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UNOFFICIAL FREE PLANNER

Nambung practical day planner

Perth vs Cervantes decision tree · Pinnacles loop vehicle rules · packing · no in-park camping · official Explore Parks WA / DBCA links

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Verify everything officially. Fees, Discovery Centre hours, the desert loop, and alerts change. Use Explore Parks WA — Nambung and alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au. This is an independent unofficial guide — not affiliated with DBCA or the Western Australian Government.

No camping inside Nambung National Park. Standard WA park entry (last official fees-page stamp we checked: 18 Aug 2026) is typically vehicle $17 / concession $10 / motorcycle $10. This planner never sells park entry, Parks Passes or official bookings.

1. Before you leave base

- ☐ Explore Parks WA park page + alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au for your dates
- ☐ Discovery Centre hours (usually daily 9:30 am–4:30 pm except Christmas Day)
- ☐ Vehicle length agreed — loop is not for caravans / trailers / vehicles over 7 m [VERIFY]
- ☐ Fuel plan — no assumption of a bowser at the Pinnacles; Cervantes is the last practical town
- ☐ Hard "leave the desert by" time written down (especially Perth day-trips)
- ☐ Screenshot alerts and maps on home Wi-Fi
- ☐ Emergency+ installed (000 needs reception)
- ☐ Tell someone the plan and expected return

2. Pick one primary path

Perth day-trip (most first-timers)

- ☐ Early Indian Ocean Drive (~2 hrs each way)
- ☐ Discovery Centre + pay or show a pass
- ☐ One-way Pinnacles loop, signed bays only
- ☐ Optional lookout if heat allows
- ☐ Skip lake / beach if that blows the drive home

Cervantes overnight (sane clock)

- ☐ Morning loop while cooler
- ☐ Then Lake Thetis *or* one beach — not both plus sunset
- ☐ Town lunch is allowed
- ☐ Still a day visitor — no in-park camping
- ☐ Beds: Cervantes / Jurien Bay / Lancelin

3. Decision tree

First visit / one solid day from Perth
Pinnacles loop first. Lookout only if energy remains. Do not invent Hangover Bay on a late start.

Family / mixed ages
Discovery Centre + accessible lookout path. Lake Thetis boardwalk as the second landscape. Skip long sandy Class 3 in heat.

Sleeping in Cervantes
Morning desert, then lake or one beach. Town is the reset, not a third park site.

Photography
Sunrise or late afternoon for kinder light. Confirm last-entry / centre hours — do not assume 24-hour loop access.

Wildflower season (Aug–Oct bonus)
Still Pinnacles-first. Heath is a layer on the same day, not a reason to skip the desert. Stay on tracks (dieback).

Towing / long vehicle
Discovery Centre car park and lookout precinct only. Do not take caravans or trailers on the one-way loop.

4. Loop vehicle & access realism

The Pinnacles Desert Drive is a one-way unsealed loop for ordinary 2WD cars in usual conditions. **Motorbikes and bicycles are banned on the loop** (DBCA park notification from 30 September 2025; no end date on the alert when checked 20 August 2026). Cars still use the loop under the usual vehicle-length rules. Re-check alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au before you plan to ride.

- ☐ 2WD is the standard visit — this is not a 4WD park for the Pinnacles
- ☐ Long vehicles / vans / trailers: Centre car park only
- ☐ Pull-over bays and signed lookouts only — no social tracks between pinnacles
- ☐ Coach peaks: midday is busiest; early and late are calmer

5. Classic day skeleton — Pinnacles first

Timing (typical)

- Arrive: toilets, shade, entry or pass
- Loop: slow, bays only, 1–2 hours for most groups
- Optional: Desert View / lookout if heat allows
- Cervantes guests: one extra stop (lake or beach)
- Perth guests: reverse clock for dusk wildlife

Success metrics

- Whole group finishes with water left
- Nobody climbed a pinnacle for a photo
- Turned around if heat demanded
- Did not invent a third landscape

6. Packing — day visitor baseline

- ☐ Water (more than a CBD day; desert has little shade)
- ☐ Sun hat, sunglasses, high SPF
- ☐ Closed-toe shoes
- ☐ Fly net in warm months
- ☐ Snacks / lunch
- ☐ Offline map + alert screenshots
- ☐ Emergency+ / 000 plan
- ☐ Simple first aid
- ☐ Wind layer if staying to late light
- ☐ Swim kit only if Hangover Bay is the planned second stop

7. Hard nos

- ☐ No camping, no fires, no “just one night” in the park
- ☐ Do not climb, sit or stand on pinnacles
- ☐ Stay on marked roads and trails (dieback)

- ☐ Do not shortcut between formations for photos
- ☐ This site does not sell park entry
- ☐ Dogs: follow official published conditions — do not assume yes

8. Heat, ocean & comms

- ☐ Open sand radiates; afternoon sea breeze does not cancel UV
- ☐ Hangover Bay is real ocean — rips, skill, never treat it as a pool
- ☐ Phone coverage is not a guarantee on the desert or beaches
- ☐ 000 needs reception. Emergency+ on home Wi-Fi. Optional sat messenger if you already carry one
- ☐ Emergency: **000**

9. Official links (verify live)

- Park home: **Explore Parks WA — Nambung**
- Pinnacles drive: **Lookout and drive**
- Lake Thetis: **Official site page**
- Alerts: **alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au**
- Fees: **Park entry fees**
- Emergency WA: **emergency.wa.gov.au**
- Pinnacles Desert Discovery Centre phone (published): **(08) 9652 7913** — verify on official pages

10. On-site itineraries (full timelines)

- **Perth day-trip: Pinnacles first**
- **Cervantes half-day: loop + lake or beach**
- **Family-easy: lookout + Lake Thetis**
- **Photography: sunrise or late afternoon**
- **Wildflower-season day**

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