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Main Street Mornington: Where a kilometre of fabulous shopping meets the sea

Imagine this. A whole kilometre of cosmopolitan boutique shopping, with more than 370 retail outlets to explore. The pavements are broad and tree-shaded, with inviting courtyards, verandahs and kerbside seating for an espresso or glass of fine regional wine. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly, and there's not a highrise building in sight. And right at the end of the street is the sparkling sea, where white sandy beaches tempt you to stroll in the freshest sea air.

Welcome to Main Street Mornington. One of the Mornington Peninsula's favourite streets in the region's largest seaside village, it's just 50 minutes from Melbourne on an easy freeway drive.

And it's full of surprises. Classy boutiques whose sister stores are in upmarket Melbourne suburbs. Cafes where coffee is an absolute passion, and where vine covered walls are reminiscent of Italy or France. Food stores selling the finest local and imported produce. The Main Street Wednesday market that's Victoria's longest running midweek regional market. Historic buildings dating back to the 1860s, including a magnificent 1892 hotel that began life as a 'coffee palace' because of the temperance movement.

So come and explore, relax, eat, drink, stroll and shop in one of Victoria's best and most vibrant village main streets.

Who shops on Main Street?

Many Australian celebrities grew up on the Mornington Peninsula, have homes in this region or simply enjoy the coffee culture on Main Street. Celebrities spotted having coffee include Sam Newman, Paul Mercurio, Hugh Jackman and Debra Lee Furness, Cadel Evans, Debbie Flintoff-King, Jana Pittman, Tony Barber, Peter Mitchell, the Dado family, Jules Lund, Brooke Satchwell, Brodie Harper, Heath Meldrum, James Reyne and Dermott Brereton, just to name a few!

What's in store?

If you adore beautiful little boutiques, this is your kind of town. You'll find dozens of them filled with fabulous fashion, then just down the street you'll find the shoes that go perfectly with that new outfit. In one of our gift shops or jewellers, just the right earrings or neckpiece will be waiting for you. (The kids are well looked after too, with a number of boutiques just for them.)

Many Melbourne shoppers discover that while our boutiques are on a par with those in the city, the shopping here is far more leisurely and more enjoyable. So if you never seem to find time to browse for gorgeous homewares, we have eclectic and classic design stores stocking contemporary, traditional and Asian-influenced furnishings, along with bright and breezy decorating ideas that are perfect for the beach house.

But when you're seriously shopping you need a coffee, lunch, a delicious little mid-afternoon pick-me-up by or a restorative glass of bubbly at the end of the day. Perhaps that's why Main Street has developed such a strong food and wine focus and coffee culture.

You're absolutely spoilt for choice here. Mornington restaurants and cafés make the most of the abundant local produce in this region, and they know just how to tantalise your taste buds.

You can choose from about 60 restaurants and cafes serving excellent coffee and light meals, along with modern Australian, Italian, Thai, Japanese, Chinese, Afghan, Mexican and other cuisines. Favourite spots for dining include intimate little courtyards, broad decks with a view of the sea and verandahs shaded by market umbrellas.

If you're packing a picnic or stocking the beach house pantry, just start at our huge Italian food and fresh produce store. Then drop into the seafood shop, visit the wine stores for our famed Mornington Peninsula wines, come to the Wednesday market and buy pasta, herbs, vegetables and more, then buy the basics at our supermarkets.

Need to relax? Drop into one of our day spas or beauty salons, and you'll step out feeling as fresh as the sea breezes down Main Street.

Wednesday Main Street Mornington Market

A traditional street market that's held every Wednesday from 9am to 3pm no matter what the weather, the Wednesday Market has been running for nearly 30 years. It's Victoria's oldest midweek regional market, and it's been so successful that the pavements on Main Street were widened (some to nearly 10 metres) to comfortably accommodate stallholders and visitors.

It's a producers' market, so 'home made, home grown, home baked' is the mantra. Expect to find lots of crafts, clothing, accessories and jewellery; delicious produce including jams, preserves, olive oils, honey, nuts, pasta and sauces; fresh foods including fruit (look for locally grown strawberries in summer), vegetables and herbs; and instant relaxation from a massage or beautiful aromatherapy products.

Main Street's intriguing history

In 1854 the new village of Mornington was called Snapper Point after a local headland, but was then named after a very grand personage: the 2nd Earl of Mornington who was British Foreign Secretary from 1809 – 12.

Historic buildings are dotted along Main Street, with some of the oldest and best preserved just across the road from the sea. You can pick up a self-guided walking tour map at the information centre in the 1860 Court House, the oldest public building in the village.

Other buildings of interest include the former State Savings Bank on the Esplanade (now a restaurant), the Old Post Office (now a museum), an Italian Renaissance-style building which housed three banks over the years but whose currency is now food and wine, and the Grand Hotel which began life as a coffee palace in 1892 when the temperance movement pushed for alcohol-free hotels. (Its status quickly changed in 1893 when it obtained a liquor licence from the hotel next door.)

Cool off on the beach

When you've finished shopping, just cross over the Esplanade at the end of Main Street, and you're in nautical Mornington. There's a park with barbecues and a playground, secluded and safe white sand swimming beaches – try Mothers Beach, Mills Beach or Fishermans Beach - boat hire, an expansive pier where you can enjoy coffee, a cool drink or a meal, and the busy Mornington Harbour with yacht moorings, boat launching ramp and local anglers trying their luck for this evening's dinner. Snapper is a favourite catch, and there's an annual fishing competition.

Want to know more? Visit www.mainstreetmornington.com.au

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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