



There aren't too many places that hold the perfect combination for an amazing camping adventure all year round. No matter how many new places I camp at, Dwellingup remains a huge favourite. Perth locals would know it as one of the best places to camp locally with families.

It's close to Perth, has a massive array of activities available, is favourable year round and is located in some spectacular country. There's nothing quite like it!

Where's this place?

You'll find Dwellingup just under an hour and a half from Perth's city centre, inland from Mandurah and along the Murray River. Dwellingup is well-known for Lane Poole Reserve – a spectacular National Park with great camping and lots of things to do.



You'll find Dwellingup along the Murray River. Photo: Aaron Schubert

What can you do there?

Located in a typical Western Australian Jarrah forest, Dwellingup has the beautiful Murray River flowing through the middle of it. If you just want a quick weekend away, camped near a stunning river with friends and family, you can do it.

However, if you want more than that, there are downhill mountain bike trails, 4WD tracks, hiking trails, canoeing and whitewater rafting, wildflowers, freshwater fishing, high ropes course, swimming and rope swings to enjoy.

Dwellingup caters brilliantly for all ages, with young children having plenty of space to explore and plenty of adventure sports for those who want a bit more action.



There are so many activities to do there, including fishing. Photo: Aaron Schubert

Camping at Dwellingup

Dwellingup has a huge range of places to camp, from the Caravan Park through to children's camps and Lane Poole Reserve, the National Park where most people head to camp.

Lane Poole Reserve has 9 locations where you can camp, ranging from big open spaces for large groups through to private, smaller camp sites that you must book online. All of the campsites are within walking distance (some just a stone's throw) from the Murray River. Camping is popular year-round, and on long weekends the park is often closed for day visitors as it gets so busy. All sites have picnic tables, fire rings, and toilets, with some that have BBQ's and hard flooring for caravans. In total, there are some 150 campsites, varying in size and accessibility.



There are so many campsites available from private to large group camping. Photo: Aaron Schubert



Fire bans at Dwellingup

One of the best things about Dwellingup is relaxing around a campfire with friends and family. However, you are in the middle of a forest, and Dwellingup has had some truly horrific fires in the past.

As a result, there are fire bans in place whenever there is a risk, and hefty fines if you disobey them. [Please check this](#) before you consider having a fire!

Day trips

Being so close to Perth, Dwellingup is easily doable as a day trip. We've been down in the past for a day of mountain bike riding, canoeing, and to use the 4WD tracks.

These days, we prefer to stay a night or two – it slows the pace down and makes soaking up such a great place even easier.



You can hire a canoe for a day trip, go bike riding, or hit the 4WD tracks for a day trip. Photo: Aaron Schubert

What does it cost?

Being a National Park, there is an entry fee applicable, unless you have an annual or 4-week pass. This is \$12 per vehicle (\$6 for concession card holders and per motorcycle), and camp fees are \$7.50 per adult, per night at the time of writing.

Lane Poole Reserve has just had some major upgrades completed, and the money raised from entry fees and camping fees goes directly towards future upgrades and management of the park. If you're interested in booking, [head here](#).



There are fees to camp, but the funds go towards managing and upgrading the area. Photo: Aaron Schubert

When's the best time to visit?

The thing that makes Dwellingup so attractive is you can literally visit at any time of year, and know you are going to have a good time.

In the middle of summer, it's hot and dry, but the swimming is beautiful and camping is still comfortable under the shade of the pine forests if you throw in a few swims in the river.

Spring and autumn are a great compromise as the weather is milder, but it's still warm enough to swim. These are great seasons for hiking, 4WD tracks, and downhill mountain biking

Come winter, when the rain pours down and the temperatures plummet, the Murray River rises dramatically and white water rafting and canoeing come into full swing. Take note that it gets cold in Dwellingup – we've seen ice form on tree leaves and melt as the sun comes up, so if you're visiting in winter, pack appropriately! On the other hand, you can have a great fire (you need to bring your own firewood) and relax around it into the evening. In other words, pick the season that suits what you want to do down there. With so many



options, you've got plenty to see and do any time of the year.



If you like white water rafting and canoeing, then winter is the perfect time to visit. Photo: Aaron Schubert

Swimming

The Murray River is a great place to swim. As with any river swimming, you should be cautious entering and exiting as there can be submerged items like trees and rocks. Every campsite has places where you can safely enter and exit.

Stay away from the rapids when swimming, and watch out for slippery rocks! Other than this, enjoy the pristine Murray River – it can be freezing, refreshing or perfect temperatures depending on when you visit!



The Murray River is the perfect place for a dip when you're visiting Dwellingup. Photo: Aaron Schubert

Canoeing and whitewater rafting

The Murray River is easily long enough to spend a few days on the river in a canoe, and I've done just that in the past. Pile your gear into a waterproof drum, and camp your way down the river.

Alternatively, there are plenty of day trips with as much white water and as little as you'd like. Most of the rapids can be avoided by carrying your canoe around them, but if you have basic canoe skills they are one of the most fun things you will do in Dwellingup.

Canoe hire can be had from in Dwellingup in town and hiring a trailer with Canoes is actually very reasonably priced. Grab a few of your friends and family and enjoy a magic day on the river. Of course, you can bring your own gear too.



You can hire canoes to enjoy a day of fun along the river. Photo: Aaron Schubert

Swings, Waterslides, and tubing

In the past, there have been a huge number of rope swings around Dwellingup, going into the water. As a kid, these provided some magic memories. These days, they are often removed for safety and liability reasons. That said, you'll still see them around. Use common sense, check their quality and condition and you'll have a great time.

There are a couple of places in Dwellingup that have little natural made water slides, where you can slide down short sections of very slippery rock into little pools. Again, play it safe but they are a heap of fun.

Another great way to enjoy Dwellingup is in a tube – get a 4WD tyre tube, or bigger, and float down the river in it!



The natural water slides are heaps of fun if you exercise caution. Photo: Aaron Schubert



Fishing at Dwellingup

For the freshwater anglers, fishing is hugely popular at Dwellingup. You need a freshwater fishing license, and then the whole Murray River is open slather. The most commonly caught fish is the Redfin, which is introduced and is a pest. Fortunately, they are great eating, and you are not allowed to throw them back, regardless of size!

If you are really lucky, you might get a Trout, but be prepared to put some time in for it!



All you need is a fishing license, and you'll be on your way. Photo: Aaron Schubert

Downhill Mountain biking and hiking

Dwellingup is home to some of WA's best downhill mountain bike trails, and they vary from basic tracks that a whole family could do through to competition tracks. There is a range of jumps, bridges, pallets, and berms to keep things interesting.

We've found the best way to enjoy a day of riding at Dwellingup on the downhill tracks is to have a 4WD and trailer that does laps from bottom to top, taking the bikes and riders up and down. Rotate the drivers around and you'll have a blast.

The Munda Biddi mountain bike trail runs through Dwellingup and is well worth a look. If you are into hiking, there's plenty of it around Dwellingup, including the Bibbulmun track which is nearly 1000km long.



The mountain bike trails at Dwellingup are some of the best in the state. Photo: Aaron Schubert

Wildflowers

In spring, there are some stunning wildflowers around the place in Dwellingup. Don't be afraid to do a bit of walking to find them!

High ropes course

In 2015 a high ropes course opened in Dwellingup, bringing a heap of fun to the region off the ground. This is open almost every day of the year, and with over 80 challenges there is something for every age bracket.



If 4WD'ing is your thing, then the Lane Poole Reserve has some great tracks. Photo: Aaron Schubert

4WD Tracks

Lane Poole Reserve has some fantastic 4WD tracks available, which range from basic gravel driving through to muddy slopes in the winter time. Stick to the tracks, if it's too wet come back later and respect the environment.



Getting around Dwellingup

Most of Lane Poole Reserve is gravel, with some of the busier sections having been bituminised. The road condition varies wildly – sometimes it's fantastic and other times it's pretty rough. Take it easy and slowly, as you can lose control around the many corners much faster than you might realise.



Our private camping set up at Dwellingup – what more could you want? Photo: Aaron Schubert

Finding out more

If you want to know more about Lane Poole Reserve in Dwellingup, contact the [Department of Parks and Wildlife \(DPAW\)](#) and they will give you up to date information on conditions and answer any further questions you may have.

How many of you have stayed at Dwellingup? What're your favourite memories from there?