



RAILWAY ADVENTURES IN 2022

Victorian Steam Safari

With Scott McGregor and Friends
19 – 28 NOVEMBER 2022

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- MELBOURNE • CASTLEMAINE • ECHUCA • BENDIGO • BALLARAT • HALLS GAP •
 - THE MURRAY RIVER • DAYLESFORD • MALDON • CASTEMAIN • MARYBOROUGH •
 - GEELONG AND THE BELLARINE PENINSULAR • THE GRAMPIAN'S NATIONAL PARK •
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INTRODUCTION

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 the country's first main line railways. These branched out in the 1850s and '60s to reach the 'Pot of Gold', the Murray River, at Echuca in 1864. Here, the riverboat trade was also booming and the coming of the railway added another spoke to this already busy hub. Our special short adventure celebrates this 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 steamboat 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 journey 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 begin our journey by experiencing the efficient, modern regional rail service before embarking on steam-powered transport that takes us back in time, and then on to the state's northern border. Here we experience the mighty Murray aboard the quaint PS Emmylou paddle steamer, where we enjoy a lunch cruise on this iconic vessel. Our next departure point is Bendigo staying in the grand old Shamrock Hotel and exploring the city at length. We visit Maryborough's grand station which is also a monument to another age and then settle into Ballarat for a few nights to explore the region, including a visit to Daylesford for a private charter of the charming DERM Railway and time at Sovereign Hill to explore and view the recently revamped light and sound show. Victoria's natural beauty is on show at the Grampians National Park and rides on The Overland, Puffing Billy and Australia's premier rail restaurant the 'Q Train' cap off a mighty trip around The Garden State in the height of autumn.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy a special trip by steam train on the Victorian Goldfields Railway, and the quaint Daylesford Spa Country Railway
- Sail and dine on a Murry River paddle steamer.
- Visit historic gold-rush towns, including Ballarat, Bendigo, and Maldon
- Explore Bendigo and Ballarat museums and townscapes on vintage trams
- Visit the gold rush open-air museum of Sovereign Hill in Ballarat and experience the newly re-launched AURA light and sound show
- Savour a sumptuous lunch on the lavish Q Train along the Bellarine Railway
- Enjoy comfortable coach connections, most meals included and the service of your expert tour leader throughout



MEET YOUR TOUR LEADER

SCOTT MCGREGOR

Scott McGregor has been involved in the media for over 30 years as an actor, presenter, writer and producer and over the last decade has extended his many interests into the world of travel. Inspired by his experiences hosting tours for the Powerhouse Museum and others he decided to establish Railway Adventures in 2012. Since then, he has led more than 40 tours to almost 40 countries. Graduating from NIDA in 1979, he appeared in a wide range of stage, film and TV roles including the lead role in the ABC's epic mini-series 1915 and the *Coral Island*. He has presented and hosted numerous prime-time ratings winners including many years as the handyman on *Better Homes and Gardens* and the host of *Room For Improvement*. He presented two series of his own *Railway Adventures* for Channels 10 and 7 and several programs for The History Channel. He also owns and operates RUWENZORI which he built in the 1980's from vintage railway carriages on top of the Great Dividing Range near Mudgee in central NSW. Restored in an opulent Orient Express style it is now a popular tourist retreat for up to 13 people. Check it out at www.stayinatrain.com



TOUR MAP



n Nights at Hotel

- Train
- Coach
- Boat

SOME WAYS YOU'LL TRAVEL

The best train trips possible, private luxury coach for off-train travel, guided walking where suitable, and other appropriate and appealing options to make exploration easy.



PS Emmy Lou



Victorian Goldfields Railway



Smart New V-Line Trains

WHY TRAVEL WITH US

The joy of travel is not confined to the destination. How you travel is a large and rich part of the experience. Railway Adventures offers a totally unique perspective on some of Australia's, and the world's, most spectacular destinations, with the confidence that the journey will be just as magical and memorable as what is discovered at the end of the line.

WITH US, YOU CAN CONFIDENTLY EXPECT:

- **Small group sizes** — a small number 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 of expert travellers with many years' experience, an intimate knowledge of the destination, and with great cultural awareness. 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, you can be sure of experiencing something special on our tours.
- **Expert local guides and local operators** — we employ local guides to share their passion and knowledge of the place they call home, while our partners on the ground provide the best possible 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. Our customer satisfaction ratings show that over 97% would recommend us to others and/or travel with us again.
- **Fully-escorted** — our tour leaders are experienced and capable, entertaining and considerate, and together with our local guides, have your needs well covered. They help with everything along the way, and provide peace of mind, enabling you to relax and enjoy the journey. And you'll find them jolly good company, to boot!

Day 1 • Saturday 19 November: ARRIVE MELBOURNE

Arrive in Victoria's vibrant capital and check-in to your hotel. In the evening, we'll enjoy a celebratory welcome dinner with the group a short walk from the Hotel.

Overnight: The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne (D)

Day 2 • Sunday 20 November: MELBOURNE - CASTLEMAINE - MALDON - CASTLEMAINE

We depart Melbourne this morning, travelling by regional express train to the quaint goldfield town of Castlemaine. Here we take some time to explore the town before heading down to the railway station. Here we'll embark on a steam-hauled tour on the Victorian Goldfields Railway along the old branch line. Explore Maldon, an iconic gold rush town awarded the 'most intact townscape' by the National Trust, before heading back to Castlemaine in the mid-afternoon. Your first-class ticket allows you to ride in the wonderful parlour cars with access to the bar for some refreshments along the way if you so desire.

You then have the rest of the late afternoon to enjoy the delights of Castlemaine and visit the historic town Centre and extensive 'Mill' Arts precinct and Gallery. Later this evening we will get festive and dine at the popular Railway Hotel.

Overnight: Castlemaine Colonial Motel (B, D)

Day 3 • Monday 21 November: CASTLEMAINE - ECHUCA- BENDIGO

This morning after a hearty breakfast in your room we will wander across town to visit Buda House, a classic, beautifully preserved Victoria Goldfields Villa set on 8 acres of tranquil gardens. We then transfer by coach to the Railway Station for our train trip to Echuca, departing in the mid-morning.

The two-hour trip north to Echuca passes Bendigo, Elmore and Rochester and arrives in time for us to board our Paddlesteamer for a gentle lunch while the steamer rolls down the Murry River from the historic Port of Echuca. In the afternoon we are back to the station for the afternoon journey to Bendigo. Here we'll meet our coach and transfer to the elegant and historic Shamrock Hotel, where you have free time before joining together for dinner in the hotel.

Overnight: Shamrock Hotel, Bendigo (B, L, D)

Day 4 • Tuesday 22 November: BENDIGO

This morning we begin our tour of the city of Bendigo, an iconic gold rush town rich with intriguing history and unique character. Starting at the Bendigo Tramways Depot and Workshop, we'll learn about the history, restoration and character of their iconic tram fleet. Following this we'll resume our tour of the city on the old tram on a tour that showcases the main sights and attractions of Bendigo, finishing at the Central Deborah Gold Mine. Here you have the option to enjoy a surface tour. Alternately, don a hard-hat and grab a miners' lamp and descend 61m below the surface of Bendigo to walk in the footsteps of past miners on a guided tour.

The rest of the afternoon and evening are free to explore the city at your leisure, with your two-day Talking Tram ticket allowing you to hop on and hop off at will. Sights to explore include Bendigo Pottery, the Chinese Dragon Museum, the stunning Reginal Art Gallery and the old Joss House.

Your evening is free to enjoy the many dining options around the city.

Overnight: Shamrock Hotel, Bendigo (B)

Day 5 • Wednesday 23 November: BENDIGO – MARYBOROUGH - BALLARAT

This morning you can enjoy a free morning and late check-out. You can use your Talking Tram pass to explore more of the city or visit, on your own, one or more of the many attractions on offer. In the early afternoon we re-group and head down the road with our coach once again to the city of Maryborough where we take a break and explore the old railway station, one of Australia's grandest regional Victoria era buildings. Here, after a break, we board a local V-Line train for a short cross-country run to the fair city of Ballarat, our base for the next 2 nights.

We check into the wonderful Craig's Royal Hotel in the centre of the city and enjoy some free time to freshen up and relax before heading across to Sovereign Hill for an evening dinner. After this jolly feast we wander over to the other side of the site to experience their wonderful new sound and light show 'AURA' which tells the Wadawurrung creation story with projections on the lake and the legend of the Eureka Battle and subsequent events that have helped to shape our nation. Gunfights and protests erupt under the night sky, and the gold rush is brought to life as never before.

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

Day 6 • Thursday 24 November: BALLARAT - DAYLESFORD - BALLARAT

Today we'll depart Ballarat by coach 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 we'll board the railway for the 1.5hr scenic round trip. Afterwards, we'll continue by coach for the return trip back to Ballarat.

The rest of the afternoon is at leisure for you to explore the city or perhaps take an optional side trip to the Eureka Centre, home to the Eureka Flag and museum dedicated to the story of the colonial days on the goldfields.

In the evening we regroup for dinner in the grand dining hall of our historic hotel.

Overnight: Craig's Royal Hotel or Sovereign Park Motor Inn, Ballarat (B, D)

Day 7 • Friday 25 November: BALLARAT - HALL'S GAP

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 on the quaint Ballarat 4-wheel tram and learn of the days when they dominated the city. Back in town you have some free time to enjoy lunch on your own and visit the excellent regional gallery and gold exchange.

In the afternoon we'll travel by coach to Hall's Gap via Dunkeld in order to view the scenic southern half of the Grampian's National Park before settling into our accommodation for the evening. Dinner is hosted in the restaurant with views over the hills beyond.

Overnight: Comfort Inn Country Plaza, Halls Gap (B, D)

Day 8 • Saturday 26 November: HALLS GAP - ARARAT - MELBOURNE

This morning take time to smell the roses of the Aussie bush in this dramatic setting before taking a special coach trip deep into the heart of 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. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before taking a short cross-country coach ride to Ararat where we'll board our train bound for Melbourne.

Arrive back in Melbourne in time to relax at the hotel before enjoying a light banquet in the hotel's restaurant.

Overnight: The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne (B, L)

Day 9 • Sunday 27 November: MELBOURNE - BELLARINE - MELBOURNE

This morning after a gentle start to the day we head down to the Docklands to catch a ferry to Queenscliff for our date with the Q Train.

Here we will be met by our hosts for the short transfer to Drysdale, our departure point for the Q Train, Australia's premier rail restaurant. The award-winning rolling restaurant travels along the historic Bellarine Railway between Drysdale and Queenscliff in restored carriages from the former Queensland Railways Sunlander train. The rural and coastal scenery rolls by while you dine on fresh local produce, a fitting finale to our journey across Victoria. Our day is capped off with a quick train ride back from Geelong to Southern Cross station and our adjacent hotel.

Overnight: The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne (B, L)

Day 10 • Monday 28 November: DEPARTURES OR OPTIONAL EXTENSION

This morning your tour concludes after breakfast in the hotel.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION

Monday: After breakfast we head back to Southern Cross Station to take a metro train to Belgrave, the departure point for the legendary Puffing Billy, Australia's most popular heritage railway situated in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges. Originally built in the early 1900's as a low cost 2'6" gauge line to service the local communities and timber industry, it was closed in stages in the 1950's before being saved by dedicated volunteers and rail fans who strived to restore the line and the rolling Stock. Since the 1960's it has been serving a huge role as one of Victoria's most popular tourist attractions.

Our train departs at 12:30 and you'll get to experience a steam hauled trip along the length of the character filled narrow gauge line while enjoying a lovely grazing platter lunch in the first-class dining car. There will be opportunities to visit the new Lakeside Centre and the Menzies Creek museum as part of your excursion ticket. Return to Melbourne in the late afternoon for an evening at leisure.

The Grampians

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 9 night's accommodation in comfortable, centrally located hotels
- Daily breakfast, two lunches and seven dinners
- 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

WHAT WE DON'T INCLUDE

- 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

EXTENSION

- 1 extra night's accommodation in Melbourne with breakfast
- Excursion on the Puffing Billy Railway
- Comprehensive sightseeing with your tour leader as mentioned

FITNESS RATING



Two 'Locos' - Good fitness

The most common grading for our tours. Two loco itineraries offer many activities that require a little extra fitness – walking on uneven ground, climbing hills to enter towns or historic sites, walks of 1-3 kilometres as well as getting on and off transport. You need to have good mobility and aerobic fitness and be able to manage your own luggage.



Sovereign Hill



Melbourne City



HOW TO BOOK

Download a booking form from our website and follow the easy steps to getting on board. Alternatively, contact us on 1300 800 977 or info@railwayadventures.com if you'd prefer a form be sent to you. Complete the form and submit it, along with your \$500 pp deposit to secure your place on the tour.

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.

TOUR PACE / LEVEL OF FITNESS:

Our itineraries are designed to make the most of each destination, so a reasonable amount of activity is built into most days, which is why we call them adventures. Our philosophy is to offer you the best experience possible, while leaving you, our guest, the flexibility to pace yourself and choose how much or how little you want to do. Each Railway Adventures tour incorporates periods of free time for your own exploration and relaxation.

While you don't need to be a 'gym junkie', a reasonable level of fitness is required for most of our tours. The ability to manage your own luggage, get on and off all manner of trains and coaches, walk for extended periods, stand comfortably, and climb steps and stairs will ensure you get the maximum enjoyment from your adventure.

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 800 977 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.

PRICE

Per person twin share..... **\$5,485**
Single personsupplement..... **\$920**
Deposit (per person)..... **\$500 at time of booking**
Final payment due by**45 Days prior to departure**

OPTIONAL EXTENSION

Per person twin share..... **\$300**
Single person supplement..... **\$100**

SOME PLACES YOU'LL STAY

Hand-picked hotels based on location, customer feedback, value and atmosphere. Here's a selection:



The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne



Hotel Shamrock, Bendigo



Craig's Royal Hotel, Ballarat

YOUR TRAVEL AGENT

THE RAILWAY ADVENTURES STORY

Railway Adventures was launched in 2012 by well-known Australian TV personality and self-confessed rail fan, Scott McGregor. A lifelong passion for travel has taken Scott to scores of countries and his love of rail has seen him exploring many of the world's great train journeys, confirming his belief that the most relaxing, romantic and engaging way to see a country is by rail. He even has his own life-sized, fully restored opulent train accommodation atop the Great Dividing Range near Mudgee, offering guests a rare and special bush retreat experience.

Since 2012 Railway Adventures has thrilled and delighted more than 1200 travellers on over 100 tours from Sweden to Sri Lanka, Tasmania to Transylvania, Britain to Burma, Venice to Vietnam and all manner of shorter adventures in our own wonderful country. Scott's numerous rail-themed TV documentaries, his ongoing involvement in rail heritage and his extensive connections with private train owners around the world, guarantee that every Railway Adventures tour is exclusive, entertaining, and authentic. 08 June 2021.

TRAVEL ACCREDITED LIC #A14416



1300 800 977 railwayadventures.com

