



FOUR SEASONS ON THE COAST OF KANGAROO ISLAND

Who doesn't feel invigorated beside the sea? On Kangaroo Island there's plenty of sea to be beside, with over 540 coastal kilometres. Take in surf-battered shores on the south and west coasts, calm coves among towering cliffs on the north coast, serene marine bays and lagoons in the north east, and sweeps of white, empty beaches and rocky shores on every coast.

The surrounding waters of Kangaroo Island are exceptionally diverse and have been said to rival the Great Barrier Reef. A rich underwater world has gorgonian corals, sponge gardens and more than 200 species of fish. Leafy Seadragons and Harlequin Fish swim with rays and over sea-stars and there's more blue than the sea itself – Blue Throat Wrasse, Blue Devils, Blue Groper and even the occasional Blue Whale.

Bring your snorkelling gear (or grab some when you arrive), and outside of summer include a wetsuit, the water can be cool. After a quick check of the local weather conditions, choose your spot and take the plunge into this underwater world with so much waiting to be discovered. From rocky coves right around the island, to seagrass meadows in Nepean Bay, there are locations to suit the experienced and the novice. There is also the chance to join a marine tour and snorkel with a local to guide you.

Marine parks and marine park sanctuary zones protect many creatures and their habitat around the island. These areas are widely accessible and you are still welcome to surf, swim, snorkel and scuba dive, sail and kayak. For those who'd rather enjoy the ocean from the shore, explore rock pools and shorelines to observe animals, shells and coastal life. Please be sure to leave things as you find them for the next explorer to enjoy.

A leisurely swim or stroll along the beach will revitalize; let the kids explore rocky coves to spy all sorts of creatures (be cautious, some bite!); paddle a kayak in a calm bay or river estuary. Whether rugged up in winter

and walking in the refreshing wind, casually strolling white sands on a calm autumn night, or spending the entire day swimming in the hot summer sun the coast will bring a sense of calm and refresh even the weary at any time of the year.

Autumn

The calm weather and many rocky coves along the Kangaroo Island coast make autumn a wonderful time for snorkelling and exploring the underwater worlds. With an assortment of fish from wrasse to whiting and Porcupine Fish, delve into the rocky and weedy habitats to discover coastal treasure troves. If you're new to snorkelling and keen to give it a go, hire a local guide to take you on a coastal snorkelling tour, they'll provide all the gear and the local knowledge, and you can enjoy a window into this exciting new world!

From the ocean to the river or even a lagoon, kayaking is the ultimate cruise to see what's happening on and around the water – quietly spot dolphins, sea eagles, pelicans, swans or fish. Explore historical settlements from the sea in American River. Hire a kayak or book a kayak tour at various spots around the island.

Autumn brings cooler days and often light winds, prepare for a range of weather conditions and you can get out and about to enjoy the coast in any weather! The coast can be quietly calming, with gentle waves lapping at the shore on a cool autumn evening walking the beach at Emu Bay. Head to one of the south coast beaches, like Vivonne Bay on a windy day to feel invigorated and marvel at nature as waves pound the coast and fresh seas spray is blown across the shore.

Winter

Cape du Couedic is "God's industrial washing machine. Complete with God's industrial dryer ... The wind blows straight through your head, [in] teeth aching, eardrum shattering magnificence" (www.inkandcleaver.com, 7 August 2014).

The exposed south and west Kangaroo Island coasts can be storm central, especially in winter. If storm watching is your thing, take a trip to the top of Cape Willoughby or Cape Borda lighthouse, or hold on to any vantage point in between. You will never feel more alive after standing atop a lighthouse in 40 knot winds! Don't forget to imagine what life was like for our lighthouse keepers when these places were only accessible by a four-day horse ride.

Calmer beaches on the north coast offer sheltered stretches to enjoy brisk afternoons strolls in gentle winter sun, with salt in the air and treasures to spy. Keep your eyes peeled for small coastal birds hunkering down in winter seaweed washed up on the beaches.

Southern Right Whales are the most frequent of large marine mammal visitors to Kangaroo Island waters. Often travelling past between May and September before returning to Antarctic waters in October. Look for them close inshore right around the coast or in sheltered bays where mothers may rest with young. Less commonly Blue and Humpback Whales also visit, and an occasional Killer Whales (Orcas) sometimes drop by for a seal meal.

Spring

Slip into the aquamarine dream and swim at one of the many north coast beaches or coves in spring sun, Snellings Beach and Western River Cove are glorious. The south coast is more exposed and often rugged, great for experienced swimmers, but remember to always give the ocean a careful assessment before plunging in.

Kangaroo Island's beaches carry the remains of many sea creatures and plants – the lucky might find a Nautilus shell after a storm at D'Estrees Bay. Sheltered reefs, such as Brownlow, can be an educational treasure trove for children and adults at low tide, and intrepid little explorers will delight. Please leave living creatures undisturbed, especially within a marine park sanctuary zone. Each tide deposits a new suite of treasures, each with a story about something that has lived and is slowly being recycled by nature.

No matter which way the wind blows, there's a beach with surf, most likely accessible by car, and you're almost guaranteed to have the break to yourself. Pennington Bay works best on a small swell in a north-westerly, but this is one place you might have to share – it's a popular surfing beach for locals and visitors alike. Check-in with a friendly local to discover the best conditions for swell at the local haunts.

Summer

If sailing is your way to escape the madding crowd, then Kangaroo Island is a dream destination. Sailing the north coast you'll enjoy spotting the village settlements, often on white sandy bays interspersed with rolling hills, coastal cliffs, rocky shorelines and devine coves. The sealife is abundant, you will be sure to spot a pod of dolphins cruising past on the north eastern coast and birdlife abounds. Sheltered year-round cruising for day sailing is perfect in Nepean Bay and along the north coast many spectacular anchorages are hard to resist for a longer stay.

The coastline transitions from cove to beach to cliff sometimes gently, and at the eastern and western most ends dramatically, with cliffs at the opposing Cape Borda and Cape Willoughby soaring over 150 metres above sea level.

For surfing novices and boogie boarders try Stokes Bay and Vivonne Bay, remembering to always assess the conditions and be mindful of rips and under-currents. More experienced surfers will head to Pennington and D'estrees Bay, a casual chat with a local will often reveal a good spot to try for the coming days.

Swimming, snorkelling and kayaking suit the summer mood and the benefit of being an island is that locations are abundant. Beaches are popular in summer, along the north coast for generally safer swimming and the south coast for the more experienced and adventurous, but no matter where, the azure blue ocean will delight those that venture in or choose to admire from the safety of the crisp white sand.

Discover more...

Recreational boats can travel through marine park sanctuary zones, but cannot fish in sanctuary zones. The marine parks app at www.marineparks.sa.gov.au will let you know when you are in a sanctuary zone and any restrictions that apply.

Kangaroo Island Council maintains boat launching facilities (www.kangarooisland.sa.gov.au/boating) at American River, Bay of Shoals (Kingscote), and Christmas Cove (Penneshaw) where fees apply, and Baudin Beach and Emu Bay which have no fees.

Take a tour to discover places the experts reveal, and encounters with dolphins, coastal raptors and seals. Visit Kangaroo Island Tourism Alliance at www.tourkangarooisland.com.au for information on tours and locations, where to buy or hire gear, boats and boards, and much, much more.