



## Orange



# 'Not bringing an Esky to the farmers' market is my greatest regret'

Tara Wells advises a long weekend to taste all this NSW food haven has to offer

**T**he elevation of 600m-1200m that defines Orange as a famed cool-climate wine region also sets the town apart during hotter months. Because, unlike other inland towns west of the Great Dividing Range, summers are bearable. There's no struggle for beach parking either (even at Orange's "beach"), or sticky coastal humidity to deal with. Add a sophisticated dining scene, fresh local produce and coffee that meets city-slickers' standards, and Orange – just 3.5 hours from Sydney or Canberra – may well reach new holidaying heights.

### DAY 1

#### Afternoon

Duck off the highway 20 minutes before town to detour via the heritage-listed village of Millthorpe. On traditional Wiradjuri land, Millthorpe prospered at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries thanks to its combination of a flour mill and railway line. Poke around the many preserved buildings from this era repurposed for modern living and providing the things we love on holiday. It's in with sourdough and relish at Millthorpe Providore, tastings of organic wines at Tamburlaine and Italian varieties at Angullong, and a riot of custom lampshades at Galvanised. There are antique shops, artist studios and a heritage walk. [millthorpevillage.com.au](http://millthorpevillage.com.au)

#### Evening

I'm staying at the Oriana Orange, a retro motel giving off 1960s Palm Springs vibes. The gardens are heaving with people enjoying its outdoor fairy-light-twinkling Summer Kitchen. They've been lured here by a monthly special on bargain oysters. Having an eye on both repeat customers and those just passing through means motel guests enjoy distinctly un-motel-like food and drinks at the Oriana's restaurants. Like the indoor Supper Club – grab a burger, but make it crisp pork belly, or a salad, but make it miso-glazed eggplant. The velvet-swathed Peacock Room where I eat features a sophisticated menu accompanied by international and local wines. The latter all have cellar doors to explore during my visit. [orianaorange.com](http://orianaorange.com)

### DAY 2

#### Morning

Orange offers whatever gets you walking – either a gentle bush stroll around the tranquil



From top: Historical Millthorpe, a town south of Orange; coffee at Lakeside Kiosk, by Lake Canobolas; the Oriana Orange.



Lake Canobolas (it's only half an hour, plus a coffee chaser from Lakeside Kiosk), or pavement-hitting for boutique shopping. Avid online fans make a beeline for Jumbled's colourful shopfront.

To escape the maze within vintage and antiques barn Dirty Janes, follow the smell of fresh scones to Salters Café. Or be willingly lost at neighbouring homewares store, the White Place, set in the rooms of a heritage house. Near the town centre, walk to the 4.5ha English elm-lined Cook Park via Anything Grows, a café within a nursery. [orange360.com.au](http://orange360.com.au)

#### Afternoon

Wine pinned Orange to the tourism map but I can't possibly visit all 40 cellar doors. So I skip over award-winners like De Salis, Philip Shaw and Halliday's five-star winery first-timer ChaLou Wines, and head instead to Ross Hill Wines. It's Australia's first carbon-neutral-certified winery, known as

much for its chardonnay and cabernet franc as its initiatives like solar panels and EV charging station.

Small Acres Cyder is a revelation for those accustomed to amazing wine and craft beer but who may have only tasted mass-produced ciders. Using winemaking techniques and a similar cellar door experience, Small Acres offers blends as well as single varietals like the Kingston Black and ever-popular Pink Lady apple cider. [smallacrescyder.com.au](http://smallacrescyder.com.au)

#### Evening

For a town of 42,000, there sure is a lot of fine dining. Hatted favourites The Union Bank and Printhe Dining are joined by newcomer Rowlee Wines Bar & Dining. Here, pared-back interiors give way to big vineyard views via floor-to-ceiling windows. The wine is, as expected, excellent, whereas the food is a surprising joy. Everything is made to share, like coal-roasted pork collar with fermented

rhubarb and honey, or carrot served three ways with creamed cheese and molasses. [rowleediningandbar.com.au](http://rowleediningandbar.com.au)

### DAY 3

#### Morning

Not bringing an Esky to the Orange Farmers Market is my greatest regret. Sure, I inhaled the best sauso roll of my life from Orange Pie Company, downed a Fish River Roasters' coffee and balanced both with a peach and elderflower water kefir from the Orange Fermentary. But to not take home swag from Second Mouse Cheese, the Salami Man and Minoru Lamb was a rookie mistake. Perhaps I can console myself with Goldfield Apiaries spiced mead, Badlands Brewery pilsener or Pride of Lunatics' biodynamic viognier. [orangefarmersmarket.org.au](http://orangefarmersmarket.org.au)

#### Afternoon

Where does all this abundance come from? I jump in the van of Pam King, third-gen apple orchardist, to find out. Today's tour with Country Food Trails visits a selection of growers suited to the season.

While one of the stops, Hillside Harvest (we pick the first plump cherries of the season) can be visited on your own, other stops are by exclusive arrangement. Like Fourjay Farms, a family-run grower providing hazelnuts for Adelaide's Rinaldi nougat and Journey Beyond's luxury trains. And a visit to Argyle Australian Saffron will change how you think about those teensy strands of "red gold". As tree-changers Angela and Brendon Argyle will attest, growing saffron is not for the faint-hearted. [countryfoodtrails.com.au](http://countryfoodtrails.com.au)

## Evening

I'd be tempted to stay at 20-seater wine bar Hey Rosey long past pre-dinner drinks if I didn't have a reservation elsewhere. The food (locally sourced, where possible, sliced and cooked in front of you)! The drinks (only the best local wines and cocktails with know-how)! The vibe (chilled and hip without anything try-hard)!

Totter up the main road and thankfully dinner delivers the goods. Lucetta Dining is a new authentic Italian eatery impressing locals and visitors alike. When I say "Italian", I mean the region of Puglia where owner Francesco Zarrella's family is from. Pasta is made daily, and be sure to order the loaded Puglian-style focaccia.

[heyrosey.com.au](http://heyrosey.com.au); [lucettadining.com](http://lucettadining.com)

The writer was a guest of Central NSW Joint Organisation and Orange360.



Clockwise from top: Orange Farmers Market; Country Food Trails; Millthorpe Providore; Ross Hill Wines; scones at Salters Café.

## ESCAPE

## ROUTE

### GETTING THERE

Orange is a 3.5-hour drive from Sydney via the Blue Mountains. The XPT train runs daily from Sydney, or catch a regular intercity train to Bathurst and onward via rail coach. Make it a flying visit, with Qantaslink daily from Sydney, or Link Airways from Brisbane and Melbourne. [transportnsw.info](http://transportnsw.info)

### WHERE TO STAY

The Oriana Orange is a 49-room motel with revamped rooms, a pool, outside bars and three restaurants, close to the town centre. [orianaorange.com](http://orianaorange.com)

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