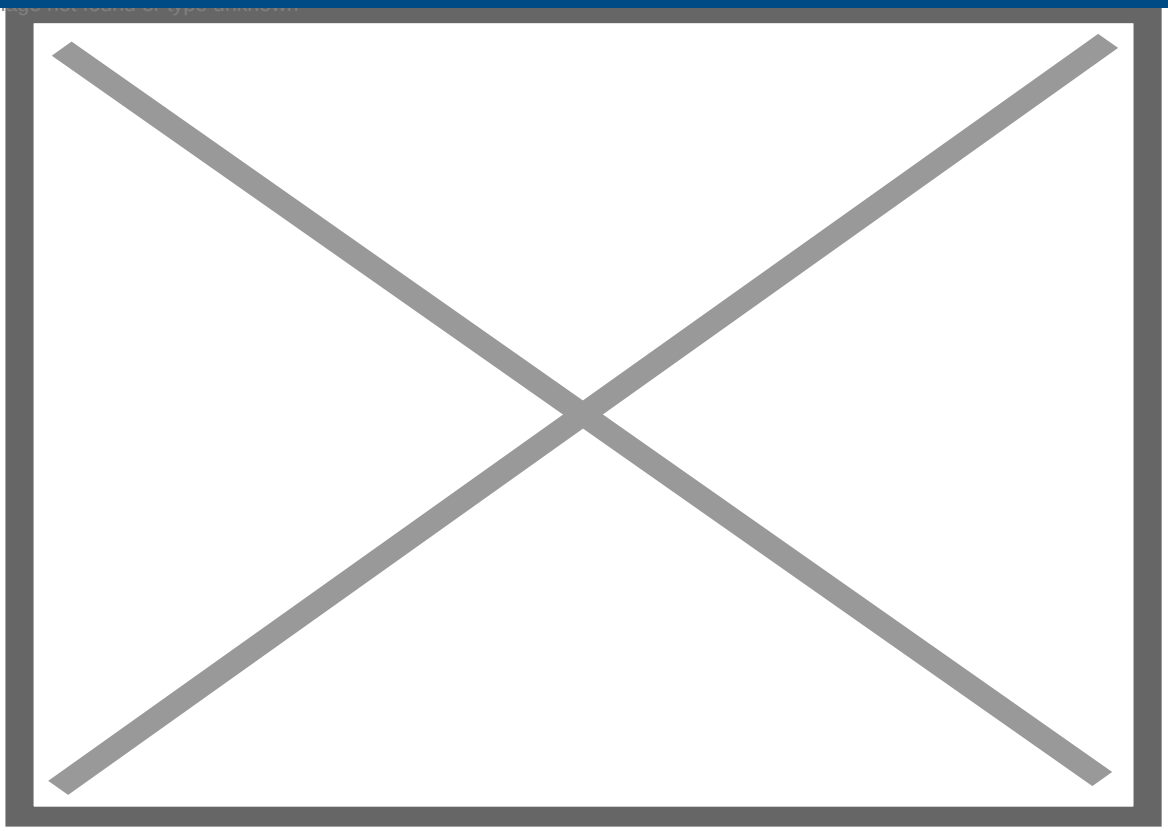
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14 days
Duration

New South Wales, Victoria
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

The Darling River Run small group tour

Apr 03 2024 to Apr 16 2024



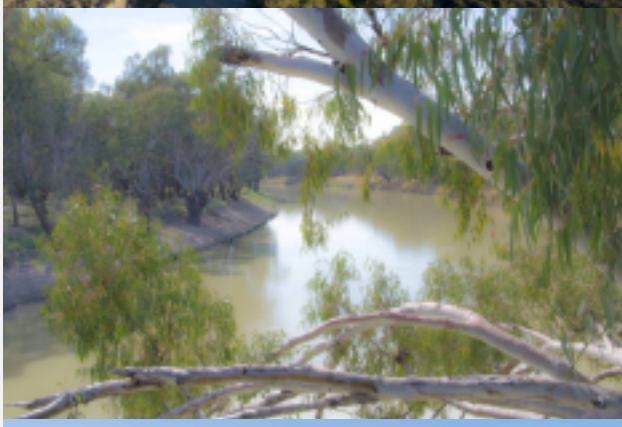
The Darling River Run small group tour

A 14 day small group tour that begins and ends in Sydney. For mature and senior travellers this small group tour travels along the Darling, through amazing landscape setting that have shaped the country of New South Wales including the Mallee forests in Malle country, we visit Aboriginal sites of importance, stay at station homesteads, and regional historic hotels, meeting the people, encountering the wildlife of the Murray Darling Basin and learning of the riverboat history of the rivers.

This is definitely an experience to be remembered as part of our collection of escorted Outback tours of Australia.

The Darling is referred typically as part of The Murray-Darling Basin traversing much of outback NSW. This basin is unique and contains much of importance in Australia's Aboriginal and European heritage, from the earliest days of Aboriginal life, to the European exploration and then on to the present day. It could be considered to be part of the essence of Australia – the cultural and historical heritage of the people, the riverboat trade, station life and the life of the towns is revealed in so many places via the river system. Odyssey traveller has developed its collections of Australian tours around History, culture and landscape, here close to Sydney over 2 weeks for the traveller either as a couple or solo traveller so much is revealed via the Darling river.







The Darling River

The Darling River meanders through New South Wales from its origins in Queensland's Darling Downs till it meets the mighty Murray River at Wentworth. It is a significant landmark in Outback Australia. Much of the pioneering history of the region has centred on the river, and it remains vital for agriculture, horticulture and town life and before that for the Aboriginal people and the river is deep in Aboriginal history and evidence of Aboriginal settlement including trade. Joining a small group tour following the Darling river will take you through the traditional lands of the Ngemba and Barkindji Aboriginal people, to who the river is an integral part of their lives and lifestyle.

The Darling river and the associated river plains in the 19th century was the 'Wild West' frontier' for Colonial settlement. By mid-century cattlemen had claimed stations and forged stock routes to Adelaide and Melbourne. The successful navigation from the Murray to Brewarrina by riverboat in 1859 signaled that the river had also became a highway. Wool empires around the Darling river grew quickly some were 2-3 million acres, shearing millions of sheep. By the end of the century river ports at Bourke, Wilcannia and Wentworth were shipping world record

amounts of wool to Europe. In the 20th century, this has changed, some land is marginalised through overstocking and land degradation, the industrial age removed vast amounts of labour from the agricultural region with its impact on towns and settlements. And rail and then road transport carried the wool bales away from the river. The greatest threat today to the river is irrigation draw downs.

This small group tour follows the Darling joining on day 3 at Brewarrina fish traps and follows through to Wentworth where the Darling reaches the Murray river, we turn here and return to Sydney over a couple of days.

“Darling River, longest member of the Murray-Darling river system in Australia; the river is formed by a collection of streams in the Great Dividing Range (Eastern Highlands), near the New South Wales-Queensland border, not far from the east coast, and flows generally southwest across New South Wales for 2,739 km (1,702 mi) to join the Murray at Wentworth (on the Victoria border), 240km from the Murray’s mouth in South Australia.

The main source of the Darling is usually considered to be the Severn, which becomes successively the Dumaresq, Macintyre, Barwon, and, finally, the Darling. Discharge of the lower tributaries (Culgoa, Warrego, Paroo, Gwydir, Namoi, Macquarie, and Bogan) of the main stream fluctuates as a result of droughts and floods. The Darling’s course is through extensive saltbush pastures, receiving an average of less than 250 mm (10 in) of rain annually, the river often loses more water by evaporation than is gained from its tributaries, many of which sometimes fail to reach the main stream. The entire Darling system drains a 650,000-sq-km (250,000-sq-mi) basin with an average annual discharge of 102 cu m (3,600 cu ft) per second at Menindee. The river has an average gradient of 16mm to the kilometre.

This small group tour follows the river and the history of the people who have used the river and the parts of the river for there livelihood beyond the pastoralists of the 19th century.

WHAT TO BRING: Casual clothes, a jacket, comfortable walking shoes or boots, water bottle, backpack, a wide brim hat, sunscreen and insect repellent are advisable. Please use a small suitcase or bag and a day bag can accompany you in the vehicle – don’t forget your camera!





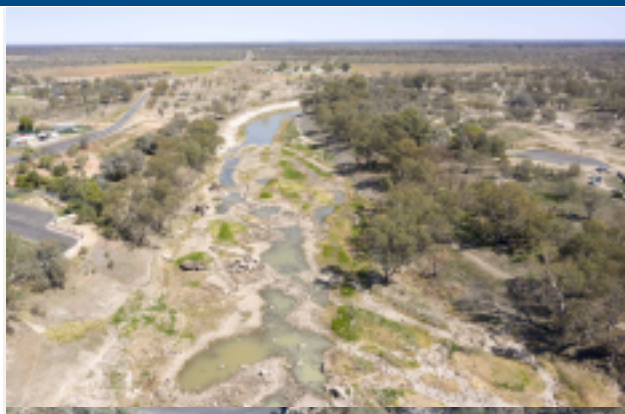


Tour Notes

- We are SATELLITE PHONE equipped for 100% mobile phone coverage.
- The itinerary is subject to change due to local conditions and availability.

Highlights

1. A unique opportunity Menindee Lakes and Kinchega National Park.
2. Understand the Aboriginal approach to river management of the Darling and then the Colonial approach.
3. View the Brewarrina fish traps which are estimated to be over 40,000 years old.
4. A vivid collection of awe-inspiring landscapes, extraordinary historical tales and memorable characters.
5. Visit the UNESCO World Heritage site Mungo National Park, home of Mungo man and Mungo Lady.







Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Sydney - Denman

Overview:

From Sydney we travel north following the Peats Ridge Road through Kulnurra to Finchley Trig Lookout. We'll stop en route for morning tea. After our stop at the lookout we make our way to the start of Finchley Cultural Walk, a short (1km) walk and see the Aboriginal engravings in the area.

This Darkinjung country and this site is part of a link with our next stop in Yengo National Park. The views from Finchley Trig Point (and

petroglyph site) lookout over Mt Yengo and went west toward Rylstone and south to Mt Tomah. Mt Yengo is an extremely important site where Baiame – the Creater God or Sky Father – came to earth, and it's significance is reflected in the number of art sites in this area, and the extent of this sites influence – Wiradjuri, Darkinjung, Wonnaurua, Awabakal, Worimi, Biripi and Kamilaroi language groups all being influenced by this area.

Our last visit today (access permitting) is to a cave near Milbrodale which contains a painted figure possibly representing Baiame.

(D)

Accommodation:

Grapevine Motel Denman or similar

Day 2

Locations: Denman - Coonabarabran

Overview:

The Hunter/Goulburn River Valley provided a trading/access route from the western side of the Great Dividing Range to the coast (and Mt Yengo site area).

Today we follow this route through Kerrabee and Wollar to the upper reaches of the Goulburn River and some sites near Ulan. A stop at Gulgon where we visit the Henry Lawson Centre and Pioneers Museum. After a break for lunch, We continue travelling through Dunedoo and Merrygoen following the Castlereagh River to the Warrumbungles and our overnight stop at Coonabarabran.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Matthew Flinders Motor Inn or similar

Day 3

Locations: Coonabarabran - Coonamble

Overview:

Today we have an early start, we are joined by an Aboriginal Discovery Ranger for the Sandstones Caves Walk, a 1.7km loop with gentle hills and some steps, in the Pilliga Nature Reserve. We will gain a better insight about the Aboriginal history in the region and view some rock art.

These were important sites for the Gamilaroi people in the Pilliga Forest area. Our route will then take us through Baradine – A visit to the new Forest Discovery Centre and on to Coonamble, another link in the river trading routes of the western area of New South Wales.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Cypress Motel or similar

Day 4

Locations: Coonamble - Bourke

Overview:

Coonable's location on the Castlereagh River and proximity to the Maquarie Marshes and Warrumbungle National Park makes it a natural link in our tour and as a trading from one area to another.

Time to explore some historical aspects of the town before following the "Wailwan" Sotry through Quambone to the Macquarie Marshes. From the Macquarie Marshes we travel across black soil, saltbush country to the important Aboriginal area surrounding Brewarrina. Links exist between this area and Mt Yengo area – in the past and the present – and the rejuvenated cultural museum should provide us with some insights to past connections, including the important fish traps and the 'mission' which was such a controversial part of Brewarrina's history.

On arrival in Bourke we'll visit the Back o'Bourke Visitor Centre, which provides us with an excellent introduction about the town and the river.

Our next two nights are at Bourke, one hour to the west of Brewarrina.

(B)

Accommodation:

Riverside Motel or similar

Day 5

Locations: Bourke

Overview:

Today we travel back to Brewarrina and have a guided tour of the ancient Aboriginal Fish Traps. On our way back to Bourke we stop to visit Mt Oxley, that was once climbed by explorers Stuart and Hume in 1829 in search of the “inland sea”.

Back in Bourke we’ll make couple of stops around town to visit its historic sites like the Old Bridge and the Old Cemetery.

(B)

Accommodation:

Riverside Motel or similar

Day 6

Locations: Wilcannia

Overview:

Today, we will drive from Bourke via Louth and Tilpa stopping at both sites before overnight in Wilcannia. In Louth we’ll visit the historic Dunlop Station, established in 1880, for a tour.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Warrawong on the Darling or similar

Day 7

Locations: Wilcannia - Menindee

Overview:

The historic town of Wilcannia was once the 3rd largest inland port (mid-19th century) with a rich and vibrant European history ("Queen City of the West") and beautiful sandstone buildings to remind us of those days. The town also has a large Aboriginal community, being the traditional area of the Barkingji people – so it too has another story to tell and one which we will explore as we continue down the river to our overnight stay in Menindee, made famous as the last stop for the ill-fated explorers Bourke and Wills. Our overnight stay will be in Menindee.

(B)

Accommodation:

Burke & Wills Motel or similar

Day 8

Locations: Menindee

Overview:

Today is spent in the Menindee area.

We spend time visiting the Kinchega National Park. We visit the historic woolshed and travel some of the internal tracks on the Darling flood plain and around the Menindee Lakes system to experience the differing environments.

When the lake system was full it provided and amazingly rich environment for the local Aboriginal people – while evidence for this occupation is not easily found, the rich bird, fish and mammal life in the lake system is still evident in abundance and the site of the local 'mission' is still accessible.

We depart Menindee and travel to the nearby Bindara Station, on arrival we'll have a chance to explore the station and learn about its history and

life on the Darling. In the evening we enjoy dinner by the campfire.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Bindara Station

Day 9

Locations: Menindee - Mungo National Park

Overview:

Leaving Bindarra, we follow the westside of the Darling meandering through the River Red Gum Forests eventually crossing the river near the old port town Pooncarie. We then access the Willandra lakes regions and Mungo National Park.

The World Heritage listing of Mungo National Park indicates its importance and interest. Time to Absorb the Special atmosphere and enjoy the sunset at the famous “Walls of China”. But it is Lake Mungo, the hidden story of each sanddune within the Mungo Lunette of this dry lake that is now an ancient lake bed that has provided the Aboriginal peoplewith the discovery of the oldest human remain to date with the sedimentary sands revealing Mungo man and Mungo lady in the early 1970’s that reset the the time clock for aboriginal history.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Mungo Lodge

Day 10

Locations: Mungo National Park - Wentworth

Overview:

We spend some time this morning exploring the new “footprints in the Sand” interpretive walk. At least 450 prints following 23 discernible track ways were discovered by Mary Pappin Jr; a young Aboriginal Ranger working with National Parks. The prints have been dated at approximately 20,000 years (at the time of the last ice age) and give and amazing insight into life during that period. We re-join the Darling River

near Wentworth, with a tour at the Inland Botanical Gardens. We then meet our local guide for a tour of Wentworth, a historic town at the junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers.

(B)

Accommodation:

Wentworth Central Motor Inn or similar

Day 11

Locations: Wentworth - Echuca

Overview:

Continuing on our exploration of the Murray/Darling River systems we follow the Murray as it winds its way through Hattah-Kulkyne National Park to Swan Hill where we stop for lunch alongside the river and then on to Kow Swamp for some bird watching. Kow Swamp is another important archaeological site contrasting markedly with Mungo National Park.

We continue with our travels to Echuca – once the biggest inland port of Australia and home of the only brothel in Australia classified by the National Trust. On arrival we'll meet our local guide for a tour of this historic city.

(B,L)

Accommodation:

Paddlewheel Motel Echuca or similar

Day 12

Locations: Echuca - Lake Hume

Overview:

From Echuca we travel to the Barmah River Red Gum forests – the largest in Australia – investigating the Aboriginal history of the area and taking a river boat cruise along a section of this unaltered wetland area (cruise schedule permitting). We enjoy a picnic lunch after the cruise and then proceed to visit the Barmah Forest Heritage & Education

Centre.

We'll continue along the Murray, stopping along the way at Yarrawonga to view the Weir and through Albury/Wodonga before reaching the Hume Dam for a walk along the rim and then continue our drive to Lake Hume Resort for dinner and overnight.

(B,L,D)

Accommodation:

Lake Hume Resort or similar

Day 13

Locations: Lake Hume - Cooma

Overview:

Today our tour takes us through Walwa, Tintaldra and on to Khancoban Pondage, a 3km lake that forms part of the Snowy Hydro Scheme. We'll pause for lunch nearby (own arrangements) before we enter the high country – the land of the Moth Hunters – on our way to our overnight stay in Cooma.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Alkira Hotel or similar

Day 14

Locations: Cooma - Sydney

Overview:

An early start this morning as we travel back to Sydney on the Hume Highway with a stop along day way at Tidbindilla Nature Reserve, for a 1h walk to view the Birrigai Aboriginal Rockshelter, dating 25,000 years back. We arrive back in Sydney in the late afternoon or early evening.

(B)

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 13 Nights accommodation.
- 13 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 8 dinners.
- 14 days of touring in comfortable and modern mini-coach to a maximum number of 17 Guests
- National Park Entry Fees and excursions as indicated.

What's not included in our Tour

- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls, laundry etc.
- Travel Insurance.
- Beverages with meals.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.