

Victorian Steam Safari

With Scott McGregor • 12 - 18 October 2018

• MELBOURNE • ECHUCA • BENDIGO • BALLARAT •
• HALLS GAP • GRAMPIANS NATIONAL PARK •



Scott McGregor's

RAILWAY ADVENTURES

OVERVIEW

The dawn of the railway age in Victoria was perfectly timed, coming hot on the heels of the greatest gold rush in Australia's history. The windfall from mining royalties was crucial in funding the construction of country's first mail line railways. These branched out in the 1850s and 60s to reach the 'Pot of Gold', the Murray River, at Echuca in 1864. Here riverboat trade was also booming. The coming of the rail line added another spoke to this already busy hub. Our special short adventure celebrates the Golden Age of rail and river transport in the colony of Victoria. It culminates in a kind of re-enactment of the famous 'meeting of the whistles' at the Port of Echuca, where steam train and steam boat connected in a hail of whistles echoing over the town and river – the sound that once reminded one and all of the prosperity and enterprise of their great state.

Join us on a round-trip that showcases not only Victoria's culturally rich cities and towns, but also its unique natural beauty, iconic gold-rush history, sublime local gastronomy and character-filled railways. We'll begin our journey in Victoria's cosmopolitan capital city of Melbourne, with a special welcome dinner aboard the Colonial Tramcar Restaurant. We continue our steam-powered adventure on a special departure aboard one of Steamrail's famous locomotives, heading north to Echuca. Here we leave the tracks for the mighty Murray aboard the quaint PS Emmylou paddle steamer, where we'll enjoy a sumptuous lunch as we cruise down Australia's greatest river. Our next departure point is Bendigo. From here we pay a visit to the regional city of Horsham, before exploring the stunning Grampians National Park. Spending the day amongst these spectacular sandstone mountains and the rare wildflowers and wildlife is a fitting exclamation mark to the end of our tour, before travelling through Daylesford for a ride on the DERM Railway and finishing up in Ballarat. Another highlight of our trip while in Ballarat is a visit to the fascinating living museum of Sovereign Hill that recreates gold-rush life in the mid-1800s.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy special trips by steam train on the Victorian Goldfields Railway, Steamrail heritage railway and the DERM railway in Daylesford
- Ride the iconic PS Emmylou paddle steamer on the Murray River
- Visit historic gold-rush towns, including Ballarat, Bendigo and Maldon
- Explore the incredibly scenic Grampians National Park and try traditional Aboriginal foods
- Stay in the historic former Railway Administration Office, now the Quest Grand Hotel, in the heart of Melbourne
- Enjoy a sumptuous welcome dinner on a restored, moving tramcar, 'The Colonial Tramcar Restaurant', in Melbourne.
- Explore Bendigo on a guided vintage tram tour and visit a gold-rush era gold mine
- Visit the gold rush open-air museum of Sovereign Hill in Ballarat
- Enjoy comfortable coach connections, most meals included and the service of your expert tour leader throughout

WHY TRAVEL WITH US

- **Small group sizes** — a small group of passengers per trip guarantees an intimate experience with less time spent queuing, more time with your guide, and better access to sightseeing destinations.
- **Unique itineraries** — each itinerary has been meticulously developed by a team with great cultural awareness and many years' knowledge of each destination. You are guaranteed to experience the best that each destination has to offer.
- **Authentic local experiences** — whether it's a little-known yet impressive steam railway, a small boutique hotel or an authentic restaurant, know that you will experience something special on our tours.
- **Expert local guides and local operators** — we employ local guides to share their passion and knowledge of the places they call home, while our partners on the ground offer us support and backup all the way.
- **Customer satisfaction** — our testimonials speak for themselves. Thousands have travelled with us over the years and many come back year after year, often bringing friends along! On our customer satisfaction ratings, over 97% would recommend us to others and/or travel with us again.
- **Fully escorted** — our team of tour leaders is experienced and capable, entertaining and considerate, and together with our local guides, has your needs well covered. They will help with everything along the way, giving you the peace of mind to soak up your surroundings. And you'll find them jolly good company to boot!

MEET YOUR TOUR LEADER

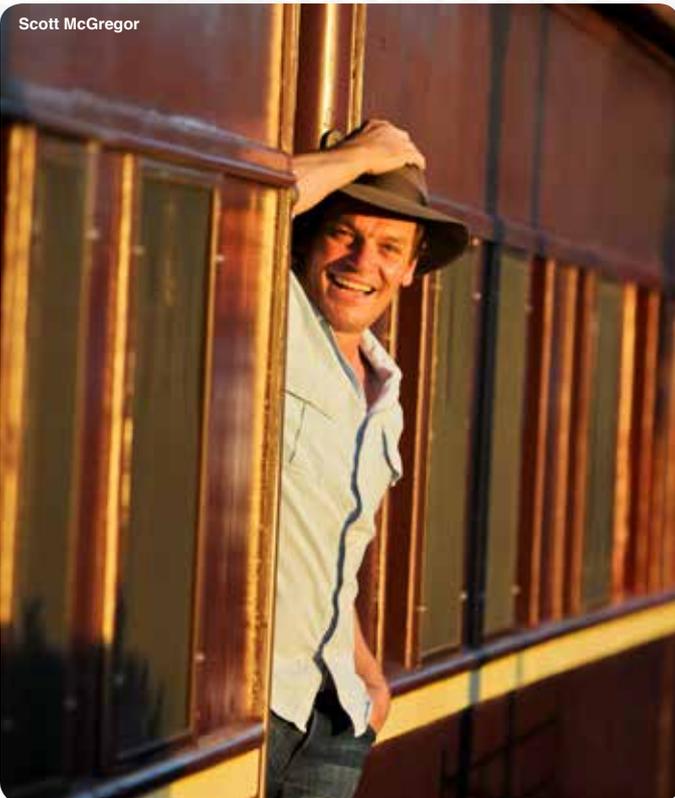
SCOTT MCGREGOR has been involved in the media for over 30 years as an actor, presenter, writer and producer. But it's now sharing his love of travel, and particularly railway travel, where Scott's passion lies.

Graduating from NIDA in 1979, he appeared in a wide range of stage, film and TV roles, including the lead in the ABC's epic mini-series 1915.

He has presented and hosted numerous prime-time ratings winners including many years as the handyman on Better Homes and Gardens and Room For Improvement. He presented two series of his own Railway Adventures for Channels 10 and 7 and a number of programs for The History Channel.

After more than a decade leading tours he decided to establish Railway Adventures in 2012. He also owns and operates RUWENZORI—an Orient Express-style tourist retreat on the Great Dividing Range near Mudgee.

Scott McGregor



DAY 1: Friday 12 October – ARRIVE MELBOURNE

Arrive in Victoria's vibrant capital and check into your hotel. It's conveniently located right next to Southern Cross Station and rich in railway history. The hotel was originally the headquarters of the Victorian Railway Administration Office. In the evening, we'll enjoy a celebratory, three-course welcome dinner with the whole group on the iconic Colonial Tramcar Restaurant, travelling through Melbourne's modern and lively city centre.

Overnight: *Quest Grand Hotel, Melbourne (D)*



DAY 2: Saturday 13 October – MELBOURNE – ECHUCA

Get ready for a full day of vintage steam train travel as we join Victoria's premier heritage rail operator, Steamrail. We depart Melbourne early this morning, settling into our first-class carriage on the Echuca Overland train. Watch the landscape whip past your window and enjoy a complementary cheese platter and drinks as we head north towards Echuca.

On arrival, we'll have some time to explore the town before boarding the historic 'unofficial flagship of Echuca,' the PS Emmylou paddle steamer. Built in the 1980s, around an original 1906 vintage steam engine, the Emmylou was named after the country singer Emmylou Harris. Board our boat for a sumptuous, first-class lunch as we cruise along the Murray River. Following our lunch cruise we'll transfer to our hotel in the centre of Echuca and have the rest of the afternoon free to relax and explore the town. We'll re-group later in the evening for dinner at a local restaurant a short walk away.

Overnight: *Mercure Port of Echuca (B, L, D)*

DAY 3: Sunday 14 October – ECHUCA – CASTLEMAINE – MALDON – BENDIGO

Depart Echuca by coach this morning and travel to the little goldfield town of Castlemaine, our departure point for a return trip by steam with the Victorian Goldfields Railway. Board our train and traverse the countryside to the town of Maldon, an iconic gold-rush town awarded the 'most intact townscape' by the National Trust. Our train departs Castlemaine at midday and crosses the scenic Victorian countryside, arriving in Maldon a short while after. Enjoy a few hours here to explore, do some shopping, have a local lunch and learn of this town's intriguing gold-rush history, before boarding our train once more for the return journey to Castlemaine. On arrival we'll travel a short way by coach to Bendigo.

After checking in to our centrally-located hotel, take some time at leisure to relax and explore Bendigo, before meeting later in the evening for dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: *The National Complex Hotel, Bendigo (B, D)*

DAY 4: Monday 15 October – BENDIGO

Enjoy breakfast at our hotel before heading out on a guided exploration of Bendigo, another iconic gold-rush town rich with intriguing history and unique character. We begin our day at the Central Deborah Gold Mine, the departure point for our 'Vintage Talking Tram' that will take us on a short ride through the city to the Bendigo Tramways Depot and Workshop. Enjoy a guided tour and learn about the history, restoration and character of their iconic tram fleet.

Following this we'll board our Vintage Talking Tram once again to resume our tour of the city. The tour showcases the main sights and attractions of Bendigo, and will return us to the Central Deborah Gold Mine at around 11am. Don a hard hat and grab a miners' lamp as we descend 61 metres below the surface of Bendigo to walk in the footsteps of past miners on a guided tour. Travel through the labyrinth of underground tunnels with your guide and discover what the conditions were like for miners in the gold rush era. We'll also have some time to visit the museum and even try gold panning!

Enjoy the rest of the afternoon and evening free to explore the city at your leisure.

Overnight: *The National Complex Hotel, Bendigo (B)*

DAY 5: Tuesday 16 October – BENDIGO – GRAMPIANS NATIONAL PARK – HALLS GAP

Today we'll depart Bendigo by coach and embark on a special trip to the spectacular Grampians National Park. Known for its rugged sandstone mountains, dramatic cliffs and plummeting waterfalls, you'll see why it deserves its reputation as one of Victoria's greatest natural wonders. We'll spend some time exploring the area, soaking up the tranquillity and uncovering some hidden gems – with a wide variety of walks and sites to see. Pay a visit to the Brambuk aboriginal cultural centre – a fascinating way to discover local aboriginal arts and culture and learn about the history, flora and fauna of the area. For lunch, we'll enjoy bushfoods al fresco at Brambuku's Bushfoods Café. Enjoy traditional Aboriginal foods such as kangaroo, birds, eggs, fish and seeds with a contemporary twist.

We'll re-group in the afternoon and transfer by coach to Halls Gap, a quaint little town conveniently located next to the Grampians. On arrival, we'll check in to our hotel and enjoy some time to relax and explore the town. We'll meet for dinner in the hotel a little later in the evening.

Overnight: *The Grampians Motel, Halls Gap (B, L, D)*

DAY 6: Wednesday 17 October – HALLS GAP – DAYLESFORD – BALLARAT

After breakfast we'll depart Halls Gap and travel to Daylesford, a little town in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range. Here we'll take a privately chartered trip on the historic DERM Railway. After some time at leisure to explore and have lunch on your own, board the Railway for the 1.5-hour scenic round trip. Afterwards, we'll continue by coach to Ballarat.

On arrival in this historic city, we'll have some time to settle in to our centrally located hotel before a visit to the gold rush open-air museum of Sovereign Hill. This living museum recreates Ballarat's first ten years after the discovery of gold in 1851. Costumed ladies and gents walk the main street, steam-driven machinery is in action, and panning for gold (you get to keep the gold, too) is a must.

Spend the afternoon exploring the museum, before we return to the hotel and re-group for a special dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: *Craig's Royal Hotel, Ballarat (B, D)*

DAY 7: Thursday 18 October – BALLARAT- MELBOURNE – DEPART (B)

After a morning at leisure, we'll visit the Ballarat Tramway Museum for a look at their impressive collection of vintage trams. They were once the city's main form of public transport, and all of them are at least 100 years old. Enjoy a privately chartered run of the quaint Ballarat 4 wheel tram, and learn of the days when they dominated the city.

Later, we'll check out from the hotel and travel by coach to Melbourne airport where we will say our goodbyes.



INCLUSIONS

- 6 nights accommodation in comfortable, centrally located hotels
- Many meals as specified in the itinerary
- Drinks included with welcome and farewell dinners
- Luxury chartered coach connections throughout
- Comprehensive sightseeing with your tour leader as mentioned
- All excursions and entrance fees to attractions, as listed in the itinerary

EXCLUSIONS

- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Meals and services not mentioned in the itinerary
- All other personal expenses, such as drinks, phone calls, laundry services, etc.
- Excursions listed as optional and extra in the itinerary

TOUR PRICES

- Per person twin share:.....**\$3,985**
- Sole room use:**\$785**
- Deposit (per person)**\$500**
- Final payment due by **12 Aug 2018**

DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

We endeavour to have all the details of our tours correct at the time of printing. However, sometimes factors beyond our control may affect the final inclusions and prices. These factors may include, but not be limited to; significant fluctuations in currency exchange rates, individual hotel/restaurant decisions that may affect bookings; weather events forcing a change of itinerary; unexpected trackwork on rail lines, unexpected closure of site attractions and so forth. Therefore, items mentioned in the brochure such as quoted prices, hotels and inclusions are subject to change. If a change is imposed on us, we will endeavour to ensure the substitute is of the same quality that you've paid for.

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to assisting with flight suggestions and bookings, we can also give you some ideas of what you could do before and after your Railway Adventure. We can also organise your all-important Travel Insurance for you. Call our office on 1300 733 323 if you would like to discuss options.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

For more information on factors such as travel insurance requirements, fitness levels, fees and charges, tour cancellations, payment schedules and so on, please refer to our Terms and Conditions, which accompany the booking form. They can also be found on our website



Steamrail Train

Platinum 1300 733 323
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This tour is operated by Platinum Travel Corp in association with Scott McGregor's Railway Adventures. ATAS Accreditation No: A10597

