



Discover Bendigo

**Join Bendigo's new Gold Rush of
food and creative culture**



 Bendigo Visitor Centre   explorebendigo | bendigotourism.com



Self-Drive 4 days / 3 nights couple escape

Womindjika (Welcome) to Dja Dja Wurrung Country, where the Ancient Traditions of Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung People) continue to thrive today. For thousands of years, Djaara have lived on and cared for this land, passing down stories, customs, and practices from generation to generation.

In the mid 1800's, Bendigo was born with people from across the World travelling to the Goldfields to find their fortune. It has left a legacy of stunning grand architecture, beautiful parklands and waterways that are integrated into modern Bendigo life. Like the Gold Rush, people are now returning again to discover our thriving cultural and creative scene that blends contemporary experiences across the city with our heritage past.

This four-day, three-night self-drive itinerary has been curated for couples to experience the best of Bendigo's arts and culture, heritage attractions and culinary specialties from Australia's first UNESCO Creative City and Region of Gastronomy. Under two hours from Melbourne, this self-drive experience provides opportunities to meet some of our innovative artists and makers who are shaping our city.

From wine tasting, First Nations art to spiritual healing, local produce and world class exhibitions, your trip will be one of connection, inspiration and culturally enriching.



Before you arrive

Visit our website www.bendigotourism.com for ideas and information in this itinerary, including the opportunity to book tours, accommodation and tickets

Follow our social media account @explorebendigo on Facebook and Instagram. Our hashtag is #explorebendigo which shows visitor's memories of Bendigo.

Need some local advice?

Call the Bendigo Visitor Centre on 03 5434 6060.

Getting here

Drive:

Take the 2-hour drive from Melbourne via Calder Highway to Bendigo. Be sure to plan ahead, pull over, and recharge.





Get to Bendigo Safely

Take a TAC Pause Stop

We want to see you in Bendigo safely for a wonderful holiday.

To reduce driver fatigue and ensure you arrive here safely, here are some important tips:

- Plan your journey ahead of time with breaks, at least one break every two hours.
- Have enough quality sleep before driving, share the driving if you can.
- Avoid driving at times when you would usually be sleeping.
- Don't travel for more than 8 - 10 hours a day.
- Don't drink alcohol before your trip - even a small amount can significantly contribute to driver fatigue.
- Pull over and take a 15-minute powernap if you feel drowsy.
- Grab a coffee to recharge

For more information and to view the interactive map, visit tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/pausestop

Day One

Morning

Arrive and park your car behind the Bendigo Art Gallery for the day and walk to the Ulumbarra theatre to start your Bendigo experience with a **Dumawul Tour**, a First Nations walking tour. There, you will meet a local guide from Djaara, who will be taking you on a journey to uncover the rich cultural histories of Bendigo's past, present and future. In particular, this tour will focus on the impacts the Gold Rush had on Djaara people (Djaara people called Bendigo upside down country) and see how Djaara's artists projects are transforming the city.

Next is a visit to one of the most spectacular visitor centres in Australia, the **Bendigo Visitor Centre**. Housed in the former historic Post Office, this place is an attraction in its own right. It is the home of two galleries that offer changing exhibitions throughout the year. The **Living Arts Space** is a gallery dedicated to artists of the Bendigo region, and the **Djaara Djuwima Gallery**, Bendigo's first dedicated permanent First Nations gallery.

Ask a volunteer at the Bendigo Visitor Centre for all the local tips and pick up something from **Uniquely Bendigo**, an award-winning retail store showcasing a huge selection of gifts and items from local makers and producers.

Fun Fact– The Bendigo Visitor Centre still features the original timber Post Office counter that would greet you.





Day One

Board the **Vintage Talking Tram** at the iconic Alexandra Fountain, a short walk from the visitor centre. The trams have been used since the Gold Rush, transporting miners and locals to their destination. It is one of the best ways to get to know our city, as you get to experience the heritage streets of Bendigo while listening to the stories shared by many.

Afternoon

Lunch

First stop is at Australia's oldest operating tram depot where you can relax and have lunch on the **Tram Cafe** deck with a light meal and coffee in hand, served straight from a 1916 N-Class Tram. The tram was recently refurbished by the master craftsmen within their workshop.

Alternatively, go further on the tram ride and hop off at the **Lake Weeroona** stop, a beautiful ornamental lake and reserve, transformed from a dusty mining area in the 1870s. Check out the **Fox and Giraffe** or the **Boardwalk Café**. Otherwise, line up for a hot jam donut, a Bendigo tradition and finish off with a handmade ice-cream from **Favourite Flavours**.

Local Tip – Bendigo has a great music scene. Time your visit with the **Groove Tram** (held every Saturday night) and **Blues Tram** (monthly) which is a unique way to experience Bendigo.





Day One

After lunch, hop back on the tram and head to the **Central Deborah Gold Mine**. Put on a hard hat and go 61 metres underground with a guide and experience life as a miner back in the Gold Rush days. Many of the guides are former miners who will share stories about how gold was found in the mine, contributing to Bendigo becoming the richest city in the world from 1851 to 1900. When finished, make your way back on the tram to the Alexandra Fountain tram stop.

Accommodation for Night One and Two

Near the Alexandra tram stop is your accommodation, **Ernest Hotel Bendigo**. It has the perfect position, situated in central Bendigo along the View Street Arts Precinct near some of the best cafes and restaurants on offer and overlooks stunning Rosalind Park.

Ernest Hotel Bendigo is set in the oldest bank in Bendigo and provides a boutique luxury experience. Owner David is an interior designer and has carefully selected contemporary Australian art pieces that adorns each of the rooms in the building set against the historic architecture.

If you want a more budget option for accommodation, the **Oval Motel Bendigo** is located at the top of the View Street Arts Precinct. Check out their retro neon sign that dates back to their 1966 build.

Local Tip – Ask about the bullet hole story in the window from the Gold Rush when you check into the Ernest Hotel Bendigo.



Day One

Evening

Dinner

Across the road from your accommodation is award winning restaurant **Alium Dining**. It has one of the best views in Bendigo from its front bay window and street dining out front. The building has been beautifully restored in its original Australian art nouveau style architecture (one of Victoria's finest). They offer a seasonal menu with the best of local produce matched with wines. One of their unique experiences you can book is called **Dining in the Dark**, a 3-course menu to enjoy while blindfolded.

Options After Dinner

- **Piano Bar** is known for its live music performances, featuring talented piano players, singers and drag queens who will entertain you all night long.
- Visit the **Djarra Lights**, a First Nations cultural activation experience. It highlights Dja Dja Wurrung culture in the Bendigo region combining the display of Djaara artwork and augmented reality experiences. A photo in front of the I am Djaara mural is a must!
- Finish your evening overlooking Bendigo's historic skyline at **Nimbus Rooftop**. It is the perfect place to watch the sunset or the night sky as you sip on a cocktail made with local gins or a regionally produced beer or wine.



Day One

Travel distances -

Melbourne CBD > Bendigo Art Gallery carpark – 1 hr 50 min drive
Bendigo Art Gallery carpark > Ulumbarra Theatre – 5 min walk
Bendigo Visitor Centre > Alexandra Fountain – 5 min walk
Alexandra Fountain > Bendigo Art Gallery carpark – 5 min walk
Bendigo Art Gallery carpark > Hotel Ernest Bendigo – 1 min drive
Ernest Hotel Bendigo > Alium Dining – 1 min walk

Cost per experience -

Dumawul Tour \$\$
Vintage Talking tram \$
Bendigo Visitor Centre – free entry
Central Deborah Gold Mine Tour \$
Cost per dining -
Alium Dining \$\$\$
Tram Cafe \$
Fox and Giraffe \$\$
Boardwalk Café \$\$
Favourite Flavours \$

Cost per accommodation -

Ernest Hotel Bendigo \$\$\$
Oval Motel Bendigo \$

Day Two

Morning

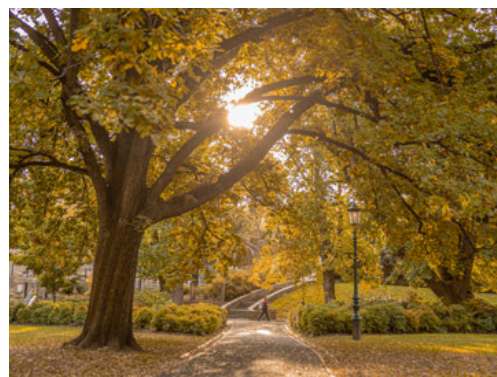
Head to **Rosalind Park** for an early morning walk along the Bendigo Creek path. Rosalind Park is arguably Bendigo's most beautiful park, named after Shakespeare's 'Rosalind' from his play, As You Like It.

Breakfast

Then head to nearby cafe **Hoo-Gah** for breakfast, which offers an eclectic range of food including many vegan, gluten-free and fod-map friendly options using locally sourced produce. Like many establishments in Bendigo, Hoo-Gah are fantastic in showcasing local artists on their walls. In the same complex is **Indulge Chocolates** which is a must visit. Chocolatier Hayley Tibbett infuses local ingredients with her Belgian chocolate creations from her chocolate lab.

Walk along the **View Street Arts Precinct**, full of much-loved cafes, restaurants, wine bars, galleries and boutique shopping before arriving at **Bendigo Art Gallery**. The gallery is one of Australia's oldest and largest regional galleries, known famously for their International exhibitions that have showcased the likes of Marilyn Monroe, Grace Kelly, Marimekko and most recently Elvis Presley. But what is just as impressive is their extensive permanent collection on display with a focus on acquiring Australian contemporary pieces.

Local Tip – Visit in Autumn when the park is covered in golden foliage, one of the most romantic times of the year or come in spring to see more than 50,000 colourful tulips blooming.



Day Two

Afternoon

Lunch

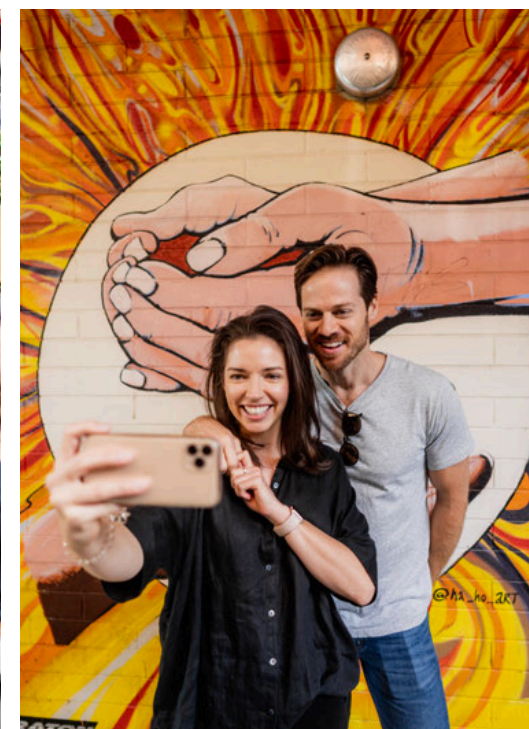
When you are finished at the gallery, exit through the sculpture annex and walk down through Rosalind Park to the wrought iron gates of **Chancery Lane**. This laneway is one of Bendigo's most photographed pockets, with street art and boutique shops galore.

It is here where you will discover an intimate bar and restaurant called **The Dispensary Bar & Diner**. They pride themselves on showcasing the best produce of the region and they are passionate about the makers, skills and context of the wines, beers, and spirits they choose to serve.

Now is a great time to walk off your lunch with a **Self-Guided Street Art Tour**. You can easily spend a whole day exploring, so arm yourself with comfortable footwear, a camera and get ready to discover some of Bendigo's most photographed pockets and ultimate selfie spots.

This self-guided walk allows you to explore the centre of Bendigo at your own pace and see a diverse range of talented artists that have come together to create a beautiful fusion amongst the city's historic buildings and streetscapes. Highlights include Chancery Lane, Minna Leunig mural, Bath Lane and a new mural from Australian artist Gus Eagleton.

Local Tip – If cocktails are your thing, ask The Dispensary for the Burnt Orange & Vanilla Bean Sour, their signature cocktail.





Day Two

Bendigo has a long Chinese history that dates back the Gold Rush where 20% of miners came from China. The history and traditions from this era are brought to life at the Golden Dragon Museum. Home to the oldest procession dragon, Loong, and the World's longest Imperial dragon, Dai Gum Loong, the museum has over 30,000 objects in their collection. While you are here, be sure to check out the Yi Yuan Gardens (Garden of Joy).

Evening

Dinner

Head to the **The Woodhouse Bar & Grill** for dinner. They have a brand-new lux bar that opened recently that specialises in cocktails. In the main restaurant, you can then sample their locally sourced produce from nearby farms while you enjoy sitting by an open fire. The Woodhouse does things differently, cooking their meat on a purpose built red gum fire chargrill stove. It is a must-do if you are a self-proclaimed foodie.

Local Tip – See Dai Gum Loong parade in Australia's longest running community event, Bendigo Easter Festival, now in its 153rd year.

Day Two

After dinner, see a performance at the **Ulumbarra Theatre**. Meaning 'gather together' or 'meeting place' in the language of the local Dja Dja Wurrung people. The theatre is truly unique as it combines the old Sandhurst Gaol as the entry that takes you through to a modern 1,000-seat auditorium at the rear. Finish the evening by taking a selfie at the Bendigo sign lit up, next to Ernest Hotel Bendigo. The 2.1 metre (height) sign was created for the Elvis Presley exhibition in 2022 and has become an iconic landmark in Bendigo that regularly changes its look.

Travel distances -

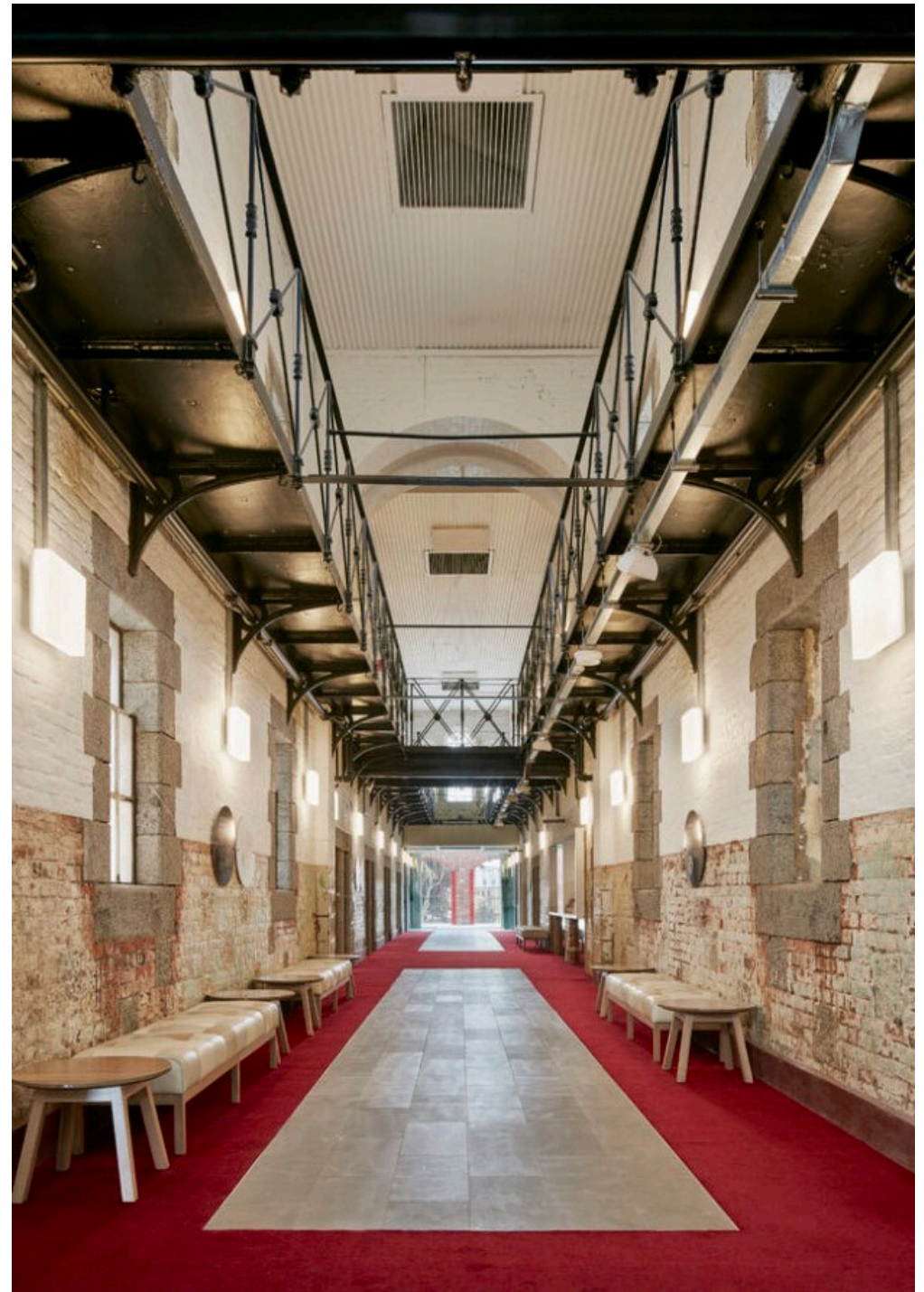
Ernest Hotel Bendigo > Rosalind Park – 1 min walk
Rosalind Park > Hoo-Gah – 3 min walk
Indulge Chocolates > View Street Arts Precinct – 3 min walk
Bendigo Art Gallery > Chancery Lane – 2 min walk
Golden Dragon Museum > Ernest Hotel Bendigo– 5 min walk
Ernest Hotel Bendigo > The Woodhouse Bar & Grill – 5 min walk

Cost per experience -

Ulumbarra Theatre \$ - \$\$\$ depending on the performance
Bendigo Art Gallery – Free or \$\$ depending on the exhibition
Self-Guided Street Art Tour – Free
Golden Dragon Museum \$

Cost per dining -

Hoo-Gah \$\$
Indulge Chocolates \$



Day Three

Morning

Breakfast

Drive north to a local favourite, the heritage-listed **Bendigo Botanic Gardens**. Established in 1857, It is one of regional Victoria's earliest examples. The gardens are known for their eclectic mix of shade trees and lush green turf, along with its National Lavender Collection and National Canna Collection gardens. New to the precinct is **Larni Garingilang**, which houses over 15,000 indigenous plants and trees amongst wetlands and ponds. Next to Larni Garingilang is **The Garden for the Future**, a contemporary botanic garden experience that has plantings conditioned for the changing weather patterns of the future.

The gardens provide the perfect view to enjoy breakfast. Take in the wetlands and ponds at Larni Garingilang while sitting on the deck at **Omari**, a new cafe that loves showcasing local artists with regular exhibitions and events. When you have finished your breakfast, hop back in your car and head towards Australia's oldest working pottery, **Bendigo Pottery**. Here you can try your hands at wheel-throwing and see live demonstrations from an experienced potter. There is a huge retail space for shopping that showcases their heritage range, as well as their more contemporary pieces which many of the local restaurants use. Outside of the main complex you will find a local artisan hub where you can see them creating their amazing works. Once finished, head back into the centre of Bendigo.





Day Three

Afternoon

Lunch

One of Bendigo's most celebrated restaurants is **Masons of Bendigo**. It is here that you will experience an amazing array of produce from the region that has contributed to Bendigo being designated a UNESCO City of Gastronomy. Located in the old WD Masons Glass Shop, Masons of Bendigo is the culmination of 20 years international chef experience of owners, Nick and Sonia. Enjoy a full Masons experience with their Chef Selected Roaming Menu, changing regularly according to what's in season, with matching beverages focused on Central Victoria's offerings.

Accommodation for Night Three

Only a 15 minute drive away is **Balgownie Estate Bendigo**, where it feels like you are in a countryside. This is where you will spend your third night in Bendigo relaxing in a luxury tent, under a blanket of stars. Their award-winning glamping safari tents are fitted with all the modern conveniences. But if glamping is not your thing, they also have cosy cottages or you can book a hotel style room at Hermitage House. But before you settle in for the night, make your way to their communal fire pit that overlooks the vines and meet some other guests followed by wine tasting at Balgownie's cellar door.



Local Tip – Visiting Masons of Bendigo on a Friday or Saturday? If so, you must stop by nearby Treacy Patisserie! Their handmade desserts are stunning, and they tend to sell out quick.



Day Three

Evening

Dinner

Balgownie's great selection of wine to taste will make you want to settle in for the night. Their contemporary restaurant overlooks the vineyard and offers a dining experience with seasonal local produce matched with their award-winning wine.

After dinner, kick back and relax under the quiet starry sky, share a red wine and put your busy life behind you, even if it's just for one night.

If you are still looking for something to do, a 10-minute drive away is **Star Cinema**, based in the former Eaglehawk Town Hall. It offers a great program of retro and modern films while you relax on a cosy red couch.



Local Tip – Try a Bendigo Shiraz or Cabernet Sauvignon, the wine variety that our region is most known for.



Day Three

Travel distances -

Ernest Hotel Bendigo > Bendigo Botanic Gardens – 10 min drive

Bendigo Botanic Gardens > Bendigo Pottery – 5 min drive

Bendigo Pottery > Masons of Bendigo – 15 min drive

Masons of Bendigo > Balgownie Estate Bendigo – 15 min drive

Cost per experience -

Bendigo Botanic Gardens –free entry

Bendigo Pottery – free entry

Star Cinema \$

Cost per dining -

Omari \$\$

Masons of Bendigo \$\$\$

Balgownie Estate Bendigo \$\$\$

Cost per accommodation -

Balgownie Estate Bendigo \$\$

Day Four

Morning

Breakfast

Wake up amongst the vines and say hello to the local kangaroos before packing up your bags for a day full of delicious surprises. But before you set off, have a bite to eat for breakfast up at Balgownie's cellar door.

Next is a short drive to the **Great Stupa of Universal Compassion**. Located in the middle of the Australian whipstick bush, it is the largest Buddhist temple in the Western World and nearly 50 metres in height! Spend time exploring its multi-faith Peace Park, meditate and reflect, before seeing the world's biggest Jade Buddha, housed on the ground level of the Stupa.

Local Tip – Come back another time to join 'Enlighten' at the Great Stupa, an monthly immersive light experience that transforms the Stupa's Peace Park into a unique lightscape.





Day Four

Visit one of Bendigo's best kept secrets, **Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Park**. The 210-hectares of the Greater Bendigo National Park is a popular destination for cycling, walking, jogging and fishing.

There is a great walking track that goes around Crusoe Reservoir and No. 7 Reservoir which is 6.1 kms (approx. 1 ½ hrs) with plenty of flora, fauna and mining relics to discover.

Afternoon

Lunch

On the way home, call into **St Anne's Winery** for the afternoon for some wine tastings and lunch. Open 7 days, St Anne's has spectacular views from the foothill of Mount Alexander and on Sunday afternoons, offers pizza and live music on their lawn area.



Local Tip – In summer, you can hire a kayak and stand up paddleboard to navigate Crusoe Reservoir.



Day Four

Travel distances -

Balgownie Estate Bendigo > The Great Stupa – 5 min drive

The Great Stupa > Crusoe Reservoir – 19 min drive

Crusoe Reservoir > St Anne's Winery – 8 min drive

St Anne's Winery > Melbourne CBD – 1hr 35 min drive

Cost per experience -

The Great Stupa – donation on entry

Crusoe Reservoir – free entry

Cost per dining -

St Annes Winery \$\$

Time to say good bye. Be sure to plan your trip, take plenty of breaks if you are feeling tired and don't use mobile phone when you are driving. We hope to see you here again soon.

Itinerary Overview

Day One Highlights:

Learn about Djaara's history and artists projects across Bendigo with a Dumuwal walking tour. Visit the Bendigo Visitor Centre and get all the tips you'll need for your trip and discover two wonderful galleries. Board a Vintage tram and see the sights of Bendigo as you make your way to the new tram cafe. Learn about Bendigo's goldrush history with an authentic experience at Central Deborah Gold Mine. Finish your day at an award-winning restaurant that looks over Bendigo and get ready to relax and recharge at Ernest Hotel Bendigo.

Day Two Highlights:

Start your day with a walk in Rosalind Park before breakfast. Explore the View Street Arts Precinct for galleries, shops and eateries, including the renowned Bendigo Art Gallery. Dine in trendy Chancery Lane for lunch before heading on a self-guided street art walking tour through the streets of Bendigo. Finish at the Golden Dragon Museum and see the world's longest Imperial dragon before heading out for a redgum wood fired food experience at The Woodhouse Bar & Grill. Finish your night with a performance at the state-of-the-art Ulumbarra Theatre.

Day Three Highlights:

Start your day discovering the Bendigo Botanic Gardens and enjoy breakfast on the deck of Omari before driving out to the Bendigo Pottery to nurture your inner artist. Enjoy a celebration of local produce at Masons of Bendigo for lunch before heading out to Balgownie Estate for glamping, wine tasting and dinner.

Day Four Highlights:

Meet the local Kangaroos and wildlife while you have breakfast before heading to the largest Buddhist Temple in the Western World The Great Stupa. Walk Crusoe Reservoir, one of Bendigo's best kept secrets and stop into St Anne's Winery for pizza and live music on the lawn before heading back home.

For more information or to book, visit www.bendigotourism.com, follow @explorebendigo on Facebook and Instagram or call/visit the **Bendigo Visitor Centre**.