

MINTARO AS THE HUB

Use Mintaro as your hub to visit not only the wineries and restaurants of the Clare Valley, but also discover many parts of South Australia using day trips from Mintaro. Some examples are shown below:

BURRA

Round Journey: approximately 1.25 hours driving time.

This historic copper mining town and still known by many as “The Merino Capitol of the World” is only a 35 minute drive from Mintaro. Purchase a “key” at the tourist centre and conduct your own tour of Burra’s historic buildings

TEROWIE AND PETERBOROUGH

Round Journey: approximately 3.25 hours driving time.

A further 45 minutes north of Burra will see you visiting the heritage township of Terowie, where in 1942 US General Douglas MacArthur, whilst transferring trains, made his famous Battle of the Philippines speech saying “I came out of Bataan and I shall return”. Another 15 minutes will take you to Peterborough, home of the Steam Town Museum and a former significant railhead in South Australia. The impressive early colonial architecture of the town is testament to its significance in the history of the state. Or, if you are on your way home to the east, this road, the Barrier Highway, will take you to Broken Hill in around a further 4 hours.

From Peterborough you can head home through some of SA’s richest mixed farming areas, visiting the prosperous town of Jamestown, Bundaleer Forest and eventually into Clare and back to Mintaro (1.5 hours) ready for a drink and dinner within walking distance of your accommodation.

SOUTHERN FLINDERS RANGES

Round Journey: approximately 4 hours driving time.

Take the road back to Clare and then head north past the Race Course. Take the road to the left where it forks, and a superb 1 to 1.5 hour drive will see you visiting the towns of Yacka, Georgetown, Gladstone, Laura (drop in at Limberlost antiques and collectables 5kms north of town), Stone Hut (the bakery is superb), Wirrabara, Murray Town and Melrose.

If the Flinders Ranges are your overnight destination, keep heading north and, via Wilmington, an hour’s drive through a changing countryside will see you in Quorn, on your way to Hawker, Wilpena, Parachilna, Blinman and beyond.

If you are returning to the delights of Mintaro however, from Melrose head back south to Murray Town. Just south of the town, take the well signposted road to Port Germein via Germein Gorge. The drive is exceptional and is only a half hour in duration! Stop at the historic ruins of the Bangor Hotel and read about the early bullockies who carried the Southern Flinders grain crops to the sea (Port Germein) through the gorge. Port Germein once boasted the longest wooden jetty in the Southern Hemisphere. Sadly, storms have taken their toll over the years and the jetty is now significantly

shortened. Have a look around this once busy sea port that saw the world's great windjammers anchored offshore.

Then it's down the highway, past the City of Port Pirie (or visit if you wish) and in 10 minutes you take the turnoff to the left to the lovely mid north town of Crystal Brook. Again, this town's bakery is a must visit! An hour's leisurely drive will find you back in Clare and then "home" to Mintaro for the night. With a couple of hours devoted to "out of the car" sightseeing and bakery visiting, you will do this round trip in 6 hours only!

THE COPPER COAST

Round Journey: approximately 3 to 4 hours driving time.

The sea is only 1.5 hours from Mintaro! From Clare, take the road to Blyth (through the historic settlement of Armagh). Five kilometres through Blyth the road carries on to Lochiel or turns north to Snowtown. Keep going to Lochiel (we will come home through Snowtown). It's an interesting drive through changing country, including salt pans. At Lochiel, turn left to Kadina and you will follow the ridge that offers superb views then head west to the sea! A right/left turn at Ninnes (you will work it out!) will bring you out at the Paskeville Field Day site on the Port Wakefield to Kadina road. Turn right to the historic Copper mining towns of upper Yorke Peninsula.

Options open up as you head up the road and they are well signposted. The towns of Moonta, Wallaroo and Kadina are well connected to each other so the order of visit is flexible. There is much literature and on line info on the Copper Coast so we won't repeat it here. Note however that you have got to the Copper Coast in approximately 1.5 hours so you have plenty of the day left to explore and still be home in Mintaro for drinks with the locals at the Magpie and Stump.

Two alternatives for the trip home. The swifter one is to take the road from Kadina to Bute. Alternatively, take the Wallaroo to Port Broughton or Kadina to Port Broughton road and visit the fishing village of Port Broughton. Both routes are around a half hour. It has a great jetty well worth a walk and the most stunning colonial hotel, right on the foreshore adjacent to the jetty. Then take the road to Bute, past Cream Puff Corner and maybe a quick stop at Bute's wildlife park (its free!).

Bute to Snowtown is another half hour and then its a further half hour back to Clare via Blyth then "home" to Mintaro. So whichever way you go, its no further than 1.5 hours from the Clare Valley to these coastal towns!

YORKE PENINSULA

Round Journey: approximately 5.5 hours driving time.

Head south down the main street and in less than 10 minutes you will be at Leasingham. Turn left and go to Auburn, where a well signposted right turn will see you in Port Wakefield, via Balaklava. You have taken only 50 minutes to travel from Mintaro to Port Wakefield. Take a tour around this historic town, including the wharf area. There is so much more to this former port at the head of St Vincent Gulf than the obvious row of servos and fast food outlets.

With maybe a coffee consumed, head north up the highway and take the left fork to Yorke Peninsula. Several kilometres on, you will turn left and follow the eastern coastline of the peninsula,

visiting the towns of Ardrossan, Port Vincent, Stansbury and Edithburgh, with many small settlements and beaches along the way.

Driving time is approximately 1.5 hours to Edithburgh from Port Wakefield. How long you stop in each seaside town is up to you! There are numerous jetties to walk.

When you turn for home, you can drive up the centre of the peninsula through Yorketown and Minlaton, the major service centres, along with Maitland, of the Lower Peninsula. Unfortunately, a day just does not allow time to venture along the foot to Marion Bay, Stenhouse Bay, Innes National Park, Cape Spencer and Corney Point. It is well worth considering an overnight stay in this western most region of the peninsula to allow proper exploration of the area.

Back up the central road and 15 kilometres north of Minlaton, deviate left to Port Victoria on the western coast. Port Victoria is arguably the best known port in Australia that was regularly visited by the massive 4 masted Barques (windjammers) that loaded grain for passage, via Cape Horn, to Europe. The streets of Port Victoria are named after the ships of the mighty German P Line; ships such as the PAMIR, PASSAT, POMMERN, PEKING and the PADUA, which stills sails today as a sail training ship with the name KRUZENSHTERN under the Russian flag. (It visited Australia during the 1988 Bi Centenary Celebrations). The PASSAT was the last windjammer to load at and leave Port Victoria in early June, 1949.

Take the road to Maitland from Port Victoria and continue north through Arthurton until you reach the main road from Kadina to Port Wakefield at Kulpara. A right turn will take you back to Port Wakefield. Driving time Edithburgh to Port Wakefield via central road is approximately 2 hours. A further 50 to 60 minutes and we are back in Mintaro via Balaklava and Auburn.

THE RIVER MURRAY

Round Journey: approximately 3.5 hours driving time.

After a short 15 minute drive south to Auburn, turn left to Saddleworth then another left to Marrabel. Marrabel is the home of arguably South Australia's most famous rodeo. Check out the imposing status of "Curio", the buckjumper that no-one ever rode out! Only 3 kilometres south of Marrabel, turn left to Eudunda. You will take less than 1 hour from Mintaro to have arrived at this early German settlement, now a service centre for the mixed farming enterprises of the area.

Take the road to Morgan through Eudunda, and a 40 minute drive via the Historic Mount Mary hotel will find you in the historic river port of Morgan. The town offers much to see so allow some time to explore. From Morgan, you can be on your way home to the east through the Riverland, Riverina and Sunraysia. Or make your way back to Mintaro, less than 2 hours away if you retrace your steps.

You may however, for a change of scenery, take the road to Burra from Morgan and travel through the saltbush country that lies to the East of Goyder's Line. The journey will take less than an hour and Burra (see Burra's entry) is only 35 minutes from Mintaro!

THE BAROSSA VALLEY

Round Journey: approximately 3 hours driving time.

Take the 15 minute drive south to Auburn, left to Saddleworth (10 mins) and left again to Marrabel (a further 10mins). Turn right (south) and take the 30 minute drive to the historic town of Kapunda. Go through the town after a look around (the bakery is excellent) and take the left turn to Greenock a couple of kilometres south of Kapunda. From Greenock its on to Nuriootpa in the heart of the Barossa. And its taken you only a 1.5 hour's drive from Mintaro!

The Barossa Valley of course has superb visitor information, so enjoy your day in this significant wine producing region. If you are at the northern end of the Valley when you are ready to return to Mintaro, turn left onto the Sturt Highway at Nuriootpa and take the first turn off the highway to the right (Belvidere Road). Head north to the T junction with the Truro Road and turn left. A 20 minute drive through vineyards and farming land will see you back in Kapunda. Instead of returning north to Marrabel, take the Tarlee Road for a 10 minute journey to Tarlee. You probably passed through Tarlee on your way to Mintaro from Adelaide and took the left fork to the Clare Valley at Giles' Corner, 5 kilometres through Tarlee. So to cover different ground, take the right fork (Barrier Highway) and travel through Riverton to Saddleworth. There its left to Auburn then right to Mintaro.

If you don't mind 12 kilometres of sound but unsealed road, continue north through Saddleworth to Manoora (less than 10 mins). Turn left here onto the unsealed road to Mintaro, passing Martindale Hall and entering the town from the east.

Mintaro Short Drives

Martindale and Merilden

This drive requires you to drive on unsealed roads. The roads are absolutely no problem to a traditional 4 wheel drive and, except after a recent rain event, generally OK for the family car or even a small sedan. An adventure worth a bit of dust and bone shaking!

You are probably aware of Martindale Hall, arguably Mintaro's most significant attraction. Surrounding it are 11,000 acres of prime farming land, until recently all owned by The University of Adelaide. A significant acreage has been recently sold to BTG, a therapeutic pharmaceutical manufacturer that produces Rattle Snake anti venom for the North American market.

This drive will take you through the centre of Martindale, past its cattle yards, shearing shed, shearers' quarters, manager's residence and the original farm centre with its barns, stables, blacksmith's workshop and single men's' quarters. And to the Merilden Railway Station and Goods Shed.

Lets get underway!

You may wish to combine this drive with your visit to Martindale Hall or make it a separate excursion. In any event you need to follow the signs out of town to The Hall. You will go "down and over" a floodway just before a turn to your left up an unsealed road or a turn to the right through the gates of The Hall.

Whether you go to The Hall first or straight into the drive, the turn up the unsealed road gets us on the way. Follow the road east for about 1.5 kms until you come across modern cattle yards on the first left turn. You may like to get out and see if you can work out how the yards work; where are cattle brought to the crush (that structure that confines then for treatment like vaccinations, de-horning, artificial insemination, pregnancy testing etc), where are they loaded for market and how does this maze of yards allow them to be drafted (separated) into different groups.

Take the left turn and travel down the road for 200m and pull over at the iron gate. Look up the hill to your right. You will see the original, and still used stone shearing shed with galvanised extension. Further to the left are the impressive shearers' quarters, still used at least twice a year.

Over the creek and up the hill for a further 400m and you will pass the Manager's house, a substantial single storey colonial residence with return verandas. 100 metres further on and stop at double gates. Down to your right is the original farm centre with the buildings as listed earlier. The blacksmith's shop is the free standing faded red galvanised iron square structure with the turret chimney for the forge.

A further 500m up the road and, over the crest, stop at the cyclone gates to your left. Note the chicken wire fencing style that indicates the "coursing paddock", where live hare coursing was conducted from 1884 to 1986 (102 years) by the Mintaro Coursing Club. (see a display of the club's memorabilia in the Magpie and Stump Hotel). Information on Live Hare Coursing is found elsewhere on this website.

Approximately 1 kilometre down the road you will come to a cross roads, which offers three choices. A turn to the left will take you back to the northern outskirts of Mintaro if you do not wish to proceed on this drive. If you go straight over and 500m up Woomie Creek Road you will come to the Mintaro Gas Turbine Station, a part of SA's power grid, first opened by the then Premier John Bannon in March 1984. During the First Gulf War of 1990-91, the power station had 24 hour security guards patrolling its grounds, much to the bemusement of the locals!

If you proceed on past the Power Station you will come out on the Mintaro to Farrell Flat Road. A left turn will see you back in Mintaro, a right turn in Farrell Flat.

Best option is a U turn and go back to the cross roads and turn left onto Merilden Road. 4.5 kms on, turn right into Bowman's Road and pull into the Merilden Railway Station and its stone Goods Shed. Follow this link for the history of this once bustling part of Mintaro's life.

Head further down Bowman's Road for 1 kilometre, across a floodway and turn right into Martindale Road. A six kilometre drive through the heart of Martindale's rich farming land will see you pass the airstrip to your left, opposite the quarry used for road maintenance and then the current working hub of the farm with implement sheds, workshops, silos etc on your right. Before you know it you will be passing the cattle yards and back to the floodway and the gates of Martindale Hall. Turn right to Mintaro and left to Martindale Hall.

Depending on how long you spend out of the car, this drive will be less than 1 hour. Enjoy our beautiful countryside!

Polish Hill River

This drive requires you to drive on some unsealed roads. The roads are absolutely no problem to a traditional 4 wheel drive and generally OK for the family car or even a small sedan. An adventure worth a bit of dust and bone shaking!

Its best to start this trip at Paulette's Winery at the top of Trillion's Hill, the highest point on the Mintaro to Sevenhill Road. You may take this drive when returning to Mintaro from Clare or, if its a stand alone adventure, head to Paulettes from Mintaro.

The view alone makes a stop at Paulette's Winery a must! As well as tasting this family owned winery's great products, you can experience a magnificent view of Polish Hill River and beyond.

Back in the car, head out of the winery (left turn) and down the Mintaro road (one continuous left hand bend) for 500 metres. Take the road to the left (which really means going straight on) and this unsealed road will take you through the western end of the valley. Numerous small vineyards line the road for the next 2 kms until you arrive at Annie's Lane corner.

To the left is the entrance to the Wilson Winery; straight over the crossing and 400 metres on is the gate to Pike's Winery on your left. These Polish Hill River wineries boast excellent reputations for producing superb cool climate wines. Take the time to check out the links to these three winery's websites for product detail, opening hours and other information.

Just before the entrance to Pikes you will pass, on your left, the Polish Church and museum, which is open from 11am to 4pm on the first Sunday of each month except January. Check out the website for its history and significance.

Back on Polish Hill River Road after turning left from Pike's, head down the road to the East for 2.5 kms to the T junction with Hill River Road. Turn right onto this somewhat bumpy road and follow the road around the side of Mt Rufus. It's not unusual to see many kangaroos on the hill to your right. Again, this road affords a magnificent view to the left over the rich farming lands of Mintaro.

After 2.2 kms, you will be back on the Mintaro Road. Turn left and another 2.3 kms will see you back in our magnificent town. Depending on just how long you linger at the three wineries, allow 1 to 1.5 hours for the excursion.