



Orange, Dubbo and Mudgee drive

This drive takes you on a circuit through Orange, Dubbo and Mudgee – three of the best reasons you'll ever find for packing a bag and heading to the country.



MUST SEE AND DO

Hire a bike in Mudgee and take a two-wheeled vineyard tour.

Experience a slice of Australia's pioneering history at Dubbo's Dundullimal homestead, a brilliant evocation of life on the frontier.

At Lake Canobolas, near Orange, take a swim, explore the walking trails or enjoy a picnic.

With around 50 wineries offering cellar-door sales, Mudgee gives visitors plenty of opportunities to take home some special souvenirs.

Photographs

above left to right: Elephants Heman and Burma at Western Plains Zoo (Gary Miller); Convent, Orange; Canoeing in Rylstone; Mudgee wine region (Mike Newling)

Hit the road

Starting from Sydney, this touring route takes you west to Orange, then north to Dubbo before turning south-east to Mudgee. Three days is a practical minimum for the journey from Sydney and back, but you could easily spend a week indulging in a rambling country escape.

From Parramatta Road in Sydney, turn right onto the M4 (Western Motorway), which begins at Strathfield. Follow the M4 to Lapstone in the Blue Mountains, where the M4 becomes the Great Western Highway. The highway passes through the cities of Katoomba, Lithgow and Bathurst, where it becomes the Mitchell Highway and continues to Orange. The 260-km journey from Sydney to Orange takes about 3½ hours.

Orange

Handsome, historic and cultured, Orange is enjoying a growing reputation as a high quality source of rare and seasonal produce. This is immediately apparent in the local cafés and restaurants and in the farmers' markets, which are held in the showground on the second Saturday of each month. Stop for the night so you can sample the excellent regional cuisine in one of the city's fine restaurants.

Pick up an Orange City Heritage Trail brochure from the visitor information centre and stroll around the city's fine historic buildings. Don't miss the superb Orange Regional Art Gallery.

Just a short distance along Forest Road from the heart of the city, Gosling Creek Reserve

has been redeveloped into an environmentally based recreational facility. Built around a historic reservoir that originally supplied the city with water, it includes picnic and recreation areas with a shared pathway suitable for walking, cycling and roller-blading,

From Orange, take the Mitchell Highway north through Molong and Wellington to Dubbo. The 150-km journey takes about 1½ hours.

Dubbo

Standing head and shoulders above all other attractions in the area, Dubbo's Western Plains Zoo is a major-league attraction, sufficient reason alone to make the journey to Dubbo. Zoo tickets are valid for two days – and you'll certainly need both days if you want to see the very best the zoo has to offer.

Make sure you're in the audience for the keeper talks and feeding sessions – a fascinating way to learn about some of the world's endangered species.

One of the earliest settlements west of the Great Dividing Range, Dubbo has a legacy of historic architecture.

Dundullimal, a homestead dating from the 1840s, speaks volumes about the ingenuity and sheer resilience of Australia's pioneers, while Old Dubbo Gaol brings the Victorian penal system thrillingly to life with animated models and computerised wizardry. From Dubbo, head east on the Golden Highway for about 20 minutes and follow the signs to Mudgee.



Mudgee

En route to Mudgee you'll find the town of Gulgong. Founded in the heady days of the gold rush, its main street has 130 National Trust-classified buildings that reveal the town's history. Gulgong is a creative hub, with many artisans exhibiting their work in the large and modern Cudgong Gallery, a stark contrast to the historical streetscape. The 140-km trip to Mudgee from Dubbo takes less than 2 hours.

About 50 wineries in the Mudgee region offer cellar-door sales, so make sure you leave some

room in your boot. Buying wine from the vineyard where the grapes are grown adds a little something extra to the taste. Mudgee vineyards include some excellent organic wineries and you'll have plenty of opportunities to take home some special wines that you won't be able to find in your local liquor store.

Mudgee also has a number of appealing accommodation options, so it's not too hard to find excuses for staying a night or two. If you feel like stretching your legs, head to the village of Rylstone and continue to Dunns

Swamp, where the waters of the Cudgong River are backed up behind Kandos Weir, making a lovely backdrop for a bushwalk.

To return to Sydney, take Highway 86 south towards Lithgow, then follow the Great Western Highway, or take the M4 Motorway. The 265-km journey will take about 3½ hours.

i For more information on these areas, telephone visitor information centres in: Orange: 1800 069 466; Dubbo: 1800 674 443; and Mudgee: 1800 816 304.



Mudgee Attraction / Activities

Mudgee Region Museums

The Mudgee region has a rich history, which is reflected in the heritage streetscapes and museums. The town of Gulgong is of particular interest, with two museums and the Prince of Wales Opera House, which dates back to the gold-rush era.

84 Market St, Mudgee
Telephone 1800 816 304
www.visitmudgeeregion.com.au



Orange Attraction / Activities

Orange Adventure Playground

Next to the Orange Botanic Gardens is the Adventure Playground, which includes a farm tractor, rock walls, tree house and rocket. The playground is wheelchair friendly and has toilet, picnic and BBQ facilities.

Hill St, Orange
Telephone 1800 069 466
www.orange.nsw.gov.au
Rates: Free entry*



Dubbo Attraction / Activities

Old Dubbo Gaol

Old Dubbo Gaol is a fully restored 1800s gaol, enhanced with some of the latest technology in entertainment. Suitable for visitors of all ages, it caters for all levels of interest, especially families. Open every day from 9 am to 4.30 pm.

90 Macquarie St, Dubbo
Telephone (02) 6801 4460
www.OLDdubboGaol.com.au

* Rates valid at date of publication, October 2006. Accommodation prices based on twin/double share (unless otherwise stated) and subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply, please contact the service provider for a complete list of terms and conditions.