



Travel: the best places to visit in Australia in 2018

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It makes sense to spend your holiday dollar at home when we have such incredible diversity.

Here are some of recommended hotspots to visit in 2018.

The Tweed - NSW

Why: This northern NSW coast region offers World Heritage rainforests, mountain ranges, uncrowded beaches and world-famous surf breaks - all nestled in the eroded caldera of the largest shield volcano in the southern hemisphere. Outside the main centres of Kingscliff, Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah, you can enjoy the quirky charm of quiet villages and historic river ports. The Tweed also offers easy access to the Gold Coast where the Commonwealth Games will be held in April.



Kakadu is one of the world's greatest national parks, with climbs, views, plunge pools and gorges to satisfy your Instagram for months. ruthduncan@fairfaxmedia.com.au

Highlights: Check out new agritourism food offerings such as [Tasting Plate Tours](#). New restaurant [Ancora](#) has just opened on the Tweed Coast offering a casual dining scene with Mediterranean beach club interiors, while [Husk Distillers](#) (home of the famous Ink Gin) are due to open a new cellar door in early 2018.

More info: <https://www.visitnsw.com/destinations/north-coast/the-tweed-area/tweed-heads>

Footscray and the Mornington Peninsula-Victoria

Why: Melbourne's eclectic Footscray precinct is full of new breweries, bars and restaurants sitting alongside African, Italian and Vietnamese institutions. There's a burgeoning art scene and an incredible Asian market. [The Mornington Peninsula](#), meanwhile, saw the opening of three major new properties in 2017: [Jackalope Hotel Point Leo Estate winery](#) and the refurbished Lindenderry at Red Hill.

Highlights: Try the little Ethiopian-themed places along Footscray's Barkly St that serve smooth, medium roasted coffee and traditional injera flatbread to accompany their Habesha cuisines. The [Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove](#) on the Mornington Peninsula has just reopened after a facelift.

More info: www.visitvictoria.com

The Gold Coast - Qld

Why: The [Commonwealth Games](#), to take place April 4-15, could see this seaside favourite mature from being a destination for schoolies and family summer getaways to a serious city that can stage world-class events and festivals. The Games has inspired more than a billion dollars worth of new infrastructure including hotels and restaurants.

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outside the main centres of Kingscliff, Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah, you can enjoy the quirky charm of quiet villages and historic river ports. **iStock**

Highlights: Get out and explore different corners of the coast. The laid-back southern beaches of Burleigh, Currumbin and Coolangatta are perfect for escaping the crowds.

Special dates: Try chasing the [Queen's Baton Relay](#) as it travels around Australia in the weeks leading up the Games. In Queensland, it will pass through Brisbane,

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plunge pools and gorges to satisfy your Instagram for months.

The Mornington Peninsula saw the opening of three major new properties in 2017 including the Jackalope Hotel Point Leo Estate winery.

Highlights: Southern Kakadu has Gunlom, a steepish 2km climb that takes you to the top of a waterfall with a natural infinity pool and lookout over the southern section of Kakadu National Park. Nearby, a series of interconnecting walks take you to scenic spots including Boulder Creek, Motor Car Falls and Yurmikmik Lookout. If you're after a crystal-clear plunge pool, wander through the forest to Maguk Plunge Pool where you can cool off under a waterfall. Jim Jim Falls Plunge Pool and

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More info: <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu>

McLaren Vale - SA

Why: This small town was where [SA's viticultural origins began and the Mediterranean climate continues](#) to drive its world-class red wine and diverse food offerings. Sustainable winegrowing is the buzzword about town.

The laid-back southern beaches of Burleigh, Currumbin and Coolangatta are perfect for escaping the crowds. **TripAdvisor**

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Perth - WA

Why: The WA capital has undergone a transformation over the past few years, with new bars, restaurants, shopping and cultural precincts opening alongside major infrastructure developments. The small bar scene is booming. Disused heritage buildings and laneways now house 93 small bars, many offering share plates of local produce. The [much-hyped Qantas direct flight to London](#) will start flying out of Perth daily from March.

Highlights: Elizabeth Quay has new public spaces, boardwalks, restaurants and bars. Stage One of the \$2 billion waterfront project opened to the public in early-2016. Another public space, Yagan Square, is being developed in the CBD to celebrate WA history, culture, landscape and produce. The city's new 60,000-seat stadium will open in January 2018 as the state's AFL home.

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More info: https://www.westernaustralia.com/us/places_to_see/perth

Bay of Fires and The Remarkable Tasmanian Devil - TAS

Why: Tourism Australia's beach expert Brad Farmer recently named [Bay of Fires](#) as the state's best, thanks to their sugary white sand and clear ocean.

The Remarkable Tasmanian Devil, at Hobart's Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, aims to give a fresh perspective on Australia's largest marsupial carnivore. It portrays the devil as a remarkable survivor rather than a cartoon character or victim of facial tumour disease, and assesses why the devil has endured while the thylacine (Tasmanian Tiger) did not.

More info: <https://eastcoasttasmania.com/discover/town/bay-of-fires/>

[The Remarkable Tasmanian Devil](#) is open until 6 May, 2018.

Cartier: The Exhibition, Canberra - ACT

The National Gallery of Australia will welcome [300 Cartier masterpieces in March](#) that will offer a glimpse into the intimate world of the Paris jewellery house and its famous clients, including royalty, aristocrats and global socialites. The exhibition will run from March 30 to July 22 2018.

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