

DESTINATION EDITORIAL (1070 words)

Eurobodalla, land of many waters

It's easy to see why Eurobodalla is known as the land of many waters with 130 kilometres of coastline and Marine Park, 83 beaches, 4 major river systems and nearly 20 lakes.

With all this water you'll need ways to explore it and there are plenty of options - from a relaxing river cruise to a houseboat adventure with friends or up close on a kayak tour.

Join a guided cruise or charter where you will discover just how good you'll feel taking time out and experiencing some of the most scenic waterways in Australia. Cruise the azure coloured waterway of Wagonga Inlet at Narooma – you won't want to leave. Navigate the Clyde River from Batemans Bay to Nelligen and follow the route of the steamships that once traded along the coast, winding through magnificent national parks. Or maybe a sail around Batemans Bay's picturesque Tollgate Islands. Day time and twilight sailing charters are now available. If you want to take to the water Eurobodalla has it covered from dinghies to tinnies, canoes, kayaks, surfboards and yachts and even BBQ pontoon boats.

If you enjoy fishing then you're in luck. Eurobodalla is a fishing paradise where it's never too far to a jetty to try your luck for bream, leatherjacket, garfish, ludwerick, trevally, tailor and whiting. Just off the beaches you'll get the big sand flathead and close to the reefs you may chance upon the bigger snapper, morwong, pigfish, leatherjacket, and trevally. If you've got a boat or going on a charter further out on the continental shelf you'll find the big game marlin, yellowfin tuna, kingfish and maako shark hunting grounds. And in the many estuaries the region is known for you can quietly fish for flathead, bream, whiting and jewfish.

While the waterways reflect a multitude of blues, it's the hinterland that provides a dramatic backdrop to the coast with more than 70% of the region made up of lush national park and forest. Within this spectacular landscape you can bushwalk, hike, mountain bike or camp. Pick up the Walking in Eurobodalla brochure at the Visitors Centres for details on short walks and longer walking trails.

In the National Trust village of Central Tilba just south of Narooma and nestled in the foothills of the sacred Mount Dromedary (Gulaga), you will find artisans such as the woodturner, leatherworker and cobbler practicing their crafts in 19th century weatherboard cottages. Don't miss the toy store, lolly shop, gallery, jewellers, lovely cafes and the historic hotel. Venture down the road to Tilba Tilba and lose yourself (and an afternoon!) exploring the stunning 3.5 acre Foxglove Spires woodland garden.

A visit to the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens, south of Batemans Bay, is a perfect way to discover the range of more than 2000 plants native to this region. With each season there's a new glorious display of flora which you can enjoy on one of the well-designed walks, the sensory gardens or from the café and nursery.

If you're a history buff or you simply enjoy stories of yesteryear, you could never be bored with Eurobodalla's eclectic past from the first inhabitants to early settlers, dairy farmers and ship builders, larrikins and bushrangers. This rich heritage is kept in places like Old Mogo Town - a recreation of a mining village from the heady gold rush days - providing visitors with a glimpse into what life may have been like at the end of the 19th century. More history and stories are on offer on a trip on the Wagonga Inlet in Narooma. Charlie is a genuine third generation 'water man' and he skips the electric powered 100 year old Wagonga Princess. There is nothing this man doesn't know about the history of this pristine inlet. The trip includes Devonshire tea and a rainforest walk and runs Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

The rich pastures and clean waterways of this region produce some of Australia's – and the world's – finest food. Our famously delicious Clyde River oysters taste even better when eaten on the water in

which they're grown. There are wonderful restaurants, bistros and cafes, with water views or village vista's, in which to enjoy local produce and fresh seafood.

The area is as famous for its cheeses as it is for its seafood with award winning cheese makers in the region. Great natural ingredients are just the beginning of the culinary pleasures you can enjoy in Eurobodalla. The range of menu styles is as broad as your own palate, from modern European to traditional Australian, casual to haute cuisine. Dine in absolute style, with superb wine lists, or enjoy a home made pie and cake in a historic village café or enjoy the simplicity of fish and chips on a river cruise.

If you find with all these things to do you're still missing your local Club, visit one of the friendly Services or Bowling Clubs in the region. From bowls to bingo and great bistro meals your toughest decision will be deciding which one to visit. There's also no need to give away your weekly Bridge Club when you visit the South Coast, Bridge @ the Bay welcomes visitors and can assist in finding a partner if needed.

And if golf is how your choice of leisure, you are spoiled for choice in Eurobodalla. There's something special about playing on new courses and there are plenty to provide a great challenge. From links-style courses to lush fairways cut through towering gum forests - there's even a golf course perched on a clifftop featuring incredible ocean vistas. The clubs are genuinely hospitable and welcome visitors and for much of the year, many of the courses are quite uncrowded.

Eurobodalla's captivating landscape and scenery is a magnet for artists. The beauty of our land inspired the original inhabitants to begin a tradition of art and story telling which has continued ever since. Talented artists, craftsmen and photographers have moved to this region and create fine work which can be seen in local galleries. The villages and towns of Eurobodalla have many excellent galleries and studios that invite you to view and buy paintings, sculptures, woodworks, textiles, ceramics and pottery. The Land of Many Waters Gallery at the Batemans Bay Visitors Centre regularly exhibits work of local artists and is well worth a look.

Eurobodalla - a place to relax, rejuvenate and bring out your better nature. Enjoy it.