
Five Loaves Baker www.fiveloavesbakery.com.au

Wineries

Anna's Vineyard www.annasvineyard.com
Gardner's Vineyard www.gardnersvineyard.com.au

Producers

Cleanseas www.cleanseas.com.au
Minniribbie Paddock www.minniribbie.com.au

Tours

Coffin Bay Explorer www.coffinbayexplorer.com
Goin' Off Safaris www.goinoffsafaris.com.au



GETTING AROUND

It's a nine-hour drive up around the Yorke Peninsula and down through to Port Lincoln, or you can book a direct flight with Regional Express.

Flights are priced from around \$130 one way.

www.rex.com.au

You'll find information about tours and attractions in the Eyre Peninsula Secrets section of The Nullarbor Traveller.

www.thetraveller.net.au

Hire cars can be booked through the Budget website to pick up at any of the Eyre Peninsula's regional airports.

www.budget.com