

Along the Hume Highway

Canberran, Tiffany Bonasera has created this itinerary while taking her family on a drive around Yass Valley. Follow along or create your own Yass Valley experience.

Stop at the Yass Information Centre to collect the Visitors Guide, town walk and town drive maps.

Mon-Fri 930am– 430pm

Sat & Sun 10am-3pm – hours extended to 4pm during daylight savings

259 Comur Street, Yass

Ph 02 6226 2557 / 1300 886 014

www.yassvalley.com.au

The Hume Highway now stretches all the way from Melbourne to Sydney, there's not a single town on it to slow you down. But for travellers and Canberra day trippers, there are so many reasons to stop off at Yass Valley and tour the towns and attractions on the Old Hume Highway. My family and I set off to explore the hidden gems and here's our suggested itinerary:

Cooma Cottage

An easy drive from Canberra, Cooma Cottage, formerly the home of the first Australian born explorer, Hamilton Hume, comes up on your right before you reach Yass town centre. It's one of the oldest surviving rural houses in Yass. The beautiful heritage listed site features an intact complex of buildings, some constructed of handmade bricks.

Visiting Cooma Cottage had a surprising impact on the kids, who were thoroughly engaged by its historic value, the landscape and the friendly horses we encountered at the back of the homestead.

Sat-Sun 10:00am – 4:00pm

756 Yass Valley Way, Yass

Ph 0488 963 492

www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/cooma-cottage

Comur Street, Main Street

The well preserved main street (Comur Street) takes you back to a time when life was a little simpler. The 19th century architecture will resonate with visitors to the region, a lovely insight into the character of regional Australia. The predominant building styles on the main street today are Victorian and Georgian, which reflects the early wealth and status of the town.

For our family, it was a great way to connect with the country, and see how it contrasts with where we live. Like many visitors, we loved exploring the shipping experiences and seeing how many of the older buildings have been carefully restored. The kids spotted the park and playground behind the Yass Valley Information Centre. We promised to stop for a play next time.

Comur Street, Between Browne Street & Riverbank Park

Ph 02 6226 2557

Mayfield Mews

A short 10 minutes from Yass Main Street and you'll find the village of Bowning. It's everything you'd imagine a small, country town to be, gorgeous heritage homes, tree lined streets and a charming pub the Bowning Hotel. Here, you; also unearth some surprises. Mayfield Mews is one of them. It's an absolute must do for Yass Valley visitors.

A former residence of both Louisa and Henry Lawson, it's now home to Cyril and Debbie Cox, who have converted the old stables and coach house on the property into a café, a homewares store and garden centre, all in a lovely historic setting.

Wed – Sunday 10am- 4pm

4 Leake Street, Bowning

www.mayfieldmews.com.au

Ph 02 6227 6572

Bowning Antique Centre

Just next door is the step back in time Bowning Antique Centre. One look at the vintage pieces that sit on the footpath outside the entrance, and I am quickly lured in to see what other treasures are inside, and there are lots. Bowning Antique Centre is old school, that's why it gets visitors hearts racing, whether you're an antiques enthusiast or value collectables.

"Look with your eyes" I called to the kids who also enjoyed browsing the centre (and the bowl of welcome mints.) we spent longer looking around than we'd anticipated. Owners Yvonne and Bernie Howe have a great eye for furniture, bric-a-brac, books, crockery and artwork. Bowning Antique Centre has charm in bucket loads, spread out across a couple of character filled rooms.

Thurs – Sun – 10:00am – 4:00pm

4 Leake Street, Bowning

www.bowningantiquescentre.com.au

Ph 02 6227 6527

Rollonin' Café

Greeted by a friendly emu (a real one, in the paddock next door), it's easy to see why the family owned Rollonin Café, run by Renata Ryan, is popular with both locals and visitors. Set in a replica slab hut, just off the Hume Highway, it was designed to replicate local buildings from the 1800's, and provide an authentic country experience.

Open for light breakfast, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea, Rollonin Café is particularly popular with families. Besides the great food and atmosphere, Rollonin is a fun spot for kids to meet farm animals, including, Mac the Clydesdale, Daisy the Cow, Woolly the Sheep. Look out for the homemade jams, candles, scarfs and crafts too.

Thur – Mon 830am-4pm

144 Bowning Street, Bowning

www.rollonincafe.net

Ph 02 6227 6507

Crisps Galleries

The Crisp Galleries, located on the Hume Highway (not far from the village of Bowning), is nothing short of a surprise package. There is a café and gallery, gift shop, nursery, working studio, plus a stunning garden, even an historic carriage museum, tucked away in a country shed. I don't use these words lightly, but we had an enchanting experience.

Sandy Crisp kindly showed us around the property, including the studio, where we were introduced to his brother, glass artists Peter Crisp. His famous Bombay Gin Chalice has featured worldwide advertising, and he created the world's most expensive perfume bottle. You'll even find a hand written note to Peer from singer Tina Turner, referring to him as, "Simply the Best!". This is not an exaggeration, to the formal gardens adjacent to the studio are breathtaking.

Fri - Mon 10am-4pm

Gap Range, Bowning

www.crispaustralia.com

Ph 02 6227 6073

Barneys of Bookham

For city kids, like mine, life on the farm is fascinating. That's why it's worth a stop at the farm machinery along Fagan Drive in Bookham. From what I understand, it's been a popular place to stop for generations and no doubt it will continue to attract interest for years to come.

Did someone say pie? Yes, actually, it was my daughter. She loves pies and thankfully Barneys of Bookham has them on the menu, even a breakfast pie. Comfortable and friendly, this coffee shop and café is a Bookham stalwart, and for good reason. At Barneys you can expect freshly prepared food from the best ingredients. Owner Darryl Bowling has turned it into a popular hub for locals and it's a convenient pick up spot for travellers.

Thurs – Mon 9:00am – 4:00pm

20 Fagan Drive, Bookham

www.barneysofbookham.com.au

Ph 0412 684 743