

# Goldfields



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## ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Goldfields is blessed with forests and farmland, pristine rivers and historic villages, bustling with creative life, and bookended by the grand cities of Ballarat and Bendigo. Even the tiniest towns are characterised by impressive nineteenth-century architecture – a legacy of the great wealth unearthed by the world’s treasure hunters back in Victoria’s gold rush era. Today the region is famous for its local produce, restaurants, vineyards, vintage boutiques, attractions and art galleries.

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## TOP ATTRACTIONS

### Sovereign Hill

Australia’s foremost outdoor museum, Sovereign Hill re-creates the original township of Ballarat to show what life was like during the goldrush. During the decade after gold was first discovered in 1851, thousands of international adventurers rushed to the Australian goldfields in search of fortune. The excitement is brought to life with Sovereign Hill’s gold panning, gold pouring and township tours.

### Ballarat Wildlife Park

At Ballarat Wildlife Park, visitors can enjoy interactive experiences with some of Australia’s most loved wildlife including koalas, wombats and emus.

### Kryal Castle

Australia’s only medieval theme park, Kryal Castle is a legendary land of myth and medieval adventure with knights, dragons, wizards, kings, queens, princesses and fairies. Within the castle walls is a sprawling medieval village of activities, beginning with the Dragons Labyrinth which reveals the legend of Kryal.

### Central Deborah Gold Mine

With hard hat on and miner’s lamp in hand, visitors can descend underground at the Central Deborah Gold Mine which was operational until 1956. Guided tours take place through the honeycomb-like tunnels on level two (61 metres beneath the surface), an Underground Adventure Tour takes place on level three and, at 228 metres underground, Nine Levels of Darkness is Australia’s deepest underground mine tour.

### Bendigo Pottery

Australia’s oldest pottery works, Bendigo Pottery has become an arts hub with seven resident artisans and a recently developed antique and collectables centre. Those keen to get their hands dirty can throw a clay pot themselves, while others can watch professional potters at work.

### Bendigo Art Gallery

Bendigo is fast gaining a reputation as regional Victoria’s arts and culture capital, largely thanks to its gallery. The Bendigo Art Gallery frequently hosts coveted international collections, and is currently exhibiting *Marilyn Munroe* in collaboration with Twentieth Century Fox (until 10 July), a curation of artefacts, clothing and other objects belonging to or worn by Monroe.

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## KEY EVENTS

### Archibald Prize Exhibition

October/November

The Archibald Prize is awarded annually to the best portrait, 'preferentially of some man or woman distinguished in art, letters, science or politics, painted by any artist resident in Australasia'. First awarded in 1921, this is one of Australia's oldest and most prestigious art awards and provides a glimpse into the who's who of Australian culture - from politicians to celebrities, sporting heroes to artists. The touring exhibition will be on show at the Art Gallery of Ballarat later this year.

### Bendigo Wealth Heritage Uncorked

October

The winemakers of Bendigo host Bendigo Wealth Heritage Uncorked each year to showcase the best of Bendigo's wine, food, local musicians and grand goldrush architecture. Visitors have the opportunity to taste the region's best wines, matched with gourmet food prepared by local chefs while strolling from one stunning heritage venue to the next.

### Bendigo Easter Festival

March

Australia's longest running cultural festival, Bendigo Easter Festival is a four-day community celebration with activities for the whole family, including a twilight movie, Easter egg hunt, blues and roots music, and arts and craft market. Bendigo's Chinese heritage is celebrated with the world's longest Imperial Dragon, Sun Loong being awakened and headlining the gala parade on Easter Sunday.



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## PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

### **Food Fossicking Tours**

Bendigo's Food Fossicking Tour highlights the city's vibrant food culture. The walking tour provides participants with the opportunity to meet local food heroes, enjoy food and beverage tastings, hear stories from the producers and fill their foodie tour bag with local produce.

### **Bendigo Tramways**

The iconic Bendigo Tramways has launched new trams to make it easier to explore the city – The Schaller Tram, painted by artist Mark Schaller and the Jimmy Possum Tram, which has been designed by designers from Bendigo's iconic furniture store.

### **The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion**

The Great Stupa is the largest Buddhist monument in the western world, constructed near Bendigo. It is the final home for the largest gem quality Jade Buddha in the world, and is becoming popular as a major tourist attraction in Victoria.

For more information on the Goldfields, visit [www.visitmelbourne.com/Regions/goldfields](http://www.visitmelbourne.com/Regions/goldfields)