

Adelaide is a beautiful city, and one of the most incredible things about Adelaide is the quality of bushwalking available on the suburban fringe. It is surrounded by the Mt Lofty Ranges, and much of the hills faces are made up of a series of conservation parks. In these parks, you can find some great scenery, interesting history, a variety of wildlife and some of Adelaide's best bushwalking trails.

Most people in Adelaide know of or have hiked the Waterfall Gully to Mt Lofty walk. But there are some other lesser known trails that you should definitely explore as well. All of these walks and hikes on our list are no more than 45 minutes from the city, and many are accessible by public transport. So whether you're just visiting Adelaide, or you're a local – you'll be able to hit the trails with ease.

So without further ado, let's get into the top five.



1. Waterfall Gully - Mt Lofty

- Where does it start? – Carpark at the end of Waterfall Gully Road
- Time it takes – 2 hours 30 mins
- How hard is it? – 3/5
- How scenic is it? – 4/5
- Wow Factor – 1/5

Waterfall Gully to Mt Lofty is a very popular walk up a beautiful gully along the first creek. The first segment passes two lovely waterfalls, and then continues along the creek, up the gully towards Mt Lofty. Chinaman's Hut about a third of the way along is a nice break and historically interesting spot.

At the top is Mt Lofty Summit, which has a huge obelisk, a restaurant, café, and a large open viewing area with stunning views over the city. The walk can be steep in segments, however, the vast majority is paved. This walk is very popular and can get very busy especially on weekends when people often use it for a training run.

At times it may feel more like a city street than a bushwalk, which may put off the purists. Waterfall Gully to Mt Lofty is a beautiful walk with nice surroundings culminating in a great view.

How to make the walk a bit different

- Do it at night, enjoy the lights, and get terrified by growling drop bears.
- Try and find all the waterfalls on the creek – to date I've found five.





2. Hikers Hill

- Where does it start? – Montacute Road, off road parking in some available bays.
- How long does it take? – 2 hours
- How hard is it? – 4/5
- How scenic is it? – 3/5
- Wow Factor – 2/5

The Hikers Hill is a large long ascent from the Fifth Creek / Montacute Gorge up to the top of Morialta Conservation Park and then weaves back down via Fox Dam to the road. The trail starts on Montacute road, look for where the Yurribilla Trail meets the road. Turn Left and follow Chapmans Track up Hikers Hill, and enjoy working up a sweat climbing up the hill. From the top of this hill, follow the Moores Track along the spurs and then onto the Fox Hill Track. Have a look at Fox Dam as you pass, there may be wildlife nearby, and make sure to wander out to the peak of Fox Hill. The majority of the walk takes place on large fire tracks making it fairly easy walking.

How to make the walk a bit different

- Time yourself up Hikers Hill (Chapmans Track) and try and improve your times.
- Extend the walk from the top with a loop around the Rocky Hill track then back via Moores Road for great views over Morialta Falls.



3. Mine Track

- Where does it start? – Black Hill Conservation Park Carpark on Gorge Road
- How long does it take? – 3 hours
- How hard is it? – 3/5
- How scenic is it? – 3.5/5
- Wow Factor – 3/5

The Mine Track is a walk around the northern parts of Black Hill Conservation Park showing some beautiful surrounds through the gullies and even an old mine. Start from the car park, and head up the Ambers Gully Track past the ruins and a dry waterfall. At the top follow the main ridge track around the back of the park. When you see the sign for the Mine Track head off down that track and follow it until it runs out enjoying the views over the Torrens Gorge along the way.

Keep a look out about half way down the hill for an old mine about 5 meters west of the track. Once the track gets too overgrown, head back up to the main ridge track, and continue



to follow that back to the Ambers Ruins and the carpark. The track varies, with some sections being single track, while others are open fire tracks, and some bits of the Mine Track being quite scrubby.

How to make the walk a bit different

- Bring a torch and have a look in the (all be it short) mine.



4. Horsnell Gully Valley Walk

- Where does it start? – Carpark at the end of Horsnell Gully Road
- How long does it take? – 2 hours
- How hard is it? – 3.5/5
- How scenic is it? – 4/5
- Wow Factor – 4/5

The Horsnell Gully Valley walk is a great walk that is seldom visited, in a much-underappreciated park. The track starts by walking through a densely vegetated section, before opening out into the gully. The narrow track along the gully gradually ascends following the creek.

It eventually reaches a waterfall that you have to scramble up. This is one of the few tracked walks in the Adelaide Hills that requires any scrambling. Once at the top of the waterfall, the track becomes loose, gravelly and unstable as it climbs steeply up the hill.



Here's a map of Horsnell Gully to give you an idea of what it's like.

From the top, enjoy the view and follow the track along to the top of Rockdale hill. Then follow the open Rockdale Hill Trackback down the hill. Look out for the sign near the bottom directing you back to the carpark. The gully track is narrow and above the waterfall is rough, however, the Rockdale hill track is an open fire track.

How to make the walk a bit different

- From the top of Rockdale Hill, follow the Yurrebilla Trail down to Giles Ruins look at the historic ruin and enjoy the creek
- Go after considerable rain, and try and climb by a flowing waterfall (but be very, very careful as the falls will be slippery)





5. Onkaparinga Gorge Hike

- Where does it start? – Piggott Range Road Car park Gate 12 of Onkaparinga Gorge National Park
- How long does it take? – 1 hour or 1.5 hours if you complete the Nature Trail
- How hard is it? – 1/5
- How scenic is it? – 4/5
- Wow Factor – 3/5

This is a simple but beautiful walk down to some huge cliffs on the Onkaparinga Gorge. Start on the Nature trail travelling clockwise, and follow it downhill towards the gorge. Look for a sign to the Gorge Track pointing towards a small track on the left-hand side.

Follow this track down to the gorge and a large water hole. Make sure you have some time to explore the bottom of the gorge, it is very pretty.



A map of Onkaparinga Gorge.

To get back, follow the same route, however following the rest of the nature trail clockwise around the loop is well worth the walk, and will take about an extra half an hour. It meanders through some nice scrub on the edges of the gorge. The quality of the trail varies from open fire tracks along the Nature Trail, to a narrow single track as it approaches the bottom of the gorge.

How to make the walk a bit different

- Bring your bathers, and go for a swim in the water hole at the bottom (but make sure you have a friend there for safety reasons if you get into trouble)
- Bash and explore along the gorge to either the Sundreys or Bakers Gully end and feel like you are the only person in the world

There you have it, the top 5 hikes to do in Adelaide

Adelaide has some great hiking right on its doorstep, with a huge variety of scenery and terrain to explore. These are just some of the tracks around the suburban fringe, but there are heaps more that could keep you occupied for many, many years. Happy hiking everyone!

For more on our top hike series, check out our guide for Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.