

Discover Australia

Experience the very best of the Land Down Under, journeying from quirky foodie-haven Melbourne to the heart of the Red Centre to tropical North Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef. Kick things off by eating your way through Melbourne's best restaurants before heading to Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park to explore its sacred rock formations. Next up is Sydney for a behind-the-scenes tour of the world-famous Opera House. Cruise the Great Barrier Reef aboard a catamaran, then stop in Queensland to meet members of the Kuku Yalanji: the world's oldest living culture.

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DAY 1: Melbourne

Arrive at any time. Make your way to the hotel to check-in. There are no planned activities during the day, so enjoy some time to explore the city before joining our CEO for a welcome briefing at 6pm.

Arrival Day and Welcome Meeting: The adventure begins tonight. Feel free to explore before your welcome meeting, but make sure you're back in time to meet the group. Check for the meeting time on the welcome note at the hotel. After introductions, your CEO will review the details of your tour. Please note that normal check-in times apply at our start hotels, but you can usually store your luggage for the day if you arrive early.

Accommodation: Rendezvous Hotel Melbourne (or similar)

DAY 2: Melbourne

Embark on a food tour of Melbourne with a local author and culinary storyteller. Home to many thriving immigrant communities, Melbourne has long been considered one of Australia's gastronomic hubs. On this foodie walk through the city's famed laneways, we'll experience a range of flavors and cuisines over lunch at three popular venues. Start with an Asian entree with wine; move on to an Italian restaurant for a main dish accompanied with more wine, and finish off the tour with a gelato dessert at our third stop. Spend the rest of the day at leisure.

Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Melbourne Foodie Walk

Melbourne has long been considered a major centre for foodie culture in Australia. As home to many immigrant communities, the gastronomic expertise on offer here is both diverse and exciting. Explore this incredible city on a National Geographic Journeys-exclusive guided walk, led by local author and culinary storyteller, Monique Bayer. Enjoy lunch at three popular venues that showcase why contemporary dining in Melbourne is such a special experience. Through European flavours as well as those from across Asia, you'll gain a greater understanding of the city's history, its people, and its celebrated (and gorgeous) laneways.

Free Time: Free time to explore the city or take an excursion.

Accommodation: Rendezvous Hotel Melbourne (or similar) (Meals included: Breakfast/Lunch)

DAY 3: Melbourne

Spend the day exploring vibrant Melbourne. Set out on an optional excursion on the Great Ocean Road, following spectacular sea cliffs along the windswept Southern Ocean. Visit some of the region's top wineries or wander the city's narrow cobbled lanes and alleys, discovering quirky cafés and colorful murals.

Free Time: Melbourne is full of things to do – take advantage of this free day and get out to explore! Head out on a Yarra Valley Wine Tour or book an excursion along the Great Ocean Road.

Accommodation: Rendezvous Hotel Melbourne (or similar) (Meals included: Breakfast)

DAY 4: Melbourne/Uluru

Catch a flight to Uluru, in the heart of the Australian outback. Visit the Cultural Centre of the Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park—a UNESCO World Heritage site—and learn about the beliefs and customs of the Anangu, the area’s traditional indigenous owners. Cap off the day with a glass of sparkling wine as you witness a crimson sunset over this fabled monolith.

Private Vehicle: Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Plane: Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Indigenous Cultural Centre Visit: Learn about Indigenous Australian culture in the area to get a better perspective of the history, beliefs and present-day life of the Anangu people. Discover the wild world of bush tucker (indigenous food), find out which plants are used in bush medicine, and hear creation stories.

Uluru Mala Walk: Walk along the northwest side of Uluru with your CEO to learn about the history of the area, stories of the Anangu people and these awe-inspiring uplifted sandstone rock formations.

Sunset at Uluru: Enjoy a glass of sparkling wine while watching the sunset over Uluru. Marvel at the changing colours over the desert and keep reminding yourself that yes, you really are there.

Accommodation: Desert Cardens Hotel (or similar) (Meals included: Breakfast)

DAY 5: Uluru

Awaken at dawn to witness the sunrise over Uluru and see the famous Field of Light installation. Then delve into a full-day exploration of the ancient, red-hued landscapes of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. After breakfast, make your way to Kata Tjuta, Uluru’s neighboring natural wonder for a morning of exploration. Later set out on a guided walk around the base of the monolith, gaining insight into its sacred significance to the Anangu.

Sunrise at Field of Light: Head to the Field of Light for a sunrise experience you won't soon forget. The artist Bruce Munro created an art installation that becomes illuminated in the changing light. Observe the stunning display and watch the sun rise with views of Uluru (Ayers Rock) in the distance.

Kata Tjuta National Park: Take a walk in Kata Tjuta National Park to explore the beautiful, red, domed rocks that comprise the site. While Uluru is the most famous landmark in the park, we explore a bit further afield to enjoy this stunning landscape.

Free Time: Enjoy some time at leisure.

Accommodation: Desert Cardens Hotel (or similar) (Meals included: Breakfast)

DAY 6: Uluru/Sydney

Enjoy free time on our final morning in the Red Centre. Cap off the visit with a helicopter tour over this magnificent site. Then pack up and head off to the airport for an afternoon flight to Sydney. Check in to our hotel and opt to join our CEO for a dinner out on the town in one of Sydney's famous neighborhoods.

Plane: Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Accommodation: Vibe Hotel Sydney (or similar) (Meals included: Breakfast)

DAY 7: Sydney

Take it slow with a slow with a leisurely morning, or get up early and join your CEO for a walk around the Rocks area, a waterfront neighborhood that marks the spot of the first European settlement in Australia. It also holds a spiritual significance for the area's indigenous people. Around midmorning, circle back and meet for a private tour of the Sydney Opera House. This afternoon, step aboard a private catamaran for a sunset sail around Sydney's famous harbor. Tuck into a delicious Australian Barbecue dinner as the sun sets in the background.

Metro: Get around underground via public transit.

Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Private Tour of the Sydney Opera House

During today's private tour of the Sydney Opera House the group will learn about the history of the opera house and how the architecture functions within the theatres to produce sound. You'll learn how during the mid-1950's a man from Denmark named Jørn Utzon created a sculpture on Sydney Harbour that dramatically shifted twentieth-century architecture.

Sydney Harbour Sunset Dinner Cruise: Board a private yacht and enjoy a three-hour cruise navigating the bays and coves of Sydney Harbour. Relax and enjoy the iconic scenery as our crew share stories of Sydney and its famed harbour. Enjoy a casual Aussie BBQ as the sun sets over the Harbour Bridge and Opera House and watch the city lights come alive across the water.

Accommodation: Vibe Hotel Sydney (or similar) (Meals included: Breakfast/Dinner)

DAY 8: Sydney

Enjoy a day at leisure to explore the best of Sydney. Walk the Rocks and stop by Maybe Sammy for a drink, which happens to be one of the best bars in Sydney. Take the ferry to Manly Beach or walk the Bondi Coastal walk and snap some photos. Or, spend a full day exploring the Blue Mountains on an optional excursion.

Free Time: Today is a free day and we recommend visiting the Australian Museum, Bondi Beach, or Darling Harbour.

Accommodation: Vibe Hotel Sydney (or similar) (Meals included: Breakfast)

DAY 9: Sydney/Port Douglas

Fly to Cairns today and travel up the scenic coastal road to Daintree Rainforest, the world's oldest tropical rainforest and part of a UNESCO World Heritage site. Embark on an interpretive walk with an indigenous guide at the lush Mossman Gorge, learning about the traditional ways of life of the region's Kuku Yalanji people. Continue to the resort town of Port Douglas, our home for the next three nights.

Plane: Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Private Vehicle: Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Indigenous Peoples Interpretive Walk: Take an interpretive walk through the Daintree Rainforest. Follow an Indigenous guide and learn about bush food, medicinal plants and the lasting relationship of the Kuku Yalanji people with their natural environment. Find out how to make bush soap, watch an ochre painting demonstration and sample some bush tea.

Accommodation: Mantra PortSea (or similar) (Meals included: Breakfast)

DAY 10: Port Douglas

Explore the Great Barrier Reef on a full-day catamaran tour to the Outer Reef. Immerse yourself in the largest coral reef system in the world, which teems with 1500 species of tropical fish, as well as whales, dolphins and porpoises. Hop into the warm waters off Australia's east coast and experience this marine wonderland for yourself. Lunch will be served onboard. Back in Port Douglas the evening is yours to do as you please.

Great Barrier Reef Excursion With Sailaway: You haven't truly visited Australia until you've experienced the Great Barrier Reef. Climb aboard the Sailaway VII, a 25m (82ft) sailing vessel and take the journey to the Outer Barrier Reef. Spend time in the largest coral reef system in the world, snorkel amongst colourful fish and keep an eye out for nemo (of course). You'll sail along the coastline with spectacular views of the Daintree Rainforest and pass Snapper Island on the way out to the reef. You'll enjoy a guided snorkel tour, and a glass bottom boat which offers extra viewing opportunities for those not looking to get in the water. Afternoon tea, coffee, cakes, fruit, and a buffet lunch are included and all necessary snorkelling gear and equipment.

Accommodation: Mantra PortSea (or similar) (Meals included: Breakfast/Lunch)

DAY 11: Port Douglas

Enjoy a free morning in charming Port Douglas. Stroll the town's boutique-lined streets and idyllic beaches or head to the Sunday markets to browse the stalls. Later in the day, join your fellow travelers for an exclusive cultural experience at Cooya Beach. Meet Indigenous guides for a welcome ceremony, and get acquainted with members of the Kuku Yalanji people. Our CEO will organize an optional farewell dinner to toast your adventures down under.

Free Time: Today is a free day in charming Port Douglas. Head to the Sunday markets to see what souvenirs you can take home or if you are looking for adventure consider booking an optional snorkelling or diving trip out into the Great Barrier Reef again.

Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Exclusive Indigenous experience at Cooya Beach: Enjoy an exclusive Indigenous experience at Cooya Beach featuring a welcome ceremony and a smoking ceremony, during which travellers will learn the purpose and meaning of these rituals and their significance to the Kuku Yalanji people.

Accommodation: Mantra PortSea (or similar) (Meals included: Breakfast)

DAY 12: Port Douglas/Cairns

After one last breakfast in Port Douglas, transfer back to Cairns where our tour ends at the airport mid-morning. Alternatively, extend your stay in Port Douglas.

Private Vehicle: Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

(Meals included: Breakfast)

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DAY 2:

- **Myki Explorer Public Transportation Pass:** From St. Kilda to Fitzroy, make the most of your time in Melbourne with a Myki Transportation Pass, giving you access to all tram travel throughout the city. (15AUD per person)

DAY 3:

- **Great Ocean Road Day excursion:** Enjoy an excursion along the Great Ocean Road showcasing some of Australia's most scenic coastal views (144-195AUD per person)
- **Yarra Valley Wine Tour:** The Yarra Valley is home to dozens of vineyards and wineries set along the banks of the Yarra River itself. It is considered one of Victoria's premier wine regions making it an idyllic escape from Melbourne. Stroll the grounds of these establishments, sip a glass of chardonnay, and relax in this beautiful setting. (120-129AUD per person)
- **Myki Explorer Public Transportation Pass:** From St. Kilda to Fitzroy, make the most of your time in Melbourne with a Myki Transportation Pass, giving you access to all tram travel throughout the city. (15AUD per person)

DAY 5:

- **Sounds of Silence Dinner:** Enjoy a decadent three-course dinner while watching the sunset over Uluru. Try traditional bush tucker inspired food, including crocodile, kangaroo and barramundi, while listening to a didgeridoo performance as day turns to night. After dinner, learn more about the southern night sky during an astronomy tour with a local expert – prepared to be dazzled by the incredible clarity of the outback sky from this remote location. (225AUD per person)

- **Outback Astronomy Tour:** Enjoy a tour of the night sky, learning how Indigenous people of Australia used the stars for mythology and seasonal predictions while getting a chance to stargaze through telescopes and binoculars. The Outback is one of the best places to stargaze, with low humidity and surrounding light - take a peek and see whats out there! (52AUD per person)

DAY 6:

- **Uluru Helicopter Flight:** See some of the highlights of the red centre from a bird's-eye view. Take to the air and choose between a 15-minute loop around Uluru, or opt to also see Kata Tjuta on a 25-minute flight. (150-285AUD per person)

DAY 11:

- **Great Barrier Reef Diving from Port Douglas:** Experience the largest coral reef in the world from beneath the ocean's surface on a scuba diving day trip. The Great Barrier Reef teems with 1500 species of tropical fish, as well as whales, dolphins and porpoises. Bring an underwater camera and go crazy! (301.50-450.00AUD per person)
- **Great Barrier Reef Snorkelling from Port Douglas:** Don a mask and snorkel the largest coral reef in the world, the Great Barrier Reef. Say g'day to Nemo, the clown fish, and some of the 1,500 other species of tropical fish that thrive in the warm waters off Australia's east coast. (246.50-355.00AUD per person)