



Belair National Park offers something for everyone. With an array of activities from scenic walks to mountain biking and family-friendly picnic spots are available to people seeking a day of outdoor activity.

It also has a rich and interesting history. From 1840 to 1880 the area was known as 'Government Farm' and had a variety of uses including wattle-bark cutting, the manufacture of rabbit control poison, stocking of cattle and horses, a seedling nursery, summer residence for the Governor of South Australia, and a stop-over for Gold Escorts from Victoria.

It was proclaimed Belair National Park in 1891 after a plan to sell it off was opposed by the public. It is one of the oldest National Parks in the world and the first in South Australia. Nowadays Belair offers loads of opportunities for getting out and enjoying the outdoors, and its close proximity to Adelaide (20-minute drive from CBD) makes a perfect place for a day-trip.

Here's a pick of the best things to do:

## Belair for families

- The **Adventure Playground** is an awesome place to play with a fort, underground tunnels, flying fox and Giant's Steps! There is plenty of grassy space, picnic tables and BBQs.
- **Playford Lake** (the Duck Pond) is an easy walk, great for kids. There's a little jetty and some bench seats to relax on while the kids feed the ducks (take some stale bread).
- **Koala Spotting** – you'll surely see one or two! Look either up, or down to see their oval-shaped eucalyptus droppings on the ground, a sure sign there's a koala in a tree nearby.
- Walk through **Echo Tunnel** on the Waterfall Hike, passing underneath the Adelaide-Melbourne train line. Take a torch and allow 1 hour.

## Belair for the adventurous

- Tackle the **Adventure Loop** mountain bike track. A 12km loop from the park's entrance begins on easy fire-trail and turns into some sweet single-track with slippery rocks and roots trying to acquaint your stack-hat with the ground. Good fun for the confident mountain biker with intermediate experience. Allow 2 hours.
- The **Waterfall Hike** one of the Park's best trails, takes you from a lush valley up to the upper and lower waterfalls. You'll encounter steep stair climbs to test your aerobic capacity, and the odd cliff to challenge your acrophobia, all while walking through the refreshing scrubby forest. Allow 2.5 hours.
- Try your luck at finding **Amphitheatre Rock!** A cool overhang/cave formation ripe for exploring. Drive up to Karka Pavilion and walk along Melville Gully Road. Allow 1.5 hours.



*NP Commissioner's white Cottage in Belair was once used as a "shack" to stay overnight on weekends.*



## Belair for History

- **Commissioner's Hut** at Gold Escort Ground was once used by the Commissioners of the park as a “shack” to stay overnight on weekends.
- **Old Government House** is a beautiful Victorian-era building surrounded by a cottage garden. Originally built in around 1860 for the Governor of South Australia, the House is open for guided tours Sundays and Public holidays 1-4 pm.
- **Sparke's Gully Cherry Plantation** was established in remembrance of soldiers in WW1. Take the left road at Karka Pavilion and it's a short walk to the cherries. Continue for 5 minutes along the same walking track to the **Native Pine Plantation**, a memorial to soldiers fallen in the Second World War.

## Belair for amazing scenery

- A great view of the Blackwood Hills can be had by walking up **Queen's Jubilee Drive** from the State Flora Nursery.
- Grassy **Long Gully** is magical on a cold misty morning. Drive-in at 8 am, park at the Friend's Centre, and watch the sunlight spill into the valley. In the afternoon Long Gully is a great spot for a picnic too, with BBQ shelters dotted throughout the area.
- Any of the Park's walking trails (e.g. Microcarpa & Valley Loop hikes, Lorikeet & Heritage Tree walks) are great to rejuvenate yourself while ambling through scrub and bushland.



*Enter Belair National Park through the Main Gate on Upper Sturt Road.*

## Getting to Belair

If you don't want to pay the vehicle entry fee of \$12 (\$9.50 with concession), then car parking is available outside the park office or along the nearby side streets. Attractions like Playford Lake are within an easy walk of the entrance.

Alternatively, use any of the other gates along Sheoak Road and Upper Sturt Road. These are foot/bike access only but usually have space for parking and are a good option to get to some of the hikes.

Download a Park Map [here](#).

With such a variety of activities to do and things to see, Belair National Park is a must-visit for your next day trip to the Adelaide Hills.

## What you'll need

Although not a massive area and relatively close to civilisation, it is still important to go prepared on any bushwalk.

Get yourself a good daypack, some sturdy shoes and plenty of water and snacks. Always carry a first aid kit, just in case, and if you find hiking hard on your knees, consider investing



in a set of hiking poles and you'll be forever converted to their benefits.

**If you've been to Belair, then what's your favourite trail?**