



Six Months In Gingin & the Chittering Valley



This spot holds a special place for us. We pulled up at the Gingin Caravan Park back in February, with Michael's health taking a turn for the worse. It was as far as we got before a rush trip to hospital saw him diagnosed and admitted to ICU with Myasthenia Gravis — a condition we'd never even heard of, that came out of nowhere.

Seven long weeks later he was discharged, and we came straight back here to start the road to stabilisation. Six months on, with a long way to go, we're finally about to pack up and head out to the Wheatbelt, covering it in very short trips to see how we go, while staying close enough to Perth for his ongoing neurological reviews over the coming months.

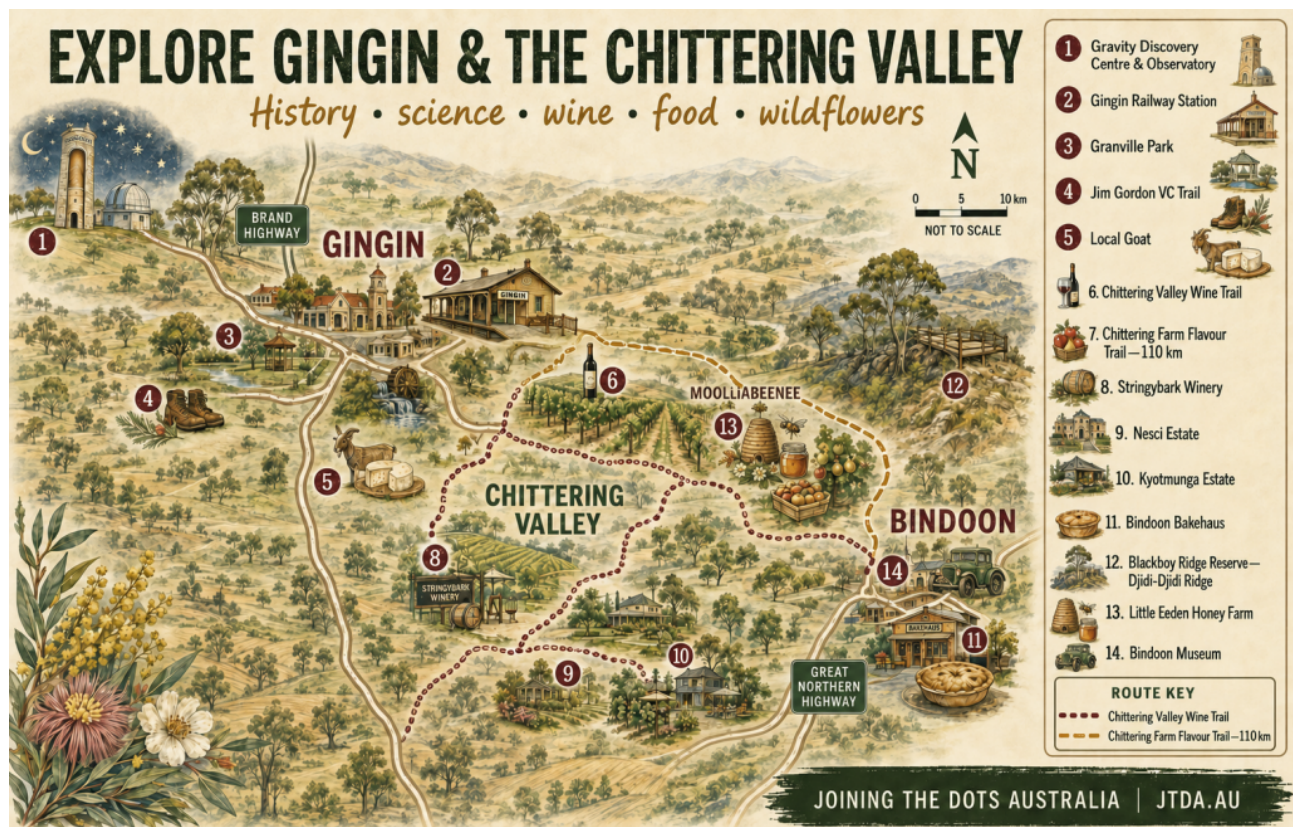
So it feels fitting to share a bit about the place that saw us through all that — because if you've ever found yourself stuck in Perth traffic, dreaming of rolling hills, a good cuppa and somewhere to stretch your legs that isn't a shopping centre car park, let us introduce you to Gingin and its neighbouring Chittering Valley.



Barely an hour north of the city along the Brand Highway, this is the kind of place where the pace slows right down, the gum trees tower overhead, and the biggest decision you'll make all day is which winery to stop at next.

Gingin (say it "Jin-jin") is one of the oldest towns in Western Australia, and it wears its history proudly without ever feeling stuffy about it. Team that up with the neighbouring Chittering Valley — all vineyards, orchards and produce stalls — and you've got yourself a properly good day trip or weekend away.

Things to See and Do



Gravity Discovery Centre and Observatory

No visit to Gingin is complete without a trip out to the bush to test a bit of Galileo's handiwork. Climb the 222 steps of the Leaning Tower of Gingin and drop a few objects to relive the old gravity experiments, then stick around after dark for a look through Australia's largest public telescope. Even the kids who reckon they're "too old" for



museums tend to come around on this one.

Gingin Railway Station

Built in 1891 and beautifully restored, the old railway station is now home to a café and the local visitor information centre (open weekends and public holidays). Grab a cuppa on the platform and have a squiz at the history display on the town's early settlers.

Granville Park

Right in the heart of town, Granville Park is the sort of spot you plan a picnic around — green lawns, towering gums, a water wheel turned by Gingin Brook, and enough shade to see off even a stinking hot Wheatbelt afternoon. There's a café on-site too, if you fancy someone else doing the sandwiches.

Jim Gordon VC Trail

A gentle heritage walk looping past the town's oldest buildings — St Luke's Anglican Church, the old Post Office, Jones' Shop and Philbey's Cottage among them. It's flat, it's short, and it's a lovely way to get your bearings and your steps up at the same time.

Chittering Valley Wine Trail

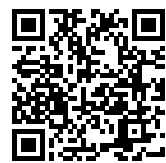
Head south into the Chittering Valley and you'll find yourself amongst rolling hills threaded with vineyards. The Wine Trail links seven local cellar doors — Stringybark Winery (with its excellent restaurant attached), Nesci Estate and Kyotmunga Estate among the local favourites. Nesci even puts on open-mic nights among the vines if you time your visit right.

Chittering Farm Flavour Trail

A 120-kilometre self-drive trail winding through the valley, past roadside stalls selling citrus, stone fruit, honey, asparagus and goat's cheese. The region has quietly become one of the state's produce bowls, so come hungry.

Bindoon Bakehaus

Not strictly Gingin, but close enough it'd be rude not to mention it. This award-winning bakery is a Chittering institution, turning out pies, tarts and artisan breads made almost entirely from WA-grown produce. Get in early — the good stuff sells out.



Little Eeden Honey Farm

Tucked away at Mooliabeenee, this family-run apiary produces pure, unprocessed honey and has grown into a proper one-stop destination — pet and child-friendly café, campgrounds and even a wedding venue. Pop in for a honey tasting (just ask if the shop's open) and grab a jar of honeycomb while you're at it.

Bindoon Museum

Housed within the Brockman Centre, this volunteer-run museum tells the story of Bindoon and the wider Chittering Shire through old farm machinery, lovingly restored vintage vehicles and a good stash of domestic memorabilia dating back to the early 1900s. While you're there, have a wander through the Bindoon Arts & Craft Centre next door for local pottery, quilts and handmade gifts (open Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday).

Blackboy Ridge Reserve

For a bit of a leg-stretch with a payoff, the 45-minute return walk up to the Djidi-Djidi Ridge lookout rewards you with sweeping views over the valley — spectacular in wildflower season, which runs roughly August to November.

Local Goat

Just west of town, this family-run dairy produces artisan goat's cheese on 148 acres of banksia woodland. A proper taste of the region, and a nice excuse for a scenic drive.

A Bit of History



The first European through the area was explorer George Fletcher Moore, who arrived in 1836 and noted down the Noongar name “Jinjin” on his charts. Pastoralist William Locke Brockman followed in 1841, establishing Gingin Station and giving the town its start. From there, Gingin grew up as a proper pioneer settlement — a stopover point for travellers making the long haul from Perth up to Geraldton, with the Gingin Hotel serving that exact purpose since the town’s earliest days.

These days Gingin balances its colonial-era charm with a genuinely forward-looking streak, thanks to the Gravity Discovery Centre putting the town on the map for anyone with an interest in science and stargazing. It’s a rare combination — heritage buildings and dark-sky astronomy, all within cooee of each other.

The wider Chittering Valley has its own agricultural story, built on rich, loamy soils that turned out to be perfect for vineyards, orchards and market gardens. What started as farming country has, over the decades, become one of WA’s most loved new food-and-wine weekend escapes.

Why Visit?



Because sometimes you just need a break that doesn't require a flight, a passport or four+ weeks' annual leave. Gingin and the Chittering Valley give you history, science, wine, cheese, wildflowers and a proper country pub, all within about an hour of Perth. Whether you're chasing a lazy picnic by the water wheel, a night under some genuinely dark skies, or a long lunch at a winery with a glass of something local in hand, this little pocket of WA has a way of making you forget you were ever in a rush to begin with. Pack the car, bring an appetite, and go say g'day.