



Finke River Yatra

Finke Gorge National Park, Central Australia

Saturday 9th July – Tuesday 19th July 2022

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 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).

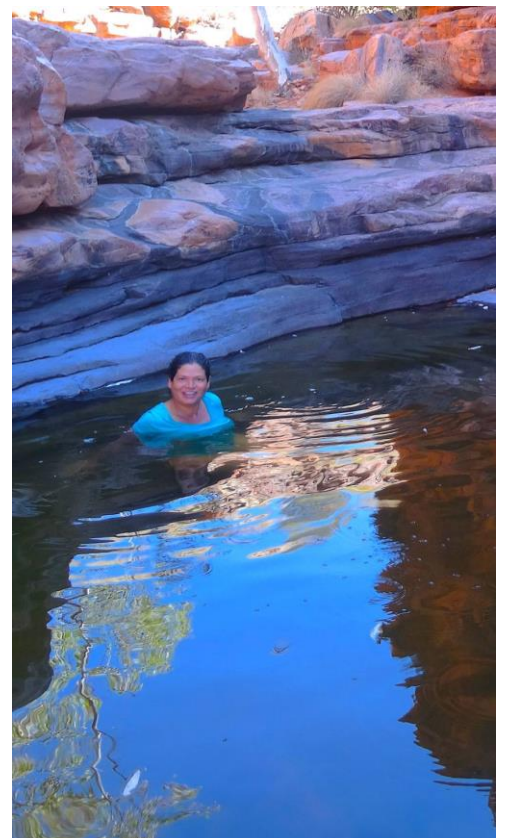
Ronny Hickel has studied, practised and taught in various traditions of yoga, and buddhist dharma for the last 25 years. He is a yoga and tai-chi instructor, a qualified outdoor recreation guide and has trained in Hakomi Psychotherapy. Originally from Austria, Ronny moved to Australia in 2000 after living 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) including repair kit
- ✓ 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 stool/cushion, blanket
- ✓ sun screen, insect repellent
- ✓ torch and spare batteries
- ✓ toiletries, towel, swim wear
- ✓ blister bandaids
- ✓ 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 Saturday 9th July.

We will meet at the 'Alice Springs Tourist Park' in Alice Springs at 12pm.

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 12.30pm 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 1:30pm. Please make sure your flight arrives before 1pm 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 Tuesday 19th July.

We will arrive back at the 'Alice Springs Tourist Park' around 2.30pm.

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 3pm on Tuesday 19th July.



Retreat cost

Cost: \$1400 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:

1. Read this Information Document thoroughly.
2. Fill out & submit the online [APPLICATION FORM](#). Applications open Monday 11th April at 8am. Please be aware that the number of applications is limited.
3. We will contact you within 7 days via email if your application has been successful or if you have been placed on a waiting list.
4. If your application has been accepted we will provide payment details and you will have 3 days to secure your place by making full payment. *Please do not make a payment or any travel arrangements unless you have been offered a place on the retreat.*
5. You will receive a confirmation email to confirm your booking once your funds have arrived.

Our Cancellation Policy:

Cancellations before the 15th June 2022 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.

Please note that if we need to cancel the retreat due to COVID-19 regulations or other unforeseen circumstances, we will refund the retreat fee minus a \$50 administration fee.

COVID-19

The Yatra Bushwalking Club is working within the framework of state guidelines regarding travel, hot spots and public gathering rules. We will not inquire into vaccination status unless required by state guidelines.



For more information please contact *Ronny* on:

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yatra.org.au