

**N**eed a change of scenery, but you're too short on time and heavy on commitments? Then take off on a microadventure, a trend among those who want more from a weekend than a lazy bushwalk. Whether it's just for a day, a few hours or a quick overnighter, switching off from everyday life and doing something that's fun and different from your routine can have an amazing effect on your wellbeing. Get a taste of some of these microadventures or discover one of your own.

# Time for a MICROADVENTURE

Can't take time off? The newest trend is a weekend microadventure, where you cram a serious holiday into a couple of days. **Toni Krasicki** reports.

**FROM  
SYDNEY**

## CANYONING IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

You've hiked the trails, seen the Three Sisters and dropped in at the Hydro Majestic – what next? It's time to step off the tourist trails, get the adrenaline pumping and absorb the incredible natural beauty of the wilderness. Canyoning – abseiling down waterfalls, jumping

into and wading through creeks, sliding and scrambling along rocky shelves and canyons and swimming in mountain pools embedded in steep cliffs – is a true escape from the everyday.

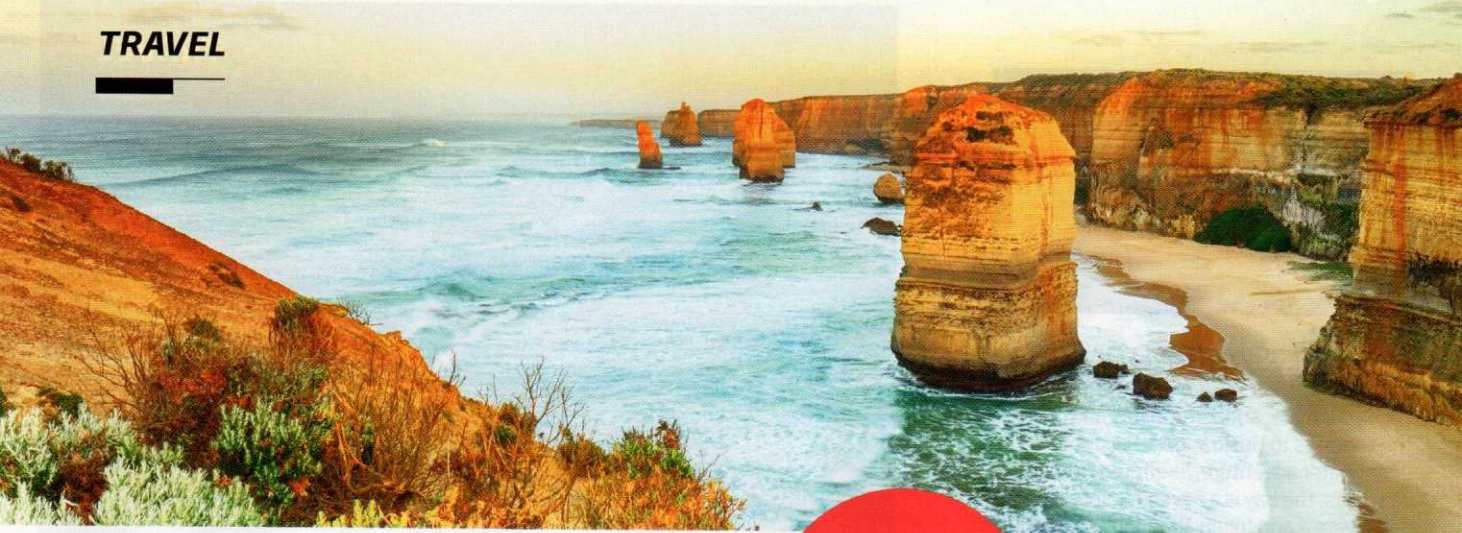
Canyoning is not for the faint-hearted. But if you're keen to spend a thrilling day (or two) in remote areas that few visitors get to see, and want to have a lot of fun

doing it, it's a great alternative and adventurous way to do the Blue Mountains. Several outfits based in Katoomba run half and full day multi-level trips for all abilities.

**Where to:** Lesser-known areas of The Blue Mountains National Park.

**Why:** Adrenaline, thrills and spills.





**FROM  
MELBOURNE**

**EXPLORE THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD**

With the Great Ocean Road, it's all about how much time you want to spend exploring. This blissful string of unspoilt beaches, quaint coastal towns and hidden hinterland is a firm favourite.

Feel Bass Strait's wind in your hair along the 44km Surf Coast Walk that hugs the coast from Torquay to Aireys Inlet. Further west, the Great Ocean Walk meanders for 104km from Apollo Bay to the Twelve Apostles and can be

done in small chunks. Alternatively, forget the oceanside and head inland to the eucalyptus forests of the Great Otway National Park. Hike through forests to hidden waterfalls, zipline at the treetop walk in the Otway Ranges or hit the mountain bike park in Anglesea.

**Where to:** Torquay and Warrnambool.  
**Why:** Pristine air, beaches, waterfalls and forests.



**CYCLE THE LILYDALE TO WARBURTON RAIL TRAIL**

This 38km (one way) cycle, walking and horse riding trail follows the route of the Warbuton railway line, which carted farm produce from the Yarra Valley to Melbourne from 1901 to 1965. The grade of the trail is suitable for all.

With the Yarra Ranges National Park as a backdrop, the trail winds its way through the picturesque Yarra River Valley and past original station platforms. The trail is never far from a cafe, restaurant or winery, which makes it easy to combine the ride with a food and wine tour, and maybe an overnight stay in a quaint B&B.

**Where to:** Lilydale in the Yarra Valley.  
**Why:** Fitness, food and fun.

**BY FOOT OR BY BIKE ON FRENCH ISLAND**

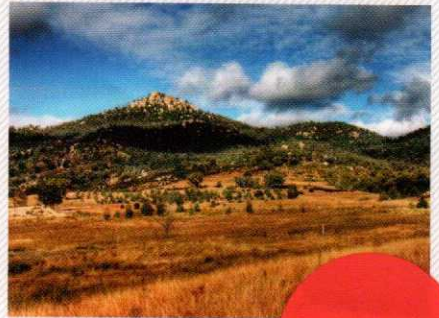
Only 70km from the city, French Island is often bypassed on the way to the more easily accessible Phillip Island. Two-thirds National Park, the island protects wetlands and a healthy population of koalas. Actually, if you see a koala on the mainland, it's more than likely to have come from French Island.

Take walking shoes and a bike along to explore the natural bushland and empty beaches on a network of trails. For the adventurous, camp at the free Fairhaven Campsite. Long drop toilets and BYO water though.

**Where to:** A 10-minute passenger ferry ride from Stony Point.  
**Why:** For peace and serenity.



PHOTOGRAPHY PARKS VICTORIA



**FROM  
CANBERRA**

**BIKE, HIKE AND CLIMB IN THE NAMADGI NATIONAL PARK**

Outdoorsy Canberrans are spoilt for choice. From hiking or biking the 145km Centenary Trail that circumnavigates Canberra to tearing down Mt Stromlo's forest park on a mountain bike, there is no need to stray too far from the city limits to indulge in a little adventure.

Occupying 48% of the ACT, mighty Namadgi National Park attracts hikers, bikers and climbers of all skill levels. The park has a plethora of hiking trails, with many offering rewarding views over the Brindabella Ranges and Canberra City.

Specially designated fire trails abound for horse riding and mountain biking, while the granite rock face of Booroomba provides slabs and fissures for climbers. Check out the Aboriginal rock art at Yankee Hat Shelter.

**Where to:** 45 minutes from the city gets you to the edge of Namadgi National Park.  
**Why:** Nature, solitude and fitness. **FB**



