



## Mungo Outback Journey

### Wildlife and Aboriginal Culture in the Outback 3 Day Private or Group Touring Module

<b>Tour code:</b>	MOP
<b>Tour Duration:</b>	3 days, 2 nights
<b>Style:</b>	Private Party or Special Group touring
<b>Operates:</b>	March through November
<b>Departs:</b>	Mildura Airport at 10:15am (see flight information below)
<b>Returns to:</b>	Mildura Airport on Day 3 to meet return flight to Melbourne.

**Other Pick ups/drop offs:** can be arranged from/to Mildura and surrounds.

**Flight Information:** *Flight IS NOT included in our price.*

Scheduled flights to Mildura originate in Melbourne. At the current date (June 2011) Qantas, Virgin and Regional Express (REX) run services between Melbourne and Mildura. If you are travelling from Melbourne on Day 1 you must book a flight out of Melbourne to arrive in Mildura no later than 10am. If you wish to return to Melbourne on Day 3 we prefer that you book an afternoon flight. If you need advice on the best dates to travel please contact us. Carefully check luggage requirements for all airlines before booking your flight.

NB - This tour is also available for specialised Group touring.

### Overview

[Travel Agents please see last page for suggested brochure/website text]

Discover the animals and history of the Outback at Lake Mungo in the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area. Travel expansive red dirt plains sprinkled with Kangaroos, Emus and Pink Cockatoos. Walk in the shade of Desert Pines searching for brilliant parrots and sleepy lizards. Climb ancient sand dunes with an Aboriginal Guide who will show you the stone tools and artefacts of his culture.

Your private journey is conducted by experienced Wildlife and Aboriginal Guides\* who reveal Mungo's arid land wildlife and ancient Aboriginal Heritage.

Experience the peace of the Australian Outback whilst staying in the small town of Wentworth beside the junction of Australia's iconic rivers, the Murray and Darling.

\* Expert guidance is provided by a top level Echidna Walkabout Wildlife Guide working in collaboration with a Harry Nanya Aboriginal Guide (from the local Paakantyi Tribe) to provide a genuine overall understanding of the significance of the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area.

#### Aboriginal History

Australia's Aboriginal People have lived and hunted beside Lake Mungo for 50,000 years. In the mid 1900's ancient camps and burial sites were exposed by erosion, creating tremendous excitement throughout the scientific world. Aboriginal occupation of Australia was pushed back many thousands of years by the discovery of ritual burials sites that are evidence of the oldest organised human culture on earth and the reason the region was proclaimed a World Heritage Area. Mungo National Park is also home to many arid land animals and birds including kangaroos, rare species of parrots and cockatoos, birds of prey, reptiles and many others. Skeletal remains of extinct marsupials, the forebears of Australia's unique suite of wildlife, are another example of the huge significance of Lake Mungo.

#### Wildlife

Many native Australian birds & animals inhabit the beautiful dune fields and saltbush plains of Mungo. At dawn and dusk Red and Western Grey Kangaroos graze together in the low vegetation – heads raising and lowering silently in the solitude of the vast dry lake-bed. Bird life at Mungo is both rich and rare – resident



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Wedge-tailed Eagles soar overhead and nest in the few desert trees, giant flightless Emus swagger about the plains in small bands. Falcons & Kestrels hunt low flying birds and insects. Most beautiful of all is the Pink Cockatoo with its fabulous multicoloured crest – a remarkable bird to see in this arid land. Some of Australia's most vividly colourful parrots are seen at Mungo, often in the desert pines where noisy Babblers also live & make their large communal nests. Shingleback & Bearded Dragon lizards are often seen basking in the sun in these delicate arid ecosystems. Our Wildlife Guide will place you in locations at the right time to see many of these creatures.

### Accommodation & Geography

For two nights you will stay in the town of Wentworth in well appointed (en suites) 3 star accommodation overlooking bird-filled Thegoa Lagoon. Across the road the Darling River nears its final junction with the Murray River. These two rivers drain 1/3rd of the Australian continent – much of their courses travel through semi-arid land. The dramatically contrasting interface between the riverine and arid land ecosystems around Wentworth means we often view wildly differing and unexpected species. Because of this - although our journey focuses on Lake Mungo - we also visit other important wildlife and Aboriginal sites in the region. Wentworth is the perfect base to explore this magnificent area on foot & by vehicle, escorted by your personal guides. Meals are traditional Australian bush fare – a genuine taste of Australia.

### Day by Day Description

(Meal inclusions shown thus: B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)

#### Day 1 Rivers and Lakes of the Outback

Depart Melbourne airport in the morning on a short flight (flight by others) to Mildura on the edge of the Outback. Upon arrival you will meet your Echidna Walkabout Wildlife Guide and begin your private Outback journey. Your first stop will be at the junction of Australia's two great rivers - the Murray and the Darling - where they meet in the Outback. This is a very significant place to both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. It is surprising to see so much water flowing through this semi-arid region.

We have lunch then drop your gear at your accommodation located overlooking Thegoa Lagoon, a major billabong of the Murray River and home to many birds. Next we drive away from civilisation into the arid country searching for wildlife and birds along the billabongs. Often extraordinary numbers of water birds are seen here as they arrive out of the desert looking for food and water near the rivers. This is a very important place for the local Aboriginal People. At the end of the day we head back to your accommodation to prepare for tomorrow's journey to Mungo then on to dinner in the town of Wentworth.

*O/n Two Rivers Motel (L,D)*

#### Day 2 Lake Mungo – Wildlife & Culture on a 50,000 year Journey

This morning we depart for our special day at Lake Mungo.

After breakfast you will meet your Aboriginal Guide from the local Paakantyi Tribe who will travel with us for the rest of the day to interpret the culture of this region. We drive across the dry bed of Lake Mungo to lunettes (wind-curved sand dunes) to begin a "story line" through 50,000 years of Aboriginal History beginning at the lake bed and rising high into the eroded dunes. You will learn about the people who lived at this place, see evidence of their camp sites, view the remains of their cooking fires and, depending on the movement of the sand and soil, you may even help with the discovery of new sites! Your Guide will also point out evidence of extinct fauna. It will become obvious that this now dry arid area was once a thriving wetland where large numbers of waterbirds and animals coexisted beside a vibrant population of Aboriginal People for tens of thousands of years. Where people lived they also died and not far from where you will be walking is the oldest recorded human cremation in the world. Burial sites continue to be exposed throughout the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area and are monitored carefully by local Aboriginal People to minimise disturbance and engender respect for their ancestors. We cannot take you to these sacred areas but it is wonderful to know that the person who is guiding you is a descendent of these enduring people whose culture is the oldest in world.



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(NB: Australian Federal and State laws forbid collection or removal of Aboriginal Artefacts)

We then begin a circumnavigation of Lake Mungo by vehicle and on foot. This afternoon our Wildlife Guide and Aboriginal Guide collaborate in a unique cross cultural interpretation of the land and its wildlife. You will travel through 4 ecosystems ranging from dry lakebeds to rich sandy bush country. As we travel we'll stop often to search for birds and animals and learn about the vegetation in this constantly changing landscape. You will learn how the Willandra Lakes System dried out over thousands of years as the climate warmed. Because the country is flat, any rise places you on top of a world that stretches from you direct to an endless 360 degree horizon – a profound peace emanates from the ancient land. As the day subsides we re-cross Lake Mungo and spend time walking in the saltbush with the kangaroos of Mungo. On cloudless evenings the coats of male Red Kangaroos vibrate in the sunlight. Your Wildlife Guide will point out the distinctive white ear marks of the Western Grey kangaroos. Vivid parrots and Cockatoos may join us. This is also the perfect time to serenade the evening with the evocative vibrations of the Didgeridoo – your Aboriginal Guide will share this unique instrument with you before we have a barbecue dinner in the bush.

After dinner we'll head back through the desert to your accommodation. On clear evenings we'll stop to study the stars of the Southern Hemisphere - including the Southern Cross. The stars in the Outback on a clear night shine so brightly you can almost reach out and touch them! Many of the constellations have great meaning to the Aboriginal People.

**O/n Two Rivers Motel (B,L,D)**

### Day 3 Red Dunes of the Inland

Take a relaxing morning walk at your accommodation and enjoy the birds that are constantly on the move about Thegoa Lagoon. One of the real surprises here are the Blue-faced honeyeaters that live and breed in the trees surrounding the motel.

As a grand finale we head out to one of Australia's signature emblems - the red sand dunes of the Outback. They sweep in endless moving waves across vast areas of the country engulfing all before them, sometimes settling when vegetation ties them down. Just out of Wentworth a large meandering dune has been caught up by a stand of eucalyptus trees and as the sand has increased in height the trees have grown taller to keep above the advancing sands. Some of the trees are massive representatives of their species, they may be up to 400 years old. All sorts of birds use these trees as feeding and resting places in the arid zone. We walk the dune field discovering the plants and wildlife that inhabit these remarkable systems and your Guide explains how these magnificent icons of Australia are formed.

After our walk we'll have lunch (at your own expense) then depart Wentworth to Mildura for your return flight to Melbourne (flight by others)

**(B)**

### Inclusions

- Tour includes: Full interpretation by experienced Guides, meals and accommodation as described below, entry fees and on ground transport ex Mildura Airport.

**Expert Nature Guides:** You will be guided on this journey by our friendly, experienced and knowledgeable Echidna Walkabout Wildlife Guide. Many hours of research work precede the tour to ensure that you see and learn about native wildlife in its natural environment. First class standards in guidance are the hallmark of Echidna Walkabout. Our in-house Nature Guide training program ensures that all guides have an in-depth working knowledge of the wildlife and environments you will see.

**Aboriginal Guide:** Aboriginal interpretation is provided by a Paakantyi Tribe person from Harry Nanya Tours.

**Accommodation:** Two Rivers Motel (\*\*\*) overlooking beautiful Thegoa Lagoon, a natural "billabong" of the Murray River. Breakfasts are provided in your room.



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**Meals on tour:** Meals are provided as noted in the itinerary. Dinners are 2 courses. Weather permitting, dinner on Day 2 is a bush barbecue in the desert. Picnic lunches are provided on tour.

Note: Alcoholic beverages are not included in the price.

NB Vegetarian or other food preferences must be provided at the time of booking. We will always do our best to cater for special needs but please keep in mind that we are operating in a very remote environment.

**Transport:** In comfortable air conditioned vehicle

**What to bring:** Strong walking shoes or boots, clothing to suit variable weather conditions (please check weather forecasts for expected temperatures or call us), sun hat, rain proof coat, small torch, insect repellent, sunscreen, day pack and 1 litre water bottle.

**Weather:** Be prepared for extremes in both seasonal and daily temperatures in Outback Australia. Winter days are cool to warm and nights cold to frosty. Spring and Autumn days are warm to very hot. Desert winds can be penetrating, very cold in Winter and hot and dusty at other times of year. Shelter from the elements is minimal.

### Cancellations or Modifications by us:-

#### Before the tour

On the occasions when rain does fall at Mungo, dirt roads into the area may become waterlogged and impassable meaning that the tour may be modified or cancelled. If you have booked and paid for a tour that is cancelled by us due to rain prior to the departure date we may do **one only** of the following:

- Offer you the tour on another occasion
- Offer an alternative tour
- If neither of the above is possible we will refund the amount you have paid us for the tour (this amount does not include flight)

#### During the tour

Echidna Walkabout will always attempt to run your tour as per our itinerary. However Outback travel can be influenced by a wide range of conditions and factors that are often out of our control and which may cause us to disrupt or change the tour. On some occasions we may have to modify the itinerary due to extreme heat or wet weather or poor road conditions. We will always try to get you back for your flight out. However you must be aware that **we will not compensate you in any way whatsoever for any losses or liabilities you may incur.**

### PLEASE NOTE: The following items are NOT included in your tour price

Flights. Airport transfers to and from Melbourne Airport. Alcoholic beverages

## About Us

Janine Duffy and Roger Smith founded Echidna Walkabout in 1993, to foster respect for Australia's wildlife and to ensure its wild and free-living future. Most tours depart Melbourne and travel to carefully chosen wildlife locations in south eastern Australia.

Our fantastic team of Wildlife Guides – Bill, Paul, Joanne, Martin and Janine & Roger – and Koala Researchers – Mary, Donna & Alison – ensure that every tour is a special, once-only experience. No two tours are ever the same with wild animals!

Our Wildlife Team provides support to our tours. Their research is passed on to you and to the National Parks Service, Field Naturalists Clubs and the Atlas of Australian Birds.

Echidna Walkabout respects our Indigenous Cultures, and is grateful to the Paakantyi, Wathaurong and Gonnai communities for their support over many years.



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Our tour groups are small (no more than 8 people) allowing for a personal experience and optimal wildlife viewing opportunities.

For the past 12 years, Echidna Walkabout has tracked and monitored the movements and lives of hundreds of wild koalas. The proceeds of each tour contribute to this important study and our guests are involved while on tour. The results of this study are made available to all our staff, the National Parks Service, Field Naturalists Clubs, wildlife veterinarians and wildlife carers.

We are also regenerating an old farming property west of Melbourne as a Wildlife Habitat – for the benefit of native wild birds, Kangaroos, Koalas and Wallabies, plus reptiles, frogs and invertebrates - to restore some lost habitat to these wild creatures that have given us so much. We have, and have always had, a serious commitment to running sustainable tours. Our comprehensive environmental code is available for viewing on our website: [Environmental Code](#)

On this tour our Wildlife Guides work very closely with Aboriginal People to assist with cross cultural exchange.

### BOOKINGS/INFORMATION

Echidna Walkabout  
PO Box 370 Port Melbourne VIC 3207 AUSTRALIA  
Tel: +61 3 9646 8249 Fax: +61 3 9681 9177  
Email: [enquiries@echidnawalkabout.com.au](mailto:enquiries@echidnawalkabout.com.au)  
[www.echidnawalkabout.com.au](http://www.echidnawalkabout.com.au)

**Because this is a Private Tour it cannot be booked on our website – please contact us directly by email or telephone for booking and payments.**



## Mungo Outback Journey

### TRAVEL AGENT'S PAGE

#### SUGGESTED BROCHURE/WEBSITE TEXT:

Mungo Outback Journey Private 3 day tour [7 words, 48 characters incl. spaces]

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Experience the peace of the Australian Outback whilst staying at 3 star Two Rivers Motel 3 days and 2 nights in the small town of Wentworth beside the Thegoa Lagoon.

Australia's Aboriginal People have lived and hunted beside Lake Mungo for 50,000 years. Mungo National Park is also home to many arid land animals and birds including kangaroos, rare species of parrots and cockatoos, birds of prey, reptiles and many others. Skeletal remains of extinct marsupials, the forebears of Australia's unique suite of wildlife, are another example of the huge significance of Lake Mungo. If you really want to see Australia's true Outback, and finds out how it came to be the Outback, this is the place to be! [205 words, 1236 characters incl. spaces]

\* Expert guidance is provided by a top level Echidna Walkabout Wildlife Guide working in collaboration with a Harry Nanya Aboriginal Guide (from the local Paakantyi Tribe) to provide a genuine overall understanding of the significance of the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area

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#### Why is Mungo so important?

Mungo National Park is where the oldest cremation site of any human was discovered – dating back 50,000 years. The region has been continuously occupied by Aboriginal People since that time – the longest known occupation of any land by any people on earth. Ongoing research found the area to be so important it was listed as a World Heritage Area in 1981. Mungo also contains a unique insight into climate change and its effect of human habitation and the environment over many thousands of years. The wildlife of Lake Mungo is also uniquely Australian – the flora and fauna have evolved through dramatic changes in climate encompassing total inundation, rich wetland and desertification. The bones of the ancestors of Australia's unique marsupials are often found protruding from the ground at Mungo! Today the land holds 2 of Australia's 5 species of great kangaroos, many rare and beautiful parrots, birds of prey, reptiles and a rich arid land flora. If you really want to see Australia's true Outback, and finds out how it came to be the Outback, this is the place to be!

Updated: July 2011 For more details about this tour contact: [roger@echidnawalkabout.com.au](mailto:roger@echidnawalkabout.com.au)