

2012 - SOUTHERN COAST TOUR – DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1 The coach departs Adelaide Airport at about 12 noon. Travelling north out of the city the route follows the Stuart Highway (National Highway 1) north towards Port Augusta. Turning west at Port Wakefield we enter the top end of the Yorke Peninsula; thence follow the Peninsula coast south with spectacular views of the Gulf of St Vincent to the left of our route. After stopping at the Ardrossan Bakery for lunch we pass through the small towns of Pine Point, Port Vincent and Stansbury. By the end of the day we will reach Edithburgh at the bottom south-east corner of Yorke Peninsula – and here we spend the next two nights. Dinner in the ‘Location Café’ – a nice place by the Gulf for a meal.

DAY 2. Today we chase the coastal scenery down gravel roads; using the highways of the lower Yorke Peninsula as necessary to cross to the western side; from the waters of the Gulf of St Vincent to the Spencer Gulf less than 100km away to the west of Edithburgh. On leaving Edithburgh we travel south and west to the southern edge of the Peninsula for first views of Kangaroo Island – many kilometers away to the south across Investigator Strait. We wind around the coast road for a time before turning north to Yorketown where we will find somewhere to have morning tea. Yorketown is typical of the small towns of the Yorke Peninsula – stone cottages many in beautiful condition, granite hotel and other buildings in the town centre, and small stone churches too many to count. From Yorketown we travel generally south-west for Innis National Park with its wonderful and wild coastal scenery. Lunch maybe in the Park depending on the weather. We return this evening back to our motel at Edithburgh.

DAY 3 This third morning we travel through the prime agricultural lands that take up most of inland Yorke Peninsula – in spring this is a land where the canola, wheat and other crops provide an enormous patchwork of colours before harvest time. Through Warooka, Minlaton and Maitland we will stop for morning tea at ‘Henry on George’- an old café in the historic copper mining town of Moonta. Beyond Moonta we travel through Kadina and Port Pirie on our way to Port Augusta where we will stop for lunch in the Arid Lands Botanic Gardens. After lunch we will be travelling west on the Eyre Highway for 250km to our third evening stop – this time in a typical Eyre Highway motel at Wudinna (pronounced *Woodna*). Initially this afternoon route is through the spectacular red and blue colours of saltbush country – around the northern boundaries of the Iron Knob mine with its mineral colours highlighted by the afternoon sun. Then gradually the country changes to open and undulating agricultural lands – here you will see some of the biggest areas cleared for wheat fields anywhere in Australia. As we near Wudinna you will see the purple colours of the Gawler Ranges far away to the north.

DAY 4 From Wudinna this morning we follow the Eyre Highway to Ceduna, the western most point on this tour. After a short town tour and morning tea in a foreshore café we set out on the Flinders Highway following the west coast of Eyre Peninsula. After brief stops at Smoky Bay (famous for its oysters) and one or two other tiny settlements we will arrive in Streaky Bay in time for lunch. This afternoon we will travel the loop road to the ‘whistling rocks’ of Point Bauer (the ‘locals’ call this place Point *Boor.*). The loop road takes us to the wild coastal cliffs of the Southern Ocean and gradually around the Point into the calm waters of Streaky Bay. We will return to Streaky Bay in plenty of time for you to wander the path from this village which circles around the southern end of this wonderful bay. A great place for sunset photos across still waters. We spend two nights in Streaky Bay.

DAY 5

We are going to spend the full day today travelling scenic coastal roads and tracks to the south-east of Streaky Bay. To rocky escarpments and calm bays that make up 30km or more of this coastline. We will travel out to Point Labatt and from the edge of the lookout high over the rocky platforms of the shoreline below we will have a chance to see the largest colony of sea lions on the Australian mainland. Today, and for the first time on this tour, we will have experienced the best wild beauty of the Southern Ocean as it rolls onto the limestone cliffs of this part of our continent.

DAY 6 We travel today 300km down the western side of Eyre Peninsula from Streaky Bay through Elliston to Port Lincoln. Whilst the Southern Ocean is beyond the hills (including sandhills) to the right of the coach for much of the route, we will be stopping at some spectacular places – often no more than a few hundred meters off the Flinders Highway – as we travel. At Venus Bay we will make a long stop for morning tea and lunch – and you will understand why this small settlement has that name. At Cummings Monument we will look down the cliff face to ponder how it was only one fisherman, Leo Cummings, who lost his life at this place when the trawler on which he was working with two others was washed onto the reef far below. At Elliston we once more take a scenic coastal loop road at the edge of this small town. Beyond Elliston the soils gradually become more fertile – tall gum trees and hills that seem like mountains in the distance provide a gentle and attractive change to the scene. This gradual change to the landscape signals our approach to the region of Coffin Bay and soon after Port Lincoln. We will pass the turn-off to Coffin Bay this afternoon – that part of our tour is on the agenda for tomorrow. This evening, and for the next two nights we stay in a motel on the edge of Boston Bay at Port Lincoln.

DAY 7 Accompanied by a well qualified guide this morning we will take in the sites of Port Lincoln and the surrounding bays, marinas and hills. Then it is out to Coffin Bay National Park.. After lunch in one of those ‘Sea Change’ cafes on the shore of Coffin Bay we will travel into the Park for an afternoon of beautiful coastal scenery. Perhaps the highlight this afternoon is our visit to what many of those, who should know, do assert is the most beautiful surfing beach in Australia. You will find it hard to argue with that assessment once you have seen this pristine beach with its turquoise ‘shore break’. Coffin Bay Parks is certainly one of the best Coastal National Parks in Australia.

DAY 8 We are leaving the Peninsulas of South Australia today to travel for a brief time through that State’s renowned wine regions, the Clare and Barossa Valleys and the McLaren Vale. Not that this is a ‘wine tour’, rather this route on our coastal journey enables us to avoid the city of Adelaide entirely, and provides in the thousands of acres of vines a pleasant contrast to the Southern Ocean which is otherwise the magnet that attracts us back to the coast all the time. From Port Lincoln we travel up the eastern side of Eyre Peninsula with Spencer Gulf on our right. After a morning tea stop at the Cowell Bakery we travel through Whyalla and stop for lunch again at somewhere in Port Augusta. In the afternoon we travel a short distance down the western escarpment of the Flinders Ranges – crossing those Ranges through Horrocks Pass. By mid-afternoon we will be passing through the town of Clare on our way to Mintaro where we will spend the evening in The Mews.

DAY 9 This is one of the few days on this tour when we will not see the oceans or the waters of any ocean or gulf all morning. Leaving Mintaro at a comfortable time after breakfast we will travel generally south-east into the Barossa Valley. Passing through the towns of Kapunda and Nuriootpa in the Barossa we will reach the Hahndorf - Mt Barker region and our lunch stop. From there we travel south-west down the Adelaide Hills to intersect the McLaren Vale region to the south of Adelaide city. Our aim is to strike the coast again – the bottom of the Gulf of St Vincent, at Aldinga Beach. This surprising and spectacular coastline reaches up into the southern coastal suburbs of Adelaide. Now and for the rest of this afternoon we are on the Fleurieu Peninsula travelling down and across the Peninsula through Sellicks Beach, Myponga, Yankallilla and Delamere. Then across the bottom of the Peninsula through undulating grazing country that rolls down to the edge of the ocean in many places. By late in the afternoon we reach Victor Harbor for a night in the Anchorage Hotel by the water on Encounter Bay.

DAY 10 Today we will be travelling the length of the Coorong and beyond to the fishing village of Beachport. After breakfast we will drop in to Port Elliot and Goolwa – taking time to view the Goolwa Barrage on the Murray River mouth, and to also see ‘that’ infamous bridge to Hindmarsh Island. (If time permits we will make a short detour to view the quay development that today perhaps explains the commercial pressures that made the bridge a reality). Beyond Goolwa and Strathalbyn we take the punt across the Murray River at Wellington – the place where this most famous of Australia’s rivers flows into Lake Alexandrina. We then follow the shore of the Lake to Meningie - where the receding shoreline so recently provided a practical example of the consequences of abusing the Murray/Darling water resource. For the next two hours and more our journey follows the course of the Coorong National Park. For mile after mile the low coastal scrublands separate the highway from the Lakes, and beyond the lakes the white sandhills always stand as the barrier to the Southern Ocean. The scenery is spectacular at all times of every day and in all weather conditions. Beyond the Coorong and past Robe it is a short distance down to Beachport where today’s journey ends. A significant crayfishing port, this village is one of those increasingly rare places which has so far avoided the ravages of land speculators. Dinner this evening in the glass atrium of one of those beautiful old South Australian hotels; the atrium maximises the view of Norfolk Pines and Rivoli Bay beyond.

DAY 11 After spending this morning along the far south-east coast region, perhaps even crossing the border the short distance to Nelson, we will return to Mt Gambier for and extensive tour of that city and its beautiful surrounding country.

DAY 12 We return to Adelaide today along the inland route coming back into the city through Murray Bridge and down again through the Adelaide Hills. We expect to be back in Adelaide by early afternoon.