

**W**hen driving along Waterfall Way – just over the Never Never Creek – to get to Bellingen, you know you are entering somewhere incredibly special. This village, nestled in the forest inland from the Coffs Coast in NSW, has to be one of Australia's most beautiful towns. From simply gorgeous walks in the national park to perfectly preserved Federation-style buildings and delicious food and wine, Bellingen has it all.

Start with a wander down the main street, poking into beautiful historic shopfronts where you can buy antiques, or admire works at the Woodcraft Gallery. Be sure to stop by Emporium Bellingen in the historic Hammond and Wheatley

Building, which first opened in 1900 as a department store. Then make a stop for the region's best ice-cream at Bellingen Gelato, or perhaps a bite to eat at one of the many cafes that line the street.

For dinner, book a table at Popla Bellingen. Housed in the heritage-listed 2 Oak Street, the restaurant was created by the team behind the award-winning Sydney restaurant Bloodwood. Or try Cedar Bar & Kitchen, run by a team of passionate foodies who showcase local Coffs Coast produce.

Want to try produce direct from the source? Time your visit for a Saturday when the Bellingen Growers Markets are on; they run twice a month. There's also the

monthly Bellingen Community Markets where you can stock up on handmade arts and crafts, fashions and gourmet tea and coffee.

Bellingen is renowned for the arts, and whatever your creative passion there's a festival to celebrate it. Highlights include the Readers & Writers Festival in June, the Winter Music Festival in July and the Bellingen Music Festival in September.

Of course, a trip here wouldn't be complete without visiting the nearby World Heritage-listed Dorrigo rainforest. Take a stroll along the Skywalk suspended over the rainforest or tackle one of the many walking trails where you can peek behind spectacular waterfalls.

Fancy a seaside walk? Nearby are the wonderful beaches stretching from Urunga north to Woolgoolga. Perfect places for a swim or, for the more energetic, a surf. Another great place to explore is the Solitary Islands Marine Park just off Coffs Harbour.

**Where** Bellingen is a 5½-hour drive north of Sydney, just inland from Coffs Harbour. It's a five-hour drive from Brisbane and a 30-minute drive from Coffs Harbour airport. Accommodation available includes retreats, elegant guesthouses, a youth hostel and riverside camping. Farmstays are available, too, on organic farms.

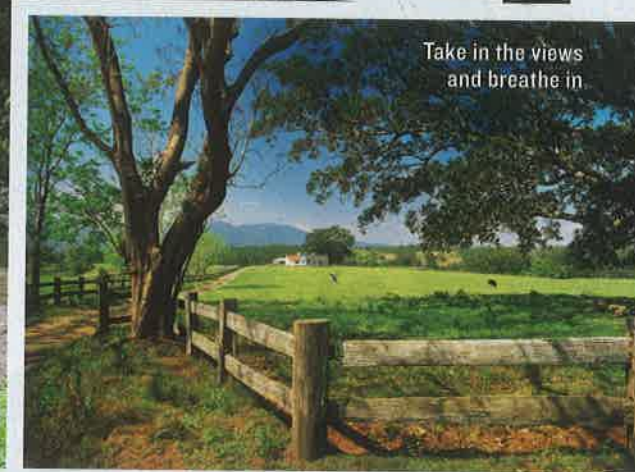
**When** Year-round!  
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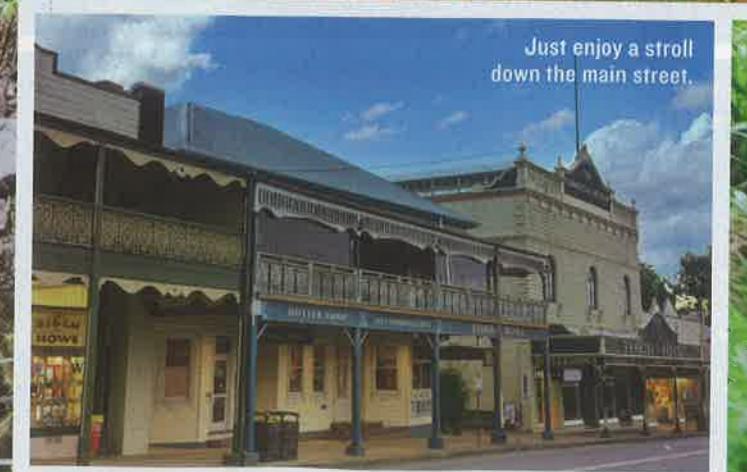
Join Fast Ed on a recipe road trip to Bellingen on *BHG TV*, April 20.



Some people call it the prettiest place on Earth.



Take in the views and breathe in



Just enjoy a stroll down the main street.

# Beautiful Bellingen

Set among stunning hills and rainforests, this historic northern NSW town is a must-see



Photography: [unreadable]