

ACTIVE AUSTRALIA

Trip itinerary: *Koala Family Trip*

**Kangaroos, Koalas & Kookaburras • Learn to surf • Janolan Caves
Horse riding in the Snowy Mountains • Beaches and rainforest of the East Coast
Snorkeling & beach volleyball • Canoe safari**

9 days: Sydney – Melbourne

Adult Fare: US\$1999 + applicable taxes and fees

Child Fare (15 and under): US\$1499 + applicable taxes and fees

The Koala is a family-friendly trip, designed as a more relaxed version of our Emu trip, with lots more goodies thrown in for the kids. We know that family trips aren't the same as regular adventure trips, so over the years we've developed a hassle-free recipe packed full of both exciting activities and relaxed downtime for the whole family. Our itineraries are flexible, so we can make adjustments on the road to make sure everyone's having a good time. The accommodations are family-friendly, and the meals are designed to suit all ages. Australia is a safe destination and a great place for families. We venture into several National Parks, go on a canoe safari, visit some spectacular caves, learn to surf, take a horseback ride and do some unforgettable hiking in various parts of NSW and Victoria. We maintain plenty of options for all ages and there'll be lots of activities to keep parents busy too! We have two guides to take good care of you. The accommodations vary along the way – but all the places we've chosen work well for families. The Koala Family Trip is an awesome adventure for the whole family. To enjoy all the activities, children should be 9 years of age or more, but with notice we can often cater to younger children.

Monday **Arrive Sydney, hiking Blue Mountains**

The first thing we do on the *Koala Family Trip* is leave town! We'll pick you up in the morning, either from a central downtown spot or direct from the airport, and head to the Blue Mountains. Families will find plenty of interesting things to do in Sydney on their own, so we recommend arriving a little early if you'd like to spend some time here. The Blue Mountains are beautiful and very scenic – they get their unique bluish tinge from fine drops of eucalyptus oil suspended in the air, which are released by native eucalyptus trees in the area. There are a huge variety of walks to do here, so this afternoon we'll combine some of the highlights, depending on the needs of the kids. We have two guides on our family trips – and all our other trips too – so we can easily split up and do different things, depending on how everyone's feeling.

ACCOMMODATION: *Katoomba Apartments, Blue Mountains* (L,D)

Tuesday **Exploring Janolan Caves**

This morning you have the opportunity to take another walk, or else you can just hang out at the lodge. We'll leave mid-morning, and go straight to the Janolan Caves – a fascinating system of very spectacular limestone caves. Quite other-worldly, and fascinating for kids and adults alike. We'll then drive down to Kangaroo Valley, located on the edge of Morton National Park. We stay in family-friendly accommodation here – and everywhere else – and it's a good idea to get a good night's sleep before going canoeing tomorrow!

ACCOMMODATION: *Kangaroo Valley Hotel* (B,L,D)

Wednesday **Canoe Safari in Kangaroo Valley**

This morning we're off for a "canoe safari". Moving a few feet above the waterline is ideal for visiting with the local wildlife, and this area is suitable for everyone. Parents, kids, experts, beginners...the wildlife makes the canoeing a real hit. Using very stable canoes, we glide along the water, and as long as everyone stays quiet, we'll see a wide variety of native birdlife, gray wallabies and sun dragons (a large local lizard) – we may even see a platypus! We'll continue paddling through the peaceful gorge surrounded by sandstone cliffs and natural bush, before heading back to the take-out point. Tonight we stay another night at Kangaroo Valley.

ACCOMMODATION: Kangaroo Valley Hotel (B,L,D)

Thursday **Day at the beach!**

Today starts with a short drive to Jervis Bay, where we have a classic Aussie day at the beach! Lots of sunscreen, a big floppy hat for everyone... and we spend the day lying on the beach, swimming, snorkeling, playing beach games. Jervis Bay Marine Park is home to all sorts of fascinating wildlife, including whales, dolphins, sea eagles, penguins and many species of fish. We'll have most of the day available to cavort in the water, with other options too, such as lovely bush walks. We'll have no trouble keeping busy with so many things to do here! We're staying here for a couple of days, so it's a very relaxing day.

ACCOMMODATION: Beachside accommodations, Jervis Bay (B,L,D)

Friday **Learning to surf at Jervis Bay**

Today we're not going anywhere. We've got a better plan – we're going to teach you to surf! If you've never tried it before, no worries – our experienced surf instructors will have you up and at 'em in no time. Obviously we take safety very seriously, and we don't go out if the waves are too big – but there are a number of beaches here where the conditions are usually suitable for beginners. We strongly recommend the surf lessons, for people of all ages – it's just too much fun to miss! At the end of the day, we have a beach BBQ and a little kid-friendly beach volleyball.

ACCOMMODATION: Beachside accommodations, Jervis Bay (B,L,D)

Saturday **Hiking the Snowy Mountains**

This morning we head south to the Snowy Mountains or "The Snowies", as they're known to the locals. They are part of the Great Dividing Range, which extends from Canberra to Melbourne. We'll check into our lodge, before heading out for today's activity – hiking! We'll be hiking in Mount Kosciuszko National Park, home to Australia's highest mountain, known to climbers as one of the "Seven Summits" because it is the highest peak on one of the seven continents of the world. There are heaps of trails to choose from in the area, and we'll select the best hikes for the group. At the end of the day we return to Thredbo Valley Lodge for a hearty meal and a good night's sleep.

ACCOMMODATION: Thredbo Valley Lodge, Thredbo Valley (B,L,D)

Sunday **Horseback riding near Beechworth**

Today we're on our way to Beechworth, a historic gold mining town nestled amongst the hills. Along the way we'll pass through the Rutherglen wine region, where we'll stop for a picnic lunch at a winery. This is a great opportunity for parents to enjoy a peaceful moment in the shade of a gum tree, while we take the kids for swim in the local lake (or billabong as it's known as down here). After lunch we have a short drive through to Beechworth where we'll be going horseback riding! The horses we use are very docile, and it's quite safe for children. If horseback riding isn't your thing then there are plenty of other things to do in this beautiful town, such as gold-panning, hiking or simply just relaxing with a book at our accommodation. This evening we'll be having a classic Aussie barbeque beneath the gum trees.

ACCOMMODATION: Local lodgings, Beechworth (B,L,D)

Monday **Wildlife visit in Healesville Sanctuary**

Today we head through to Melbourne, which is arguably Australia's most interesting city, from a cultural perspective. Along the way we'll be stopping at Healesville Sanctuary, which is a great place to see any Australian wildlife that we've missed so far. The Platypus house is well worth a visit, and you'll see all sorts of birds, snakes, and marsupials here. After lunch, we'll visit the Galeena Beek Cultural Centre, for an "official" look at Aboriginal culture. Later on we'll head to our accommodations and celebrate our last night together at a friendly local restaurant.

ACCOMMODATION: Local lodgings, Healesville (B,L,D)

Tuesday **Water park fun and depart Melbourne**

Today we have one last unmissable activity lined up for the kids before we head to Melbourne – a visit to a water park! Children love this place, with its network of slides and pools, plus it's a great way to wind up nine days of fun with ACTIVE AUSTRALIA! Then it's a short drive into Melbourne, where we can drop you at the airport or anywhere in the city if you're staying on to explore Melbourne. Melbourne is one of Australia's most interesting cities, with all sorts of cultural entertainment. It's relatively easy to get around and we recommend

staying here for a couple of days if you have the time.

(B,L)

Important Information

ACCOMMODATIONS: The *Koala Family Trip* is a multi-activity oriented trip through the south east corner of Australia. We've chosen interesting, comfortable and family-friendly accommodations throughout. In some places it's quite luxurious. But many of the other places we stay are off-the-beaten-track, and don't have many accommodation options – but are really, really spectacular. Some accommodations have separate bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms, and others have two bedroom apartments with shared bathrooms. You'll love the places we stay!

RECOMMENDED FLIGHTS: If you're flying in on the first day of the trip, or out on the last day, we recommend arriving in Sydney by approximately 9 - 10am on Monday, and departing from Melbourne after 4 – 5pm on Tuesday. Other flight times may also be possible - if you are considering alternative flight times please let us know.

PICKUP INFORMATION: On the first day of the trip we can either pick you up from the Old Sydney Holiday Inn at 9.30am, or from the Sydney airport, either in the Domestic Terminal at 10.15am or in the International Terminal at 10.30am.

DROP OFF INFORMATION: On the last day of the trip we can drop you off at the Melbourne airport in time for either domestic flights departing after 4pm or international flights leaving later than 5pm. Alternatively, we can drop you in downtown Melbourne sometime after 4pm if you are staying on for a few days.

FITNESS: You and your kids need to have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself on the *Koala*, but no more than the average family. This trip is all about family fun so the activities are OK for people with short legs! If you're concerned about your fitness level, or whether your kids are up to it, have a chat with us so we can help you choose between the Kea and our other trips.

EXPERIENCE: You don't have to have any outdoor experience at all to take our trips because we help you make the most of Australia's amazing outdoor environment. Our staff are highly trained and very experienced outdoor guides, and we will look after you and your kids! You don't need to have ever done any snorkeling, canoeing, caving, surfing or horseback riding to enjoy these activities with us. All we ask is that you are energetic, enthusiastic and in reasonable shape, and we guarantee you'll have an incredible time. We manage the level of commitment to suit your experience, and we have an impeccable safety record. We hold all relevant government licenses.

FLEXIBILITY: Because of the off-the-beaten-path and non-commercial nature of the places we stay, we may need to change a night stop. We try to make as few changes as possible, but retain the flexibility to make sure your trip is as good as it can be. Some of our activities are weather dependent and if it's a choice between safety and an activity, your safety will always come first. In these cases we'll have a suitable alternate activity.

INCLUDED: The trip fare is US\$1999 + applicable taxes and fees for adults, and US\$1499 + tax for kids 15 and under. We quote all prices in US dollars, so our families from all over the world can more easily relate prices to their own currencies. You can also join for shorter periods of time, at a pro-rated price. The trip fare includes just about everything, specifically:

- All guiding services. We generally have two guides per trip, a lead guide/driver, and a co-guide who is responsible for meals and accommodations. This means we can really make sure your family has a great time! We operate with small groups, and we don't hesitate to offer a second departure when our trips start getting full.

- Comfortable accommodations for the entire period you are with us (see “Accommodations” above). We can organize extra accommodation for you, if you want to arrive earlier or leave later.
- All your meals (as indicated), except where we've found people prefer to check out the wide range of local restaurants. (B,L,D) means breakfast, lunch & dinner included. Alcohol is not generally included, although we do spring for a few drinks here and there!
- All hiking, snorkeling, canoeing, caving, surfing or horseback riding activities as described in the itinerary, except any optional extra activities. We have estimated the rates for optional extra activities run by local operators in US dollars, but these rates may vary according to the USD/AUD exchange rate of the day. There are many optional activities available at extra cost along the way – just ask your guide. None of these activities are compulsory, and nor will your trip seem less awesome if you do the more budget options. Although some people enjoy sampling the optional extras, others prefer to focus more on the hiking, snorkeling, canoeing, caving, surfing or horseback riding which is of course the reason you've chosen the *Koala* in the first place!
- All specialized equipment required for all activities – please refer to our gear list for further details.

We'll see you soon!