

Good morning.

This morning we will travel across the Finke River on our way into Alice Springs. You will notice that the scenery has changed to the red desert sands and spinifex plains that are characteristic of Central Australia.

I trust you will agree that there is no more relaxing or enjoyable way to travel into the heart of this great country than aboard The Legendary Ghan.

For those of you who are leaving The Ghan in Alice Springs, thank you for holidaying with us. It has been a pleasure having you aboard. We hope to see you aboard The Ghan soon or perhaps its sister train, the Indian Pacific.

Regards,



Hospitality Attendant

Today's Activities	Time*	
Morning Tea/ Coffee in Cabin	7.00am	
Daybreak Breakfast – maroon card	7.30am	8 am
Sunrise Breakfast – navy card	8.45am	
Bar Open – Souvenirs on Display in Lounge Car for viewing/ purchase	10.00am	
Journey Commentary (played over private cabin sound system)	10.00am	
Journey Information Session – Lounge Car	10.30am	
Arrive Alice Springs	11.55am	
Alice Springs Desert Park, including lunch**	11.55am (Mon)	

****Alice Springs Desert Park – for guests travelling on The Ghan to Darwin arriving in Alice Springs Monday**

Gold Kangaroo Service guests travelling from Adelaide through to Darwin without breaking their journey in Alice Springs will tour the magnificent Desert Park during the break in Alice Springs. Lunch is included at Madigan's Restaurant within the Park. The Park features more than 400 species of plants and 120 species of animals and provides a wonderful introduction to the subtle richness of the Australian outback. The Ghan departs Alice Springs for Darwin on Monday at 4.10pm.

Journey Information Session

All Gold Kangaroo Service guests are invited to join the Gold Kangaroo Manager in the nominated Lounge Car at 10.30am for a Journey Information Session. It's an opportunity to learn more about the train and the areas we are travelling through, as well as ask any questions you may have and partake in some friendly banter with other guests. Please listen for the public address announcements to advise in which Lounge Car the Journey Information Session will be held.

Coober Pedy

In the early hours of this morning we passed close to Coober Pedy, the Opal Capital of the world. Opals were first discovered in Coober Pedy by a 15 year old boy named Willie Hutchinson, in February 1915. The town produces 70-80% of the world's opals. Following World War 1, numerous returned soldiers came to Coober Pedy to stake their claim, and it was they that introduced the "dugouts" as a means of living in relative comfort underground. Even today, most of the population of Coober Pedy live and work underground to escape the scorching summer heat which can reach 52 degrees for 3 or 4 months of the year. Many of the motels in Coober Pedy also feature underground rooms. Coober Pedy's high quality water comes from an underground source 24km north of the town. Great Southern Railway's travel branch, Trainways, offers unique package holidays which include a stopover at Coober Pedy. Coober Pedy is a fascinating place like no other in the world.

The Iron Man

Keep an eye out for The Iron Man this morning after we pass through Kulgera. The Iron Man is a unique monument marking the site of the one millionth concrete sleeper laid on the stretch of railway line between Tarcoola and Alice Springs. This track, on which we are now travelling, was one of the most difficult to construct due, in part, to the harsh and unforgiving climate of Central Australia. The new line was completed in 1980 and replaced the old wooden sleeper line which was continually ravaged by white ants and floods. The Train Manager will make an announcement as we approach The Iron Man.

Finke River

This morning we will cross the Finke River, which was named by John McDouall Stuart after his patron, William Finke. The Finke River extends over 1,000km from the MacDonnell Ranges in the north into Lake Eyre in South Australia. The river only runs its entire course a couple of times every century. The Finke River is a popular meeting place for Aboriginal people, who call it "Larapinta", meaning "serpent". The River is dotted with permanent waterholes, many of which are of cultural significance to the Aboriginal people. The Ghan crosses the river over the Finke River Bridge which is constructed in 15 spans of 30 metres each.

Train Trekkers Club

Great Southern Railway offers guests the opportunity to become members of the Train Trekkers Club. Membership of the Club is exclusively available to past travellers on the Indian Pacific, The Ghan and The Overland trains. Members gain access to competitions, train tours, product updates, film nights and more. You can join the Club by completing the form inside your *Platform* magazine.

Indian Pacific

The Legendary Ghan's sister train, the Indian Pacific, is also acknowledged as an Australian icon and one of the world's great train journeys. As the name implies, the Indian Pacific gives you two oceans on its 4,352km transcontinental journey between Perth and Sydney via Adelaide. From the treeless plains of The Nullarbor to the spectacular Blue Mountains, this incredible journey offers stunning sightseeing and hospitality from start to finish. The great train offers optional Off-Train Tours at Broken Hill, Adelaide, Kalgoorlie and Perth (westbound train only) providing you with an opportunity to experience the character and history of these famous outback towns. This is an adventure that spans Australia.

Souvenirs

A range of merchandise and souvenirs will be on display from 10.00am in the Lounge Car this morning for the convenience of guests who may wish to purchase a last minute memento of their journey aboard The Ghan or a gift for family and friends.

The Ghan Collectables

Great Southern Railway, with the introduction of Gold Kangaroo Service to The Ghan, is providing its guests two very special gifts as a token of our appreciation for your patronage. The first is the Limited Edition 2004 The Ghan pin that was contained in your 'Welcoming Kit', and guests disembarking this morning will be provided with a special 'Certificate of Travel'. The designs of the pins and Certificate of Travel change each year, and the only way anyone can obtain a pin or certificate is by travelling in Gold Kangaroo Service. Neither item can be purchased so we are expecting that with time both the pins and the certificates will become collector's items. Should you travel with us again on The Ghan or the Indian Pacific please wear your 2004 The Ghan pin so that we can recognise you as a very special guest.

Did You Know?

Coober Pedy comes from the Aboriginal words "Kupi piti" which means "white man's burrow". Given that most of the town's population live underground in dugouts, the words are very apt.

Approximately 3,500 people live in Coober Pedy, and it is estimated that this population comprises 45 different nationalities, making it one of Australia's most multicultural towns.

The Finke River is listed in "The Guinness Book of Records" as the oldest river in the world.

With a population of over 20,000, Alice Springs is the second largest city in the Northern Territory.

With the completion of the Alice Springs to Darwin rail-link, The Ghan journey to Darwin from Sydney is approximately 4,650km in length, making it around 300km further than the Indian Pacific's transcontinental journey from Sydney to Perth.