



**MAP KEY**

Destination	Public Toilets
Scenery / Attractions	Accommodation
Cafés & Restaurants	Information Centre

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Cathedral Rock

## New England High Country

Drop into the Armidale, Guyra, Uralla and Walcha Visitor Information Centres for more information on New England High Country.

### Armidale Visitor Information Centre

82 Marsh Street  
Armidale NSW 2350  
(02) 6770 3888  
[tourisim@armidale.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tourisim@armidale.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.armidaletourism.com.au](http://www.armidaletourism.com.au)

### Uralla Visitor Information Centre

104 Bridge Street  
Uralla NSW 2358  
(02) 6778 6420  
[visit@uralla.com](mailto:visit@uralla.com)  
[www.uralla.com](http://www.uralla.com)

### Guyra Visitor Information Centre

Rafter's Restaurant  
New England Highway  
Guyra NSW 2365  
(02) 6779 1876  
[tourism@guyra.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tourism@guyra.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.guyra.nsw.gov.au](http://www.guyra.nsw.gov.au)

### Walcha Visitor Information Centre

51W Fitzroy Street  
Walcha NSW 2354  
(02) 6774 2460  
[council@walcha.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@walcha.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.walchansw.com.au](http://www.walchansw.com.au)

# Tourist Drive 17

The Best of New England High Country

Full Day Tour 245km (15.5km unsealed)

Gara Gorge, Hillgrove, Wollomombi Gorge, New England National Park, Trout Hatchery & Cathedral Rock

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**New England High Country**

## 📍 ARMIDALE TO GARA GORGE

Commencing at the Visitor Information Centre, turn left into Dumaresq Street, then right into Marsh Street. At the traffic lights turn left into Barney Street (Waterfall Way). Continue heading east for 2km to Castledoyle Road, this will lead to **Gara Gorge ❶**, part of **Oxley Wild Rivers National Park ❷**. Follow Castledoyle Road for 16km to reach the Gorge. **Gara Gorge** is a popular picnic spot, well known for its scenic bush strolls and swimming holes. It is also the site of Australia's first commercial hydro-electric scheme. The remains of this historic scheme can be viewed on the **Threalfall Historic Walk ❸**, a 5km return loop walk.

An option for the energetic is to rock hop along the riverbed of the gorge exploring the cascades and pools downstream. DO NOT attempt this walk after heavy rain or flooding.

The two picnic areas include toilets, picnic tables and gas BBQs.

## 📍 GARA GORGE TO METZ & HILLGROVE

Return along the Castledoyle Road and turn right onto the Waterfall Way. Continue east through the rolling hills of the New England High Country. Approximately 20km east, take the Baker's Creek turn-off to the right and continue to **Baker's Creek Falls ❹**. The view at these falls is the first taste of the many beautiful New England streams that tumble and cascade off the edge of the high country, forming the source of the great coastal river systems of Northern NSW. Continue along the Waterfall Way towards Hillgrove.

Both **Metz and Hillgrove** were once thriving gold mining towns. In the latter part of the 1800s, and at its peak, the population of Hillgrove numbered close to 3000. The town began to decline after 1900, and by the 1920s most of the town's buildings were being dismantled and relocated to Armidale.

The **Hillgrove Rural Life and Industry Museum ❺**, housed in the 1896 Hillgrove School building, contains a fascinating collection of exhibits, and gives visitors a unique insight into everyday life in old Hillgrove. The museum is open Mon, Fri, Sat, Sun and public holidays from 10.00am to 5.00pm.

Follow Stockton Road from Hillgrove, back to the Waterfall Way (approximately 5km).

## 📍 HILLGROVE TO WOLLOMOMBI GORGE

From the Hillgrove exit, the next stop is 11.8km along the Waterfall Way. Turn right at the Wollomombi Gorge sign and drive into the National Park car parking area. **Wollomombi** and **Chandler Falls ❻** are part of the rugged and spectacular **Oxley Wild Rivers National Park**. Wollomombi Falls is a sheer drop of 220m, making it Australia's second highest waterfall.

Visitor facilities include walking tracks, lookout platforms, a shelter shed with a gas BBQ, drinking water and toilets.

There are several short walks in the area including Wollomombi Falls Lookout, Checks Lookout and a 1km walk to the Wollomombi River where you are free to explore the river bed and rock hop.

Energetic explorers can complete a 4 to 5 hour return River Walk down to the bottom of the gorge and the Chandler River. Take plenty of drinking water!

## 📍 WOLLOMOMBI GORGE TO NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL PARK

Return to the Waterfall Way T-intersection and turn right. Continue heading east along Waterfall Way for approximately 29km and take the right hand turn-off to New England National Park. 4km along the road is the **LP Dutton Trout Hatchery ❷**. The hatchery is open to the public and offers an audiovisual show, aquarium display, group and self-guided tours, hand feeding of the fish and free picnic and BBQ facilities.

Continue on for 9.5km to the World Heritage Listed **New England National Park ❸**, Australia's second oldest park, covering over 300,000 hectares of wilderness. The park has a remarkable diversity of tree and plant life – from snow gum eucalypt forest to temperate and sub tropical rainforest and Antarctic beech forest. **Point Lookout ❹** offers a spectacular panoramic view of the Bellinger Valley that extends over 70km towards the coast. The park offers many well-marked and maintained walks, a picnic shelter, toilets, cabin accommodation and camping facilities that allow the visitor to enjoy the park all year round.



Wollomombi Falls

## 📍 NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL PARK TO CATHEDRAL ROCK NATIONAL PARK

Return to the Waterfall Way and continue east. 8km further on there is a left hand turn to **Cathedral Rock National Park ❻**. Cathedral Rock is a fascinating National Park with magnificent granite tors, formed about 230 million years ago. Birdwatchers will delight in the prolific birdlife found here and rock-hoppers and explorers will find plenty to discover around the granite outcrops in the park. A scramble to the top of one of these boulders gives you extensive views of the surrounding tablelands. It is an excellent park for bushwalking with camping grounds available. Camping grounds can be accessed from either the Waterfall Way or the Ebor/Guyra Road.

## 📍 CATHEDRAL ROCK NATIONAL PARK TO EBOR FALLS

From Cathedral Rock National Park, continue east along Waterfall Way and turn right at the T-intersection towards Ebor. Approximately 4kms further on, take the left hand turn

off to **Ebor Falls ❶**. These are spectacular upper and lower falls, located in the Guy Fawkes River National Park. The upper falls vantage point shows the upper falls in their tiered form. The second lookout, 600m further on provides a view of the upper and lower falls as well as a magnificent view over the deep gorge and surrounding countryside.

## 📍 RETURN TO ARMIDALE

From Ebor, you have a choice of two return journeys to Armidale - either along the Waterfall Way, or continue the loop on the Ebor/Guyra Road (approximately 78.5km), rejoining the New England Highway at Guyra. The Ebor/Guyra Road passes through some of New England High Country's finest pastoral land. On reaching **Guyra**, it is only a short 37km drive south along the New England Highway back to Armidale.

On the route is **Malpas Dam ❷**, the local water supply and recreational dam (no powerboats allowed) and Thunderbolt's Cave – once the hideout of the infamous bushranger, both turn-offs are on your left.

Continue back to Armidale to complete the tourist drive.