

Frequently asked questions: Small Group Tours

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Please note all these descriptions are for a general small-group tour situation and if there is something different to the usual, i.e: a more strenuous day to hike and see Gorillas, we will always outline it within the specific tour description and itinerary. Please feel free to [contact us](#) and ask any questions that we may not have covered in this document.

Pace

Inala creates comfortably paced itineraries. We understand that you wish to see lots of glorious birds, but that you also don't wish to be running around a hundred different places at a million miles an hour.

We try to strike a perfect balance between showing you as much as possible, without setting a hectic tempo. In the course of a day we choose several key sites where we can bird at a moderate, enjoyable pace and discover and discuss the many other wonders of nature as we look for the birds. Depending on weather conditions, bird behaviour and time available on the day, there will always be further sites that we can visit.

Activity Level/Terrain

We choose sites that are accessible to the whole group, we often pick loop tracks on stable ground and we try not to walk more than a few km at any one stop. Your guide will always give you a general description of a track's length and terrain before each walk and you can then make a choice about your participation depending on your own abilities. We understand that some members of the group may have physical limitations and we find that the enjoyable pace and the moderate terrain of Inala tours means that there are very few times when the whole group does not choose to participate. If a guest does not wish to come on a particular walk, the guide will ensure you can rest in the vehicle, or find you a nice shady spot to do some quiet birding near the carpark until the group returns.

If a particular unique, rare or very special species requires a bit more physical exertion to see, it will always be described in the itinerary.

Structure of a day on tour

Every tour is of course slightly different and the time at which we start and finish each day is often dictated by the seasons, the weather, and the bird behaviour in the area of the country you are in. Some days with longer distances to cover may go for longer, some activities may require a very early start. On average, we have breakfast between 6.30am - 7.30 am and are packed up and on the road by 8am at the latest. A break for picnic lunch in the field is usually between 12.30-1.30 and we try to conclude the day and arrive at the accommodation around 5pm, to give you some time to yourself before dinner which is usually set to start between 6-7 pm depending on if there is a night tour scheduled for after dinner.

Our accommodations are often chosen to be in locations where there is opportunity for you to do further birding and exploring if you wish in your free time.

Group Size: Birding with others is very enjoyable, there is a camaraderie that quickly builds in a group and we find that our guests make rapid solid friendships as we all share so much in common, starting with our love and respect for the natural world. We ensure that group sizes are not too large and you will find that our groups are capped at 12 guests,

but often we may run with 8-10 guests. A smaller group ensures better bird sightings for everyone, more room in the vehicles, and greater speed and flexibility in all group activities and decisions.

If you have never been on a group tour before it may feel a little intimidating, but do not worry, everyone is there to have a great time, to see the birds, to enjoy nature, to explore, and to discover new places. Inala's specialist bird guides are also all lovely people and they help the whole group feel at home and to enjoy each other's company. We find that a lovely group dynamic forms where people assist each other with spotting birds and we all use each other's skills and strengths to make birding together a great deal of fun.

Photography

Most birders are now also photographers, with everyone ranging along a long spectrum of skill and interest. Some people use binoculars first and foremost, some now look through their camera lens instead of their bins, some are a blend of both. How you bird is entirely up to you and we welcome everyone. Each year we run a few tours that are specifically tailored to photography, all our regular group tours are primarily about seeing the birds, with photography as a bonus. To ensure a fair balance and harmony in the groups, we do not prioritise photographing over seeing a bird or animal and we make sure everyone has a good look at a bird before any photographers change their position or try for a better angle.

Meals and drinks

Breakfast generally consists of a continental style breakfast with cereal, fruit and yoghurt and tea/coffee. Lunch will generally consist of a packed lunch style meal eaten in the field, with a savoury sandwich/filled roll/wrap and a desert option usually a slice/cake/muffin/fruit and a drink. Dinners are two courses and usually consist of several menu options for main with the choice of either an appetiser or dessert.

Drinks (soft and alcoholic) are generally not included but at lunches and breakfasts juice may be made available. Throughout a tour we provide morning tea snacks and ensure that you do not go hungry. We ask in the booking form for all your dietary needs and allergies and do our very best to match your needs. We encourage you to bring your reusable water bottle and will have clean, potable water available throughout the tour for you to refill.

Accommodation

We choose places to stay that are always clean and comfortable and are usually 3 or 4-star ratings. On some tours in the more remote areas we may not always have a great deal of choice when it comes to accommodation, yet we do our utmost to choose the best available close to where we are touring. Often we have used a supplier for many years and know them as friends, and very often they too have a strong interest in nature and conservation.

Rooming

When you book a **double room** - the bedroom may come with a double, queen or king bed, it is variable between suppliers.

When you book a **twin room** - the bedroom may come with 2 x single beds OR more often 1 x single and 1 x double/queen/king, it is rather variable between suppliers.

Most double and twin rooms are ensuite (with a bathroom privately adjoined to your bedroom) however very occasionally at a few locations, there may be a separate bathroom you share with one other bedroom; for example in a large cottage where there is a shared living area, kitchen and bathroom with two private bedrooms).

When you book a **single supplement** you will always have your own private bedroom and we do our best to ensure you will have your own ensuite bathroom, however very occasionally at a few locations, there may be a separate bathroom

you share with one other bedroom.

Note for international guests: a bathroom in Australia only sometimes has an actual bath in it and usually contains a shower, wash sink and toilet.

The itinerary

Whilst we aim to follow the itinerary as planned, please note that the itinerary provided should only be used as a guideline. Depending on individual trip circumstances, weather, and local information, the exact itinerary may not be strictly adhered to. The guides reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary as they see fit.

Experience: I am a very experienced birder / I am a beginner birder / I have never been on a birding group tour before - Are your tours suitable for me?

Yes, yes and yes, our guides are experienced in taking out nature enthusiasts across the entire spectrum of knowledge and experience. If you have never birded before or if you have birded since you were knee high to a grasshopper, our very knowledgeable and friendly specialist guides will enhance your knowledge and match your passions and interests. Our guides are also very knowledgeable about topics far beyond birds alone and will do their utmost to inform and entertain on topics such as history, botany, insects, reptiles or whatever else someone may have as their personal passion.

What do I need to take with me on tour?

As we visit such a wide range of places, after you have booked onto a tour, we will send you a suggested packing list. Each day on tour we recommend a wide brimmed hat, a long-sleeved shirt and footwear with decent grip. In your day pack a spare layer of clothing just in case, a refillable bottle of water, your binoculars and camera gear and of course your best bird spotting karma. Please also carry any individual medical items you may need. i.e. Epi-pen, Asthma inhaler

Tipping

All gratuities/tipping are at your discretion and are earned, not expected. In general, tipping is not compulsory in Australia, however, we recommend tipping if the person/staff member/tour guide/provider has met your expectations or gone above what is expected, a service that stands out in your mind, you can reward with say 10% of a meal/service charge, or \$10-20 per day for a local tour guide, again any tip is greatly appreciated in Australia, totally up to you.

“I love the look of a group tour, but the dates don’t suit me, can I organise it as a private tour?”

100% yes. A great deal of what we do at Inala is creating bespoke private nature-based itineraries for individuals, families and groups of friends. Often we are asked to base a tour off an existing group tour itinerary as a starting point, with individual interests, destinations and bird wish-lists incorporated. So if the dates of the group tour don't suit you or you would prefer the freedom and flexibility of a private tour, please let us know and we can make some suggestions.