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The Cross Cut Saw

Preliminary Information for All Participants.

Our remote area programs travel to some of the most remote and isolated parts of inland Australia. To safely complete the program a lot of consideration and planning goes into preparation and ensuring that we have adequate fuel, clothing, water, food and equipment for a safe and enjoyable experience. To this end we need to carry only essential items and possibly forego many of the daily trappings of our normal daily life. If you are used to having a daily shower and washing in many liters of water this will not be possible for most of the program – although you should be able to shower at least every few days. If you like many cans of drink per day or lots of fine bottled wine, this is not possible. And finally if you like a complete change of clothing each day this may not be possible either! Sounds terrible - but if you are looking forward to real adventure travel there are many alternatives to these comforts and the rewards in this part of Australia are certainly worth a few deprivations.

Sleeping is in Diamantina twin tents. These are the best safari tents available. There is room to stand up, they have a floor and they have steel poles and are designed to withstand winds over 100kph. They come replete with swags on stretchers and a bedside table. The swags are fully made up with sheets doona and pillows. On a starry night you will have the option to take the swag and stretcher outside and sleep beneath the Milky Way. The stars in the High Country are incredible!

The success of any expedition relies on the group dynamic. You are likely to be travelling with people from other countries, different socio-economic backgrounds and different takes on life, politics etc. That is one of the wonderful things about humanity. If you are intolerant of other people you may need to reconsider participating, as you will be in close quarters with other people for the duration of the expedition.

Your expedition crew:

Your Expedition crew has years of experience traveling through remote parts of Australia and the mechanical knowledge necessary in the case of emergency. They also have remote area first aid training. They have extensive experience in leading groups in inland Australia and have a broad knowledge of landscape features so will be able to assist participants to interpret these. We carry a number of reference books and maps for inland Australia and will be responsible for participant welfare and the “learning for fun” part of the program. Your crew is committed to ensuring you have a safe and enjoyable expedition.

Footwear:

You need lace-up hiking boots that cover your ankle and have sturdy, treaded soles (like vibram). Full-grain leather or Gortex is best. **We cannot emphasise the importance of appropriate footwear that has been well worn in to avoid blisters and pain.** Lower profile hiking shoes, walking shoes, running shoes, approach shoes, sand shoes, elasticised boots and similar are not acceptable.

Packing List:

Following is a recommended list of items to pack, it is not prescriptive. You are permitted to bring a **SOFT travel bag NOT weighing more than 15kg fully packed**. This will be loaded onto the roof or a ute tray, so it needs to be weatherproof and rugged and not your finest Gucci or Louis Vuitton. Your day pack is carried with you on the hike, your main bag will be available in camp at night. Your swag is pretty warm, but everyone sleeps differently, so if you really feel the cold, think about bringing a set of thermals and using them as your PJs. We suggest layering your clothing. Start off cold in the morning, warm during the day, warm up as the afternoon progresses. If it rains put on an outer shell, and have a complete set of dry gear you can change in to in camp in case of rain/snow.

Warm long pants, light walking shorts
Light shirts with collars and sleeves
Jumper or Polar-fleece
Waterproof jacket/windcheater
T-shirt or two
Wide brimmed hat and beanie/balaclava
Boots or walking shoes
Runners for around camp
Socks and Undies – whatever you think is a fair thing.
Thermal base layer, long leggings and top, Icebreaker are good, two sets ideal
underwear is a good alternative
Waterproof overpants (nylon, pvc,gortex)
Long Gaiters, below knee.
Swimming costume (optional but good when having a bush shower)
Thongs or crocs for shower
Toilet bag (soap, comb, brush, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo)
Spare glasses
Medicines (tablets, potions, lotions)
Towel—micro fiber is good

Sun cream
Face Washer
Wet ones/baby wipes
Water bottle for drinking – not a used PET, make sure it has a wide mouth for refilling – camelbak are good
Camera ,spare film and batteries
Torch and spare batteries – we recommend an LED head torch
Gloves or mittens
Walking poles

Personal Hygiene:

On a daily basis you will find yourself coping with a limited amount of washing water. We can provide a liter or two of hot water when in camp, and when possible a brief bush shower with hot water. Bring a small Tupperware tub for washing. You'd be surprised how creative you can be. We traveled with a hairdresser once who washed and conditioned her hair with one cup of water!!!!

Bring your own cup for tooth brushing. 'Wet-ones' or 'Huggies' are a great substitute for a shower. We recommend you bring a couple of packets. Please bring bio degradable eco soap. Do bring adequate deodorant. You will be travelling in close quarters and your fellow travelers will be eternally grateful for this courtesy. If you want to be indulgent, superfine marino socks and undies (icebreaker) are excellent as they can be worn for several days without requiring washing

Toilet is usually a shovel and a toilet roll (which we provide- with a box of matches to burn the paper). There are long drops at Bluff and Lovick's Hut. For a humorous tutorial on toileting in the bush check out <http://bit.ly/bushcrapper> In camp we have two tubs of water and antiseptic, one for after toilet and the other for general hand washing, and the vehicles all have antiseptic hand cream pump packs in the door pockets for daytime use. You may want to bring your own hand towel.

Fitness:

You need to have a reasonable level of fitness. The grade is moderate to difficult. The ground surfaces range from well groomed trails to rocky scree and mud, and there can sometimes be snow. There are steep sections. You need good general cardio vascular fitness. If you can comfortably walk 5-10km regularly you should have no problems. Day 3 is the toughest day, we are walking for around 8 hours. It is advisable to take regular walks prior to joining us.

Communication with the Outside World:

Whilst some come to get away from friends and family, others like to stay in touch. There is Telstra mobile coverage for most of the walk.

Charging Devices:

Your vehicles have USB charge plugs and cigarette lighters. We also carry a 240 volt inverter. Make sure your portable device batteries are in good order. Older ipads can take several hours to charge, which can log jam the system. Be sure to bring lots of batteries and spare SD cards for your camera.

Food:

Provisioning for a remote area expeditions requires careful menu planning. Once we are on the road there are no opportunities for re-provisioning. We serve modern contemporary cuisine from all over the world including Greek, Italian, Thai etc. Do not expect just meat and three vegetables. You can expect to eat very well. If you have any food allergies or dislikes you must advise us at least three weeks prior to travel. **We are unable to amend the menu or make special dietary considerations once we are on the road.** Breakfast is a continental spread. A choice of corn flakes, nutri grain, wheat bix, or our home made muesli with stewed fruit and yoghurt, organic sourdough toast with butter and a selection of spreads, fresh brewed coffee and billy tea. Lunch is usually a wrap or roll with sweet biscuit, fresh fruit and cordial served on the trail. The evening meal is at a set table and is the main meal of the day. We do not serve desserts or snacks, so if you are a snacker or a sweet tooth, BYO. Breakfast is served at sunrise each day, lunch is when the sun is high and the evening meal is served between one and two hours after sunset.

Beverages:

Our drinking water in camp is rainwater or potable spring water, we are pretty fussy about

quality. There is no need to bring plastic bottled water. We also provide tea and coffee whilst in camp and a glass of table wine with dinner. If you wish to bring something else to drink please feel free. We have 12 volt refrigeration to store beer and soft drinks and room to store spirits. **There are no opportunities to restock en route.** We find that people tend to drink more than they think they will, so err on the side of indulgence rather than temperance. Whilst this is in no way intended to suggest we encourage the consumption of alcohol, the crisp alpine air, combined with chilly evenings under the stars relaxing by a warm fire is certainly conducive to a moderate tippie if you are that way inclined. Make sure the beverages you are bringing with you are stored in glass or plastic. Modern cans don't stand up to the vibration caused by corrugated roads and tend to break. For wines, ensure your boxes have large cardboard separators.

Accidents can happen:

We are traveling into some of the most remote country in the world, and have to be well prepared. Your tour guides are trained in advanced and remote area first aid and we carry extensive first aid equipment, however we are not a mobile dispensary, nor do we carry pain killers for everyday use. We are not permitted to provide you with any medication so we recommend you bring the following.

Adequate personal medication you may need including Band-Aids or Elastoplasts
Paracetamol or Aspirin
Stingose, adequate supplies of any personal medication.

Camp duties:

As a member of the expedition you will be expected to assist in camp duties including washing dishes, food preparation, collecting firewood and assisting in packing and unpacking of vehicles. This is part of being a team member and will contribute to both the success of the expedition and your enjoyment.

Pick Up and Drop Off:

We pick up at all Mansfield hotels. Please be waiting outside with your bags at 10.00 am and ensure you have completed check out formalities. The different Diamantina vehicles will be travelling around town to several other hotels, however we will usually be within 10 minutes either side of 10.00am. We drop off on the last day around 4pm at Mansfield.

