

The Great Rivers Travelling the Darling and the Murray

Departs
27th September 2022

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different





\$6,590 pp

Ex Syd, twin-share,
excludes domestic flights
(and trains)

Single supp \$1,200

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 SW 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 the 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 13 days including a side trip to the heritage listed city of Broken Hill.

Major attractions include remarkable Mt Oxley, the Aboriginal paintings of Gundabooka National Park, 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, Tuesday 27th September
Sydney - Dubbo - Brewarrina**

Our train departs Sydney Central Station at 7:19 am and arrives in Dubbo at 1:45 pm (eat 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, Wednesday
28th September
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 3 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, Thursday 29th September
Bourke - Trilby Station, Louth**

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 dependant) at Trilby. *B/L/D*

Day 4, Friday 30th September
Trilby – Broken Hill

In the morning we will head downstream 100km 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. Next we head onto Broken Hill for the next 2 nights (another 120km). We will visit the Miner's Memorial in Broken Hill and have lunch at the Line of Lode Café on top of the mining area. In the afternoon we visit the sculpture symposium. Our accommodation in Broken Hill will be at the Imperial Fine Accommodation. We'll meet on the veranda of the Imperial for a casual dinner with catering from a local restaurant. *B/L/D*



Day 5, Saturday 1st October
Broken Hill

Today we head down to the Menindee Lakes (about an hour away) for a 9 am cruise on the lakes. The vast Menindee Lakes is a natural flood lake

system which 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. After the cruise we will head up river for Nelia Gaari Station for lunch. Lily and Greg are our hosts at Nelia Gaari on the banks of the Darling River. Over lunch Greg and Lily will give you an overview of their property. They also have a 9 hole golf course laid out between the giant Red River Gums if you want to try your hand (best that you use the clubs provided and not your good ones). After lunch we head back to Broken Hill for a quiet afternoon. Dinner tonight will be at the Astra or similar. *B/L/D*

Day 6, Sunday 2nd October
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. While it's cooler 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. After lunch we will visit the Royal Flying Doctor Service 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 7, Monday 3rd October
Broken Hill to 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 fabulous Regional Gallery and the Geo Centre. After lunch 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 8, Tuesday 4th October
Bindara Station - Mungo National Park - Mildura

Early departure to travel to Mungo via Pooncarie. At Mungo we will take a tour of Mungo



National Park and the Willandra Lakes World Heritage site. The tour allows for access to restricted areas that are otherwise barred to the public. Mungo Man and Mungo Woman that were found at Mungo National Park have been carbon dated to over 40,000 years old and have led to the World Heritage listing. The tour takes a little over 2 hours. Following the tour we will have lunch at Mungo Lodge cafe. After lunch we travel for an hour and a half to Wentworth where the Darling River joins the Murray River. There is an easy 1 hour walk (approx) via a nature trail to the vantage point with great views of the confluence of the rivers. We will have dinner at the Gol Gol hotel and stay overnight at the Commodore Motel or similar. *B/L/D*

Day 9, Wednesday 5th October
Mildura to Wilkadene

A Sunday morning sleep in until our 10:50 paddle steamer tour. The tour on the PS Melbourne takes two hours. After the cruise we will have lunch at Stefano's café (Stefano is the TV celebrity chef that some of you may remember from Gondola on the Murray series). After lunch we drive another 120km to Wilkadene for a 2 night stay on a luxury houseboat. Located on a picturesque backwater of the Murray River, Wilkadene

Station is home to the Woolshed Brewery and our houseboat. Sleep on board and in the day tour the river, swim, read, rest and visit the craft brewery for some sunset ales. Dinner on the houseboat. **B/L/D**

**Day 10, Thursday 6th October
Wilkadene Murray River Houseboat**

A rest day. Spend all day on the houseboat. We will cruise at a leisurely pace along the Murray River past



spectacular ochre red cliffs, long white sandbars, river red gum forests and fascinating wetlands. Or stay where you are, read a book, swim in the river and take an afternoon nap. A free day for you to do as you

please. The more active can have a 4 km hike up to the look out at Headings Landing before a BBQ lunch. The look out has spectacular views up and down the Murray. We will have all meals on the house boat.

B/L/D

**Day 11, Friday 7th October
Wilkadene to Middleton**

After disembarking the houseboat at 8.30 am we will follow the river down to its end at Lake Alexandrina from where the the Murray flows into the Coorong and out into the Southern Ocean. If there is time we will stop 70km down the track at Banrock Station wetland and hike the 3.5 km to the boardwalk that takes you into this internationally significant wetland. Anyone not wanting to hike can rest at the Banrock Wine Centre which provides a cafe with sweeping views over the river flood plains. After Banrock Station we will follow the Murray down to the historic port of Morgan. Lunch will be overlooking the Murray River at Caudo's winery (60km Banrock to Caudo Vineyard). After lunch we will continue to follow the Murray to Middleton stopping along the way at Gnaut Gnaut Conservation Park for a 1.5 hr Aboriginal Guided tour along the river cliffs in this Aboriginal culturally significant reserve. Our accommodation for the evening will be at the very quaint Beach Huts and dinner will be at Blues restaurant at our accommodation. **B/L/D**



**Day 12, Saturday
8th October
Goolwa**

Our boat trip today 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 at the Goolwa Wharf. In the afternoon we drive to the nearby Langhorne Creek wine region for wine tastings and a behind the scenes tour of Bleasdale winery. Back to our accommodation at Middleton for the night with dinner at the Flying Fish or Thunderbird in Port Elliot. **B/L/D**

**Day 13, Sunday 9th October
Goolwa to Mannum**

After breakfast we will head to the pretty town of Mannum stopping along the way at the heritage town of Strathalbyn where you will have some time to wander the historic High Street. Mannum is a picturesque town once famous for building the river ships. Here we will visit the Mannum Dock Museum, home of the fully restored Paddle Steamer Marion. This museum gives a great overview of the history of the river and the riverboats. Part of the museum is the Paddle Steamer Marion is a fully restored heritage vessel built in 1897 and is one of the last operational, heritage, steam driven, wood fired, passenger carrying side paddle steamers in the world. After the museum at 1pm we will take a 1.5 hour cruise on the PS Mayflower..We will eat and stay at the Mannum Motel. The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) has officially named the new River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve, outside of Mannum, as one of the most magnificent places on Earth to see the night sky. This evening we will have a picnic dinner followed by some instruction on night sky photography. **B/L/D**



**Day 14, Monday 10th October
Goolwa to Adelaide**

Our tour concludes today. We will arrive at Adelaide for a late morning flight back home. **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.*