

ROAD TRIP

Exploring the beautiful countryside around Orange, you might find yourself driving off into the sunset. **FACING PAGE** Get serious about your dinner at one of Orange's hatted restaurants, Charred Kitchen & Bar.

for the love of food

DRIVE AROUND THE CENTRAL TABLELANDS OF NSW FOR A TRAIL OF GOURMET TREATS, DELICIOUS WINES AND SOME COUNTRY SIGHTS NOT EASILY FORGOTTEN.

WORDS BERNARD O'SHEA, KYLIE IMESON, HANNAH JAMES



PHOTOGRAPHY ORANGE 360, DESTINATION NSW



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT The gorgeous landscape surrounding Orange; a classic room at Byng Street Boutique Hotel; enjoy a cheese platter on a Country Food Trails tour; share the vineyard view and a tippie at De Salis Wines; Ferment: The Orange Wine Centre.



DAY 1 ORANGE

Start your trip in Orange, the foodie mecca of Central NSW. The cafe and restaurant scene is thriving, and beyond the tree-lined streets the wine and food trails extend in all directions – the map available at the visitors’ information centre makes it look like a rail network! Where to start? A good person to ask is Nicole Farrell, founder of Country Food Trails, whose curated tours offer an overview of the city and sample of the local produce. There are five tours, but you can customise them to suit your interests (ours included a great bush-tucker breakfast, a city tour, a charcuterie platter and wine tasting at Ferment: The Orange Wine Centre in the city, then out to Dindima vineyard, Norland Fig Orchard, an olive plantation and Lake Canobolas). Strike out alone to De Salis Wines, and time your arrival to watch the sun set as you taste the range of sparkling wines.

Where to stay: The Byng Street Boutique Hotel, with its striking interiors, is the standout newcomer to the hospitality scene. byngstreethotel.com.au

Where to eat: Charred is the restaurant everyone is raving about (the name is a nod to its wood-fired ovens). Fiorini’s Ristorante Italiano has little online presence, but a great word-of-mouth reputation.

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DAY 2

ORANGE TO MILLTHORPE

Just 20 minutes drive from Orange is the picturesque village of Millthorpe, halfway between Orange and Bathurst. It earned its reputation as a foodie hub long before its local rivals, and thankfully it hasn’t lost any of its old-world charms. Wine-lovers are in for a trio of treats: visit Slow Wine Co, Tamburlaine Cellar Door and Angullong Cellar Door.

Where to stay: For cosy intimacy for two, Hockey’s Accommodation @ The Old Chemist, hockeysaccommodation.com.au; for grandeur, Rosebank Guesthouse & Gallery, rosebankmillthorpe.com.au

Where to eat: Tonic is the best known of Millthorpe’s restaurants, and The Old Mill Cafe and Millthorpe Providore are gorgeous lunch stops. >



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP Stock up on treats at the Old Mill Cafe and Bakery in Millthorpe; roam the pretty streets of the little heritage town; stay at Rosebank Guesthouse & Gallery, which dates back to 1902.



DAY 3

MILLTHORPE TO BATHURST

Australia's oldest inland European settlement has many historical and other attractions to offer, and is just half an hour from Millthorpe. If you're inclined to linger, it makes a great base for exploring the region. To quell any hunger pangs when you arrive, head to Legall Patisserie Cafe at 56 Keppel Street – its lemon tarts are legendary – or if it's lunch you're after, there's The Hub Espresso Bar + Eatery two doors down at No. 52. Machattie Park is the place to stretch your legs – it has lush trees, a begonia house and fernery. The city's most impressive buildings, such as the neoclassical courthouse and the War Memorial Carillon on Kings Parade, are a stroll away. If you're to the manor drawn, Abercrombie House ("a magnificent statement of Scottish baronial splendour" boasting 50 rooms) is the place for you. It's open to the public from Wednesdays to Sundays and puts on fabulous high teas. abercrombiehouse.com.au

Where to stay: For a truly memorable stay, you can't beat Bishop's Court Estate Boutique Hotel. Its six suites are sumptuous, the 113-year-old chapel has been converted into a grand dining room, and the lovely lounge-cum-library has a collection of *Country Style* back issues. Utter heaven! bishopscourtestate.com.au

Where to eat: A popular newcomer on the culinary scene is Vine & Tap, which aims to make every meal feel like a convivial Italian family gathering. Shared plates with generous serving sizes are the go, best eaten alfresco in the cosy courtyard. Church Bar (housed in the old Anglican Church School House) is a well-established favourite, thanks to its wood-fired pizzas and splendid beer garden.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Partake of an Edwardian High Tea at Abercrombie House, with main rooms and gardens open to explore during the afternoon; sip bubbles and sleep well at Bishop's Court Estate Boutique Hotel.




DAY 4

BATHURST TO MUDGEE

Mudgee's pretty high street, lined with 19th-century buildings, is a treat to wander down after the two-hour drive from Bathurst. Grab breakfast – and a great coffee – at Mudgee Corner Store, and while you're there stock up on local produce, including eggs and honey. Lunch options are varied: Alby & Esthers is a pretty spot tucked down an alleyway that opens into a courtyard. The food is delicious, and the list has lots of local wines. If you're heading out of town, stop for lunch at Our Chow. There are lots of tables and the arancini balls are fab. But the wine tasting is probably what you've come to Mudgee to do. Our top picks are Lowe Wines, set in the middle of a working vineyard, with delicious handmade dips and bread to snack on. The Roger sparkling red is a must-try. Book ahead if you want to stay for lunch at The Zin House, which serves home-grown organic produce, or just wander around the beautiful gardens. We also love Logan Wines, with unmatched views; sit on the balcony and order a cheese platter. Riesling lovers shouldn't miss Robert Stein Winery – back in 1838, the Stein family was among the first to grow the grape in Australia successfully.

Where to stay: Nestled among the vines at Yeates Wines, the Gate House has beautifully appointed loft bedroom accommodation. Pop over to the cellar door or enjoy a glass of wine by the dam. yeateswines.com.au/accommodation

Where to eat: Roth's Wine Bar + Cellar. Licensed since 1923, Roth's is one of the oldest wine bars in NSW. Try their signature 1080 cocktail and pizza. 

PHOTOGRAPHY/DESTINATION NSW, ELISE HASSEY, SUPPLIED



CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT Logan Wines is surrounded by attractive scenery; Mudgee is prime grape-growing land; the cellar door at Yeates; the Gate House accommodation on the same site; a delightful dish from the menu at The Zin House restaurant; more of Mudgee's beautiful terrain.

