

When the words 'Perth' and 'hiking' are uttered in the same sentence there are good odds the conversation is about the Perth Hills, where the flat Swan Coastal Plain ends and the Darling Scarp emerges.

The bushland and undulating hills make for some great bushwalking (there's one track that's 1000km long!) among wildflowers, waterfalls, and the odd abandoned quarry.

But it's not all grass trees and red-tailed black cockatoo flocks, don't forget Perth also has some great coastline walks along the Indian Ocean, and the mighty Swan River.

Don't have a car? Neither do I. So the five areas listed below are all accessible by public transport. Okay, I might be pushing it with Ellis Brook Valley, but I have to include it anyway. So, grab your SmartRider card and let's get hiking!

1. Kalamunda National Park

Distance from Perth: 28km

Walking 1000km along the Bibbulmun Track from Kalamunda, in the Perth Hills, to Albany is not everyone's cup of tea. But, with the Kalamunda bus station at the doorstep of the Bibbulmun Track's northern terminus, almost anyone can experience at least a small section of this famous trail.



Rocky Pools in flow in Kalamunda National Park

Apart from adding a feather to your hiking cap, there is also plenty to see, especially wildflowers, bushland panoramas, and birdlife. A popular spot is the scenic Rocky Pools, which was a popular swimming hole pre-1930s. Not sure how the kids back then coped with the freezing water. I'll just enjoy the sound of running water and hopping amongst the rocks, thanks.

The Kalamunda local government provides a number of marked trails which traverse the area and are well worth exploring. The best time to visit is in the cooler months, especially after winter rains have filled the streams, and in late winter and spring when the wildflowers are erupting.

2. Mundy Regional Park and Lesmurdie Falls National Park

Distance from Perth: 24km

Located to the west of Kalamunda and Lesmurdie, the parks are accessible from all sides via public transport. Once again the Kalamunda local government has provided some fantastic marked trails.

My favourite would have to be the Whistlepipe Gully Walk – a 3km trail which loops around the banks of a winding creek with numerous small waterfalls. When the vegetation is lush from winter rains you could swear you are traipsing through a tropical jungle.



Attempting to not get wet at the foot of Lesmurdie Falls

Whistlepipe Gully is a great one for the kids, but if you are looking for a hike a bit more strenuous try a couple of the longer walks which loop around the hillier sections of the park. The reward for your effort will be panoramic views across the Swan Coastal Plain and an

abundance of wildflowers and birdlife.

The jewel in the crown, however, would have to be Lesmurdie Falls, probably the most spectacular waterfall in the Perth metropolitan area. For a close-up view, take the Foot of the Falls Trail along Lesmurdie Brook but be careful hopping along those slippery rocks.

For a more panoramic view, take the high road along the southern shoulder of the valley and enjoy aerial views from the observation platforms.

3. Ellis Brook Valley

Distance from Perth: 25km

Okay, so Ellis Brook Valley isn't that easy to access via public transport (about a 40 min walk from the closest bus stop), but it is doable without a car. And the effort is worth it. The area has probably the best display of wildflowers I have ever seen in the Perth metropolitan area. There are a number of different trails to explore for different fitness levels. For those that like to take an easier walk try the Echidna, Eagle View Trail, or the Blue Wren Ramble Trail. These three trails have mind-blowing amounts of wildflowers if you come at the right time of year. If you are more adventurous try the Sixty Foot Falls Trail which climbs to the top of the waterfall, providing brilliant views over the valley and to the city beyond. The trail also passes by the well-known Old Barrington Quarry, which for a hole in the ground is very photogenic.



A walk amongst the wildflowers on the Eagle View Trail

Ellis Brook Valley is a personal favourite of mine. I felt like a kid walking around here for the first time. Not sure what it was about this place.

Wildflowers I have never seen before? Pushing my way through tunnels of chickweed to find a babbling brook surrounded by colour? Hunting down my first ever sighting of a splendid blue fairywren? Or crawling through a hole in a fence to tip-toe my way to the edge of an abandoned quarry? Whatever it was, I had a blast and will forever be memorable.

4. Perth's Indian Ocean Coastal Walks

Distance from Perth: 49km

That's enough of the Perth Hills, time to give hikes along Perth's stunning coastline some credit. There are plenty of walks all the way from Burns Beach in the north, to Mandurah in the south, but my favourite would have to be what I term the Unofficial Rockingham Coastal Hike.



Atop a sand dune enjoying the calm blue waters of Warnbro Sound

Stretching from the Rockingham City foreshore on Cockburn Sound, around Point Peron, along with the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park coastline, and then finishing in Port Kennedy after enjoying the expansive ocean views of Warnbro Sound, the Rockingham Coastal Hike is a big task at 25km.

Luckily the majority of the trail is a flat concrete path but you do get some adventure along the rocky shores of Point Peron. As the majority of the trail is easily accessed by public transport the hike can be broken up into much smaller sections.

So what can you experience on the walk? Plenty. Indian Ocean views, long sandy beaches, jagged limestone cliffs and outcrops, dolphins, bird life, rolling sand dunes, flocks of colourful kiteboarders, exploring WWII bunkers and gun emplacements, nude beaches (if you are so inclined), maritime history, and best of all absolutely stunning sunsets. A great summertime hike, so bring your swimmers.

5. Walking the Banks of the Swan River

Distance from Perth: 2.5km (to Narrows Bridge)

I'm not sure the exact length of the Swan River's perimeter, but whatever it is it's huge. This means plenty of walking opportunities. But where to start? Why not the Three Bridges Loop which joins the Narrows Bridge, the Canning Bridge and the Queen Victoria Street Bridge. At a touch over 40km, you may want to break the walk into sections and spread the joy. Along the way there are obviously three bridges but also dolphin sightings, spectacular river views, Point Walter Spit (a sandbar that extends over 1km into the river at low tide), parklands, cafes to sample, black swans, sunsets from Como jetty and a glimpse into the lives of Perth's wealthy (including one of Australia's most expensive houses at \$57.9 million).



Perth city lights reflecting on the Swan River

Want something a little closer to the Perth CBD? Try the loop from the newly developed Elizabeth Quay, over the Narrows Bridge, along the South Perth Foreshore, across Heirisson Island (don't forget to say hello to the urban mob of Western Grey kangaroos) and then back along Riverside Drive. A great walk to take on a warm summer night while watching the city lights sparkle.

Heading interstate or maybe you live further east? Here are the [best hikes near Adelaide](#), [Brisbane](#), and [Melbourne](#).

What's your favourite bushwalk near Perth? Comment below.