

Tropical Audubon Society Northern Australia Birding with Bellbird Tours

August 3rd – 16th 2025



Regent Bowerbird in O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat

Itinerary

Day 1 – August 3rd: Darwin

Our Bellbird guide will be available to assist with anything you need once you arrive in Darwin. We'll meet tonight at 6:30pm for dinner at the hotel. Everyone will need to get a good night's sleep before our birding fun begins tomorrow morning!

Overnight: Darwin (en-suite rooms, meals: D)

Day 2 – August 4th: Darwin

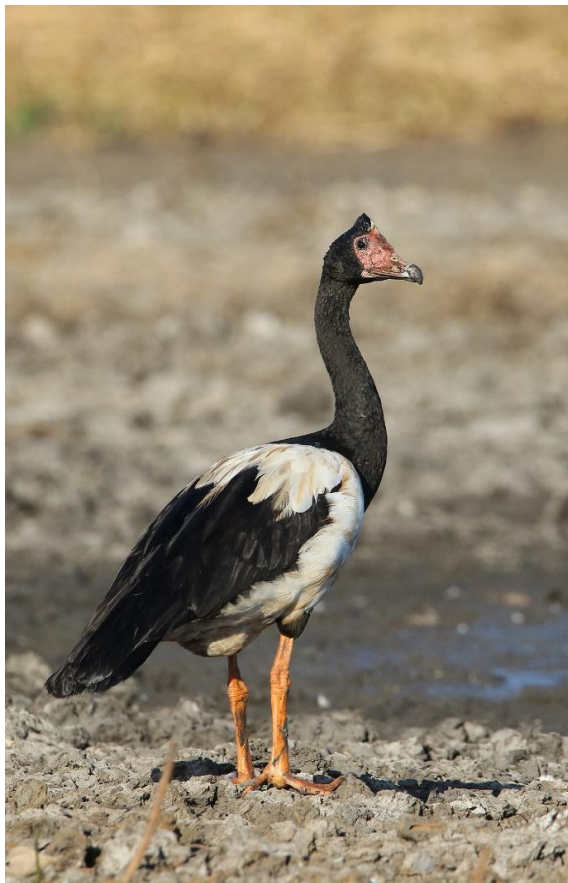
Our first stop today will be at Buffalo Creek, where, depending on the tide, we have a chance of glimpsing the elusive Chestnut Rail. Other mangrove species found here include Black Butcherbird, Green-backed Gerygone, Australian Yellow White-eye, Black-tailed Whistler and Azure Kingfisher. We may also see Beach Thick-knee on the nearby beach. We'll visit one of the local reserves containing monsoon forest to search for Gray Whistler, Arafura Fantail, Arafura Shrike-thrush and Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, as well as our main target, the gorgeous

Rainbow Pitta. In the Darwin Botanic Gardens, we'll look for Rufous and Barking Owls on their day roosts. We'll then drive to the Howard Springs Nature Park where we'll have another chance to see Rainbow Pitta. While here we should also find Blue-winged Kookaburra, Large-billed Gerygone, Little Bronze Cuckoo and Red-winged Parrots.

Overnight: Darwin (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)

Day 3 – August 5th: Kakadu

As we head toward the famous Kakadu National Park today, we'll stop on the way at Foggy Dam, originally a rice-growing project, but thousands of Magpie Geese put an end to that idea and the area is now a nature reserve. The reedbeds and lily-covered ponds are home to birds like Brolga, Magpie Goose, Black-necked Stork, Royal Spoonbill, Comb-crested Jacana, White-browed and Baillon's Crake, Green Pygmy-goose, Broad-billed and Paperbark Flycatchers, Tawny Grassbird and Golden-headed Cisticola. In the adjacent woodlands, we have another chance for Rainbow Pitta as well as Lemon-bellied Flycatcher.



Magpie Goose in Kakadu National Park

Kakadu is Australia's largest terrestrial national park, covering almost 20,000 sq. km. It's a place of great cultural and biological diversity; the rock escarpments are a treasure trove of Aboriginal rock paintings and the birdlife and wildlife are spectacular! Along the way, we'll visit one of Kakadu's finest wetlands, Mamukala, a large billabong (oxbow lake) that can hold thousands of waterbirds. From the bird hide, we can see waterfowl such as Magpie Goose, Radjah Shelduck, Hardhead, Plumed and Wandering Whistling-Duck, Green Pygmy-Goose and egrets and herons include Little, Intermediate and Great Egret, Nankeen Night-Heron and Pacific and Pied Heron. After checking in at our hotel in Jabiru, we'll head south toward Nawurlandja to bird among the sandstone cliffs and watch the sunset. Targets here include Black-banded Fruit-Dove, Partridge Pigeon, Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeon, White-lined Honeyeater, Sandstone Shrike-thrush and Helmeted Friarbird.

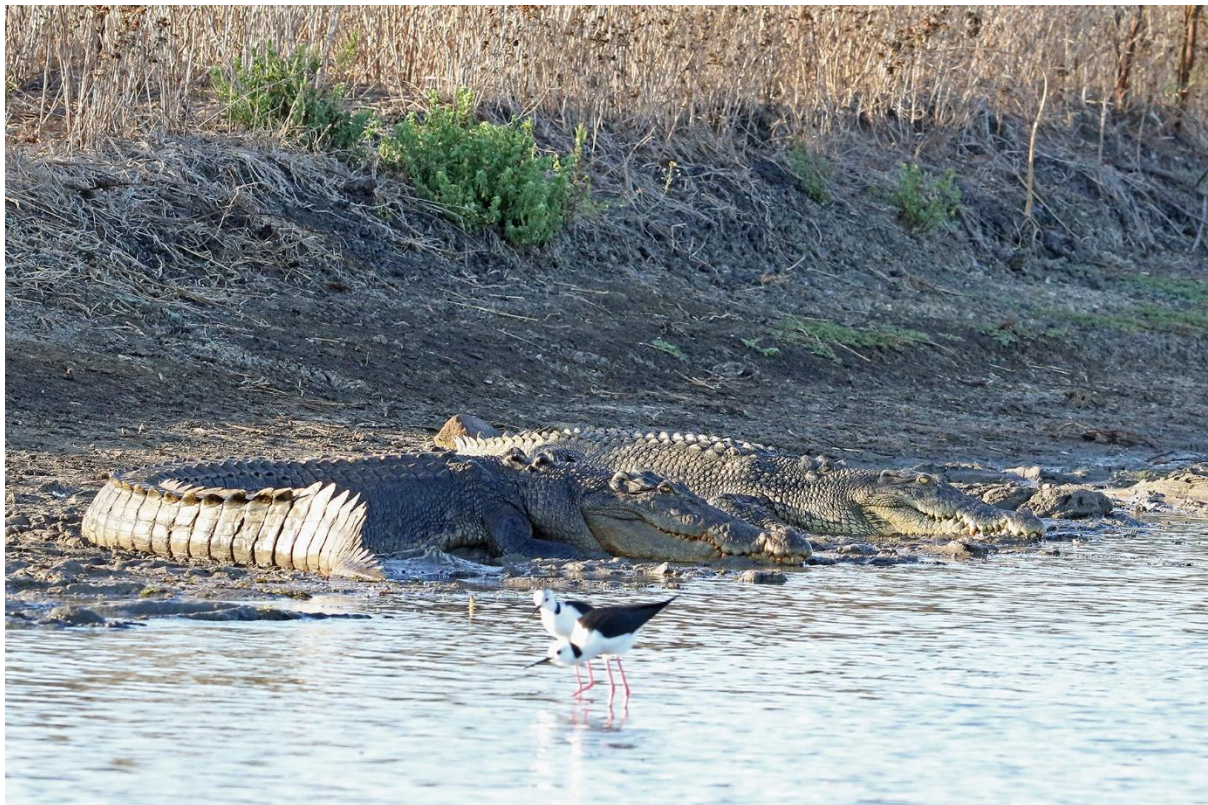
Overnight: Jabiru (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)

Day 4 – August 6th: Kakadu

This morning, we head north for an early walk at Bardedjilidji, where we'll be looking for Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeon, Sandstone Shrike-thrush and possibly Rainbow Pitta and Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove. The rest of the morning will be spent at Ubirr, where we'll view Aboriginal rock art paintings and enjoy spectacular views of the floodplain. This is a good place to find Rufous Owl, Yellow-rumped Munia and White-lined Honeyeater, along with the newly split Wilkin's (Eastern) Short-eared Rock Wallaby. If the tide is right, we'll check out Cahill crossing to see its famous crocodiles. By then it will be time to head back for lunch.

After a break in the middle of the day, we'll head to Nourlangie to clean up any of the endemics we may have missed. This is also a great spot to see some Aboriginal artwork. There are also Black and Little Red Flying-Foxes here, as well as many exotic lizards, colorful turtles and unusual butterflies.

Overnight: Jabiru (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)



Saltwater Crocodile and Pied Stilt in Kakadu National Park

Day 5 – August 7th: Cairns

The early morning always allows for the best birding and we'll use that to our advantage by looking for any species that we haven't seen yet; this could be in and around our accommodations or further back towards Darwin.

We'll catch a flight to Cairns; depending on our arrival time, we'll plan to spend a few hours in the afternoon birding along the Cairns Esplanade. This will give us a chance to look for waders on the mudflats as well as Black-necked Stork, Beach Thick-knee, Australian Pelican and Australian and Glossy Ibis. The esplanade is a fascinating mix of world class birding less than 100 meters away from a shopping strip with fabulous cafes and restaurants. In the trees between the beach and the road, we should find Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, White-breasted Woodswallow, Varied Honeyeater, Torresian Kingfisher, Peaceful Dove and Scaly-breasted Munia. At the northern end of the Esplanade is a large, grassy area fringed with mangroves; this is one of the best spots to look for Mangrove Robin, Dusky Myzomela and occasionally Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove.

Overnight: Cairns (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)

Day 6 – August 8th: Cairns (Great Barrier Reef)

A special day today, spent near Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef. Leaving at 8am, it's an easy 2-hour boat ride from Cairns. Michaelmas Cay is a protected bird breeding site playing host to many seabirds. Most of the small cay is fenced off to protect the birds but that won't stop us being able to see them exceptionally well. We should find Great Frigatebird, Brown Booby and Brown Noddy as well as Black-naped, Common, Roseate, Lesser Crested, Great Crested, Sooty and Caspian Terns. There is always the chance that something rare and exciting might be present when we arrive.

There will also be plenty of time for those wishing to go snorkeling in the shallow waters around the Cay. There's a myriad of brightly colored fish, giant clams and green sea turtles as well as a huge amount of coral. For those not wishing to go snorkeling, there is an all-you-can-eat buffet onboard our catamaran as well as a glass bottomed boat that takes groups out over the reef throughout the day.

We will arrive back on shore at approximately 4pm.

Overnight: Cairns (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)

Day 7 – August 9th: Chambers Wildlife Lodge

We'll spend the day at higher elevations, which means less humidity and cooler temperatures as well as a different selection of birds. One of our main targets today will be the endangered Southern Cassowary. This large, flightless, dinosaur-like creature can be surprisingly elusive! While searching for it, we should also encounter Graceful and Yellow-spotted Honeyeater, Green Pygmy Goose, White-browed Crake and more. We'll then head into the hinterland of Cairns: the Atherton Tablelands, where we may see Brolga and Sarus Crane.

After a delightful day of birding, we'll arrive at the Chambers Wildlife Rainforest Lodge, hidden in lush, tropical highland rainforest in the beautiful waterfalls and crater lakes district. The lodge has resident Platypus, Brush Turkey mounds, and Tooth-billed Bowerbird bowers as

well as a good chance to view Victoria's Riflebird. After dinner, we'll look for mammals such as Sugar Gliders, Striped Possums and Bandicoots.

Overnight: Chambers Wildlife Lodge (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)



Crimson Finch in the Cairns Area

Day 8 – August 10th: Chambers Wildlife Lodge

This morning, we'll visit the spectacular Curtain Fig Tree, where there are regular sightings of Double-eyed Fig-Parrot, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Spotted Catbird, White-throated Treecreeper, Lewin's and Macleay's Honeyeater, Large-billed Scrub-wren, Mountain Thornbill, Brown Gerygone, Eastern Whipbird, Little and Bower's Shrike-thrush, Black-faced, Spectacled and Pied Monarch, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Pale-yellow and Grey-headed Robin and Metallic Starling. We'll then head to the wonderful Mount Hypipamee.

Around the main carpark and picnic area, there is a chance for Golden Bowerbird, particularly in fruiting trees, as well as Southern Cassowary, Tooth-billed Bowerbird, Spotted Catbird, Lewin's and Bridled Honeyeater and the rainforest specialists: Fernwren, Emerald Dove, Chowchilla, Atherton and Yellow-throated Scrub-wren, Mountain Thornbill, Brown Gerygone and Pale-yellow Robin. Other birds we are likely to encounter include Australian Brush Turkey, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Superb and Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Double-eyed Fig Parrot, Australian Figbird, Black Butcherbird, Green Oriole, and Noisy Pitta, among others.

Later in the afternoon, we'll bird the tropical gardens and streamside forests in the vicinity of the lodge, which is set in lush tropical surroundings and caters exclusively to naturalists and birdwatchers. It is a tremendous birding area, and the perfect base for birding the wider district. After dark we will do some spotlighting for Tree Kangaroo, owls, and nightjars.

Overnight: Chambers Wildlife Lodge (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)



Platypus, one of two Monotremes possible on this trip

Day 9 – August 11th: Kingfisher Park

From Chambers Wildlife Lodge, we head north towards the well-known Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge. We'll stop along the way at several locations including Mareeba, where a small, unassuming town park is one of the best spots to locate White-browed Robin and Black Butcherbird. Once we arrive, we'll have the afternoon to spend birding around the lodge grounds. There are a number of species here that we'll not have the chance of finding anywhere else on the tour, so we will spend some time looking for them. These include the highly elusive Red-necked Crake and the beautiful Blue-faced Parrotfinch. For those interested, there will be the option to go spotlighting tonight where we will be looking for Bandicoots, Possums including the Striped Possum and Tree Frogs.

Overnight: Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)

Day 10 – August 12th: Kingfisher Park

Today, we'll head up to Mt Lewis, a fantastic birding spot at a higher altitude than anywhere else we cover in the tropics. Significantly cooler than at Kingfisher Park, it brings a host of different species including Bassian Thrush, Golden Bowerbird, Tooth-billed Bowerbird, Fernwren, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Mountain Thornbill, Spotted Catbird with its very distinctive cat call, Chowchilla, Bower's Shrikethrush, Yellow-breasted Boatbill, Eastern Spinebill, Bridled Honeyeater and Atherton Scrubwren. Back down the mountain, we'll have the afternoon to spend birding further afield where we will look for Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, Lovely Fairywren, Chestnut-breasted Munia and Spangled Drongo.

Overnight: Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)

Day 11 – August 13th: Brisbane

Today we'll be heading back into Cairns to catch our flight to Brisbane. Our birding plans for the day will depend on what time our flight is and where we will have some spare time, but rest assured that where the opportunity presents itself, our guide will be more than happy to spend that time looking for species we haven't yet seen.

Overnight: Cairns (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)



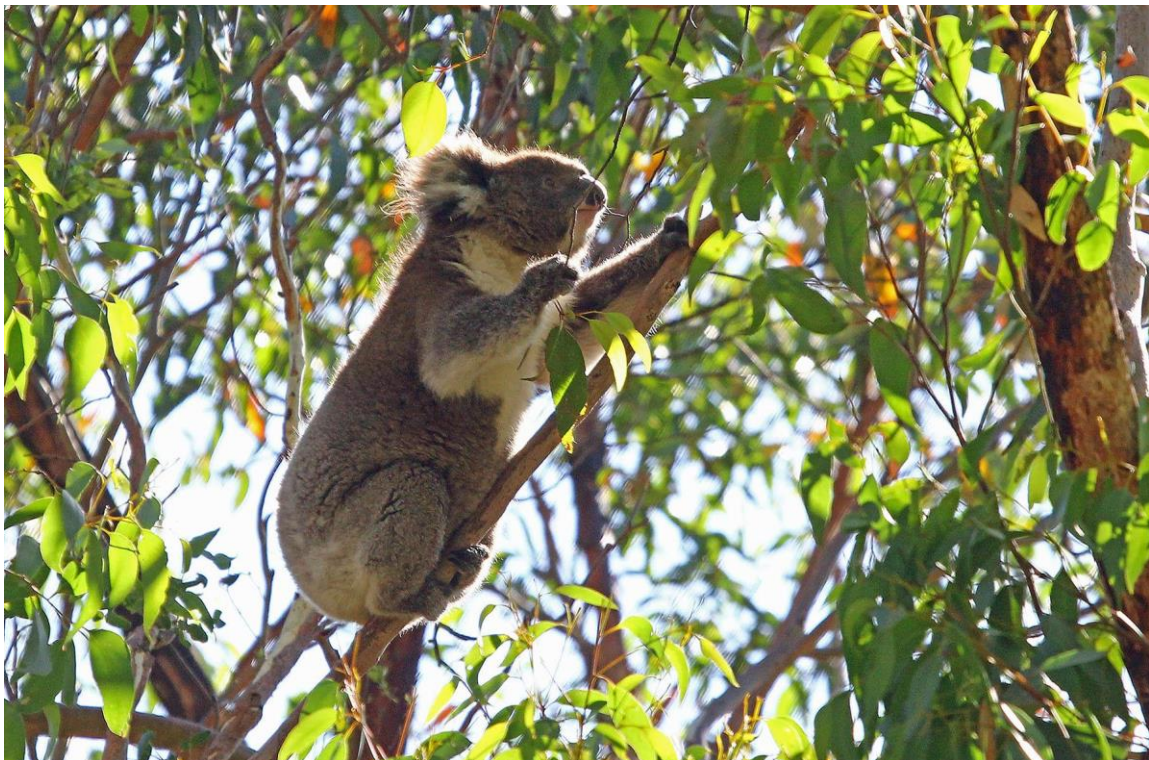
Albert's Lyrebird in Lamington National Park

Day 12 – August 14th: Lamington NP

First thing in the morning, we'll visit Tallebudgera Creek to look for Mangrove Gerygone, Leaden Flycatcher, Spangled Drongo, Rufous Whistler, Sacred, Azure and Torresian Kingfishers, Red-backed, Variegated and Superb Fairywrens, Osprey, Brahminy Kite and White-bellied Sea-Eagle. The main focus of the tour is Lamington National Park, but en-route we'll visit Sharp Park near Canungra to look for Platypus and a range of bird species including Gray Goshawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australasian Figbird, Olive-backed Oriole, Noisy Friarbird, White-cheeked, Brown, Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters, Scarlet Myzomela, Rainbow Bee-eater, Azure and Forest Kingfishers, Laughing Kookaburra, Pale-headed Rosella, Buff-banded Rail, Double-barred Finch, Red-browed Firetail, Maned Duck, Dusky Moorhen and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. We'll then continue to Lamington National Park and check-in to overnight accommodation.

After settling in, we'll go birding in the rainforest, targeting specialist birds including Regent and Satin Bowerbird, Green Catbird, three species of Scrub-wren, White-throated Treecreeper, Black-faced, White-eared and Spectacled Monarchs, Eastern Yellow, Pale-yellow and Rose Robins, Eastern Whipbird, Rufous and Gray Fantails, Spotted Pardalote, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Red-browed Firetail, Australian King Parrot and Crimson Rosella. After dinner, there will be the option to look for nocturnal animals, including mammals (possums, bandicoots and pademelons), Tawny and Marbled Frogmouths and Southern Boobook.

Overnight: Lamington National Park (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)



Koala in the Brisbane Area

Day 13 – August 15th: Lamington NP

We'll start early and drive to the western side of the park to look for Albert's Lyrebird, Noisy Pitta, Wompoo Fruit-Dove, Wonga, White-headed, and Top-knot Pigeons, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Paradise Riflebird, Australian Logrunner, Bassian and Russet-tailed Thrush, Golden Whistler, Eastern Shrike-tit, Brown Thornbill, Common Cicadabird and Brown Gerygone.

Later in the day, we'll return to the Gold Coast via wetlands, grasslands and woodlands. Possible species include Magpie Goose, Plumed Whistling-Duck, Hardhead, Australasian Shoveler, Latham's Snipe, Australasian Grebe, Australian Pelican, Glossy, Australian White and Straw-necked Ibis, four species of egrets, Australasian Darter, Black-necked Stork, Little and Long-billed Corellas, Rainbow, Scaly-breasted and Little Lorikeets, Nankeen Kestrel, Black-shouldered Kite, Brown Falcon, Spotted Harrier, Chestnut-breasted Munia, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Black-faced Cuckooshrike, Australian Reed Warbler, Pied Stilt, Black-fronted and Red-kneed Dotterel and Bush Thick-knee.

Mammals that may be seen include Eastern Gray Kangaroo, Whip-tailed, Red-necked and Swamp Wallaby, Red-necked and Red-legged Pademelon, Koala, Platypus, Echidna, Black and Grey-headed Flying Fox, Common Ring-tailed, Short-eared and Common Brush-tailed Possums, Sugar Glider and Long-nosed and Northern Brown Bandicoot.

Overnight: Lamington National Park (en-suite rooms, meals: B, L, D)



Golden Whistler in the Brisbane Area

Day 14 – August 16th: Departure from Brisbane

Today will be spent having one final look for any difficult species in Lamington NP before driving back to Brisbane to look for birds around the city. Along the coast there are beaches, mud flats, mangroves and sand dunes covered in dense heath; many freshwater wetlands fringed by ancient eucalyptus and tea-trees are found on the inland side of the dunes. Heading further inland, remnant patches of sub-tropical rainforests, dry sclerophyll eucalypt forests and dense bush all hold their own unique bird species, including Mangrove Honeyeater, Mangrove Gerygone, Torresian Kingfisher, Satin Flycatcher, Chestnut-breasted Munia, Red-backed, Superb and Variegated Fairywrens, Chestnut Teal, Royal Spoonbill and a range of other species.

Your guide will drop you at the airport or at your hotel depending on your arrangements.

Overnight: N/A (meals: B, L)

Bellbird Tour Provides:

- Expert guiding services by one of Bellbird Tours most experienced guides.
- A bird checklist.
- Use of high-quality telescope and a selection of reference books to use during the tour.

What to bring: binoculars, telescope and/or camera equipment if you want, chargers, power outlet converter plugs, insect repellent, sunscreen, hat, face masks, personal water bottle (we'll provide unlimited refills).

Weather during your trip: The weather for your trip should be warm and comfortable although rain is always a possibility.

What to wear: Lightweight long pants, thin long-sleeved shirt, over this you can wear various layers to be taken off as necessary. Sunhat and sturdy walking boots recommended. Sandals/flip-flops, shorts and t-shirts are OK for non-birding time.

Your safety is important and on all trips a satellite phone, 2-way radio, GPS and an extensive and up to-date first aid kit is carried; we have Passenger Driver Accreditation, Eco-tourism Accreditation and hold a current Senior First Aid certificate and Advanced 4WD certificate.

Costing, inclusions and exclusions for the duration of the itinerary specified above:

Inclusions:

Australian Goods & Services Tax (GST/VAT), accommodation as described above (based on a triple and twin room where possible), all meals as outlined in the itinerary consisting of continental breakfasts, sandwich or bakery lunches and 1 or 2-course dinners, unlimited drinking water refills, some coffee/tea supplied by the guide, some

snacks/biscuits/fruit/muesli bars etc; expert guiding, transport in comfortable and reliable air-conditioned vehicle, entry fees and domestic flights.

Not included:

Pre & post trip accommodation, meals and drinks other than those provided, personal expenses, personal travel and cancellation insurance, tips and anything else not specifically included. Breakfasts are usually continental, dinners one or two course. Meal upgrades (where available and/or practical) are at your own cost.