

Victorian High Country Walking Tour



Welcome to your next adventure.
Here are a few details to help you get prepared...

Getting to and from your Trip

An air-conditioned bus will take us from Melbourne to Bright and back; and to and from the trails each day. As the transport from Melbourne is provided at no additional charge, discounts cannot be offered to those who choose to make their own way to Bright.

Accommodation

Pre/Post Tour

With an early departure, we recommend a night in Melbourne for those coming from interstate or overseas. We recommend to our guests the following hotels. All the below hotels are within easy walking distance from the pick up location.

- Best Western Melbourne City on Spencer St
- Vibe Savoy Hotel Melbourne on Spencer St
- The Great Southern Hotel Melbourne on Spencer St

* Please note that there may not be any shops or cafes open (especially for weekend departures) and we recommend organising breakfast the night before.

On Tour

Accommodation on this tour are cabins with shared bathroom facilities. A single supplement will give you your own room but not your own bathroom.

Washing Facilities

The park that we stay at has guest laundry facilities. Machines are coin-operated and change is available from reception during opening hours. Washing powder is also available at a small charge from the store.

Phone Coverage and Charging

There is patchy phone coverage while you are on the track. Like most remote rural places, Telstra offers the best chance at reception. When you are back at your accommodation there is phone coverage and free WiFi.

Climate

Our tour runs in early Autumn and late Spring. The weather should be warm days and quite cold mornings.

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Food

Breakfast comprises of cereal, fruit and toast. Lunch is sometimes prepared and brought to you on the track when we can get vehicle access. On days you are walking in a remote section guests will pack their lunch in the morning which consists of cold meats and salad with sandwiches, rolls or wraps. Dinner is a 2 course meal, main and dessert. Each day on the track you will enjoy our famous baked cakes/biscuits for mornig tea and fresh fruit is always available.

If you have any special dietary requirements please let us know when you book, we are happy to adapt our tasty, nutritious meals to suit a variety of dietary needs.

Medical Restrictions

As we operate in remote areas, guests will need to bring all of their own personal medications on tour. Whilst our guides are qualified in remote area or wilderness first aid and carry satellite phones, we do not carry epi-pens, Ventolin or other emergency medications. If a person requires urgent medical attention whilst on tour, it may take several hours or more for emergency services to attend the scene and take you to a medical facility.

Under certain circumstances your tour consultant may request a medical certificate of fitness before you are cleared to participate on the tour.

If pre-existing medical issues that will affect your ability to complete the tour or have an impact on other guests experiences, are not disclosed prior to the departure, we reserve the right to remove you from the tour.

You can bring a CPAP machine whilst on tour but you will need to purchase a single supplement.

Dietary Requirements

From vegetarians to pescatarians to meat loving carnivores with an aversion to cucumbers we cater for all dietary requirements and will make sure you are well fed and looked after on tour. Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements. We will do our best to cater for these whilst you are tour.

Access to Shops

Our accommodation is a short walk into Bright and there will be plenty of opportunitues to purchase essentials.

What to Pack

- Day-pack - with a thick waist strap to help take some weight off your shoulders. In wet weather, a waterproof cover or a bin bag to wrap your belongings in can be handy
- Shorts/long pants and shirts for walking - as many sets as you wish! Quick-dry material is best, especially for trousers. Don't wear jeans walking.
- Socks - whichever thickness you're comfortable walking in and as many pairs as you like
- Boots/shoes for walking (make sure you wear them in well - see note on footwear below)
- Windcheater or lightweight jumper for walking
- Thermal gloves, a warm hat/beanie and thermal base layers
- Waterproof jacket with hood*
- Sun protection - hat (secure fitting and/or with chin strap), sun cream, sun glasses

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- Casual clothes for evenings
- Torch/headlamp (can be handy when twin sharing for getting up at night)
- Any preferred first aid supplies - such as your favourite blister treatment! (Your guide will carry a full first-aid kit)
- Walking poles (recommended for this tour)

To reduce waste we ask that you pack the following:

- Water bottle/s or camelback - 2 to 3 litre capacity
- A lunch container (with freezer brick if desired),
- A keepcup or thermos cup for hot drinks whilst travelling

*You have to expect some bad weather at any time of the year down here so bring wet weather gear even if the forecast is fine.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Waterproof pants. Some people love them and some hate them - personally, we don't wear them but there have been times when we have wished for a pair!
- Fly net (especially for walks in warmer weather)
- Camera and charger/batteries
- Gaiters for snake bite protection are recommended unless you are wearing long pants and long socks. They're also good for keeping dirt and prickles out of your shoes.
- Sock protectors (to keep sand out of your boots)
- Bathers and towel
- Small towel to carry during the day
- Snacks and alcohol - there will be time to purchase more during the week if you need to. Some people like to have some muesli bars, nuts, lollies etc

Getting ready for your walk...

While there are a couple of easier days on this tour, some of the others are quite challenging, with some decent hills to get up and down -- which can be hard on the knees, thighs and glutes. However, the walks are achievable to those of reasonable fitness. If you have done some training prior to the walk you will enjoy it all the more. You will be surprised just how your fitness improves over the couple of days. A positive mental attitude is most important. If you focus on the scenery, the company and the moment, not on the kilometres, then you find yourself reaching your destination with little problem. If you have done some training prior to the walk you will enjoy it all the more.

The best way to prepare physically for the trip is to walk, walk and walk some more - preferably on broken and uneven surfaces. Try to walk frequently. Even walking around your suburb will get you walk-fit. By the start of our tour you should be able to comfortably walk 15km, and try and do a few 20km walks on rough tracks, as well as being comfortable walking steep hills. Include stepping up onto and over big steps, a random rock or bench on your walk would make a good candidate to add to your training regime. Many of the council provided outdoor gyms have blocks you can practice stepping up on to as well. Make sure to train both legs equally!

We know that this type of preparation is difficult to fit into a busy schedule. If you don't have the time to do long walks, we recommend doing regular stair walking sessions and lots and lots of glut exercises (squats and lunges). Walking small distances frequently helps a lot as well. For instance, walking 3 - 5km four times a week, and 8km once a week, is a great help. If you're doing short training sessions, make sure you get yourself puffed and sweaty. Otherwise you won't benefit from your efforts.

And start walking in the shoes you will wear on the walk now!

Looking after your feet

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Footwear is very personal and we prefer people wear what feels comfortable. Walking shoes shouldn't be too tight, but your foot shouldn't slip around in them either. If you're buying new shoes, go shopping after a long walk so your feet are a bit swollen. The best places to buy walking boots/ shoes will have some sort of ramp that you can stomp up and down on and make sure there is no pressure on your toes and heels.

Boots can provide ankle support and help keep the sand out. Some hiking boots can be quite heavy. These are great for cold weather alpine hiking but they do tend to tire your legs quicker and heat your feet. There are plenty of lightweight boots available which are great for most Australian conditions.

You might prefer to wear sneakers on your walk. They do let in a lot of dirt though and tend to wear out quite quickly on the rough surfaces of a bush track. Sturdy sandals have proven to be a good substitute for shoes when feet have blistered, and for beach sections. You are welcome to bring two pairs and alternate.

The main thing is to make sure you know your footwear well - try them out in a variety of terrains and do a few long walks (15 - 20km) in them before the tour. We cannot emphasise enough that you have well worn in shoes or boots, good socks, and first aid for the prevention and treatment of blisters.

Preventing blisters: To prevent blister formation, we highly recommend using 'fixomull' or a similar tape on heels and toes where rubbing is likely to occur - ask for it at your pharmacy. Some walkers also wear two pairs of socks to prevent blisters forming - a thin inner pair and a thicker outer pair. Others swear by Hikerswool applied between toes and over pressure points. The principle of blister prevention is to transfer any friction, caused by the movement of your foot inside your shoe, onto the fixomull tape or the extra sock, rather than onto your skin. If you know that your feet have a tendency to blister in certain spots, tape them before you walk. We are happy to help you with this. If you feel any rubbing or a 'hot spot' whilst walking, the best thing to do is stop and do something about it. In all instances, prevention is better than cure. Blisters are very difficult to dress so that you are able to walk comfortably.

Treating blisters: Blister treatments vary and you may have your favourites. The second skin variety seems good, though you will also need good tape to keep it in place. Second skin treatments often have a sterile gel pack that pads and protects the blister from further friction. They can also be used as a (more expensive) preventative measure. Blister Block or Compeed are examples of this type of dressing.

A thick moleskin type plaster is also good to carry for blister treatment. Holes can be cut into moleskin to fit around a blister and a plaster put on top of that. This way there is little pressure put on the blister itself.

Walking poles are very popular these days - especially the lightweight aluminium shock absorbing type. They help to take some pressure off your knees going downhill and can help you get uphill too! However, if you have good knees and strong legs you may not need them. A lot has been published about the pros and cons of walking poles - we're sure you can get the full story from the net. If you do choose them it's worthwhile practicing how to use them correctly so you get their full advantage. Try to use your arms as much as possible - by placing the poles opposite arm to leg and applying pressure as you step forward. Find someone knowledgeable in the shop where you purchase them to give you some tips. We can always help you when on tour.

Emergency Contact on Tour

In the case of an emergency and family and friends are trying to get in contact with you and unable to reach you on your personal phone, please ask them to call the office on 1300 544 882. After hours or on the weekend there is an option on the voicemail which will direct them through to the duty managers personal mobile.

On tour in an emergency situation our guides will be carrying satellite phones.

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Final Payment Due Date

Final payment is required six weeks prior to departure or at time of booking if booking within six weeks. We will send out a reminder email.

Cancellation Policy

All our tours are guaranteed departures.

We hope that you do not need to cancel your booking. However, if you do, our cancellation fee, based on the notice given prior to the departure date, is:

- 85 days or more, you will be refunded all monies paid, less a \$50 administration fee
- 42 to 84 days prior to departure, you will lose your deposit
- 28 to 41 days: 25% of full tour cost
- 14 to 27 days: 50% of full tour cost
- less than 14 days: 100% of full tour cost, no refund

If you have any concerns about cancelling, please take out travel insurance covering this contingency. This policy will be adhered to despite the most compelling and compassionate circumstances.

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