



# Discover Heathcote: Central Victoria's Hidden Gem

A three-day tree change escape for couples...

[heathcote.org.au](http://heathcote.org.au)





# Self-Drive Itinerary

## 3 Days 2 Nights

Based in the heart of Central Victoria and nestled between the stunning McHarg and Mclvor Ranges, you'll find the charming township of Heathcote. Where a perfect combination of relaxed and intimate, boutique and artisan take pride of place, offering those village vibes that visitors and locals alike have come to know and love.

Curated for couples, this three-day, two-night itinerary is ideal for Lifestyle Leaders seeking out new experiences and a desire to escape city life and embrace a weekend of wine and food, nature and the outdoors.



# Welcome to Heathcote

## Getting To Know Heathcote

- The township of Heathcote developed as a result of the gold rush along McIvor Creek in 1852. At its height, the population was estimated to be 40,000.
- Today Heathcote is home to more than 30+ cellar doors and even more vineyards. In fact, Heathcote is known to have some of the oldest Shiraz producing vines in Australia.
- Heathcote is a major contributor to Australia's first UNESCO Creative City and Region of Gastronomy.
- Heathcote is home to The Age Good Food Guide's Regional Restaurant of the Year, Chauncy.
- Heathcote boasts the longest main street in Victoria.
- Heathcote is on Taungurung Country and extends its appreciation to the Traditional Owners of the land.
- Heathcote is connected to Bendigo via the O'Keefe Rail Trail, an historic journey travellers have been taking since 1888 when the railway line first linked the townships during the gold rush.



## Before You Arrive

We love to inspire.

Follow our social media accounts [@ExploreHeathcote](#) for teasers of what to expect in our beautiful region.

Eager to know more? Do you have special requirements?

Be sure to give our **Visitor Centre** a call on **03 5433 3121** to make the most out of your stay.



# Getting Here

## Drive

Travel north from Melbourne via the Northern Highway (B75) to Heathcote. It's an easy drive, approximately 125km and takes around 90 minutes.

## Bus

V/Line coach services connect from Southern Cross Station (Melbourne) via Heathcote daily.





# Travel Safely

## Take A TAC Pause Stop

The TAC Pause Stop initiative aims to reduce driver fatigue on long journeys by encouraging road users to plan ahead, pull over, and recharge.

Here are some important tips and hints to ensure you travel safely and arrive alive.

- Plan your journey ahead of time.
- Aim to get enough quality sleep before driving – regardless of whether the trip is a long or short.
- Avoid driving at times when you would usually be sleeping.
- Don't travel for more than 8 - 10 hours a day.
- Plan to pause from the road at least every two hours.
- Consider swapping drivers where possible.
- Don't drink alcohol before your trip - even a small amount can significantly contribute to driver fatigue.
- Take a 15 minute powernap if you feel drowsy.

For more information and to view the interactive map, visit [tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/pausestop](https://tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/pausestop)



# Day One - Friday

## Early Morning

Kick start your day with a caffeine hit at **Rutherford & Maine**, a contemporary boutique store complete with coffee, homewares and a courtyard overlooking the passing thoroughfare.

Set off on foot for the short stroll to **Heathcote Visitor Centre** where you'll be welcomed by friendly local volunteers. Here you'll find an insider's guide to the region with sound local knowledge and advice, maps and brochures, ensuring you're armed and ready to get amongst it.

🚶 *Rutherford & Maine > Heathcote Visitor Centre: 2-minute walk*

## Mid Morning

Established in the 1850s after gold was discovered in the area, Heathcote is full of hidden gems. Continue along country Victoria's longest main street following the **Historical Walk**. View the craftsmanship and architecture from a gold rush era gone by, where a beautiful blend of modern and quaint little cafes, boutique retailers and cellar doors proudly take their place.

## Lunch

Indulge in a French-inspired long lunch at two-hatted restaurant and The Age Good Food Guide's Regional Restaurant of the Year, **Chauncy**.

Located in a beautifully renovated sandstone building dating circa 1853, husband and wife team, Louis and Tess, have lovingly created and finessed an impeccable dining experience. Their signature four-course menu is personally sourced from regional and seasonal produce showcasing their love for artisan food and exceptional wine.

Cost: \$\$\$\$





# Day One

## Mid Afternoon

Take the short stroll to **Heathcote Wine Hub**, formerly The Wooden Church. Be spoilt for choice with more than 200 local wines on offer. It's the perfect introduction to our beautiful and diverse wine region. Enjoy a tasting and cheese platter whilst learning about the region.

🚶 Chauncy > Heathcote Wine Hub: 5-minute walk

Cost: \$\$

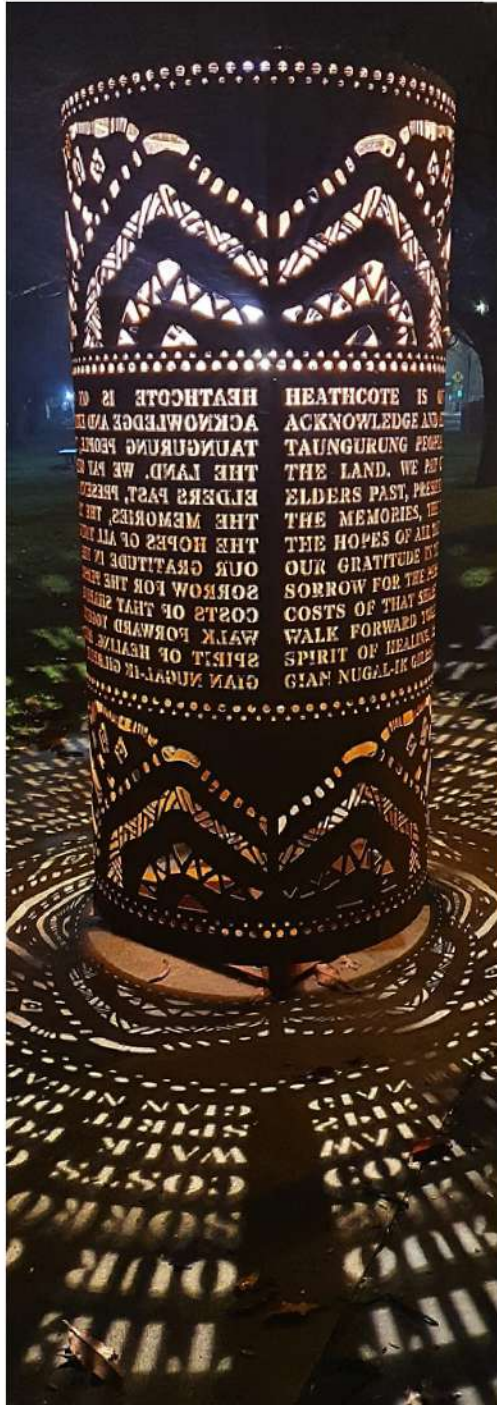
## Late Afternoon

Head back to your car and take the short drive to check in to your first night's accommodation at **Mt Ida Eco Cabin**, an off-grid cabin made with recycled materials, a touch of style and luxury, and where you'll leave no carbon footprint. It offers peace and quiet with picturesque views over the local farmland and Mt Ida.

🚗 Heathcote CBD > Mt Ida Eco Cabin: 6-minute drive

Cost: \$\$\$





# Day One

## Dinner

This evening wind down after your first day of exploring with a relaxed dinner at **Palling Bros. Brewery**. Named after the infamous local, Rood Palling, the team specialise in handcrafted artisan beer and dining, sourcing local produce where they can.

Owners, Peter and Colleen, are passionate about supporting the local community and grassroots artists, hosting regular poetry and open mic nights, comedy shows, live music, and art exhibitions.

Enjoy a tour of the brewery, a beer paddle, and a delicious meal.

🚗 *Mt Ida Eco Cabin > Palling Bros Brewery: 4-minute drive*  
Cost: \$\$

## Evening

Before calling it a night, be sure to take the short detour to Barrack Reserve on High Street to view the **Acknowledgement of Country shadow sculpture**. Taungurung artist, Isobel Morphy-Walsh, was inspired by the crow's view of Mount Camel and the mountain range in the area when creating this beautiful sculpture.

**Insider tip:** the sculpture is a must see at night and is lit up every evening from 6pm.

🚗 *Palling Bros Brewery > Barrack Reserve: 2-minute drive*  
🚗 *Barrack Reserve > Mt Ida Eco Cabin: 6-minute drive*



## Day Two - Saturday

### Early Morning

Start your morning right with a visit to **Fetching Treasures** in the heart of Heathcote for a delicious home-style cooked breakfast. Be sure to wander through the treasure trove of antiques and collectables before embarking on today's adventure.

🚗 *Mt Ida Eco Cabin > Fetching Treasures: 6-minute drive*

Cost: \$\$

### Mid Morning

Take the picturesque route walking across the swing bridge into the **Valley of Liquidambers**, for a spectacular plantation of trees, changing from season to season.

**Insider tip:** visit in mid-autumn when the leaves change colours and it's a sea of rich golden hues.

🚶 *Fetching Treasures > Valley of Liquidambers: 7-minute walk*

Venture a little further and take the hike up **Mclvor Range Reserve** walking track (2.6km loop) passing by the historic **Powder Magazine** once used to house gold mining explosives, up to **Viewing Rock Lookout** for views across the township, and down to **Devil's Cave** on the way back down.

**Insider tip:** visit in spring for native wildflowers.

🚶 *Valley of Liquidambers > Mclvor Range Reserve: 1-minute walk*




## Day Two

### Late Morning

Heathcote is most well-known for its rich and earthy red wines, with more than **30+ cellar doors** throughout the region. This success has paved a path for other budding enthusiasts with a growing number of breweries and distilleries emerging.

It's time to take the northern route visiting three uniquely Heathcote experiences showcasing a diverse range of offerings.

First stop, **Envy Distilling**. This small craft distillery is owned and run by couple, Nathan and Vanessa (the 'N' and 'V'). This passionate duo is deeply inspired by their surroundings, taking characteristics from the region to make their beautiful gins. Take a sip on our favourites, The Dry, inspired by Heathcote's dry and rugged nature, and their Shiraz Gin, recognising Heathcote's hero wine varietal.

 *Mclvor Range Reserve > Envy Distilling: 9-minute drive*  
Cost: \$\$





## Day Two

### Lunch

Let's curb that appetite with a beautiful cellar door lunch at **Silver Spoon Estate**. Running completely off-grid and championing sustainable vineyard practices, enjoy a bite to eat from their seasonally curated lunch menu, complemented with a wine tasting experience.

Passionate husband and wife team, Peter and Tracie, will talk you through their love for sustainability and why their food and wine experience is so unique.

 *Envy Distilling > Silver Spoon Estate: 7-minute drive*

Cost: \$\$\$



### Afternoon

Continuing north, your third stop will encompass both a winery and brewery experience rolled into one, at **The Shiraz Republic and Cornella Brewery**. This rustic family-run vineyard and micro-brewery offer a diverse range of experiences from wine and craft beer tastings, tours, food and live music every weekend in a relaxed atmosphere.

**Insider tip:** if you're here during autumn, rent-a-row and make your own wine or join a stomping party. If you're here at the end of winter, you can walk amongst the canola fields and be surrounded by a sea of yellow.

 *Silver Spoon Estate > The Shiraz Republic: 11-minute drive*

Cost: \$\$



## Day Two

### Late Afternoon

Check in to your luxury self-contained villa, **The Cellars at Heathcote II**. Each villa features contemporary design features, a fireplace, kitchenette, your very own walk-in wine cellar and large deck overlooking the olive groves and vineyard below.

🚗 The Shiraz Republic > *The Cellars at Heathcote II*: 10-minute drive  
Cost: \$\$\$\$

### Dinner

A short 2-minute drive down the road, you'll be treated to a true country pub fare at **Toolleen Hotel**. Think country hospitality, a friendly face and a great range of modern and traditional pub fare. Enjoy a delicious meal by an open fire in the cooler months or go alfresco in the beer garden in the warmer months.

🚗 *The Cellars at Heathcote II* > *Toolleen Hotel*: 2-minute drive  
Cost: \$\$



### Evening

Step outside and take a seat on your private deck at The Cellars and enjoy astronomer's favourite Victorian night sky for the **best stargazing**. Heathcote's clear and dark night skies make for the best uninterrupted views.




## Day Three - Sunday

### Early Morning

Relax and soak up the morning sun with a **gourmet breakfast hamper** at **The Cellars** complete with fresh local artisan bread, milk, freshly squeezed juice, condiments made onsite from the orchard, farm fresh eggs and bacon, and more. Yum!


### Mid-Morning

It's time to explore Heathcote's most popular natural attraction, the colourful **Pink Cliffs**. Heading back into the township of Heathcote, discover a unique landscape legacy of early gold mining activity, everchanging colours at different times of the day and the perfect location for finding a magic selfie spot.

 *The Cellars at Heathcote II > Pink Cliffs: 23-minute drive*

### Lunch

No visit is complete to the Heathcote region without a visit to **Gaffney's Bakery**. Take your time to wander around and appreciate the incredible range of locally inspired pies and pastries, cakes and sweet treats, and much more. You're guaranteed to pick up something to eat now and a little something to take home for later.

 *Pink Cliffs > Gaffney's Bakery: 2-minute drive*

Cost: \$





## Day Three

### Early Afternoon

If you're heading south on your way home, you'll travel past rolling hills and volcanic boulders to the oldest National Trust-listed country pub in Victoria, **Tooborac Hotel & Brewery**.

Renowned for its bluestone building, charm, pub fare and for having their own brewery onsite. Take a brewery tour, try a beer paddle, kick back and relax in the beer garden and enjoy the remainder of your day.

**Insider tip:** try their Woodcutters Ale alongside one of their famous Lamb & Shiraz pies.

🚗 *Gaffney's Bakery > Tooborac Hotel & Brewery: 12-minute drive*  
Cost: \$\$



# Itinerary Overview

## Day One Highlights

- Exploring Victoria's longest main street along the Historical Walk.
- Dining at two-hatted restaurant and Regional Restaurant of the Year, Chauncy, for a French-inspired long lunch.
- 200+ Heathcote wines at your finger tips for tasting and purchase at Heathcote Wine Hub.
- A brewery tour, crafty ale and dinner at Palling Bros. Brewery.
- A nights' stay in off-grid cabin, Mt Ida Eco Cabin, with all the luxuries.
- Viewing the glowing Acknowledgement of Country shadow sculpture.

## Day Two Highlights

- Exploring Mclvor Range Reserve. Learn about Heathcote's history at the Powder Magazine & Devil's Cave, plus epic views at Viewing Rock Lookout.
- Visiting some of Heathcote's most unique cellar doors, distillers and breweries at Envy Distilling, Silver Spoon Estate and The Shiraz Republic & Cornella Brewery.
- Soaking up a nights' luxury accommodation in a private villa at The Cellars.

## Day Three Highlights

- Exploring one of Heathcote's most photographed locations, Pink Cliffs.
- Checking out Central Victoria's most impressive bakery selection and display at Gaffney's Bakery.
- Enjoying an afternoon session at the oldest National Trust listed country pub in Victoria, Tooborac Hotel & Brewery.

For more information, to start planning or book your stay, visit [heathcote.org.au](http://heathcote.org.au)

