



## TRIP NOTES

### VICTORIAN ALPS—PACKHORSE HIKE

### 6 DAY HIKE

The Victorian Alps is a vast and beautiful alpine area featuring the state's highest peaks. On this tour, we'll walk across grassy snow plains, climb rocky summits, visit historic high country huts and take in spectacular alpine vistas across Mt Feathertop and Mt Hotham and the dramatic river valleys below.

Pack horses will carry our food and gear from camp to camp, leaving us free to walk with just a day pack each day. The horses will keep us company in camp each night, giving us insight into the life of working horses in the mountains. This is a classic exploration of the Bogong High Plains, taking you to the heart of this extreme and beautiful wilderness.

Park Trek has partnered with Bogong Horseback Adventures to offer this truly unique tour that allows you to walk in style and comfort. As a hiker, you will require a high level of fitness to comfortably complete this walk.

Hike with experienced and knowledgeable Park Trek guides who will follow the tracks of your packhorse team across the High Country into bush camps. Set up your tent or swag with the help of the Bogong Horse team. The tour takes you to Heathy Spur, Wallace's, Pretty Valley, Mount Jim, The Jiatmathangs, and Mount Feathertop, along with some of the oldest Cattlemen's huts in the High Country. Our packhorse team carry all sleeping gear, food and clothing through the Alpine environment, allowing you to walk with the comfort of a daypack over this three-day journey.

Guests will be required to sign our waiver before departing on the tour (hard copies will be provided the night prior at Spring Spur Stay). This waiver covers riding the 'hospital horse' (only in a medical emergency) and also general risks associated with camping with horses. The hospital horse can take weight up to 100kgs only.

Cost: \$2699 per person

A \$700 deposit is required per person with the balance due 60 days prior to travel.

## INCLUSIONS

- Experienced, knowledgeable guides from Bogong Horseback Adventures
- Pack horses
- Park Trek walking guides
- Spring Spur accommodation pre and post tour
- All group camping equipment
- All meals as per the itinerary
- Beer and table wine with evening meal while camping (alcohol own expense at Spring Spur on first and last night)
- National Park fees
- First aid and emergency communications plus a hospital animal (can carry max 100kgs)
- Amazing hiking in the Victorian Alps Park Trek guides will collect guests from:
  1. Outside the National Gallery of Victoria, St Kilda Road at 10am on the day of departure
- Bogong Horseback Adventures can collect guests from:
  1. Albury airport (pick up can be organised between 10am and 4pm)
  2. Albury railway station (pick up can be organised between 10am and 4pm)

We can drop you back to the National Gallery or Albury following the tour. Spring Spur stay is a four hour drive from Melbourne and one hour and 20 minutes from Albury.



**\*Please note, the itinerary may run in reverse dependant on start/finish locations.**

## **DAY ONE (Arrival day)**

Our Park Trek guides will meet you out the front of the National Gallery of Victoria on St Kilda Road at 10.00am on the day of departure. It is a five-hour drive to Tawonga so we'll break up the journey with some coffee stops and a lunch break at Glenrowan (lunch at own expense). For guests starting the tour in Albury, we can arrange pick up from Albury airport or Albury train station between 10am and 4pm.

We arrive at Spring Spur Homestead in the afternoon and have free time to stretch our legs and explore the gardens and property. In the late afternoon we'll meet up in the lounge to go over some pre-walk information and organise camping gear. You will be issued a 'dry bag' for the clothing and personal goods you wish to take on the hike. The remainder of your gear

can be left in your bag at the homestead. Tonight we'll enjoy a delicious home-cooked meal using produce from the Spring Spur kitchen garden before retiring to our rooms at the Homestead.

Meals: dinner.

Overnight: Spring Spur Accommodation

## **DAY TWO**

**(19-24 kilometres walking, approx 7 hours, moderate grade)**

After an early breakfast we transfer to the trailhead (approx one hour drive). Our walk starts on the beautiful Heathy Spur trail, which rises gently across alpine grasslands studded with snowgums and rocky outcrops. We leave views of Rocky Valley Lake behind us as our trail joins the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT). Here we can take the 5-kilometre return side-trip to the summit of Mt Nelse (1880m) for incredible views across the surrounding peaks.

Returning to the AAWT, we descend through forest then meander around the curves of the hillside to one of our day's highlights – Wallace Hut. This heritage-listed hut was built in 1889 and is thought to be the oldest surviving hut in the high country. After a lunch break, we head out past Cope Hut and across the Bogong High Plains following the ski pole line. We skirt around Mt Cope and make our way to Ryders Yards where we meet up with our pack horse crew and set up camp for the night.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner.

Overnight: Camping/ swag

## **SPRING SPUR ACCOMMODATION**

Guest rooms are situated on Bogong Horseback Adventures' Spring Spur property, with beautiful views of Mount Feathertop and the Kiewa Valley. Guests rooms are designed to give you a sense of privacy with secluded outdoor spaces and framed vistas of the native gardens, horse paddocks and surrounding mountains.

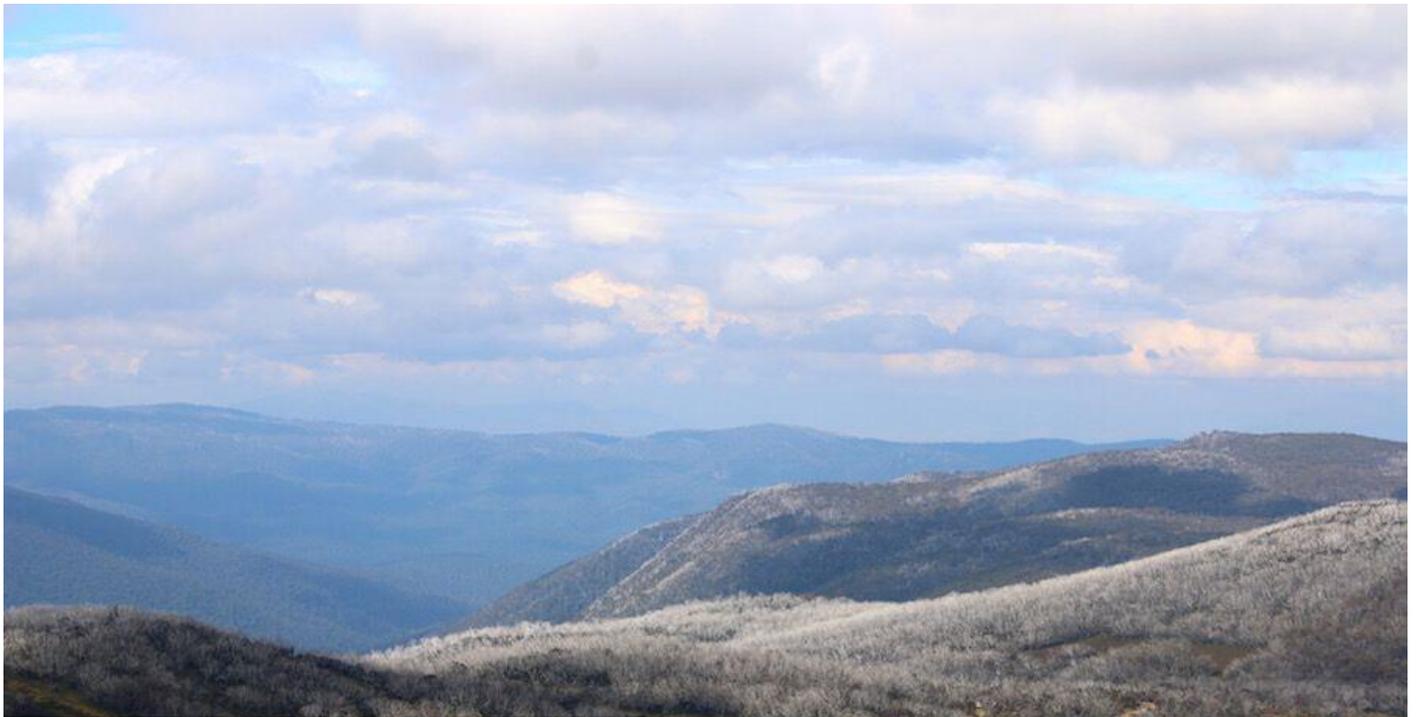
Enjoy a glass of wine or cup of tea privately on your verandah or come up to the shared lounge and socialise with the group (alcohol at own expense). Each room has an en-suite bathroom and comfortable bed.

There are six rooms at Spring Spur which can be set up as twin single or King beds. As there is no single supplement on tour, if you are travelling solo we will match you with a same gender traveller at Spring Spur, and you will have either your own swag or twin share a tent while out camping in the Alpine ranges.

## **ABOUT THE FOOD**

The homestead kitchen features home grown and locally sourced produce with a menu that has an Italian, Mediterranean Australian Asian fusion - homestead influence. Freshly baked breads, pizza, pastas, risottos, Spanish tapas, fresh salads, with home made mustards, relishes, preserves, baked cakes and pastries, all prepared in the Spring Spur Kitchen.

Meals prepared at the Spring Spur kitchen are transported, miraculously, into the pack horse load and prepared on the campfire in remote area camps.



### DAY THREE

(9-13 kilometres walking, approx 4 hours, easy grade)

We rise early for a delicious breakfast around the campfire. We pack up camp, then it's time to hit the trail – we head out past Cope Saddle Hut and follow the pole line across the beautiful undulating grasslands of the Bogong High Plains. Keep your eyes open here for brumbies on the surrounding hillsides and birds of prey soaring above you.

We pass Mt Jim and continue to follow the AAWT to 'pole 333', a ski pole at the junction of four trails. Here we head for Tawonga Huts, where we have lunch and set up an early camp. Those with energy to spare can take the optional walk to the summit of Mt Jaitmathang (1852m). It is a well worthwhile trip (about 4km return) as this is one of the highest peaks in the Victorian Alps and the summit offers beautiful 360 degree views across the High Plains.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner.  
Overnight: Camping/ swag

### DAY FOUR

(10 kilometres walking, approx 4 hours, moderate grade)

After we pack our lunches and break camp this morning, we re-trace our steps to pole 333 and turn towards Weston Spur. As we slowly descend off the High Plains we have stunning views across to Mt Feathertop and the Razorback – we can clearly see the scale of our walk for tomorrow.

Weston Spur descends steeply to Weston Hut, a comfortable hut perched on a sheltered saddle – this is a good spot for morning tea or lunch. Our pack horse team may pass us on the trail today as they take the same track the walkers use to reach the West Kiewa Valley. We descend steeply to Blair Hut, in a picturesque setting by the river, before crossing to Diamantina Yards where we make camp for the night.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner.  
Overnight: Camping/ swag





## DAY FIVE

(19 kilometres walking, approx 7 hours, difficult grade)

We set off early today to give us plenty of time for a challenging and spectacular day of walking. We strike up Diamantina Spur, a trail infamous for being both steep and rocky. It is slow going but we gain altitude with every step and the views open up around us. Eventually we reach the Razorback, a ridgeline connecting two of Victoria's highest peaks – Mt Feathertop and Mt Hotham. The climb to the summit of Victoria's second highest mountain, Mt Feathertop (1922m) gives us incredible views – and a surge of emotion at our achievement.

The final leg of our walk is a spectacular high country highlight. We follow the Razorback trail as it climbs and descends across the ridgeline towards Hotham. It is a rocky and very exposed trail in parts and caution is required, particularly in windy conditions. At the end of the Razorback, we climb into our waiting vehicle for the journey back to Spring Spur Lodge (approx 1.5 hours) for a well-earned shower, a home-cooked dinner and bed.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner.

Overnight: Camping/ swag

*Alternate route— Those who do not wish to do the steep walk up to Mt Feathertop on day 5 can take an easier route via Cobungra Gap and Swindlers Spur. This walk ascends for much of the day, including a very steep and rocky section above Dibbin Hut, then undulates past Derrick Hut to the Mt Loch carpark (15km walking, approx 6 hours, moderate).*

## DAY SIX

(departure day)

After a relaxed breakfast at the Homestead, we pack our belongings and head back to Melbourne. We'll stop for breaks and lunch en route and return to the National Gallery by around 3pm. If you are flying from Melbourne airport please organise a flight after 5pm. For those returning to Albury, we can arrange a departure time from the Homestead after 10am.

Meals: breakfast.

## GENERAL CAMPING INFORMATION

We provide excellent quality tents and swags, Ex-ped mattresses and sleeping bags. Guests will be comfortable for camping in the mountains. Upon booking please advise preference for either a Tent or Swag (note: tents may need to be shared between 2 guests).

The camp will be set up with a bush kitchen, campfire, camp stools, 6x6 meter tarpaulin in case of bad weather, a 'thunderbox' latrine, and wash basin (water can be heated if requested).

## GEAR LIST—WHAT TO BRING

Please bring your gear in a soft duffel bag rather than hard suitcase to help guides pack the trailer. Bag weight limit 12kg per person (best to be a non-rigid duffel bag).

### DAY PACK

recommend approx. 20 litres, with a load bearing harness. As a walker, you will need to have your own day pack and water bladder/bottle and suitable hiking shoes/boots. Here is a suggested list of what walkers will need to be wearing or have in their day pack:

- rain jacket and waterproof over pants
- a fleece jacket
- wide-brimmed hat for sunny days
- beanie or woollen hat/gloves
- water bottle or drinking bladder, min 2 litre
- high factor sunscreen
- blister pads and/or tape
- antiseptic hand gel, lip balm
- sun glasses
- walking poles and gaiters (optional)
- camera, binoculars
- spare batteries for all devices/charger

### MAIN BAG

You only carry your light day pack while walking, the pack horses carry other required items.

- 2 pairs long and/or short pants. Preferably loose fitting, lightweight and quick drying
- 2 x Long sleeved shirts
- 4 x T-shirts
- Fleece jacket/woollen sweater – something warm
- rain jacket/ spray jacket
- small quick drying travel towel
- walking socks/underwear
- if rain is expected, then having a set of thermal under garments can keep you warm
- a woollen or fleece hat for cooler weather
- warm gloves
- waterproof, reusable bag for worn clothing
- comfortable shoes and clothing for evenings and activities
- head torch and spare batteries
- toiletries— shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, sanitary products, toothpaste etc.
- Water purification tablets for use in creek water



## LIST OF WHAT WE PROVIDE:

- Park Trek and Bogong Horseback guides, who will cook and care for you.
- Transport which includes collecting from Melbourne or Albury and returning back. We use a comfortable 12-seater mini coach with a trailer attached for luggage.
- 4 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 4 dinners. Plus trail mix, nibbles, fresh fruit
- 2 night's accommodation on a twin share basis at Spring Spur, 2 night's comfortable camping accommodation (tent (twin share) or roll out swag— please advise on booking)

## ABOUT THE WEATHER

The weather in the mountains in the summer is generally fine and mild. However, summer heat waves and blizzards do happen occasionally, so be prepared. A tight knit jumper or good quality polar fleece, thermal underwear or skivvies provide that extra insulation when needed.