

An excellent introduction to an area of the country with a rich and well-preserved transport history. This will take you behind the scenes of the better preserved railways with opportunities to chat to those responsible for running the lines.

Tour Highlights

- Cairns in the tropical north, with a visit to the Inner Barrier Reef
- Brisbane is the capital of sunny Queensland with a railway museum and nearby Gold Coast trams
- Sydney – plenty to see and do. Bondi beach, Opera House, Suburban and light rail as well as sightseeing
- The famous Zigzag Railway is scheduled to be back in operation in time for our visit
- Melbourne – The famous Puffing Billy! One of the finest preserved steam railways in the world.
- Tasmania – Pearn's Steam World. History in steam, from giant traction engines to miniature steam trains. There is also a steam driven boat!
- Don River Railway – One of Australia's finest heritage passenger carrying railways running alongside the picturesque Don river near Devonport in northern Tasmania
- West Coast Wilderness Railway – Queenstown to Strahan through the dense rain forest on Tasmania's wild west coast



This is a wonderful chance to experience Eastern Australia by train. There are very interesting workshops and museums to lose yourself in and indulge in the history of steam. Plus plenty of opportunities to do some alternative exploring if you wish.

For those travelling to Australia from the Northern Hemisphere, to allow some 'recovery time', it would be wise to arrive in Australia at least a day before the tour commences. Please see the paragraph at the end of this itinerary for details of the available options.

Friday 16 October 2020

We will meet up in Cairns, Queensland, and in the evening, we will have a briefing meeting to introduce you to your Tour Manager and give you a taste of what is to come over the next three weeks.

Saturday 17 October 2020

We will have a fairly gentle first day, first visiting the nearby sugar factory at Gordonvale to see the sugar trains coming in from the fields for crushing at the factory. Mid-afternoon, we'll head north for a visit to Hartley's Crocodile Adventures to see the crocs in their natural habitat and see the local keepers trying to avoid getting bitten! There's a wide variety of birds and other indigenous beasts too.



Sunday 18 October 2020

We'll head north on the coast road, with fabulous views and beaches, to Port Douglas for a ride on the friendly little Ballyhooley Railway for a ride through the leafy suburbs. This will be followed by a short ride north to another sugar factory at Mossman to photograph the sugar trains there.



Monday 19 October 2020

A unique rail journey that winds its way from Cairns to Kuranda, a village situated in the heritage listed rainforest - an unforgettable journey through tropical paradise passing spectacular waterfalls into the stunning Barron Gorge. We'll have a couple of hours to look round the tourist village of Kuranda, and we will return by the spectacular Skytrain cable car skimming over the tops of the trees in this tropical forest

Tuesday 20 October 2020

Cairns is as close as we can get to the Great Barrier Reef. The best parts of the reef are a couple of hours boat ride out, so that is what we will do. We will take a two hour journey in an air conditioned catamaran to a private pontoon anchored above the reef, and we will be able to visit their underwater viewing platform to see the amazingly varied fish population. There is also a glass-sided boat and a glass bottomed boat which will take you within inches of the coral-encrusted reefs – if you are really lucky, you may see one of the rare turtles that inhabit the area. On top of this, you can go snorkelling (equipment provided) at no extra cost. Scuba diving is also available. This is a day which cannot be missed!



Wednesday 21 October 2020

Today we will have our first taste of travel on Australia's mainline rail system. Our train, the 'Spirit of Queensland' will take 24 hours for the thousand mile journey to Brisbane. Your seat converts into a comfortable bed for the overnight part of the journey



Thursday 22 October 2020

Queensland's Railway Museum is at Ipswich, a two-hour train (plus a ten minute bus) ride from central Brisbane. It is Queensland's main rail works, and they are working towards making the whole extensive site open to visitors. Alternatively, you can spend the day exploring Brisbane – many of the ferries that ply the river with superb views of this modern city are free.

Friday 23 October 2020

We have a day out taking the local train to Gold Coast, a seaside city with gorgeous beaches. We will use the new Gold Coast light rail, the largest Public Transport project in the country which is transforming the city into a modern accessible destination. We'll return to Brisbane for the night

Saturday 24 October 2020

Today we will head south on the 1½ hour flight to the capital of New South Wales, Sydney. If you prefer, we can arrange for you to travel by train on the 14 hour day journey. However, one word of warning – the train departs at 04.55 a.m.!

Sunday 25 October 2020

It's a long day, but well worthwhile. We will take a long day out to the world-famous ZigZag Railway at Lithgow for an unforgettable climb up the scarp slope of the Blue Mountains. The Zigzag is one of the foremost preserved lines in Australia, and there are wonderful views as the train climbs. It does what it says on the tin - forward, backward, then forward again, climbing all the time!

Monday 26 October 2020

Sydney is one of Australia's largest cities, and there is plenty to do, with museums, excellent botanic gardens and, of course, the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. A free day



Tuesday 27 October 2020

A two hour train ride (plus a 20 minute bus ride) takes us to Thirlmere, the official rail museum for New South Wales with an absolutely amazing collection of locomotives and other rolling stock and ephemera. This absorbing collection will surely keep us busy for several hours before the return journey to Sydney

Wednesday 28 October 2020



Sydney has an excellent tram museum, our destination this morning – it's a half hour ride from the centre. We will be able to ride a vintage tram and view their extensive collection. In the afternoon, we will take a wonderful half-hour ferry journey from the Circular Quay out to Manly – this is when you will get your best photos of both the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House, and look out over the South Pacific. Manly is a nice resort town, and a great place to sit and people-watch with a good cup of coffee. The return trip is just as good as the outward!

Thursday 29 October 2020

Today, we will move on to Melbourne. The morning flight takes about an hour and a half, or we can offer the alternative of rail travel: the train departs at 0742 and arrives in Melbourne at 1830. For those who fly, we recommend an afternoon exploring the city centre trams (the central area is free, and includes the circular route 35, operated with vintage trams).



Friday 30 October 2020

We will have a day out to the Puffing Billy Railway, travelling out by the Melbourne suburban train to Belgrave, about an hour's journey. There will be time for a Workshops inspection before departure at 1110 for Gembrook where we arrive at 1300. We travel on a century-old steam train running on its original 25km mountain track with stunning views through the beautiful forest and fern gullies of the Dandenong Ranges. We shall return at 1445 arriving back at Belgrave at 1630. We travel back to Melbourne on the suburban trains.

Saturday 31 October 2020

We'll take the train back to the Puffing Billy, where a coach (hopefully vintage) will meet us, and chase the Puffing Billy train for photographs. In the afternoon, we'll continue to the immensely popular Healesville Sanctuary to see Australia's best collection of fauna, including their koalas! We return to Melbourne for the night.



Sunday 1 November 2020

Today we will travel to Castlemaine on the morning V-line line train. The Victorian Goldfields Railway is an authentic heritage train linking the historic gold mining towns of Castlemaine and Maldon in central Victoria. After lunch in one of the cafes or pubs in the lovely little town of Maldon we shall return to Castlemaine on a K or J class steam operated train. We will then continue by V-line train to Bendigo for our overnight stay.

Monday 2 November 2020

Bendigo Tramways are a living piece of history. They have the oldest operating tram depot in Australia and also the best working collection of trams in the world, all lovingly restored. We will then explore the hidden underground tunnels of a real gold mine that operated during the gold rush boom of the late 19th century. Central Deborah Goldmine was awarded the Victorian Heritage and Cultural Attraction of the year in 2011, 2012 and 2013 as well as the Trip Advisor certificate of excellence in 2015. We will then return by train to Melbourne, and pay an early evening visit to Williamstown Railway museum which has a large collection of Victorian Railways 5'3" locos and rolling stock.

Tuesday 3 November 2020

After breakfast, we will break for the journey home

OPTIONAL EXTENSION to TASMANIA

Tuesday 3 November 2020

After breakfast we will fly to Launceston. Once arrived and checked in we will visit the Queen Victoria Museum ex Railway workshops. If there's time, we will then visit the stunning Cataract Gorge and Basin. There are magnificent walkways, a swimming pool, a suspension bridge with panoramic lookouts as well as tea rooms and picnic areas. A ride on the chairlift to the other side to see the Victorian Garden and relax in the restaurant and only 10 minutes from town! We will stay overnight in Launceston. (Dinner included)



Wednesday 4 November 2020

This morning we will leave at 0800 to travel to Devonport by road, visiting Pearn's Steamworld on the way. It can best be described as history in steam! There is everything here from giant steam engines to miniature steam trains, threshing machines, tractors, a fire engine as well as a steam driven boat! Afterward we will go to The Don River Railway and board one of Australia's finest heritage passenger trains which runs alongside the picturesque Don River. The afternoon sees us drive through the sparsely inhabited Western Tasmania to our accommodation in

Queenstown. (Dinner included)

Thursday 5 November 2020

Today we will visit the West Coast Wilderness Railway. It has 3 of the 5 former Mount Lyell mining and railway rack locomotives (1,3 and 5) preserved in operational condition. It also has 2 diesel locomotives. The railway is significant because of its Abt rack system to conquer the mountainous terrain through the rainforest. If time allows we will take a short cruise on the Gordon River. We will stay overnight in Queenstown. (Dinner included)



Friday 6 November 2020

We will travel by road through the beautiful central Tasmanian Mountains to Hobart, where we will arrange a visit to The Tasmanian Transport Museum in the suburb of Glenorchy. It has an amazing array of exhibits including seven steam locomotives. We will stay overnight in Hobart. (Dinner included)

Saturday 7 November 2020

In the morning, we'll take a drive up Mount Wellington, with great views down over the city. If you prefer, visit the fascinating Salamanca market, down by Hobart harbour. This has been voted one of the best street markets in Australia, and has become a major attraction. In the afternoon, we'll fly back to Melbourne.

Sunday 8 November 2020

A free day in Melbourne.

As an option, we can offer a 2½ hour drive to the Walhalla Railway, a 2'6" railway that used to serve the gold mines hereabouts. It's a pleasant ride up Stringers Creek, a nice relaxing conclusion to a wonderful holiday!

Monday 9 November 2020

After breakfast, break for your flight home

What's included

Breakfast daily and dinners where shown, accommodation in 3-star hotels, all transport and excursions as set out in the itinerary and the services of a Darjeeling Tours Limited Tour manager. Personal and incidental expenses are not included. Dinners in large cities are excluded to allow flexibility: Australia has some excellent restaurants, and tastes vary. This allows some individual flexibility, and avoids a continuous diet of hotel buffet dinners.

Flights

There are so many options for flying to Australia that we will treat each booking as individual to accommodate your preferences. You are, of course, free to book on a 'ground only' basis and arrange your own flights, or we will be happy to arrange flights for you at cost. Obviously prices do vary (occasionally on a day by day basis!), but return fares with a quality airline (Emirates) from London would start just above £700 in economy.

Prices are all based on a 'ground only' basis from Cairns to Melbourne. Please see the paragraph above for flights to and from Australia

Main tour price	£3,495 (based on two people sharing)
Single supplement	£545
Extension to Tasmania	£1,095 (based on two people sharing)
Single supplement	£235



Please note that carriers, flights times and train times are subject to change.

Great Barrier Reef – turtle and fish



Sugar train



Melbourne Vintage tram



Sydney Opera House

