Girraween Short Break

11–14 September 2020 (3 nights)

Highlights

• Explore the escarpment of Main Range National Park, following rainforest tracks to lookout points
• Spend 2 full days exploring beautiful Girraween National Park & admire the views from the top of granite domes
• View the water formations along Bald Rock Creek
• Taste local wine and produce from the Granite Belt
• Relax in the beautiful cabins at Girraween Environmental Lodge with evening spas and private walks
• Travel via Tenterfield & have the option of climbing to the summit of Bald Rock National Park

Take a short walking and wellbeing break to the rainforests of Main Range and Girraween National Park in south east Queensland’s Granite Belt at one of our favourite times of the year. Spring in this region heralds wildflowers, regeneration, abundant wildlife and cool nights radiant with stars. Walks include creek explorations, exhilarating ascents of the local peaks, and shorter strolls through sub-tropical rainforest in World Heritage listed areas. From Aratula we travel to Main Range National Park for rainforest and lookout walks with the option to climb to Mt Cordeaux. This park straddles the Great Dividing Range and is part of the Scenic Rim arc of mountains. South of Stanthorpe, we spend three nights in the comfortable and spacious accommodation of Girraween Environmental Lodge. Meaning “Place of Flowers”, nearby Girraween National Park is famous for its granite domes, improbable balancing boulders and exquisitely water worn creek forms. Walks lead us to fascinating underground creeks, magnificent granite outcrops and lookouts over the eucalypt forests and heathlands. Each day, we will offer a selection of popular and lesser known walks with options to hike as much or as little as you prefer. During our stay, we enhance our connection to body, mind and nature, with two mornings of optional yoga classes and a local flora expert showing us the spring wildflower bloom and teaching us about local bush foods. Our final walk is to the largest exposed granite monolith in Australia, at Bald Rock National Park with spectacular views and quiet picnic spots.

DETAILS

Price: Twinshare / person (ex Brisbane)
Price: A$1,714
Note: Singles will have a private bedroom and will share a bathroom with one other, in a two bedroom chalet.

Minimum Group size: 6 guests
Special Interest: Wildlife, Botanical, History, Geology

For bookings call 07 5533 3583 | visit www.parktours.com.au | or email info@parktours.com.au | 1
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WALK RATING
Easy to Moderate: 4 to 10km per walking days with some challenging options available. A reasonable level of fitness and recent walking experience are important to participate in the program. We reserve the right to be flexible with the itinerary to allow for unforeseen circumstances including weather conditions and group fitness.

INCLUSIONS
• 3 nights twin share accommodation in spacious 2 bedroom / 1 bathroom chalets (singles will have a private bedroom sharing bathroom with one)
• Meals include – 3 Breakfasts, 4 Lunches, and 3 Dinners
• National park fees
• Yoga classes
• Professional tour leaders
• Pre-departure material including background & personalised A-Z tour information

EXCLUSIONS
• Transport throughout the tour – this is a “Tagalong Tour” see FAQ’s for more information
• Airfares & taxes to start / from end of tour
• Airport transfers
• Heavy or excess baggage
• Travel insurance
• Personal expenses e.g. drinks (water, alcohol, tea & coffee), laundry, telephone, or optional tours / excursions

TOUR LEADERS
Tony Groom founded interNATIONAL PARKtours with wife Connie in 1975 inspired by a Churchill Fellowship visit to the National Parks of the US and Canada. 40 years later he continues to find inspiration in the National Parks of the 65 countries he has visited. He says “National Parks are islands of hope which provide peace and inspiration in an increasingly frantic world.” He is a published writer and photographer.

Lisa Groom is the daughter of interNATIONAL PARKtours founders Tony & Connie Groom and grand-daughter of Binna Burra Mountain Lodge founder Arthur Groom. You could say the great outdoors is in Lisa’s blood. Growing up with the business she commenced working as a tour leader and co-ordinator with interNATIONAL PARKtours in 1991, and took over the helm of the company from her parents in 2001. Leading walking holidays in Australia and Europe, her passion is for regional ecotourism, discovering local characters and showcasing nature from a different perspective.

FAQ

What’s a Tagalong Tour?
During this current time of physical distancing and strict hygiene procedures we have all developed clever ways to interact with each other, taking inspiration from this interNATIONAL PARKtours has adapted our short break experiences as ‘Tagalong Tours’. The group transport has been removed allowing you to travel in the comfort of your own vehicle between destinations, to safely rediscover experience and connect to national parks in regional areas. We still enjoy the essence of our walking holidays - small groups, meeting the locals, staying in comfortable accommodation, being guided by knowledgeable leaders on daily adventures and carrying nothing more than a daypack. The camaraderie of the group experience will still be present during bushwalks and meal times, while being mindful to adhere to COVID-19 safety and maintain appropriate physical distancing. To help guide you on your journey, additional maps and location material will be included in your pre-departure information. If you would prefer to pay extra and let someone else worry about the driving please contact our office for further information on the additional cost.

What new procedures are in place for 2020 tours?
During our walking holiday strict COVID SAFE hygiene procedures will be in place. These include, but are not limited to:
• Complimentary hand sanitiser will be available on tour
• Daily health checks will be undertaken by your guide, in line with Queensland Health requirements. More information will be provided to you before the start of the tour.
• Physical or social distancing will be practiced during our daily activities. The current advice from the Department of Health is for everyone to keep at least 1.5 metres apart from others (outside of their family unit) where possible.
• Additional cleaning will be undertaken as required

Please note interNATIONAL PARKtours will comply with new policies and procedures as they are made available through our industry authorities and Government to keep you safe and healthy whilst on tour.

How & when to book?
To place your booking, simply visit www.parktours.com.au and select the “Bookings” page, or complete a Tour Booking form and return by post or email with your $A500 deposit. Once you have booked on a tour, we will stay in contact with regular mailings (see below).

What information and contact can I expect?
When you send your initial deposit, we will contact you to confirm your booking. Please do not book any travel arrangements until our office contacts you to advise that your tour has been confirmed to depart. Once the tour has been confirmed to depart, a comprehensive pre-departure information pack will be sent to you, including a Tour A-Z, suggested packing list, medical questionnaire, balance of payment invoice, and pre / post accommodation options. The final mailing is sent approximately two weeks before departure and includes final tour information, meeting points, accommodation and guest list. This will also include any additional documentation required under new Covid-Safe procedures.

What is the group size?
We specialise in small group travel with a tour size normally between 8 to 18 guests. Please refer to the front page for details on the minimum group size for this particular tour. All tours need a minimum number of participants to operate at the price listed in the itinerary. If the minimum number is not reached, a tour may still operate with a surcharge.

How fit do I have to be?
When you are assessing your ability to participate, age is not necessarily as important as your fitness and recent walking experience. Please read the tour walk rating and the day-by-day walking descriptions in the itinerary to determine if the tour is suitable for your fitness level. If you have any queries, we are happy to put you in touch with either the tour coordinator or tour leader to discuss your fitness in more detail.

What gear and equipment do I need to take?
Because we focus on half and full day walks, returning to our accommodation in the afternoon, you don’t need to carry any more than a daypack with rain wear, sunscreen, drinking water, camera and lunch. We recommend walking poles and hiking boots on most of our tours as they offer good ankle support and grip. A detailed packing list is included with your tour’s information pack.

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TOUR ITINERARY

11–14 September 2020 (3 nights)

Day 1 –Fri 11 Sep | Main Range NP walk / travel to Girraween
We begin our journey at 9am, gathering at the rural town of Aratula approximately 1 hours’ drive south-west of Brisbane. After a brief welcome at a local coffee shop, we convoy a short distance to Cunningham’s Gap and Main Range National Park. Starting our walk in rainforest, we climb steadily on a zig-zag track to a lookout below the main Mt Cordeaux Peak on the northern side of Cunningham’s Gap. There are sweeping views towards Brisbane, Boonah and south towards Mt Mitchell and other Main Range peaks. After a picnic lunch here, we continue via Warwick and Stanthorpe to Granite Belt country. This area is Queensland’s main wine region and home to the Queensland College of Wine. Many of the 50+ wineries in the region have enjoyed significant success with Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Chardonnay. We settle into our accommodation at Girraween Environmental Lodge (3 nights) and enjoy our first dinner.

Meals: L, D
Walks: Mt Cordeaux 6.8km return / 2.5 hrs easy-moderate walk (shorter walk offered if stormy weather)

Day 2 – Sat 12 Sep | Girraween NP / The Pyramid, Granite Arch & Junction walk
For the early risers, we begin the day with a one hour outdoor yoga class, including breath work, meditation techniques, relaxation and mindfulness. Our first full day in Girraween features the more iconic walks in the park, with its granite outcrops and balancing boulders. Starting out beside Bald Rock creek, we follow the short Granite Arch track through open heathland, Blackbutt and Stringybark forest. After it passes right through a natural granite arch, we continue through eucalypt forests and grassland to the base of The Pyramid. There is the option to return via the short Wyberba walk with views of the Pyramid. Otherwise it is a steady but exhilarating climb to the top of this massive granite dome and we are rewarded with magnificent views over the park to the second pyramid. After photographs among the impossibly balancing large boulders (including Balancing Rock) we return to Bald Rock Creek for a picnic lunch. There is then the option to follow this track all the way downstream to The Junction with Ramsay Creek. The creek also attracts birdlife such as superb fairy-wrens, Red-browed firetails and thornbills. We return to our accommodation for a short break and have the option of visiting a local chocolate shop and winery in the afternoon. You may also prefer to relax in the peaceful lodge setting or enjoy a massage (extra cost and advance bookings required).

Meals: B, L, D
Walks: 4km / 2 hrs easy walk OR 9km / 4 hrs moderate walk. The optional climb of The Pyramid is steep and moderate-challenging in grade

Day 3 – Sun 13 Sep | Girraween NP / Mt Norman walk
Once again, you can begin your day with an outdoor yoga class before we explore the other side of the national park. At 1267m above sea level, Mt Norman is the highest point in the national park and a lesser known walk in the area. We transfer by convoy via Wallangarra, where we are joined by local bush food and flora specialist Chris Duncan on our walk. The walking route passes through woodland and shrub land on wider roads and bush tracks then climbs steadily to the rocky base of the mountain. Here the going gets slightly steeper as we traverse the open rock slopes. We reach a band of rocky slabs below the actual summit where there are picnic options and unusual formations to explore. Returning home via Wallangarra, we have time for afternoon tea at the old station which includes some history of interstate train travel. You might like to enjoy the lodge spa and pool before our final dinner.

Meals: B, L, D
Walks: 4km, 3-4 hrs easy-moderate return walk. Steep final ascent / descent but gradient generally varies from gentle to moderate

Day 4 – Mon 14 Sep | Bald Rock NP / return home
After breakfast and checking out of our lodges, we travel in convoy via Tenterfield to Bald Rock National Park just across the border in NSW. Hiking via winding tracks, granite boulders and tors, we climb steadily up the largest granite rock in Australia. This will give us a final perspective and views in all directions as we enjoy a picnic lunch on top. Our tour ends here and your guides will be able to assist with any directions for the best, most scenic route home.

Meals: B, L
Walks: 3-4km / 2-3 hrs easy-moderate walk. Please note if border restrictions are still in place an alternative walk will be offered.
InterNATIONAL PARKtours have been leading small group walking holidays since 1975. Our like-minded guests bond easily and often create reunions, celebrations and friendships, many of them life-long. Our tours are active with regular half and full day walks. Aside from walking, we also spend time meeting local people, tasting regional food and immersing ourselves in the culture and history of a destination. Our flexibility enables us to adapt to the likes, dislikes and agility of our travellers, and changing situations such as weather and unforeseen circumstances. In most locations, we stay 2-3 nights and sometimes longer. This allows us to slow down, unpack our bags and enjoy the local atmosphere at different times of the day. Accommodation is comfortable and unique plus locally owned and operated where possible.

Our guides are dedicated, informative people who share their passion and knowledge on local history, culture, wildlife and topography. Our journeys are designed to safeguard the ecosystems; benefit the communities we visit and contribute to the sustainability of destinations. Travel is a chance to change your perspective. Nature always provides a new view if we take the time to look.

“I find the organisation and attention to detail is always good. Having travelled quite a few times with IPT now I would not consider a walking tour with any other organization”
Catherine Eakin

“I have had a wonderful experience on my IPT trips. I know the accommodation, meals, etc. will have the level of comfort I’m looking for”
Anne Stanfield

Disclaimer of Liability
Although interNATIONAL PARKtours has prepared the Information contained in this itinerary with all due care and updates the Information regularly, interNATIONAL PARKtours does not warrant or represent that the Information is free from errors or omission. Whilst the Information is considered to be true and correct at the date of publication, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of the Information. The Information may change without notice and interNATIONAL PARKtours is not in any way liable for the accuracy of any information printed and stored or in any way interpreted and used by a user.

Itinerary Updated: June 4, 2020 4:30 PM

Responsible Travel
For your protection, we are member of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA). Your payments are kept in a client account until required for payment of your tour. We are accredited with AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS), a national accreditation scheme, endorsing travel agents who have met strict financial and customer service criteria. We also have advanced accreditation with Ecotourism Australia, are members of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, and a Green Circle member of Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF).

Serendipity of travel
Our Leader and local guides will continually work on your behalf to provide a memorable journey. We have planned an intimate adventure, but adventure cannot be guaranteed. If indeed it could then it would lose its appeal.

Though we do the best we can to plan a smooth journey, sometimes things change at short notice. Some things may take longer than anticipated, transport and accommodation arrangements may alter, and you may experience occasional shortcomings and be frustrated by the ‘manana’ attitude; at other times you will be amazed by local efficiency. Tour itineraries may need to be modified but this is done so with your needs in mind and to provide the best tour experience.

So, be flexible, surprised and delighted with the serendipity that comes from being open to the unexpected. Your enjoyment of this journey is ultimately up to you.