

# Outback & Reef



## Highlights - 22 days, 43 hrs, 4200 nm

Our single most popular trip! This itinerary combines the Outback with the untouched Gulf of Carpentaria in the north and the spectacular Pacific Coast to the east. Experience the dramatic contrast between the dry red, interior and the lush coastal forests while enjoying warm Aussie hospitality throughout. The route includes three very different islands – Sweers, Fraser and the Whitsundays – and two UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Discover for yourself why our clients love this trip!

## Day 1 - Brisbane / Toowoomba

Welcome to Australia and the beginning of your adventure!

Meet the Lead Pilot and your plane at Darling Downs Aero Club [DDAC] in Toowoomba. Charts and documents for the trip will be distributed at this time.

Your Tour Director will outline some of the highlights you can expect. If you are looking for a special Aussie souvenir or experience, let us know so we can help make it happen!

## Day 2 - Toowoomba

Pilots will complete their check rides and have their pre-trip general briefings today. If time allows we will visit a private vintage aircraft collection based at the airfield. If you are interested in an optional joy ride on one of these aircraft talk to the Tour Director ahead of time.

Passengers are welcome to either join the pilots at DDAC or enjoy some of the local highlights. Your Tour Director will be able to provide you with more information.



## Day 3 - Toowoomba to Charleville

Our first flying day! See the transformation of the landscape as we travel inland, getting closer to the Outback. After arrival we will have a short tour of

this farming community, known as the Gateway to the Outback, and in the evening do some stargazing of the southern sky at the Cosmos Centre.

## Day 4 - Charleville to Birdsville

Wheels up for Birdsville, a classic desert town with its iconic Aussie 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. This welcoming town, with no paved roads into it for hundreds of kilometres, has a truly unique atmosphere!

Before dinner we will take a trip to Big Red, a Simpson Desert sand dune where, from atop the dune, we will admire the sunset as we enjoy drinks and canapés. A beautiful, peaceful experience.



## Day 5 - Birdsville to Coober Pedy

Today's highlights are Coober Pedy's opal mines and underground accommodations, the Simpson Desert and, while en route, a pub in a town with a population of four people!

As we fly over the Simpson Desert, you will understand why it is designated as Remote Country. In spite of the desolate terrain, there are small herds of wild horses and camels – so keep your eyes open!

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



Coober Pedy Opal

is famous. For an intro to opal mining, the gallery in our underground hotel is worth a visit.

## Day 6 - Coober Pedy

Coober Pedy calls itself the Opal Capital of the world. Here you will find a town that still has a “gold rush” feel and culture.

We take a half-day tour that includes an introduction to opals, town highlights, an underground church, the “Dog Fence”, the beautiful Breakaways scenic lookout and the nearby opal fields.

After the tour we suggest visiting the town's many opal shops. For selection and price, this is the best place on the trip to buy your opals.



Breakaways - Coober Pedy

## Day 7 - Coober Pedy to Uluru

Today we depart for Uluru, also known as Ayers Rock, a spectacular monolith that rises abruptly from the surrounding flat ground and is one of Australia's most famous iconic symbols.

Other points of interest are Mt. Conner and Kata Tjuta, also known as the Olgas. Many visitors talk about feeling a certain energy from these amazing natural structures.

In the evening we will travel into the desert to see sunset on Uluru and to enjoy Dinner Under the Stars. This award-winning event is always memorable!



Dinner under the Stars



## Day 8 - Uluru / Ayers Rock

Today you can explore Uluru or Kata Tjuta independently. Ask your Tour Director about other popular activities such as a walk in the Valley of the Winds, the Uluru base-walk loop or an aboriginal tour. Camel rides are also available! Tonight's dinner will be a cook-your-own Aussie-style BBQ in a casual, outdoor, pub-like setting.



## Days 9, 10 & 11 - Alice Springs

Our flight to Alice Springs, the unofficial capital of the Outback, is one of the most scenic of the trip. With views of Uluru and Kata Tjuta, Kings Canyon, the Macdonnell Range, Standley Chasm and Simpsons Gap.

While in Alice you will have ample free time to do some exploring on your own. It is one of the best places on tour to buy aboriginal art, collectibles and souvenirs. Just ask your Tour Director for more information.

Scheduled activities and visits include:

- Desert Park, where you can see the native flora and fauna close up and learn more about the land over which we are flying.
- Aviation Museum with its excellent video about Connellan Air and Outback flying in the early days.
- Royal Flying Doctor Service museum and gift shop.
- Cultural Precinct with its gallery of paintings from local artists.
- Simpsons Gap, which is typical of the gaps that are critical to the ecology of the region.
- The Telegraph station, where Alice Springs began.



Other popular options you may opt for include:

- A game of golf on the course beside the hotel.
- Reptile Centre where you can get up close with the local species!
- Railway and Truck Museum
- Todd Mall
- Standley Chasm



## Day 12 - Alice Springs to Adels Grove

Heading north we fly over the Devils Marbles, a unique rock formation best seen at low altitude. After refuelling at a typical Outback roadhouse, it's east over the cattle country of the vast, flat Barkly Tableland.

Adels Grove is an oasis at the eastern end of the tableland. After arriving and swimming in the stream,

enjoy a cool drink on the shaded deck. It's a refreshing change from the dry interior. This is the only place on the tour where we stay in tent structures.

*Please note: Because we have tent accommodations here, the toilets and showers are in a separate central building. This is common in Northern Australia.*

## Day 13 - Adels Grove to Sweers Island

Before departing Adels Grove, we take a morning paddle in Lawn Hill Gorge National Park – a beautiful freshwater stream framed by high cliffs. And keep an eye out for freshwater crocs! They are harmless however, so we can enjoy a swim in the cool, clean waters.

Our afternoon flight is a short one over the unblemished gulf coast with its mangrove swamps and meandering rivers. Fly low, keep your eyes open and you might see a large saltie (salt water crocodile)!

Our approach to Sweers is very picturesque, so you may want your camera ready.



*Please note: we have cabin accommodation here and the toilets and showers are in a separate building.*

## Day 14 - Sweers Island

Sweers Island is a great place to relax and unwind thanks to its idyllic setting and welcoming hosts, Tex and Lyn.

Highlights include Tex's 4WD island history tour, reef fishing, beach walks and the unusual and friendly wildlife! This is a colourful spot, offering many wonderful photo opportunities!

Dinner will be at the resort and with a bit of luck it may include the fish we caught just a few hours earlier!



## Day 15 - Sweers Island to Undara

We continue our scenic flight along the gulf before turning inland just south of Karumba.

Once away from the coast the terrain becomes more rugged and wooded, particularly as we approach Undara Resort.

A lava cave tour is just one of our highlights. Others include having dinner and sleeping in old railway cars that have been creatively converted into comfortable dining rooms and bedrooms. Expect to be awakened early by the call of the Kookaburras!



Undara Carriages

*Please note: we have railway car accommodation here and the toilets and showers may be in a separate area.*

## Day 16 - Undara to Hamilton Island

On departure we will get a birds-eye view of the lava tubes before tracking to Hamilton Island where we will fly over several of the Whitsunday Islands, including Whitehaven beach, considered one of the most beautiful in the country. The brilliant white sand

of Whitehaven contrasts sharply with the gray-green of the forests and the coral water.

For dinner we'll go "harbour side" to one of the many fine restaurants.

## Days 17, 18 - Hamilton Island

The Whitsunday Islands is a scenic and popular vacation area for Aussies. You can choose any one of these full-day options:

- Sailing Tour, including snorkelling and walking on Whitehaven Beach.
- Snorkelling an outer reef of the Great Barrier Reef.
- Diving the Great Barrier Reef.

Tonight you are on your own for dinner. Your Tour Director can provide you with recommendations.

On our second day you will have the full day on your own. You might consider renting one of the golf carts,



Whitehaven Beach

which you can use to drive anywhere on the resort. In the evening we'll meet for dinner at another seaside restaurant.

## Day 19 - Hamilton Island to Fraser Island / Hervey Bay

More beautiful coastal flying today!

After landing at Hervey Bay we will travel by boat to Fraser Island, a World Heritage Site, and check into

our island resort nestled in the trees. We encourage you to explore this eco-resort and the surrounding grounds. A trip to the beachside bar is a favourite activity.

## Days 20, 21 - Fraser Island

Fraser Island is the largest sand island in the world. It has a unique, fragile ecology, which we will learn about during a full-day guided tour in a 4WD vehicle. The tour will include many of the natural beauty spots for which Fraser Island is famous; pristine Lake McKenzie, 75-mile beach, the Maheno shipwreck from WWII and crystal clear Eli Creek, to name a few. And with a bit of luck you will see a wild dingo – the purest strain of dingoes in Australia!

On our second day you are free to enjoy the comfort and beauty of the resort, relax by the pool, take one of the many bush or beach walks, take a guided kayak tour or join one of the numerous ranger-guided



Fraser Island Dingo

walking tours.

In the evening we will have our official end-of-trip dinner at the resort restaurant.

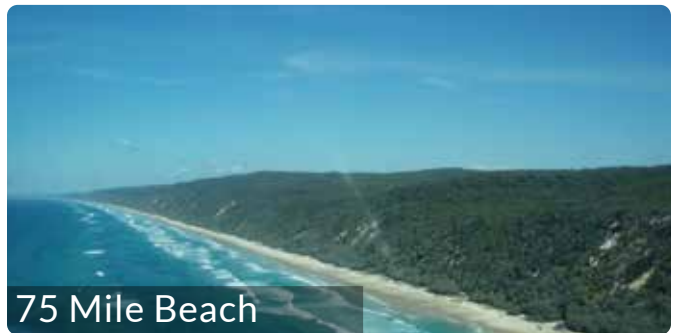
## Day 22 - Fraser Island to Toowoomba / Brisbane

For our last day of flying, we depart Hervey Bay and take a scenic flight around Fraser Island, where we will see many of the sights from the previous day's tour. We then track south along the coast at 500 feet.

Have your camera ready as there are several pretty coastal towns and you may see sharks, manta rays or whales.

En route to Toowoomba, we will pass the dramatic Glasshouse Mountains, named by Captain Cook.

Dinner will be in a restaurant overlooking the Brisbane River. This is a good time to exchange memories, photos and email addresses with your new friends!



75 Mile Beach

## Day 23 - Depart Brisbane

We say farewell after breakfast.

Thank you from the Air Safaris International team. Do tell your friends and we look forward to seeing you again soon for another trip!

Happy travels!