

Margaret River tips

I love going “down south” to Margaret River as Perth locals call it. First of all, go to the Augusta Margaret River Visitors Centre in town (on main street Bussell Hwy) and pick up a couple of A3 maps - invaluable for finding wineries and the like – keep one in the car. The staff are really helpful and will be able to help you book accommodation and tours. To research ahead, visit <http://www.margaretriver.com>.

There’s heaps of info on my [blog](#) too – this post is quite useful: [Best places to eat in the Margaret River region](#).

When to go?

Anytime!

In summer, the beaches are the perfect place to spend time. Mind you, there can be hundreds of flies in summer. During school holidays, accommodation can be expensive.

In autumn, the changing colour of the leaves on the vines makes for pretty vistas. The weather is mild to cool. You need a jacket at night.

Winter can be pretty cold, but if you are staying somewhere that has a log fire, it’s perfect red wine drinking conditions. We love Margaret River in the cooler months.

Spring is lovely as the vines start to green up and if you’re in the right places, you’ll spot some wildflowers in the region too.



Events

Check out [margaretriver.com event listing](#) for more events and info. These are my favourite events in the region:

- [Emergence Creative](#) - a very cool conference for those in the creative industries, held in February / March
- [Drug Aware Pro Margaret River](#) WCT surfing event in April attracting the world’s best
- [Margaret River Gourmet Escape](#) – no foodie should miss this one, usually in late November





Stay

[Cape Lodge](#) - it is one of my favourite places in the world to eat and stay. In Conde Nast's top 10 boutique hotel restaurants in the world, for good reason. The tiled floors in the huge spa bathrooms are heated and it's so comfortable. The restaurant is renowned and a must for any serious foodie.

[Seashells in Yallingup](#) is also very comfortable, self-catering and walking distance to the beach and next door to the Caves House pub. I've stayed here several times and always find the apartments spacious and comfortable.

For an upmarket B&B, [Loaring Place](#) is terrific and very comfortable without a hefty price tag. It's a five-minute drive out of Margaret River town towards the beach. It's well appointed with spa baths in each room, a welcoming lounge area for guests plus a lovely garden with friendly kangaroos.

[Rosa Brook B&B](#) is gorgeous, stunning actually, but quite pricey. The breakfast waffles are to die for and come with homemade jams.

[Margaret River Guest House](#) is historic, a little quirky and quite comfortable. Rooms are a little dated and it's reasonably expensive for what it is, yet continues to rate highly on TripAdvisor.

[Smith's Beach Resort](#) is modern and comfortable if lacking character, right by the beach. Lamonts restaurant is really good too.

For a romantic and completely secluded luxury getaway about 20 minutes drive out of town, we love [Forest Rise Eco Retreat](#). I want to live there forever and always.

The [Margaret River Hotel](#) is reasonably priced, quite dated and basic. It's excellently located in the middle of the main street in town.

The [Darby Park Apartments](#) are located just opposite the Visitors Centre in the middle of town. It's unremarkable with a first impression of a big bland hotel from the outside. I tell you what; I've never slept so good in the whisper quiet rooms and comfy beds.

Rent a house. Check out the holiday rentals online for a huge choice of places to stay – from apartments in town to properties with acres of bushland a short drive away. Best websites to find holiday rentals:

- <http://www.margaretriver.com/> - accredited and the best choice if you are worried about renting online
- <http://www.stayz.com.au/>
- <https://www.airbnb.com.au/>

You can read more on my post: [Margaret River's best accommodation, from lux to less.](#)



Eat

Breakfast – Margaret River town

Eat at [Muster](#) Wine Bar – breakfast / lunch / dinner (photo above is breakfast)

Breakfast at [Morries Anytime](#) – also great for lunch and dinner. Good coffee.

[Urban Bean](#) is popular with locals and their dogs and does a good breakfast.

Breakfast – out of Margaret River town

[Blue Ginger](#) on Station St (just out of town in the industrial area) is a bit of a local's secret – it does terrific food and has a fantastic food store attached.

[Yahava Koffee](#) imports / roasts coffee has a coffee roaster, single origin coffee, and a cute café

Breakfast at [Sea Gardens](#) near Surfers Point – good coffee with (distant) ocean views.

[White Elephant](#) at Gnarabup does good coffee and is right on the beach.

Lunch and Dinner – in Margaret River town

[Swings Taphouse](#) was the first bar to serve wine on tap with glass sight fonts. Good food and decent wine available in a variety of carafe sizes. Read my post about it [here](#).

[Settlers Tavern](#) in town has good pub food...but it can get a little rowdy with locals who like more than a couple of drinks on Friday and Saturday nights. Best lamb shanks and good oysters.

Tastings & food to buy

Saturday mornings – go to the Margaret River [Farmers' Market](#) – great local atmosphere, pick up breakfast, and meet those that grow the region's fantastic produce. Read my post [here](#).

[Margaret River Providore](#) is worth seeking out - they make and sell all manner of jams, preserves, quince pastes, olive tapenades, sauces, etc. Lots of tastings - and they have chocolate liqueur too!

[Samudra](#) in Dunsborough is a yoga place with a very cool healthy café and outdoor chill out garden. They also sell bamboo yoga clothes. There are plenty of other places in Dunsborough I've not mentioned, but only mentioned Samudra because it's quite different.

[Yallingup Wood Fired Bread](#) makes absolutely delicious bread – you can see old kilns and bread is baked in the morning and available to buy after 11am (check) but always sells out. They sell their bread at the Farmers' Markets most Saturdays.



Wineries

With over 120 cellar doors, you won't have to travel far to taste great wine. Margaret River produces just three per cent of all the wine in Australia, but 25 per cent of Australia's premium export wine. The wine produced in the region is excellent, particularly chardonnay and cabernet varietals.

My favourite producer - [Fraser Gallop Winery](#) - to go there, either call them or book a tour with Margaret River Discovery Company margaretriverdiscovery.com.au - Sean Blocksridge is a great guy and the tour is so much more (and better) than a boozy bus tour. If Sean can't take you, do a tour with Chris at Top Drop Tours <http://www.topdroptours.com.au/top-drop-tours-contact-us.aspx>. Both are excellent choices for upmarket wine tours.

There are plenty of others that will pile you onto a bus and take you to seven wineries in one afternoon – it becomes a fun boozy blur but not my preferred way to experience the excellence of the region's wines.

My favourite **cellar doors**, besides the lunch spots listed below, are:

- [Cape Grace Wines](#) a boutique producer of quality wines
- [Cape Naturaliste Vineyard](#) use natural wine making techniques and have very quaffable wines at good prices
- [Heydon Estate](#) is a boutique producer and they age all their wines before releasing them.
- [Pierro Winery](#) makes a great SBS white with a Little Touch of Chardonnay (LTC) - very cute cellar door, worth a stop.

Winery lunches

These are my favourite winery lunch spots:

- [Aravina Estate](#) – beautiful grounds, excellent kids play area, kitchen garden, and a surprise car museum – you can read my review [here](#)
- [Cullen Wines](#) - boasts biodynamic wine making and has an organic kitchen garden on site – read my review [here](#).
- [Hay Shed Hill](#) (also does breakfast) – lovely outlook, relaxed atmosphere and a deli counter to die for – read my review [here](#)
- [Knee Deep](#) – fine dining exquisiteness
- [Leeuwin Estate](#) – iconic and not to be missed
- [Vasse Felix](#) – consistently rates high with top food critics for good reason
- [Wills Domain](#) – great share platters
- [Voyager](#) (new menu not yet tried)

A fabulous online guide to find cellar doors and wineries is [Vine Collective](#) – I use this and love it. Be sure to follow Travelletto on Vine Collective.



Other attractions

In town, [Lloyds of Margaret River](#) is a very unusual interesting shop that sells everything from fishing tackle to kitchen gadgets to garden sculptures to kids toys. Walk towards the back and it just keeps going....! I always stop by and always end up buying something.

[Virgin Vasse](#) is an olive oil company that makes natural soaps, lotions, creams etc from olive oil. They started after the owner's child had such a bad skin condition, they couldn't use soap or shampoo, so they started making their own. Lovely products without chemicals.

Visit [Gabriel Chocolate](#) - ex lawyer who made a mint and then followed his passion and makes chocolate from the bean to the bar. Margaret River Choc Company melts Belgian chocolate and on-sells it.

[Margaret River Venison](#) farm is worth a stop - ask for a taste of the venison pastrami.

We love [The Growers](#) - you won't find cheaper wine anywhere in Margaret River. We're fans of their dessert wine – delicious and exceptional value. They sell the beautiful Wilura Olive Oil (I don't use anything else).

[Millers Ice Cream](#) boasts ice cream made within three hours of the cows being milked. It's delicious and worth stopping in if you are in the area.

Look for [Bahen & Co](#) chocolate for sale in local outlets. Made from ethically sourced cacao beans from around the world, there's just two ingredients in their renowned dark chocolate – 70% cacao and 30% sugar. Chocolate that's good for you.

[Dirty Detours](#) offer mountain bike adventures if you fancy being more active.

Surfing – there are surf breaks galore down south. The head of Rip Curl once told me that Margaret River has the most consistent big waves on the planet. It's home to one of the world's greatest surfing event and attracts surfers from around the world. You can take [surf lessons](#) too.

There are artists' galleries dotted around the region and calling in to appreciate art is a lovely way to spend an afternoon.

For some pampering, Margaret River is also has some gorgeous Day Spas – [Empire Retreat](#) is supposed to be one of the best but I haven't been there is years.

[Koomal Dreaming](#) runs excellent indigenous cultural tours – the grandparents of Josh 'Koomal' were the last aboriginal people to stop living a traditional lifestyle in the bush in the region. You'll visit a cave, learn to make fire from sticks, taste some bush food straight from the bush. It's a fantastic tour for anyone that wants to learn a bit more about Australia's indigenous culture.



Scenery

Talk about being spoilt for choice. Visit stunning beaches of Canal Rocks, Meelup (near Dunsborough - on a still sunny day, it's like Sardinia, simply gorgeous), Surfers Point, and Grace Town. In fact, anywhere along the coast is beautiful.

There are [four caves](#) in the region and all of them are worthy of a visit – If I had to choose one, I'd choose Lake Cave and there's a new deck with see through floor that looks straight down into cave.

Drive south along Caves Road through the tall timber Boranup Forest. Magical trees, just beautiful. I highly recommend that you stop, take a short walk among the Karri trees, and breathe it all in.

Drive along Wildwood Road – very pretty back road lined with trees with vistas of rolling hills with rows of vines.

Caution

Kangaroos are notorious, drive with caution at dawn and dusk.

Cars fly along Caves Road – again, please drive carefully.

For more information

- www.margaretriver.com
- www.margaretriverdiscovery.com.au
- www.facebook.com/swsecrets

If you find a gem in Margaret River that's not listed in the document, please share it with me on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) so I can check it out next time I head 'down south' 😊