

# The Italian Festival

Western NSW and the  
Riverina Murray,  
Mildura to Griffith

Departs 15th August 2023

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different





**\$6,950 pp**

Twin-share, excludes  
domestic flights and  
train travel

Single supp \$1,200

## **THE ITALIAN FESTIVAL WESTERN NSW AND THE RIVERINA MURRAY, MILDURA TO GRIFFITH**

Welcome to our tour of regional NSW and Victoria, with visits to farms, orchards, historic homesteads, heritage sites and award-winning gardens, all the while enjoying the hospitality of local hosts.

This meticulously hand-crafted tour incorporates prized entry spots at The Italian Festival in Griffith, an annual special event showcasing the food and music of the Riverina. You'll be invited to join locals at the communal table, as they celebrate and acknowledge the passion and dedication of the Riverina's growers and producers.

Along the way, you will visit a UNESCO World Heritage area, guided by Aboriginal guides where possible. You'll encounter Australian wildlife almost daily, including kangaroos, emus, echidnas and a colourful range of spectacular birds. You will get a unique insight into daily life on a working property with guided tours of private farms, and afterwards enjoy a few sundowners, and a home-cooked meal. There will be opportunities to taste award-winning food and wine direct from the producers, with time to relax, unwind and meet the locals.

This tour will be limited to a maximum of 10 guests. You will be in excellent hands with our experienced tour host and driver Bill who will be accompanied by a second vehicle and driver from the Blue Dot team.

**Fitness Level:** Low to reasonable level of fitness required. Some short hikes to be expected. Bring hiking poles if you normally use them. Many of the roads you travel on are unsealed dirt or gravel. Although it doesn't rain much in the outback when it does unsealed roads are likely to be closed to traffic. Bindara and Mungo are dry weather only. Our touring route and itinerary will be adjusted in the event of wet weather.



**Day 1, Tuesday 15th August**  
**Arrive Mildura**

Fly to Mildura from your capital city, arriving around 4pm, before checking in to the hotel. Tonight we meet for a welcome dinner at Stefano's restaurant, an institution in Mildura, made famous by the TV series "A Gondola on the Murray". Overnight in Mildura. *D*



**Day 2, Wednesday 16th August**  
**Mildura**

Today we'll board a Murray houseboat and enjoy a scenic river ride along the red gum lined Murray River and

Darling, with lunch prepared on board. While you eat, take time to snap photos of the passing landscape and listen to some intriguing commentary on the area's history. In the afternoon, explore the bustling city of Mildura. *L*

**Day 3, Thursday 17th August**  
**Mildura to Bindara**

This morning, we'll depart for Bindara (approx 3 hour drive). En route, we'll stop at Wentworth, at the confluence of the Darling and Murray Rivers, for a picnic lunch and walk along the nature trail. In the afternoon, arrive at Bindara Station which is located on the banks on the Darling River, 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. This evening, a walking tour with our host Barb. Dinner and overnight at Bindara. *L/D*



**Day 4, Friday 18th August**  
**Bindara — Mungo NP — Lake Paika**

After breakfast, we head to Mungo National Park. We'll have lunch at Mungo Lodge, then embark on a visit to the park and the Willandra Lakes World Heritage site. Mungo Man and Mungo Woman have been carbon dated to 40,000 years, and have led to the World Heritage listing.

Access to the Walls of China beyond the boardwalk is available only through a licensed



operator. The tour takes a little over 2 hours. Later in the afternoon, we'll begin our drive to Lake Paika Station. After settling in, we'll join owners Di and Iain for sunset drinks on the lake (or lake shore depending of water levels) followed by a casual dinner. Your first

glass of wine with nibbles is included. Overnight at Lake Paika Station. *B/L/D*

### Day 5, Saturday 19th August Yanga National Park

After breakfast, a guided tour of nearby Yanga National Park. We'll depart at 10am for a short 20 kilometre drive to Yanga NP. The tour will include Carter's bank wetlands, a bush walk to teepee tree, morning tea at the woolshed, a guided tour of the homestead and visit to Cook's cottage interpretive centre and lunch (both morning tea and lunch are included). We will return to Lake Paika in the early afternoon to enjoy some easy time wandering through Di's lovely garden before dinner under the stars at Lake Paika. Di is a great cook. *B/L/D*



### Day 6, Sunday 20th August Lake Paika — Hay — Burraburroon

After breakfast, depart Lake Paika for our 1.5 hour drive to Hay. On arrival, we'll visit the Australia's Shearers

Hall of Fame to discover the story of the golden era of wool, including a sheep shearing demonstration. Lunch is at the café at Shear Outback. Next, a fascinating self-guided tour of Dunera Museum where German Jews and other refugees fleeing Nazi occupied Europe were interned from 1940. The museum houses exhibits, photographs, stories and music about the experiences of internees, POW's and townfolk. After, we head to Bishops Lodge historic house and heritage rose garden. Bishop's Lodge is an extraordinary 1888 iron house, designed by architect John Sulman. Late in the afternoon, we'll leave Hay on the 60 km journey for our night at Burraburroon Farmstay. The homestead and Bob's Bend are located on the banks of a large lake with extensive gardens. We will join owners Ken and Tertia for sundowners and tapas on the deck over the lake followed by a South African camp oven dinner cooked by Tertia (the tapas is included in your tour, with drinks available for purchase). Tertia is a South African expat and journalist. She is also the editor, writer, production manager... and everything else... of the local newspaper. The dinner will include Ken's coal-baked bread. There is limited accommodation so everyone will need to share at Burraburroon. *B/L/D*

### Day 7, Monday 21st August Burraburroon

After breakfast, a leisurely guided walk with owner Ken. Ken is an ex agriculture lecturer and passionate farmer. He will show us the areas of Aboriginal significance on his farm. Spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure. Tonight, a South African brai dinner. *B/L/D*

### Day 8, Tuesday 22nd August Burraburroon — Corrynia

After a hearty breakfast, we'll depart on the drive to Corrynia Station.

Corrynia is a working wool, cotton, rice and wheat farm run by Bruce and Julie Armstrong. The homestead and grounds are a lovely oasis, complete with an abundance of native fauna and flora (including some furry orphans). During our stay we will join owner Bruce as he gives you a tour of their 17,000 acre busy working station where you will learn a little of their technologically advanced farming practices in growing the worlds best quality and highest yielding rice, cotton, rye grass and wool. In the afternoon, enjoy Corrynia's beautiful gardens, pool and tennis court or challenge someone to a game of croquet. In the evening, a sundowner (available to purchase) while Julie is preparing her home cooked dinner, which will be served at the homestead. (Note. The order of activities may change depending on the farm schedule). Overnight at Corrynia. *B/L/D*



### Day 9, Wednesday 23rd August Corrynia

Today after breakfast, a fascinating tour of the cotton "gin" ("gin" being an abbreviation of "engine"). Invented by Eli Whitney in

1793, the cotton gin was an important invention because it significantly reduced the time it took to separate cotton seeds from the cotton fibres. The cotton gin revolutionised the American textile industry, and the subsequent increase in the production of processed cotton became a pivotal time in world history. After the tour and lunch, some downtime to take in the beauty and surroundings of Corrynia, with its many activities including walking trails, canoeing, bike riding or wildlife spotting. There are often sightings of goannas, wallabies, emus, kangaroos, and many species of birdlife. *B/L/D*



### Day 10, Thursday 24th August Corrynia

After breakfast at Corrynia we head to Griffith. Over the following days we will explore Griffith and

the wonderful Riverina food bowl. Tonight you'll be picked up and driven the short distance to Piccolo Family Farm for a signature event set in the gardens



of the Piccolo orchard. The talented Adelaide based company, Co-Opera, will provide a performance. Although Co-Opera perform both in capital cities and internationally, the company's true passion is to bring their performances to audiences in regional Australia. This year, the company are performing Gianni Schicchi by Puccini, a comic opera based around a family's response to the death of a wealthy merchant



whose will has left all his wealth to a monastery. It features the well known aria *Oh My Beloved Father*. The Piccolo Family will provide their beautiful venue and genuine

hospitality, with Luke Piccolo preparing a fabulous dinner utilising local produce and catered by the team at Limone Dining. Limone is one of most successful of Griffith's many top-notch Italian eateries, and chef Luke was a 2018 finalist in the Appetite for Excellence award, one of Australia's major competitions for young chefs, waiters and restaurateurs. Luke went on to become the winner of the young restaurateur for 2019. After this wonderful dinner, we will return to our accommodation at Grand Motel Griffith (or similar).

**B/L/D**

**Day 11, Friday 25th August  
Griffith**

First stop, we visit Aquana - Murray cod sustainable fish farm, to hear the story of how a young person had an idea, googled "how to become a sustainable fish farmer" and now has a great business producing a delicious product. Next, De Bortoli's winery for a walk



through the very surprising and beautiful Emeri's Garden This large pleasure house garden was developed by Emeri De Bortoli, a passionate gardener. We'll be taken on a private tour of the garden by Emeri's daughter-in-law Margot. The walk is followed by a tasting at the De Bortoli Winery (home of the Noble One) We'll have

a light casual lunch followed by some free time in the afternoon. Tonight, we head to town for the "Taste of Italy - Ferragosto Festival Dinner Dance" with Italian themed food, music and entertainment. Comedian

James Liotta will MC the show with comedy performances and a live band. **L/D**

**Day 12, Saturday  
26th August  
Griffith**

Today, a day in and about Griffith to enjoy the buzz of the festival activities.

The whole town gets involved, with a number of events and exhibitions lovingly organised by the Griffith community. In the afternoon, a wine tasting at Warburn Estate, then dinner at Limone. **L/D**



**Day 13, Sunday 27th August  
Griffith**

Sunday is Griffith's Fiesta Long Lunch in the lovely gardens at Pioneer Park. Experience the atmosphere and hospitality of the Griffith locals, who invite you to join them to eat, drink, chat and enjoy traditional music over a leisurely lunch. Enjoy homemade Italian cuisine, local wines, and some folk music in a marquee set in the gardens of the park. Return to the accommodation late in the afternoon. No dinner needed tonight after our long lunch. Overnight in Griffith. **L**



**Day 14, Monday 28th August  
Griffith**

Early today, fly home from Griffith to your capital city, or book your seat on Country Trains XPLOER 641 service to Sydney Central Station via <https://transportnsw.info/regional-bookings/>.

**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. There may also be times where the group are accommodated at separate campuses. We will advise you at time of booking. We trust you will be understanding in these circumstances.*



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.