

24 May & 11
Sept
2010
8 Days

Outback Opal Odyssey & Lake Cargelligo

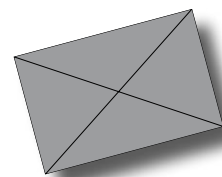
\$1598ppts
\$330s/s

This holiday combines two different examples of Australia's national gemstone, the opal.

*At White Cliffs you will see exquisite examples of white opal
which can be nearly clear with specks of colour in it.*

In Lightning Ridge you will see the popular black opal, the most popular colour.

*The three main towns of White Cliffs, Lightning Ridge and Lake Cargelligo
all provide a real sense of life in outback NSW.*



Day 1: Home—Coonabarabran (LD)

Our coach will depart Strathfield, Hornsby, Newcastle and the Hunter before making our way west on the Golden Highway through Merriwa to Coonabarabran.

Country Gardens Motel 02 6842 1711

Day 2: Coonabarabran—Lightning Ridge (BLD)

This morning we will head north west through the grain growing areas of Coonamble and Walgett. After lunch at the **Lightning Ridge Bowling Club**, we will be greeted by a **local guide who will take us out into the opal fields** and show us the modern methods being used today. We will have some time in the afternoon to purchase opals (or just have a look) before having a swim or wallow in **hot artesian baths** (great for a tired miner).

Lightning Ridge Motel 02 6829 0304

Day 3: Lightning Ridge—Bourke (BLD)

After breakfast we will head west to **Brewarrina** where we will marvel at the simplicity used to farm fish as recently as fifty years ago on a guided tour of the fish traps just below the towns Weir. We arrive at **historic Bourke**, on the banks of the Darling River mid afternoon where our local guide will show us around this remote community, whilst relaying some of the history surrounding this once mighty river port. We will enjoy some time at the Back o' Bourke Exhibition. After dinner (subject to availability) we will board the **Jandra Paddleboat**. The floodlights of the boat will highlight the river gums and wildlife.

The Darling River Motel 02 6872 228



Day 4: Bourke—White Cliffs (BLD)

After breakfast we will continue our journey along the Kidman Way to **Cobar** for morning tea. Then head west on the Barrier Highway, crossing over the Darling River at Wilcannia, before arriving at the famous **White Cliffs Dug-Out Motel** for the next two nights. Sleep underground in one of 32 unique rooms or one of the two above ground units. A licensed restaurant and lounge will allow us to relax and enjoy ourselves at a constant 22 degrees. A pool and undercover BBQ area will provide views of White Cliffs and the sunset.

White Cliffs Underground Dug-Out Motel 08 8091 6647
(2 nights)

Day 5: White Cliffs (BLD)

An interesting day is planned with a **guided tour of White Cliffs** with ample opportunity to **'noodle'** among the mullock heaps to see if we can unearth any 'colour'. A visit to a couple of **underground homes** will give us a chance to meet the locals and experience their life style. Lunch will be around the pool and in the afternoon you will have time to meet the locals, tour the shops and galleries and purchase some more local opal.



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Day 6: White Cliffs—Cobar (BLD)

This morning we will leave White Cliffs underground **"way of life"** and travel back to the once mighty Darling River Port of Wilcannia a drive around the town offers some nostalgia as we view the **Sandstone river buildings**, from here, it is over Maccullochs Range to Cobar. In town we will visit the **Great Cobar Copper Museum**, located right on the edge of the town beside the open cut mine, which is now full of water, later in the afternoon we will visit **Peak Gold Mine**, which is one of the states newest gold mines, visit the poppet head before returning to town and our accommodation

Town & Country Motel Cobar 02 6836 1244

Day 7: Cobar, Lake Cargelligo, Parkes (BLD)

At the cross roads we make a right turn onto Kidmans Way now heading south through Gilgunnia, the abandoned mining town of Mount Hope, to the oasis of **Lake Cargelligo**. When full the lake covers about 1500 hectares. This expanse of water has made it a popular haven for Australian and migratory water birds and has created a perfect destination for bird watching and photography. This area is classified as a wildlife refuge. Among the birds which enjoy total protection are the Australian Pelican, the Black Swan and Great Crested Grebe. We will have lunch here and time to look around before following the Lachlan river as closely as possible to Condoblin. Here we are only 8km from the geographical centre of NSW. We travel back to the Satellite Dish town of Parkes.

Country Comfort Parkes 02 68634333

Day 8: Parkes—Home (BL)

Further east to the 120 year old **Cook Park** of Orange for morning tea, from here it will be lunch at Lithgow over the mountains then into Sydney and back to the Hunter.