

NORTH EAST VICTORIA – MURRAY TO THE MOUNTAINS RAIL TRAIL 7-days / 6-nights **QUALITY**, guided cycling with gourmet food & wine from Rutherglen to Bright



Join us to explore North East Victoria, to experience the incredible alpine valleys and mountain scenery that were once the home of high country cattlemen, legendary bushrangers and the miners of the Australian gold rush in the late 1800's. A region now known for world class local food and fine wines that are widely exported.

This guided cycling tour follows the mostly sealed **Murray to the Mountains Rail Trail**, from one of Australia's most iconic rivers at Rutherglen to Bright in the foothills of the Victorian Alps. We ride mainly flat stretches of the trail through the Ovens and King valleys past impressive vineyards and fertile farmland where hops, nuts, apples, berries and black Australian Angus beef are grown. There are undulations of course which give views across the valleys to forested foothills and Mount Buffalo, one of Victoria's oldest National Parks and the Australian Alps.

We stay in comfortable, quality accommodation and enjoy the gourmet foods and wines of the region including cellar-door platter-style lunches in season showcasing local cheeses and fresh tasty produce. Wine-tasting is an important part of the tour. Taste the iconic Shiraz wines, full-bodied reds that are bursting with Australian sunshine. Go back in time to taste the traditional fortified wines of Rutherglen and Milawa. The King Valley offers white wines including Riesling, Prosecco and Sauvignon Blanc and the Alpine Valleys region has cool climate wines such as Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay and lighter style reds including Tempranillo, Sangiovese and Pinot Noir. Along the way we can try wines from lesser known grapes such as Saperavi and Fiano. For a change, quench your thirst with mountain-crafted beers at the Bright Brewery made with local hops.

We provide multi-gear hybrid bikes, or bring your own bike if you prefer. E-bikes are available (at extra cost).

Cost from: **\$2850** per person, twin-share Single supplement from \$600

Departs: 15th November, 13th December, 2021; 14th February, 14th March, 4th April, 2nd May 2022.

Includes: 6 nights in comfortable 4-star accommodation with ensuite; 6 full breakfasts, 5 platter-style lunches, 4 restaurant dinners; all wine tastings and farm gate tastings; luggage transfers; bike hire with pannier, water bottle; expert local guides with support vehicle; detailed route notes and maps; transfers from and back to Rutherglen.

Not included: Meals not mentioned, other drinks, transport to/from Rutherglen before and after the tour (pick-up from Albury or Melbourne may be available at extra cost – ask for details), personal expenses. Bike helmets are required and are available but we recommend you bring your own or buy one locally.

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Grade: Easy to moderate, mainly on quiet country roads or on paved trails. The itinerary is at the discretion of the guides and subject to local conditions and weather.

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 – Arrive Rutherglen

Plan to arrive in Rutherglen by mid-afternoon, allow time to explore its historic buildings, galleries and tales of the 1850's Wahgunyah Gold Rush. Meet your guide and group at a local restaurant for a dinner showcasing the great food and the full-bodied reds and fortified wines, such as Shiraz and Tokay.

Day 2 – Rutherglen to All Saints Winery and transfer to Beechworth

Cycling @ 25km

An easy cycle at the start of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail along the flat, sealed path from Rutherglen to the *Chef Hatted* restaurant at All Saints Winery for a gourmet lunch. Wine tastings after lunch and we ride back to Rutherglen (or take the support bus if you prefer). Later in the day, transfer to the historic town of Beechworth to stay overnight. Explore this unique town, with its gold mining history, heritage precinct well-preserved Victorian period buildings and links to the outlaw Ned Kelly. There are quaint souvenir shops to discover as well as an award winning bakery and ice-creamery. Dinner is at a local restaurant.

Day 3 – Beechworth to Milawa

Cycling @ 35km

We begin with a 15km downhill ride on the rail trail from Beechworth to Milawa, with wine tasting stops at Pennyweight's organic winery, Woodpark Cellar door, Christmont Cellar and others as time allows. Surrounded by the sights, sounds and smells of the typical Australian bush, we find hidden valleys and cycle across railway heritage brick bridges. There is an optional stop at an olive farm for an olive oil tasting and then onward to the well-known Milawa Cheese Factory for a tasting of award winning cheeses and a platter lunch. After lunch visit a variety of produce venues in the Milawa township including the mustard factory and specialty meats smokehouse, all within easy riding distance. In the afternoon visit the iconic Brown Brothers Winery for a private tasting. Tonight stay in a 4-star hotel resort with dinner at the resorts' highly regarded restaurant.

Day 4 - Milawa to Myrtleford

Cycling @ 43km

Depart the King Valley on the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail and tackle the only hill of the route on the way to the Ovens Valley. We visit Gapsted Winery, where a table tasting is included with a tasty platter lunch. There are views along the rail trail to the mountains ahead and a short ride downhill into Myrtleford where you stay tonight. Dinner tonight is at your own arrangement (not included) with a number of options in town.

Day 5 – Myrtleford to Bright

Cycling @ 30km

Ride to breakfast at the Alpine Gate café, the first of many stops today on the ride to Bright. The rail trail follows the Ovens Valley overlooked by the impressive monolith of Mount Buffalo. We can visit the first and only pumpkin seed factory in Australia and stop for a tasting at Feathertop Winery. Lunch is at Ringer Reef Winery, where a platter lunch, a glass of wine and a view to Mount Buffalo are all part of the experience. After lunch ride along the trail to Bright, perhaps stopping for coffee and cake at the Rail Trail café or a mountain-crafted ale at the Bright Brewery. We stay in Bright for two nights, a pretty, riverside town with its many deciduous trees, so spectacular in Autumn and Spring. Tonight's dinner is at one of the town's award winning restaurants.

Day 6 – Bright to Wandiligong and return

Cycling @ 25kms

After breakfast an easy ride to visit Wandiligong, with its National Trust classified landscape and 1800's gold mining history. We ride the bike trail beside Moses Creek, past Mystic Park (a world class paragliding site and a mountain biking mecca). Lunch is at the 'Wandi Pub', awarded as one of the best country pubs in Victoria. We can visit an apple orchard or an olive farm if time permits. We return to Bright for dinner.

Day 7 – Depart Bright and onward transfers

Tour ends

Time to explore the trails around Bright before the transfer to Rutherglen (or depart at your own arrangements).

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Outdoor Travel offer guided cycling and walking in Australia and New Zealand. The **Barossa** and **Clare Valleys** offer great cycling in South Australia. Explore the Australian Outback of the **Flinders Ranges** and the **Larapinta Trail**, or Victoria's **Great Ocean Walk**, Western Australia's **Cape to Cape Track** or Tasmania's **Freycinet Peninsula**. In New Zealand you can cycle to the **Marlborough** wineries, along the **Nelson Great Taste Trail** or **Otago Rail Trail**. Walk the **Milford**, **Routeburn**, **Grand Traverse**, **Hollyford Track**, **Queen Charlotte** or **Akaroa** or combine walking, kayaking and cycling the **Abel Tasman** peninsula to the north of the South Island.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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