

GOLDFIELDS TRACK

PLUS+

6 – 13 Nov 2024

The fully supported off-road tour is back!

Imagine a tour where you are cycling through the Australian bush in the morning and soaking in the bath at a beautiful destination that same afternoon. Where you are dodging rocks by day and sipping scotch on the rocks in the lounge bar by night. Drinking in the scenery of the great outdoors one minute, then eating at a great restaurant a few hours later. All of this, joined by the best support crew in the business and the camaraderie of a friendly bunch of fellow cyclists sharing your journey.

No need to imagine...this is the **Goldfields Track PLUS+** AllTrails experience.

The tour at a glance

Dates: Wed 6 Nov – Wed 13 Nov 2024 (7 nights)

Start/Finish: Southern Cross Station Melbourne

Distance: 342km (49km daily average)

Bike Type: Mountain bike (MTB)

Group Size: Small group tour, approx 10-15

Difficulty Rating: 7/10

Location: VIC Goldfields; Ballarat, Daylesford, Bendigo

Accommodation: Excellent motel and resort accom

E-bikes: Welcome (e-MTB)

Meals: 7 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners

Terrain: Varied: Flat to undulating in parts, hilly in others. No Extreme MTB terrain.

Surface: Varied: mostly clay and gravel. Some shale, rocks, tree roots etc.

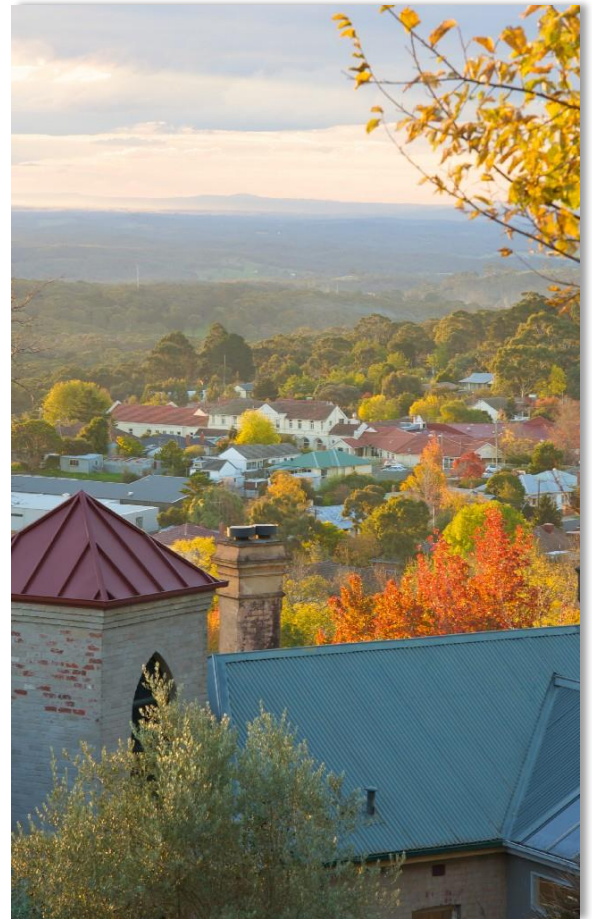
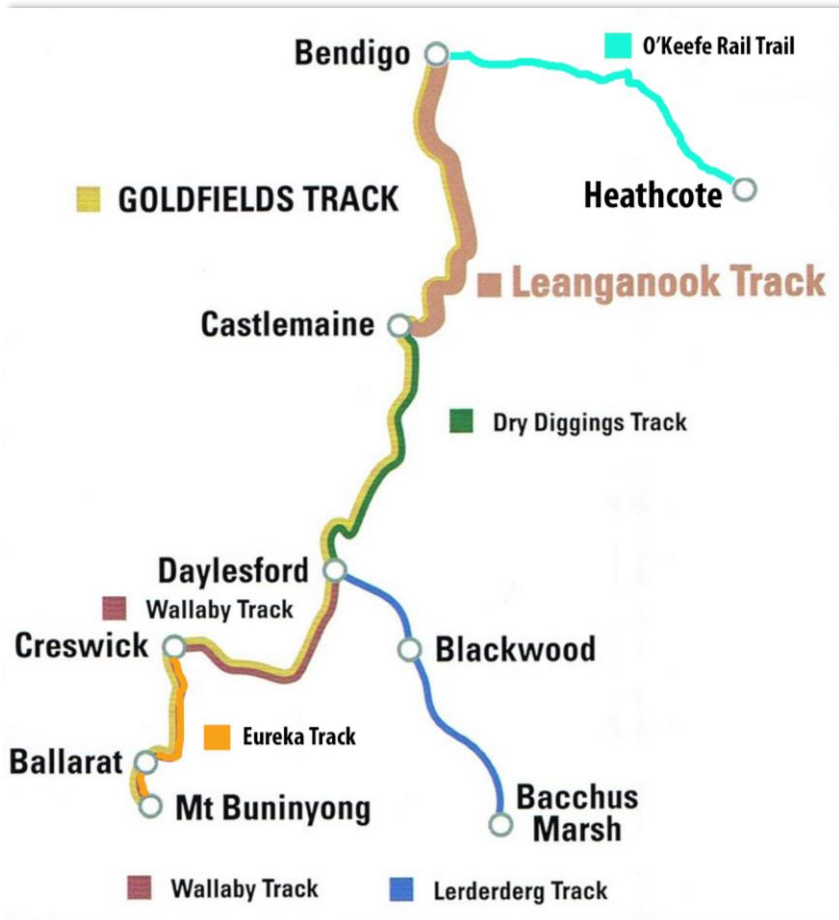
Route Types: Single track, Fire track, roads (sealed and unsealed) and bike paths.

Traffic Volume (when applicable): Low to none.

Who is this tour for?

Cyclists looking for a cross country MTB tour with exceptional bush scenery, history and immersion. While the Goldfields Track is not highly technical, it is not a curated rail trail either. Cyclists can expect most conceivable objects passing under their wheels at some point. You will require competent off road cycling skills (good balance and body strength) and a sense of adventure to enjoy a relaxing experience with low or traffic-free riding, great scenery, flowing singletracks and time to enjoy other non-cycling highlights of the regions visited. Including a four-night stay in magnificent Daylesford, it's a great way to see the real goldfields and central highlands of Victoria.

The ride



The 210km Goldfields Track is a composition of four separate tracks each with their own character and charm. What's the **PLUS+**? We've added the offshoot Lerderberg Track and O'Keefe Rail Trail to give you an extra 140km of scenic cycling. We begin at Mt Buninyong and head north to Creswick, then on to a 4-night stay in Daylesford where we branch off to cover the Lerderberg artery, then on to Castlemaine, and Bendigo, finishing with the O'Keefe Rail Trail to Heathcote.

Our days are broken up into small sections, defined by our re grouping stops for morning tea, lunch and extra water/snack stops if required. These breaks are at set times and locations enabling riders to plan the amount of time required to enjoy the sights and attractions along the way to each stop where they take a break, chat about their ride, re-live some of the highlights and refuel for the next section. Cyclists move off knowing the distance and terrain ahead, aiming to arrive at the overnight stop around mid-afternoon.

The accommodation and meal inclusions are excellent – another **PLUS+**. – Check in at the end of your riding day and have a cuppa, snack, shower or soak in the bath. Explore the surroundings, go for a walk around town, share a cool drink with friends or simply relax. A briefing at 6pm before the evening meal is always interesting, finding out what happened that day and a rundown on the sights, special attractions and any cautions to look out for the next day. Lots of laughs and stories are shared before we settle down to a great meal and a few drinks.

Bedtime is not far away, where you put your head down in salubrious surroundings, remembering the day and dreaming of tomorrow.

Why we love it (and think you will too)

- One of the most highly rated single tracks in Australia
- Four-night stay in stunning Daylesford (perfect for a non-riding partner or optional day off)
- A night at the luxurious RACV Creswick Goldfields Resort
- Ride as much or as little as you want, use the support vehicle whenever required
- Cycling guide plus vehicle-based support crew
- Our friendly crew on hand for bike mechanical assistance, morning tea set-up and moral support
- Top quality accommodation and great meals
- The famous AllTrails camaraderie

Pricing (AUD)

	Until 30 Jun 2024	From 1 Jul 2024
Twin share	\$4390 pp	\$4490 pp
Single room	\$5180	\$5280

Included

- All accommodation (7 nights)
- Meals: 7 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners
- Snacks, water and fruit on the tracks
- Cycling Guide plus vehicle-based support crew
- Support and safety vehicles
- Bike mechanical assistance
- Transfers to/from each daily ride
- All National Park passes and trail fees
- Official paperback Goldfields Track Ride Guide
- Rider Pack: jersey, bottle, bag
- Transfers from Melbourne and return
- Luggage transfers and logistics, sorted

Payment schedule

- Deposit on booking (\$400)
- Progress Payment 30 days after deposit (40% of package cost, less deposit paid)
- Balance 6 Sep 2024 (60 days before tour)

Travelling on your own?

We often have cyclists who are travelling solo. If so, you may pay the Single Supplement price to have your own room, or join our 'Twin Share Request List'. If we have another solo twin share traveller of the same gender, we will pair you in twin share accom. If we cannot find you a match, the single room price will apply which will give you your own room for the entire tour. Contact us anytime to check twin share availability – we may already have a match for you.

Travelling with friends

\$50 pp discount for groups of 3 or more cyclists.

Optional extras

Bike packaging carriage:

Most cyclists travelling on a plane generally bring their bike in a cardboard bike box/carton. If you have a soft bike bag or hard case, we can carry them in our vehicles for the duration of the tour for the following fees:

- Collapsible cardboard carton \$0
- Soft foldable bike bag \$20
- Hard case or unfoldable bag/carton (if space available) \$70



*"I have been on over 100 supported and unsupported bike tours over 40 years and I can **honestly say** that I thought the recent Goldfields Tour was right up there in the top 3 or 4 tours that I have done. **I loved it...**The support supplied by AllTrails made the experience significantly more **enjoyable** than it would have been by way of an unsupported tour... As always the accommodation and meals (after riding and during each ride) were excellent. All riding support, including minimising risk through safety strategies, was **excellent.**" Eddie (NSW).*

*"A **great experience**, fun group. Richard and Jo deserve **6 stars** for their service." Carol (USA).*

*"Thanks so much for a **great tour**. I appreciated being able to ride and not carry luggage and got a totally different experience of the trail than the year before when I bike packed it. Thanks so much for your **attention to detail**, the maps, the book, the gpx files and the support. If you run it again I probably will **come back and bring some mates with me.** Tanya (NSW)*

Getting to and from the tour

Arriving

Our meeting place is Southern Cross Station (Coach Terminal), Melbourne, early on Wed 6 Nov. If you are from out of town, we suggest staying at a hotel close to the station on Tue night (we have hotel suggestions if you need them). Note: The Melbourne Cup runs on Tue 5 Nov so book early (why not combine your trip with a day at the races?). After meeting at the station you will be transferred to Mt Buninyong, the start of the ride.

Departing:

The tour will finish on the final day at Heathcote and we will transfer cyclists back to Melbourne (Southern Cross Station Coach Terminal) arriving approx 3:30pm. It is possible to catch a plane home that evening, however we suggest that you do not book anything earlier than 6:30pm, just in case you are delayed getting back to Melbourne for any reason (weather, traffic etc). Staying in Melbourne that night will give you more flexibility.



Training for the tour

This tour does not contain any extreme mountain biking terrain or technical challenges, however the surfaces of the tracks are varied and can be quite different to cycling on rail trails, which are usually curated and flattened, creating a relatively even base. The tracks on this tour can be bumpy, uneven and have occasional obstacles such as rocks or tree branches, requiring a cyclist to have good balance and full body strength as they navigate. We suggest that cyclists do some training on off-road tracks to gain experience and competency before coming on the tour, which will no doubt increase your enjoyment of the trip along with improved fitness levels. Of course, if there are rough sections or obstacles that you prefer not to ride, you can easily walk your bike through or around the obstacle, and our support team is never far away to give you a hand if needed. We have a training schedule specific to this tour which we will send to you after you place your deposit, however we are more than happy to send this to you earlier when you are considering the tour – just ask us for a copy and we will get it out to you straight away. The aim is to build your cycling distances in training to be able to ride close to 50km / day for two days straight.



Itinerary

Daily distances are set out below. Shorter distances and support vehicle also available.

Meals and Accommodation inclusions: Breakfast = B, Lunch = L, Dinner = D, Accommodation = A

Cycling Location	Distance	Date	Overnight	B	L	D	A
Mt Buninyong to Creswick (Eureka Track)	46km	Wed 6 Nov 2024	Creswick RACV	-	L	D	A
Creswick to Daylesford (Wallaby Track)	54km	Thu 7 Nov 2024	Daylesford	B	L	D	A
Daylesford to Blackwood (Lerderderg Track)	40km	Fri 8 Nov 2024	Daylesford	B	-	-	A
Blackwood to Bacchus Marsh (Lerderderg Track)	39km	Sat 9 Nov 2024	Daylesford	B	-	D	A
Daylesford REST DAY	NA	Sun 10 Nov 2024	Daylesford	B	-	-	A
Daylesford to Castlemaine (Dry Diggings Track)	51km	Mon 11 Nov 2024	Castlemaine	B	L	D	A
Castlemaine to Bendigo (Leanganook Track)	62km	Tue 12 Nov 2024	Bendigo	B	L	D	A
Bendigo to Heathcote (O'Keefe Rail Trail)	50km	Wed 13 Nov 2024		B	L	-	-
Total Distance Cycled	342km			7	5	5	7
Average Daily Distance	49km						

Day to day

Mt Buninyong to Creswick (Eureka Track) 46km Wed 6 Nov 2024

Day 1. Your week-long **Goldfields Track PLUS+** tour starts at Southern Cross Station, Melbourne as we meet for our transfer to Mt Buninyong. This first section of the ride through to Ballarat is a great introduction as one of the easiest sections of the week, mostly along bitumen roads. After Ballarat the dirt roads arrive, as do a few hills, as the terrain heads into the Great Dividing Range. Long sections of singletrack through open native forest have recently been upgraded near Creswick – it's great riding and there are a few climbs to test the legs. Tonight, we have a great way to kick off our tour as we park up for the evening at the RACV Goldfields Resort where you can settle in for the afternoon and enjoy the many facilities on offer: swimming, spa, tennis, golf – or even a 4.5km mountain bike trail around the golf course if you haven't had enough yet today. The day concludes with a briefing, a few laughs, stories and drinks and a meal in the restaurant together. More details on the [Eureka Track](#).

Creswick to Daylesford (Wallaby Track) 54km Thu 7 Nov 2024

Day 2. Start the day with a great resort breakfast and even an early swim if you wish. Some nice flat cycling along bitumen roads is a relaxed introduction to the day ahead before you disappear into the Wombat State Forest, enjoying more great singletrack mixed in amongst fascinating gold rush relics and amazing engineering feats. Some more climbs through the deep greens of the forest present themselves on the way to Daylesford, Victoria's premier 'spa country' destination. People come from all over to bathe in the famous mineral waters, sample the award-winning restaurants, reinvigorate at a wellness retreat or day spa, or just unwind with a stroll through the township or local markets with boutique art and crafts. We have a lovely motel central to it all where we unpack and settle in for the next 4 nights as we explore the surrounding tracks over the coming days. After briefing we stay together for another group dinner in one of the great local restaurants. More details on the [Wallaby Track](#).

Daylesford to Blackwood (Lerderderg Track) 40km Fri 8 Nov 2024 (overnight Daylesford)

Day 3. A full buffet breakfast welcomes the day in – plenty of sustenance for the day ahead. The first section winding through striking tall, open messmate and peppermint forest with wattle and hazel pomaderris understorey. Up and down you go through pleasant forest, mostly on 4WD tracks, enveloped by the dense shrubs that crowd the track and looking out for 4WD potholes. After a morning tea break, the next section includes a stretch following the Lerderderg River for 7km along former water races, wending in and out between river and road, before arriving in Blackwood, sitting deep in a dark valley surrounded by a forest that includes blackwood trees. The town's name appears aptly descriptive but actually, it takes its name from an early surveyor, Captain Francis Blackwood. Transfer back to Daylesford and after briefing, an evening for you to explore at your leisure and source your own dinner from the many options in town. More details on the [Lerderderg Track](#).

Day to day cont.

Blackwood to Bacchus Marsh (Lerderderg Track) 39km Sat 9 Nov 2024 (overnight Daylesford)

Day 4. After breakfast we head back to Blackwood to start our ride. As we travel south, we are following a declining rainfall gradient. A cool and damp fern-lined river gives way to tall gum trees, then to drier stringybark and box forest on the ridgetops, with ironbark on the plains of the south. Throughout its length, the Lerderderg flows through a steep, forested valley that becomes progressively tighter until winding – at its climax – through the sheer rock walls of a spectacular gorge. At the gorge mouth are rare examples of exposed rocks that were laid down 300 million years ago when Australia was part of the Gondwana supercontinent. From there, it's a suburban ride into Bacchus Marsh where we once again head back to Daylesford for a big group dinner which will lead into our rest day tomorrow. More details on the [Lerderderg Track](#).

Daylesford REST DAY Sun 10 Nov 2024

Day 5. Sleep in? Up early for a walk around the lake? Book in for a spa or bathing at the Hepburn Springs? Explore the Daylesford Sunday markets? Join a wine tour? Find a great restaurant for lunch? Park up at the cosy hotel bar? Read a book and fall into a lazy afternoon nap? Be as busy or chilled as you want to be on your rest day in Daylesford. See you tomorrow with batteries recharged.

Daylesford to Castlemaine (Dry Diggings Track) 51km Mon 11 Nov 2024

Day 6. This morning our hosts will again put on a wonderful breakfast spread for us before we say goodbye to the town and head out on the Dry Diggings Track. Once again, we begin on an easy downhill to Hepburn Springs before a day mixed with outstanding off-road cycling, challenging climbs, lovely downhill sections and a few sections of bitumen. Today includes what is widely acknowledged as the best mountain biking section along the entire length of the Goldfields Track. A gradual descent, the track winds through fascinating old mine sites, long vanished villages and awesome geological features before dropping into the beautiful Vaughan Springs picnic area. Our destination of Castlemaine is a former gold mining town situated in a valley at the junction of three creeks and a lovely spot to spend the afternoon, with its impressive historic streets lined with grand public buildings like the town hall, courthouse, and Theatre Royal. Our motel is just a short stroll from the town centre where all of this architecture is on display and you can soak it all in with a wander around town before our evening briefing and dinner together tonight. More details on the [Dry Diggings Track](#).



Itinerary Details cont.

Castlemaine to Bendigo (Leanganook Track) 62km Tue 12 Nov 2024

Day 7. We start early today after breakfast as we undertake the final 58km of the Goldfields Track which is the Leanganook Track section. Today's ride has an easier surface which will allow you to soak up a lot of the interesting historical relics and stories of the region as well as enjoy some spectacular views from the crests of many of the climbs. The native woodlands of the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park soon give way to pine plantations and the apple orchards of the Harcourt valley. The final section into Bendigo Regional Park passes endless mine relics and old water channels giving a sense of the intensity of mining operations during the gold rush era. Arriving in Bendigo, we check in to our accommodation – a premier four-star property located opposite Lake Weeroona just 1.4km from the CBD. Tonight, we get together and enjoy our final evening briefing and a proud celebratory dinner. More details on the [Leanganook Track](#).



Bendigo to Heathcote (O'Keefe Rail Trail) 50km Wed 13 Nov 2024

Day 8. Travellers have been taking the journey from Bendigo to Heathcote since 1888, when the railway line first linked the towns during the gold rush. Today the recreational trail beside the old railway line allows users to journey along the safe, scenic trail passing through some spectacular natural bushland, waterways and recreation reserves. We stop at the Axedale township for morning tea, where the trail crosses the pretty Campaspe River. Soak up the stunning natural river environment, which is a habitat for platypus, and keep an eye out for wildlife such as wallabies, kangaroos, koalas, and the beautiful wildflowers along the trail. Arriving in the welcoming village atmosphere of Heathcote, a location fast becoming one of Australia's most loved wine regions, we pack-up and celebrate together with lunch before heading back to Melbourne. More details on the [O'Keefe Rail Trail](#).



Frequently asked questions and helpful information

Travel insurance

You may get sick of us reminding you about travel insurance, but it is important. For those travelling internationally, it is vital. For Australians travelling domestically it is still extremely important and usually very good value. Travel Insurance is different to the insurance you get from being a member of a bicycle organisation. If you are investing in a tour like this, it is worth investing in some peace of mind for your payments.

Support Vehicle

Our support vehicle is there to pick up weary riders and bikes if they wish. In some locations along the trails there is no vehicle access, however our vehicle will be stopped at strategic locations where the track is accessible by road, helping riders with water, snacks and information. You will also see the support vehicle at morning teas and lunch stops. Riders may get in the vehicle at the meet-up points if they would like to skip a section of the ride or if they have fallen well behind schedule. The bus is also sometimes used for part-time riders who only ride certain sections of each day – these are often partners of someone else on the ride. This vehicle can be quite popular on some days and there is no shame in getting a lift every now and again so if you are considering a tour and are 'in the ball-park' in terms of your fitness and preparedness, but not 100% sure if you will be up to it on the toughest days, go for it – our vehicle and staff will be there to help out.

Cycling Guide Support

Our crew will also have a riding guide on this tour. This guide will sometimes be ahead of the group marking the route, and in some cases may act as a 'sweeper' rider at the back of group, making sure that everyone is accounted for.

Scheduled times

Times will be given on the Day Sheets for morning departure and regrouping stops for morning tea, lunch, water stops and attractions. If cyclists are falling behind the Day Sheet times, for the safety of all cyclists on the ride, they may be asked to board the support vehicle. If conditions allow, we transport cyclists ahead to the next meeting point where they can re-join the group and keep within the times. These times are adhered to for the continuity and safety of the ride, keeping all cyclists, mechanics, medical team, within easy reach in case of emergency, and to meet our pre-booked times for meals and attractions where applicable. Slower riders are often given the chance to depart early, allowing more time to reach the regrouping points. If you feel that you are extremely far off the fitness level required and cannot commit to training that will have you prepared in time, then you may be better off booking a later ride or a different type of tour – just give us a call or email to discuss.

What sort of bike do I need?

A mountain bike (MTB) is best for this tour. There are no extreme mountain biking terrain or technical challenges, however the surfaces of the tracks are varied and are different to cycling on dedicated rail trails, which are usually curated and flattened. These tracks can be bumpy and uneven, requiring a cyclist to have good balance and overall body strength as they navigate. Front mudguards are not compatible with our bike racks; please remove these prior to coming on tour.

Do I need to be an experienced mountain bike rider?

You don't need to be a MTB specialist, however we do strongly suggest that some training on uneven surfaces and forest tracks will serve you well. We have a training schedule specific to this tour which we will send to you after you place your deposit, however we are more than happy to send this to you earlier when you are considering the tour – just ask us for a copy and we will get it out to you straight away.

Ebikes

E-MTB bikes are welcome on this tour and we have special Ebike carrying racks that can accommodate their unique size and weight, keeping your bike safe when we need to transport it. Our racks (and staff) can lift bikes weighing up to a maximum 25kg (battery removed). The racks carry the bike in a vertical position with the front wheel nestled in a cradle, meaning that any front wheel/fork accessories such as pack racks, panniers or mudguards must be removed.

Bike Hire

We don't have our own fleet of hire bikes but if you want to hire a bike just let us know and we can give you some options for hiring through a local bike shop near our office in Melbourne.

Carrying personal items on the bike

We suggest you carry a spare tube, two full water bottles or a 'Camel Pack' water bladder and your own personal goods such as phone, wallet and rain gear, on your bike with you. We transport your luggage, drawstring day bags, food and extra water. A more detailed list of things to bring and not bring is on our 'Tour Preparation Guide' which is sent out to you before the ride.

What sorts of people join our tours?

People from all parts of Australia and some overseas guests. Ages generally range from 35-75 with the average cyclist in their 50's or 60's. Usually about 40% women, 60% men with a mix of singles, friends and couples.

Meals and food

Check tour details for meal inclusions on your ride. Our emphasis is on fresh food and balanced diet with plenty of carbohydrates, proteins, fruit and vegies. We successfully cater to most dietary requirements, however feel free to contact us with any questions. Most meals are included as part of our tours, however you may be required to purchase some meals.

Frequently asked questions and helpful information cont.

Accommodation on our rides

We always try to obtain great accommodation in the best location for you to rest your weary head (and legs) in each town whether it be a motel, hotel, B&B, cabins, lodge or similar. We aim for 4 star where we can but also try to select the best and most welcoming accommodation for cyclists and our tour group needs. On occasion we travel through some very small towns where accommodation is extremely limited. If for whatever reason, such as limited options, the accommodation one night is below normal standard, we strive to balance this with an extra good accommodation on nights following.

Sharing rooms – how does it work

On the online entry form you can nominate any travelling companions who you would like to share a room with and/or be accommodated close to so that couples or friends can be grouped together. This can be in a double bed or twin beds. If you are travelling alone like many of our riders, a Single Supplement price is available for those who would like their own room for the whole trip. If you wish to share a room as a solo traveller, you can put your name down on a Twin Share Request List and we will try to match you up. If you are a snorer, a very early riser, or have other habits that may affect your fellow roommates, we ask that you book your own room at the Single Supplement price.

Room types for solo travellers

TWIN: If you are coming on your own and have booked in as twin share, this usually means that you will share a room with one other single twin share cyclist or crew member, however in some cases we may have larger rooms (eg. two-bedroom apartment or a B&B/house with multiple bathrooms) where we may have 3 or more single twin share travellers together. **SINGLE:** A Single Room booking usually means your own room with ensuite. On very rare occasions when we travel through small towns or we are limited in accommodation options single room bookers may share a larger unit/house/lodge with other single travellers of the same gender. You will have your own room but not necessarily your own ensuite.

Snorers can enjoy their own room

If you are a chronic snorer or have other habits that may affect your fellow roommates, we suggest booking your own room (single supplement cost). This is not just a courtesy to your fellow travelling companions but will also give you the space and privacy you need to enjoy your sleep after a long day on the bike.

Non-riding partners and part-time cyclists

This is a great tour for non-riding partners. We realise that often our cyclists want to spend their holidays with loved ones who may not be a keen cyclist as they are - we are happy to accommodate non-riding partners and part-timers who only want to ride part of each day, or only certain days. We will generally try to allocate pickup points along the route every day. The entry price will be the same for part-time riders. Sometimes there may be a discount for non-riders, depending on their tour plan.

Safety

We have a great safety record but accidents can happen. We have trained First Aiders as crew, comprehensive First-Aid Kits, a list of hospitals in the areas that we travel through, as well as mobile phones and a satellite phone for emergency calls when we are out of cellular range. Safety discussions are held throughout the tour as part of the daily briefings.

Bike mechanical assistance provided

A staff member with good bike mechanical knowledge will be part of our crew and will have a stand pump for different valves. The mechanic will often be able to help you with a safety check, general tips and advice about your bike and its upkeep, as well as fixing mechanical problems. We will have limited parts available for replacement which will be charged at shop prices. Labour is free for the first fifteen minutes, there after costs may be incurred at the mechanic's discretion. Cyclists with rare or different bikes are asked to contact us at AllTrails as parts can often be very difficult to obtain.



Why book with us?

We only run 10-15 tours per year, always adding fresh destinations annually. This makes every tour as special to us as it is to you because we are not operating the same rides repeatedly week-in week-out and we are just as excited to be there as you. On most occasions the owner-operators of the business will be on tour with you and the reassurance that comes with that is one of many great reasons to have confidence in booking your cycling holiday with us.

We are a proud Australian-owned company, with the privilege of taking cyclists to the small towns and communities all over the country, supporting regional economies and offering cyclists the opportunity to experience the hospitality of Australia outside the big cities. We have earned a top reputation in the cycle tour industry through hard work, dedication and genuine care for every person on every tour. Our longevity in the industry and large community of loyal AllTrails clients who keep coming back year after year are testament to the high standard of tours that we provide. We consider ourselves the best in the business and we always make sure that our tours represent a high-quality product at a fair price.