

Explore the backroads & forests



Misty morning at Congarinni.

An ideal way to take in the stunning beauty of the Nambucca is to take a drive. There are stunning mountain views and panoramas of ordered farmlands and tracts of rainforest, timbered ridges and winding streams, all within an easy drive.

DISCOVER THE BACKROADS: Most drives mentioned can be made with safety in the family car with sensible driving. Some roads are gravel-surfaced and may be rough or dusty in sections. Some parts are also narrow and you should be alert for oncoming traffic, particularly logging or other heavy vehicles. Service stations are rare once you leave town, so start with a full tank. Most of all, don't be in a hurry!

Other more adventurous scenic routes can be sourced from the Nambucca Visitor Information Centre, located just off the Pacific Highway at Nambucca Heads.

NAMBUCCA TO BELLINGEN VIA BOWRAVILLE: This is a drive requiring about a half day. Travel to Bowraville and turn on to the Missabotti road just north-east of the township. Travel west on this road through picturesque farmlands ignoring turns to the left.

There are beautiful sections of rainforest on the southern slopes and open forest on the northerly slopes plus stunning views over farmlands below. After a few kilometres the road will again open into farmlands of the Upper Bellinger Valley and eventually will bring you out at Bellingen township. From here take the sealed main road east to return to the highway at Raleigh just north of Urunga for an easy trip back to Nambucca.

YARRAHAPINNI LOOKOUT AND WAY WAY FOREST: This should top your list. Mount Yarrahapinni rises from the sea between the Nambucca and Macleay valleys. Just below the summit is a lookout which provides a spectacular view over South West Rocks and along the coast.

The summit has been cleared to provide for a fire tower and telecommunications facilities. It offers breathtaking panoramas of the coast

and hinterland. Along the way are magnificent stands of timber and beautiful rainforest.

Take Scotts Head Road off the highway just south of Macksville. After about 5km, turn right into Way Way Forest Road. You may wish to pause at the beautiful Pines picnic area in the Yarriabini National Park. There are barbecues, a walking track and 3D artwork, which tells the Aboriginal Dreaming story of Yarriabini. And, if you are lucky, you may see some large and rather curious goannas as they visit the picnic area.

From the Pines continue on Way Way Creek Road until you turn left into Tower Road to reach the summit. You may wish to return via Rosewood Road (turn left out of Tower Road) which winds through banana plantations and farmlands to regain the highway at the village of Warrell Creek. Or you may return towards the Pines picnic area and turn right into Jimmy's Ridge Road to the pretty Grassy Head reserve, and from there onto the village of Stuarts Point. You may then return via the sealed Grassy Head Road to Scotts Head Road. Take note that Jimmy's Ridge Road may be rough and dusty on occasions. You should allow at least a half day for this drive, particularly if you want to enjoy the bush and beach areas along the way. This trip really needs a full day, particularly if you are to enjoy the sights and interesting stops along the way.

INGALBA, TAMBAN AND COLLAMBATTI FORESTS TO TAYLORS ARM AND RETURN VIA MACKSVILLE: Take the Pacific Highway south to Eungai Creek and turn right through the village into Tamban Road. This becomes Mackays Road as it enters the forest. Continue (about 12kms from the village) and turn left into Jacks Road then right (about 1.5 kms) into Cedar Park, a picnic area in Ngambaa Nature Reserve, which holds a beautiful stand of the magnificent softwood timber that originally brought settlement to the Macleay and Nambucca Valleys. Back-track to Mackays Road and turn left to continue south-west. Mackays Road will take you into Western

Range Road. Turn right and continue until Western Range Road terminates at the Hickeys Creek-Taylors Arm Road. Turn right and follow the signs to Taylors Arm.

Most of these roads are fairly well-maintained and are usually in reasonable condition, except after heavy rains. However, you will be travelling through long stretches of bush well away from settlement and you should ensure you have plenty of fuel and that your vehicle is in good condition.

The forest drives will take you through beautiful bushland with views from the ridges over the Upper Macleay and Nambucca Valleys. Watch on Western Range Road for a left turn up to the Collombatti lookout. It is well worth the stop.

At Taylors Arm you may wish to call at the famous Pub With No Beer before completing the return journey over sealed roads through picturesque farmlands to Macksville. There are picnic and barbecue facilities at the pub and in the nearby Taylors Arm Reserve.

VISIT EUNGAI:

Eungai (Map ref: Regional: J4) is situated approximately midway between Kempsey in the Macleay Valley and Macksville in the Nambucca Valley. Nowadays, it is by-passed by the Pacific Highway and a short loop-road (about one kilometre) provides a welcome rest from the busy highway.

There's more than a century of history attached to Eungai. The district produced quality hardwoods for use in furniture, building construction and railway sleepers and Eungai developed into a busy rail centre for both passengers and freight.

The villages of Eungai still reflect the character of those early days when bullock trains hauled timber for the mills, while the General Store provides present-day services in an old-world setting.

Visitors to the Macleay and Nambucca valleys can make many choices as to how to enjoy the area's natural attractions – Eungai Rail offers an ideal starting point for trips through the ranges.