

AUSTRALIA: THE GREAT OCEAN WALK

# 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

The wild coast of Australia's state of Victoria has long been hidden from view, an unspoiled green ribbon of rolling hills sandwiched between the scenic Great Ocean Road and the tempestuous surf of the Southern Ocean. Today, walkers can finally experience the primitive and pristine beauty of this staggeringly beautiful corner of Great Otway National Park, thanks to the recently completed Great Ocean Walk. Lace up your boots to explore almost 60 miles of untouched wilderness, choosing high trails over towering sea cliffs or beach hikes alongside crashing surf. From the charming village of Apollo Bay to the famed Twelve Apostles sea stacks, this is some of the most remote and remarkable terrain you are ever likely to traverse. Using rustic, homestead-style lodgings in sparsely populated seaside towns as your base, you hike through primeval manna gum forests where koalas linger high in the canopy and past wide grassland grazed by kangaroos. Trace heathland ablaze with vibrant wildflowers and lush wetlands where rivers and waterfalls meet the sea. Marvel at colossal shipwrecked anchors cemented in beach sand and stroll through working farmlands. But perhaps the real beauty of hiking the undulating Great Ocean Walk is this: few people have walked it before you, and it is pure privilege to count yourself among the first to witness its magnificence.



## Daily Itinerary

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### DAY 1

Arrival in Melbourne. Transfer to Apollo Bay. Optional Marriners Lookout Walk; 5.3 miles, easy to moderate

Arrive in Melbourne and make your way by private transfer to Apollo Bay with a Country Walkers representative. The transfer—a glorious three-hour drive along the Great Ocean Road—is one of the world's most scenic drives and a great way to get acquainted with the sprawling coastal beauty you will soon explore. The road took 13 years to build in the 1920s, laid by servicemen returning home after World War I as a memorial to their fallen brothers. Today, surfers and beach lovers follow the picturesque byway to Apollo Bay from all over the state of Victoria and throughout Australia, drawn not only to the natural beauty and white-sand beaches but also to the many fine restaurants and artsy shops, separated from the beach by a wide, grassy foreshore. The green rolling hills of Great Otway National Park abut the town, providing an inviting and pastoral setting. If you arrive at your lodge early enough, you can rest up on the beach here or wade in the waters of the mouth of the Barham River in Mounts Bay. Alternately, you might warm up for your walking days on the Marriners Lookout Walk, an easy beach and road walk, followed by a steep climb to a breathtaking overlook. Choose from one of Apollo Bay's many eateries for dinner on your own.

## Overnight in Apollo Bay

### DAY 2

Shelly Beach Picnic Area to Blanket Bay  
Day Visitors Car Park; 8.5 miles,  
moderate

Begin the day with a transfer to Shelly Beach Picnic Area, where a tranquil walking path awaits. As you hit the trail, you follow an inland route into Great Otway National Park through a forest cathedral of towering mountain ash trees, among the tallest in Australia. This was a heavily logged area during early settlement days and you might be able to spot notches in some stumps about three to six feet high; loggers plugged planks into these slots and stood on them to cut the trees. Today, the park is also known for its unique bird species such as pink robins and striated fieldwrens, an extreme variety of beneficial fungi, and a population of elusive koalas. Keep your eyes peeled for them all as you negotiate the rises and falls of this well-worn, wide dirt track. You return to the coast at Blanket Bay, an isolated spot where supplies were once delivered to the Cape Otway Lightstation. You might pause here for a swim, one of your few chances to do so during your trip as many of the beaches you will visit are known for their crashing surf. At Blanket Bay, you meet a representative who shuttles you to one of two accommodations (depending on availability): either an award-winning eco-retreat in Cape Otway where you can join a local conservationist for one of the lodge's renowned dusk walks perhaps spotting wild kangaroos and koalas, or Cape Otway Lightstation—this historic public facility, Australia's oldest continually operating lighthouse, closes its gates at 5:00 p.m., after which it becomes your private seaside oasis. As twilight approaches, you might join the caretaker for a stroll out to the lighthouse point, where you can hear stories from World War II and marvel at rocky coastal views from 300 feet above the pounding surf ... all as the sun dips below the horizon in a blaze.

## Overnight in Cape Otway







### DAY 3

Blanket Bay Day Visitors Car Park to Cape Otway Lightstation; 6.4 miles, moderate

Return to Blanket Bay this morning to continue tracing the Great Ocean Walk. Your breathtaking route today leads you through coastal forest dotted with stunted stringybark trees and along a

soaring clifftop with stunning views of the ocean and surrounding hills. Soon, you arrive at the quiet haven of Parker Inlet, where the Parker River empties into the ocean. This is one of our favorite spots for its picture-postcard setting and you will want to linger for a rest or a swim. From here, if the tides allow, follow rock shelves and beaches along the water, or take the high inland route. You might depart the main trail for a side trip to idyllic Crayfish Bay, where you can go for a swim. After time here among the impressive rock formations, return to the main route and continue through forests, rolling hills, and farmland blanketed with a stunning display of wildflowers, particularly in spring. Perhaps you will spot the white flowers of the coastal Correa or the coast beard heath. By walk's end, you arrive at the Cape Otway Lightstation. This afternoon, you can redeem your provided ticket to explore the station's museum and the lighthouse itself, perched atop a 300-foot cliff overlooking the roiling ocean below. This evening, enjoy dinner at your accommodation.

## Overnight in Cape Otway

### DAY 4

Cape Otway Lightstation to Castle Cove Lookout; 9.6 miles + optional 1.3-mile beach walk, moderate

Begin today's walk at Cape Otway Lightstation. En route to Station Beach, you pass an old cemetery that is the final resting place of shipwreck casualties, victims of the treacherous waves for which this coast is infamous. You may take a short optional trek to Rainbow Falls, a pretty spring-fed cascade that comes alive with color when the right sunlight shines upon it. After time here, you may choose either the inland or the beach trail, depending on the tides and on your ability to walk on sand for a long distance. We recommend trekking along Station Beach, a magnificent wild stretch of sand pounded by waves and

populated by darting hooded plovers. You will want to walk between the high-water line and the dunes to minimize disturbing the tiny birds' nests. Expect to navigate over some rocky outcroppings on the beach. Alternately, the inland walk takes you through wind-sculpted sand dunes and coastal scrubland, tracing high calcified cliffs as you go. You later arrive at the tranquil Aire River estuary



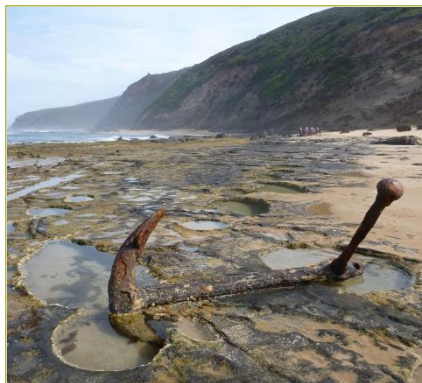
and wetlands, a spectacular natural haven where the Aire River spills into the Southern Ocean. Climb inland, upriver, through spinifex forests, rising up and down with the trail, enjoying sweeping views of the rugged coastline and watching for the native echidna, a platypus-like egg-laying mammal covered with defensive quills. Your destination is a lookout over Castle Cove, a stunning beach surrounded by soaring cliffs where dinosaur fossils have been unearthed.

## **Overnight in Hordern Vale or Glenaire**

### **DAY 5**

Castle Cove Lookout to Milanesia Beach Turnoff; 9.1 miles, moderate

Today's hike leads you to some of the most spectacular ocean vistas and to one of the most gorgeous beaches in Australia. From Castle Cove, trace the cliff tops through heathlands and forests, passing magnificent expanses of manna gums, grass trees with their long-needle-like leaves and tiny white flowers, and patches of wildflowers such as pink heath, the floral symbol of Victoria. Your undulating footpath occasionally emerges from the bush to reveal breathtaking panoramas. Very near here in the protected area of Dinosaur Cove, almost 1,500 fossils of small herbivores and plant life were uncovered. Keep your eye on the skies for the majestic peregrine falcons that nest and hunt in the canopy. Your trail descends to the white sands of Johanna Beach; its broad expanse and enormous crashing surf make it one of the country's most dramatic coastal havens. Take time to soak in its natural beauty. If you would like to swim, walk up the Johanna River for a dip rather than risking the ocean's dangerous rip tides. Walk the beach's soft sands about a mile before ascending inland to rolling hills and bucolic farmland, perhaps spotting a troop of Eastern gray kangaroos napping or grazing in the grassy valleys. Your walk today concludes at the Milanesia Beach



Turnoff, where you meet your shuttle. You return here tomorrow to start your day with a walk along the surf of Milanesia. This evening, back at your lodge, you enjoy a well-earned dinner and a relaxing evening in good company.

### **Overnight in Hordern Vale or Glenaire**

## **DAY 6**

Milanesia Beach Turnoff to Parker Access Track; 7.5 miles, moderate with challenging sections

Return to the Milanesia Beach Turnoff after breakfast and follow the pathway to the shore. This isolated and rugged beach sees few visitors, so you just might have the beach to yourself. Follow the beach for a time before ascending the high sea cliffs into the bush. Your path rises and falls frequently today, crossing creeks and following wooden steps and four-wheel drive tracks, with many scenic rewards of breathtaking rocky coast and sweeping ocean views. From Bowker Hill, you are able to see all the way back to Cape Otway Lightstation. After a break at Ryan's Den campground, continue onto the most challenging leg, traversing the rolling pristine wilderness and coastal forest of Cape Volley. The diversity of plant and animal life here thrives amidst the rich archaeological sites of the Gadabanud people, who to this day cherish their cultural relics you see. Your walk finishes at Moonlight Head, so named after Matthew Flinders was entranced one night in 1802 when rain-soaked clouds broke here to reveal a magical lunar-lit landscape. Your delightful lodge for the night is up the trail a ways along the Parker Access Track. Settle in here, rest, and relax before dinner on site.

### **Overnight in Wattle Hill**



## DAY 7

The Gables Car Park to Gellibrand Bridge. Loch Ard Gorge guided walking tour. Optional Port Campbell Discovery Walk; 8.1 miles, easy to moderate (does not include three additional optional walks/sections of 3.4 miles, 0.4 miles, and 3.1 miles)



You may begin your day with a 3.4-mile walk through a shady forest to the official beginning of today's walk at the Gables Car Park. Or your hosts are happy to give you a lift. As you get underway, you follow a newly established section of trail to the Gables Lookout, perched atop one of Australia's highest sea cliffs. Between June and September, whales can often be spotted from here. Continue through a grove of casuarina trees before emerging onto Wreck Beach. If the tide is low, you can walk the white sands to your next destination, peering out to two shipwrecks from the 1890s. These two anchors poking above the surface are eerie reminders of the treachery of these waters. If it is high tide, follow the inland route over more rolling terrain. Arrive at Devils Kitchen campground, and then follow a mostly flat trail along the wild coastal cliffs toward Gellibrand Bridge in Princetown. Your local Loch Ard Gorge guide, John, meets you here. If you arrive early, you might have time to explore the wetland boardwalks and bird signage across the street. En route to your accommodation in Port Campbell, John brings his 25 years of guiding experience to the fore and leads you on a tour of the Razorback Walk in the spectacular Loch Ard Gorge, sharing insights about local geology, whale migration, the Twelve Apostles rock formations, and the wreck of the Loch Ard. Later, settle in to your motel in Port Campbell, a colorful and lively seaside village. Set on a beautiful sheltered bay and surrounded by cliffs and Norfolk pines, the town feels like a safe haven along a rocky, roiling coast. For a bird's-eye view, consider the Discovery Walk, an invigorating climb up stairs from the beach at Port Campbell Bay. Dinner is on your own tonight—you may choose from several restaurants along Port Campbell's main street or beachfront.



## Overnight in Port Campbell

### DAY 8

Gellibrand Bridge to the Twelve Apostles.  
Departure from Camperdown; 4.2 miles,  
easy

After breakfast, you are returned to  
Gellibrand Bridge, where you begin your  
walk to the Twelve Apostles, a

remarkable group of limestone sea stacks hugging the coast. These magnificent natural towers were created from the constant crash of waves on soft rock. As waves lashed at the headlands, they eroded the rock from both sides until arches formed. Then the arches collapsed, leaving stacks behind. From Gibson Steps, you see the two stacks called Gog and McGog. If the tide is low and time allows, you can walk to the beach for a closer look. After, continue to the Twelve Apostles Visitor Center, where you can follow an interpretive trail along boardwalks and enjoy spectacular views of the famous rock formations. After your visit, your final transfer meets you here and delivers you to the Camperdown train station for connections onward.

## **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 rent a satellite phone; please remember, your local representative is only a phone call away.

## **A NOTE ABOUT TRANSFERS**

While daily transfers on this tour are not long, your arrival transfer from Melbourne to Apollo Bay takes approximately three hours. Please note that the Great Ocean Road, as well as other secondary roads in this area, are very narrow, winding, and exposed to drop-offs at times. If you are prone to motion sickness, please plan accordingly.

## **A NOTE ABOUT SATELLITE PHONES**

It is essential that you carry a cell phone or satellite phone on this tour. Please note, however, there is no cell coverage on long stretches (sometimes all day) of this walk, therefore, we highly recommend you consider renting a satellite phone.

Following are a couple of suggested companies should you wish to rent a satellite phone within Australia and have it sent to your hotel in either Melbourne or Apollo Bay:

Renta 2-Way: [renta2way.com.au](https://renta2way.com.au)

Orbit Satellite: [orbitsatellite.com.au](https://orbitsatellite.com.au)

## 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, at their orientation meeting 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](https://countrywalkers.com/sustainable-travel).

Here is one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

Country Walkers is proud to support the **Conservation Ecology Centre** in its dedication to ensuring a future for the wildlife of the Otways, and the wild places on which they depend. The Eco-Allies are a very special group of people who provide regular support which allows for ongoing conservation efforts—from restoring habitats to conducting ground breaking endangered species research. The Great Ocean Ecolodge, our standard property for Nights 2 & 3 of this tour,

is located within the grounds of the Conservation Ecology Centre. For more information, please visit [conservationecologycentre.org](http://conservationecologycentre.org).



# Tour Facts at a Glance

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## TOUR LENGTH

8 days, 7 nights

## DEPARTURES

This tour is available daily, on request, from January 1 to May 31, 2019 and September 1 through December 31, 2019. All prices are per person, based on double occupancy.

## TOUR PRICE

2019 departures	Per person	Single +	Solo Surcharge
January 1–January 31 & December 16–December 31	\$4,598	\$1,070	\$400
February 1–May 31 & September 1–December 15	\$4,198	\$790	\$400

## STARTING POINT

**Melbourne, Victoria, Australia** (Melbourne Airport or local hotel)

**Based upon individual arrival times**

## ENDING POINT

**Camperdown, Victoria, Australia** (Camperdown Railway Station)

**12:00 p.m.**

## ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate, with an average of 6 to 10 miles per day (3 to 5 hours of steady walking), plus additional options. This is a linear walk with limited vehicle access points; therefore there are limited options to shorten daily sections. There are no major steep sections but the terrain is undulating most of the way, which can be tiring for some. Walks follow cliff tops, wide forest trails, sandy beaches, and even traverse short sections of private farmland. The undulating terrain includes coastal and forest foot paths, a small amount of closed 4WD tracks, short stretches of beach, and some boardwalking. A few shallow unbridged river

crossings may be necessary in periods of heavy rainfall, especially when combined with high tide and ocean swell conditions. **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, six packed lunches (days 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7), and five dinners (days 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6); beverages not included
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Orientation meeting 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.

### **At your orientation meeting:**

A Document Pack will be provided to you at your orientation meeting on Day 1 of the tour. It will include the following materials:

- a. Maps: These have the walks highlighted.
- b. Tide charts.
- c. Waterproof map case: To keep your Route Notes, tide charts, and maps dry.
- d. Informational booklets: Containing useful additional information about the area.
- e. Insulated lunch bag: This will keep your lunches cool and fresh and is yours to keep.
- f. Head net.
- g. Entry tickets to the Cape Otway Lightstation.

## 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

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## STARTING POINT

**Melbourne, Victoria, Australia** (Melbourne Airport or local hotel)

### **Based upon individual arrival times**

Upon arrival, a local representative will meet you in Melbourne—either at a Melbourne city hotel or at the Melbourne Airport—and transfer you approximately three hours to your first hotel in Apollo Bay.

While you are with your representative, he/she will provide an orientation, ensure you are comfortably settled, and answer any questions you may have. During the briefing, your representative will go over the week's itinerary and may share suggestions for visits, meals, etc.

**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

Melbourne Airport (MEL), Australia  
[melbourneairport.com.au](http://melbourneairport.com.au)

## GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

Melbourne Airport, also known as Tullamarine Airport, is the primary airport serving the city of Melbourne and the sole international airport of the four airports serving the Melbourne metropolitan area. It comprises four terminals: one international terminal, two domestic terminals, and one budget domestic terminal. The airport features direct flights to 33 domestic destinations of Australia in addition to destinations in the Pacific, London, Asia, and North America. The airport is 14 miles from the city center, adjacent to the suburb of Tullamarine.

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

» **By taxi:** Melbourne's taxis are a convenient way to get from the airport to your destination. You can catch a taxi from designated taxi stands, unless you have



pre-booked one. Taxi stands are located on the ground floor outside Terminals 1 and between Terminal 2 and 3. Taxi stands are located on the ground floor of the transport hub outside Terminal 4. Taxi fares vary based on distance, location, time of travel, and other factors. For a customized taxi fare and time estimate, please visit [taxi.vic.gov.au/passengers/taxi-passengers/taxi-fares/taxi-fare-estimator](https://taxi.vic.gov.au/passengers/taxi-passengers/taxi-fares/taxi-fare-estimator).

» **By SkyBus:** SkyBus offers an express bus service from the airport to the city center. This service operates 24/7, including all public holidays. Buses run every 10 minutes throughout the day and the fare is \$18 AUD one-way. Tickets can be purchased on arrival at the bus stop or purchased online at [skybus.com.au](https://skybus.com.au). On arrival at Southern Cross Station in the city, SkyBus provides a complimentary hotel transfer service, subject to availability, during the following hours: 6:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Monday to Friday; 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, excluding Christmas day. For more information visit [skybus.com.au](https://skybus.com.au).

## PRE- AND POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

We recommend spending at least one day prior to and/or following the tour to explore the vibrant city of Melbourne. For accommodation, dining, and event suggestions, please visit [visitmelbourne.com](https://visitmelbourne.com).

Visit [victoriawalks.org.au/Melbourne](https://victoriawalks.org.au/Melbourne) to find hundreds of free Melbourne walks and walking maps—the ideal way to discover Melbourne’s street art, hidden laneways, and stories behind its iconic buildings.

## ENDING POINT

**Camperdown, Victoria, Australia** (Camperdown Railway Station)  
**12:00 p.m.**

An approximate one-hour transfer will be provided at 11:00 a.m. from the end point of your final walk at the Twelve Apostles Visitor Centre in Princetown to the Camperdown Railway Station, Victoria. You may plan on arriving at Camperdown Station by 12:00 p.m.

From Camperdown you need to catch a V-Line train service back to Melbourne. The rail journey to from Camperdown to Melbourne Southern Cross Station takes approximately two hours and 45 minutes, and costs approximately \$25 AUD. Please visit [vline.com.au](https://vline.com.au) to view up-to-date train timetables, fares, and to pre-book tickets. Once on the [vline.com.au](https://vline.com.au) home page, click on “Plan trip/buy

tickets,” choose your “From” and “To” stations and date, and then “Look up times.” On the following screen, choose your desired departure and continue from here to complete your purchase.

Camperdown Railway Station is extremely quiet with a small inside waiting area, toilets and AC, and benches along a sole platform serving one afternoon train. Should you choose not to pre-purchase train tickets on-line, you will have plenty of time to purchase tickets and check baggage upon arrival at the station. V-Line notes the need to check luggage ½ hour prior to train departure; however, the line to pick-up tickets and check luggage is the same so pre-purchasing tickets doesn’t save much time. Should you arrive at the station to find a long line causing you concern (again, this would be a very rare occurrence), please introduce yourself to someone who works at the station and they will assist. After multiple years of running this tour we have had multiple guests go to the station without pre-purchased tickets and we have not received any feedback that there was concern over timing when they arrived at the station.

### **GETTING FROM MELBOURNE CITY CENTER TO MELBOURNE AIRPORT**

Please refer to the “Getting to the Starting Point” section.

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

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## 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](https://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](mailto: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](http://eta.immi.gov.au/ETAS3/etas)) for a small service fee. For more information, see [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).



## CURRENCY

Australia uses the Australia dollar (AUD). For current exchange rates, visit [oanda.com](http://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.

### Travel Tip

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

## 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](http://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](http://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.

### 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.

## 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](http://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

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](http://qwikcast.com). For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see [weatherbase.com](http://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.



### 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.

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](http://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](http://australia.com/en-us/planning/australian-public-holidays.html).



## TRAVEL IN AUSTRALIA

### Trains



**Rail Australia: [railaustralia.com.au](http://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.

### 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](http://australia.com), click on "Plan your Trip," and then "Useful Tips," scroll down and click on "Transport."

#### 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!

## MUSEUM INFORMATION AND DISCOUNT CARDS

[museumsaustralia.org.au](http://museumsaustralia.org.au).

# Packing List

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## 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 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
- » Gaiters (recommended for keeping out grass seeds and for protection against snakes)

## 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
- » International cell phone or satellite phone: **it is essential that you carry a cell phone or satellite phone on this tour. Please note, however, there is no cell coverage on long stretches (sometimes all day) of this walk, therefore, we highly recommend you consider renting a satellite phone.**
- » 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 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 for optional swimming in the ocean
- » 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](http://cw.newheadings.com).**