

Ikara-Flinders Ranges. Magic name, magic country. Mention them to most people and their thoughts immediately turn to Wilpena Pound and the Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park. Or the even more northerly area of 'Arkaroola' (check out our list of [things to do in Arkaroola](#)). However, you don't have to travel quite as far to still see the raw beauty of these ancient ranges. The Southern Flinders offers you a diversity of places to see and things to do. Quorn is one of those places.

A town seen far and wide in a long list of films (*Gallipoli*, *Wolf Creek*), it has a population of just over a 1000 people. Its lifeblood now is to support farmers, pastoralists and tourism. The town and surrounds are steeped in the history of the indigenous Adnyamathanha as well as the European settlers that came and took up leases from the 1840s on, and physically, the immensely old geological features that host the region.



Before you start exploring the Southern Flinders Ranges, be sure to drop into the Flinders Ranges Visitor Information Centre.

Visitors to the town are well-served with options for dining – ranging from pub food to freshly prepared tucker in the numerous bistros/cafes in First Street. This amazingly wide street harks back to the days of bullock drays bringing supplies to the town, and needing to be turned around.

Equally, there is a variety of options for accommodation whether you are looking for catered, self-serviced, caravan park or bush camping. The old railway station building is now used as the [Flinders Ranges Visitor Information Centre](#) and much can be learned from a visit as well as using their helpful website beforehand.

A broad range of activities can be enjoyed by visitors. Here are just 5 great things to do when you visit Quorn:

1. Warren Gorge Loop Trail

This is a well-marked walk that can be tackled by most people, particularly if you follow the advice and walk clockwise. Allow yourself anywhere from one and a half to three hours to complete the circuit. My wife and I took just over 2 hours at a casual pace with lots of stops to take photos of the constantly changing views.

You get a taste of it all: uplifted sediments in the gorge, gum lined creeks, native pine forest, wattle grove, spinifex and yacka covered hillside, rocky ridgetop and mallee studded bush. This is complemented with expansive views of the Arden Hills and views to distant Wilpena Pound.

Euros and red kangaroos are regular sights and, if you're lucky, the endangered yellow-footed rock wallaby will be sighted either in the gorge or along the western side of the range. Camping is permitted in the area for a small fee, while maps are available from the information centre.



The Warren Gorge Loop Trail is a must-do if you're in the Southern Flinders Ranges.

2. Pichi Richi Railway

This iconic railway has been nurtured back into existence by an enthusiastic group of

volunteers. It showcases engines from both the steam and diesel eras of the narrow-gauge Ghan line to Alice Springs.

Prize exhibit is the Coffee Pot, a tiny steam motor coach that is not only over 100 years old and lovingly restored but is the only working one of its kind in the world.



The old Pichi Richi takes you from either Port Augusta or Quorn through the spectacular Southern Flinders Ranges.

You can take a trip onboard at selected dates between March and November. Check out the [Pichi Richi website](#) for the latest information and [timetables](#).

3. Nathaltee Track

Don't have a 4WD? This is the way to go if you have an all wheel drive vehicle. It is a self-drive track that can be driven in a couple of hours and gives you a taste of the hardships that the early settlers experienced as well as some magnificent vistas towards the Dutchmans Stern and back down the valley to Quorn and Devils Peak.



This is the sort of view you will experience on the Nathaltee Track. Pretty stunning, right? There are many other 4WD tracks in the area that can be explored but this, driven particularly early morning or late afternoon, will whet your appetite for more. More information is available from the [information centre](#).

4. Powell Gardens Botanic Gardens

Are you interested in native plants? Do you want to get ideas for your own garden? A visit to these gardens is a must. They were started by Brian Powell and his wife Faye (of the quandong growing fame). There are now over 200 local species of plant on display with the seed bank of rare species also being preserved.



Started by Brian and Faye Powell, the first to cultivate quandongs, the Powell Gardens are a must for the native flora enthusiast.

One section of the garden is dedicated to showcasing natives suitable for home gardening. Easily accessible on the edge of town in the parkland belt, this is another volunteer-based offering for visitors. For more information visit the [Flinders Ranges Council website](#).

5. Four Winds Cultural Guiding

Want to understand more of the aboriginal culture of the Ikara-Flinders? Join Stefan, an Adnyamathanha man, who has spent his life immersed in the ranges and his culture. He will share some of his knowledge of his land and its history, about bush tucker and bush medicine and many other stories from his deep love and knowledge of his country.



This is Stefan. He knows more about this part of Ikara-Flinders Ranges than most people. A variety of tours are run on a regular basis. More can be found on the [Four Winds Dreaming website](#) or at the information centre.



Other Activities

There are many more walks, drives, bike rides and activities in the area, including the Heysen and Mawson Trails. I could list another six or so walks of various difficulties quite easily.

Similarly, there are 4WD tracks that will test your skills and nerve as well as reward you with fabulous views. All this and more, and at the end of the day you can sit down to a coffee and cake or stronger beverages at one of the previously mentioned cafes or pubs.

Right now (winter 2016), the ranges are cloaked in an amazing coat of green. The rain that has been experienced has created a magnificent colour in this land of contrasts.

At only a 3.5 hour journey from Adelaide and with a number of scenic ways to get there, it's the perfect weekend trip in winter, spring, and autumn.