

CAIRNS - THE GULF BIRDSVILLE – MARREE FLINDERS RANGES

24 DAYS DEPARTING THURSDAY 30TH MAY TO SATURDAY 22ND JUNE 2024

MOTEL ACCOMMODATION – RESTAURANT MEALS



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HIGHLIGHTS

<i>Bourke</i>	<i>Darling River</i>
<i>Charleville</i>	<i>Cosmos Centre</i>
<i>Blackall</i>	<i>Woolscour</i>
<i>Longreach</i>	<i>Aust Stockmans Hall of Fame</i>
<i>Qantas Museum</i>	<i>Thomson River Cruise</i>
<i>Townsville</i>	<i>Magnetic Island</i>
<i>Green Island</i>	<i>Port Douglas</i>
<i>Barrier Reef</i>	<i>Daintree River Cruise</i>
<i>Atherton Tableland</i>	<i>Kuranda Train & Skyrail</i>
<i>Undara Lava Tubes</i>	<i>Georgetown</i>
<i>Karumba</i>	<i>Gulf of Carpentaria</i>
<i>Croydon</i>	<i>Normanton</i>
<i>Gulflander Train</i>	<i>Mt Isa</i>
<i>Birdsville</i>	<i>Marree</i>
<i>Lake Eyre</i>	<i>Flinders Ranges</i>

DAY 1: THURSDAY 30TH MAY HOME TO GRIFFITH

D.

Leaving home we travel north via Bendigo and Echuca. Crossing the Murray River into N.S.W. through Deniliquin to Griffith for our first overnight stop. This pleasing, gracious rural centre with its historic buildings and cedar-lined streets, is located in the Riverina region of NSW. Here we settle into our motel and freshen up before dinner which is in the motel restaurant.

Accom: The Kidman Wayside Inn Ph: 02 6964 5666

DAY 2: FRIDAY 31ST MAY GRIFFITH TO BOURKE

B.D.

Departing Griffith we continue along the Kidman Way on our way to Cobar where the sun always shines, the Kidman Way passes through some of Australia's most stunning outback country. We arrive in bustling and prosperous Cobar the jewel of outback NSW for our lunch stop. Continuing on this afternoon we arrive in Bourke for our overnight stop and this historic town is considered to represent the edge of the settled agricultural districts and the gateway to the Outback which lies north and west of Bourke. We visit The Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre, which brings back to life the history of outback New South Wales, and the Back O' Bourke. A chance to enjoy the interactive stories of the inland sea, the wool story, riverboats, conflict and much more. We discover more about the life of Henry Lawson's outback, and marvel at the stories of our women of the west. It is said that "if you know Bourke, you know Australia". There is time to settle into our motel and relax before dinner at the Bourke Bowling Club.

Accom: Darling River Motel Ph: 02 6872 2288

DAY 3: SATURDAY 1ST JUNE BOURKE TO CHARLEVILLE

B.L.D.

This morning there will be a pleasant surprise and something you would probably not expect in a small outback town like Bourke. A cruise along the mighty Darling River aboard the PV Jandra is a journey back in time reliving memories of life on the river when river trade was king. Paddle steamers were the major means of transporting wool and other produce all the way from the railhead at Bourke, to the Murray junction at Wentworth. Later this morning after we cross the Queensland border we pass through Cunnamulla where the handshake's stronger and the smile lasts longer! before arriving at Charleville which is in the heart of Queensland's Mulga country. This is the town in which Cobb and Co had one of its major coach building factories, operating until the advent of the motor coach, while back in 1922 Qantas scheduled its first fare paying passenger service from Charleville to Cloncurry. Tonight something different as we visit the Charleville Cosmos Centre & Observatory. This special observatory is unique, an entire roof is rolled off to reveal powerful Meade telescopes. A never to be forgotten journey of the night sky. There is nothing quite like seeing the distant stars & planets with your own eyes through the magnificent telescopes. Dinner and breakfast in the motel restaurant.

Accom: Mulga Country Motor Inn Ph: 07 4654 3255

DAY 4: SUNDAY 2ND JUNE**CHARLEVILLE TO LONGREACH B.L.D.**

Departing Charleville this morning we continue north, joining the Landsborough Highway and travel through Tambo to Blackall famous for many reasons and the centre of some of the most productive cattle country in Central Queensland. Blade shearer Jack Howe put Blackall on the map in 1892 at 'Alice Downs' when he set a world record by shearing 321 sheep in seven hours and 40 minutes. Blackall was also the first outback town to start drilling an artesian bore back in 1885. It is also the home of the Black Stump which was used for surveying purposes and permanently marks the original Astro Station established in 1887. Anything west of this point is said to be 'beyond the black stump'. We visit the Wool Scour which is the only complete still standing "steam driven" Wool Scour in Australia and is now heritage listed. Continuing on to Barcaldine and then Longreach our home for the next the two nights.

Accom: Longreach Motor Inn Ph 07 4658 2322

DAY 5: MONDAY 3RD JUNE**AUSTRALIAN STOCKMANS HALL OF FAME B.D.**

Here you can soak up the history and heritage that surrounds the legendary town of Longreach. Our first visit today is to the Qantas Hangar where six aircraft were built in the hangar between 1916 and 1929, then on to the Qantas Foundation Memorial Museum. The centrepiece of the museum is a 1/4 scale replica of the AVRO 504K, the first passenger aircraft purchased by Qantas. Join a tour of the decommissioned 747 'City of Bunbury' and the latest addition to the collection is the Boeing 707 jet, the very first passenger jet ever owned by Qantas. A highlight of the day then is a visit to the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame. Pioneering country best describes Longreach and district, and it was for this reason that it was chosen as the site for the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame. This outstanding tribute to Australia's outback pioneers includes a variety of traditional artefacts, electronic displays, photographs, films and stories of bush life. Tonight there is something different as we join our cruise on the Thomson River followed by a bushman's dinner and entertainment.

DAY 6: TUESDAY 4TH JUNE**LONGREACH TO CHARTERS TOWERS B.L.D.**

Early start today as we continue our travels further north passing through Winton, located at the headwaters of the Diamantina River. Winton is in the centre of Matilda Country, a diverse region in which vast Mitchell Grass plains are broken by magnificent coloured gorges, ridges and jump-ups. It is a major sheep area and a large trucking centre for the giant road trains bringing cattle from the Channel Country into the railhead. The Outback town is best known as the place that AB (Banjo) Paterson wrote Waltzing Matilda in 1895 while staying at Dagworth Station outside Winton. Through Hughenden to the historic gold town of Charters Towers, located in the Burdekin River Valley. Charters Towers is a regional centre for the mining, beef industry and education, specifically boarding schools catering for remote rural families. Dinner & breakfast while at Charters Towers will be at the motel restaurant.

Accom: Cattlemans Rest Motel Ph: 07 4787 3555

DAY 7: WEDNESDAY 5TH JUNE**CHARTERS TOWERS TO INGHAM B.D.**

A short distance this morning to Townsville with the idyllic paradise of Magnetic Island right on our doorstep. With a diverse mix of rainforest, reef, sandy beaches, outback bush

and big city benefits, Townsville has something everyone. We visit Magnetic Island with its majestic scenery and glorious climate that averages over 320 days of sunshine per year, and you won't want to leave. Two thirds of Magnetic Island is national park featuring huge strands of eucalypts and abundant wildlife, including koalas and varied birdlife. Later today we travel to Ingham. Dinner & breakfast while in Ingham will be at the motel restaurant.

Accom: Tropixx Motel

Ph: 07 4776 0000

DAY 8: THURSDAY 6TH JUNE**INGHAM TO CAIRNS****B.L.**

Today we continue on to Tully one of the wettest areas in Australia, but it is a thriving sugar cane and banana growing area. Visit Paronella Park which is a unique experience where history and romance are fused together. Paronella Park is a magical, unforgettable place nestled amongst heritage gardens and 13 acres of lush Australian rainforest situated on the banks of the crystal clear waters of Mena Creek. We stop at Mourilyan to visit the Sugar Museum before arriving in Cairns. Known as the capital of the tropical far north, this colourful city overlooks Trinity Bay. The city's terraces, foreshore, parks and spectacular gardens boast a colourful myriad of tropical plants and trees. Cairns commands an enviable position with the Great Barrier Reef to the east, mountain rainforests and plains of the Atherton Tableland to the west and exquisite palm fringed beaches to the north and south. Settle into our motel, home for the next four nights.

Accom: DoubleTree by Hilton

Ph: 07 4052 6752

DAY 9: FRIDAY 7TH JUNE**KURANDA SCENIC TRAIN & SKYRAIL B.**

A trip to Cairns would not be complete without taking the amazing scenic Kuranda train ride. We travel by bus to Central Station to take the train to Kuranda. Enjoy the natural beauty reflecting on the effort that was taken to construct the rail line over the mountain. There are many outstanding chances to get that perfect photo, and the train actually stops on a trestle bridge to give you the perfect picture location. In Kuranda the village in the rainforest, you are free to explore the markets and craft shops in the village, have a quiet coffee and soak up the atmosphere or take a look at the Butterfly House. On the return trip we take the exciting Sky Rail, with its fabulous panoramic views and breathtaking scenery across the top of rainforest.

DAY 10: SATURDAY 8TH JUNE**CAIRNS-GREEN ISLAND-BARRIER REEF B.L.**

We cruise today to Green Island which is a beautiful 6000 year old coral cay located in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The island is the only coral cay on the Great Barrier Reef with a rainforest growing on it and is home to 126 native plant species, colourful birdlife, surrounded by magnificent coral gardens. Stroll through magical rainforest, laze on the white coral sands and enjoy a glass bottom boat ride to view an amazing display of tropical fish and coral gardens. Return to Cairns for lunch along the harbour esplanade.

DAY 11: SUNDAY 9TH JUNE**PORT DOUGLAS & DAINTREE RIVER CRUISE B.**

An early rise this morning before heading north to indulge ourselves for the ultimate "Breakfast with the Birds" at the Rainforest Habitat at Port Douglas. In this wildlife park of the future, visitors can wander through three different and unique environments that depict numerous species of the surrounding rainforest, wetlands, and grasslands. Boardwalks overlook

lagoons where both Estuarine and Freshwater crocodiles lurk beneath murky waters or bask on the sunlit banks. Leaving this extraordinary habitat we travel the short distance to the international tourist destination of Port Douglas situated in a tropical tree covered mountain setting. One of the oldest towns in Queensland, it is surrounded by lush vegetation and pristine rainforests. See Little St Mary's Church by the sea and take a stroll on four mile beach before continuing north to Mossman. This small picturesque town referred to as the "sugar town of the north" is set amid the scenic splendour of green canefields, and rainforest clad mountains. Further on to Daintree where the Daintree region is a nature-lover's paradise. It abounds with tropical birds, butterflies, reptiles and countless species of wildlife, not to mention 3000 plant species from 210 families which are found in the Wet Tropics. This afternoon we enjoy our boat cruise on the Daintree River followed by a special afternoon tea at the Daintree Village.

**DAY 12: MONDAY 10TH JUNE
CAIRNS TO MT SURPRISE**

B.D.

Leaving early this morning we travel via the Atherton Tableland, the fertile plateau which forms part of the Great Dividing Range in Queensland. Joining the Kennedy Highway and travelling south/west to Undara where the Undara Volcanoes National Park is a fascinating and unforgettable experience. The main attraction of the park is undoubtedly the lava tube systems which were formed 190,000 years when a major volcano in the McBride volcanic province erupted, its molten lava flowing down a dry river bed. Recognised as the longest and largest lava tubes in the world we will enjoy a guided tour of the lava tubes before dinner tonight which will be supplied by the Bedrock Village at Mt Surprise.

Accom: Bedrock Village Ph: 07 4062 3193

**DAY 13: TUESDAY 11TH JUNE
UNDARA TO KARUMBA**

B.D.

Continuing further west to Georgetown on the Gulf Developmental Road to Croydon. The area is noted for its gemstones, especially agate and onyx. Georgetown is also a trans-shipping centre for beef road trains. Further on to Croydon where restoration work within the Croydon Historic Precinct is transforming the surviving town into a showpiece. Of interest are the old gaol, butchers shop, general store and hospital. Gaslights still stand on footpaths and the old courthouse and mining wardens office still have their original furnishings. This afternoon we travel to Normanton which is the central town of the whole Gulf Savannah. Situated on a high gravel ridge on the edge of the savannah grasslands that extend to the west and the wetlands that extend to the north. Later we journey further west to Karumba, situated at the mouth of the Norman River and the centre of the prawning industry in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Karumba is surrounded by flat wetlands, the habitat of saltwater crocodiles and many species of birds including brolgas and cranes. A barramundi fishing industry operates out of Karumba

Accom: End of the Road Motel Ph: 07 47459 5599

**DAY 14: WEDNESDAY 12TH JUNE
KARUMBA**

B.L.D.

Today we will be in true Australian Gulf country at Karumba and what better way to see it than on the water. On the Croc and Crab 10m fully shaded high-powered luxury vessel we enjoy an exciting outback by the sea adventure. Live crab pot lifting, live crab handling, crab tying, croc spotting and bird spotting are all part of this Gulf experience. Also included on this great cruise is freshly served Gulf cooked mud crabs and prawns and a tropical fruit platter. Yet another highlight this

evening will be our cruise on the Norman River to experience a beautiful Gulf sunset.

**DAY 15: THURSDAY 13TH JUNE
KARUMBA TO MT ISA**

B.D.

Returning to Normanton this morning we visit the corrugated iron railway station which dates back to 1891 and home of the famous Gulflander Railmotor. Join the historic Gulflander Railmotor and travel to Critters Camp where our coach meets you and continues back to Normanton. For the remainder of the morning we enjoy a town tour of Normanton with time to explore the Main Street. Later we farewell Normanton and the Gulf of Carpentaria and travel south through the outback where the only sign of civilisation is the Burke and Wills Roadhouse. Travelling through Cloncurry where the first ever flight of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia took place from on May 15, 1928, we join the Barkly Highway and continue west to Mt Isa, home for the next two nights.

Accom: Abacus Motel

Ph: 07 4743 1500

**DAY 16: FRIDAY 14TH JUNE
MT ISA SIGHTSEEING**

B.D.

Mt Isa is described as the Oasis of the Outback - a gleaming mirage on the horizon for travellers from all directions. Mount Isa nestles among the ochre-red Selwyn Ranges, on the banks of the Leichhardt River and is the most important commercial and administrative centre in North West Queensland. Our city tour today will take in the Clock Tower, a memorial to John Campbell Miles whose discovery in 1923 of rich silver and lead ore initiated the settlement of Mt Isa. The city lookout offers panoramic views of the city and mine area and we visit the National Trust Tent House. This afternoon we enjoy a guided tour of the Mt Isa School of the Air. Return to our motel in time to freshen up before dinner.

**DAY 17: SATURDAY 15TH JUNE
MT ISA TO BIRDSVILLE**

B.L.D.

This morning we leave Mt Isa and continue south through Dajarra to Boulia, the capital of the Channel Country. It is the home of the mysterious Min Min Light, reportedly first sighted near the ruins of the Min Min Hotel. Boulia is the centre of a prosperous beef and wool industry with cattle generally grazed in the western and northern areas and sheep properties to the east. Travelling further south through Bedourie to Birdsville which is home for the next two nights. Birdsville is a small outback town situated on the banks of the Diamantina River between the sands of the Simpson Desert and the gibbers of Sturts Stony Desert. The area is steeped in history, from aboriginal meeting places to European settlement in the late 1870s and beyond. The famous Birdsville Track starts here on its long path into and across South Australia.

Accom: Birdsville Hotel/Motel

Ph: 07 4656 3244

**DAY 18: SUNDAY 16TH JUNE
BIRDSVILLE SIGHTSEEING**

B.L.D.

Birdsville is Australia's must visit Outback town. Always noted for its wild country and isolation, Birdsville is best known for its famous pub and the annual race meeting when the population grows from 120 to 6,000 in two days. This morning we will visit the Birdsville cemetery, the famous Birdsville race track and the Birdsville Information Centre later we travel the short distance out to the Big Red Sand Dune. Big Red is the first and highest of 1100 dunes in the Simpson Desert, which run north-south for hundreds of kilometres. There will be time for you to experience the

legendary Birdsville Pub and to have a drink at one of the real Australian icons in the outback.

DAY 19: MONDAY 17TH JUNE

BIRDSVILLE TO MARREE

B.L.D.

Today we commence our journey along The Birdsville Track which is one of the most notable outback roads in Australia. The 517 km track runs from Marree in northern South Australia, north across the Tirari Desert and Sturt's Stony Desert, ending in Birdsville in south western Queensland. In former years the track was of a very poor quality and suitable only for high-clearance four-wheel drive vehicles, but it has been upgraded to a full-scale dirt road and is now a popular tourist route. It is also used by stock trucks carrying livestock. Our path traverses the driest part of the country with less than an average 100 mm of rainfall annually. The area is extremely barren, dry and isolated but it is true outback country and a highlight of the trip. Artesian bores line the route, pouring out sixty-four million litres of boiling salty water every day. We pass Lake Harry ruins, en route to Marree our home for the next two nights. Marree is an outback town 645km north of Adelaide at the junction of the infamous Birdsville Track and the rugged road to Oodnadatta.

Accom: Marree Hotel

Ph: 08 8675 8344

DAY 20: TUESDAY 18TH JUNE

MARREE / LAKE EYRE

B.L.D

Today we explore this amazing outback town of Marree. Marree lies at the junction of the Oodnadatta Track and the Birdsville Track, and only 49 metres above sea level. Marree is an important service centre for the large sheep and cattle stations in northeast South Australia as well as a stopover destination for tourists traveling along the Birdsville or Oodnadatta Tracks. Today there will be time for an optional scenic flight over Lake Eyre (own expense).

DAY 21: WEDNESDAY 19TH JUNE

MARREE TO WILPENNA POUND

B.L.D.

This morning we depart Marree and continue our journey further south through Lyndhurst before arriving in Leigh Creek, a small township situated in the North Flinders Ranges. We visit the viewing area at the Leigh Creek coal fields. From Leigh Creek we continue our journey south turning east and at Parachilna, we travel through the magnificent Parachilna Gorge. The creek has carved out a steep and rocky gorge through the mountains with Parachilna Gorge one of the largest in the chain. The stark red rocks of the gorge light up in the early morning or late afternoon sun and make excellent photographic subjects. On to Blinman for a short visit to the old pub before arriving at Wilpena Pound for our two night stop.

Accom: Wilpena Pound Resort

Ph: 08 8648 0004

DAY 22: THURSDAY 20TH JUNE

FLINDERS RANGES SIGHTSEEING

B.D

Enjoy exploring one of the oldest landscapes on earth today, Wilpena Pound, the centrepiece of the Flinders Ranges National Park. Time is available this morning for a walk into the old Wilpena Homestead should you wish. Comfortable shoes for walking are recommended and don't forget your camera. This afternoon at there will be time for an optional scenic flight over Wilpena Pound (own expense). Dinner and breakfast will be in the motel restaurant.

DAY 23: FRIDAY 21ST JUNE

WILPENNA POUND TO RENMARK

B.D.

Leaving the Flinders Ranges we make our way south through Hawker to one of Australia's oldest copper mining towns, Burra. Today the town continues as a centre for its surrounding farming communities, and being one of the best preserved towns of the Victorian era in Australia is an historic walk back in time. If time permits we will do a tour of this most interesting town taking in the Welsh miner's underground homes in the walls of Burra Creek. Continue on to Renmark for our last night away.

Accom: Hotel Renmark

Ph: 08 8586 6755

DAY 24: SATURDAY 22ND JUNE

RENMARK TO HOME

B.

Departing Renmark this morning, we make our way via Ouyen, Warracknabeal and Horsham for the final leg of our journey home after a memorable twenty four days away.

Accommodation for the above tour is motel, hotel or villas on a twin share basis.

PLEASE NOTE: Lunches and Dinners have not been included while in Cairns as there are approximately one hundred restaurants nearby and this allows you the flexibility of using your free time in Cairns to try different eating places without being restricted to tour times.

PRICE: \$12,290.00 per person twin share

SINGLE SUP: \$2440.00

Price includes GST

PRICE INCLUDES:

Luxury Coach Travel

Brendan's Australian Tours Travel Bag & Wallet

Motel Accommodation - Twin Share

All Admissions & Cruises as specified

All Meals as specified:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

Pick up & return to your home.

● Travel Insurance is highly recommended and is the responsibility of each passenger.