

LAKE EYRE & WILPENA POUND

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SAMPLE ITINERARY

This is a sample itinerary and may be subject to change. We may need to alter or amend itineraries, excursions, accommodation, or sightseeing arrangements from those published, with little or no notice. This may be due to road conditions, weather, cultural considerations, safety factors and other operational considerations or government regulations. Final itineraries are sent to passengers approximately 2-3 weeks before travel.

DAY 1 – Adelaide – Clare Valley

Today you will be greeted by our friendly and professional Tour Directors.

After landing at Adelaide Airport please collect your baggage and make your way to the café located at the bottom of the escalator in the baggage hall where one of your Tour Directors will meet you.

We then depart Adelaide and travel north along the Princes Highway, making our way to Port Augusta. We spend the night at the Standpipe Golf Motor Inn. (L,D)

DAY 2 – Parachilna – Marree

This morning we enjoy a visit to the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens. Established in 1993 to research, conserve and promote the wider appreciation of Australia's arid zone flora, the centre is home to thousands of highly evolved plant communities that are specially adapted to thrive in an environment where temperatures are extreme, and drought can last for decades. The garden showcases a diverse collection of arid zone habitats in a picturesque setting of more than 250 hectares.

Later this morning we continue our journey north to Parachilna. Enjoy a gourmet lunch under the verandah of the Prairie Hotel before heading on through Lyndhurst and Leigh Creek, arriving in Marree late afternoon. This historic little settlement lies at the junction of the Birdsville and Oodnadatta Tracks, and was once one of the busiest towns in Outback Australia! Tonight, we stay at the Marree Hotel. (B, L, D)

DAY 3 – Lake Eyre – Goyder Lagoon – Birdsville – William Creek

Please Note: Today your tour will split into 2 groups. Group 1 will take the scenic flights/tour as per the itinerary below, while Group 2 travels up to William Creek by road following the Old Ghan rail line. On Day 4, Group 2 enjoys the scenic flight and tour, while Group 1 travels back down to Marree by road.

This morning we head to the Marree Aerodrome to prepare for our scenic flights. Meet your experienced pilot and board our Cessna Grand Caravan (subject to availability). Once airborne, our morning flight will take us over Lake Eyre South before crossing over to Lake Eyre North, the larger of the two lakes.

We continue north over Clifton Hills Station and Goyder Lagoon on the Diamantina River floodplains. Located at the junction of the Diamantina River and Eyre Creek, this large ephemeral swamp consists mainly of shallow braided micro-channels which look stunning from the air. From Goyder Lagoon we fly further north to Birdsville where we land and enjoy a leisurely lunch at the iconic Birdsville Hotel. This is followed by an informative town tour taken by a local guide to close points of interest and the Waddi Waddi trees.

This afternoon we take to the skies for our second flight for the day, this time heading southwest over the mighty Simpson Desert. Admire the endless red sand dunes that stretch to the horizon, before once again flying over Lake Eyre North. After another close inspection of this breathtaking natural spectacle we'll fly over Belt Bay, the lowest point on the Australia continent at 15 metres below sea level, and head for William Creek, where we rendezvous with the rest of the tour group. We spend the night here in modern ensuite accommodation and enjoy dinner in one of the most atmospheric outback pubs in Australia - the William Creek Hotel. (B, L, D)

DAY 4 – Old Ghan Line – Coward Springs – Lake Eyre North – Marree

Today Group 2 enjoys the scenic flights to Birdsville and Lake Eyre, while Group 1 travels down the Oodnadatta Track to Marree.

LAKE EYRE & WILPENA POUND

Later this morning we continue south along the Oodnadatta Track, following the Old Ghan line - one of the great historic railway lines in the world. Construction began in 1878 and it eventually reached Oodnadatta in 1891. The line only reached Alice Springs in 1929, so the journey from Oodnadatta at this time was still made by camel. The old line was eventually closed in 1980, and the new line takes a different route to Alice Springs. Some of the old sidings that refilled the steam engines with water, such as Coward Springs, are incredibly interesting and well preserved. Today we'll visit a few of them on our way down to Marree. Upon our arrival we'll rendezvous with Group 2 and check-in to the Marree Hotel for our overnight stay. (B, L, D)

DAY 5 – Maree – Wilpena Pound

After breakfast we farewell Marree and begin our trek south to the Flinders Ranges and Wilpena Pound. Enjoy the scenic drive through Bunyeroo and Brachina Gorges, stopping at several vantage points along the way to admire the views of the Flinders Ranges. Enjoy a picnic lunch along the way before arriving at Wilpena Pound Resort early in the afternoon.

Wilpena Pound sits in the southern region of the Flinders Ranges National Park. It is characterised by spectacular scenery and is home to nearly half of South Australia's species of plants. After checking in to your deluxe resort room, we'll set off on a guided walk through the tranquil Pound Gap into Wilpena Pound (easy grade, 2-3 hrs return). Follow Wilpena Creek past ancient River Red Gums and pines to arrive at the historic Hills Homestead. For the more energetic, there is an optional extension to the walk that leads to Wangarra Hill lookout, which offers panoramic views of Wilpena Pound (good level of fitness and mobility required).

This afternoon we return to the resort. Take some time to freshen up before dinner in the restaurant. (B, L, D)

DAY 6 – Wilpena Pound - Adelaide

This morning we enjoy a visit to the Old Wilpena Station precinct, one of South Australia's oldest and best-preserved pastoral settlements. There's also an opportunity to take a 20-minute scenic flight over Wilpena Pound (at your own expense).

Later this morning we begin our trek south back to Adelaide. Travel to Hawker before taking the R.M Williams Way down through Carrieton, Orroroo and Burra. Enjoy a quick look around this interesting little village before heading on to Adelaide, arriving late afternoon. We then check-in to the Stamford Grand Hotel in Glenelg for our final evening together.

Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner in the hotel restaurant and reflect upon your adventure into the heart of outback Australia. (B, L, D)

DAY 7 – Adelaide – Home Ports

Today your adventure concludes. After breakfast you'll be transferred to the airport for your return flights home. (B)

Every effort will be made by your crew to ensure that the above itinerary is followed. However, Outback Spirit reserves the right to alter the itinerary once on tour as required due to weather and track conditions or other operational considerations.