



Finke River Yatra

Finke Gorge National Park, Central Australia

Thursday 15th July – Sunday 25th July 2021

Dharma Yatra

'Yatra' is the Sanskrit word for pilgrimage. On this unique journey, in the heart of Australia, engage with the dharma teachings of the Buddhist traditions and investigate our deep interconnectedness while travelling through the ancient Finke Gorge and along one of the oldest riverbeds in the world.

We will come together as a small community of pilgrims walking through this ancient land with its countless expressions of natural beauty. The yatra will be based on the spirit of simplicity and in that we let go of the usual luxuries of life. Apart from the walking periods the yatra will also provide periods of time for sitting meditation, facilitated activities, sharing circles, a daily yoga practice, art, music and celebration.

The yatra will provide a safe and caring environment where we can explore and exchange our individual experiences and wisdom with likeminded people. The timeless landscape of Central Australia will provide an ideal setting for this sacred exploration.

Our Journey

Set in the Finke Gorge National Park of Central Australia, our 10 day journey will take us from the renowned oasis of 'Palm Valley' to the remote 'Running Waters' waterhole following the riverbed of the 'Finke'. Weaving our way through this special landscape, will give a unique experience of Australian wilderness.

There will be a mix of full walking days and stationary days allowing opportunity to sink into our time in the desert. Our walking days will vary between 10 to 25 kilometers and while there is not much steep terrain there are several tough, sandy sections classified as difficult. **PLEASE BE AWARE THAT AS WE ARE IN A REMOTE LOCATION A GOOD LEVEL OF FITNESS IS ESSENTIAL FOR THIS YATRA!**

The yatra is an all-weather event. Rainfall is highly unlikely that time of the year, day temperatures are usually pleasant (20 degrees), the nights are very cold and could drop below zero. All nights we will be accommodated in our personal tents. An accompanying support team will take care of meals and luggage. The support team will require some help with food preparation, washing up, luggage and setting up/packing down our camp.

Facilitators

Jess Huon has been engaging in meditative and embodiment practices since she was seventeen years old in Asia, Australia, Spain, and the USA. She has trained in traditional Buddhist monastic settings, in inter-faith contexts of meditative inquiry, and also within long periods of solitary forest practice. Holding a Bachelor of Creative Arts (VCA), and a post grad in the therapeutic arts practice (RMIT), Jess brings traditional teaching alive in a fresh, accessible, and transformative manner. A natural orator, her talks have been described as “street language for the soul”. Whilst deeply informed but not bound by tradition, her style is grounded in contemporary life. Jess teaches retreats and offers public talks in Australia and overseas. When based in Melbourne she writes and co-directs with rollercoaster theatre company, a company of actors with intellectual disabilities. She teaches regularly at Melbourne Insight. (jesshuon.com).

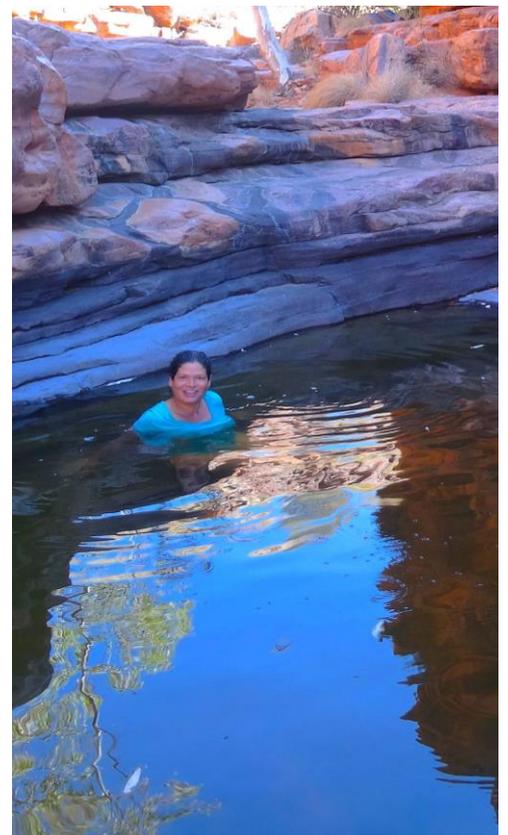
Ronny Hickel has studied, practised and taught in various traditions of yoga, and buddhist dharma for the last 25 years. He is a yoga and tai-chi instructor, a qualified outdoor recreation guide and has trained in Hakomi Psychotherapy. Originally from Austria, Ronny moved to Australia in 2000 after living in India and South East Asia for numerous years. His approach is shaped by his love and passion for the wilderness, nature connection, deep ecology and the rich spiritual traditions of the world including tribal traditions, buddhism, yoga and modern science. He now resides in the Tweed Caldera where he works in personal development and outdoor recreation, facilitating meditation, yoga and tai-chi classes, nature reconnection retreats, MenAware gatherings and yatras.

The yatra will be conducted under the shelter of the Five Ethical Precepts, which create a safe, caring and conscious environment for spiritual practice. On the retreat the precepts invite us to restrain from harmful speech and actions, sexual expression and intoxicants. The majority of our retreat program will be supported by noble silence. The meditation instructions on the retreat are primarily grounded in the Buddhist Insight Meditation traditions, the yoga and movement exercises are suitable for all levels and are designed to nourish our physical condition and assist our mindfulness practice.

What to bring?

- ✓ tent
- ✓ warm sleeping bag (minus 5 degrees comfort)
- ✓ camping mat (thermarest)
- ✓ sun hat, beanie, gloves and rain/wind coat
- ✓ appropriate clothing for hot and very cold weather (be prepared for minus zero degrees)
- ✓ hiking shoes (walked in, not causing blisters!)
- ✓ daypack for walking
- ✓ water bottle
- ✓ cup, bowl, plate, cutlery
- ✓ lunch box
- ✓ yoga mat, meditation cushion, blanket
- ✓ sun screen, insect repellent
- ✓ torch and spare batteries
- ✓ toiletries, towel, swim wear
- ✓ any personal medication or supplements if required.

Pack lightly and tightly – Please keep your luggage confined to two bags maximum.



Getting there

The yatra will start on Thursday 15th July.

We will meet at the 'Alice Springs Tourist Park' in Alice Springs at 1pm.

It is important that you arrive at our meeting point on time. The exact meeting location will be announced closer to date. We will depart at 1:30pm to drive 140km to our first camp at Palm Valley Campground.

For participants who prefer to fly in on the day we will arrange a pick up service from Alice Springs airport at 12:30pm. Please make sure your flight arrives before 12pm on the day.

The Alice Springs Tourist Park is situated opposite the Araluen Cultural Centre and offers budget accommodation and campsites (alicespringstouristpark.com.au)

Flights to Alice Springs are very limited. As we are travelling in peak season we recommend that you book your flight as soon your place on the yatra is confirmed. Please do not make any travel arrangements before your place has been confirmed.

The yatra will end on Sunday 25th July.

We will arrive back at the 'Alice Springs Tourist Park' around 2pm.

We will provide transport directly back to the Alice Springs airport aiming to arrive there around 1:30pm. To Be safe please book your return flight for after 2:30pm on Sunday 25th July.



Retreat cost

Cost: \$1250 base fee & Dana

The BASE FEE covers all meals and catering, hiring of support vehicles and equipment, all camping and national park fees, administration cost and some travel expenses of the team.

This fee does not include any payment for the teachers and organisers.

Dana – Generosity: Following an old Buddhist tradition the teachers and organisers on this yatra do not charge for their services. At the end of the retreat there will be a donation box and dana (monetary gifts) will be gratefully received. Dana supports facilitators and organisers, keeps events affordable, and cultivates a spirit of generosity.

How to book:

Bookings open 8am, Monday 5th April 2021

Please note that there are only limited places available and that this yatra will likely book out very quickly.

1. On 8th April go to yatra.org.au/upcoming-yatras/ and fill out the registration form for this yatra.
2. Secure your booking by making full payment to:
Account Name: Yatra Bushwalking Club Inc
BSB: 722744 (Southern Cross Credit Union)
Account Nr: 100134728
IMPORTANT: Please state 'FY21' and 'YOUR NAME' in the reference box.
3. You will receive a confirmation letter by email to confirm your booking.

If the yatra is fully booked upon registration, you will be notified, and your name will be placed on a waiting list. You will then be contacted if a place becomes available.

Please contact us if you wish to arrange an alternative payment plan.

Our Cancellation Policy:

Cancellations before the 15 June 2021 will receive a full refund minus a \$50 administration fee. No refund can be guaranteed for cancellations after that date. Please inform us early if you need to cancel so that you can receive your payment back and your place can be offered to someone else.



For more information please contact *Ronny* on:

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yatra.org.au