



With nearly 60,000 kilometres of coastline around Australia, it's a pretty safe bet that you will find yourself at a beach or two when exploring this great country. For us, the coast is the ultimate place for adventure when you are travelling. Whether it's to fall asleep to the sound of crashing waves, catch a big fish, dive amongst world-class coral or just take a refreshing dip in the ocean, nothing beats spending time along our coast.



Boats are super popular for coastal camping.

In WA especially, we have some of the best beaches in the world, and we find ourselves spending the majority of our annual leave along various stretches of coast. What has been a total game-changer for us though, is access to a boat.



Before the boat we used kayaks.

Starting with a kayak

I've always been seriously into fishing and snorkelling, and at a young age, I added spearfishing to my list of hobbies. You'd often find us floating around 50 - 100 metres off the coast in search of the perfect reef, trying to hook a big, tasty fish or pot a crayfish for dinner. We started out swimming from the beach and then progressed to using kayaks, which allowed us to go a bit further offshore and manoeuvre fish out of the water faster to avoid shark encounters. They also provided us with a spot to sit and relax after a few hours in the water.

The thing is though, kayaking with a heap of gear onboard (and in a full wetsuit) is hard work, and one day after getting smashed by waves while paddling back into shore, I decided to get a boat!

That investment has been the single, most significant development towards improving our adventures when touring Australia.



A folding boat can be loaded on top of a camper trailer.

Project boat

Initially, we intended to have a boat we could load onto our camper trailer. However, that meant finding another way to house a bunch of our gear, so the plan was quickly ruled out. It would be easier to have someone just tow a trailer (as we usually go away with others).



Our 3.75 metre Stacer at the beach.

I didn't want to spend too much either, but at the same time I wanted it to be fully capable of going off-road, so I picked up an old 3.75 metre tinny with a brand-new trailer for about 4 grand. We found out pretty quickly that the 15hp Honda wasn't going to do the trick, so we replaced it with a 25hp two-stroke Mercury, which flies along even with 4 people and gear for diving and fishing.



Our off-road boat has covered a heap of WA.

I did extensive modifications to the trailer to enable towing wherever we wished, and so far, it hasn't restricted us in any way. It's seen its fair share of WA, including a heap of rough roads throughout Steep Point, the [Gibb River Road](#), and Warroora Station. Although it's rather old and bulky (except the motor/trailer), our tinny is exactly what we need, and we love it.



Camping on the Coral Coast metres from the beach and our boats.

Increased exploration opportunity

How does a boat improve your level of adventure around Australia?

It's one thing to be able to go to the best beaches in Australia, but what if you could hop in a boat and head around the corner to another fantastic beach that's completely deserted? Have you ever stared at a stunning point in the distance and wondered what was on the other side of it? One of the reasons we fell in love with owning a 4WD was because it allowed us access to those more off-the-beaten-track areas, and a boat does the same thing just via the water instead of land.



Lucky Bay in our boat.

A boat allows you to see so much more of this amazing country. Lucky Bay in Esperance is hugely popular for the stunning white sand, turquoise water and of course the kangaroos. It's also a perfect example of a destination made that much more enjoyable if you have a boat as very few people get to explore the other side of the bay, however, with a boat, you can drop it in the drink and go check it out.



Launching the boat at Lucky Bay.

The views hiking along the coast are stunning, and a boat allows you to see that beauty from a whole new perspective. We've found some truly magical bays exploring in our tinny, and occasionally we do several loads ferrying people back and forth so that we can spend the day away from the masses.



Our boat loaded up for a trip away.

Extra storage capacity

Room and payload are always a problem when you are touring Australia. A boat can give you some additional storage space, although you do have to be mindful of the weight, especially if you are going off-road. We often split our load in a way that puts big, lightweight gear into the boat, making it easy to move around. Our small tinny gets loaded with a few extra jerry cans of fuel first, which are then followed by the essential bulky gear that's lightweight. Stuff like swags, fishing rods, Oztents, esbies and other bits and pieces that are a pain to keep anywhere else, are perfect for being transported in the boat but of course, make sure it's well secured!



Exploring the coastline around Esperance.

Access to a new world of adventure

If you are into fishing, snorkelling, spearfishing or just kicking back on a beautiful beach somewhere, a boat gives you the freedom to have far more adventure than you ever could from the shore or a kayak.

We frequently take our boat up to 4km offshore, where we can enjoy the unspoiled reef, plenty of fish and do a spot of trolling. The deeper waters mean we can target bigger fish, making a nice change from the whiting and herring caught closer to shore. In general, we just have a better time!

Of course, similar to fishing from the shore, you need to search for that particular spot where the fish are biting. But with fewer people around, the odds for finding seafood and creating the ultimate adventure are in your favour.



A good feed from Esperance.

Seafood for the win

We eat a lot of seafood, and the majority of it comes from getting out of the big cities and taking trips away with our tinny. If you're local to WA, then check out this guide for a whole bunch of useful information.

I know I mentioned it before, but a boat really does give you access to places away from the crowds, and if fishing is your thing, then your chances of getting a good feed are vastly increased. Crayfish and fish are the usual targets for us, but we do occasionally get abalone.



There's nothing better than a fresh seafood meal cooked hours after collecting it yourself, from some pristine reef in a remote part of Australia.

Pro-tip: if you haven't tried fish wraps before, do it!



Walpole inlet near the mouth.

Fantastic family and friend time

We've shared plenty of great times with both family and friends in our little tinny, and whether it's a few hours or a full day out on the water, it's always an adventure that you'll be reminiscing for years to come.

From bonding with mates over a big mackerel to watching my 3-year-old pull in his first fish and conquer the fear of leaving the shore in something not much bigger than a bathtub, is a terrific life experience.



Exploring the canals in Mandurah.

It's good for your health

Being able to take a boat out is excellent for your health. It's fun, and it allows you to do some extra exercise, learn some new skills and leave the daily grind and troubles behind. Sitting out in the middle of the blue with nothing but glassy water, a few fish and your mates or family allows for a new perspective to be gained, or an old one refreshed. Either way, everything slows down, healthy priorities slip into place, and the worries seem to drift away (pun unintended!).



Taking the family out for a ride up the river.

Boat acronym

Righto, enough on the positives of how a boat can transform your Aussie adventures, it's time to focus on the business side of things. There is a funny acronym for BOAT - Bring Out Another Thousand, and boat owners will often admit it's not far from the truth.



Launching our boat at Exmouth.

Of course, it vastly depends on what you own, how big it is, what condition it's in and how often you take it on the water, but boats don't operate without money thrown into them.



You've got several things that need to be serviced and maintained, plus fuel so you don't get stranded and have to paddle your way to shore. You'll need extra fuel for your vehicle to tow the boat around, as well as licensing, registration and so on and so forth.

Our small boat is about as cheap as it gets (except being 2-stroke, it does use a fair bit of fuel!) and every cent thrown at it over the years, has been well and truly worth the adventures we've had! It's wise to take your time and think through how often you'll use a boat before making the purchase - stick to one that suits your needs and make sure it's in good condition!



Bigger boats offer different benefits.

There's no perfect boat

The next thing to remember is that there is no perfect boat. If you want to beach launch and drag it around off-road, then something smaller is better, but once you start heading out further from the coast, or in rougher conditions, you'll want a larger boat. We've learned to be happy with a small boat, and even though it means we can't take it further than our usual 4km offshore, we can tow it anywhere off-road and that's a win in our book, but perhaps you want something different..?



Exploring the Walpole inlet.

Where are you going to sleep?

Having come back from Exmouth recently, I was pleased to see thousands of boats on the way up, in the region while we were there, and on the road, as we travelled back down. They are super common in that part of the world, and since you are limited to only towing one trailer, it begs the question about accommodation. Where are you going to sleep?

Some people have flash boats and sleep in cheap swags or tents, and others have flash vans and no boat, and some do as we do and use their small boat to transport part of their gear.

There's often some sort of compromise, but whichever choice you make, there's no doubt a boat will bring you a heap of fun memories and adventure.

Who's got a boat, and loves it?!