

The Great Rivers

Travelling the Darling and the Murray

Departs
25th March 2023

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different





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THE GREAT RIVERS TRAVELLING THE DARLING AND MURRAY RIVERS

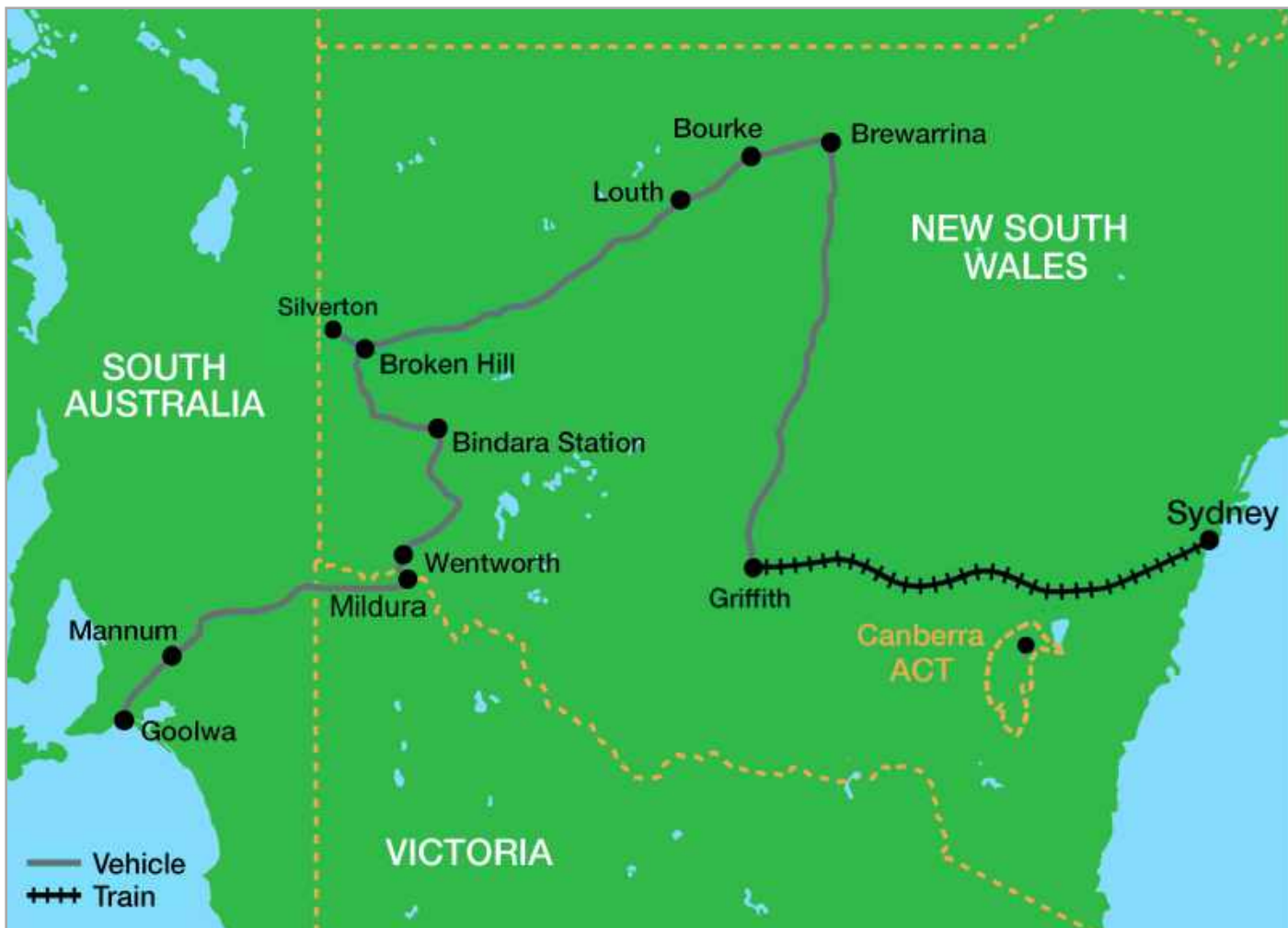
Although there are some differing views, the Darling River is generally considered to begin a little to the east of Brewarrina with the confluence of a number of rivers flowing from northern NSW and south west Queensland. From the 40,000 year old Aboriginal Fish Traps at Brewarrina, the Darling joins 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 2,400 km 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 outdoor sculpture museum at Broken Hill, a visit to iconic Trilby Station, the Menindee Lakes, cruising past the ochre-coloured cliffs of Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park and enjoying the abundant bird life of 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.

Travel by train from Sydney to Griffith and fly home from Adelaide. Our accommodation will range from renovated farm quarters to luxury house boats.



**Day 1, Saturday 25th March
Sydney — Griffith**

Our train Xplorer 641 departs Sydney Central Station for Griffith at 7.05 am and arrives at 3.25 pm. (Alternatively, Rex Airlines and Qantas offer flights to Griffith). You will be collected from Griffith Railway Station by Bill. Check into the hotel and freshen up before our welcome dinner at Limone in Griffith, an exceptional full degustation with a welcome wine. *D*



**Day 2, Sunday 26th March
Griffith —
Brewarrina**

After breakfast at Limone, we'll depart for Brewarrina around 9 am, with a picnic lunch en route. Once an

important inter-tribal meeting place for generations of Aboriginal people, Brewarrina (locally known as "Bre") is a town on the banks of the Barwon River. The name Brewarrina is derived from 'burru waranha', a Weiland name for a species of Acacia tree. *B/L/D*

**Day 3, Monday 27th March
Brewarrina — Trilby Station, Dunlop Station**

After breakfast, a visit to see the heritage listed fish traps. These purpose-built rock constructions are estimated to be more than 40,000 years old and are believed to be one of the oldest man-made structures in the world. We will take a one hour Aboriginal guided tour of the fish traps. After that, we begin our drive to Bourke 100 km west. En route we will visit Mt Oxley on the property of Bill and Denise, 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'll 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 4, Tuesday 28th March Trilby

This morning 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 5, Wednesday 29th March Louth — 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, serving 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. *B/L/D*



Day 6, Thursday 30th March 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 will 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 Old Saltbush. *B/L/D*

Day 7, Friday 31st March Broken Hill — Bindara Station

The entire city of Broken Hill was National Heritage listed in 2015. Our morning tour may include Broken Hill's The Royal Flying Doctor Centre, The Palace Hotel, the fabulous Regional Gallery and the Geo Centre, depending on time availability and interests. After, we will head to Bindara Station some 130 km away. Bindara is located on the



banks on the Darling, between the townships of Menindee and Pooncarie. Bindara Station's historic homestead, outbuildings and cemetery are a living

history that is very interesting to explore first hand. The area abounds in birds and wildlife. At Bindara, Barb our host will take us on a walking tour of her property to explore the European history and Aboriginal cultural points of interest, whilst giving an interesting commentary. *B/L/D*

Day 8, Saturday 1st April Bindara Station — Mildura

After breakfast, depart Bindara and 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 overnight stay and dinner at a local restaurant. *B/L/D*

Day 9, Sunday 2nd April Mildura — Wilkadene

Today we depart for Renmark (120km) to pick up provisions for our river cruise. We'll have lunch in Renmark, then on to Wilkadene to pick up our luxury houseboat for a 2 night stay.

Located on a picturesque backwater of the Murray River, Wilkadene 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 10, Monday
3rd April
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 5 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 11, Tuesday 4th April
Mannum**

After breakfast, we'll disembark the boat and set off on our drive to Mannum. We will have a casual lunch at the lovely Caudo Vineyard. Caudo is a family owned property located on the banks of the Murray, a wide oasis of green lawn, towering gums, historic buildings and limestone cliffs. 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. Accommodation in Mannum. **B/L/D**



**Day 12, Wednesday
5th April
Mannum to
Middleton**

After breakfast, a 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, wood fired, steam driven, passenger carrying paddle steamers in the world. After the museum at 10:30 am we will take a 1.5 hour cruise on the PS Mayflower. Visit the paddleboat maritime museum, paddleboat ride and picnic lunch in Mannum then drive to Beach Huts in Middleton with a stop at a winery in the Langhorne Ck region. Our accommodation and dinner will be at the lovely Middleton Beach Huts where we stay two nights.

B/L/D



**Day 13, Thursday
6th April
Goolwa to Adelaide**

In the morning we head to Victor Harbor to walk around Granite Island. If we are lucky we might see some whales on

their migration to the Australian Bight for the calving

season. Our final boat trip is along the iconic Our boat trip today is on the Coorong to the Murray Mouth, departing from Goolwa. Our cruise will take about 2½ hours and travel along 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. We have our farewell dinner tonight at Port Elliot. **B**



**Day 14, Friday 7th April
Goolwa to Adelaide**

Our tour concludes today. After breakfast we will drive through the picturesque Fleurieu Peninsular to Adelaide airport (about an hour drive). We will arrive at Adelaide for a late morning flight back to Sydney or Melbourne. **B**

IMPORTANT: The accommodation on this tour will offer the best level of comfort available. At times we stay at unique character filled properties. These properties have been hand selected by local ground operator Bill of Outback Beds, in keeping with our philosophy and intention to support tourism to regional areas. If you are joining the tour as a single traveller and purchase a single supplement, you will receive your own room. However, depending on the configuration of the tour group, occasionally travellers may be required to share a bathroom. On rare occasions, travellers may need to be accommodated at separate campuses. We will advise you at time of booking. We trust you will be understanding in these circumstances.