

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS OF AUSTRALIA

Share the spirit that embraces us all

A UNIQUELY AUSTRALIAN INVITATION

Australia is a place of natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. Our abundant unique natural wonders leave a lasting impression on visitors who experience them first hand. From unspoilt beaches, tropical rainforest and rugged mountain ranges to vast tracts of desert, this is a country of contrasts.

Our natural treasures such as the Great Barrier Reef, Uluru, Kata Tjuta and Kakadu National Park all have an important place in Australia's identity and are recognised around the world. These places are accessible and can be experienced in a number of different ways from learning about a sacred site with Aboriginal Elders to exploring a unique land formation that has existed for hundreds of millions of years.

With 17 unique World Heritage areas, some of the oldest rainforests on Earth and a massive one-third of the world's protected marine areas, there are hundreds of awe inspiring locations that have cultural and spiritual significance to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians alike.

Inspired by the footsteps of our early explorers and Aboriginal ancestors, Australia is a place of amazing journeys. From the very beginning of our creation, Aboriginal people knew it was only by travelling the land, letting nature and spirits shape the journey, that they could have a true understanding of Australia. Today this spirit embraces us all.

Across and around our massive land and its 12,000 islands, countless possibilities connect endless unique experiences.

Key Facts

- With a landmass of 7.68 million sq kms, Australia is the world's smallest continent and largest island. Australia is also the lowest, flattest, most stable continent, with desert comprising 35% of the land mass.
- Australia is home to 17 World-Heritage sites. One of these, Kakadu National Park, covers a land area of almost 20,000 sq kms – the same size as the country of Israel.
- Few places in the world meet all four World Heritage natural criteria, but we have four that do – Queensland's Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics, Tasmania's Wilderness, and Western Australia's Shark Bay.
- The Daintree Rainforest is the oldest in the world – 135 million years

old. It supports over 3000 plant species, 13 mammal species found nowhere else in the world and nearly half of Australia's birds.

- Australia is the world's biggest island – a continent of 7.6 million sq km with almost 36,737 kms of coastline. An additional 10,000 sq kms of coastline encircle 12,000 islands.
- There are 10,685 beaches on which to play - that's more than anywhere else on Earth.
- Australians are custodians of one-third of the world's protected marine areas, with more than 360 protected marine areas covering 65 million hectares.
- Indigenous Australians are considered to represent the world's most ancient culture and have a unique belief system that has existed for more than 50,000 years – The Dreamtime. Aboriginals are spiritually connected to the land and refer to the Dreamtime as ways to explain their existence and tell the creation stories of this ancient place.

Uniquely Australian

- **Head out on a walking tour** around The Rock's mighty feet, sharing stories of the Anangu ancestral culture and being introduced to the wildlife that is linked to the legends of Uluru. Uluru (Ayers Rock) has bewitched travellers from all over the world. What forces formed this solitary red rock and what secrets does it hide? The Anangu Aboriginal people, (traditional owners of Uluru) who respect this rock as a mother, know many of the answers, and their understanding and legends of this harsh and beautiful land will do much to open your eyes.
- **Watch a sunset across the vast wetlands** from the natural lookout of Ubirr. Take a helicopter ride over Arnhem Land and Jim Jim Falls or stand on what feels like the edge of the world at Gumlon Falls.
- **Take your time to explore** the rugged escarpments, lush wetlands, plunging gorges and cascading waterfalls in the World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park. Witness the millions of migratory birds amongst the wetlands or watch the crocodiles lazily sun their primitive hides on the banks of the Adelaide River.
- **Travel one of the most scenic ocean drives in the world.** The 300 kilometre long Great Ocean Road is a spectacular journey that follows the south-west Victorian coastline past the magnificent Twelve Apostles. The road winds along cliff tops, up breathtaking headlands, down to the edge of beaches, across river estuaries and through lush rainforests offering panoramic views at every turn.





- **Head out to Phillip Island to see Australian wildlife in its natural habitat.** See Australia's largest colony of fur seals; many koalas; a large population of mutton birds and migratory waterbirds. See the Penguin Parade when tiny fairy penguins waddle ashore each night on the Sunset March.
- **Bushwalk to the southernmost point of mainland Australia** at Wilsons Promontory National Park. The 50,000 hectare national park features magnificent and secluded beaches, cool fern gullies, great views, and spectacular rock formations.
- **Experience a journey symbolic of Australia's history** on a visit to Parliament House. The Forecourt, with its featured mosaic dot painting, recognises the long history of Aboriginal culture in Australia. The use of marble and timber in the main foyer provides a link to the arrival of Europeans to Australia.
- **Take a cruise on Sydney Harbour** with Tribal Warrior, which offers interpretation of the Sydney landscape through indigenous eyes. The tour includes a visit to a Sydney Harbour island and a traditional welcome ceremony.
- **Explore the oldest discovered open cave system** in the world at Jenolan Caves. One of the most spectacular ways to experience these caves is by taking in one the performances or events held in the caves.
- **Explore the ancient lunar landscape** of Mungo National Park with local Aboriginal people and learn about their 50,000 years of history and culture. Discover places where rain and wind have uncovered fireplaces, hearths, artefacts and stone tools, and see for yourself the rock formation that looks like a giant tidal wave.
- **See The Tjapukai Dancers of the Rainforest** provide Dreamtime insights in tropical north Queensland. Presenting a theatrical interpretation of Aboriginal culture from the beginning into the future, Tjapukai's version of world history conveys the vast timeframes of Aboriginal experience.
- **Be stunned by the magnificence** of one of the world's greatest natural wonders, the Great Barrier Reef is an explosion of colour that stretches for 2,600 kilometres off the Queensland coast. Crammed full of the most astonishing marine life and coral reefs imaginable, this World Heritage marine wonderland is a maze of reefs and islands.
- **Immerse yourself in tranquil surroundings** in the world heritage listed Daintree Rainforest. The 135 million year old Daintree Rainforest is one of the oldest in the world. It supports over 3000 plant species, 13 mammal species found nowhere else in the world and nearly half of Australia's birds.
- **Discover Dreamtime Quinkans** in Cape York's Laura region, famous for its giant Dreamtime figures known as Quinkans. Visit the Quinkan Regional Centre and discover more about the region's dozens of Aboriginal art gallery sites, only a handful of which are accessible to tourists. To the Bidjera and Darumbal people, Central Queensland's Carnarvon Gorge National Park is one of their most sacred places and figures strongly in Aboriginal folklore and Dreamtime stories.
- **Take a tour of one of the world's last great wilderness areas** in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. This remote area of rugged ranges with spectacular gorges and unspoilt beaches is

the quintessential Australian landscape of red earth, rock, gum trees, crocodiles, wallabies and blue skies. One of the highlights is the Bungle Bungle Range in the remote Purnululu National Park. A stunning collection of beehive-shaped geological formations which were a local secret from the world until discovered in the 1980s.

- **Go swimming with the biggest fish in the world**, the whale shark, which visits Ningaloo Reef each year. Or snorkel on the pristine coral reef just a few metres offshore and see colourful fish and rare turtles. There are no overcrowded pontoons on our West Coast—it's just you, a mask and fins, and the most amazing marine life you're ever likely to see.
- **Visit the Valley of the Giants** one of Western Australia's most popular tourist destinations, named after the red tingle trees that grow up to 75 metres tall in this area. Take the ground level walk to marvel at the height of these ancient trees, or the treetop walk 38 metres above the forest to experience life in the canopy.
- **Marvel at Arkaroola**, in the northern Flinders Ranges, a spectacular wildlife sanctuary with fascinating geological formations, picturesque gorges and a variety of wildlife. The remoteness of this place combined with the startling views of the universe provides a magical setting to reflect on your sense of self and individual spirituality.
- **See Lake Eyre and the Oodnadatta Track**, as remote and barren as you can get. Mound-springs create bush oases and wetlands for camping. Red plains stretch to a horizon that blazes at sunset and there's brilliant birdwatching and wildflowers after rain.
- **Discover Kangaroo Island** home to rare seals, sea lions, koalas, wallabies, bandicoots, platypus and many more species.
- **Take a scenic flight and gaze in wonder** as the monumental splendour of the rock basin of Wilpena Pound rolls out beneath you. An impressive natural amphitheatre in the Flinders Ranges National Park, it is a beautiful place to discover Australian flora and fauna.
- **Escape the modern world in unspoilt and pristine Tasmania.** The remote isolation and natural beauty makes The Bay of Fires Walk at the edge of Mt William National Park extraordinarily special. Here you'll see Tasmania just as the Aborigines did, centuries ago.
- **Conquer the summit of Cradle Mountain** located in one of the most spectacular regions in Australia. You'll climb through majestic alpine forests, ancient rainforest, rugged mountains and glacial lakes on the trek to the top of the mountain.

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1 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

2 Geoscience Australia

3 Geoscience Factsheet, 2006

4 Australian Government Culture & Recreation portal,
<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/beach/>

5 <http://www.dfat.gov.au/aib/environment.html>