

The Stawell Gift Easter Tour

New
Tour!

21
April
2011
8 Days

\$1559pp/pts
\$398s/s

Bright/Beechworth Autumn Colours, Easter, Stawell Gift Foot Race, Chinese Dragon Parade, Mount Beauty, Beechworth Bakery, Nut Farm, Shepparton, Victorian Fruit Bowl, Ardmona SPC Cannery, Campbells Factory, Benalla, Holbrook Submarines

Day 1: Home—Albury (LD)

Departing from the Hunter, we will pick up in Tuggerah, Hornsby and Strathfield before our lunch stop near Goulburn. We will take the Hume Expressway to the twin town of Albury, where we will settle into our apartment style accommodation for the next two nights.

Quest Apartments Albury 02 6058 0900 (2 nights)



Day 2: Bright & Beechworth (BD)

This morning we head to the mountains travelling to **Bright**, offering spectacular views of **Mount Beauty, and Mount Bogong**. Bright is best known for the colourful display of deciduous trees that line the village, and for being home to many craft shops (we will visit some, but not all!). From here we continue to **Beechworth**, for a tour of the town and in particular, take the opportunity to purchase lunch at the famous **Beechworth Bakery, made famous by motivational speaker Tom O'Toole**. A **local guide** will come on board for a tour of some of the highlights, and we will **visit a nut farm**, this area being famous for its walnuts, chestnuts and hazelnuts.

Day 3: Albury—Bendigo (BD)

We say goodbye to Albury and head west through the river towns of **Corowa, Yarrawonga and Cobram**. This area is the start of the **Victorian Fruit Bowl** with many market gardens, plantations and crops. The Cobram region is renowned for its golf courses and wineries in particular the **Cobram Cream liquer**. In **Echuca** we have organised a **cruise on one of the many local vessels to ply the Murray River**. Echuca still has much of its charm and nostalgic ties to its romantic days as the busiest river port in Australia. We have a short run in the afternoon to Bendigo with a visit to the **Chinese Museum** which highlights the significant role the Chinese played in the development of Bendigo. This museum is home to some of the oldest and longest dragons in the world.

Colonial Inn Golden Square 03 5447 0122 (4 nights)

Day 4: Bendigo Easter Fair & Parade (BD)

We wake up this morning after hopefully a little visit from the Easter Bunny. To give us a different perspective, we will enjoy the **Bendigo Easter Fair**, which commenced in 1871, making it Australia's longest continuous running festival. With over 100

floats the highlight is the **Awakening of the Dragon**, unique to Bendigo. A lot of noise is required to awaken Sun Loong who will slowly rouse himself from his year long slumber to walk in the Gala Parade. In order to do this the famous Southern Lions perform accompanied by the clash of cymbals and the beating of drums. This culminates in the explosion of **tens of thousands of firecrackers**. Also during this ceremony the Bendigo Chinese Association Lion Team perform the donation dance. The rest of the day will be full of entertainment, dancing and music. We will meet again for dinner to discuss the amazing day!

Day 5: Bendigo: Anzac Day & Talking Tram (BD)

This morning there will be the opportunity for those who wish to join in for the **local Anzac Day services**. In the afternoon there will be time to explore the town, and of course take a ride on the famous **Bendigo Talking Tram**.

Day 6: Stawell Gift (BD)

We head to Stawell for one of the world's richest footraces, The first **Stawell Gift** was in 1878, as a fun race between miners at the end of the gold rush. It has been raced every year since, except for four years during the Second World War. Originally it was the townspeople putting together an entertainment package to happen over Easter, complete with 'special trains' to the event. Today it is the **most prestigious footrace in Australia, with a \$40,000AUD first prize**. The race is handicapped and a number of heats are required to proceed through to the final. Gambling on the race is allowed with a good field of bookies on course. A full day of an Australian tradition.

Day 7: Bendigo—Albury (BLD)

We will spend the morning in the fruit town of **Shepparton**, a visit to the **Ardmona SPC cannery** and factory seconds are always a popular purchase here. We visit Campbells and their factory outlet, where good bargains can always be found. From here we detour into **Benalla**, home of the beautiful rose garden and statue of **Sir Weary Dunlop**. We will have some time to take in the city before continuing onto Albury.

Quest Apartments Albury 02 6058 0900

Day 8: Albury—Home (BL)

We make our way north to **Holbrook** the town now famous for its Submarines. Learn why as we stop for photos, and if you like you can take the opportunity to climb upon a genuine submarine. We continue to Sydney arriving mid afternoon and back to the Hunter around 6pm.

