

## Cycle Australia – Great Ocean Road to the Grampians

### Australian Cycling Tour – Victoria Coast and Mountains

Day		Location	Meals inc	Km cycled
1	Arrival day. Morning transfer to Queenscliff, town ride and opening beach cricket match.	Queenscliff		20
2	Morning cycle to Torquay, afternoon beach activities including surf lesson, surf kayak.	Torquay		50
3	Cycle Torquay to Wye River. Bells Beach swim, Lorne lunch and Kennett River koalas. Beach house stay.	Wye River		70
4	Cycle Wye River to Johanna. Apollo Bay beach, Rainforest walk and Great Ocean walk path night adventure. Option for beach horse ride. Old farmhouse stay.	Johanna	B	60
5	Cycle Johanna to Port Campbell. Twelve Apostles and Loch Ard Gorge. Transfer to Grampians National Park via winery for local BBQ. Log cabin stay.	Halls Gap	B	60
6	Warm up MTB course then loop ride through National Park. MacKenzie Falls, Reid's Lookout, Giant Koala, boomerang lesson, night walk, Oz movies. Options for rock climbing, kayaking, hiking.	Halls Gap	B, L	70
7	Cycle Halls Gap to Murtoa. Farm stop for lunch and yabbing. Cricket practice and Australian Rules football lesson. Pub stay and local party BBQ.	Murtoa	B, L, D	85
8	Transfer to Melbourne for city ride and final night BBQ and slide show		B	40

Australia is jam-packed with a great mix of sights and sounds, landscapes, wildlife and specific 'Aussie' culture that most people look forward to visiting and experiencing at least once in their life. This cycling tour takes in just a small corner of this massive island continent but it has been carefully chosen and designed to allow you to experience in a week, what others drive, fly and train around for months to see. The first section of the trip is along the southern coast known as the Great Ocean Road. It has a lot to offer; world-class surf coast areas of Queenscliff, Torquay and Bells Beach, rugged and panoramic coastline, a mixture of eco-systems and scenery, diversity of the local wildlife, plants and animals, the quaint and picturesque small country towns and fresh and tasty local produce. There are panoramic coastal beaches, lush rainforest, wild bushland and diverse marine life. The area has plenty of indigenous animal species including wallabies, koalas, platypuses, possums and kangaroos. The latter can be viewed from our beach housing and farm-stay accommodation. We then leave the coast and head for the mountains to the Grampians National Park. This places us in the heart of a 30,000 year old aboriginal culture still evident today. It is a region of natural beauty and much-loved destination of the local Victorians.

The cycling component will consist mostly of riding the length of the Great Ocean Road, from Queenscliff to Port Campbell as well as several mountain-biking routes in the Grampians National Park and our last day's ride is into the Wimmera Mallee Plains for a look at Australian farming life. This route will take us alongside famous beaches and surf meccas, through laid-back country

towns, cool coastal cities, eucalypt-scented forests, lush rainforests and even a winery or two! We cycle the coast, mountains and plains of Victoria, try our hand at surfing, cooking, kayaking, horse trekking, night hiking, "yabbing", fishing, cricket, Australian Rules Football and even learn how to throw a boomerang! We travel a very special and unforgettable part of Australia, with experiences not part of many traveller itineraries: handpicked beachside stays, local pubs and log cabins in the Grampians National Park. After a day in the saddle we can always savour some traditional local culinary specialities or enjoy a BBQ or a hearty local pub meal.

The last day offers something special as we head back into the centre of Melbourne for one more ride before reliving our trip over dinner and a beer and then sampling some of the city nightlife.

With some fantastic cycling and an unforgettable cultural experience we believe this trip has something for everyone....and we can't wait!

#### **Day 1 – Melbourne (Vehicle transfer to Queenscliff), 20 km flat easy riding**

This is arrival day and you are free to explore this fascinating city before our scheduled group meeting at noon. After a quick group meeting, our gear and bikes will be loaded onto the van to head to our first stop, the picturesque town of Queenscliff (under 2 hours). No rest for the wicked, so we jump onto the bikes for a short town ride before our opening beach cricket match, and some seaside games lead us into a few drinks and our first night dinner.

**Caravan park twin cabin stay (private toilet/shower), No meals**

#### **Day 2 – Torquay, 50 km flat moderate riding**

This is a warm up cycle to test the bikes and the local traffic, and of course to see some of the interesting points between Queenscliff and Torquay. Lunch will be in Torquay, famous for its surf and home to Rip Curl and Billabong. The afternoon is free to explore the many great beaches of the area, shop for some new beach gear and maybe take a surf lesson or try our hand at some surf kayaking alongside the training iron men and women. Fish and chips by the back beach is a local tradition we will take part in tonight before hitting the town for a local beer and a chat to some friendly inhabitants.

**Twin hotel/motel stay (private toilet/shower), No meals**

#### **Day 3 – Wye River, 70 km hilly moderate riding**

Our first full day of cycling is one of our favourites. Not long after leaving Torquay we have a chance to take a dip in the waves of the famous Bells Beach... but be careful of the undertow! Lorne is home to some award-winning pie shops so we stock up on local Gold Medal Winning pies and head for a beachside picnic for lunch, and if the temperature gets high enough, a midday dip is always a great idea before getting back on the road. With great views all the way to Wye River we have lovely bushland to our right and stunning coastline to our left. Tonight we dine at the local Rookery Nook Hotel with its ocean views. It is unpretentious but "boy, they cook up a fantastic fish and chips", or other delicious house specials which, when washed down with a local wine or beer, will make the perfect end to a great day.

**Beach house stay (shared facilities), No meals**

#### **Day 4 – Johanna, 60 km hilly moderate riding**

Like yesterday today is a treat for keen cyclists and animal lovers. A few kilometres into the day we enter koala territory. There will be many opportunities to see koalas in the Otway National Park eucalyptus forest. Many car-bound travellers never realise they are near to so many koalas as they zoom along but at our pace and with our handlebar height view we can spot them easily as well as their forest housemates, like the black wallaby and echidna. We stop off at Apollo Bay for an early lunch and some seaside sports, or just a refreshing swim before a big ascent to one of the trip's highlights, the lovely 800 metre walking track through the rainforest part of the Otway's National Park. Slowly stroll next to huge beech trees that are retreating back to nature after centuries of sheltering the diverse flora and fauna that make this tiny area of the nation so unique. The scenery changes again as we hit the flats of Johanna with its cattle farms on the fertile plains that back onto the rainforest, bush and sea. We stay in an old farm house tonight with an open fire, some home cooking and some drinks.

**Farm Stay (shared facilities), Breakfast**

### **Day 5 – Port Campbell (Transfer to Halls Gap), 60 km hilly moderate riding**

We rise early today so that we can take part in some morning beach sports to get the blood pumping with a refreshing dip in the nearby sea. We say goodbye to our great hosts as we hit today's only hill before a gentle ride all the way down to the famous Twelve Apostles and Loch Ard Gorge area where we get great views of this ancient coastline. We finish our Great Ocean Ride at Port Campbell, a great place for lunch and maybe a final swim in the sea before we head inland to the equally special Grampians National Park. On our way we visit a local winery where we can taste some wines from grapes grown on 100 year-old vines. We'll have time to do a bit of tasting before we hit our lodgings for the next two nights; log cabins in a central location that several kangaroo families call home as well! The nights 'welcome to the Grampians' BBQ will be cooking as we settle in for the first of two great nights here sleeping under the bright Milky Way stars.

**Log Cabin Stay (Private facilities and kitchen), Breakfast**

### **Day 6 – Halls Gap, 70 km hilly moderate riding**

Today we circumnavigate the National Park seeing the best this region has to offer. First we swap our road bikes for Mountain Bikes and head onto some 4WD trails to get a deeper look into the National Park. We head to the stunning MacKenzie falls and Reids Lookout where we get a great picture of the landscape of the beautiful National Park that we are riding through. We use quiet tracks mixed with a few step climbs as we circle around to the 'Giant Koala' one of the icons of the park. The smells of eucalyptus, the quick glimpse of a gecko, brown snake, blue tongue lizard, deer, fox, a family of emus or the many Macropods that call the park home remind us of the beauty and diversity of the area. If we get back early enough we will have the chance to try some rock climbing, hiking, kayaking or a boomerang lesson at the local Aboriginal culture centre. The Halls Gap Hotel invites us to one of its ritual pub dinners and then it is back to the cabins for a night adventure walk to see the National Park's less conspicuous animals before retiring to a beer and maybe a local classic Australian movie on a big screen.

**Log Cabin Stay (Private facilities and kitchen), Breakfast, Lunch**

### **Day 7 – Murtoa, 85 km flat moderate riding**

This is a big day's ride where we take on the flat plains of the Wimmera Mallee, an area known for its farmland. Behind us, the Grampian ridges get smaller and smaller and the green leaves are replaced by the wide open spaces of the wheat and barley farms. We stop for lunch at one of the local farms and try to catch our dinner. The water channels and farm dams are home to the 'yabby' which is a very tasty fresh water shrimp that can be cooked any way you fancy but our personal favourite is BBQ! Our resident expert chef has offered to cook whatever we catch for our small town 'BBQ and beer' night. A few locals may come out with instruments at the ready for some karaoke, rural Australia style. Murtoa is a town of 700 and we have been invited by a few to join in a game of cricket, Australian rules or netball, the three main sports in this part of the world. With the conclusion of our riding we can let our hair down and relax by eating a feast with refreshing ale or two outside on a lovely summer's evening. The local pub is our home tonight, so it will be just a short stumble from whichever local home we end up being invited to.

**Local Pub Stay (shared facilities), Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

### **Day 8 – Melbourne, 40 km flat riding**

Today we say our goodbyes as we return (4 hours) to Melbourne for a final ride in the Garden City, a fitting way to finish our great adventure. There are numerous things to do in the city but we will take the bikes and head out of town along the bohemian St Kilda Road and along the Yarra River cycling trails that take us for a great and virtually traffic-free tour of a few lovely suburbs along the river. We have our final night enjoying some great city views of Melbourne's skyline as we enjoy a final dinner and drinks, reminisce about our trip and enjoy a media slide show of the trip before we can kick on in slightly more comfortable clothes and explore the many bars and nightspots for which the city is famous.

**This is departure day and you are free to leave at any time, Breakfast**

## **Inclusions**

7 nights accommodation (1 night in a hotel, 1 night in a caravan cabin, 1 night pub stay, 1 night farm stay, 1 night beach house, 2 nights log cabins)

All transport en route (from Melbourne start and end point), and support vehicle (bike hire possible)

Meals; Breakfasts (5), Lunches (2), Dinners (1)

All morning tea and afternoon teas (snack food, hot drinks) whilst cycling

All water (whilst cycling)

Cycling leader/ Mechanic

Bike tools and spare parts

MTB hire for short Grampians Course

Boomerang lesson

## **Group size**

Maximum 12

Minimum 4

## **Accommodation**

The sleeping arrangements are for a mixture of Australian experiences so in the twin-share options (hotel, cabins, and pub stay) single travellers will be paired up with someone of the same sex. This ensures that whether you are travelling solo or with friends, everyone is paying the same rate. In the farm stay and beach house we will be staying in multi-share, same-sex rooms so more than 2 per room but never mixing different sexes in the same rooms. We choose places (where possible) with character and charm and which are comfortable, centrally located and suit the cycling course we know and love. The twin accommodation in hotels and cabins will have private bathrooms. The other 3 nights are a little more basic with shared washing and toilet facilities but which more than make up for this by the great location and atmosphere.

## **Bike Asia Travel Style**

We think cycling through a region for the first time with a group of like-minded people is a great way to travel. Our aim is to provide you with the opportunity to meet new people, learn about new cultures, experience different landscapes and most all to have some fun. Cycling is a major part of our trips – they are cycle tours after all. We have designed them so that they are accessible to people with a reasonable level of fitness. Different trips will require varying degrees of physical ability. Each trip dossier has specific details on terrain, cycling conditions and distances covered each day. All of our trips are fully supported, so should you want or need to take a rest, there will be a seat for you and a place to put your bike. Our trips are also designed to allow you the opportunities and time to appreciate the environment, scenery and culture around you, and to participate in any activities that may be on offer.

## **Responsible Travel**

For more information about Bike Asia's commitment to ethical and sustainable travel practices, please read our [Responsible Travel Policy](#).

## **Transport**

The transfers to and from Melbourne will be done using a minibus. This vehicle will also accompany the group as the support vehicle to carry luggage and participants who need to use it at any stage.

## **Bikes**

You will need to bring your own bike for this trip. We will be able to provide mechanical support and tools. You will need to bring spares. Bike hire will be possible; please contact us if this is your preferred option.

## **Food**

Food is a very important part of any travel experience. This region is developing an excellent reputation for quality produce and restaurants to match. We will be eating in a variety of places from the humble pie shop to local pubs, picnics, BBQ and restaurants. In order to keep costs down, not all meals are included. Please refer to the itinerary above for further details on the inclusions.

## Money

You will need to bring money on the trip to pay for the following: meals not included, all drinks (except water when cycling), activities and transport in free time, optional activities, insurance and of course shopping.

## Insurance

Obtaining your own travel insurance is required in order to participate on a Bike Asia tour. It will need to include a minimum coverage of medical expenses with emergency evacuation, personal liability and accident insurance. Your group leader will need to see a copy of your insurance at the group meeting on the first day.

Two well known travel insurance providers are: [World Nomads](#) and [Covermore](#).

## Joining Point Instructions

You will need to arrive in Melbourne and be at the meeting point at 12:00 midday. The exact location of the meeting point has yet to be confirmed but it will be in the Central Business District, where there is vehicle access and parking so that the support bus can park.

## Fitness

You will need to have a reasonably good level of fitness to participate in this trip. There are eight cycling days in total, with several days cycling over 60km and one day over 80km. This trip involves some mountain climbing and mountain biking. It is a great idea to do at least some cycling in the month leading up to your tour. This is up to you but we highly recommend some training as it will alleviate saddle soreness and leg fatigue, and you may enjoy the tour more if you find the cycling easier.

## Cycling Conditions

The terrain is mainly sealed surfaces.

## Health

In order to make the most of your holiday, the healthier you are the more you will enjoy it! Our group leader will have Wilderness Rescue training and will travel with a first-aid kit, however it is also recommended that individual travellers have a basic first aid kit with any personal medical requirements. Our group leader is not authorised, for legal reasons, to administer any kind of drugs, including pain relief tablets, antibiotics etc so be sure to pack a supply of your favourite pain-killers. Pharmacy products vary in different countries and you may not be able to buy products that are widely available at home. Include the following: plasters, dressings, bandage, calamine lotion (a must for soothing sunburn), oral re-hydration treatment (in case of bouts of diarrhoea), insect repellent, insect sting relief, antiseptic cream and antiseptic wipes.

For more information on travel health, you can click on the links below:

[Australia](#) - [United States](#) - [United Kingdom](#)

## Visas

Travellers who are not Australian citizens will need to obtain an Australian tourist visa.

## Luggage/Packing list (guide only)

We advise against using a hard shell suitcase for this trip. A soft backpack would be the most suitable, and the easiest to transfer in/out of the support vehicle in the morning and evening. Keep in mind when you are packing that often our local crew are lifting our bags every day so try to pack as lightly as possible. Please check our climate charts to assess your clothing requirements, or contact us if you are unsure.

Personal	
Y	Long trousers
Y	Shorts
Y	Shirts
Y	Light jacket
Y	Hat
Y	Sandals/light shoes
Y	Swimming Costume
Y	Sunglasses
Y	Light rain coat
Y	Toiletries
Y	Tampons
Y	Small towel
Y	Sunscreen
Y	First aid kit
Y	Mosquito repellent
Y	Camera and film
Y	Contact solution

Travel	
Y	Travel insurance details
Y	Flight tickets
Y	Money/ travellers checks/cash/credit card
Y	Money pouch
Y	Medication (eg cold tablets, headache tablets, sleeping tablets)
Y	Main/day pack
Y	Alarm clock
Y	Plastic bags
Y	Pocket knife
Y	Torch

Bicycle	
Y	Bike
Y	<u>Bag for your personal belongings</u> while cycling, eg. daypack, bum bag, handlebar bag.
Y	Helmet
Y	Cycling gloves
Y	Water bottle/bladder
Y	2 x padded bike shorts with something to put on over the top when off the bike.
Y	Light wind-proof jacket for cycling
Y	Cycle shoes (with cleat attachment if you use them)
Y	Handle extensions
Y	Gel-seat

**Safety**

Our cycling tour leader has the authority to change or cancel all or part of this trip if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. This decision would not be taken lightly, and where possible it would be made in consultation with our local crew, local operator and Bike Asia management. Your leader will be present on all included activities, staying at all the same hotels, guesthouses and of course cycling with you. During free time, should you choose to participate in any optional activities that are not part of our itinerary, please note that we cannot give any representations or guarantees about the safety of the activity, the standard of the operators running them or the equipment that they use.

In the group meeting on day 1, your tour leader will run a session on cycling safety; whilst some travellers will have had years of touring experience, for others this might be their first cycling trip. We need to cater for a range of abilities and experience and it is in everyone's interest to learn about the particulars of cycling in this region from someone who has already done it. It goes without saying that by running and participating in a cycling trip, both parties accept an inherent level of risk. However, we take the safety of our passengers very seriously and we ask that you cycle in a safe and responsible manner and that you look out for the well-being of your fellow travellers. Cycling helmets must be worn by all cyclists at all times whilst cycling.

**Bike Asia Tour Leader**

Our leaders are passionate about cycling ... phew! They love what they do and take their job seriously. They will make every effort to ensure you have a safe, enjoyable trip with as much fun as possible. They bring many qualities and skills to this role: knowledge of group cycling, safety, management, and liaising between you and the local crew.

**Rules**

We don't have many, but the ones we do have are important. We always abide by the laws of the country that we are travelling through.

**Feedback**

After you have completed the trip, we want to know what you thought about it. This is important to us as it is through your feedback that we monitor our trips and make improvements for the future. Log on to our website and click on the feedback link. It will take you a minimum of 3 minutes, or should you feel like writing in more detail, then a little longer. If you fill in the feedback form, we'll give you an automatic 5% discount on any of our trips in any other region.

**Photos**

We are always looking for good photos of the regions which we travel through. If you have some that you would like to send us, we would love to have a look

**Newsletter**

Our quarterly email newsletter has information on events happening in Asia, travel stories, cycling stuff, last-minute deals on our trips, travel tips and more. If you would like to subscribe just go to our homepage and enter your email address. Your email address will be kept confidential.