

AUSTRALIA

Sydney to the Blue Mountains

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

Our Self-Guided Walking Adventures are ideal for travelers with an independent spirit who enjoy exploring at their own pace. We provide authentic accommodations, luggage transfers, and some meals, along with comprehensive Route Notes, detailed maps, and 24-hour emergency assistance. This gives you the freedom to focus on the things that matter to you—no group, no guide, and no set schedule to stand in the way of enjoying your adventure, your way.



Overview

Australia's Blue Mountains National Park, the cherished UNESCO World Heritage site in Sydney's backyard, provides one of the world's most magnificent backdrops for walking. With such sweeping beauty—soaring tablelands of sandstone brimming with rock formations, infinite blankets of blue-green eucalypt and gum forests, torrents of waterfalls plunging down massive cliffs—it's little wonder that local Aussies come here for a walkabout. Go on your own walkabout during this Self-Guided Walking Adventure, using the charming outpost villages of Blackheath, Katoomba, and Leura as your bases, hiking as much or as little as you would like. Our routes cut deep into Grose River Valley and Valley of the Waters, helping you retrace the paths of Australia's early explorers, traversing steep hills and thrilling cliffsides with help from occasional manmade ladders, stairs, and bridges. The Giant Stairway descends past the Three Sisters, an iconic trio of rock formations. Countless waterfalls shower multi-hued cliffs bearded in green. There is awe-inspiring wonder at every turn in this corner of Oz. And there is breathtaking luxury at the close of your days, with deluxe accommodations at two sumptuous lodgings and an upscale Bed & Breakfast, made all the more comforting by Aussie home cooking one night and fine dining on two others.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrival in Sydney. Transfer to Blackheath. Optional visit of the Campbell Rhododendron Gardens

After arriving in Sydney, make your way by private transfer to Blackheath, one of 26 charming townships in the Blue Mountain region of New South Wales. Famed for its annual Rhododendron Festival, Blackheath boasts a vibrant artistic heart and a rich colonial history, both of which are embodied in its many antique shops. This stunningly beautiful area on the park's western edges draws nature lovers of all types: rock climbers, horseback riders, spelunkers, kayakers, and of course walkers. Its dozens of bush trails traverse some of the most dramatic sandstone vistas and rock formations in Australia. If you arrive at your resort early, you might choose to prepare for your adventure by limbering up with a treatment at the onsite spa (at your own expense; please reserve ahead of time at parklands.com.au/day-spa). Or visit the Campbell Rhododendron Gardens, a rich botanical collection of small exotic plants and towering native trees. The gentle walking paths throughout the park and around the lake provide a nice warm up for your rambles ahead.

Parkland Country Gardens & Lodges, Blackheath

A 4½-star country lodge and luxurious retreat, the Parkland Country Gardens & Lodges is set on 28 acres of beautifully manicured grounds with flower beds, sweeping green lawns, garden cottages, and a private lake. The property's lush kitchen garden provides fruit and vegetables to the resort. Parkland offers

a soothing environment in which to unwind, with a warm palette of colors and elegant touches in every room. Just over a half mile from the main street of Blackheath, you can easily stroll into town to browse antique shops and sample Australian cuisine.



DAY 2

Blackheath loop walk; 12.5 miles, moderate with challenging sections, 2,050-ft. elevation gain and loss

Your first invigorating walking day is a long loop walk through rainforest and open woodland that leads to spectacular overlooks. Following Popes Glen Track, you trace a babbling creek beneath a ferny understory down into the Popes Glen Valley. Climbing steeply out of the valley, you make your way up to the lookout point of Govetts Leap for sweeping views of the Grose River Valley, a stunning landscape of blue-and emerald-tinted forest and granite and quartzite faces that glow yellow and brown in the sunlight. Watch for the colorful king parrot taking wing in the canopy and keep your ears trained for the “weela weela” song of the yellow-tailed black cockatoo. From Govetts Leap, descend through the bush to spectacular Bridal Veil Falls, which plummets some 260 feet. Your footpath then leads uphill, tracing the valley edge to Evans Lookout, where you can admire the Blue Gum Forest more than 1,600 feet below. Then navigate down steep terrain to the Grand Canyon Creek, passing silver-bark Blue Mountain ash trees and black wattles. Cross the creek, perhaps stopping to soak your feet, and then follow undulating terrain of tall coachwoods, sassafras, and giant ferns. Soon, arrive at the Grand Canyon, a modest gorge but impressive nonetheless for the razor-sharp cut made by the river below over millennia. Next, you pass through The Rotunda, an expanse of sand and silt overshadowed by hanging rocks. From here, return to town, where you can relax at your lodge before dinner on your own in Blackheath.



Parkland Country Gardens & Lodges, Blackheath

DAY 3

Scenic World to Jamison Valley and Ruined Castle; 9.8 miles, moderate with challenging sections, 2,450-ft. elevation gain and 1,650-ft. elevation loss

Depart Blackheath by taxi this morning, using your included voucher. Your exhilarating walk today is through the Jamison Valley amid rainforest and eucalypt forest. To reach the valley floor, you board either the Scenic Cableway (the steepest aerial cable car in the Southern Hemisphere) or the Scenic Railway (the steepest incline railway in the world). Begin your hike along an elevated boardwalk used by coal miners 100 years ago. As you walk, you see mining relics and tunnels and climb over the remnants of the 1931 landslides. You might even spot the elusive ground-dwelling, pheasant-sized lyrebird and sip pure water from Marrangaroo Spring. Enjoy your packed lunch among a flock of cheeky currawongs or rosella parrots after you scramble up past apple, peppermint, and bloodwood trees to the impressive rocky outcrop known as Ruined Castle. To return, you may board the Cableway or Railway or opt to climb the Furber Steps, a challenging ascent through dense rainforest past cascading waterfalls and lovely grottoes with spectacular valley views. At the top, you may walk to your next lodging, or halve the distance by riding the Skyway across the canyon. If you prefer, call for a taxi at your own expense. You have the evening to relax at your resort or explore Katoomba, with its lively café scene and shopping. Built on coal mining, this charming town is renowned for its proximity to some of the most stunning vistas in the Blue Mountains. Even the Aborigines named the area “Kedumba,” meaning “shiny, falling waters” after the immense beauty here, some of which is captured in the town’s inviting galleries.

Lilianfels Resort & Spa, Katoomba

Evoking the grace of a European manor, the 5-star Lilianfels Resort & Spa enjoys a magnificent setting. Perched near the edge of an overlook 3,300 feet above sea level, it offers sweeping views of Jamison Valley and its canyons. Located in the heart of the Blue Mountains, the two-acre retreat is adorned with manicured gardens and beautiful

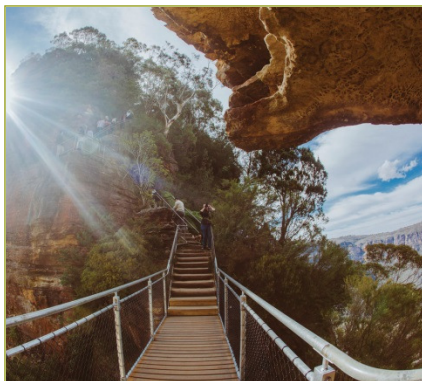
Victorian touches, including luxurious silk and hand-crafted wallpaper. Generous terraces look over the valley and the onsite day spa tailors treatments to your desires. Also onsite, Darley's restaurant is the most awarded fine dining establishment in New South Wales, preparing elegant fare sourced from the surrounding countryside.



DAY 4

Katoomba to Leura via the Three Sisters, Giant Stairway, Leura Forest, Prince Henry Cliff Walk, and Gordon Falls Reserve; 5.3 or 6.2 miles, moderate to challenging, 3,000-ft. elevation gain and 3,100-ft. elevation loss. **This walk is not recommended for anyone with vertigo.**

Begin the day with a short walk to Echo Point, which offers spectacular views of the Three Sisters, a trio of rock formations soaring high up from the escarpment. One Aboriginal legend says it was their father who turned them to stone to protect them from a rival tribe smitten with the beauty of the girls. Descend into the valley via the 862 steps known as the Giant Stairway. These steep steps through the bush deliver you into the thick canopy of the Leura Forest. You won't find as many tourists here, making for a leisurely and peaceful walk past towering trees engulfed in delicate ferns and covered with mosses that shimmer many shades of green. When conditions are right, filtered sunlight creates a magical woodland scene here. Soon, you ascend the steep trail to the Prince Henry Cliff Walk, passing waterfalls and having the option to take short detours to more cascades and lookout points. At the top, follow the cliffside path to the Gordon Falls Reserve and continue on to your home for the next two nights in the charming town of Leura. A true gem of the Blue Mountains, this village's residents adore their private gardens and tend to them lovingly, making a simple stroll a visual and fragrant delight. Leura is also home to the Toy and Railway



Museum, Australia's largest collection of toys, dolls, teddy bears, and model railways. Dinner features Aussie home cooking at your in-town Bed & Breakfast.

Broomelea Bed & Breakfast, Leura

In the heart of Leura's tranquil Living Heritage district, the 4½-star Broomelea is a classic Bed & Breakfast with a

charming Edwardian flavor. The restaurants, boutiques, and galleries of Leura are just a ten-minute walk away, as are the cliff walks that overlook the Grose River Valley. Many of its rooms retain original Federation touches and a generous breakfast is served in a relaxed setting. Owners Bryan and Denise Keith have operated the historic house as an inn since 2000, enhancing its interior with warm touches and its exterior with lovely gardens as well as an inviting wraparound porch on which to breathe in the evening Blue Mountain air.

DAY 5

Valley of the Waters; 6.6 or 7.2 or 7.8 miles, moderate with challenging options, elevation gains range from 1,000 ft. to 2,450 ft. and elevation losses range from 1,500 ft. to 2,800 ft. **The challenging options are not recommended for anyone with vertigo.**

Today, you descend into the Valley of the Waters, wending your way past plunging cascades, beneath overhanging cliffs, and through magnificent grottoes. A real highlight today is the "mid-cliff" walk along a wide path that has been carved into the sheer cliff face. Handrails, ladders, and airy lookouts provide a birds-eye view over hundreds of miles of forest. After a hearty breakfast, depart your hotel by foot for your final bushwalk. Once you reach the Fairmont Resort, skirt a golf course and hike to Lillian's Bridge, a thrilling 21-foot span over a 200-foot gorge. Once you cross, continue to the Tea Rooms, an eatery on the cliff's edge also known as Conservation Hut. A trio of trails departs from there and they variously entail steep climbs, walks underneath massive cliffsides, or a trek farther into the valley. No matter your route, enjoy spectacular views of pristine waterfalls, including the Wentworth Falls, a three-tiered shower that has carved a U-shape into the cliff. For the final stretch, make your way along a small stream to Wentworth Falls Village. Another town of rustic charm, this was the terminus of the first railway journey in the Blue Mountains in 1867. Take a taxi back to Leura using your provided voucher. There is time this evening to

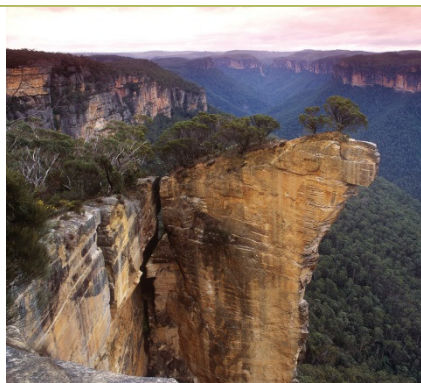
relax and recount your rewarding walk through the Blue Mountains over drinks and dinner.

Broomelea Bed & Breakfast, Leura

DAY 6

Departure from Leura

After breakfast, your trip concludes with a transfer to the local train station, where you can make arrangements for your onward travel.



ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

NUISANCE WILDLIFE

The Australian bush (outdoors) is a natural place where wild animals, large and small, live freely. Watch where you walk, sit, and stand. Pay attention and observe a wide variety of wildlife—both friendly and not-so-friendly—on, or near, the track ahead. Walkers occasionally share the trail with a variety of potentially dangerous creatures including snakes, spiders, ants, and insects such as European wasps and honey bees. Walkers with allergies to bites and stings need to ensure they carry appropriate medication. Snakes and spiders do little harm unless provoked or disturbed; stay on the track, watch your step, and be alert. Leeches may be present in wetter areas and during wet weather. While they do no real harm, they can be alarming and cause some distress. If you find a leech attached (they attach to you from overhanging vegetation) simply use salt or a hot match-head on their tail to prompt their release. It is essential that you carry a basic first aid kit while walking. The detailed Route Notes that you will receive prior to your departure provide tips to help you respect the space of nuisance wildlife, prevent encounters, and administer treatment. We encourage all guests to carry a cell phone; please remember, your local representative is only a phone call away.

SOLO TRAVELERS

As an added safety measure, all solo travelers will be provided with an EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) at no additional cost*. EPIRBs are used to alert search and rescue authorities in the event of an emergency and indicate your location by sending out a personalized emergency distress signal. Used only when all other means of rescue or communication have failed, these emergency beacons should only be activated if you have a life-threatening accident or medical emergency (any activation expenses incurred are at your own expense). Solo travelers will receive their EPIRB, along with details of its use, in their Document Pack awaiting their arrival at the first hotel in Blackheath on Day 1 of the tour. A pre-paid addressed envelope will also be provided for its

return at the end of the tour. On the final day of the tour, this envelope should be handed over to your final accommodation hosts, who will mail it back to our local partner on your behalf. *Please Note: travelers will incur a \$150 fee should the EPIRB not be returned.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Here is one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

Protecting the natural and cultural beauty of the Blue Mountains.

To ensure that travelers can enjoy this unspoiled wilderness for generations to come, we support the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. For more than 50 years, this volunteer-driven organization has worked to preserve this UNESCO World Heritage site through education and awareness. The group has actively advocated for environment-friendly policy, worked to protect the natural environment, and brought more lands into the park's purview.

Itinerary Overview

PLEASE NOTE: your detailed Route Notes will be mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure. While these Route Notes may list a number of accommodation options, your specific accommodations are listed below. Please make sure to bring this Itinerary Overview with you.

STARTING POINT

Sydney (airport or local hotel), NSW, Australia

Based upon individual arrival times

NIGHTS 1 & 2

Parklands Country Gardens & Lodges

132 Govetts Leap Road

Blackheath, NSW 2785, Australia

Tel 011 61 2 4787 7211

Email reservations@parklands.com.au

parklands.com.au

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHT 3

Lilianfels Resort & Spa

5-19 Lilianfels Avenue

Katoomba, NSW 2780, Australia

Tel 011 61 2 4780 1200

Email reservations@lilianfels.com.au

lilianfels.com.au

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 4 & 5

Broomelea Bed & Breakfast

273 Leura Mall

Leura, NSW 2780, Australia

Tel 011 61 2 4784 2940

Email info@broomelea.com.au

broomelea.com.au

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

ENDING POINT

Leura (train station), NSW, Australia
Based upon individual departure times

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH

6 days, 5 nights

DEPARTURES

This tour is available daily, on request, starting February 6–April 12, May 1–May 31, September 1–September 27, and October 15–December 20, 2018.

TOUR PRICE

2018 departures	Per person	Single +	Solo Surcharge
February 6–April 12			
May 1–May 31			
September 1–September 27	\$2,948	\$760	\$220
October 15–December 20			

STARTING POINT

Sydney (airport or local hotel), NSW, Australia

Based upon individual arrival times

ENDING POINT

Leura (train station), NSW, Australia

Based upon individual departure times

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate to challenging with an average of 5.5 to 12.5 miles per day (4 to 6 hours of steady walking) and limited options. There are daily cumulative elevation gains up to 3,000 feet and daily cumulative elevation losses up to 3,100 feet, with some long, steep sections including ladders and lots of steps. The walk on Day 4, as well as two options on Day 5, are **not recommended for anyone with vertigo** (there is, however, the option to skip the walk on Day 5—as well as any other day—and transfer to the next accommodation). Walks follow the natural landscape: along cliff tops, down gullies and canyons, and along valley floors. The terrain mostly includes narrow, well-defined, and typically well-marked forested trails (with both smooth, hardened surfaces, as well as uneven, rocky surfaces covered

with fallen leaves and branches). A few trails are more exposed with rough and rocky terrain and river crossings on boulders should be expected. The terrain also includes short sections of roads required to reach your accommodation. Remember: preparation is the key to ensuring your tour readiness; the more you walk or participate in aerobic exercise prior to your trip, the more you will enjoy your experience!

INCLUSIONS

- » Breakfast daily, four packed lunches (days 2, 3, 4, and 5), and three dinners (days 1, 3, and 5); beverages not included
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Orientation phone call with a Country Walkers' representative
- » Luggage transfers between the hotels
- » Detailed Route Notes (mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure) and maps (mailed to your first on-tour hotel)
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner
- » 24-hour One Call International Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Participation Agreement and you will receive:

- » A Guest Information Form to complete and return at least 45 days prior to your tour
- » Luggage tags
- » Route Notes and maps
- » Your trip invoice

GRATUITIES

Standard gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers; however additional tips are always welcome. Should you wish to tip for meals or services not included in the cost of the tour, please do so at your discretion. Local currency is preferred.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

STARTING POINT

Sydney (airport or local hotel), NSW, Australia

Based upon individual arrival times

Upon arrival, a private transfer will meet you at either Sydney Airport (in the Arrivals Hall, holding a sign with your name, Country Walkers, and/or the name of our local partner) or a Sydney city hotel and transfer you approximately 2–2½ hours to your first hotel in Blackheath. Once settled in, our local partner will await your phone call to provide you with an **orientation**, ensure you are comfortably settled, and answer any questions you may have.

In order to arrange your arrival transfer and orientation phone call, please provide us with your arrival and departure details by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Sydney Airport (SYD), Australia
sydneyairport.com.au

GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

Sydney Airport is an international airport located five miles south of the city center, in the suburb of Mascot in Sydney. It is the only major airport serving Sydney, and is a primary hub for Qantas, as well as a secondary hub for Virgin Australia and Jetstar Airways. Several airlines offer direct flights from the U.S. to Sydney Airport, including Qantas, Virgin Australia, United, and Delta. Most international flights arrive at Terminal 1, however check your ticket or with your airline to confirm your terminal for arrival. Sydney Airport has free Wi-Fi throughout T1 and T2.

If you are spending pre-tour time in Sydney, you may travel to the city center via one of the following options:

» **By taxi:** each terminal has its own sheltered taxi stand with supervisors on hand during peak times to ensure a smooth flow of taxis for travelers. A taxi to the city center costs approximately \$55–\$60 AUD and takes approximately 20–25 minutes. The lines at the taxi stands can be long; you may consider pre-booking a taxi to collect you from the airport. Pre-booked parking bays are

available at the international and domestic terminals. Some taxi companies that offer pre-booking include Legion Cabs (legioncabs.com.au), Premier Cabs – Airport Taxi Service (airporttaxi.com.au), Silver Service Fleet (silverservice.com.au), St. George Cabs (stgeorgecabs.com.au), Taxis Combined Services (taxiscombined.com.au), and GM Cabs (131001.com.au).

» **By train:** there are train stations located at both the International and Domestic terminals, which operate as part of the **Airport Link** train service (the Domestic terminal train station is located directly between T2 and T3 terminals and is accessible from within the terminals from the Arrivals level. The International terminal train station is located at the northern end of the terminal and is accessible from the Arrivals level). Airport Link is a fast and convenient way to reach the center of Sydney. Trains run approximately every 10 minutes and the journey to the city takes only 13 minutes. The international and domestic rail stations link directly to the City Circle line, which means most city destinations are within a short walk of stations. For more information about Airport Link, including fares, maps, and travel planners, visit the Airport Link website, airportlink.com.au. For the latest information about the Sydney train network, service, and track work updates, and other Sydney train information, visit the Sydney Trains website, sydneytrains.info.

» **By Sydney Bus:** Sydney Buses operates a timetabled service, Route 400, between Bondi Junction and Burwood which stops at both the International (T1) and Domestic (T3) terminals. Clearly marked bus stops are located on the arrivals level outside each of these terminals. General information about fares, timetables and connections to other parts of Sydney is available at sydneybuses.info.

PRE- AND POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

We recommend spending at least one day prior to and/or following the tour to explore the city of Sydney. Following are a few mid-range hotel recommendations in The Rocks, Sydney's famous (and our favorite) heritage precinct. Located a short stroll from the Sydney Opera House, the Harbour Bridge, the Royal Botanic Gardens, and the lively Circular Quay area with its excellent restaurants and bars, the Rocks provides an ideal base for exploring the city and surrounds.

Harbour Rocks Hotel

34 Harrington Street
The Rocks, Sydney
Tel 011 61 2 8220 9999
Email H8758@accor.com
harbourrocks.com.au

A beautiful 59-room boutique hotel offering spacious and stylish guest rooms, an on-site fine-dining restaurant and bar, as well as an alfresco “Garden Bar” — overlooking historic Nurses Walk, this peaceful terrace is an oasis amid the hustle and bustle of Sydney’s historical Rocks precinct.

Russell Hotel

143a George Street
The Rocks, Sydney
Tel 011 61 2 9241 3543
Email info@therussell.com.au
therussell.com.au

The Russell Hotel retains the charm of its 1887 origins, while offering quaint and comfortable boutique accommodation. Every room at The Russell has a style of its own—furnishings are a rustic blend of antique bedheads, pine dressers, and marble washstands. There is also a rooftop garden that offers the perfect vantage point to look out over Circular Quay. All rates include a continental breakfast downstairs in The Push Bar + Dining.

Holiday Inn Old Sydney

55 George St
The Rocks, Sydney
Tel 011 61 2 9255 1800
holidayinnoldsydney@ihg.com
ihg.com

Situated in a heritage listed building, the hotel’s 175 rooms feature contemporary decor with all amenities. As well as a lobby lounge bar and full restaurant, the hotel boasts one of the best roof top pools in Sydney overlooking one of the world’s most beautiful harbors, Sydney Harbour.

For further hotel and restaurant suggestions, please visit sydney.com.

ENDING POINT

Leura (train station), NSW, Australia

Based upon individual departure times

A short transfer will be provided from your last accommodation to Leura Station. **Train tickets for the journey to Sydney Central Station, Sydney Airport, or elsewhere cannot be purchased ahead of time; they must be purchased through a ticket vending machine at the Leura Station.**

In order to arrange your departure transfer, please provide us with your *expected* train departure time (based on sydneytrains.info train timetable; see below for more information) by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.

GETTING FROM LEURA TO SYDNEY CENTRAL STATION

There are direct trains from Leura to Sydney Central (Train) Station departing hourly. The journey takes approximately two hours and costs approximately \$6–\$10 AUD (purchasable only through the vending machine located at Leura Station). Please visit sydneytrains.info for up-to-date timetables and rates or call the Transport Infoline at 131 500 (from Australia) or +61 2 4907 7500 (from overseas). Once on the sydneytrains.info website, you have the following options to view up-to-date timetables and rates:

Search Train Timetables

1. Under “Select a Line,” choose “Blue Mountains Line”
2. Under “Select a Direction,” choose “Bathurst to Central”
3. Choose your preferred date and time, then “View Timetable”

OR Plan Your Trip

1. Under “From,” enter “Leura Station, Leura”
2. Under “To,” enter “Central Station, Sydney”
3. Choose your preferred date and time, then “View Trip”

If spending post-tour time in Sydney, taxis to area hotels are readily available at Sydney Central Station.

GETTING FROM LEURA TO SYDNEY AIRPORT

To reach Sydney Airport from Leura Station, follow previous directions for “Getting from Leura to Sydney Central Station.” Upon arrival at Sydney Central Station, you will be required to connect to an Airport Link train service from Platform 23. Trains run approximately every 10 minutes and the journey to the airport takes only 13 minutes and costs approximately \$18 AUD. For more information about Airport Link, including fares, maps, and travel planners, visit airportlink.com.au or phone +61 2 8337 8417.

Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to schedule return flights immediately following the tour’s conclusion, please call your airline directly for specific check-in requirements.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*, which guarantees peace of mind for every guest. From the moment your reservation is confirmed, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, Self-Guided experience. For best availability, reserve your trip early.

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

If you have not already gone through our reservations process, please note that the method by which Self-Guided Adventures are reserved differs in important ways from typical scheduled tours. We encourage all guests to refrain from purchasing plane tickets or making contingent plans until they receive confirmation from us. Here's how the process works:

1. **Reservation Request.** The process begins when you make a reservation request for this tour, either online at countrywalkers.com or by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. Please note the online form does not on its own constitute a final reservation or a guarantee of tour space. If you use the form, one of our Tour Consultants will call within one business day. Outside of 90 days prior to the tour start date, a \$350 per person credit card authorization is required at the time of the reservation request. Within 90 days prior to the tour start date, your final tour cost, pre-authorized to your credit card, is required. If we are unable to accommodate you on your preferred dates/tour (or an alternative of your choice), this payment is fully refunded.
2. **Reservation Request Receipt.** Upon receipt of your deposit and preferred tour start dates, you will be provided with an emailed reservation request receipt, stating your reservation number and reconfirming the details of your reservation request (tour name, departure date, and tour price), while we get working on securing availability with all the hotels.
3. **Confirmation.** Our goal is to confirm your reservation request within five business days; however, this may take longer for a variety of reasons. All of our accommodations are available on a request basis; we

do not hold blocks of rooms and, therefore, must confirm availability at the time of your request. If at all possible, we recommend you provide a range of back-up tour start dates at the time of your initial request. Once your reservation is confirmed, a Tour Consultant will contact you and your credit card will be automatically charged the \$350 per person deposit (or full payment if within 90 days prior to your tour start date). Once you have received our official confirmation, you can make flight reservations.

4. **Final Payment.** Final tour payment is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As pricing is determined over a year in advance, we may be forced to change our listed price over time. However, please note that once your reservation is confirmed, we will always honor the price quoted when you booked.

TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotel Availability: Since we typically use small, boutique properties for Self-Guided tours, securing availability can sometimes prove challenging, especially on short notice. (Again, we encourage guests to book early and be flexible.) On some tours, if our standard property is not available, we may have alternate hotels of equivalent quality that we have approved. We'll book one of these alternates if the standard property is not available. If the hotel or room type requires a surcharge, we will contact you prior to reserving it. We will not reserve non-approved properties.

Room Category: We typically book standard rooms. If you are interested in upgrading your room type, please contact a Tour Consultant. Please bear in mind that upgrades are not available at every hotel; surcharges will be determined once we know what's available. Triple rooms (or rooms with two beds) can be a rarity. Should you desire such an accommodation, we may need to offer two rooms—supplements may apply. Please allow us extra time to sort the options out.

ORIENTATION MEETING & TRANSFERS

Though Self-Guided tours are a predominantly private experience, there are occasions where you may be in contact with others. Because guests are allowed to pick their own start dates, there may be other Country Walkers travelers staying in the same properties as you or even starting on the same date. For this reason, we may need to combine your orientation meeting with that of other

guests or ask you to share on-tour transfers. This does not mean you need to walk together.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Cancellations must be made in writing. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.