

Outback & Reef – Itinerary




Highlights - 21 days, 43 hrs, 4200 nm

The complete package! This trip combines the Outback with the untouched Gulf of Carpentaria to the north and finishes on the spectacular Pacific Coast. You will experience first-hand the dramatic contrast between the dry red, interior and the lush coastal forests. We will visit three very different islands - Sweers, Hamilton and Fraser - and two UNESCO World Heritage Sites. You will travel to parts of Australia not even seen by most of the locals!


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Day	Itinerary	Hotel
1	<p>BRISBANE TO TOOWOOMBA</p> <p>Welcome to Australia and the beginning of your adventure!</p> <p>Today we will meet in the hotel lobby and then be driven a short distance west to the country town of Toowoomba, home of the Darling Downs Aero Club [DDAC] and our aviation base for the trip. En route we will pass rich agricultural land before ascending to the top of the dividing range where the town sits.</p> <p>We will arrive with sufficient time for you to get settled into your room before we have welcome drinks and dinner with our Lead Pilot. At this time you will also be given all the charts and documents you will need for the trip.</p>	<p><u>Burke & Wills</u> <u>Hotel</u></p>
2	<p>TOOWOOMBA</p> <p>In the morning we will ride to DDAC at Toowoomba aerodrome for a full day's briefing by the Lead Pilot and for check rides. Passengers are encouraged to join but there are other touring options in town. Your Tour Director will be able to provide suggestions.</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap; justify-content: space-around;">     </div> <p>While at DDAC, you will be able to visit the private vintage aircraft collection owned by Aerotec and, subject to time and aircraft availability, optional joy rides can be taken on some of these aircraft. Please let us know ahead of time, if possible, that this might be of interest to you.</p> <p>Our evening dinner will be at a select local restaurant.</p>	



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3	<p>TOOWOOMBA TO CHARLEVILLE</p> <p>Our first flying day! After departing you will see the landscape transforming as we travel inland to Charleville, at the edge of the Outback. This farming community once boasted one of the finest hotels in the country, the Corones Hotel. After our arrival, we will have a short town tour, including a visit to the Corones where we have dinner. In the evening we will do some star gazing into the southern sky at the Cosmos Centre.</p>	<p><u>Mulga Country Inn</u></p>
4	<p>CHARLEVILLE TO BIRDSVILLE</p> <p>Our second flying day takes us to Birdsville, a classic desert town with an iconic pub. Once you step inside – about 100 paces from where we park the aircraft – you will know that you have truly arrived in the outback. There are no paved roads into town for hundreds of kilometres and the locals like it that way! The town truly has a unique atmosphere.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>After arriving you will be able to settle in and spend a bit of time at the pub, if you wish, before we travel a short distance out of town to enjoy a desert sunset from the top of Big Red, the tallest dune in the Simpson Desert. This is a favourite event. Drinks and canapes will be available!</p> <p>Dinner will be at the Birdsville Hotel.</p>	<p><u>Birdsville Hotel</u></p>


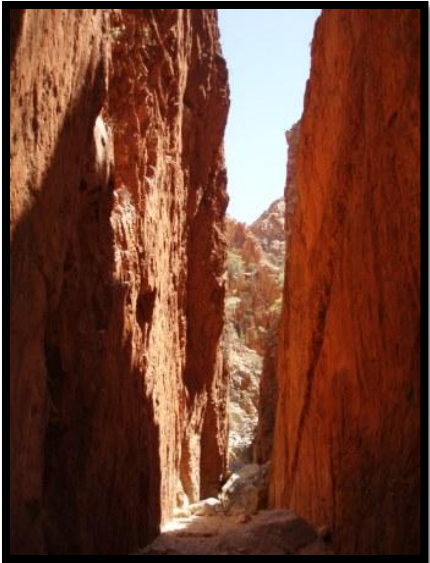
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5	<p>BIRDSVILLE TO COOBER PEDY</p> <p>En route to Coober Pedy we fly over the Simpson Desert. You will clearly see why it is designated Remote Country. In spite of the desolate terrain, there are small herds of wild horses and camels – so keep your eyes open!</p> <p>En route we stop at William Creek Pub for lunch. With a permanent population of 4 people, it is the smallest town will we visit. On approach, you may find the airstrip and the main road hard to differentiate. The locals would prefer that you land on the runway and not the main street! The pub, where we will eat, is worth a photo or two, so do have your camera ready.</p> <p>As we arrive at Coober Pedy you will see thousands of holes surrounding the town – a result of the opal mining and opal jewellery industry for which the town is famous. After arrival at our underground hotel, we suggest a visit to the underground display gallery or a walk through town.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Dinner will be at the Desert Cave Hotel.</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1; text-align: center;">  </div> </div>	<p><u>Desert Cave Hotel</u> <u>(underground rooms)</u></p>
6	<p>COOBER PEDY</p> <p>As you will discover, Coober Pedy calls itself the Opal Capital of the world. You will find a unique culture and a town that still has the feeling of a “gold rush” mining town.</p> <p>We will gain a better appreciation as to what makes this area so unique, during our half-day tour which includes an introduction to opals, town highlights, an underground church, the “Dog Fence”, the beautiful Breakaways scenic lookout and a visit to the Opal fields.</p> <p>After the tour, in the afternoon, we suggest a visit to the town’s opal shops. For selection and price, this is the best place on the trip to buy your opals.</p> <p>Our evening dinner will be at a local restaurant.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> </div> <div style="flex: 1; text-align: center;">  </div> </div>	


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7	<p>COOBER PEDY TO AYERS ROCK / ULURU</p> <p>Today we depart for Ayers Rock. En route we will pass an impressive mesa called Mt. Conner. Feel free to fly around it! From Mt. Conner we will clearly see Uluru, and Australian icon, in the distance. This spectacular monolith rises abruptly from the surrounding flat ground. And even further out we will be able to see the Olgas, also known as Kata Tjuta.</p> <p>On the evening we will see the sun set on Uluru and then have dinner under the stars, in the desert. This award winning event is popular with everyone.</p> 	<p><u>Sails in the Desert</u></p>
8	<p>AYERS ROCK / ULURU</p> <p>Today is an at-leisure day so you can set your own schedule for exploring the area. Some of the more popular activities include a walk in the Valley of the Winds, the Uluru base-walk loop or an aboriginal tour. Camel rides are also available!</p>  <p>For dinner, for a change of pace, we will have a go at a cook-your-own Aussie-style BBQ in a casual, outdoor, pub-like setting.</p>	

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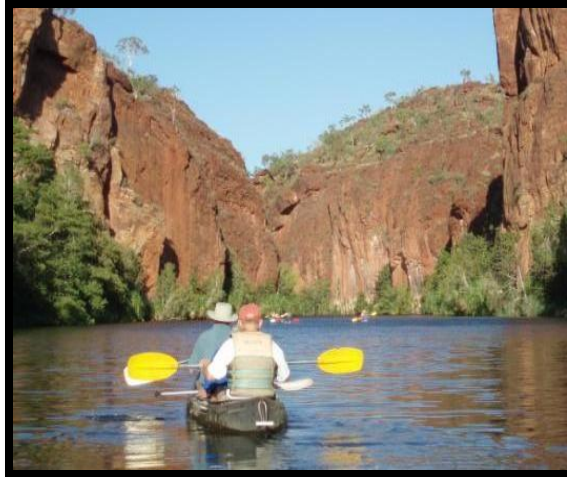
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9	<p>AYERS ROCK / ULURU TO ALICE SPRINGS</p> <p>Today's flight is short, but full of variety. After takeoff we do a scenic flight over Uluru and The Olgas. We then head to Alice Springs, flying over Kings Canyon and the Macdonnell Ranges on the way. We also pass over Standley Chasm and finally Simpsons Gap just before landing.</p>  <p>After we have settled in at the hotel, you will have the afternoon at leisure. It might be a good time to visit the Todd Mall, an outdoor pedestrian mall, or to buy an Aussie hat at our favourite hat shop. This is also a good place to do some souvenir shopping, particularly for aboriginal art and collectibles. Dinner will be at a traditional steakhouse, which also does a great camel steak!</p>	<p><u>Crowne Plaza Hotel</u></p>
10	<p>ALICE SPRINGS</p> <p>Our touring schedule today includes the Desert Park (where you will see native birds and gain an appreciation of the desert ecosystems) as well as Standley Chasm and Simpsons Gap, over which we flew the previous day.</p> <p>For the remainder of the afternoon you are free to explore on your own, but do ask your Tour Director for suggestions as there are numerous shops and interesting art galleries in town that are well worth a visit.</p> <p>In the evening we will have dinner at a local restaurant, followed by an Outback music and light show at the Sounds of Starlight Theatre.</p> 	

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11	<p>ALICE SPRINGS</p> <p>This morning you can set your own schedule for exploring Alice Springs or for relaxing as you wish.</p> <p>We will meet for lunch at the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), where we will also have a tour of the history and operations of this highly respected organization. Afterwards, there is a tour of the Reptile House, just across the street.</p> <p>For the remainder of the afternoon, the Tour Director will have suggestions for your optional activities. There are many museums of various types, art galleries and other outings to enjoy; definitely something for everyone.</p>  <p>Dinner tonight is at your leisure. The Tour Director can provide you with suggestions.</p>	<p><u>Crowne Plaza Hotel</u></p>
12	<p>ALICE SPRINGS TO ADELS GROVE</p> <p>Today is one of our longest flying days. We fly north to Tennant Creek. This leg includes the Devils Marbles waypoint, a unique rock formation, which we believe is best seen at low level. After refuelling we fly over the well-named Barkley tableland. It's remote, it's flat and is a great place to do a bit of low level flying.</p> <p>Adels Grove is an oasis in the tableland. This is the only place on the tour where we stay in tent structures. It's a refreshing, green setting after so many days in the dry interior. Please note that the toilets and showers are in a central building.</p> <p>Dinner will be on the outdoor deck at the resort.</p>	<p><u>Adels Grove</u></p>

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13	<p>ADELS GROVE TO SWEERS ISLAND</p> <p>Before departing Adels Grove, we will go for a paddle in Lawn Hill Gorge National Park – a beautiful fresh water gorge in the surrounding tableland. Keep an eye out for freshwater crocs – they are harmless so you can feel free to take a swim in the cool, clean, clear water!</p> <p>Our afternoon flight is relatively short, but includes the unblemished gulf coast with its mangrove swamps and meandering rivers. Fly low and keep your eyes open and you might see a large saltie (salt water crocodile)!</p> <p>Please note that we have cabin accommodation with toilets and showers in a separate building, as is often the case in Northern Australia.</p> <p>Dinner will be at the resort.</p>	<p><u>Sweers Island Resort</u></p>
14	<p>SWEERS ISLAND</p> <p>Sweers Island is a great place to relax and unwind thanks to its idyllic setting and welcoming hosts, Tex, Lyn, Mick and Lee.</p> <p>Feel free to walk along the beaches at your leisure or just enjoy the atmosphere of the central dining area.</p> <p>Time permitting, Tex will give us an island history tour, including a drive in his 4WD to points of interest on the island, and Mick will take us out to try our luck at fishing on the nearby reefs.</p> <p>Dinner will be at the resort.</p>	





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15	<p>SWEERS ISLAND TO UNDARA</p> <p>We have an early departure from Sweers and continue our scenic flight along the gulf before turning inland just south of Karumba. Once away from the coast we fly over more rugged and wooded terrain until we arrive at Undara Resort. We take an afternoon tour to see the lava tube caves, a rather unique geological structure.</p> <p>We will have dinner in a railway car that has been converted into a dining car. Other converted railway cars become our overnight accommodation.</p>  <p>You can expect an early morning Kookaburra wake-up call!</p>	<p><u>Undara – Railway Carriages</u></p>
16	<p>UNDARA TO HAMILTON ISLAND</p> <p>Our trip to the coast takes us over the beautiful coastal range. Closer to Hamilton Island we will fly over Whitehaven beach and the north end of the island. The brilliant white sand of Whitehaven contrasts sharply with the gray-green of the forests and the coral water. After arriving you will have time to relax or look about the island before dinner.</p> <p>For dinner we'll go “harbour side” for dinner at one of the many fine restaurants.</p>	<p><u>Reef View Hotel</u></p>


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17	<p>HAMILTON ISLAND</p> <p>The Whitsunday Islands, of which Hamilton Island is a part, is a popular vacation area for Aussies. You have two full-day options from which to choose: sailing (includes snorkelling and walking on Whitehaven Beach) or snorkelling on one of the outer reefs of the Great Barrier Reef. Both options include lunch. Please tell your Tour Director which tour you prefer.</p>  <p>Tonight you are on your own for dinner. The Tour Director can provide you with some recommendations.</p>	<p><u>Reef View Hotel</u></p>
18	<p>HAMILTON ISLAND TO FRASER ISLAND / HERVEY BAY</p> <p>Today's flight takes us along the coast the entire day. You will see why Australia is known as a land of beaches, if you haven't already guessed. After landing and transferring to the harbour, a short, scenic boat ride takes us to Fraser Island, a World Heritage Site, and to our island resort nestled in the trees.</p> <p>On arrival we encourage you to explore this beautiful resort and the surrounding grounds.</p> <p>In the evening we will enjoy the resort's dinner buffet.</p>	<p><u>Kingfisher Bay Resort</u></p>

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19	<p>FRASER ISLAND</p> <p>Fraser Island is the largest sand island in the world and has a unique, fragile ecology, which we will learn about during a full day tour in a 4WD vehicle. The tour will take you to pristine Lake McKenzie, 75-mile beach, the Maheno shipwreck from WWII, crystal clean Eli Creek and much more.</p> <p>With a bit of luck you will see a wild dingo near the beach – the purest strain of dingos in Australia!</p> <p>In the evening we will have dinner and the resort pub, a short walk from the main building.</p>	<p><u>Kingfisher Bay Resort</u></p>
		
20	<p>FRASER ISLAND</p> <p>A day to relax and enjoy the comfort and beauty of our resort; relax by the pool, take one of the many bush or beach walks that are available, or join one of the numerous ranger-guided walking tours.</p> <p>In the evening we will have our end of trip dinner at the resort restaurant.</p> <p>Please note that if the weather forecast for the next day is unfavourable, we may opt to depart on this day and have our last night in Toowoomba back at the Burke & Wills.</p>	
		

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21	<p>FRASER ISLAND TO TOOWOOMBA / BRISBANE</p> <p>For our final day of flying, we depart Hervey Bay and take a beautiful scenic flight over Fraser Island, seeing many of the sights from the previous day's tour. We then head south along the coast at 500'. Have your camera ready as there are several beautiful coastal towns and you may see sharks or manta rays, maybe even some whales.</p>  <p>We eventually turn inland and head towards Toowoomba on our final leg. En route we will pass the dramatic Glasshouse Mountains, named by Captain Cook. After landing, we unload and return to Brisbane.</p> <p>After checking in and refreshing ourselves, we will have dinner at a restaurant overlooking the Brisbane River. We will have a chance to talk about the trip highlights. This is a good time to get phone numbers and emails from the other members of the group so you can stay in touch with your new friends.</p>	<p><u>Rydges Southbank</u></p>
22	<p>DEPART BRISBANE</p> <p>After breakfast the tour is officially over. You can now check-out of the hotel and depart for your next destination.</p>	