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VictorsFood Tours Australia - - South Coast Food Tour

By [Syrie Wongkaew](#), About.com Guide

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Sydney is nestled in a land of plenty. But the land, with its strange contours, and the ravages of drought and fire, is unforgiving. Yet from this often hostile environment, an abundance of foods has sprung. The food and wines that grow around Sydney ensure that many continue to negotiate the trip Down Under.

Recently I was able to meet some of the producers of this wonderful food. I joined VictorsFood Tours on a two-day exploration of Sydney's seductive south coast. Discovering new destinations and exploring local flavors are the makings of a perfect weekend. VictorsFood Tours, run by chef Victor Pisapia, caters for people who want to combine their passions for food and travel.



Cupitt's Winery
S. Wongkaew

We set out from Sydney and headed south. First stop, morning tea at the Berry Wood-Fired Sourdough Bakery. Set in a charming 90-year old building, the Berry bakery offers delights for breakfast and lunch using as much local and seasonal produce as possible. We sampled a selection of buttery pastries including a dark chocolate and pear tart, moist friends and my favorite – the elegant prune and custard tart.

Tucked around the corner is the wood-fired bake-house, an annex to the café, where a team of award-winning bakers hand-craft a range of organic sourdough loaves using traditional, slow methods.

By now, it's almost 11am – a perfect time to visit the Berry Chocolate Shop. Here exists the world of many a child's fantasy. Patrons can order freshly made chocolates from behind the glass counter or linger nostalgically over packages of colorful confections and old-fashioned preserves.

All 11 in our group eagerly shuffle into the tiny chocolate factory viewing room to watch owner Leon as he deftly whips together rich soft-centers while explaining the characteristics of good chocolate.

We soon leave the pretty town of Berry for our next stop, the Green and Gold Vegie Farm, run by farmer Robert Boyd. This 110 year-old farm is cultivated using organic methods and supplies many of Sydney's top restaurants. A small shop-front attached to the farm sells the daily specials – plump beetroot, slender stalks of ruby-red rhubarb, pumpkins, peas, broccoli, spinach and fresh eggs from Boyd's 200 free-range chickens.

After nibbling on some local south coast cheeses, our appetites were sufficiently whetted for our most anticipated stop: Jim Wild's Oyster Farm at Greenwell's Point.

The smell of the ocean hits us as we step off the coach. We're greeted by Jim, who is wild indeed -- about oysters. Jim has been shucking oysters since he was a kid. He has salt water in his veins. He welcomes us heartily and points us to a table especially set up for us on his wharf. Freshly shucked oysters, prawns and local fish are on the menu.

Jim's love for oysters is infectious. On a tour of his small farm, he explained the oysters' purification process and then took us to his special place. Here Jim shucks (and eats), thousands of Sydney rock and pacific oysters. He proudly tells us he once held the title of "world's fastest oyster shucker." Watching his lightening fast hands made this easy to believe.

We're led out to the rickety dock for lunch. Set on a small canal, it's a beguiling spot. The rustic setting instantly relaxes you. Life is good.

First course is served -- dozens of freshly-shucked, plump Sydney rock oysters. We gulp them down, straight from the half shell, smooth, briny and luxurious. A fellow traveler exclaims in awe "I feel like I've swallowed the ocean".

After several blissful hours it was finally time to decamp and set off for our accommodation in Booderee National Park, Jervis Bay. I'd forgotten how beautiful and relatively untouched this part of New South Wales is. As we wound through the thick Australian bush we were greeted by curious kangaroos, wallabies and a rather shy echidna.

We found post-card worthy ocean views at the Bay of Plenty Lodges – a small property offering self-contained cottages, cabins and units.

To end the night we sipped champagne and dined on local specialties nestled amongst the treetops at the luxurious Paperbark Camp's Gunyah Restaurant.

The next day was more leisurely but no less delicious. It began with an alfresco breakfast cooked by our gracious guides using local and seasonal ingredients.

Next, we were willingly taken for a slow-food lunch at a vineyard.

If it weren't for the eucalypts, one could easily mistake Cupitt's Winery for the South of France. Owner and winemaking Francophile, Rosie Cupitt's love of France is eloquently expressed in the Provence-esque architecture of the winery.

Here we sampled a variety of wines in Rosie's underground winemaking cave including Viognier, Chardonnay, Rosé, Cabernet Franc, Sauvignon Blanc and Chambourcin, before sitting down to a magnificent slow food lunch.

With our bellies full we start the journey back to Sydney with one last stop to taste some famous chocolate port. It's only been 48 hours but the sharing of food and wine has turned a bunch of strangers into a group of friends.

South Coast Food Tour [image gallery](#)

VictorsFood

VictorsFood, based in Sydney, Australia, offers domestic and international food travel experiences, cooking parties, cooking classes and team building workshops.

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Syrie Wongkaew traveled as a guest of Tourism NSW.

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