

# GOURMET GETAWAYS

Love your food? These fab holiday ideas should be on your travel menu!



Huka Lodge



The Byron at Byron



## CULTURAL JOURNEY

**Star pick:** Huka Lodge, Taupo, New Zealand  
Don't expect anything budget at this lakeside retreat – Queen Elizabeth, Kate Winslet, Bill Gates and Barbra Streisand have all been guests, after all! But it's *the* pick if you're after the real NZ foodie experience – rainbow trout fishing in crystal-clear mountain streams and Lake Taupo. For a more affordable trout fishing adventure, Chris Jolly ([www.chrisjolly.co.nz](http://www.chrisjolly.co.nz)) offers a fishing charter service on Lake Taupo (your catch will be barbecued or served sashimi style with wasabi). Also in town, check out The Merchant of Taupo

([www.themerchant.co.nz](http://www.themerchant.co.nz)) for a fine selection of cheeses, salamis, oils and wines. A quick trip from Taupo takes you to another foodie spot – Rotorua (Rachel Hunter's favourite hangout). Here, try a traditional Maori hangi, which is a meat, fish or vegetable and shellfish dish cooked on hot rocks in an earthen oven. Another of Rachel's faves is Tamaki Tours, where you can feast on a hangi banquet ([www.maoriculture.co.nz](http://www.maoriculture.co.nz)).

**Details:** Rooms at Huka Lodge start at \$607 per night. Go to [www.hukalodge.com](http://www.hukalodge.com).

## COOKING SCHOOL

**Star pick:** Gwinganna, Qld  
Gwinganna is not just a dreamy spa loved by stars such as Kate Ceberano, Naomi Watts and Hugh Jackman – it's also known for its interactive organic cooking and gardening school, which includes several themes. This is the place to go if you want to learn practical skills while you bliss out – you'll learn the nutritional benefits of produce and how to whip up delicious organic meals (think Kashmiri lamb shanks, tahini balls, gluten-free corn bread and quinoa sushi).

**Details:** The next three-night Organic Cooking Celebration retreat runs in December (with recipes perfect for entertaining!) and is priced from \$1350 per person. Go to [www.gwinganna.com.au](http://www.gwinganna.com.au).



Dish  
Restaurant

## GREEN ESCAPE

**Star pick:** The Byron at Byron, NSW

Always the leader in lifestyle trends, Byron Bay is still the place to go for gourmet food in NSW. Gavin Hughes, head chef at celeb hot spot The Byron at Byron

(Jess Simpson and John Mayer got loved-up here), credits the rich land and hippie homage. 'We have great volcanic soil and lots of rainfall so things grow pretty easily,' says Gavin.

The area's snagged a more chic reputation lately, luring the likes of Kate Hudson for a touch of laid-back relaxation. The revamped Dish Restaurant has landed foodie awards for its local delights: 'Our oysters come from Morton Bay, north of Byron, our beef is from Casino, west of Byron, and our coffee is grown and roasted less than five kilometres from the restaurant,' says chef Michael De Laurence. The Green Garage, the Rolls-Royce of supermarkets, also makes the cut with their philosophy – 'keeping it local, keeping it fresh'. Hit the hinterland and visit Bangalow, famous for their pork belly, sample what's on offer at Utopia and load up on local produce at the Farmers' Market, each Saturday.

**Details:** Rooms at The Byron at Byron Resort start at \$360 per night for two. Go to [www.thebyronatbyron.com.au](http://www.thebyronatbyron.com.au).



Kangaroo  
Island

## Celebrity holidays

### GUIDED TOUR

**Star pick:** Gourmet Safaris' Kangaroo Island trip, SA

If you'd love a package tour to some of Australia's most special foodie regions, you can't go past SBS *Food Safari* host Maeve O'Meara's tailored Gourmet Safaris (HG Nelson and Deborah Hutton love them). The next Gourmet Safari takes in the secret celeb spot of Kangaroo Island, off the South Australian coast. It's home to incredible produce (think cheeses, wines, lobster, marron, samphire, honey and olive oil) and some of the best beaches on earth. The ex-chef from London's star haunt The Ivy is on hand to create amazing meals and hampers. You'll meet local producers, taste the produce, help put on banquets and get all the insider knowledge.

**Details:** The six-day November tour costs \$2095 per person, and includes accommodation and meals (plus wine), one night in Adelaide and a tour of the Central Markets in Adelaide. Go to [www.gourmetsafaris.com.au](http://www.gourmetsafaris.com.au).



### BUSH TUCKER

**Star pick:** El Questro Homestead, WA

A stay at El Questro doesn't just mean a celebrity experience (Princess Mary and Prince Frederik have stayed here, and Nicole Kidman tried during the filming of *Australia* but it was fully booked) – this traditional Aussie homestead on the edge of the Kimberley region, one of the last true frontiers, offers a bush tucker tour as well. Guides give you insight into life on the 400,000-hectare wilderness park and take you on a nature walk that reveals the incredible beauty of the surrounding canyons, gorges and lookouts. Plus, you'll learn all about the

traditional culinary choices of the Aboriginal people, including local plants, and you'll have a meal beside a waterhole. Back at the homestead, dinners include locally sourced delights like fresh barramundi flavoured with wild bush spices, a macadamia crust and wattle cream sauce.

**Details:** The homestead is open from April 1 to October 31. Rooms start at \$1000 a night. You can also stay at one of El Questro's private riverside campsites (\$15 a night). Go to [www.elquestro.com.au](http://www.elquestro.com.au) or call (08) 9169 1777.



### Getting there

Virgin Blue flies to all Australian states and to New Zealand. Go to [www.virginblue.com.au](http://www.virginblue.com.au) for great deals

## And for Tasmania and Victoria...

**TAS:** To satisfy you *and* your bloke, try a beer and cheese trail! Check out Cascade brewery ([www.cascadebrewery.com.au](http://www.cascadebrewery.com.au)) in Hobart and the Grandveve cheesery ([www.grandveve.com.au](http://www.grandveve.com.au)), then drive north to Boags Centre for Beer Lovers (03 6332 6300) in Launceston and Ashgrove Farm Cheese ([www.ashgrovecheese.com.au](http://www.ashgrovecheese.com.au)).

**VIC:** To burn off everything you eat, try Green Gym at Bendigo's Peppergreen Farm. Get fit while organic market gardening (planting, harvesting, potting and weeding). Priced from \$40 per night, including all meals and accommodation. Go to [www.conservationvolunteers.com.au](http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au) or call (03) 5444 0777.

Gwinganna

El Questro  
Homestead