Muka: Small Town, Big Welcome



We've been in and out of Mukinbudin over the past couple of weeks, using it as a handy base to explore the natural wonders that aren't far from town. And honestly, "Muka" — as the locals call it — has grown on us.

A Town Built on Wheat, Sheep and a Bit of Grit

Mukinbudin sits in the north-eastern Wheatbelt of WA, about 300km — roughly three and a half hours — northeast of Perth, and 80km north of Merredin. Long before wheat farmers arrived, pastoralists were running sheep on enormous leases here from the 1870s, while sandalwood cutters and miners passed through on their way to the goldfields. The first wheat farmers turned up around 1910, working their blocks without livestock for years

before sheep were added to the mix. The railway reached town in 1923, the townsite was gazetted in 1922, and Mukinbudin has been quietly getting on with the business of growing grain ever since.

For a town of fewer than 400 people, it punches well above its weight. There's a genuinely good, positive feel to the place — it's essentially an agricultural service centre, but a properly equipped one. You'll find a pub, an IGA, a servo plus a separate fuel outlet, a butcher, a newsagent/LPO, a caravan park, a health centre, a hardware store, a tyre dealer and a couple of ag machinery dealers. Basically, if you need it, Muka's probably got it — and if they don't have it, they'll organise it for you.

Rocks, Reserves and a Few Surprises

The real drawcard for us has been what's on Mukinbudin's doorstep. This stretch of the Wheatbelt is scattered with enormous granite outcrops — ancient bubbles of molten rock that cooled underground millions of years ago, now exposed after aeons of erosion. They've long been culturally significant to Aboriginal people, whose gnamma holes (natural rock cisterns) in these outcrops provided water for locals, shepherds, sandalwood cutters and goldfields-bound miners alike.

Beringbooding Rock, about 65km northeast of town, is the standout. It has one of the largest rock water catchment tanks in Australia, a huge gnamma hole known as the Kangaroo Hole, a genuinely impressive balancing boulder, early pioneer wells, and Aboriginal hand paintings tucked around the back of the rock. Come in spring and the wildflowers put on a real show.

Further afield, **Elachbutting Rock** (about 100km northeast) is sometimes called Wave Rock's little sister — it has its own colourful rainbow wave, a 40-metre tunnel called Monty's Pass, and a large acoustic cavern known as King's Cave. A 6km trail loops around the rock through the bush if you're up for stretching your legs.

Closer to Westonia, **Baladjie Rock** rewards the climb with sweeping views over its lake system, and the surrounding nature reserve is full of birdlife. Add in Weira Reserve and Quanta Cutting Reserve closer to town, and there's easily a week's worth of exploring

within a short drive.

The Heart of the Town

Back in Mukinbudin itself, there's a small museum precinct built around a 1950s working farm shed, where a dedicated community group maintains a collection of restored machinery — right next to the town's heritage grain silo, a genuinely impressive piece of engineering from a bygone era.

Then there are the blue trees. You might spot one on your travels without knowing the story: the Blue Tree Project began right here in Mukinbudin, after locals turned a young farmer's private tragedy into a message that's now spread right around the country and beyond — a simple, striking reminder that it's okay not to be okay, and to check in on the people around you.

When the town's cafe closed a couple of years back, the pub stepped up and carved out a room for a small in-house cafe — cosy, but limited. The good news is the shire has now committed to building a new community centre with a proper cafe at its heart, which should give Muka the meeting spot it deserves.

Practicalities for the Travelling Crowd

The overnight RV stop is right in the middle of town, an easy stroll to everything you need. Our one gripe: a dedicated crossing over the grain lines would make getting between the RV stop and the shops a lot less of a balancing act.

All up, Mukinbudin is a top little base for exploring the eastern Wheatbelt and dipping your toes into the fringes of the goldfields. Vibrant, friendly, and full of surprises for a town this size — we'd happily base up here again.