

Murray River: Stage 3 Mildura to Victor Harbor

Experience The Riverland

Thursday 08 March, 2018 to Saturday 17 March, 2018

Day to Day

A typical day on the ride:

Full breakfast 7am, Depart 8am

Ride 25-30km to morning tea around 9-10am, half hour stop, usually on the side of the road. Coffee or tea with home-made biscuits, slice, and fresh fruits, served up, of course, with some entertaining banter and fun.

Ride 35-45km to lunch around 12-1pm. Half hour to an hour, often in a bakery or cafe.

Ride 20-40km to our overnight accommodation, usually arriving around 2-3pm. Check-in, make a cup of tea or have a drink by the pool, or a soak in the bath. Explore the town or visit the local attractions.

Evening briefing at 6pm with lots of laughs and stories about today's ride and safety tips for tomorrow, followed by dinner - usually at the hotel restaurant.

Off to bed!

Location	Distance	Date	B	L	D	A
Mildura REST DAY	NA	Thu 8 Mar 2018	--	--	Y	Y
Mildura to Meringur (Renmark)	91km	Fri 9 Mar 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y
Meringur to Renmark	82km	Sat 10 Mar 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y
Renmark to Berri	99km	Sun 11 Mar 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y
Berri to Waikerie	71km	Mon 12 Mar 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y
Waikerie to Blanchetown (Waikerie)	79km	Tue 13 Mar 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y
Blanchetown to Mannum	92km	Wed 14 Mar 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mannum to Strathalbyn	117km	Thu 15 Mar 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y
Strathalbyn to Victor Harbor (via Murray Mouth)	80km	Fri 16 Mar 2018	Y	Y	Y	Y
Victor Harbor	NA	Sat 17 Mar 2018	Y	--	--	--
Total distance cycled	711km		9	8	9	9
Average daily distance	89km					

Meal and accom inclusions noted as B, L, D, A (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Accommodation)

Mildura REST DAY — NA — Thu 8 Mar 2018 — - - D A

Today's rest day in Mildura is based out of our tour hotel, the Mildura Grand Hotel, an historic landmark building with character and charm, yet with all of the modern amenities and comforts that you would expect. The hotel was originally the Mildura Coffee Palace, dating back to the earliest days of the irrigation settlement. Mildura was a planned temperance colony, part of the Chaffey brothers' vision for Mildura as a place without an ingrained drinking culture to distract working men from their duties. In 1889 tenders were called for the building of the Coffee Palace. On the ground floor, plans revealed a billiard room, dining room, offices, smoking room, kitchen, storeroom, servants' quarters and large underground cellars. On the first floor 21 bedrooms were to be constructed. Skeptics described the Coffee Palace as a 'gross over-development', however the Coffee Palace prospered and extensive additions were planned only two months after its doors opened to the public. Two sisters, Mrs Annie Yule and Miss May Williams, ran the premises from 1904 until 1915. In 1915, as the temperance movement was failing, Miss Williams applied to the Licensing Court for a Wine Licence but the application attracted great opposition from prohibitionists. Eventually a Wine License was granted and was followed by a full licence in 1919. From 1924 to 1963 the hotel continued being rebuilt and modernised and by the end of 1966 most of the rooms had private facilities, making the Mildura Grand Hotel one of the most modern in the state. A wonderful base for your rest day in Mildura, which is a stand-out among so many other great towns along the river. Set on the banks of the magnificent Murray River, Australia's most important waterway, Mildura provides an irresistible array of water-based, nature-based, local produce and cultural holiday experiences. Enjoy. If you are arriving today to join us for stage 3, fly in any time to the airport which is 15 mins from our hotel. Most flights come from Melbourne with connections to other cities but there is one flight direct from both Sydney and Adelaide with Rex Airlines. Head to the hotel where we will meet you and welcome you to the group for this stage of magnificent and varied cycling through to Victor Harbor.

Mildura to Meringur (Renmark)— 91km — Fri 9 Mar 2018 — B L D A

STAGE THREE - EXPERIENCE THE RIVERLAND: Today we head west out into the wide open spaces of north-west Victoria and head for the border. It's a good 90km distance, plenty to get the legs working again after your day off in Mildura, or to get your legs cranked up for the first time if you have just joined us for Stage 3. We are very remote out here and there is no accommodation for our group for over 150km from Mildura so we will be stopping at Meringur and arranging a bus transfer ahead to Renmark for the night. As you sit back at The Renmark Golf Resort, our accommodation, you can see why we are now into the heart of the South Australian Riverland region - a great golf course, a nice big pool area and a steakhouse overlooking the course. Even better is that we will spend two nights here.e.

Meringur to Renmark — 82km — Sat 10 Mar 2018 — B L D A

This morning we head back on the bus to Meringur for our last ride in the state of Victoria. Have you ridden with us all the way from Thredbo? If so, congratulations, as today will probably hit the 1000km mark! You will have a great opportunity to get into your cycling rhythm, pumping out the kilometres, heading directly west towards the South Australian border. It's a long straight road, perfect for clearing the mind and contemplating life, as many do on these long-distance rides. After crossing the border into SA the road begins to wind up northward to meet the Murray River again and as it does you will notice the greens of the landscape slowly begin to take over the browns as you draw in to the outskirts of Renmark and then into the township itself. By the time you reach the Renmark

Golf Resort you will have another afternoon to enjoy all of the facilities of the resort.

Renmark to Berri — 99km — Sun 11 Mar 2018 — B L D A

Today doesn't take us far 'as the crow flies', but it's a 96km ride as we cut across to Barmera, one of the most popular aquatic playgrounds in SA situated on the shores of Lake Bonney - a lake renowned for its sunsets - then track the Murray down south then back up again almost completing a full circle back to Berri. There are plenty of towns and settlements for us to stop at today, with the river providing plenty of life and sustenance for these places to survive. It's a much contrasted ride to the last couple of days as you pass through places like Loxton, the 'Garden Town of the Riverland' with beautifully maintained gardens and a leader in the use of low-water sustainable landscapes. Our overnight stop is at Berri, host to some of the largest wine production facilities in Australia and one of Australia's oldest wineries. Our accommodation is again in a great location, with great facilities such as the outdoor swimming pool, gym, tennis court, laundry, and a restaurant & bar.r.

Berri to Waikerie — 71km — Mon 12 Mar 2018 — B L D A

Today we stray away from the river then draw back close again on a few occasions. Often you won't be able to see the river but you'll probably sense it by the amount of vegetation and its colour. As soon as you are away from the water source out here in the remote inland areas of the country, everything turns dry and brown pretty quickly. Much of our day is spent on the quieter small roads of the region however some of it will be on the Goyder Highway, named after George Goyder, a government surveyor in the mid-late 1800's who first identified and mapped 'Goyder's Line' which indicates the northern limit of climatic suitability for intensive agriculture in South Australia which over time has proven to be impressively accurate. It's an interesting story - look it up when you can. Overnight tonight is at the Waikerie Hotel, which after undergoing a rebuild after a fire in 2011, is proud to have some of the best hotel accommodation in the Riverland region. More good news is that we are staying here again tomorrow night so no need to pack your bags in the morning!

Waikerie to Blanchetown (Waikerie) — 79km — Tue 13 Mar 2018 — B L D A

We are on the bike again today but don't worry about packing your bags as the winding river will bring us back close enough to stay in Waikerie again tonight. It's a lovely ride this morning north-west through farming fields and small settlements on the way to Morgan where we will take a punt ferry across the river into the town centre for lunch. Morgan was the home port of hundreds of paddle steamers during the 1800's which carried cargo and passengers up the Murray-Darling River system. Morgan, therefore, is one of the truly historic Australian towns which is a must see by those who are interested in this great Australian history. It is also at Morgan where the river turns south and heads for the ocean nearly 300kms away. The second half of the ride brings a much more remote feel which is truly stunning. You never feel lonely however as not too far away, over to your right, is the Murray which ebbs and flows away from the road and back again many times over the course of the journey keeping the cycling interesting. It's not until Blanchetown that you hit civilisation again, where, due to its small size and limited accommodation, we will transfer cyclists the short distance back to Waikerie for the night

Blanchetown to Mannum — 92km — Wed 14 Mar 2018 — B L D A

This morning we head back to Blanchetown in our vehicles and begin our ride along this stretch of the Murray which is claimed to be one of the most pristine in all of its length and the towns along its banks make the most of it. Swan Reach is a favourite stop for travellers to enjoy some good old-fashioned Murraylands hospitality when driving between the Barossa and the Riverland. A visit to the hotel is a must, with sweeping views of the mighty Murray River from its prominent location perched on top of golden cliffs. Down the road at Nildottie make sure you stop at the rest area for a great elevated view of this spectacular part of the river and again at the turn-off to Kroehns Landing and at Len Kroehn Lookout. We stray from the river for a brief period then take the turn off to Forster where we will cross the river by punt. As you swing back towards the water you are treated with truly inspiring riverscapes. If you have time, stop off at Forster Lookout which is not very well sign-posted but worth the effort to find. Over the punt and it's one more stretch across the fields before we hit the river again and trace its path through small settlements and gatherings of homes hugging the water's edge, until the larger town of Mannum, our overnight stay, which enjoys some of the best cruising waters on the entire Murray system explaining the many houseboat operations that are based in the town.

Mannum to Strathalbyn — 117km — Thu 15 Mar 2018 — B L D A

We are getting near our destination and although we are now on a parallel with Adelaide, approximately 100km to the west, it still feels like we are much further away as we take the quiet back-roads south following the flow of the river through to Murray Bridge (deriving its name unsurprisingly from the road and railway crossings over the Murray River), where we indeed cross the bridge at Murray Bridge then head south cycling through the scattered dwellings of Jervois and Wellington - a long thin village of houses and a small town centre which sits along a considerable length of the riverfront. It's here that we say goodbye to the river as we know it - just a couple of kilometres downstream the river enters the huge Lake Alexandrina. We skirt across the top of the lake and head west to Strathalbyn, one of the prettiest towns in SA. It has maintained its charm and village-like setting whilst still managing to become a thriving country town with a great location on the banks of the River Angas, situated on the cusp of the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu regions. We are nearly there! Tonight you will be ready for a good night's sleep after the longest day on the tour, ready for tomorrow's final ride to the ocean.

Strathalbyn to Victor Harbor (via Murray Mouth) — 80km — Fri 16 Mar 2018 — B L D A

What an exciting day today! We are truly into the green rolling hills and pastures of the peninsula today after so many days being out where the river was the only water source. Here the rainfall and climate is much more conducive to growing crops and creating sustainable settlements. It's a beautiful ride down to Goolwa and as we pull in you will see that the Murray has exited the big lake and created it's last snaking course into the sea - the end of the Murray River's long journey. Passing through Goolwa we will head out to Hindmarsh Island to view the point where the river finally meets the sea. The mouth of the Murray today is now a small gap between the sand hills, a direct result of the numerous locks and weirs which control the water flow along its length. In its heyday Goolwa was a thriving port which catered not only for riverboats but also for boats entering the river system from the ocean in the days when the mouth of the Murray was wide enough and deep enough to allow such passage. Seawater is prevented from entering Lake Alexandrina, Lake Albert and the Murray River by a series of 5 barrages. Congratulations, you did it! But it's not over yet...we have a final 30km ride along the Encounter Bikeway though the pretty ocean townships of Middleton, Port Elliot and Hayborough on the way to Victor Harbor, which is probably South Australia's favourite seaside holiday destination. Our accommodation is right down in the heart of the township, opposite the beachfront, Granite Island, Warland Reserve, the famous Causeway Horsesdrawn Tram and the Visitor Information Centre. A wonderful place for our final overnight and a great place for our group farewell dinner. What a ride and what an experience!

After breakfast this morning the tour officially finishes. Stick around Victor Harbor for a while or check out the many other great places in and around Adelaide. For those flying home today there are direct flights to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth with connections to other locations. We will arrange a shuttle transfer this morning to Adelaide Airport which is approximately 1 hr 15 mins drive from our hotel (book this as an optional extra on the booking form). We are planning a 9:30am departure from the hotel so we suggest booking flights home after 1pm.

