

AUSTRALIA: SYDNEY TO THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Guest Handbook

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.

Overnight in Blackheath

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.



Overnight in 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.

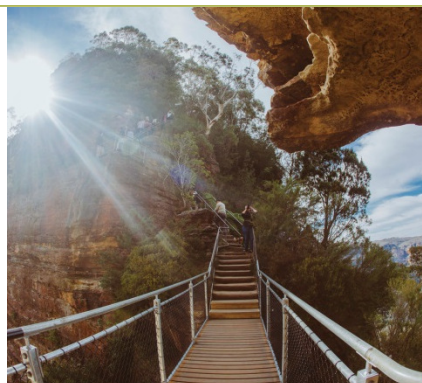
Overnight in Katoomba

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.



Overnight in Leura

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.

Overnight in 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 at countrywalkers.com/sustainable-travel.

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.

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, 2019. All prices are per person, based on double occupancy.

TOUR PRICE

2019 departures	Per person	Single +	Solo Surcharge
February 6–April 12			
May 1–May 31			
September 1–September 27	\$3,148	\$760	\$225
October 15–December 20			

STARTING POINT

Sydney, NSW, Australia (airport or local hotel)

Based upon individual arrival times

ENDING POINT

Leura, NSW, Australia (Leura train station)

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 water- and tear-resistant Route Notes and maps
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner
- » 24-hour travel-related support provided by 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 receive:

Within 24 hours of reservation confirmation:

A Confirmation Email with a link to our online guest portal, My Account, which allows you to view important information and manage parts of your account online. Similar to other web-based portals you may already use for online banking or shopping, My Account will let you:

- a. View your active reservations.
- b. Make a payment.
- c. Access the latest version of your reservation invoice.
- d. Access your guest profile where you'll be able to update essential information and preferences (passport information, important dietary considerations, allergies, etc.).
- e. Ensure that your contact information is the most up to date (name, address, phone number, email).
- f. Provide us with your tour arrival and departure details so that we may arrange any included arrival and departure transfers and/or orientation meetings.

One day following reservation confirmation:

An Online Participation Agreement Form to sign and submit (emailed).

Within one week of reservation confirmation:

- a. Your reservation invoice (emailed).
- b. Welcome Documents including your specific dated Hotel Itinerary and this Guest Handbook (emailed).

Approximately one month prior to departure:

Your Travel Documents including the following items (mailed):

- a. Printed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes (day-to-day walking directions; emergency contact information; detailed daily itinerary; information regarding included meals, transfers, and daily logistics; restaurant recommendations for non-included meals; town maps; and information regarding optional activities and transportation).
- b. Printed Travel Documents (your specific dated Hotel Itinerary, Daily Itinerary Overview, and—if included—Arrival & Departure Transfers Overview).
- c. Luggage tags.

Upon arrival at your first hotel:

A Document Pack will be waiting for you upon arrival at your first hotel in Blackheath (please ask reception for it). It will include the following materials:

- a. Maps: These have the walks highlighted.
- b. Waterproof map case: To keep your Route Notes and map dry.
- c. Informational booklets: containing useful additional information about the area.
- d. Insulated lunch bag: This will keep your lunches cool and fresh and is yours to keep.
- e. Scenic World voucher: A Scenic Railway (train) and/or Scenic Cableway (aerial cable car) ride allows you to easily access your Day 3 walk deep down in Jamison Valley.
- f. Cabcharge vouchers: For your included taxi/luggage transfers on Days 1 (only if dining at the Hydro Majestic), 3, 4, and 5. Please note your included arrival transfer from Sydney to Blackheath will not require a voucher.
- g. Train timetable (to plan your return journey).

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, especially by your driver(s). 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, NSW, Australia (airport or local hotel)

Based upon individual arrival times

Upon arrival, a private transfer will meet you at either Sydney Airport 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 meeting, please provide us with your arrival and departure details at least 45 days prior to departure through our online portal, My Account. (A Confirmation Email with a link to My Account will be sent to you within 24 hours of reservation confirmation.)

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](https://www.sydney.com).

ENDING POINT

Leura, NSW, Australia (Leura train station)
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) through our online portal, My Account. (A Confirmation Email with a link to My Account will be sent to you within 24 hours of reservation confirmation.)

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 gives 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

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 deposit is required at the time of the reservation request. Within 90 days prior to the tour start date, your final tour cost 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 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. 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. Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Participation Agreement to accept your responsibilities.

CHANGES IN PLANS

After booking, you may change your reservation's destination, departure date, departure city, or Tour Extensions for a \$100-per-person administrative fee. We will waive this fee for changes made within the first two weeks of booking. Any cancellation charges or applicable fees imposed by hotels or operators will be passed along to the guest. We encourage you to consult our cancel policy for the particular trip you have booked. All changes are subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed. Please note that tours with seasonal pricing may involve a higher price point. Please note: This change policy does not apply to Special Departures. Please notify us in writing.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Cancellations must be made in writing and fees are applied as noted. Cancellation refunds will be calculated as of the date we receive your written cancellation. All payments for travel services not provided to the guest will be refunded in accordance with these Terms and Conditions and in accordance with Country Walkers' cancellation policy. Exceptions to this cancellation policy cannot be made for any reason, including personal emergencies, illness, or weather. 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.

Self-Guided Adventures

- » Cancellations received on or before 91 days prior to the start of the trip: \$150 per person
- » Cancellations received 90 to 61 days prior to the start of the trip: 25 percent loss of trip price
- » Cancellations received 60 or fewer days prior to the start of the trip: 100 percent loss of trip price

TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN

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

SELF-GUIDED FLIGHT CONCIERGE

Our knowledgeable team will happily find flight itineraries that sync perfectly with your international Self-Guided Adventure. Simply request a price quote at the time of booking and, once your reservation is confirmed, we will contact you with available options. Please note that you are under no obligation to purchase the quoted flight itinerary.

Learn more about the Self-Guided Flight Concierge—including our complete policies—on our website at: <https://www.countrywalkers.com/self-guided-air-terms-and-conditions/>.

Other travel arrangements not included in the price of your trip (such as local train tickets or post-tour excursions) can be purchased through your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com).

Australia at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

U.S. citizens: Passports are required. To minimize any inconveniences during travel, the State Department recommends that passports be valid for at least six months following your scheduled return. You must also have a visa to enter Australia. Most U.S. passport holders traveling to Australia for less than 90 days can obtain an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA). The ETA is an electronic label-free visa and can be obtained at the ETA website (eta.immi.gov.au/ETAS3/etas) for a small service fee. For more information, see travel.state.gov.



Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some U.S. dollars to exchange.

CURRENCY

Australia uses the Australia dollar (AUD). For current exchange rates, visit oanda.com.

Most businesses in Australia will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards).

Contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when travelling, and to inform them of your travel destination and dates so they do not freeze your accounts when they see charges appear from a foreign country.

Important: Since you will likely need AUDs to pay for your taxi to the hotel or for any unforeseen situations, it is a good idea to change some money or withdraw some local currency immediately upon your arrival at the airport.

TIME ZONE

New South Wales, Australia (where our *Australia: Sydney to the Blue Mountains* tour takes place) and Victoria (where our *Australia: The Great Ocean Walk* tour takes place) are both in the Australian Eastern Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus 16 hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Australia country code: +61

Cell phone coverage throughout Australia is extensive, but we cannot guarantee adequate signals on all American phone models or while on walking trails or in remote areas.

For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.

Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, all of the hotels used on our tours do not necessarily provide it, or they provide it at an additional cost. Details regarding Wi-Fi availability in each hotel are available in the Itinerary Overview that you'll receive once you've reserved.



LANGUAGE

English is Australia's official language.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 240V and 50Hz is used in Australia. Plugs have two flat blades that form an inverted "V" and a grounding blade. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

The seasons in Australia are opposite those in North America. Australia has a range of climates that vary by region. In general, spring through fall (that is, September through May) is the best time to visit on an active vacation, with long sunny days ideal for walking. Wildflowers blanket the hills in summer and fall and winter months, though sometimes stormy, can make for exhilarating walks.

In the mid-elevations (3,000 feet) of the Great Dividing Range along the east coast, days hover in the 60s and 70s, though some summer days might reach into the 80s or 90s. Evening temperatures are in the 40s and 50s. Rainfall is possible at all times. Though the most rain tends to fall January through March, it is typically no more than 6 inches each month. Along the Southern Ocean, there are few extremes of temperature, with days in the 60s and 70s. Occasional higher

Travel Tips

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

temperatures make for great swimming weather. Evenings are in the 40s and 50s. Rainfall is much lighter, characterized by lighter yet frequent showers; the least rain falls at the height of summer (December through February).

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

FOOD & DRINK

Australian cuisine has its roots in the “bush tucker” diet of flora and fauna of the indigenous Aboriginal people, from wild game to wildly growing fruits and vegetables. As a British colony, Australian kitchens took their cue from British and Irish traditions, with lamb, beef, and other livestock-based dishes. Yet the locals haven’t lost their appetite for al fresco dining, often referred to as a “Barbie.” This national pastime and strongly held tradition consists of marinated meats and fresh-from-the-ocean seafood cooked outdoors over an open fire or grill. Juices might be sopped up with “damper,” a simple bread. Visitors with bolder palates may sample barbecued kangaroo, emu, wild goat, or even camel. Today, the Aussie menu gains its flavors and techniques from the many cultures that have since landed on the country’s shores, from Mediterranean to East Asian.



The migration of Mediterranean peoples throughout the 20th century has replaced the doughy damper on many tables with focaccia bread, and taught Aussies some time-honored techniques in curing meats, producing cheese, and replacing heavy lards with olive oils. It’s common to find Lebanese tabouli and hummus, Greek tzatziki, pizza, pasta and other staples of the so-called Mediterranean diet on the Australian table. Not to be out-flavored, the Asian population of Oz has also spiced up many a dish. The curry of India, the pho of Vietnam, the lemongrass of Thailand and the dim sum of China all have a hugely popular following.

The very best Australian cuisine, readily available at the dining establishments on Country Walkers’ itineraries, creates a tantalizing fusion of all these things, so you’ll have the chance to sample the best dishes of a varied and exciting culinary culture.

LIFE IN AUSTRALIA

Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open six or seven days a week between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Smaller shops are closed on Sunday, although shopping malls are open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday and also remain open till 9:00 p.m. on Thursday.

Banks are open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Some are open on Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants, lunch is between 12:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., and dinner is usually served from 6:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Tipping

Tipping in Australia is not obligatory, even in restaurants and bars. However, gratuities are not added to your bill and tipping 10% for exceptional service or kindness is at the discretion of the visitor.

Taxi drivers aren't generally tipped, but you could round up the total, letting the driver keep the change. For luggage assistance, a small tip of one to three dollars is appropriate.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

A wealth of travel information is available at australia.com.

Public holidays

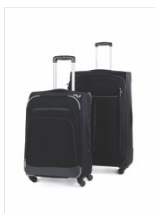
Australia public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events may affect your travel planning. For details, visit the tourist board's website, australia.com/en-us/planning/australian-public-holidays.html.



Travel Tip

Australian wine is heralded among the best in the world. The nation is the fourth largest exporter of all manner of vintages, from sweet whites to bold reds. It is a young industry, with the very first vine cuttings brought from South Africa's Cape of Good Hope in 1788. And though there are no native grapes in the island-nation, many oenophiles claim that the viticulture here has a powerful worldwide influence. Australia's most famous wine is Penfolds Grange, which has won more than 50 gold medals since 1962. Robert Parker has even claimed that it rivals Bordeaux wines for its exotic and concentrated nature.

TRAVEL IN AUSTRALIA



Trains

Rail Australia: railaustralia.com.au (Australia's alliance of privately operated rail companies). Visit this informative website for information about the many ways you can explore Australia's spectacular landscapes and cultural centers by train.

The Discovery Pass lets you cover a lot of territory for 2 weeks or 1, 3, or 6 months at one price. The Ghan train is the country's renowned rail line from north to south. And the Spirit of Queensland offers sleeper cabins and access to the Great Barrier Reef.

Travel Tip

If you rent a car in Australia, remember to drive on the left side of the road and to pass on the outside right lane. It's important to keep this in mind also when crossing streets!

Other local transportation

In addition to its rail network, Australia has several regional airlines and many regional bus lines. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance).

Most major car rental agencies are available at Australian airports and train stations. For more information contact Country Walkers, or go to australia.com, click on "Plan your Trip," and then "Useful Tips," scroll down and click on "Transport."

MUSEUM INFORMATION AND DISCOUNT CARDS

museumsaustralia.org.au.

Packing List

PACKING TIPS

Though we always suggest packing light, you can bring as many items of luggage as you wish. However, you should limit the weight of each bag to a maximum of 20 kilograms (about 40 pounds) as you need to handle your own luggage at all accommodations. Label your luggage. This is extremely important as many different people will handle your luggage during this tour. Please ensure each bag is clearly labelled with your name and cell phone number. We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

FOOTWEAR

- » Hiking boots or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. If you are bringing a favorite pair of older boots, please check that soles and seams are in good shape before you depart! By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 6-12 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear (highly recommended for this tour) keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew.
- » Comfortable shoes for evening strolls
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants

- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual

OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof (not only water resistant) rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood.
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor
- » Lightweight fleece or wool hat and gloves

EQUIPMENT

- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, lunch, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Cell phone (an International cell phone or your own cell phone with an International calling plan): for both practical and safety reasons, **we strongly advise that you carry a cell phone while traveling and at all times while you are out walking.** (Please note you may encounter intermittent coverage while on the trail or in remote areas.)
- » Travel adapter/s (connectors that change the plug shape to match the electrical outlet, thereby allowing a dual-voltage appliance or a converter from one country to be plugged into the wall outlet of another country) and converter/s (only if bringing electric appliances, such as a hair dryer, iron, or any appliance that has a mechanical motor. If the appliance is electronic, which contains a computer chip, a converter is usually not required.)
- » Water bottle/s, canteen/s, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of one liter to two liters)
- » Sunblock (at least SPF 15+) and lip balm
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel

- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

OPTIONAL

- » Telescopic walking sticks (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks **are recommended** for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Binoculars
- » Bathing suit
- » Flip flops or water sandals
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Thermos (for hot drinks)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides
- » Folding umbrella
- » Waterproof poncho (in addition to aforementioned rain gear, especially if expecting wet weather): while the aforementioned rain gear may suffice, a poncho offers the advantage of being lightweight, compact, big enough to cover both you and your backpack, long enough to allow for sitting on wet surfaces or act as a shelter, cool enough to wear during summer rains, and is cheap!
- » Bandana
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Motion sickness bracelets or other non-sleep-inducing remedy if prone to motion sickness on train or car rides
- » Alarm clock
- » Matches and salt (to remove leeches if necessary)
- » Small flashlight

ONLINE STORE

To help you prepare for your trip, we've carefully selected a range of comfortable, easy-packing travel apparel and accessories from leading brands such as Eagle Creek, Craghoppers, Patagonia, Tilley, and others. Whether you're traveling to Vietnam, walking in Canada, or exploring the hills of Ireland, our Travel Shop is here to ensure you're ready to enjoy your adventure to the fullest.

Visit the CW Travel Shop at cw.newheadings.com.