

2028 Total Solar Eclipse Over Australia: Nature, Culture, and Discovery

*with Dr. Sarah Rugheimer
or Dr. Edward Murphy*

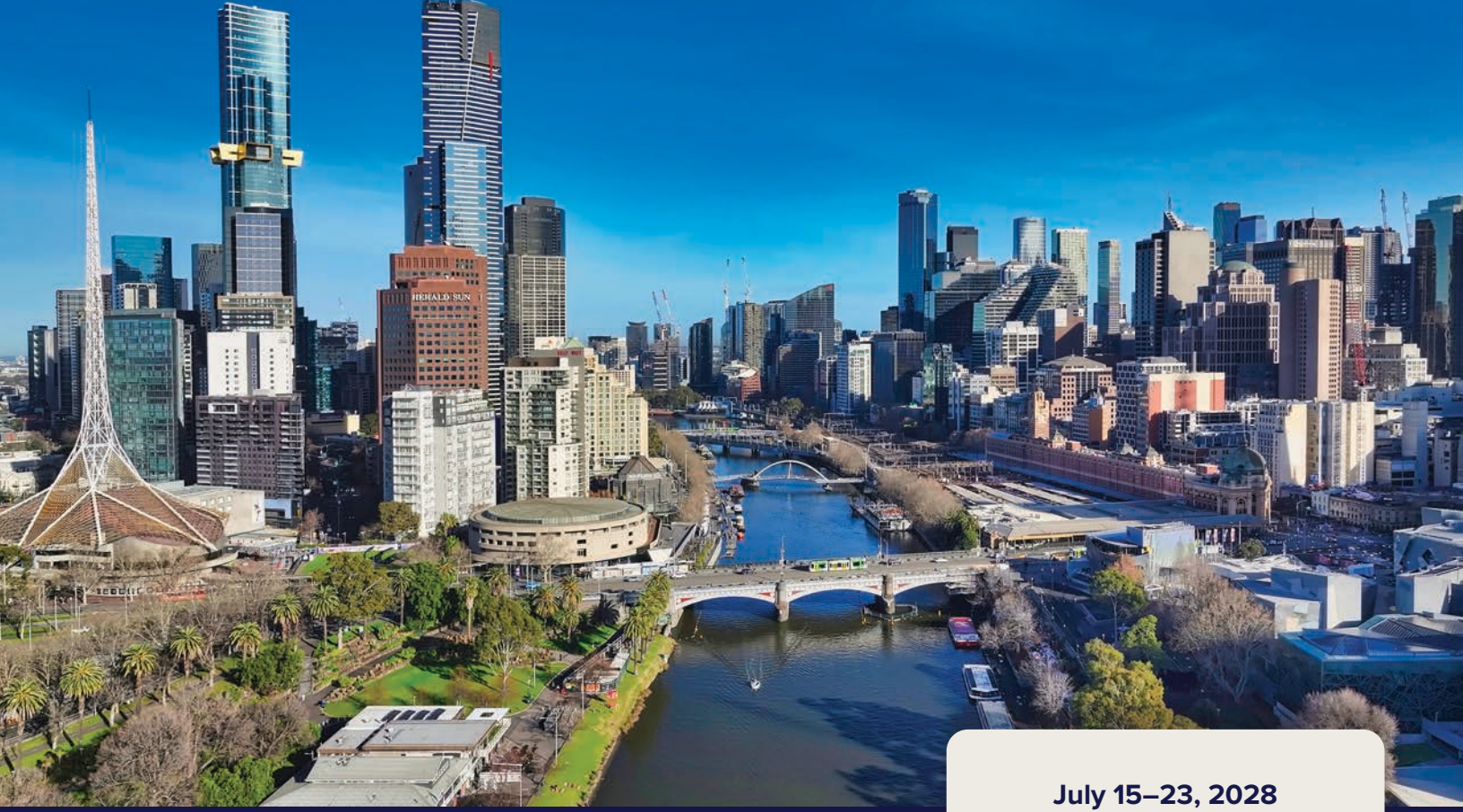
July 15–23, 2028



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From: \$12,995 per person

2028 Total Solar Eclipse Over Australia: Nature, Culture, and Discovery

Dr. Sarah Rugheimer or Dr. Edward Murphy



Journey across southeastern Australia on a program designed for curious travelers, where cultural discovery and scientific inquiry culminate in one of nature's rarest spectacles: the total solar eclipse of July 22, 2028. In Melbourne, the Yarra Valley, Sydney, and the Blue Mountains, consider how landscape, Indigenous knowledge, biodiversity, and astronomy intersect, while enjoying special access to observatories, a private planetarium experience, and conversations with astronomers and other experts. Throughout the journey, a Great Courses expert travels with your group, offering lectures, informal discussions, and interpretive insight that deepen each day's discoveries.

Experience the eclipse from a private venue in the path of totality near Sydney. The event will be illuminated by expert commentary and shared with fellow lifelong learners. Your journey also includes an evening with a local astronomer under the dark skies of the rugged Blue Mountains, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Thoughtfully balancing celestial drama with Australia's rich cultural and natural heritage, this journey offers an intellectually rewarding exploration of nature, wildlife, and sky.

Enjoy the rare opportunity to learn from two Great Courses experts as both departures come together for select program experiences, including eclipse observations and shared discussions that blend perspectives from science, history, and culture.

Your Journey Expert



Dr. Sarah Rugheimer is an astrophysicist and astrobiologist at the University of Edinburgh. Her work is focused on how to detect life on an exoplanet by looking for atmospheric biosignatures and her research interests are modelling the atmosphere and climate of extrasolar planets. Professor Rugheimer earned her bachelor's degree in physics at the University of Calgary, and her MA and PhD at Harvard in Astrophysics. In addition to research, Professor Rugheimer is interested in public outreach. Her TED talk "The Search for Microscopic Aliens" has 1.7 million views on TED.com. She previously

has been awarded the Barrie Jones Award and the BSA Rosalind Franklin Lectureship in 2019, and the Caroline Herschel Lectureship Prize in 2018. Her astrobiology course for the public, *Searching for Extraterrestrial Life*, is available as an Audible Original, in collaboration with The Great Courses. She also teaches The Great Course *Experiencing James Webb: The Invisible Universe Revealed*.



Dr. Edward Murphy is a Professor of Astronomy at the University of Virginia, where he also earned his PhD. In addition to his university teaching duties, Professor Murphy is particularly dedicated to public outreach and teaching the wonders of astronomy to adults and children alike. He was a postdoctoral fellow and an associate research scientist at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where he worked on NASA's Far Ultraviolet Spectroscopic Explorer (FUSE). In 2000, he joined the faculty at the University of Virginia, where he used FUSE, along with radio telescopes, in his research on the interstellar medium. Professor Murphy was named a University of

Virginia Office of Engagement Outstanding Faculty Speaker in 2012, and was awarded the University of Virginia Alumni Association Distinguished Professor Award in 2014. He has taught one Great Course: *Our Night Sky*. Professor Murphy has traveled to 5 total solar eclipses and has spent a total of 22 minutes and 3 seconds in the shadow of the Moon.

Highlights

- Witness the total solar eclipse from an exclusive viewing site in the path of totality, with expert commentary from your Great Courses expert illuminating the science and significance of this rare event.
- Enjoy behind-the-scenes experiences and curated discussions, connecting astronomy, natural history, and cultural heritage.
- Engage with astronomers through private planetarium programs, university visits, and stargazing events, gaining insight into southern hemisphere skies, eclipse mechanics, and Australia's contributions to astronomical research.
- Observe Australia's unique fauna—from koalas and penguins to wallabies and birdlife—through guided visits to conservation reserves and wildlife parks that highlight ecological diversity and ongoing preservation efforts.
- Spend a memorable overnight in the Blue Mountains, a UNESCO World Heritage site where dramatic escarpments, eucalyptus forests, and dark-sky conditions create an ideal setting for stargazing.

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Itinerary



Day 1: Arrival “Down Under”

Arrive in Melbourne and transfer independently to your hotel. Gather this evening for a welcome dinner and reception at Melbourne’s tallest restaurant overlooking the city, enjoying panoramic views as you meet your expert and fellow travelers.

Included Meal: Dinner

Accommodations: Voco Melbourne Central

Day 2: Capturing the Moment

Your journey begins with a visit to the Koorie Heritage trust, where you will gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal history, land stewardship, and the cultural significance of the land to the local Kulin Nations during a discussion with an Aboriginal guide. Prepare for the eclipse with an exclusive photography workshop with an award-winning photographer specializing in landscape and astrophotography. Learn tools for taking better photographs of any site, whether using a smartphone or professional camera. After, your expert will share insights about the science underlying a total solar eclipse. This afternoon, visit the Melbourne Observatory with an opportunity to view the reconstructed 1869 Great Melbourne Telescope. Return to Melbourne with free time for dinner on your own.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: Voco Melbourne Central

Day 3: Taste, Terroir, and the Southern Sky

Travel into the Yarra Valley for a tractor-drawn orchard tour at a family farm, sampling seasonal fruits like mandarin, tamarillo, and Australian limes, while learning about the region’s fertile soils and agricultural traditions. Continue to a local winery for a guided tasting paired with a relaxed lunch where you can experience the valley’s varietals. This evening, join the Senior Curator of Astronomy for a private presentation at the Melbourne Planetarium, followed by an immersive live night-sky experience and a simulation of the upcoming eclipse. Return to your Melbourne hotel after the show for dinner on your own.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Wine Tasting

Accommodations: Voco Melbourne Central

“Travelers will come away with an appreciation for the amazing universe we inhabit and a connection to our ancestors who marveled at and feared these amazing displays.”

—Dr. Edward Murphy



Day 4: Wildlife, Coastlines, and Natural Wonder

Explore Melbourne on your own this morning before driving south (approximately two hours) to Phillip Island. Here, you will visit the Koala Conservation Reserve, wandering elevated boardwalks that offer close views of koalas and opportunities to observe native birds, wallabies, echidnas, and other regional wildlife. Learn about the lifecycle of the koalas and their history on the island. Continue to the Nobbies boardwalk, where dramatic coastal cliffs, wind-carved formations, and the blowhole's spray reveal the rugged beauty of Victoria's southern shoreline. At dusk (approx. 5:45 p.m.), witness the “penguin parade,” as the charismatic seabirds waddle home from the ocean to their burrows in a remarkable natural ritual. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant before returning to your Melbourne hotel late tonight.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Voco Melbourne Central



Day 5: Blue Mountains and Dark Skies

Take a short (1.5-hour) flight* to Sydney this morning, followed by a coach transfer (1.5 hours) to the iconic Blue Mountains, a UNESCO-listed landscape celebrated for its dramatic sandstone escarpments, eucalyptus forests, and expansive valley vistas. Settle into your resort on the edge of the Blue Mountains, with sweeping views over the Jamison Valley. After dinner at your hotel, step outside for a stargazing experience with a local astronomer. Learn about efforts to recover traditional astronomy within Aboriginal communities, hear constellation storytelling, and take part in an interactive astronomy talk with both telescope and naked-eye observations. *An indoor alternative (using astronomy software) will be provided in case of inclement weather.*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Fairmont Resort Blue Mountains



Day 6: Sydney Architecture and Cultural Icons

Depart the Blue Mountains this morning and transfer to Sydney, Australia's vibrant capital. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before stepping inside the iconic Sydney Opera House—a UNESCO World Heritage site—for a behind-the-scenes tour. Learn about the Opera House's unique architecture, which has been dubbed “one of the



indisputable masterpieces of human creativity, not only in the 20th century, but in the history of humankind.” You will continue touring city highlights, including visits to the Rocks, Harbor Bridge, Hyde Park, and Botanical Gardens. This evening, explore Australia’s largest city on your own.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: The Grace Sydney

Day 7: Koala Encounter



Your day begins with a visit to the Featherdale Wildlife Park, home to one of the world’s largest collections of Australian fauna. A park ranger will share information about many of Australia’s native wildlife, including kangaroos, wallabies, echidnas, and platypus. Enter the koala enclosure for a special behind-the-scenes experience, assisting with koala feeding as part of their conditioning program and observing these iconic marsupials, while learning about conservation and habitat protection efforts. After, your expert will deliver a lecture on site. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to continue exploring Sydney on your own.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: The Grace Sydney



Day 8: Celestial Celebration

Depart this morning to a historic winery, perfectly positioned in the path of totality. Join like-minded travelers for an exclusive eclipse celebration featuring live music, wine tasting, lunch, and an opportunity to hear from a panel of Great Courses professors. At 12:40 p.m., the moon will begin to cross the sun, culminating in approximately three minutes of totality (from 1:59:10 to 2:02:44) as daylight fades, temperatures shift, and the sky darkens. Return to the hotel late this afternoon before embarking on a chartered dinner cruise through the Sydney Harbor. Witness the sunset and uninterrupted 360-degree views of the Sydney Harbor, including the Harbour Bridge, Opera House, and Luna Park. Indulge in a dinner featuring fresh, local ingredients, local beers, regional wines, and other assorted drinks.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Reception

Accommodations: The Grace Sydney



Day 9: Departure

Depart your hotel for individual flights home.

Included Meal: Breakfast

Accommodations



Voco Melbourne Central

Melbourne, Australia

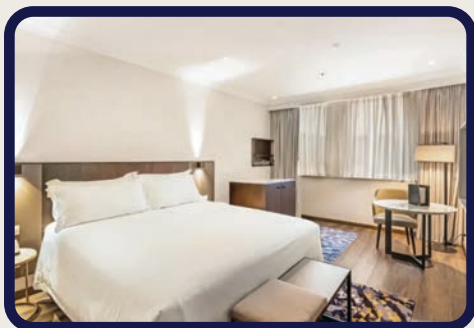
Voco Melbourne Central offers a contemporary stay in the heart of the city, steps from shopping, dining, and major cultural attractions. The hotel features stylish lounge spaces, a rooftop outdoor pool, a fitness center, and inviting dining and bar options. Guest rooms are modern and comfortable, with large windows, plush bedding, and rainfall showers. **(3 Nights)**



Fairmont Resort & Spa Blue Mountains

Leura, Australia

Set on the edge of Blue Mountains National Park in Leura, Fairmont Resort & Spa Blue Mountains enjoys sweeping views over the Jamison Valley. The resort has a relaxed mountain-lodge feel and offers extensive amenities, including a spa, indoor and outdoor pools, a fitness center, tennis courts, and a scenic golf course. **(1 night)**



The Grace, Sydney

Sydney, Australia

The Grace Sydney is a distinctive heritage hotel in the central business district, well placed for exploring the city on foot. Set in a restored 1920s building, it pairs Neo-Gothic architecture and Art Deco interiors with modern comfort. Amenities include a rooftop recreation center with an indoor heated lap pool, gym, sauna, and steam room. **(4 Nights)**



Pricing:

Departure:	Double Occupancy:	Single Occupancy:	Deposit:	
July 15–23, 2028 with Dr. Sarah Rugheimer	\$12,995	\$14,945	\$1,000	BOOK NOW
July 15–23, 2028 with Dr. Edward Murphy	\$12,995	\$14,945	\$1,000	BOOK NOW

**The internal flight between Melbourne and Sydney is not included in the tour price but will be arranged for the group. An estimated cost of \$175 will be added to the preliminary invoice at booking, and the final cost will be updated no later than 3 months before departure.*

What's Included:

- All accommodations for the duration of the tour
- Meals, as noted in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and visits as noted in each itinerary
- Expertise of The Great Courses Expert, travel director and local guides throughout the tour
- All gratuities for on-tour guides, drivers, hotel and restaurant staff as part of the group program
- All on-tour transportation, unless otherwise noted
- Quietvox listening devices to facilitate audibility and social distancing on tour
- The assistance of an ATA professional travel team to assist with pre-trip questions, travel arrangements, including flights, extra hotel nights and other services
- Comprehensive pre-departure mailings and materials with information about the destination and what to expect on tour, including a suggested reading list
- Emergency evacuation insurance

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