



ACADEMY
TRAVEL

TAILORED
SMALL GROUP
JOURNEYS

HIGH COUNTRY TRAIL

FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO MELBOURNE

OVERVIEW

In addition to their stunning natural beauty, the alpine regions of New South Wales and Victoria contain an abundance of iconic structures and historical stories.

On this new 10-day tour led by archaeologist and historian Ben Churcher, this tour brings Australian history to life in the most engaging way as we journey from Sydney to Melbourne, via the High Country trail. We make our way through the beautiful southern highlands of NSW on our way to Canberra, where a highlight will undoubtedly be a visit to the spectacular *Discovering Ancient Egypt* exhibition at the National Museum of Australia, with our tour leader adding personal insights and a depth of knowledge to the exotic displays.

Our journey continues south as we learn more about the Indigenous people of the Murrumbidgee and follow their ancient paths to the rich bioregions of the Australian Alps. Here we immerse ourselves in the crisp air and heritage of the Snowy Mountains before travelling to Beechworth, Glenrowan, Mansfield and Melbourne where we admire the history-laden landscapes and hear their colourful tales.

Across the tour, we savour the region's best restaurants and wineries, visit numerous galleries, museums and heritage buildings, and marvel at the colourful autumnal landscapes.



TOUR LEADER

Ben Churcher is an archaeologist who works in the Near East and with Aboriginal archaeology in Australia.

TOUR DATES

April 17-26, 2024

TOUR PRICE

\$7,890 per person, twin share
\$1,330 single supplement

TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$500** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

ITINERARY

Canberra (3 nights), Thredbo (2 nights), Beechworth (1 night), Mansfield (2 nights), Melbourne (1 night)

INCLUSIONS

9 nights' accommodation in centrally located 3 to 5-star hotels. All breakfasts, 2 lunches and 6 dinners. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Start & Finish

The tour starts at 9.00am on Wednesday April 17, at Central Station, Sydney.

The tour ends at 10.00am on Friday April 26, at The Langham Hotel, Melbourne.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Unique Exhibitions

Immerse yourself in the exotic richness of the visiting Egyptian collection from the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities, exhibited at the National Museum of Australia, and the work of one of the great First Nations' artists, Emily Kam Ngwarra, at Canberra's National Gallery.

Hidden Canberra

Enjoy a guided tour of Canberra that brings to life the little-known yet fascinating historic sites of the capital that only a local would know!

A Sense of Seasons

Marvel at the brilliant Autumn colours throughout the scenic countryside as we traverse the Australian High Country.

Alpine Connection

Learn more about the Indigenous connection to the land as we follow ancient pathways into the Alpine bioregions.

Bushranger Country

Revel in stories of our most iconic bushrangers, Ned Kelly and Captain Moonlite, and experience the history laden towns of the Victorian alps.

Wednesday 17 April

Southern Highlands Splendour

We begin our Grand Tour of the High Country by setting out from Sydney's Central Station and heading to beautiful Bowral, where we immerse ourselves in the unique art and cultural voice of Ngunungulla Gallery. Afterwards we enjoy some local organic produce before continuing our journey through the scenic vistas of the Southern Highlands to Canberra. This evening we enjoy dinner at Chifley's Bar and Grill, and relax at the elegantly stylish Hotel Kurrajong. Overnight Canberra (D)

Thursday 18 April

Unknown Canberra

This morning we enjoy a unique tour of the capital city that focuses on key federation, historic and military sites that most people would never know about! Afterwards, we admire the mosaic of forests at the National Arboretum, marvel at the impressive diplomatic missions and enjoy the *Emily Kam Ngwarra* exhibition at the National Gallery, a celebration of the extraordinary life of a pre-eminent contemporary artist and senior Anmatyerr woman. Overnight Canberra (B)

Friday 19 April

Discovering Ancient Egypt

A highlight of today will undoubtedly be our visit to the *Discovering Ancient Egypt* exhibition at the National Museum of Australia. This outstanding display features sculptures, *Book of the Dead* scrolls, exquisite jewellery and ornate coffins, allowing us to ponder the Egyptian gods and society, and discover the exotic land of the pyramids. Our tour leader will add his depth of knowledge and understanding to this display, providing a unique and engaging cultural experience. After viewing the Egyptian collection, we will immerse ourselves in the culturally important First Nation's exhibition and enjoy the permanent collections housed at the NMA, before embarking on a private tour of the new and old Parliament Houses. Overnight Canberra (B)



Discovering Ancient Egypt



Beechworth

Saturday 20 April

Where the Murrumbidgee's flowing...

The town we now call Gundagai sits on traditional lands of the Wiradjuri speaking people and holds national significance to Indigenous Australians. The floodplains of the Murrumbidgee were a frequent meeting place for people from nearby regions and the town's strong relationship with the Wiradjuri people is celebrated in *The Great Rescue Statue of Yarri and Jacky Jacky*, two Indigenous men who saved many from the horrific flood of 1852 in their bark canoes. Today we depart Canberra and head to Gundagai to discover more about the Wiradjuri people, see relics of pioneering life at the historic museum and learn about the region's infamous bushrangers, Captain Moonlite and Peisley at the old Gaol. In the afternoon we visit the riverside town of Tumut before arriving in the alpine village of Thredbo. Tonight, we savour local produce and relax in Thredbo's charming and iconic historic property, the Thredbo Alpine Hotel. Overnight Thredbo (B, L, D)

Sunday 21 April

High-Altitude Beauty

In 1955, Austrian skier and entrepreneur, Tony Sponar, was looking for a place with long and challenging ski runs to establish a modern winter resort and he discovered Thredbo. The Crackenback chairlift opened in 1958 and a world-class ski resort and Australia's ski tourism industry was born! Today we explore the alpine inspired architecture of Thredbo village, and, for those who are keen, we take the gondola to Top Station and enjoy a short walk, admiring the amazing alpine views. This afternoon we enjoy a late lunch at the Wild Brumby Distillery before an evening at leisure. Overnight Thredbo (B, L)

Monday 22 April

The Man from Snowy River Country

We traverse the magnificent high-country landscapes today, soaking in the vibrant Autumn colours and crisp mountain air. Descending to Khancoban, we discuss the ambitious Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Scheme and the region's legendary horseman, Jack Riley, who was immortalised in Banjo Paterson's poem, *The Man from Snowy River*. A stop on the border allows us to visit the contemporary Murray Art Museum Albury before continuing to our destination for the day, the beautiful gold rich town of Beechworth. Here we sample some outstanding local produce at The Provenence Restaurant, which has been listed for the past 14 years in the Gourmet Traveller Top Australian Restaurants. Overnight Beechworth (B, D)

Tuesday 23 April

Kelly Country

The Old Beechworth Gaol and Courthouse complex is one of Australia's most significant historic cultural sites. It played a key role in the life of bushranger Ned Kelly, his family and his sympathisers. We enjoy a guided tour of Beechworth's historic precinct and Burke Museum before departing for Glenrowan, most famous for hosting the final siege and capture of the

HOTELS

The hotels on this tour have been chosen for their unique style and or their location. We are sure you'll enjoy the charming atmosphere that some of the chosen hotels have to offer.

Canberra, Hotel Kurrajong

(3 nights)

www.hotelkurrajong.com.au

Thredbo, Thredbo Alpine Hotel

(2 nights)

www.thredbo.com.au

Beechworth, Armour Motor Inn

(1 night)

www.armourmotorinn.com.au

Mansfield, Alzburg Resort

(2 nights)

www.alzburg.com.au

Melbourne, The Langham

(1 night)

www.langhamhotels.com

WEATHER

Autumn is a wonderful time to visit the Australian High Country. Temperatures typically range between 17°C during the day and 7°C in the evenings, however, there is always a chance of rain and some chilly temperature as well, so bring along a warm jacket.

FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Grade One

Our tours have many active components, from walking tours, standing around for lengthy periods at sites or in museums, climbing stairs and walking on uneven terrain. Please see our website for all fitness requirements.

Kelly Gang. Afterwards we continue to Kelly's home at Greta before arriving in Mansfield, where we enjoy an evening at leisure. Overnight Mansfield (B)

Wednesday 24 April

Beauty and Tragedy

In late 1878, Ned Kelly and his gang had been hiding in the rugged ranges above Mansfield, with warrants out for their arrest. It was here, at Stringybark Creek, that the Kelly Gang became Australia's most wanted outlaws, after three policemen were shot and killed. This morning we visit the Kelly Tree, which marks the spot where the gunfight between the Mansfield police and the Kelly Gang occurred, before moving on to Power's Lookout, where the excellent vantage point was once used by Kelly's mentor, local bushranger, Harry Power, to view approaching troopers during his period of notoriety. Upon our return to Mansfield, we visit the local cemetery, where monumental headstones, paid for by the state, stand in recognition of the three policemen who lost their lives at Stringybark Creek. This is followed by an afternoon at leisure. Overnight Mansfield (B, D)

Thursday 25 April

Anzac Day | Onwards to Melbourne!

For those who would like to honour our fallen soldiers this Anzac Day, Dawn Service will be held only a short walk from our hotel at the War Memorial Gates, Mansfield Recreation Reserve. The service will commence at 6.00am and will last about 20 minutes. Following breakfast in the hotel, we then continue in Ned Kelly's footsteps, ending up in Melbourne Gaol today. After hearing the fascinating escape stories of some of the Gaol's most infamous residents, we visit Cook's Cottage and explore the vision of colonial grandeur and UNESCO World Heritage Site, The Royal Exhibition Building, which played a key role in the birth of Australia's Federation. This evening we enjoy a 6-course degustation experience at Pure South Dining, as we say our goodbyes. Overnight Melbourne (B, D)

Friday 26 April

Departure

Our journey concludes after breakfast this morning and a coach transfer to Melbourne Airport will be available to make our way home. (B)



ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Sharon Williams** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email: sharon@academytravel.com.au