



**RAILWAY
ADVENTURES**

2024

ICONS OF AUSTRALIA

**AN EPIC JOURNEY BY RAIL,
ROAD, SEA AND SKY**

With Scott McGregor and friends

15 MARCH – 1 APRIL 2024

**• CAIRNS • TOWNSVILLE • LONGREACH • OVERNIGHT TRAIN LONGREACH TO BRISBANE •
• TOOWOOMBA • ARMIDALE • SYDNEY • MELBOURNE •**

The Southern Downs Steam C17 train rounds the bend at Devils Elbow not far from Wallangarra
on the old Great Northern Railway in Southern Queensland, photo Lenn Bayliss

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a grand tour of Australia's three mainland eastern states, a journey encompassing many of the country's great train journeys and captivating sites. From the tropical north in Cairns, down to Melbourne in the south, this tour will take you on an epic adventure through some of Australia's most beautiful and iconic locations.

Australia offers an extraordinary variety of train journeys, thanks to the early railway boom of the 1860s-80s, which saw each colony use their own rail gauges. As a result, each state has a distinct character and there are scores of heritage societies and museums to explore. During this journey, you'll get to experience some of the most eccentric and iconic railways that Australia has to offer on no less than 10 different train trips. Get ready to board the Spirit of Queensland and embark on an unforgettable journey through the outback towns of Winton and Longreach, all the way to Brisbane. From there, you'll witness the wonders of the Great Dividing Range on board the heritage steam trains, before taking a regional train through New South Wales to the iconic city of Sydney.

In the Blue Mountains, you'll travel back in time on a privately chartered journey on the Zig Zag Railway before journeying to Melbourne, to explore the city's landmarks and experience the legendary Puffing Billy, Australia's most popular heritage railway. The Victorian Goldfields Railway will complete your adventure, steaming through the quaint gold rush towns of Castlemaine and Maldon.

Beyond the incredible train experiences, this grand tour also offers a wealth of opportunities to uncover Australia's fascinating history and rich cultural heritage. From the ancient rainforests of Cairns to the vibrant city of Sydney and the charming goldfield towns of Victoria, this tour offers a glimpse into the diverse landscapes and cultures of the continent. You'll explore the colonial history of Australia's birthplace at The Rocks in Sydney, join the Indigenous Pamagirri Guides for a journey to discover the Dreamtime in Cairns and witness the remnants of the gold rush era with visits to Buda House in Castlemaine and Maldon in Victoria. Along the way, you'll also enjoy delicious local cuisine, such as a High Tea at the Hydro Majestic Hotel and a delectable experience at the Icebergs Dining Room overlooking Bondi Beach. From the natural wonders to the rich cultural heritage, this grand tour offers a truly memorable journey through the heart and soul of Australia.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Immerse yourself in the beauty of Cairns and its surrounds for three days of adventure
- Travel back in time on a privately chartered steam train on the Zig Zag Railway
- Discover Sydney's most iconic landmarks, including the Opera House and Bondi Beach
- Travel back in time on Puffing Billy, Australia's most popular heritage railway
- Experience the outback on the legendary "Spirit of the Outback" sleeper train
- Experience the breathtaking scenery of Australia's outback and rainforests
- Ride the historic steam train of the Victorian Goldfields Railway
- Encounter some of Australia's most iconic wildlife, such as kangaroos, crocodiles, and koalas
- Enjoy High Tea at the elegant Hydro Majestic Hotel in the Blue Mountains
- Explore the stunning biodiversity of the outer Great Barrier Reef on an unforgettable cruise
- Travel by vintage steam train on the old Great Northern Railway
- Step back in time and visit a classic outback pub in Winton, Queensland
- Travel on The Spirit of Queensland train from Cairns to Townsville
- Journey across the scenic tablelands from Sydney to Melbourne on the XPT train
- Visit the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, Australia's premier outback heritage institution
- Explore Australia's largest collection of heritage rolling stock at the NSW Railway Museum





MEET YOUR **TOUR LEADERS**

Our Tour Leaders are exceptional travel professionals who have a wealth of experience in Australia and are passionate about sharing their expertise with you. We carefully hand-pick each leader for their outstanding skills and knowledge, ensuring that they bring their own unique style and personality to our Railway Adventures team. Our leaders have a wealth of knowledge in rail history, local culture, and cuisine, and are dedicated to ensuring your journey with us is unforgettable. We take pride in our team's unmatched passion, dedication, and attention to detail, making your journey with us exceptional.



Mike Condon (Queensland)

Mike is a true railway enthusiast, born into a family with connections to Queensland Rail stretching back to the 1890s. With a background in media production and direction, Mike has a keen eye for capturing the essence of rail journeys through photography and videography. Along with his passion for trains, Mike has a deep interest in history, the arts, and travel, making him the perfect tour leader for Railway Adventures. Leading a range of tours in the past six years, Mike has honed his skills in engaging with a diverse range of travellers and providing them with an exceptional experience.



Scott McGregor (NSW)

A Mudgee native, Scott has been involved in the media for over 30 years as an actor, presenter, writer, and producer. Scott has a deep passion for travel, especially railway travel. Graduating from NIDA in 1979, he appeared in a wide range of stage, film and TV roles and presented numerous prime-time ratings winners. He presented two of his own Railway Adventures series for Channels 7 and 10 and also presented programs for The History Channel. In 2012, he established Railway Adventures and now owns and operates RUWENZORI—an Orient Express-style tourist retreat on the Great Dividing Range near Mudgee. With his extensive knowledge of the media industry and his passion for railway travel, Scott is the perfect guide to lead you on your next adventure.



Graeme Hind (VIC)

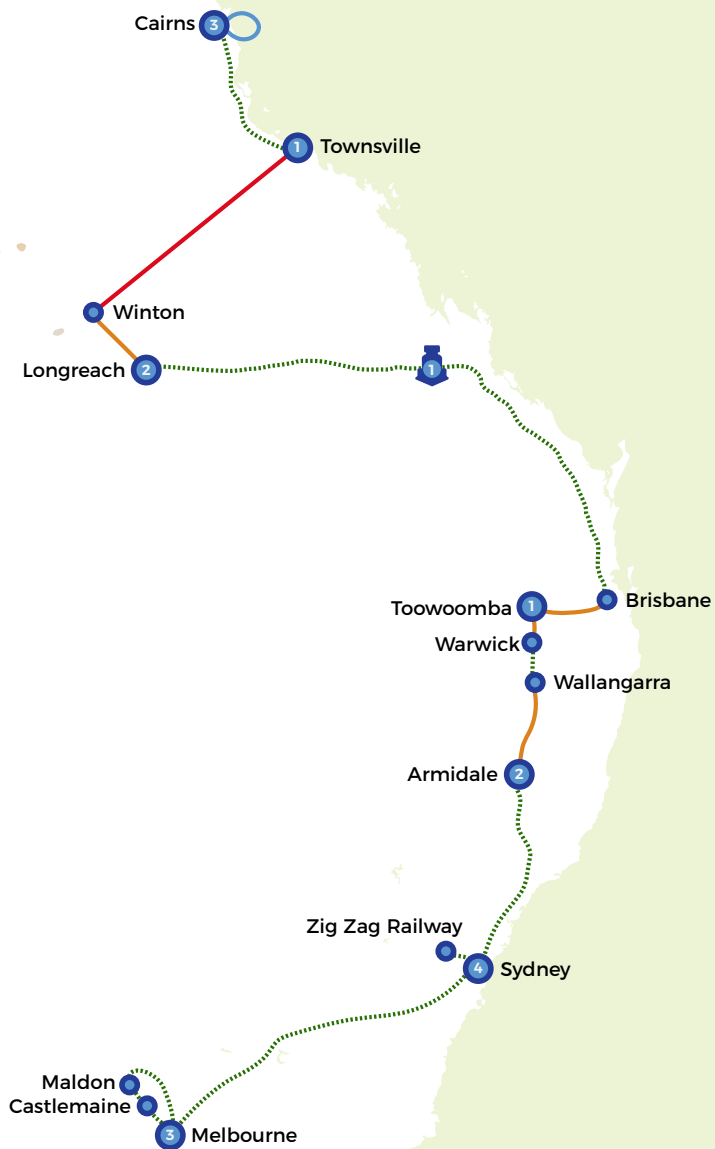
Graeme's lifelong passion for travel has taken him on adventures all over the world. From motorcycling through the Australian Outback and exploring Europe and North America, to journeying through Africa in a trusty Kombi van, Graeme's love for exploration has never waned. He developed a fascination for trains and rail travel during his childhood in Sydney, where he witnessed the last days of steam on the NSW railways. He has since become a passionate volunteer steam driver and trainer at several preserved railways in Victoria. Graeme's professional background is in water resource engineering and operations, which has taken him to rural locations in NSW and Tasmania, as well as Canada and South Africa, where he worked for the railways. His favourite places to travel include the Australian outback, the Isle of Man (which offers both motorbikes and trains!), and anywhere that offers new opportunities to learn.



Phillip MacKenzie (SA)

Phil is passionate about rail, ships, and colonial-style architecture. While working predominantly in the aviation industry for over 25 years, he has also worked in the rail industry, including as rail booking officer for the NSW Department of Tourism and as a relief station attendant based in Northern NSW. He holds an Advanced Diploma (hons) in Tourism Management and over the years has been involved in a number of rail heritage preservation groups. Originally from Sydney, Phil now resides in Adelaide where he continues to lobby governments for improved urban and regional rail services across Australia.

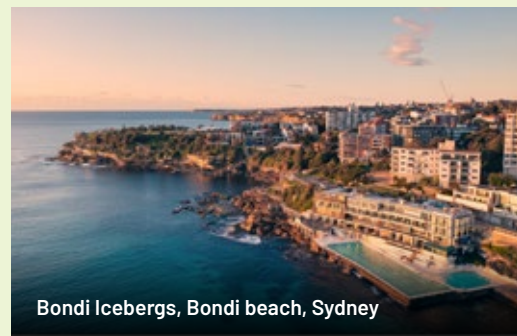
TOUR MAP



n Nights at the Hotel
 — Train
 — Coach
 — Plane
 — Boat



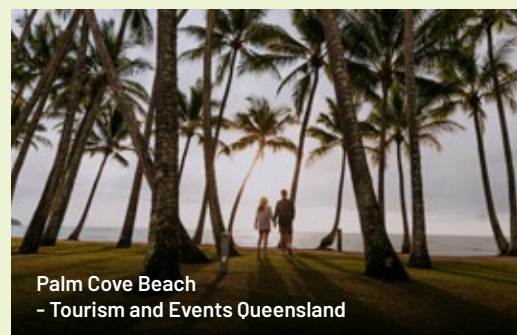
The three sisters, Katoomba



Bondi Icebergs, Bondi beach, Sydney



Spirit of the Outback train



Palm Cove Beach
- Tourism and Events Queensland



Kuranda Scenic Railway - Queensland Rail



WAYS **YOU'LL TRAVEL**

Not only will you experience the best train trips that your destination has to offer, but you'll also have the opportunity to explore the surrounding areas in comfort and style with our private luxury coaches. Our knowledgeable guides will lead you on walking tours, and you will take other suitable and exciting travel options to make your exploration easy and enjoyable.



XPT TRAIN

The NSW Railways XPT train is a diesel powered express built by Comeng and ABB Transportation based on the British design for the '125'. The train consists of two power cars and seven carriages. It runs on the three major regional routes out of Sydney, south to Melbourne, north to Brisbane and west to Dubbo. It began operation in 1982 with a total of 19 power cars being delivered and is due to be withdrawn in 2024 however the replacement train is yet to be announced. There are two classes on board, first and economy, and a buffet car is included in every service providing meals, snacks and refreshments.



FERRY TO GREEN ISLAND

Embark on a scenic boat journey to Green Island, a rare gem among the 300 sand cays of the Great Barrier Reef. Enjoy the breathtaking views of the ocean as you cruise from Cairns' wharf to the island. Take in the fresh sea breeze, spot marine life, and relax on the comfortable seating of the island ferry. There are many vessels that take passengers out to different sections of the reef, most are of the Catamaran type and is maintained at the Tropical Reef shipyard in Cairns. Boats have been taking tourists out to Green Island since the 1930's and today the traffic is tightly managed to preserve the delicate reef sanctuary.



PUFFING BILLY

Puffing Billy is one of Australia's most famous narrow-gauge steam railways, located in the lush Dandenong Ranges just outside of Melbourne. This historic railway line runs through beautiful eucalyptus forests and fern gullies, with stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. The steam train journey is a delightful way to experience the natural beauty of this region, with the train puffing and hissing its way through the hills, over wooden trestle bridges, and through deep valleys. Puffing Billy is a unique and memorable experience that offers a glimpse into Australia's railway history and the natural wonders of the Dandenong Ranges.

Day 1 • Friday 15 March: CAIRNS

Welcome to Cairns! Upon arrival, you will check in to our hotel, conveniently located in the heart of the city. In the evening, we'll gather together for a celebratory welcome dinner and drinks, where you'll have the opportunity to get to know your fellow travellers and share in the excitement of the adventure ahead. Enjoy a delicious meal and raise a glass to the start of your unforgettable journey.

For those wishing to explore more of Cairns region on day tours, pre-tour accommodation at our start point hotel in Cairns is available upon request.

Those wishing to spend more time in Cairns before the start of the tour can book the optional Atherton-Herberton Historic Railway tour or the Daintree Rainforest, Cape Tribulation and Mossman Gorge tour. Please contact us for more information and how to book.

Overnight: Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort, Cairns (D)

Day 2 • Saturday 16 March: CAIRNS – KURANDA – WILDLIFE PARK

This morning you will embark on a memorable journey aboard the ever-popular Kuranda Scenic Railway, departing from Freshwater Station in Cairns and bound for Kuranda. Immerse yourself in the charm of a bygone era, as you board the original Kuranda Scenic Railway Heritage Class carriages. These authentic timber carriages, some of which are up to 100 years old, offer a unique experience. Marvel at the spectacular scenery and capture incredible photos as you wind through the lush, World Heritage-listed rainforest. This history and geography of the region is brought to life with informative commentary, as you snake over the Great Dividing Range and descend through the Barron River Gorge to Cairns, offering awe-inspiring views at every turn.

Upon arrival in Kuranda, explore this idyllic mountain village, surrounded by the world's oldest living tropical rainforest. Visit the Rainforestation Nature Park and join the Indigenous Pamagirri Guides for a journey to discover the Dreamtime and learn about the fascinating customs and ancient traditions that they keep alive. Enjoy lunch at Kuranda and learn how didgeridoos are made and used in local ceremonies. After a demonstration and lesson, try your hand at boomerang and spear throwing!

Board the Skyrail Gondola for a special experience that takes you down to the coastal plains, flying over the canopy of the rainforest and marvelling at the spectacular views across the ranges and out over the Coral Sea.

Later in the day, visit Hartley's Crocodile Adventures to see some of Australia's iconic wildlife, including koalas, kangaroos, and of course, crocodiles. During your tour, hand-feed the friendly kangaroos and enjoy a boat ride through Hartley's Lagoon to see saltwater crocodiles in their natural habitat. Then, travel a short distance to Palm Cove, a charming beachside village centred around an esplanade lined with 500-year-old melaleuca trees. Here, you can enjoy a delicious dinner while taking in the breathtaking views of the coast.

Finally, return to Cairns after dinner, having enjoyed a full day of adventure, culture and nature.

Overnight: Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort, Cairns (B, L, D)

Day 3 • Sunday 17 March: CAIRNS – GREAT BARRIER REEF

After breakfast, embark on an unforgettable adventure to the Outer Great Barrier Reef and Green Island. Our island ferry departs from the Cairns wharf, and you'll have a full day to indulge in a variety of activities, or simply unwind at your leisure.

Green Island is a rare gem among the 300 sand (coral) cays of the Great Barrier Reef, as the only one with a rainforest ecosystem. It's the ideal destination for exploring, relaxing and swimming. You can easily traverse the whole island, which is only 1.6kms in circumference and about 600 meters at its widest point.

A delicious lunch awaits you at the island's resort, and you can choose from a range of activities. Opt for a glass-bottom boat ride or venture out to the platform on the Outer Reef to experience the mesmerising beauty of the underwater world. Alternatively, you can simply unwind by the pool or take a leisurely stroll around the island.

At 5.30pm, our ferry will take you back to Cairns, where you can enjoy your evening at your leisure. With an incredible day spent in the lap of nature, you'll be left with memories that will last a lifetime.

Overnight: Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort, Cairns (B, L)

Day 4 • Monday 18 March: CAIRNS TO TOWNSVILLE ON THE SPIRIT OF QUEENSLAND

After breakfast, rediscover the luxury of time with a scenic rail journey along Queensland's picturesque coast aboard the Spirit of Queensland. Relax and relish the panoramic views of the lush green landscape, sugar cane fields, dense rainforest coastline, and the cane tramways that crisscross the North Coast rail line and the Bruce and Cook Highways. The Spirit of Queensland is a modern tilt train that traverses the 1,681km journey between Brisbane and Cairns five times a week. The morning departure offers a gentle ride, and we arrive in Townsville by mid-afternoon, ready to transfer to your hotel.

After checking into your hotel, take a tour of the Army Museum of Queensland, located in the charming Jezzine Barracks. The museum has an impressive collection of objects and stories relating to the history of the Australian Army in North Queensland.

In the evening, enjoy a true-blue Australian dining experience at the Townsville RSL. The Returned Services League of Australia (RSL) is a support organisation for current and former members of the Australian Defence Force. Return to your hotel after dinner.

Overnight: Hotel Grand Chancellor Townsville (B, D)

Day 5 • Tuesday 19 March: TOWNSVILLE – WINTON- LONGREACH

In the late morning, you will fly from Townsville to the outback town of Winton. On arrival, you will transfer to the North Gregory Hotel, where you can unwind and have a cold beer with the locals in the hotel's authentic retro dining room. Nestled in the heart of the sun-scorched land, the North Gregory Hotel offers a one-stop outback adventure in style and comfort. The hotel is an attraction in itself, having played its part in many significant moments in Australia's history.

After lunch, visit the Waltzing Matilda Centre, the world's first museum dedicated to a song. The displays on Banjo Paterson's iconic song Waltzing Matilda (including a fascinating high-tech analysis of the original manuscript) are highlights, but you'll also find exhibitions on local geology, opals, dinosaurs and movies filmed in the Winton area.

After the tour, we journey the 180km to Longreach. The town, which takes its name from the "long reach" of the Thomson River, was only gazetted five years before the arrival of the railway in 1892. Situated right on the Tropic of Capricorn, Longreach has a population of just over 3,000, which is boosted by travellers who come to see the town's fantastic museums.

Then, check into your hotel and enjoy dinner with the group.

Overnight: Albert Park Motor Inn, Longreach (B, D)

Day 6 • Wednesday 20 March: LONGREACH

After breakfast, we head to the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, which is the country's premier outback heritage institution. Immerse yourself in the rich history and culture of the outback as you explore the museum's vast collection of objects, including touchscreen and open displays, photographs, artworks, and audio-visual presentations. Enjoy the live 'Outback Stockman's Show' which brings to life the stories of real-life stockmen and women who work on the land. Then, lunch is at leisure.

Next, we visit Qantas Founders Museum, where you can learn about the four key figures who founded Qantas and discover what life was like in Queensland in the 1920s. The history of our national airline will unfold as you experience a 1½-hour Jet Tour, exploring both 747 and 707 aircraft.

This evening, enjoy a Thompson River cruise followed by a campfire dinner under the stars. The tranquil waters of the river are the perfect setting to unwind and reflect on the day's experiences.

Overnight: Albert Park Motor Inn, Longreach (B, D)

Day 7 • Thursday 21 March: LONGREACH - BRISBANE ON THE SPIRIT OF THE OUTBACK

After a delicious breakfast, we make our way to the station to board the Spirit of the Outback for a memorable overnight journey to Brisbane. As we depart the heart of Outback Queensland, we pass through a range of ever-changing landscapes and the sleepy Central Queensland towns of Barcaldine, Alpha, and Jericho. Enjoy a chef-prepared dinner served in the train's "Tuckerbox" dining car while admiring the Central Ranges towns of Emerald, Blackwater, and Bluff as they roll by. After dinner, relax and unwind in the "Shearers Rest" lounge car as evening descends on our southbound train. Retire to your air-conditioned, first-class sleeping berth, and let the gentle rocking motion of the train lull you into a peaceful slumber.

Overnight: On board the Spirit of the Outback (B, L, D)

Day 8 • Friday 22 March: BRISBANE - IPSWICH - TOOWOOMBA

Awake to the breathtaking vista of the lush sub-tropical coastal plains, with the majestic Glass House Mountains as the centrepiece of the landscape. Enjoy a leisurely breakfast on the train this morning with an expected arrival at Roma Street Station in Brisbane just before midday.

Upon arrival, enjoy a delicious lunch before embarking on a tour of the historic CBD. Stroll along the Brisbane River to the iconic Story Bridge, and then wander over to South Bank's sandy beach. We'll then venture out of Brisbane to visit the Ipswich Workshops Rail Museum, one of Australia's premier museums, built around the living history of one of the country's great industrial complexes. Here you have time on your own to explore the world-class collection and tour the restoration work in progress.

In the late afternoon, we'll arrive at the charming town of Toowoomba. After checking in, you'll have the evening at leisure and time to take advantage of the central location of the hotel.

Overnight: Burke and Wills Hotel, Toowoomba (B, L)

Day 9 • Saturday 23 March: TOOWOOMBA - WARWICK - SOUTHERN DOWNS STEAM RAILWAY - TENTERFIELD - ARMIDALE

It's an early start this morning and after breakfast, we embark on a coach journey to Warwick to meet our special steam train for an unforgettable run to Wallangarra. The Southern Downs Steam Railway volunteers come together on a regular basis to work their steam trains on the freight railways of the region. Though open to regular travellers too, we will have our own dedicated heritage carriages and attendants to make the journey even more special.

Departing Warwick station at 8.00am, our train branches out onto the western line, and we travel south to Wallangarra while enjoying morning tea served on board. On arrival at Wallangarra, we indulge in a delicious BBQ lunch on the platform of the unique duel-gauge heritage station.

This afternoon, tour the excellent Railway Museum at nearby Tenterfield station, where we'll enjoy afternoon tea. The next leg of our tour takes us south to explore parts of the old Great Northern Railway. Sadly, the line in this part of New England is closed, however much of the infrastructure remains, including grand old stations, long truss bridges, and scenic sections of this once pivotal railway.

In the mid-afternoon, we arrive in the charming town of Glen Innes. This city takes special pride in its Celtic heritage, and we take time to reflect on the amazing standing stones on the hill overlooking the town. We then continue our journey and arrive in Armidale in the late afternoon, where dinner awaits us in the hotel restaurant.

Overnight: Powerhouse Rydges Hotel, Armidale (B, L, D)

Day 10 • Sunday 24 March: ARMIDALE

Today, after breakfast, embark on a full day of sightseeing around the charming city of Armidale. Our first stop is the grand old homestead of Booloominbah, which was designed by Horbury Hunt in the 1880s. This exceptional country mansion was originally owned by the White family and is now the head office of the University of New England.

Following this, we'll visit the Victorian estate of Saumarez, another grand country homestead set in magnificent gardens, and a veritable time capsule of how the family lived and worked. The estate's café provides a delightful morning tea, a precursor to a guided tour of this authentic country estate.

We'll then continue our round trip to Uralla, enjoying a delectable lunch at McCrossin's Mill Museum and a visit to Dangars Falls in the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. On our way back to Armidale, we'll make a short stop at the commemorative atmospheric monument at Dangarsleigh. The evening is yours to explore the many dining options in and around Armidale, including the fine restaurant in our own hotel.

Overnight: Rydges Hotel, Armidale (B, L)

Day 11 • Monday 25 March: ARMIDALE - SYDNEY ON THE NORTHERN TABLELANDS EXPLORER

After breakfast, we head down to the heritage Armidale station to board the Northern Tablelands Explorer Express train for your 579km First Class journey from Armidale to Sydney.

Trains have been running on this line since the 1880s, and today's journey will travel via the scenic tablelands down the range to the country music capital of Tamworth. Then, we will travel over the Liverpool Ranges, through the Hunter Valley and down the Central Coast Line, finally arriving in the 'big smoke' at Central Station Sydney at approximately 4:30pm. Upon arrival, you'll transfer to the hotel where you can freshen up.

This evening, enjoy an idyllic evening dinner cruise around the world-famous Sydney Harbour. Savour a delectable 3-course meal paired with fine wines while admiring the stunning views of Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House. The breathtaking harbour is widely acclaimed as the finest in the world, making for a truly remarkable experience.

Overnight: Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Sydney (B, D)



Day 12 • Tuesday 26 March: SYDNEY

Take the Sydney Light Rail from your hotel to Circular Quay where you'll embark on a walking tour to the historic "Rocks" area. The Rocks hold a unique place in Sydney's colonial history as the birthplace of European Australia. As we continue our walk to Circular Quay, a hub of activity at the heart of Sydney's waterfront, you'll see the world-famous Sydney Opera House and the beautiful Sydney Harbour up close.

We continue our walk through parkland to Mrs Macquarie's Chair for spectacular views of the harbour. Then, we'll board our coach for a visit to Australia's most famous beach – Bondi Beach. Here, you will dine at the elegant Icebergs Dining Room and Bar, where you will enjoy extraordinary views of the crescent of golden sand that is this iconic Beach.

Return to your hotel in the late afternoon and enjoy the rest of your evening at leisure.

Overnight: Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Sydney (B, D)

Day 13 • Wednesday 27 March: SYDNEY - BLUE MOUNTAINS - ZIG ZAG RAILWAY

Begin your day with an early breakfast before travelling on the light rail and an urban train from Central Station, through the stunning Blue Mountains to the vibrant village of Katoomba. Here you will explore Katoomba at your own pace before walking out to the edge at Echo Point to see the majestic Three Sisters.

Next, we'll travel to Scenic World and jump aboard the Scenic Railway, the world's steepest passenger train, which descends 310 meters into the forest on a 52-degree rail incline. At the base, there's a web of hiking trails which wind through the lush Jamison Valley rainforest. Take the train's return trip and travel on the Scenic Skyway, gliding between clifftops 270 metres above the valley floor for spectacular views of the Blue Mountains.

We'll then journey one hour west for a privately chartered steam train on the Zig Zag Railway, offering a chance to relive the magical era of steam trains. Along the way, you will be treated to views of grand sandstone viaducts as well as the remarkable scenery of the Blue Mountains. The sights, sounds, and smells of a steam locomotive will accompany you and your fellow passengers over the Great Lithgow Zig Zag.

On our way back to Sydney, we'll pause at the elegant 120-year-old art deco-style hotel at The Hydro Majestic Hotel Blue Mountains, where High Tea awaits you served in the majestic Wintergarden with panoramic views overlooking the Megalong Valley. After a full and fun-filled day, we return to Sydney where your evening is free.

Overnight: Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Sydney (B, L)

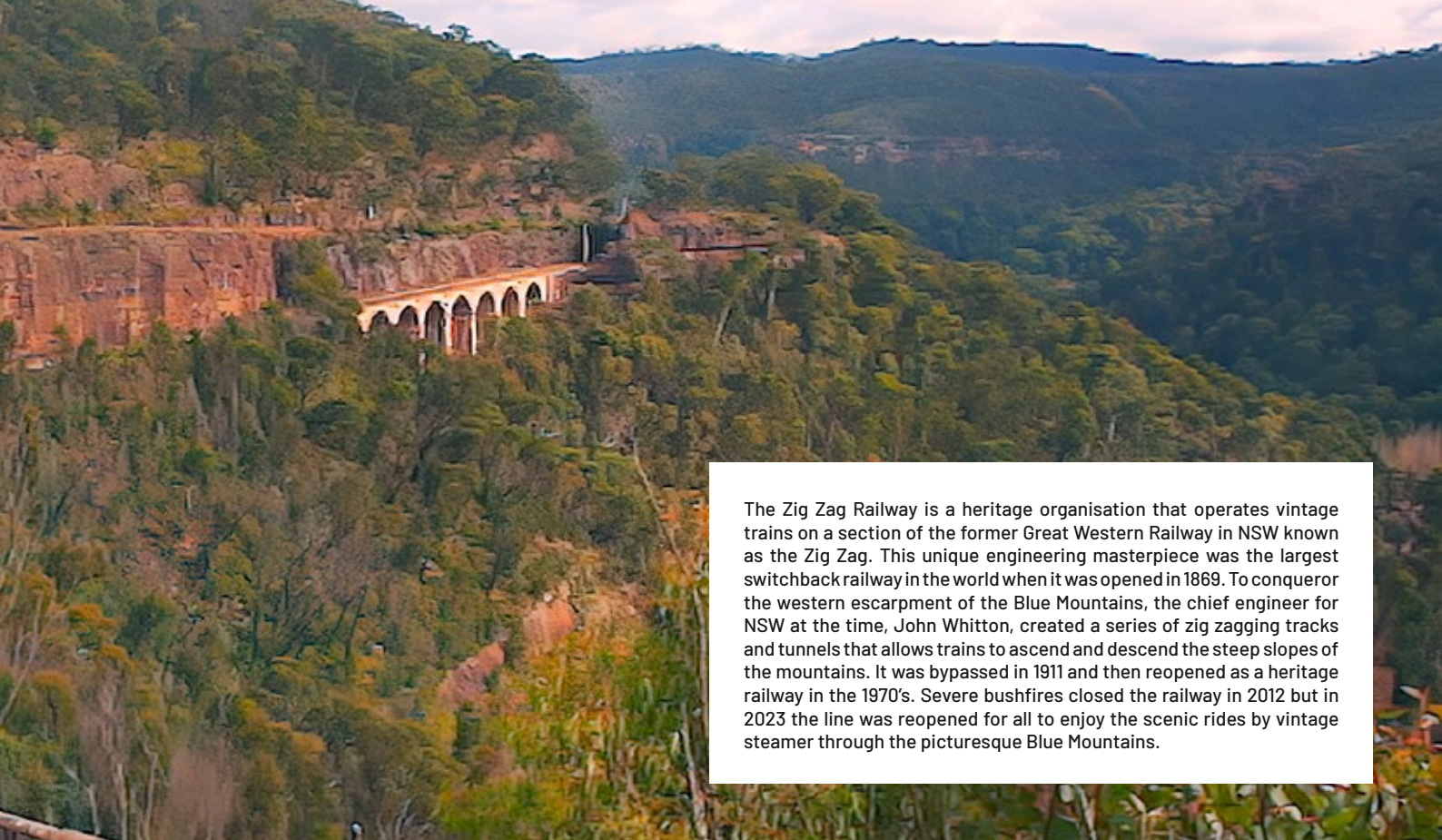
Day 14 • Thursday 28 March: SYDNEY - NSW RAILWAY MUSEUM - FEATHERDALE WILDLIFE PARK

After breakfast, travel south to the New South Wales Railway Museum at Thirlmere, where the icons of the state's collection are housed on the site of the original Great Southern Railway. Here you will explore Australia's largest collection of heritage rolling stock. Whether it's the stunning Royal Carriage or the Rail Pay Bus – used for transporting employees' wages all over the state's rail system, every corner has something interesting to see.

From the museum, you'll enjoy a railmotor journey to Buxton on our local loop-line, travelling through the Wollondilly escarpment and reaching the historical Buxton station. After alighting at the station, you'll return to Thirlmere Museum via the railmotor. After lunch, we'll head to Sydney's west to experience the country's unique wildlife up close at Featherdale Wildlife Park, home to the world's largest collection of Australian wildlife. Here, you will have a personal encounter with a koala and hand-feed kangaroos and wallabies. You will also come face-to-face with emus, penguins, wombats, and a saltwater crocodile, Max.

In the late afternoon, we'll return to your hotel, where you'll have the rest of your evening free to explore the city or relax at your leisure.

Overnight: Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Sydney (B, L)



The Zig Zag Railway is a heritage organisation that operates vintage trains on a section of the former Great Western Railway in NSW known as the Zig Zag. This unique engineering masterpiece was the largest switchback railway in the world when it was opened in 1869. To conquer the western escarpment of the Blue Mountains, the chief engineer for NSW at the time, John Whitton, created a series of zig zagging tracks and tunnels that allows trains to ascend and descend the steep slopes of the mountains. It was bypassed in 1911 and then reopened as a heritage railway in the 1970's. Severe bushfires closed the railway in 2012 but in 2023 the line was reopened for all to enjoy the scenic rides by vintage steamer through the picturesque Blue Mountains.

Day 15 • Friday 29 March: SYDNEY - MELBOURNE ON THE XPT TRAIN

After an early breakfast, we'll depart the hotel for Central Station to board the XPT train for Melbourne. The Sydney-Melbourne line is a 953km standard gauge railway corridor that runs between the two largest cities in Australia. Freight and passenger services have operated along the route since the 1880s.

Originally, a change of trains was required at the border due to the different gauges each state employed. However, it wasn't until 1962, with the opening of the standard gauge line in Victoria, that through services were possible between Melbourne and Sydney. Your journey, in First Class seats will take approximately 11 hours and traverse the scenic tablelands and slopes of rural eastern Australia. There's an on board buffet for refreshments and meals and you'll pass through cities and towns including Goulburn, Cootamundra, Junee and Albury.

As we approach Victoria's vibrant capital city, Melbourne, you'll see the bustling city come into view. Your hotel is directly opposite the station, making it easy to check-in and settle in for the night. The rest of your evening is free to explore the city or relax at your leisure.

Overnight: The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne (B)

Day 16 • Saturday 30 March: MELBOURNE - PUFFING BILLY

After breakfast, we walk to Southern Cross Station, Australia's oldest train station. From there, we will board a metro train to Belgrave, which is the starting point for the legendary Puffing Billy railway. This heritage railway, which was built in the early 1900s, served the local community and timber industry at a low cost. However, it was gradually shut down in the 1950s. But thanks to the passion of dedicated volunteers and rail enthusiasts, the line and rolling stock were restored, and it has since become one of Victoria's most popular tourist attractions. You will experience a steam-hauled journey along the narrow-gauge line, which is full of character and history. Your excursion ticket includes the option to visit the new Lakeside Centre.

Returning to Melbourne, we take a short, guided walking tour of the city centre, where we will visit some of the popular landmarks, including Federation Square, The Yarra River, St Patrick's Cathedral, The Block Arcade, AC/DC Lane, Hosier Lane, Degraes Street, and Hardware Lane.

After the walking tour, you can relax at one of the many bars, cafes and restaurants that Melbourne has to offer, as your evening is free. Melbourne is an easy city to navigate, so you could also take a historic tram to St Kilda beach and pier for dinner.

Overnight: The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne (B, L)

Day 17 • Sunday 31 March: MELBOURNE - VICTORIAN GOLDFIELDS RAILWAY

Today we head out of Melbourne, travelling north by regional express train to the quaint goldfield town of Castlemaine. Upon arrival, we visit Buda House, a classic, beautifully preserved Goldfields Villa set amidst eight acres of tranquil gardens. After exploring the historic house, return to the railway station for an 11.30am departure of our steam train on the Victorian Goldfields Railway. This vintage train chugs along the old branch line to Maldon, an iconic gold rush town awarded the 'most intact townscape' by the National Trust. Your first-class ticket allows you to ride in the wonderful parlour cars with access to the bar for some refreshments along the way. Enjoy lunch in Maldon at leisure before returning to Castlemaine on the steam train.

We return to Melbourne by regional express train and later in the evening regroup for a celebratory farewell dinner with your tour leader and fellow travellers.

Overnight: The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne (B, D)

Day 18 • Monday 1 April: Melbourne - DEPART

After a delightful trip filled with memorable experiences, it is time to bid farewell. Enjoy a relaxed breakfast before transferring to the airport for your onward journey or homeward bound flight. (B)



Victorian Goldfields Railway

WHAT'S **INCLUDED**

- 16 nights of comfortable accommodation in 3 or 4-star hotels
- 1 night of accommodation on the overnight train (Spirit of the Outback)
- 17 breakfasts, 8 lunches and 9 dinners
- Economy class flight from Townsville to Winton (luggage included)
- Welcome and farewell dinners with complimentary drinks
- Comprehensive sightseeing with expert local guides
- Entrance fees and excursions, excluding those marked as optional in the itinerary

WHAT WE **DON'T INCLUDE**

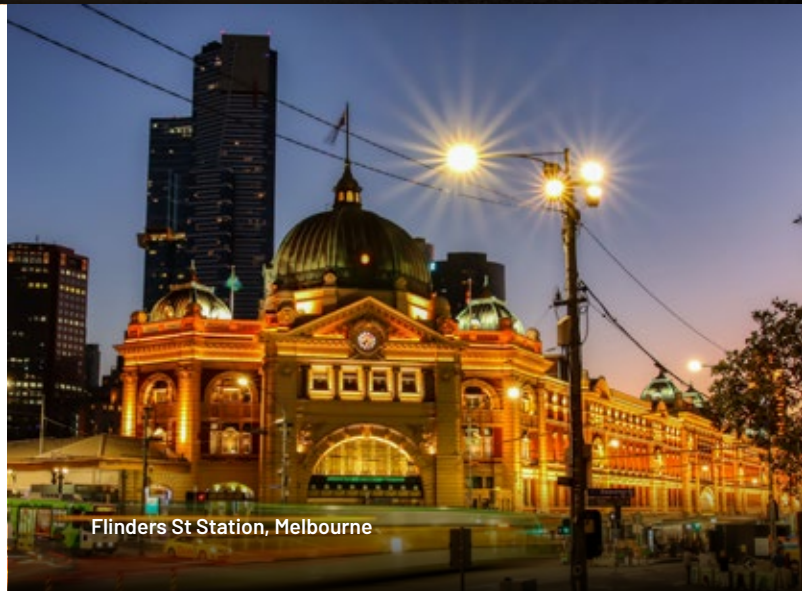
- Transport to Cairns for the start of the tour and transport from Melbourne at the end of the tour
- Excursions/entrances listed as optional in the itinerary
- Drinks with meals (except for welcome and farewell dinners)
- Personal expenses such as telephone calls, laundry, and minibar charges
- Travel insurance

FITNESS **RATING**



Two 'Locos'

The most common grading for our tours. Two loco itineraries offer many activities that require a little extra fitness – walking on uneven ground, climbing hills to enter towns or historic sites, walks of 1-3 kilometres as well as getting on and off transport. You need to have good mobility and aerobic fitness and be able to manage your own luggage.



Flinders St Station, Melbourne



Koalas at Featherdale Wildlife Park, Sydney

EXTENSION FROM MELBOURNE, ADELAIDE, AYERS ROCK AND ALICE SPRINGS 5 NIGHTS/6 DAYS

1 – 6 APRIL 2024

• MELBOURNE • ADELAIDE • ALICE SPRINGS • AYERS ROCK / ULURU •



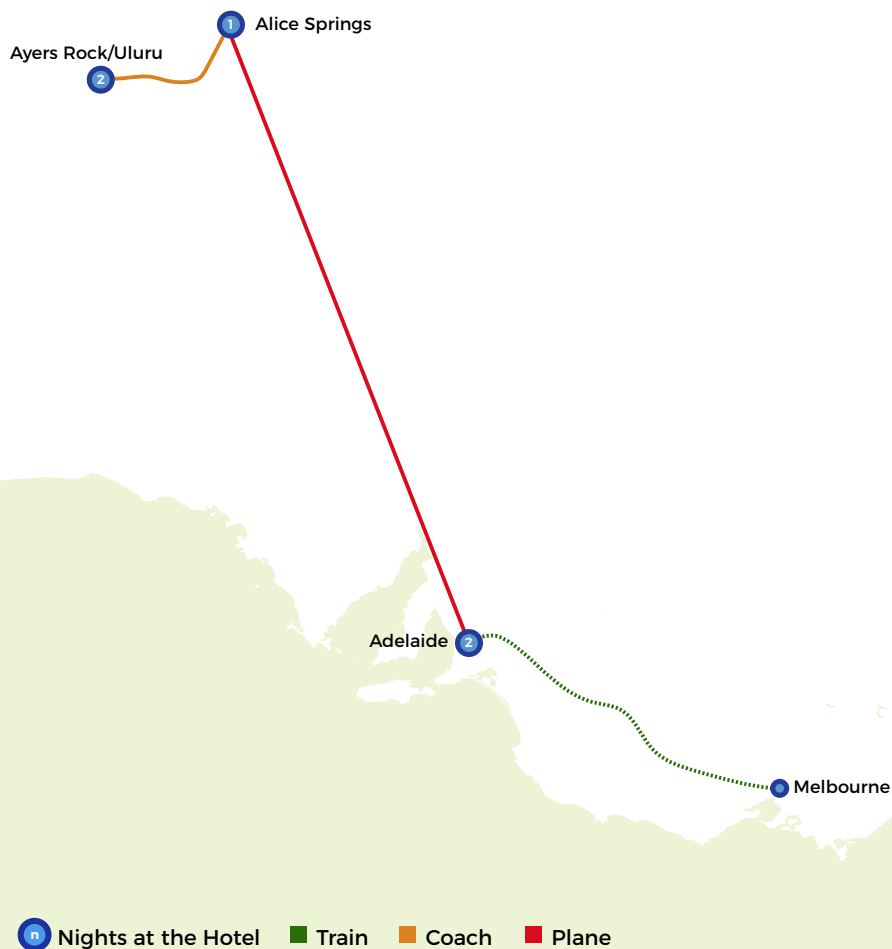
INTRODUCTION

Experience the heart of Australia with a Central Australia extension visiting Adelaide, Ayers Rock and Alice Springs. From Melbourne, travel on The Overland train to Adelaide, the food and wine capital of Australia, and indulge in a tour of the beautiful Barossa Valley, renowned for its world-class wines and fine dining. Fly north to explore the stunning natural wonders of Uluru and Kata Tjuta to learn about the rich Indigenous culture of the region and tour the Old Ghan Heritage Railway and Museum in Alice Springs. This is an incredible opportunity to immerse yourself in the best of Australia's outback and culinary delights.

HIGHLIGHTS

- See the world-renowned Uluru (Ayers Rock) and Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) on a guided tour
- Experience the mesmerising Field of Light installation at Uluru
- Experience the romance of rail travel aboard The Overland train from Melbourne to Adelaide
- Discover the Indigenous culture of the Red Centre of Australia
- Tour the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the School of the Air in Alice Springs
- Taste some of Australia's finest wines on a winery tour in the Barossa Valley
- See narrow gauge equipment and rail carriages at the Old Ghan Heritage Railway Museum
- Marvel at the natural beauty of Australia's rugged outback
- Enjoy delicious meals and accommodation in hand-picked hotels and resorts
- Optional extension: travel aboard the iconic Ghan train from Alice Springs to Darwin, experiencing the stunning Australian outback in style.

TOUR MAP



WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 5 nights of comfortable accommodation in 3 or 4-star hotels
- 5 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 5 dinners
- Economy class flight from Adelaide to Alice Springs (luggage included)
- Complimentary drinks with welcome and farewell dinners
- Comprehensive sightseeing with expert local guides
- Excursion/entrance fees, except those listed as optional in the itinerary

WHAT WE DON'T INCLUDE

- Transport to Melbourne for the start of the tour and transport from Alice Springs at the end of the tour
- Excursions/entrances listed as optional in the itinerary
- Drinks with meals (except for those provided during the welcome and farewell dinners)
- Personal expenses such as telephone calls, laundry, and minibar charges
- Travel insurance

FITNESS RATING

Two 'Locos'

The most common grading for our tours. Two loco itineraries offer many activities that require a little extra fitness – walking on uneven ground, climbing hills to enter towns or historic sites, walks of 1-3 kilometres as well as getting on and off transport. You need to have good mobility and aerobic fitness and be able to manage your own luggage.

Day 1 • Monday 1 April: MELBOURNE TO ADELAIDE ON THE OVERLAND TRAIN

After breakfast, transfer to the Southern Cross Railway Station to catch The Overland train from Melbourne to Adelaide, South Australia.

This iconic train journey has been a favourite for over 135 years, offering a unique and romantic experience while travelling between these two cities. You will travel in the Premium Red category which provides extra comfort and style, and includes in-seat dining, a trolley service, and more leg room. This will make your journey even more enjoyable, with an all-inclusive breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, coffee, soft drinks, and juice. Arrive in South Australia's capital, Adelaide, and check in to our centrally located hotel.

The rest of your evening is at leisure.

Overnight: Adina Apartment Hotel Treasury, Adelaide (L)

Day 2 • Tuesday 2 April: ADELAIDE

This morning, set out on a tour of Adelaide's top attractions, and enjoy the leafy surrounds of Adelaide's North Terrace and Botanic Gardens. Top it off with visits to landmarks such as the Adelaide Oval Precinct, St Peter's Cathedral and the Rundle Mall.

After exploring the city, we'll drive out to the world-famous Barossa Valley, Australia's best-known red wine region, for a delicious lunch and a chance to sample some of the region's best wines. Stop at the stunning Menglers Hill Lookout before returning to Adelaide through the picturesque Adelaide Hills.

Next, tour the National Railway Museum in Port Adelaide to learn about the rich history of Australian Railways. Return to Adelaide and finish the day with a tram ride along the vibrant Jetty Road to Glenelg Beach for a seafood dinner by the ocean.

Return to the hotel after dinner for a relaxing evening.

Overnight: Adina Apartment Hotel Treasury, Adelaide (B, L, D)

Day 3 • Wednesday 3 April: ADELAIDE - ALICE SPRINGS

This morning, transfer to Adelaide airport for your morning flight over the desert outback to Alice Springs. Upon arrival, check in to your hotel and enjoy lunch.

Later, delight in charming Alice Springs, where you'll tour the Royal Flying Doctor Service, ANZAC Hill, Old Telegraph Station and the fascinating School of the Air, which provides education to children living in remote areas of Australia. The highlight of today is the Old Ghan Heritage Railway and Museum which contains narrow gauge equipment and rail carriages, plus memorabilia from the original Central Australian Ghan Railway. Afterward, return to the hotel for a meal in the hotel restaurant.

Overnight: Mercure Alice Springs Resort, Alice Springs (B, D)

Day 4 • Thursday 4 April: ULURU (AYERS ROCK)

After an early breakfast, we'll travel through the rugged outback from Alice Springs to Uluru (Ayers Rock).

Along the way, you'll stop at the junction town of Ghan. The town is named in recognition of the important role the Afghans and their camels played in opening up Central Australia. We'll also make a stop at the Mount Conner Lookout and at Curtin Springs Station for lunch. Arriving at the Desert Gardens Hotel in the mid-afternoon, we'll check-in and freshen up before enjoying the Field of Light Dinner experience at the resort.

The Field of Light was created by acclaimed artist Bruce Munro, who was inspired by Uluru. This illuminated installation reflects the spiritual energy Munro felt during a visit to Australia's Red Desert. Observe the radiant display and watch a magical sunset at this iconic Australian landmark, before returning to your hotel.

Overnight: Desert Gardens Hotel, Yulara (B, L, D)

Day 5 • Friday 5 April: ULURU (AYERS ROCK)

Your hotel is situated in the township of Yulara, which is outside Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, and about a 10-minute drive from the entry station. Most of the town is made up of Ayers Rock Resort, an Aboriginal-owned enterprise that provides accommodation, restaurants and other essential services to people visiting the park. There are shops, several art galleries, conference facilities, an outside pool and a fantastic day spa.

This morning, you will embark on a day journey to see both Uluru and Kata Tjuta (The Olgas). Your experienced guide will provide in-depth guide commentary on the history and culture of the country's most famous rock formations. Enjoy a BBQ lunch and connect with nature during a Mala Walk, hike to the Mutitjulu Waterhole to see Aboriginal rock art, visit the Walpa Gorge, the waterfalls of Kantju Gorge, and the Aboriginal Cultural Centre.

In the late afternoon, take part in an Uluru sunset experience and star tour. Watch as the setting sun illuminates Uluru's red monolith, while sipping wine or beer and then sit down for a traditional Australian BBQ dinner. After dinner, your guide will take you on a star tour before dropping you off at your hotel for a restful evening.

Overnight: Desert Gardens Hotel, Yulara (B, L, D)

Day 6 • Saturday 6 April: ULURU (AYERS ROCK) - DEPART

After breakfast, our tour comes to an end. Transfer to the airport for your flights back home or to continue your onward journey (B).

Please note that there are direct flights from Ayers Rock to Sydney and Brisbane on Saturdays, which can be useful for those with international connections.

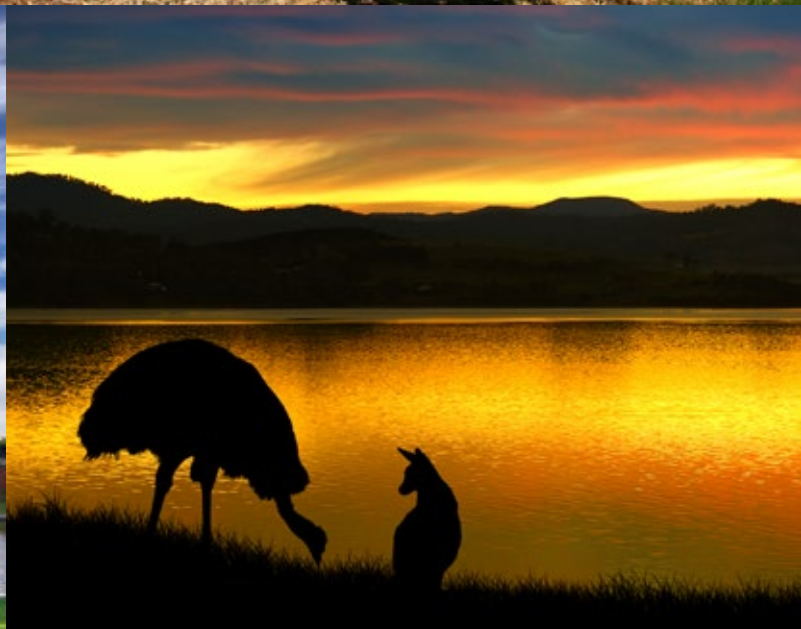
For those interested in doing the Ghan Railway:

The Ghan departs from Alice Springs for Darwin on Monday and Thursday at 6.15pm, arriving in Darwin the following day at 5.30pm, a 24-hour journey. Alternatively, departures from Adelaide to Darwin are available on Sundays at 12.15pm only in April 2024. It arrives in Darwin on Tuesdays at 5.30pm, a 53-hour journey.

Please note that departure times and prices are subject to availability and may vary. For further information or to make a booking, please contact our office.



Adelaide skyline and the River Torrens



WHY **TRAVEL WITH US**

The joy of travel is not confined to the destination. How you travel is a large and rich part of the experience. Railway Adventures offers a truly unique perspective on some of the world's most spectacular destinations, with the confidence that the journey will be just as magical and memorable as what is discovered at the end of the line.



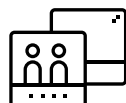
Unique
itineraries



Authentic local
experiences



Expert local
**guides and
operators**



Fully
escorted



Small
group sizes



Customer
satisfaction

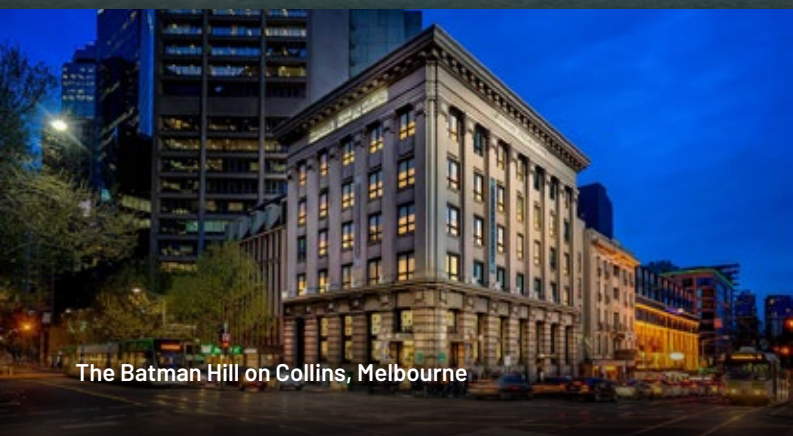
SOME PLACES **YOU'LL STAY**

Hand-picked hotels and resorts based on location, customer feedback, value and atmosphere.

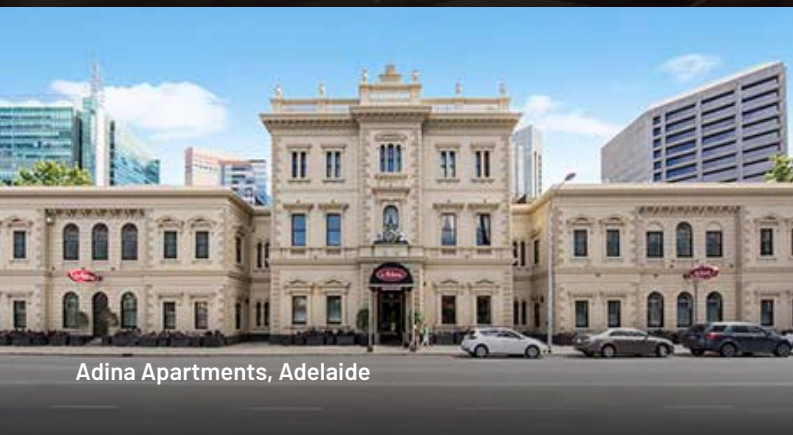
Please Note: Hotels of a similar standard may be substituted.



Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort, Cairns



The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne



Adina Apartments, Adelaide



Desert Gardens Hotel, Yulara

PRICE

PP twin share Cairns to Melbourne.....**AU\$12,385**
Single supplement Cairns to Melbourne .. **AU\$2,150**

EXTENSION **PRICE**

PP twin share Melbourne to Ayers Rock ... **AU\$4,850**
Single supplement Melbourne to Ayers Rock .. **AU\$980**

Deposit (per person)**AU\$1,000 at time of booking**
Final payment due by**22 January 2024**

Tour Code: 2403IOA

HOW TO BOOK

To join our adventure, simply download a booking form from our website or request one to be sent to you via email or phone. Fill out the form and submit it along with a deposit of \$1,000 per person to secure your spot on the tour. Our team will confirm your booking and provide further information.

Don't hesitate to contact us at 1300 800 977 or info@railwayadventures.com if you have any questions or need assistance.

SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

We understand that flights can be a crucial part of your travel arrangements. That's why we have suggested flights for this itinerary based on your departure point, preferred stopovers enroute, and pre- and post-tour activities. However, if you have a preferred airline, we can investigate and offer you a solution based on connection times and prices. Contact 1300 800 977 to discuss your options.

DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

We endeavour to have all the details of our tours correct at the time of printing. However, sometimes factors beyond our control may affect the final inclusions and prices. These factors may include, but not be limited to; significant fluctuations in currency exchange rates, individual hotel/restaurant decisions that may affect bookings; weather events forcing a change of itinerary; unexpected trackwork on rail lines, unexpected closure of site attractions and so forth. Therefore, items mentioned in the brochure such as quoted prices, hotels and inclusions are subject to change. If a change is imposed on us, we will endeavour to ensure the substitute is of the same quality that you've paid for.

TOUR PACE / LEVEL OF FITNESS:

Our itineraries are designed to make the most of each destination, so a reasonable amount of activity is built into most days, which is why we call them adventures. Our philosophy is to offer you the best experience possible, while leaving you the flexibility to pace yourself and choose how much or how little you want to do. Each Railway Adventures tour incorporates periods of free time for your own exploration and relaxation.

While you don't need to be a 'gym junky', a reasonable level of fitness is required for most of our tours. The ability to manage your own luggage, get on and off all manner of trains and coaches, walk for extended periods, stand comfortably, and climb stairs will ensure you get the maximum enjoyment from your adventure.

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to assisting with flight suggestions and bookings, we can also give you some ideas of what you could do before and after your Railway Adventure.

We can also organise your all-important travel insurance for you.

Call our office on 1300 800 977 if you would like to discuss your options.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

For more information on factors such as travel insurance requirements, fitness levels, fees and charges, tour cancellations, payment schedules and so on, please refer to our Terms and Conditions, which accompany the booking form. They can also be found on our website.



**RAILWAY
ADVENTURES**

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THE RAILWAY ADVENTURES **STORY**

Railway Adventures was launched in 2012 by well-known Australian TV personality and self-confessed rail fan, Scott McGregor. A lifelong passion for travel has taken Scott to scores of countries and his preference for rail has seen him exploring many of the world's great train journeys, confirming his belief that the most relaxing, romantic and engaging way to see a country is by rail. He even has his own life-sized, fully restored opulent train accommodation atop the Great Dividing Range near Mudgee, offering guests a rare and special bush retreat experience.

Since 2012 Railway Adventures has thrilled and delighted thousands of travellers on over 200 tours from Sweden to Sri Lanka, Tasmania to Transylvania, Britain to Burma, Venice to Vietnam and all manner of shorter adventures in our own wonderful country. Scott's numerous rail-themed TV documentaries, his ongoing involvement in rail heritage and his extensive connections with private train owners around the world, guarantee that every Railway Adventures tour is exclusive, entertaining and authentic. 31 May 2023.

Your travel agent