

TIPS FOR YOUR STAY AT MARGARET RIVER HOLIDAY COTTAGES

≡ Spring/Summer/Autumn ≡



If you're travelling to the region with family for a few days, then our advice would be to break the region down into 3 pieces, or sub regions. The Cape itself is approximate 134km from point to point, so by breaking the region into three smaller pieces, you'll be able to maximise your time touring, and avoid spending too much time in the car. - Margaret River & surrounds - South: From Margaret River to Cape Leeuwin - North: From Margaret River to Cape Naturliste. Of course, different people have different tastes, and the below will need to be adjusted according to your palette, but with 3 young kids ourselves, we're pretty well versed on how to maximise time as a family, as well as for us as parents to have fun too. Yep, there's plenty of great playgrounds around!

The Top 5:

1. A day trip to Augusta with caves and fish & chips and the sting rays of Hamelin Bay
2. Visit one of the amazing beaches from Gnarabup, The River Mouth or Yallingup and Meelup Beach
3. Visit to Lake Cave, Mammoth Cave and/or Jewell Cave or Amaze'n outdoor maze
4. Sunflower animal farm and playground, or Wonky Windmill combined with the Chocolate Factory*
5. Hire a bike or walk from Hairy Marron or visit the River Mouth for a beach afternoon and sunset

*or try designing your own chocolate bar at Temper Temper just down the road.

PLUS: A visit to the Farmers Market is a must if you're here on a Saturday Morning

On our doorstep – A day out and about in Margaret River:

- Gnarabup, Surfers Point & Red Gate Beaches
- Boranup Forest, Gallery & Cafe
- Mammoth & Lake Caves
- The Wadandi Track for riding, hiking or running
- The Farmers Market (Saturday mornings only)
- Cape to Cape walking trail
- Kevill Road Waterfall & Kangaroos
- The Berry Farm and/or Sunflower farm

Located in between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin, Margaret River is the perfect base to explore the region from Dunsborough and Busselton in the North and Augusta in the South.

Sunflower Farm

<http://www.sunflowersfarm.com/>

Open 9-5. 10 minutes drive. With an abundance of native and farm animals, Sunflower is the perfect place to get up close and personal with everything from Kangaroos to hungry goats. Buy a bucket of food for each of the family and make sure you don't give all the food to the first animals! There is an excellent new kids playground with a pirate ship theme, and they serve the famous simmos ice cream, a favourite of kids and adults. Allow 1.5-2.5 hours including the playground.

The Berry Farm

<https://theberryfarm.com.au/>

Open 10 - 4. 20 minutes drive (located in Rosabrook). A lovely farm dedicated to the different varieties of berries that grow in the region. There is a tasting room with everything from preserves, jams and tastings and there is a cafe / restaurant serving authentic country meals. The scones and jam and cakes are amazing, and the kids meals good value and even healthy....kind of. The Berry Farm also has one of the best kids playground in the region, with a combination of slides and nature based play, as well as giant chess.

this is a good lunch or coffee stop and has vegetarian options

Kevill Road Waterfall and drive

5 minutes drive from MRHC. A short drive away from Margaret River Holiday Cottages, Kevill Road is a lovely drive and one of the best places to see Kangaroos during the day. Kangaroos are nocturnal and therefore spend most of the day 'hidden away' though often you will find the roos lying in the midday sun on the side of this windy road. Running all year round, The Kevill Road waterfall is also a lovely photo stop along the way or a place to stretch the legs with some short walks.

Rotary Park and The Hairy Marron Cafe

<http://www.thehairymarron.com/>

5 minutes drive. Located on the northern side of town, Rotary Park is a lovely local park with plenty of play activities for younger kids, and bush trails to explore for older children and adults. The park is located on a small river so keep an eye out for the ducks! Across the bridge from Rotary Park is the old settlement which is an open air 'museum' giving visual insights into the history of Margaret River, including old machinery and a school house

(<https://www.margaretriver.com/members/margaret-river-old-settlement/>). Here you will find the Hairy Marron Cafe and bike shop. Go and see Paul and the crew for any bike hire and maps to visit the regions trails, from flat tracks to purpose built mountain biking. They also have a cafe in a lovely bush setting, perfect for a hot chocolate or a sandwich. They have a couple of balance bikes available for children to 'play' on for free for those enjoying the cafe.

A visit to Cowaramup

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cowaramup,_Western_Australia

15 minutes drive. Known locally as "cowtown", this local village pays homage to the local dairy industry with a strong commitment to the cow. There are plenty of cafes and small boutiques, as well as home to Millers Ice Cream.

An afternoon and sunset by the beach.

Just 10 minutes away are the beaches of Gnarabup, Surfers Point and The Rivermouth, where the Margaret River itself meets the Indian Ocean. Consider parking the car at the White Elephant Cafe <https://www.whiteelephantcafe.com.au/> (Open 7.30-3ish) and taking the short stroll along the beach track to Surfers Point. Alternatively, the park and playground at Rifle Butts Reserve which is nestled behind the beach in between Gnarabup and Surfers Point. The playground is suitable for kids of all ages and there's a huge grassy area which is perfect to kick a ball or play tag. The Rivermouth is an excellent location to watch the sunset or spend an afternoon by the beach. Whilst cold in winter, the river provides a relatively safe environment for kids to splash or make sandcastles on the bank. It's a popular surfing spot for the locals, so it's a great chance to watch the surfers in action and grab some selfies!

SOUTH: Forest & Fish – Day Trip to Augusta

(approx 100km round trip, half to 3/4 of a day)

- Boranup Tall Tree Forest
- Hamelin Bay to feed the sting rays
- Augusta for fish & chips under the Norfolk Pine Trees on the beach
- Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse and/or rock hopping
- Lake, Mammoth or Jewel Cave

Tip: we recommend doing this trip in the morning for the best light! We absolutely love this day out, and it's the most popular also with our guests. You can expect rich diversity as you drive, from tall tree forest, to spectacular white sand beaches, to great Aussie dining options and the best play spaces in the region. Travel South down Caves Road with a potential stop at Lake or Mammoth Cave. If you need a coffee or snack, stop in at the Cafe Boranup, open from 08.30ish to 3ish. Take the scenic tourist drive through Boranup Forest down to Augusta. (The Boranup Drive is unsealed though should be accessible in a normal car). Often reported as one of the top 10 drives in Australia, the Boranup Drive winds through impressively tall Marri and Karri trees. Towards the end of the drive, turn right to the Look Out, which overlooks Hamelin Bay (Indian Ocean) and on a clear day, you can see as far as the Southern Ocean.

At the end of Boronup drive, turn right onto Caves Road and continue towards Augusta. A must do stop in warmer months is Hamelin Bay, one of the most beautiful bays on the coast and home to the 'tame' wild sting rays that come into the shallows to meet people. Consider also a stop at Jewel Cave, one of the best caves to visit in the region. We recommend stopping in Augusta for lunch. If you enjoy seafood, stop at Blue Ocean (closed between 2pm and 5pm) which has the best fish & chips in the region (small dine in or take away). It's very popular for guests from Singapore and Malaysia! Another option would be the Golden Cafe which should have vegetarian options. If you're looking for more of a restaurant, the Colour Patch Cafe has awesome views, great local wines and fresh local seafood or try the terrace at the Augusta Hotel. We like to do take away fish and chips if the weather is good and then drive a little further south to Flinders Bay. Here you will find a small beach, great playground and lovely Norfolk pines to sit under. (google Flinders Bay Playground).

Drive around to the Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse and consider climbing the stairs for a great view. Note, children under 4 are not permitted, though they also have a cafe. Just around from the lighthouse, is the Water Wheel which has a lovely view across the Indian to the Southern Ocean. There are also usually some rock pools with crabs which can be fun to explore with the kids (though be very careful walking around the rocks). Tip: park at the Old Water Wheel car park and walk around 100m to the North up the Cape to Cape track to enjoy the rock pools, best views and space. Drive back towards Margaret River via Bussell Highway (30 mins) and stop in Witchcliffe for a look around. Yard Byrd has an awesome local coffee & cake experience, or a hot chocolate (closes at 4pm). Yard Byrd also has some basic toys and books for children to use. Another option is stopping at Witchy Pies, a famous bakery and picking up some hand crafted cookies.

***An alternative stop on the way home is Gllenarty Road winery. It's nestled in the bush countryside near Karridale and is a wonderful family run winery, with tasty wines and incredible food (you'd need to pre book lunch, it can be busy). If you just want to do a wine tasting, there's a great kids play space.*

A roadtrip to the North:

(approx 90km round trip)

- Great Wineries such as Cullens and Vasse Felix
- The Margaret River Chocolate Factory
- Stand above the waves at Canal Rock
- Lunch at Bunkers Beach Cafe
- A visit to Meelup Beach or Castle Rock

A day trip to the North is perfect when combining awesome wine with rich driving scenery and incredible beaches which are equally dramatic and breathtaking in summer and winter. If you're short for time and can't dedicate a whole day to the North, you can always do some of these elements when heading back to Perth.

Drive North up Caves road and make a point to stop at some of your favourite destinations or wineries. If you're looking for top class wine, try the original wineries of Vasse Felix and Cullen, the latter being one of the first wineries to move to organic wines in the region (cannot comment if that means less hangovers in the future...). If you're more into boutique wineries, try Passel Estate with a beautiful outlook and happy winery dog, it's a lovely destination (note: they have a charge for wine tasting of \$10 which is deducted if you purchase). If you need a coffee stop, why not drive down into Gracetown and check out the incredible view. Stop for a stroll south on the Cape to Cape Walk or visit the General store for coffee and snack time. Keep driving north and make a stop at Canal Rocks, which has an amazing rock formation. You can walk out on a raised boardwalk and when the ocean is pumping, you can feel it crashing right beneath you. The boardwalk is child friendly and there's ample parking. If you're feeling adventurous, you can stop at the small car park in between Canal Rocks and Smiths Beach and walk down to the Natural Aquarium. It's a reasonable walk for kids, just wear shoes and bribe with ice cream if they whinge on the way back up the hill. The swimming is breathtaking and the view incredible. (<https://www.beachlands.com.au/latest-news/how-find-aquarium-yallingup-smiths-beach>).

Drive up to Yallingup for one of the best playgrounds in the region. Perched above the beach at Yallingup and shaded by peppermint trees, this playground has something for kids of all ages. The whole area is dotted with picnic tables and if you feel like a swim, drop down onto the beach for a safe swimming area protected by reef. The sand makes for great sandcastle building too.

Lunch and dining options are scattered and depends a little on both your time, and your budget. Our favourites are:

- Swings & Roundabouts winery on Caves road which has the best playground of any of the wineries in the whole region, has a stunning view and awesome wood fire pizza
- The General Store at Yallingup. As you drop down to Yallingup beach, you'll see the general store. They have sandwiches, pies and general fare which we tend to take away and eat at the playground in Yallingup
- Wildhop Brewery is the best of the breweries when it comes to both dining standard and integrated playgrounds for kids. It's a drawback is that you cannot book, so be sure to arrive early (like 12) in busy seasons.
- For a more special experience, you can't go past Bunkers Beach House which has a stunning view of Bunkers Bay, a really fresh menu and also has colouring packs for kids.

Continue on after lunch and head towards the top of the Cape. If you have time, visit Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse and consider either walking the new trail to Sugar Loaf Rock (3.5km in each direction) or driving around to see Sugar Loaf rock instead. If you can squeeze in another beach in the afternoon, our favourites are Meelup Beach for swimming, and lazing, and Castle Rock, perfect in the late afternoon to watch the glow of light on the golden rocks, or sand and rock play for kids. If the kids still have energy and deserve a treat, a visit to Simmos Ice Cream in Dunsborough is a must. The ice cream is amazing and the play spaces are perfect for burning off the sugar. There's also plenty of shade in summer. For a different drive home, head back towards Busselton and turn right onto Chains Avenue, a stunning tree lined rural road which connects back onto Bussell Highway. This is a perfect road trip tunes drive for you and the kids!

General Tips:

Best Playground / Dining combos

Most of the wineries, cafes and breweries around the region are very well geared for children and offer a chance for the kids to play and the parents to enjoy time too. Whilst many of these venues are attached to wineries and breweries, there are plenty of options for non drinkers.

Colonial Brewing Company - <https://www.colonialbrewingco.com.au/margaret-river/>

is just 10 minutes drive from Margaret River. The venue is large and therefore suitable for both wet and dry weather, as well as for families. Outside, there is a huge garden space with a playground, swing set and different games suitable for all ages.

Cowaramup Brewing Company - <https://cowaramupbrewing.com.au/>

which has a wide ranging menu, as well as a lovely grassy garden (kids love to roll down the slope) and a playground that you can see from the restaurant. This means parents can enjoy lunch or a drink and the kids can be playing nearby.

Cheeky Monkey Brewing <https://cheekymonkey.com.au/>

An internationally acclaimed brewery and cidery, this is a lovely environment for families. There are plenty of dining options (kids menus and adults designed to share) as well as a very well set up fenced playground.

Nearby Wineries best 6 within 6 kms

- Xanadu (has a covered playground)
- Voyager
- Red Gate
- Leeuwin Estate
- Cape Mentelle
- Stella Bella

Dining

The dining around the region is relatively diverse, though the restaurants that are family friendly include:

- The Brewhouse in Margaret River
- Southern Cross Pizza is a small dining room with some children's games and awesome family pizzas.
- Chang Thai Kitchen is a good value Thai restaurant and takeaway on Station Road.
- Swings & Roundabouts Tap House: sharing plates, amazing woodfire pizza and kids activity books.
- Morries and Arc of Iris typically offer live music and a lounge bar feel.

General Tips:

Shopping - Supermarkets

Margaret River has 3 main supermarkets as well as many small specialist shops such as fruit and vegetable shops and butcheries. Woolworths is the largest and therefore offers the widest selections. Coles is another option with a similar, broad selection and IGA is a smaller, more local supermarket. Coles and Woolworths (known to locals as "Woolies") are both open from 8am to 8pm daily and take cards and cash. In Australia we charge for shopping bags (15c) so consider bringing your own bag to avoid a charge and support the efforts of the environment.

The Larder and Blue Ginger are both local produce stores and can prepare take home meals. The Larder allows you to order online and they typically deliver to the cottages (if pre ordered).

Wet Weather Games Option:

Yallingup Maze which is about a 30 min drive north up Caves road is a great option for families in all weather conditions. There's a large indoor area with loads of games to play, as well as a wide selection to purchase. These games are suitable for all ages from toddlers up to adults!

For more options for rainy days, check out this website:

<https://www.margaretriver.com/rainy-day-activities-for-families/>