



## **10 Day Legendary Outback Tracks 4WD Safari - Oodnadatta, Birdsville and Strzelecki**

### **Day 1 (L,D)**

You will be collected from your Adelaide accommodation at 7am this morning for your 10 day 4WD Safari along the Oodnadatta, Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks.

Our destination today is the opal capital of the world, Coober Pedy and it will take us all day to get here. En-route we'll stop for lunch and have a look at the salt lakes in the region.

Coober Pedy is as famous for its underground homes as it is for its opals and 50% of the population live underground (in homes called "dugouts"), as well as using underground shops and churches.

Upon arrival into Coober Pedy, we check into our hotel and then after spending the day getting to know each other, we'll enjoy our first dinner together as a group, in the restaurant.

Overnight accommodation- underground motel room with en-suite, Coober Pedy (2 night stay)

### **Day 2 (B,D)**

There's some free time this morning for you to have a wander through the town, visit the Old Timers Mine and Museum, The Umoona opal mine and museum (also home to the "Footsteps in time" fossil display), visit one of the underground churches in the town or have a look around Crocodile Harry's Underground Nest, one of the weirdest dugouts of Coober Pedy and one of most famous in the world due to its use in the movie Mad Max Beyond the Thunderdome.

After lunch we take a guided tour through a working Opal Mine, where we get an insight of what it means to be an Opal Miner.

Late this afternoon, we make our way out of town to the nearby Breakaways Reserve, offering a striking & unique example of arid scenery. From the flat - topped mesas to the stony gibber desert, remnants of millions of years provide a wealth of geological interests and breathtaking views. There are two lookout points which highlight the open spaces and colourful environment, leaving an impression of the long gone inland sea that our early explorers dreamt of. From the lookout, the locally named "Castle" or "Salt & Pepper" can be seen in an easterly direction. This outcrop has been used in a number of films and advertisements, while Panorama Hill situated in the middle, features in Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome and Ground Zero. As the day goes by, the passing of the sun changes the desert colours, creating photogenic scenes that appear surreal.

Overnight accommodation- underground motel room with en-suite, Coober Pedy

### **Day 3 (B,L,D)**

This morning we depart Coober Pedy and head across the Moon Plain to the Painted Desert (Arckaringa Hills). The Moon Plain is rich in fossil deposits, evidence of the inland sea that covered this region 120 million years ago and offers a vast expanse of rocky plains unlike anywhere else. The strange lunar landscape has been used for many Hollywood movies including Mad Max Beyond the Thunderdome, Pitch Black, Red Planet and Priscilla Queen of the Desert.

We'll cross the Dog Fence numerous times during the trip but the first time is today on the way to the Breakaways. The longest fence in the world, at 5300km's, it stretches across 3 states, from Queensland to the far west of South Australia.

The Painted Desert is an ancient Inland Sea bed where the hills are the result of rain, weather and erosion. The slopes and shapes include many different colours and shades of orange, yellow and white- hence the name "Painted Desert".

After viewing the Painted Desert from the lookout, we continue through to Oodnadatta. Famous for its pink roadhouse, the town was originally created when the Overland Telegraph Line was laid and then became the northern terminus for the Central Australia Railway.

After lunch we join the 615km unsealed Oodnadatta Track, which follows the Old Ghan Railway line and the Overland Telegraph, after it was originally mapped by the explorer, John McDouall Stuart. The track follows an old Aboriginal trading route through semi-desert country with artesian springs and waterholes along the way. The route was also used by camel trains in the 1880's, led by cameleers from Afghanistan, both of whom were especially brought to Australia for the task of hauling goods into Central Australia for use by pioneer settlers. Camels were the only pack animals capable of taking on a six-week journey in often extreme heat, through sandy terrain. When the train line was extended to Alice Springs in 1929, many of these camels were left to run wild in the outback where they number in the tens of thousands today. The line became known as the Central Australian Railway and the train service on the line was known as the Ghan in honour of the Afghan cameleers.

The Oodnadatta Track is littered with ruins of old town sites, station ruins, homes, cairns and remnants of the old railway line, the short-lived gold rush and the Overland Telegraph Line. En-route to William Creek, we stop at Algeuckina Bridge historic site and some of the station ruins.

We arrive at William Creek, the smallest settlement in South Australia with a population of 3 humans and a dog ! It's located 165km's from the nearest town and sits in the largest cattle station in the world (Anna Creek-approximately the size of England).

Overnight accommodation - motel room with en-suite, William Creek Pub Hotel, middle of nowhere, Outback South Australia

#### **Day 4 (B,L,D)**

There's time this morning for optional scenic flights over Lake Eyre (own expense).

Departing William Creek, we make our way out to Halligan Bay at Lake Eyre North for a look at the magnificent lake with its incredible colours and patterns. Lake Eyre is Australia's lowest point, the largest inland lake in Australia and the largest salt lake in the world ! The Lake contains 400 million tonnes of salt and is 15 metres below sea level. Donald Campbell set a land speed world record of 649 kmh in his turbine car "Bluebird" on its dry bed back in 1964.

We continue exploring the Oodnadatta Track this morning, heading south towards Marree. We stop several times en-route, including the natural artesian springs within Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park. The Blanche Cup and The Bubbler mound springs are created from water deep within the Great Artesian Basin which filters to the surface forming mounds and bubbling ponds.

After stopping at the Lake Eyre South lookout, we pass the famous dingo fence again and then reach Marree, which is situated at the crossroads of the Oodnadatta and Birdsville Tracks. The town also has a rich Aboriginal, Afghan and European heritage.

After checking into our accommodation, you have some free time to look around the town or visit the Tom Kruse Museum.

Overnight accommodation – motel room with en-suite, Marree Pub Hotel

#### **Day 5 (B,L,D)**

Departing Marree, we now travel north on the famous stock route, which is the Birdsville Track. The track passes through the Tirari and Sturt Stony Deserts and is extremely remote but strikingly beautiful in its harshness.

The 517km track, which traverses vast gibber strewn plains and sand dunes, was established in the 1860s as the main stock route to bring cattle from central Queensland to the railway in Marree. In these days the track had a grim reputation, many people and mobs of cattle lost their lives, so the Track is rich in history and tragedy. It later became an important as a freight route into the outback and in the 1930's, it even had its own mail route, on which the legendary mailman, Tom Kruse, worked for almost 20 years. You can still see one of his old mail trucks in Marree.

We have a look at the ruins of the Lake Harry Date Plantation and then stop at the Cooper Creek Crossing, before driving through the Natterannie Sandhills and Mungerannie Gap, which is the largest geographical sight along the Birdsville Track (150m).

We pass Mirra Mitta Bore, a hot flowing artesian bore, and the last leg of the track, into Birdsville, takes us past Koonchera Dune.

Crossing into Queensland, we arrive into Birdsville, check into our accommodation and then take a locally run tour out to "Big Red", the largest and most famous sand dune in the Simpson Desert. It offers fantastic photo opportunities, especially at sunset.

Overnight accommodation- motel room with en-suite, Birdsville Pub Hotel

### **Day 6 (B,L,D)**

This morning we head south again, through Cattle Country and back into South Australia to Innamincka, made famous by Victorian explorers Burke and Wills and their ill-fated exploration across central Australia.

En-route we enjoy the view at Deon's Lookout and visit The Dreamtime Serpent – a work of art representing a series of pathways travelled through Country to connect the river systems in the Channel Country of the Diamantina Shire. The Serpent has been created using gravel and gibbers found throughout the shire.

On arrival into Innamincka, we visit the famous Burke and Wills Dig Tree (camp LXV). It was here that the explorers left a base camp while they continued north, along with King and Grey. In charge of the camp, Brahe waited longer than he'd been requested to but his decision to return south only hours before the Burke and Wills party returned, is one of the most unfortunate coincidences in Australian history. Grey died en-route to Innamincka, Burke and Wills died along Cooper Creek and King was the sole survivor, being cared for by Aboriginal people until the back up party found him.

Overnight accommodation- motel room with en-suite, Innamincka Pub Hotel

### **Day 7 (B,L,D)**

We depart Innamincka this morning and head south through the Strzelecki Desert and join the last of our legendary Outback Tracks- the Strzelecki Track. Explorer Charles Sturt named the track after Polish explorer and geologist Paul Edmund de Strzelecki and the 465km track runs north <>south from Lyndhurst to Innamincka. The Track was pioneered as a cattle route by bushman Harry Redford (AKA Captain Starlight), who brought 1000 stolen cattle from Queensland to South Australia in 1871 without a single death. Although caught with conclusive evidence, the jury at his trial admired this feat and refused to convict him !

Our first stop today is the viewpoint at the Moomba oil and gasfields. Natural gas was first discovered in the region in 1966 and was followed by the discovery of oil in 1970. Moomba is now a major supplier of both for Australian and overseas markets.

We continue down the Strzelecki Track and turn off towards the Northern Ikara-Flinders Ranges, heading towards Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary. The privately owned sanctuary was founded in 1969 by Reg Sprigg, Biologist, Oceanographer, Conservationist, scientist and pioneer of eco-tourism.

Many minerals are found on Arkaroola, including gold, sapphires, rubies, amethyst, several forms of quartz, uraninite and malachite (among others) and evidence of early mining is scattered about Arkaroola and the Gammon Ranges.

Arkaroola is also famous for it's clear night skies and offers some of the best viewing conditions in Australia.

Overnight accommodation- motel room with en-suite, Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary

### **Day 8 (B,L,D)**

This morning you'll take Arkaroola's famous Ridgetop tour- an unforgettable encounter with the timeless terrain and unique natural beauty of Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary. Learn from your Arkaroola guides about Arkaroolas 1600 million year old geological history as they navigate the steep slopes and hair raising ascents of the Ridgetop Track. Inspiring images of red granite mountains and golden spinifex covered hillsides give way to a breath-taking view across the Freeling Heights, Lake From and the desert beyond. Take in the 360 degree panorama as you enjoy morning tea at Sillers Lookout- a lofty pinnacle at the end of the track.

Departing Arkaroola, we make our way today into the central Ikara- Flinders Ranges, known for their unique beauty, indigenous history, ancient geological formations, rich colours and textures and abundant wildlife. The Ikara-Flinders

Ranges are home to a huge array of plant species, birds, reptiles and mammals and the vibrant colours of the 800 million-year-old quartzite and limestone outcrop that is the Flinders, are truly spectacular.

Conditions permitting, we'll take the back road and stop en-route in the old mining town of Blinman.

Overnight accommodation- Wilpena Pound Resort- standard room with en-suite (2 night stay)

### **Day 9 (B,L,D)**

This morning you have the option of taking a walk into Wilpena Pound or take a scenic flight (at own expense). Walk along the beautiful Wilpena Creek, framed by huge river red gums, into Wilpena Pound. Walking on to the Old Hills Homestead, you can learn about the hardships the Hills family had to face at the turn of the century with the option of walking up to the Wangara lookout to see the mystical heart of the Ikara-Flinders Ranges with stunning views over Wilpena Pound. There is a shuttle available to shorten the walk, that can take you up and back again (extra cost- approx. \$5 each way).

Then we take the Moralana Scenic Drive, which connects the Wilpena and Leigh Creek Roads and is known as one of the best drives through the Flinders Ranges. We'll see stunning scenery featuring the southern wall of Wilpena Pound, Black Gap Lookout, red Range, Elder Range and more.

To finish the day, we take the Brachina Gorge Geological Trail, a trail that passes through 130 million years of earth history, including meteorite debris, stromatolites and fossilized plant and animal life. It offers an insight into past climates, the formation of the ranges and the evolution of early forms of life. It's also an important refuge for the rare and endangered Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby.

This leads us through the Heysen Ranges to nearby Bunyeroo Valley and Gorge and a stop for photos at the spectacular Razorback Lookout.

Overnight accommodation- Wilpena Pound Resort- standard room with en-suite

### **Day 10 (B,L)**

Departing the Ikara-Flinders Ranges, we head south towards Hawker, the hub of the Ikara-Flinders Ranges and a thriving railway town until the line was relocated west in 1956. Just south of Hawker we'll visit the Kanyaka Ruins. The ruined farmhouse is all that remains of a farmers dream to provide for his family is this unforgiving landscape. It's a harsh reminder of the hardships the first European settlers endured.

We continue to Quorn, home to the famous Pichi Richi Railway and many heritage buildings. The Quandong Café is located in the oldest stone building in Quorn, at 130 years old and is home to the famous Quandong Pie.

After a look around Quorn, we depart for Adelaide, arriving at approximately 6pm and you will be dropped off at your accommodation.

### **END OF TOUR**

**B= Breakfast L= Lunch D= Dinner**

*Departs Adelaide in 2019 on April 1st and 6th October*

*Additional dates will be added, subject to demand*

AUD \$5575 per adult, twin share.

\$5375 per child (aged 10-15 years), twin share.

\$6230 per person, single room.

**\*\*solo travellers must have single room unless twin share of the same sex can be found. Solo travellers can also request own room and pay single supplement\*\***

**\*\*please note that we only pick up in Adelaide City for this tour (NOT Glenelg or outer suburbs)\*\***

Maximum 15 passengers

Prices include GST

**Inclusions:**

- Seat in 4WD vehicle, with professional driver guide
- All Meals as stated
- Accommodation, as listed
- Entry fees and permits
- Opal mine tour at Coober Pedy
- Big Red sunset tour
- Ridgetop tour at Arkaroola

**Exclusions:**

- Arrival/departure flights
- Pre & Post tour accommodation
- Travel Insurance
- Alcohol
- Any optional activities such as Lake Eyre scenic flight (Please request flight when booking, to avoid disappointment). 1 hour is approx. \$285pp, 1.5 hours is approx. \$395pp and 2.5 hours is approx \$520pp. and Wilpena Pound scenic flight- 20 mins is approx. \$180pp, 30 mins is approx. \$210pp and 1 hour is approx \$315pp

Itinerary is exclusive to Sacred Earth Safaris and subject to availability, road, weather and cultural conditions.