



Western Australia is well known for its incredible natural beauty. It's also got some of the best 4WD tracks in the country, and when you couple these two things together you are guaranteed to have a great time.

Whilst some 4WD tracks like the Canning Stock Route, Gibb River Road and Anne Beadell Highway are well known, today I'm sharing 5 amazing 4WD tracks that are a little less known. Please look after them, and leave them in pristine condition for everyone else to enjoy.



The 4WD tracks at the Duke.

3 Bears Track

The south-west of WA is a huge favourite of mine. From Bunbury to Augusta there are plenty of beautiful beaches, pristine forests, incredible surf breaks and other natural beauties to be explored. The 3 Bears Track encompasses a lot of this and is well and truly worth doing. It starts just out of Dunsborough and works its way south along the western side of the coastline towards Yallingup.



The 3 Bears track coastline.

The coastline can be rugged, rough and incredible or calm, crystal clear and picturesque. Named after a very popular surf break, the 3 bears surf break is roughly in the middle of the track and often has a number of 4WD's parked up in the dirt carpark even on weekdays. There are toilet facilities here as required.

The 4WD track itself is not difficult, and can even be done with some reasonable clearance all-wheel drive vehicles. But, if you haven't done much 4WDing before it is worth going with someone else! Most of the track is compact sand, but it can get very soft when it's hot, and there are a number of limestone sections where you want to have deflated tyres and pick a line that isn't going to give you a puncture.



Surfing at 3 bears.

To get to the track, head out towards Sugarloaf Rock on Cape Naturaliste. Once you turn onto Sugarloaf Road, you'll see a dirt track on your left-hand side about 500 metres in. This is the start, and it takes you down to the coast and then you pop out on Caves Road near Yallingup. The track can be done in 2 hours very comfortably, and there are a few places you can stop and soak up the views. Recommended tyre pressure is somewhere around 20 - 25 PSI.



The view from 3 Bears Track.

Holland Track

If you have 3 days or more up your sleeve, the Holland Track is a fantastic track to do. Starting not far out of Hyden, the 4WD section weaves its way through the goldfields and pops out near Coolgardie.

This track has an interesting history. It was built over 2 months and was originally a cart road to shorten the journey of those arriving in Albany and heading to the goldfields looking to find their fortune in gold. Today, it's used by a huge number of 4WD and motorbike owners and is looked after by the Toyota Landcruiser Club of WA.



Sitting around the campfire along the Holland Track.

You can camp in a huge number of places along the track, and firewood is easy to gather. The track is very easy when it's dry, and after a bit of rain, it gets difficult real fast. Spring is a fantastic time to do the track, after the water has had some time to subside but it's still fun, with the weather being cold enough to enjoy a nice campfire. Be very wary of the water crossings, and check the depth before you plough through.



A Navara on the Holland Track.

If you are coming from Perth, you really need a minimum of 3 days, and even that time frame means you can't hang around much. A long weekend is doable, but you'll have some big days of driving. There are no facilities on the track; you need to be 100% self-sufficient in terms of food, water, toilets and recovery gear.

Punctures are extremely common on this track mainly due to roots that stick out everywhere, and even the keenest eyes miss them. You want to be running around 24 - 30 PSI, and do your best to avoid the roots!



Lots of water on the Holland Track.

Around the Duke

The beaches around Esperance are second to none. Seriously, they rate as some of the best in the country, and there are more beaches to explore than you could do in a few weeks in the area. Lots of 4WD tracks exist around Esperance, but some of my favourites are further east.



The pristine beaches at the Duke.

The Duke of Orleans Caravan Park is located 90km east of Esperance and is located in a truly stunning location. There are a huge number of 4WD tracks that head out in either direction which takes you to the most pristine, quiet and beautiful beaches you will ever see. Some of the 4WD tracks are easy and require mildly lower tyre pressures. Others will have you dropping as much air out as you can to get up soft hill climbs (on the way back out).



The Duke of Orleans 4WD Tracks.

Over Easter this year, we explored a huge number of 4WD tracks in the area and had a ball. There are big granite rocks to drive over, jump ups, river crossings, mud, sand and everything in between. The real bonus though, is that when you get to a beach there's no one there, and you can kick back and relax, or wet a line in an absolute pristine paradise. You can head west along the main beach, which is a quick and simple drive. Or you can head out to the hammerhead and find some much more difficult 4WD tracks that will take half a day or longer.



River crossing near the Duke.



Kalgan's Pool

Heading up the other end of the WA lies Kalgans Pool; a fantastic water hole in the Pilbara, with an even better 4WD track on the way in. To find out more, head to the visitor's centre at Newman and pay a gold coin donation for the permit and a rough explanation of where to go.



The start of the water to Kalgans Pool.

The first part of the track is a dry river crossing, then lots of corrugations on a narrow gravel road, and then you enter the fun part; water! The mines in the area pump a huge amount of water out, and it goes to this area. For the last 20 minutes of the drive, you drive through an extensive amount of water on the tracks, most of which is around 20 - 50cm in height.



The main track to Kalgan's Pool.

The tracks are rocky and solid, so there's no chance of getting bogged, but you are literally driving down a river and it's a whole lot of fun. At the end, you pop out at a beautiful waterhole to enjoy. This 4WD track should not be attempted without a snorkel, as a tiny bit of water into your motor will destroy it.

Tyre pressures around 25 - 30 PSI is a good start, with taking it easy on the corrugations a must and having some decent mapping tools to show where you are. One way, this track takes about an hour and a half, but it vastly depends on the condition of the road at the start.



The 4WD track out of Kalgan's Pool.

Saddleback Ridge

Even further north lies El Questro Station; a magic place that is hugely popular just off the Gibb River Road. El Questro has some brilliant 4WD tracks, but one of the best is Saddleback Ridge. Just a few minutes' drive out of the little town you turn right, cross a small river and then meet a hill that is nothing short of massive.

You'll get a map on arrival which shows all this very clearly, so there's no chance of getting lost!



The view of Saddleback Ridge.

Low range is a must, with your tyre pressures down to 25 - 30 PSI, and just crawl your way up. There are several tight turns, and a few ups and downs but you eventually end up at a small carpark with a big lookout at the top. You can see El Questro from the top, along with views for miles in the distance. It truly is a beautiful 4WD track, and in terms of scenery trumps a lot of what you'll see anywhere else in WA.

This track is short, steep and a lot of fun. If it's been graded, it's not too difficult at all asides from the steepness. If you visit after a busy period (like school holidays) it can be quite chopped up, and you need to pick your lines to avoid scraping or collecting the bottom of your 4WD where you don't want it to! You can get to the top in 15 minutes, quite easily.



At the top of Saddleback Ridge.

Of course, you can walk up, but you'd have to be mighty fit to do so! On the way back down, use your engine braking and limit the use of your brakes. This means selecting first gear low



range and letting the car crawl its way down at a controlled rate. If you use your brakes, you risk them getting hot and failing. Not what you want halfway down a mountain!

WA has some truly unbelievable 4WD tracks, and if you poke your nose around you'll find plenty more. We'll see you out there!

What's your favourite 4WD track in the west?