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Diamantina Australian Remote Area Programs Information for participants joining **Canning Stock Route 2009**

Preliminary Information for All Participants.

Our remote area programs will have some participants traveling in our desert equipped Landcruisers and Patrols while others will be traveling in their own vehicles.

These programs provide expedition 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 vehicle preparation and ensuring that we have adequate fuel, water, food and protection 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 once every three 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. As you know the program involves a high proportion of travel in desert that is typically dry. Although there are several known points where we can fill up with water these can be unreliable and quality cannot be guaranteed. Outback travel presents challenges beyond the norm. Sometimes we have to divert our itinerary due to flooding, track closures, Aboriginal business, mechanical or safety issues—or to witness incredible events like wild-flower shows or wildlife events. You need to have a flexible attitude. The outback is a big place and you can expect some very rough travel on tracks that have no maintenance. This program is NOT suitable for people with lower back problems or people unable to withstand long periods sitting in a vehicle.

The expedition staff:

Your Expedition staff collectively has over 40 years of experience traveling through remote parts of Australia and has 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. During travel time we maintain commentary both in the Diamantina vehicles and by radio for self drive participants.



On a daily basis you will find yourself coping with a limited amount of washing water and wisely using a cloth washer – you will find that a five litre ice cream container makes an ideal wash dish. ‘Wet-ones’ have proved to be a good substitute for a quick wipe down before meals. We recommend that you bring clothing which can be washed when we do have a plentiful supply of water – we carry the buckets, you bring the soap and the line. There will occasionally be time for you to wash and dry clothes, however pack sensibly to minimise the need to. We stop at wells every two or three days and rig a bush shower up. Showers can also be purchased, usually for around \$3.00 at towns like Halls Creek, Kunawaritji, Wiluna and Warburton.

Being part of the group

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.

For Participants in our vehicles

The space and weight for luggage for each participant will need to be limited to a **small** carry-on day bag (to go under your seat) and a rugged soft travel bag (for your clothes, etc) to be packed on the roof of the vehicles with an absolute **maximum of 15 kg** for each person. Please note that solid type suitcases are not suitable when we are packing luggage. We suggest soft type bags will serve you better on an expedition.

Your co-operation with the luggage limit will be of great value to all of us. There will be limited space under your seat for your day bag (eg **small** day pack)

What to Pack

Below is a recommended list of items to pack, it is not prescriptive. When thinking about clothing, remember there are significant climate variations.—you will experience all kinds of weather.

Two sets long pants/2 short
Light shirts with collars,
a warm roll neck or woollen for evenings
is good,
a t-shirt or two.
Jumper or Polar-fleece
Wide brimmed hat and beanie
Boots or walking shoes, and
sandals or thongs or the like
Socks –
Undies – whatever you think is a fair thing.
Waterproof jacket/windcheater
Pyjamas (optional). Thermal
underwear is a good alternative
Swimming costume (optional
but good when having a bush
shower)
Sandals or thongs
Toilet bag (soap, comb, brush,
toothbrush, toothpaste,
deodorant, shampoo)
Washing soap, 10 m line and pegs
Spare glasses
Medicines (tablets, potions, lotions, cap-
sules, drops, lozenges, etc)

Towel—micro fiber are good
Sun screen cream
Insect repellent
Washer
Small bowl for washing (eg 5 liter plastic ice
cream container or equivalent)
Wet ones/baby wipes
Water bottle for drinking
Camera ,spare film and batteries
Torch and spare batteries – we recommend
the led miners lamps
Spare plastic bags
Needle and thread
Small backpack to carry your day to day
items
Pen, diary
Money and credit cards
Tickets
Fly net
Pair of gardening gloves –
handy for collecting wood etc.



trip notes

the canning stock route (cont.)

Baggage

Don't you often find that when you go away you pack more gear than you really need? As this tour is an expedition, space and weight are at a premium. We emphasise that your crew will be eternally grateful if all your clothing can fit in a soft bag not weighing more than 15kgs. We request a soft bag because they are easier for us to pack. Don't bring your very best Gucci bags, just something rugged and preferably fairly airtight that you don't mind getting dusty. Ideally you should have 2 bags. One for your clothing, which is stowed and inaccessible during the day, and a **SMALL** day bag that you carry in the vehicle holding items that you may require while you are traveling i.e.: Camera, Binoculars, Torch, Water bottle, Note pad/pencil. I emphasise small as it will have to fit at your feet, on your lap or in between seats in the vehicle. There are also a few of days where we stop for a shower while traveling and you will want to bring your towel and toiletries with you on these days in the vehicle. Just make sure it is not a huge bag, as it will be traveling on your lap, or under your seat. Make sure you bring spare batteries for any electronic appliance.

A great Souvenir!!

Since fossils and Aboriginal artifacts are off limits by law, and the usual assortment of tea towels and spoons are as tacky as always, you may like to bring along a packet of zip lock glad sandwich bags. Fill them with different coloured sands en route, and when you get home, layer them into a spaghetti jar. We will be visiting Aboriginal Art Centres along the way; items purchased can be shipped home, which is safer than having them bounce around in the vehicles. Major Credit cards are usually accepted.

Communication with the Outside World

Whilst some come to get away from friends and family, others like to stay in touch. To this end, we pass public phones on Days 1, 2, 3, 7, and 15. If there is an emergency at home while you are away and you need to be contacted we have a satellite phone for emergencies only. The number is 0410657681. Messages to this phone are retrieved daily.

Toilet and personal hygiene

By nature deserts are dry places, and as we are traveling to the more remote desert areas, water is at a premium. Showers will be available to purchase at Halls Creek, Willuna and Warburton. We will also rig up a bush shower near some of the wells on the Canning. Toilet is usually a shovel and a toilet roll (which we provide- with a box of matches). A tub of water and antiseptic soap is for hand washing. A good way to wash when we are in remote areas is to bring a flannel and a small dish (something the size of a margarine Container) and some "soap on tap". You may also want to bring along some antiseptic cream – dry hand wash. 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!!!!

Meals

Provisioning for a remote area desert expedition requires careful menu planning. Once we are on the road there are limited 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.

DIAMANTINA TOURING



the canning stock route (cont.)

Drinks

Our drinking water in camp is rainwater or potable bore water. We also provide cordial with lunch, tea and coffee in camp and a glass of table wine with dinner. If you wish to bring something else to drink please feel free. We have an icebox to store beer and soft drinks and room to store spirits. You can stock up on soft drinks at Tilmouth Well, Halls Creek, Willuna and Warburton. Alcoholic beverages should be brought with you. You can restock at Willuna, otherwise 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 desert climate, combined with balmy evenings under the stars is certainly conducive to a moderate tittle 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. Clinking bottles in the back of the vehicles will send your drivers and fellow guests nuts.

Alcohol and Aboriginal Lands

As we are traveling on Aboriginal lands during our trip, there may be a couple of camps where we will be required by law to keep the grog cupboard locked. There are heavy fines for consumption of alcohol on Aboriginal lands, so this condition must be stringently adhered to.

Photos and Aboriginal Lands

There is some sensitivity towards photography of both people and land features on Aboriginal Lands. When we arrive in Communities, please ensure your cameras are not visible. Before photographing any person, please ask for their permission. Usually they will give it quite happily, but sometimes not. Imagine people climbing over your back fence armed with cameras trying to photograph you in your backyard – same deal. Some of the areas we are traveling through are traditional lands with spiritual significance to the Traditional Owners. Permission may be needed to be obtained to photograph natural features.

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 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.



trip notes

the canning stock route (cont.)

Information for Self-drive, Tag-along Drivers and their Passengers

Self drive participants travel in our convoy/. On a regular day of travel the Expedition Leader travels in the lead vehicle with the main convoy behind spaced apart at safe distances. The order of travel is at the discretion of the tour leader, and will change during the trip. The rear vehicle is always a tour company vehicle for safety. In addition to the inclusions mentioned elsewhere for all participants, self-drive, tag-along participants are assured of satellite phone support for emergency situations, mechanical assistance and back up, knowledge of the area and practical advice for the unskilled four wheel driver. We do NOT provide vehicle recovery if we cannot get the vehicle moving. Recovery is YOUR responsibility in the event that we cannot repair the vehicle. It is a requirement that all self drive participants follow directions of the tour leader as to safe traveling speeds and general convoy etiquette. As a team member you will need to operate your vehicle as a member of the convoy as a whole. On arrival in camp you will be directed where to park your vehicle.

Vehicle Preparation

Do not overload your vehicle. Be prudent when packing. Store everything in sturdy containers. Keep liquids in plastic, and pack everything tightly in your vehicle so nothing moves around. Anything that can spill will as the terrain is very rough. An overloaded vehicle will just put more pressure on your running gear and make it harder for you. We provide camp stools, tables, lighting in camp and all catering equipment. Feel free to bring a comfy fold out chair.

Vehicle Service

Ensure that your vehicle has had a complete service prior to traveling and is in top shape.

Tyres

Our program route covers the most demanding types of terrain including sand, stones, gibber, mud and bitumen. Therefore tyres should be in top condition, 3/4 tread or more. Tubeless tyres are preferable however split rims are OK. In sand you will need to deflate your tyres to 16-20psi. You will need to bring a tyre gauge and a 12 volt pump.

Roof Rack

It is recommended that roof racks should be steel and of an approved type. Do not overload your roof rack. Keep your centre of gravity as low as possible. Heavy tool boxes are better stored low in your vehicle.

Bull Bars: Bull bars are recommended. You should also ensure you have a front and rear anchor point in case we need to recover your vehicle with our winches or straps.

Fuel Range

This varies greatly depending on the terrain, distances between outlets. On the Canning you will need to carry 200 liters plus of fuel for a standard 4X4 vehicle, like a Nissan Patrol or Toyota Landcruiser. Fuel can be purchased en route, however there is no fuel between Billiluna and Kuniwaritji, a distance of over 800 kms, much of which is hard sand driving, and the same between Kuniwaritji and Willuna, which is a distance of over 1000km. Carry your extra fuel in sealed, approved fuel containers that are anchored to your vehicle, preferably low to your centre of gravity.



trip notes

the canning stock route (cont.)

Communications

The lead vehicle will carry a satellite phone along with a UHF CB radio. It is essential for all vehicles to be fitted with a UHF CB radio to keep in contact with the Expedition Leader's vehicle. Any good brand of UHF CB will be appropriate; however a hand held unit is not suitable as they are difficult to hear whilst traveling. Ensure you have a sturdy antenna, one that will tolerate long periods of intense vibration due to corrugates. You may wish to bring a spare antenna.

240 Volt Generators

We do not permit the use of 12 volt generators therefore allowing all to enjoy the peace and quiet of the outback and wilderness. We use battery lighting for the main camp area. We suggest you carry 12 volt fluorescent tube lighting and/or a good torch. By all means play plenty of music in your vehicle during the day, however please do not have music playing in camp at night. Many people come to the outback for solitude and quiet, and musical tastes can be highly subjective.

Vehicles

Due to the high flammability of spinifex we recommend the use of diesel vehicles. If you do have a petrol vehicle, it is ESSENTIAL that you protect your vehicle from the buildup of spinifex seed and constantly monitor and clear that seed. The stock route is littered with burnt out petrol engine vehicles. All vehicles should bring along a wire hook, a fire extinguisher and a water spray pump—like the one used to spray your garden. We regularly have trouble with Land Rovers, Range Rovers and Discoverys. They don't seem to like the extended travel on huge corrugates and the suspension seems to go down to highway mode and stay there. If you have one of these ensure your electronics and suspension system has been thoroughly checked prior to departure. Also there is no availability of rims for these vehicles in the outback. We recommend you bring an extra rim.

Recommended Spares

Since this program covers difficult and remote areas, please think carefully before omitting any of the items listed below:

radiator hoses
fan belts
heater hose
1 liter gear oil
5 liters engine oil
oil filter
brake fluid
fuel filter
points
insulation tape
distributor cap
rotor button
jumper leads
spark plugs
condenser
coil

spare globes and fuses
wire
5-minute araldite
fuel tank sealer
radiator sealer
puncture repair kit
can CRC or similar
universal joint
tyre pump
pressure gauge
spare wheel complete
spare tubes or wheel complete
spare ignition key
fire extinguisher
shade mesh to tie up under your vehicle and over radiator to protect from spinifex seed



trip notes

the canning stock route (cont.)

What to take (Per vehicle basic list)

tent or swag
bucket
12 volt fluorescent light or torch
first aid kit and other items as listed for all participants
containers for water for personal use and an emergency supply
also 2 X 20 liter plastic water containers for use in the communal kitchen
spare well sealed fuel containers
snatch strap (good quality heavy duty)
D shackles
jack and board to place jack on (in sand), shovel (long handled is better).
basic tool kit including appropriate tools for tyre changing.
tubeless plug tyre repair kit is handy for tubeless tyres.

Tag-along vehicles will be required to carry up to three boxes of food materials in their vehicle for group use. Please reserve this space during vehicle preparation. Your tour staff will allocate and distribute these items at either Alice Springs or Halls Creek.

Water availability and conservation

This program involves a high proportion of travel in desert which is typically dry. Although there are known points where we can fill up with water these can be unreliable and quality cannot be guaranteed. Safe travel requires that water from different sources is not mixed, that water is used sparingly and that, except in cases of emergency, reserves are always kept. See the note above re carrying water for common use in addition to personal needs.

Vehicle inspections

Each vehicle will be required to be inspected at least three weeks prior to departure to check mechanical condition and suitability for the terrain which will include a lot of dune crossings, gravel roads, creek crossings and possibly muddy conditions. Inspection can be performed with an approved vehicle. Please bring with you written proof of vehicle condition. This is a necessary requirement due to the remote and isolated areas we cover. If your vehicle is from 4X4 hire this is not necessary, however, if you do hire a vehicle, carefully inspect spare wheels, jacks, hoses, and have a good look over your vehicle prior to travel. Check for oil leaks. Do not trust the hirer to be providing you with a first rate vehicle!

Shade Mesh to protect against spinifex

Bring along a sheet of shade mesh and some zip ties. When we get into spinifex country it is advisable to cover your radiator and air intakes with mesh to protect them from becoming clogged with seed.

REMEMBER THE SECRET OF A SUCCESSFUL AND ENJOYABLE EXPEDITION IS GOOD VEHICLE PREPARATION.