

The Great Rivers Travelling the Darling and the Murray

Departs
20th November 2022

Blue Dot Travel

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THE GREAT RIVERS TRAVELLING THE DARLING AND MURRAY RIVERS

Although there are some differing views, the Darling River is generally considered to begin a little to the east of Brewarrina with the confluence of a number of rivers flowing from northern NSW and south west Queensland. From the 40,000 year old Aboriginal Fish Traps at Brewarrina, the Darling joins the Murray at Wentworth and flows on to Lake Alexandrina, Lake Albert and the world-renowned Coorong National Park in South Australia.

This diverse region showcases some of Australia's iconic landscapes, picturesque river ports, historic outback communities, spectacular nationally and internationally-listed national parks and conservation reserves, important Aboriginal sites, abundant wildlife and productive farming land. Citrus, stone fruit, olives, honey, dates, almonds, wheat, cotton, grains, yabbies, sheep, cattle and vineyards are grown or raised along this route. We will be making stops to taste the local produce or sample the wines at well-established vineyards, or perhaps we'll stop at one of the small craft brewers to see how they are getting on.

These rivers are long, very long. The combined Darling and Murray River is 2,844 kilometres long from its longest tributaries in the Darling Downs of Queensland. Our tour follows the river for only 2,400km which we will do in 14 days including a side trip to the heritage listed city of Broken Hill.

Major attractions include remarkable Mt Oxley, the abundant birdlife at Menindee Lakes, visiting Australia's first biosphere reserve, the Morgan Conservation Park (famous for its untouched lagoons, swamps and creek systems), the ochre-coloured cliffs of Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park and the Coorong National Park (now recognised as a wetland of international significance).

Along the way we will stay at great locations, and experience real outback hospitality and home cooked country food prepared with local organic produce. Depending on the season we will also participate in farm activities and community events.



**Day 1, Sunday 20th November
Sydney — Dubbo — Brewarrina**

Our train departs Sydney Central Station at 7:19 am and arrives in Dubbo at 1:45 pm (have your lunch on the train). You will be collected from Dubbo railway station by Bill and we'll start our 4 hour drive to Brewarrina. Dinner and overnight at Beds on the Barwon. *D*



**Day 2, Monday 21st November
Brewarrina - Bourke – Trilby Station**

Once an important inter-tribal meeting place for generations of Aboriginal people, Brewarrina is now

home to the Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Centre. This unique complex overlooks the national and state heritage listed fish traps the purpose-built rock constructions are estimated to be more than 40,000 years old and are believed to be the oldest man-made structures in the world. We will take a 1 hour Aboriginal guided tour of the fish traps before heading on to Bourke 100 km west. En route to Bourke we will visit Mt Oxley. Mt Oxley is on the property of Bill and Denise and it is a remarkable peak rising from a perfectly flat landscape, Mt Oxley has outstanding 360 degree views, and showcases the abundance of wildlife, including wedge-

tailed eagles and euros. We will have a picnic lunch on the mountain. After lunch we will travel the short distance to Bourke and enjoy a 2:30 pm paddle steamer ride on the Darling River on the PS Jandra (approx 1 hr). After the cruise we head down river for an hour to Trilby Station. Trilby Station is run by Liz and Garry Murray. Trilby is a 6th generation, 320,000 acre sheep and goat station. Liz and Gary are passionate about their outback way of life and enjoy sharing their experiences and lifestyle with visitors to the station. *B/L/D*

**Day 3, Tuesday 22nd November
Trilby Station, Dunlop Station**

After breakfast we will walk with Liz on a farm tour before heading to historic Dunlop Station for a guided tour (Trilby was once part of the huge Dunlop Station). Lunch will be back at Trilby and the afternoon will be spent recapturing the spirit of the wide, open spaces as we navigate Trilby's 'mud map' tours. Alternately you can enjoy some free time. Dinner around the campfire (weather dependent) at Trilby. *B/L/D*



Day 4, Wednesday 23rd November Trilby – Broken Hill

In the morning we will head downstream 100 km to the small town of Tilpa. Famous for its classic outback pub, which has been welcoming visitors for over 100 years. Originally a busy port servicing the river trade it was a 'cross-road' in the outback as it served as a stock crossing and port for the wool clip being transported down to Adelaide. Quirky? Tilpa has the shortest heritage trail in Australia comprising just two signs on either side of the main road and the Tilpa cemetery is the only one in Australia with no one in it! We'll have a short petrol break here. In another 200 km we stop at Nelia Gaari farm stay for lunch. Lily and Greg are our hosts at Nelia Gaari which is also on the banks of the Darling River. Over lunch Greg and Lily will give you an overview of their property before we drive another 70 km to the Menindee Lakes. The vast Menindee Lakes is a natural flood lake system and was augmented in the 1950s with weirs and channels from the Darling River to form permanent lakes which would secure Broken Hill's water supply. Water is pumped from here to Broken Hill over 100 km away. After visiting the lakes we head onto Broken Hill for the next 2 nights (another 120 km) where we stay at the Imperial Fine Accommodation. Dinner is at the Astra or the Broken Hill Pub (BHP). *B/L/D*



Day 5, Thursday 24th November Louth — Broken Hill

After breakfast we head straight to Silverton at 8,30 am. Silverton is almost a ghost town but it predates Broken Hill

as a thriving silver mining town. When the silver was almost mined out, new deposits were found in Broken Hill. There are pictures in the Silverton Goal museum of houses from Silverton being hauled on carts to Broken Hill by camels. Silverton was more recently made famous by the Mad Max movies and just about every beer commercial that features an outback pub. In the 1970-80s Silverton and Broken Hill established a vibrant art scene which was later donned the Brushmen of the Bush movement. In the morning we will visit the Monks Lookout. The view from the Monks is as broad as the horizon (in fact you can see the curvature of the earth from here). From the lookout you can see across the Mundi Mundi Plains to the Flinders Ranges. We will then head to the Silverton Goal museum, take a stroll around Silverton and meet at the Silverton Pub for lunch before heading back to Broken Hill. After lunch we'll visit the Line of Lode lookout and Miner's Memorial before we head out to the sculpture symposium in the afternoon. Tonight we will have dinner at the Palace Hotel. The Palace was made famous by the film Priscilla Queen of the Desert. The Palace is now the HQ of Broken Hill's annual Broken Heel festival. Accommodation at The Imperial. *B/L/D*

Day 6, Friday 25th November Broken Hill — Bindara

The entire city of Broken Hill, also known as the Silver City, was National Heritage listed in 2015. This morning

is a day for visiting the quite remarkable collection of Broken Hill museums and galleries, including The Royal Flying Doctor Centre, the fabulous Regional Gallery and the Geo Centre. Alternately, at any time you can pull out of the gallery hopping tour to have some free time to wander the main streets of Broken Hill and to purchase your big chunk of Broken Hill silver or another souvenir. We next visit the Miner's Memorial on top of the mining area and have lunch in town before we head back to the Darling River to Bindara some 130 km away. We will have afternoon tea at Bindara following which Barb our host will take us on a late afternoon walking tour of her property. Barb will take us via all the European and Aboriginal cultural points of interest whilst giving an interesting commentary. *B/L/D*



Day 7, Saturday 26th November Bindara Station – Mildura

After breakfast we'll travel to Wentworth (approx 2.5 hours) where the Darling River joins the Murray River. There is an easy (approx) 1 hour walk via a nature trail to the vantage point, with great views of the confluence of the rivers. We'll also take a 3.5 hour paddle steamer cruise on the PS Melbourne, including lunch. In the afternoon, back to Mildura for our overnight stay and dinner at a local restaurant. *B/L/D*

Day 8, Sunday 27th November Murray River Houseboat

Today we depart for Renmark (120km) to pick up provisions for our river cruise. We'll have lunch in Renmark, then it is on to

Wilcadene to pick up our luxury houseboat for a 2 night stay. Located on a picturesque backwater of the Murray River, Wilcadene Station is home to the well known local watering hole, The Woolshed Brewery. We'll sleep and eat on board our houseboat and during the day explore the river, read, rest or visit the craft brewery for some sunset ales. Home cooked dinner on the houseboat. *B/L/D*



Day 9, Monday 28th November Murray River Houseboat

We'll cruise at a leisurely pace along the Murray River past spectacular ochre cliffs, long white sandbars, river red

gum forests and fascinating wetlands. You may wish to read, swim in the river or take an afternoon nap. The more active can have a 4 km hike up to the lookout at Headings Landing before a BBQ lunch. The lookout has



spectacular views up and down the Murray. Dinner on board. **B/L/D**



**Day 10, Tuesday
29th November
Mannum —
Middleton**

After breakfast, we'll disembark the boat and set off on our drive to Mannum. In Mannum we will

visit the Dock Museum, home of the fully restored Paddle Steamer Marion. The museum gives a great overview of the history of the river and the important role of the river boats. Paddle Steamer Marion is a fully restored heritage vessel built in 1897 and is one of the last operational wood fired, steam-driven, passenger carrying paddle steamers in the world. After the museum visit we will take a 1.5 hour cruise on the PS Mayflower. Later, enjoy a stroll along the river front and village of the historic port city. In the afternoon we will stop at Gnaut Gnaut Conservation Park for a 1.5 hour guided tour along the river cliffs in this Aboriginal culturally significant reserve. Then on to Middleton where we stay three nights. Our accommodation for the evening and dinner will be at the very quaint and comfortable Middleton Beach Huts. **B/L/D**



**Day 11, Wednesday
30th November
Goolwa to the
Murray Mouth**

Our final boat trip is on the Coorong to the Murray Mouth, departing from Goolwa. Our cruise will take about 2½

hours and travel through the Coorong National Park. You'll visit ancient Aboriginal midden sites and learn about the local indigenous culture, hear stories of the riverboat days, and pass by scenery immortalised in the movie Storm Boy. A 'midden' is an occupation site where Aboriginal people gathered. The cruise will also include a walk over the sand dunes to the ocean and river mouth. Lunch will be after the boat trip at Goolwa Wharf. In the afternoon we head into Victor Harbor to walk around Granite Island and visit the local whaling museum. If we are lucky we might see some whales on their migration to the Australian Bight for the calving season. Overnight at Middleton Beach Huts. **B/L/D**



**Day 12, Thursday
1st December
McLaren Vale**

Breakfast in the communal garden kitchen at the Beach Huts at 8.30 am. At 9.30 am we will depart for a day at the wineries. First stop is

d'Arenberg Winery and a visit to the Alice in Wonderland-like d'Arenberg Cube. Each of the five

levels of the Cube have been carefully designed to entice and excite the senses including features such as a wine sensory room, a virtual fermenter, a 360degree video room, and many other tactile experiences. Explore the Alternate Realities Museum, located on the ground floor, and view the many art installations on display. Our visit will include a tasting. Next we head to a winery for lunch. In the afternoon we drive to the Fleurieu coast for a walk on the beach at Port Willunga and then we return to Middleton via one last winery stop at Lloyd Brothers (or similar). We will have a light supper at our accommodation at Middleton Beach Huts. **B/L/D**

**Day 13, Friday 2nd
December
Bleasdale**

After breakfast, we'll drive to the Langhorne Creek wine region for a tasting and Behind the Cellar Door tour of the National Trust classified Bleasdale Winery. Later we will head to explore the lovely Adelaide Hills region. We'll have lunch there before making our way back to Adelaide. Our final evening will be spent at Atura Hotel, conveniently located at the airport in Adelaide. Tonight our farewell dinner will be at a local restaurant. On this last evening, Bill will bid you farewell and wish you well for your onward journey. **B/L/D**



**Day 14, Saturday 3rd December
Departure**

Our tour concludes today. After breakfast in the hotel, it's an easy stroll to the airport gate at the appropriate time for your flight back to Sydney or Melbourne. **B**

IMPORTANT: The accommodation on this tour will offer the best level of comfort available, staying with wonderful outback hosts. We offer a unique hospitality experience in regional Australia. All properties have been hand selected by our local ground operator Bill of Outback Beds. This is in keeping with our overall philosophy and intention to support tourism in these areas. If you are joining the tour as a single traveller and purchase a single supplement, you will receive your own room. However, on occasions, you may need to share a bathroom with other travellers. On some occasions, twin/double travellers may also need to share a bathroom. We trust you will be understanding in these circumstances.