



Down the Darling to the Riverina

Western New South Wales



DAY 1 Canberra - Wellington (B, L)

(B = BREAKFAST L = LUNCH D = DINNER)

We depart Canberra and travel north to Goobang National Park. Established in 1995, the park plays an important role in preserving the largest remnant forest and woodland in the central west region of NSW where interior coastal flora and fauna species overlap. We will have lunch on site then take the short walk to Caloma Lookout offering stunning views westward towards the Darling River. We continue to Wellington, the second oldest town west of the Blue Mountains, where excellent examples of Federation architecture remain. We lodge at the Hermitage Hill Country Retreat house which was once the old Wellington District Hospital.

Accommodation: Hermitage Hill Country Retreat

DAY 2 Wellington - Brewarrina (B, L)

After breakfast we tour the Wellington Caves, featuring the magnificent Cathedral Cave with its famous stalagmite reaching a staggering 15 metres in height. The caves were discovered in the 1800s and reveal a spectacular underworld of fossils and grottos. We continue to the nearby Osawano Japanese Gardens where over 1500 individual plant specimens can be found, and with luck the cherry blossoms will be in bloom. After a light lunch we drive northwest to Brewarrina and the beginning of our river journey.

Accommodation: Beds on the Barwon

DAY 3 Brewarrina - Bourke - Trilby Station (B, L, D)

Brewarrina was once an important inter-tribal meeting place for generations of Aboriginal people who constructed a series of pools and traps in the river to catch fish. These fish traps are now a National Heritage site and are estimated to be more than 40,000 years old, making them the oldest man-made structures in the world. We will take a one hour Aboriginal guided tour of the fish traps before continuing towards Bourke. Almost halfway between Brewarrina and Bourke we find Mt Oxley, a remarkable peak rising 150 metres from an otherwise perfectly flat landscape. Mt Oxley has outstanding 360 degree views and showcases an abundance of wildlife, including wedge-tailed eagles and euros. We will drive to the summit and have a picnic lunch on the mountain. After lunch we will pass through Bourke then travel down river to Trilby Station on the banks of the Darling, to meet Liz and Gary Murray on their historic 6th generation 320,000 acre sheep and goat station. Liz and Gary are passionate about the outback and we will have the opportunity to learn about life on a working sheep station.

Accommodation: Trilby Station



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DAY 4 Trilby Station (B, L, D)

After breakfast we will walk with Liz around the homestead. The station is nestled by the banks of the Darling with a long history of shearing when the river played an important role in transporting the wool clip to Adelaide or Echuca. A short distance from Trilby is the historic Dunlop Station which once encompassed one million acres (Trilby was also part of Dunlop Station). The homestead is rambling and being slowly restored by its current owner who will take us on a short tour, including the magnificent shearing shed dating to 1870 that once held 60 stands (shearing posts). Lunch will be back at Trilby followed by some relaxation by the river. Dinner by the campfire tonight - a million stars for company.

Accommodation: Trilby Station

DAY 5 Trilby - Wilcannia - Bindara Station (B, L, D)

In the morning we drive downstream for 100km to the small town of Tilpa, famous for its outback pub which has welcomed visitors for over 100 years. Originally a busy port on the Darling, Tilpa serviced the river trade as a 'cross-road' of the outback where stock crossed and the wool clip was loaded. 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! Further down the track we pass through Wilcannia which was once a bustling river port. These days the town is quiet like many of its outback contemporaries. A cluster of beautiful sandstone buildings remaining from 100 years before attesting to the prosperity that once came from the river traders. Our destination is Bindara Station located on the edge of Kinchega National Park and the Menindee Lakes. There are nine large lakes that act as a catchment for the overflow of the Darling River and thus rely on replenishment from flood waters upstream. We will pass by the lakes, stopping for a stroll and a photograph. Tonight we will have a campfire dinner at Bindara.

Accommodation: Bindara Station

DAY 6 Broken Hill (B, L, D)

Bindara Station was established in 1871 and was once part of Netly Station which ran from the banks of the Darling to the South Australian border. Over the years the station has been broken up into smaller sections, and the river frontage was sold to the Packer family in 1935 and named Bindara. In the company of the owners, we will take a tour around the property highlighting both European and Aboriginal cultural points of interest. We are just two hours from Broken Hill and our journey takes a break from the river as we head into the Silver City. We will have lunch at a local restaurant then visit some of the main attractions around town, including the Geo Museum and the Regional Museum. Our day winds down with a gin tasting at the Broken Hill Distillery located at the Tydvil Hotel which will also host our dinner.

Accommodation: The Imperial



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DAY 7 Broken Hill (B, L)

After breakfast we head to Mutawintji National Park, approximately one hour north of Broken Hill. 'Mutawintji' means 'a place of grass and water' and the local Wiimpatja people have been drawing on the abundance of natural food and water resources for thousands of years. The Homestead Gorge walking track takes us into the ranges, passing through red cliff gorge country with white sand riverbeds and a wonderful diversity of animal and plant life. Along the way we will see examples of Aboriginal rock engraving and paintings. We will have a picnic lunch in the well-appointed campground before returning to Broken Hill later that afternoon. Tonight is a free evening for you to explore Broken Hill or just relax in the comfortable surroundings of our hotel.

Accommodation: The Imperial

DAY 8 Broken Hill (B, L, D)

Not far from Broken Hill is the town of Silverton, now almost a ghost town, which actually predated Broken Hill as a thriving silver mining town. We take the heritage trail walk to the Monks Lookout where the view is as broad as the horizon. From the lookout you can see across the Mundi Mundi Plains to the Flinders Ranges. Silverton's claim to fame (other than its mining history) is in the movies when the town became the base for the Mad Max series. At the local pub there are some wonderful photographs and relics from that time and it is also a great place for lunch. There will be some free time this afternoon. Keeping with the movie theme, we will have dinner at The Palace Hotel, made famous by the film Priscilla Queen of the Desert.

Accommodation: The Imperial

DAY 9 Broken Hill - Wentworth - Lake Paika (B, L, D)

We continue our journey towards Wentworth and the junction of the Darling and Murray rivers. Captain Charles Sturt discovered the junction of Australia's two mightiest river systems in 1830, paving the way for the establishment of a thriving river port. There is nature trail that we will take to the isthmus delineating the two rivers. We have travelled from the headwaters of the Darling as far as we can go and now turn east into the hinterland of the Riverina district. After our walk we will have a pub lunch and continue towards Balranald and our accommodation at Lake Paika Station. Dinner tonight at the homestead.

Accommodation: Lake Paika



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DAY 10 Mungo National Park (B, L, D)

After an early breakfast we head to Mungo National Park and the Willandra Lakes World Heritage site for a private guided tour with the park ranger. The tour allows access to restricted areas that are otherwise barred to the public. Mungo Man and Mungo Woman, as they have become known, were discovered at Mungo National Park and are carbon dated to 40,000 years old. The tour takes a little over two hours followed by lunch at Mungo Lodge Café. In the afternoon we return to Lake Paika Station in plenty of time for a sunset drink in the beautiful homestead gardens before dinner under the stars.

Accommodation: Lake Paika

DAY 11 Lake Paika - Burraburoon Farm Stay Via Hay

(B, L, D)

We depart Lake Paika and head for Hay. Here we spend some time visiting Shear Outback – Australia’s Shearers’ Hall of Fame where you will find all things from the golden wool era, including shearing demonstrations. We will take a fascinating guided tour of Dunera Museum where German Jews and other refugees fleeing Nazi occupied Europe were interned from 1940. We will have lunch at the Convent Café, a local favourite in Hay, before continuing to Burraburoon farm stay. At Burraburoon we will join owners Ken and Tertia for sundowners on their lake terrace, followed by a South African flavoured camp oven dinner cooked by Ken and Tertia (Tertia is a South African expat and editor, journalist, production manager and everything else for the local newspaper).

Accommodation: Burraburoon farm stay.

DAY 12 Burraburoon - Griffith (B, L, D)

This morning after breakfast we join property owner Ken (an agriculture college lecturer in a previous life), for a drive around his farm and an overview of local Aboriginal heritage sites and modern agricultural practices. We will have an early lunch at Burraburoon before the two hour drive to Griffith where we will arrive just in time for a wine tasting at a favourite winery, Calabria. Dinner will be at La Scala, a Griffith Italian institution.

Accommodation: The Grand Hotel



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DAY 13 Griffith (B, L)

After breakfast we will take a food and wine tour of Griffith. The town itself was laid out by Walter Burley Griffin and has wide streets and roundabouts reminiscent of his more illustrious work in Canberra. First stop is the Sustainable Murray Cod Fish Farm followed by a guided walking tour of the beautiful Emeri's Garden, part of the De Bortoli winery complex. After our garden tour we will have a wine tasting at De Bortoli cellar door. We will conclude our touring with a long lunch at Limone Dining. Limone is the 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 and restaurateurs. Luke went on to become the winner of the young restaurateur for 2019. Our journey almost complete, this afternoon is a chance to reflect on our travels. A casual dinner tonight for those who are still hungry.

Accommodation: The Grand Hotel

DAY 14 Griffith - Canberra (B)

After breakfast we head for Canberra, stopping at Temora for morning tea.

End of arrangements.



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