



“The Essence of Australia”

experience what makes Australia unique

**Sydney ~ Kangaroo Island
Great Barrier Reef ~ Daintree Rainforest ~ Atherton Tablelands
Aboriginal Culture & Rock Art ~ A Remote Outback Cattle Station**

*Note: tour can only be taken between May and October due to weather
Meals included indicated by: (B)Full Breakfast; (L)Lunch; (D)Dinner*

Day 1 Fly from your hometown to Los Angeles or San Francisco. Board flight to Sydney

Day 2 Cross International Dateline

Day 3 Welcome to Sydney, Australia! / Afternoon Free

Arrive in Sydney early this morning. You will be met at the airport and given a private transfer to your hotel in The Rocks. I suggest you leave your luggage at the hotel (too early for check-in), stroll down to Sydney Harbour; take the ferry to Manly for lunch at a seaside café while watching the surfers on this famous beach.

After returning to Sydney, walk to the Opera House and the Botanical Gardens. You'll want an early night tonight. Near your hotel there are waterfront restaurants where you can dine while looking at the Opera House and Harbour Bridge.

Accommodation: 5 star hotel, Deluxe Opera House View

Day 4 Day at Leisure, Sydney
(B)

This morning, visit the Sydney Aquarium and enjoy a VIP Guided Tour. Afternoon free. If you want to climb the Sydney Harbour Bridge, I will book it (extra cost). I will suggest other things you can do on your own. Tops would be the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Sydney Aquarium and Powerhouse Museum, and the Queen Victoria Building - an elegant, Victorian-era shopping arcade.

Day 5 Sydney to Adelaide (Fly)
(B)

Fly from Sydney to Adelaide, a charming city, just one square mile surrounded by parks on all four sides, making it an easy city to explore on foot. Walk to the South Australia

Museum for a tour of the Aboriginal Collections, which is the most significant collection in the world.

The remainder of the day is free for you to spend at your leisure. Adelaide has a lovely zoo and botanical garden, interesting craft markets, and Tandanya, an outstanding Aboriginal cultural center, where Aboriginal art may be purchased at reasonable prices. *Please Note: Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery provides scheduled tours on Thursday and Friday at 11:30 am only. Other times, visit on your own.*

Accommodation: boutique hotel x 1 night, deluxe room

Day 6
(B/L/D)

Adelaide to Kangaroo Island (Fly) / 2 Day 2 Night Kangaroo Island 4WD Tour

Your flight to Kangaroo Island is on small aircraft, so you will leave your main bags at the hotel and carry only one small bag (limit 22 lbs.).

Kangaroo Island is the best place in Australia to see wildlife – in the wild. Learn how the Australian sea-lion survives the rigours of the Southern Ocean. The colony of bulls, cows and pups rests on the beach where you can walk among them. Enjoy a visit to the spectacular and vast sand dunes of Little Sahara. From the South Coast you traverse the rural areas of the middle of the Island via the Parndana Wildlife Park. North Coast beaches, Snellings and Stokes are perfect for a leisurely stroll to enjoy the sound of waves breaking on the pristine, sandy coast. Nature walk through the drooping she-oaks of Latham National Park and observe the kangaroos and wallabies. This is also the habitat of the rare Glossy Black Cockatoo, and great country for the elusive echidna (spiny ant-eater). Note: A nocturnal tour will be provided one evening on Kangaroo Island.

Accommodation: luxurious B & B x 2 nights

Day 7

Kangaroo Island Touring

(B/L/D)

After breakfast today travel to Rocky River, headquarters of the Flinders Chase National Park. Here, kangaroos laze and Cape Barren geese graze. The Chase is home to many varieties of native animals and birds. On to Admirals Arch, an ancient limestone formation close to the ocean, a perfect haul-out area for an active colony of the New Zealand fur seal. To Remarkable Rocks, via the spectacular coastline of Cape du Couedic, where the forces of nature have carved modern sculptures out of the granite. A short bush walk searching for the Echidna and observing the colourful Kangaroo Island endemic Crimson Rosella. See Vivonne Bay; its crystal clear water, supports a colony of the Little Penguin. You go to Point Ellen to fossick for shells on the beach and possibly sight a penguin in its rookery.

Day 8

Kangaroo Island to Adelaide (Fly) / Afternoon Free

(B)

After breakfast fly back to Adelaide. Rest of the day at leisure. If this is toward the end of the week, you might enjoy a visit to the Central Market – the largest food market in

the southern hemisphere. Get a picnic and eat it in the park! You might want to visit the Wine Center, the Emigration Museum, or return to the South Australia Museum to see its fine collection of 19th century Australian landscape paintings.

Accommodation: boutique hotel x 1 night

Day 9 **Adelaide to Cairns (Fly) / Cairns to Port Douglas (Self Drive) / Rainforest Habitat**

- (B) Fly from Adelaide to Cairns. Collect vehicle and self drive north from Cairns to Port Douglas, a gorgeous one hour drive on a road that hugs the coast. Enroute, you might have a picnic on the beach.

In Port Douglas visit the Rainforest Habitat, one of Australia's leading environmental wildlife parks. The birds and animals here are totally different from those on Kangaroo Island. The aviary is wonderful! And you'll see your first "saltie" – the salt water crocodile here.

Accommodation: 4.5 star hotel x 3 nights, 1 Bedroom Apartment

Day 10 **Outer Barrier Reef Cruise**

- (L) Step aboard the world renowned, luxuriously appointed, 62- foot sailing catamaran Synergy II. Nudged casually along by tropical breezes in the warm, balmy waters encompassing Australia's Great Barrier Reef, Synergy II is the personification of complete relaxation.

Synergy II is a visually exciting, high performance vessel located in the tropical seaside village of Port Douglas in Tropical North Queensland. The region provides the perfect tropical getaway, boasting two World Heritage listed icons, the Great Barrier Reef and the oldest living rainforest on the planet, the Daintree.

This exclusive, luxurious boat will whisk you off to a dynamic reef ecosystem bursting with a huge variety of exciting marine life including over 1500 species of fish and 460 varieties of coral. Meals are a gourmet affair like nothing else seen on the Outer Reef because they're freshly cooked on board, served al fresco on the split-level rear deck. A fine selection of champagne, wine, beer spirits and cocktails are also available from their extensively stocked bar.

Day 11 **The Daintree Wanderer**

- (L) Travel through the rich farming areas toward the World Heritage Listed forest region of the Daintree National Park. Step aboard a personalized craft for a cruise on the mirrored smooth waters of the Daintree River. The cruise takes you through silent backwaters where crocodiles can normally be seen basking on the muddy banks.

Upon arrival on the northern side of the river enter the Daintree section of the Wet Tropics World Heritage protected rainforest. Journey up the beautiful Alexandra Range passing through rainforest and on to the first stop for home style morning tea deep in the

rainforest at the Jindalba boardwalk. Enjoy a delicious lunch of tropical rainforest-inspired local produce under the rainforest canopy.

Visit an orchard with many species of tropical flowering plants, both native and introduced. The sole purpose for the fruit grown at this orchard is to make pure, fresh, ice cream sold no where else on the globe. For all those ice cream lovers this is your chance to add to your list of flavors (optional extra)

Last stop will be at the outstanding panoramic picture postcard view at Alexandra Range Lookout. From here you'll have a spectacular view of the mouth of the Daintree River, Snapper Island and on a clear day Port Douglas. Cross on the Daintree River Ferry – the iconic vehicle punt that transfers you out of the world heritage rainforest back to your accommodation.

Day 12 **Self Drive Port Douglas to Atherton Tablelands (Rental Vehicle)**

Drive across the mountains into the Atherton Tablelands, an agricultural area with cattle; sheep; tea, coffee, and banana plantations, and sugar cane fields. Enroute stop to see waterfalls or wetlands filled with birds (yes, different from all the birds seen so far!). Stop for lunch in a typical small Australian town, where you can hone your skills at ordering an Aussie lunch (“one burger, hold the beets.”)

Your accommodation is an award-winning eco-accredited accommodation. Originally a rainforest, this area became a farm a century ago. The present owners are trying to re-establish the rainforest – a long process!. It boasts lovely hiking trails and vistas of the mountains.

Stay in cabins with wood stoves to ward off the chill, and kitchens. The owners leave cereal, bacon and eggs for you to cook for breakfast. You may have dinner in their restaurant or cook in the cabin.

Accommodation: treehouse in the Atherton tablelands x 2 nights

Day 13 **Morning Guided Bird Watching Tour / Remainder of The Day Free**

(B)

This morning, enjoy a guided bird watching tour with your host. The remainder of the afternoon is free for you to explore the area. You may want to drive to a creek bank to try to spot the elusive platypus, an egg-laying mammal, or try some of the bush walks. Or -- just curl up on the deck with a good book!

Day 14 **Self Drive Atherton Tablelands to Cairns Airport / Cairns to Darwin (Fly) / Visit Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (Open until 5:00 pm)**

(B)

Return to Cairns, fly to Darwin. Upon arrival in Darwin, get rental car and visit the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. This is on of the most interesting museums in Australia, known for its outstanding collection of Aboriginal art from the top of Australia. The museum also has Southeast Asian and Oceanic art and maritime

archaeology, Northern Territory history and natural sciences, and a permanent gallery devoted to the tragic events of Cyclone Tracy.

Darwin has a fascinating history. Closer to the rest of the world than any city in Australia, it began as a pearling and shipping port with a population from many European, Asian and South Pacific Island nations. This is the only deep-water port in the entire north of Australia! Darwin was heavily bombed by the Japanese in World War Two, and then rebuilt, only to be blown off the map on Christmas Eve a few years later by a cyclone. While using Darwin as your base, take time to visit some of the places that make this a very unusual area.

Accommodation: 5 star hotel x 1 night, 1 bedroom suite

Day 15 **Darwin to Mt Borradaile (Charter Flight) / 1 Day Visit to Mt Borradaile**

(B/L/D)
7:00 am

After an early breakfast, will leave your larger bags at the hotel and carry small bags for the next 4 days. You will be flying in small, charter planes (like Cessnas) into restricted Aboriginal territory, Arnhem Land; and then to a very remote outback cattle station. These are adventures that very few tourists have the opportunity to experience – but for me, they represent the very heart of what makes Australia unique.

You cannot enter Arnhem Land without special permission from the Aboriginal people, and that permission is included in your touring package. Arnhem Land holds the largest collection of the oldest rock art in the world. Your stay here will allow you to see some of the very best of that. This very unique wilderness expedition is strictly limited to a small number of visitors into the region each week.

7:30 am

Depart on board your light aircraft flight to Mt Borradaile, nestled in a landscape of rugged ranges fringed by lotus-covered billabongs. The Aboriginal people are the traditional owners of the sacred Mount Borradaile and their world renowned rock art is over 50,000 years old. Your host, Max Davidson, and his guides will reveal to you the legacy of Aboriginal Dreamtime Mythology. This is one of the most powerful cultural sites in Australia.

After you land, head out to see some rock art. You'll be hungry for lunch after climbing around in the bush to see some of the thousands of paintings out in this bushland.

After lunch, there should be time for a quick swim in a crystal clear rock pool high up in the escarpments.

At dusk enjoy an unforgettable billabong cruise while enjoying wine and canapés. Davidson's base camp at Mt Borradaile is a haven of wildlife – birds, crocodiles, and the occasional wild pig and wild water buffalo, all in one of the most interesting and diverse eco systems in northern Australia. On this cruise, crocs and magnificent birds are guaranteed!

Then back to camp for a shower before dinner.

I believe that it is an important part of the Australian experience, to have at least one night camping in the bush – and this is it! This is not rough camping in swags under the stars... nor luxurious like African safari camps. The tents have 240-volt power outlets and external lighting (until about 11 p.m. when the generator is turned off). The shower block is a short walk from the tents. All tents are spaced in a wide semi circle around the social hub, a complex that incorporates briefing room, library, kitchen and dining area.

Accommodation: Davidson's Arnhemland Safaris x 1 night

Day 16 **Mt Borradaile to Bullo River Station (Charter Flight)**

(B/L/D)

After being awakened this morning by a chorus of kookaburras, have breakfast and a bit of time for another rock art site, before lunch and boarding your charter flight to Bullo River Station.

This flight will take you across tropical wetlands, through some of the most remote outback in all of Australia to the edge of the famous Kimberley plains, one of the greatest cattle-growing areas in the world. Out here, cattle stations start at half a million acres and go up (the largest station in Australia is the size of Belgium).

Bullo River Station is encircled by the coffee coloured waters of the Victoria River and rugged hills. The Station runs around 9,000 Brahman-cross cattle for beef, which is shipped out live “on the hoof” to markets in Australia and the Middle East. It also is home to wallabies, dingoes, wild buffalo, a myriad of native and migratory birds, fish and the omnipresent crocodile. The ‘Boab’ is Bullo’s symbol and these proud trees dot the entire property.

Marlee & Franz Ranacher welcome you into their home and relish the opportunity to share their stories and encourage guests to participate in all that Bullo has to offer. Bullo River Station was made famous by Australian author Sara Henderson (Marlee’s mother), whose American husband Charles Henderson developed Bullo River in the 1950’s, with the story of station life vividly chronicled in Sara’s books. Since 2001, Bullo River Station has belonged to Sara’s eldest daughter, Marlee, and her Austrian-born husband, Franz, with the noisy assistance of their two young sons Ben & Franzie. Marlee & Franz are charming and entertaining hosts and meeting with them in the informal surroundings of the family home and hearing Marlee’s own stories of growing up on the property adds a fascinating dimension to any visit. Marlee has since written her own account of growing up on Bullo and the book “Bullo – the Next Generation.”

Please note that due to the nature of running a property of this size, it sometimes means that either Marlee or Franz may be personally unavailable during certain periods – especially during the mustering season. A small team of dedicated guides will be on hand to ensure you are well looked after and will miss nothing of the Bullo River experience.

A purpose built guest area consists of twelve double/twin rooms each with air-conditioning and en suite facilities. Located a few metres from the main house, all

rooms have sliding door access to the lawns surrounding the homestead. Of course, guests are welcome to enjoy full access to the vast living areas of the homestead plus use of the small swimming pool. Breakfasts are usually served outside on the homestead verandah with dinners in the main dining room. Dinners are informal and the menu relies heavily on the two exceptional products of the property, namely fresh barramundi (hopefully one you have caught yourself) and organic prime beef.

There is much to do here! Upon arrival, for example, you might be taken over to the Bullo River to fish for barramundi at sunset. Even if you don't catch one of these great fighting (and great tasting) fish, you'll not forget the day you sat fishing on a cattle crossing by a river whose banks are guarded by a handful of salt water crocs. The boys, Franzie and Ben, might be serving you cheese and olives to go with sunset drinks (if they have finished their homework) or they might be helping their father catch bait – all with an eye on the old salties!

After dinner, Franz might teach you how to crack a whip... one just never knows what will happen at Bullo River!

Accommodation: Bullo River Station x 3 nights

Day 17

Bullo River Station

(B/L/D)

This morning you might have a river cruise up the spectacular Bullo River Gorge to fish or spot crocodiles, visit an aboriginal rock art site, see a completely different bunch of birds than we've seen elsewhere, watch cattle mustering and bull catching, and tour the cattle yards. Do try to spend some time with the boys as they attended the "School of the Air."

They have a small schoolroom at the homestead, and a tutor works with them. But their teacher is several hundred miles away, in Katherine, and their fellow classmates live on stations that stretch over a huge area. The boys are taught by telephone and computer. They even have choral practice by the air! The tutor works with them because Mom Marlee is out catching bulls, grading roads, and running this amazing cattle station.

The station only takes tourists during the "dry" season (the Aussie winter). In early November, the station doesn't take tourists because it is the beginning of "the wet" – the cyclone season. The weather builds up until horrific storms break across the Kimberley, turning rivers into floodplains and putting roads well under water. Darwin gets a terrifying 10,000 lightning strikes a month. The station is totally isolated from the outside world until late April or early May, when Marlee gets on the road grader and opens Bullo up again. She and Franz have small fixed wing planes and helicopters to get them into town for emergencies.

Day 18

Bullo River Station

(B, L, D)

Today continue to enjoy the many activities offered at Bullo River. At some point you will be taken on the most amazing helicopter ride of your life – over the cattle station, to

a magnificent gorge dotted with waterfalls. You'll land on the sandy beach and get out for a swim you will never, never forget!

Day 19 **Bullo River Station to Darwin (Charter Flight) / Collect Rental Vehicle**

(B/L)

Sometime during the day you will be transferred by a single engine charter flight to Darwin. Upon arrival pick up rental car and drive to the hotel.

Accommodation: 5 star hotel x 2 nights, 1 bedroom suite

Day 20 **Free Day with Rental Vehicle**

(B)

After being “out bush” for several days, it is good to have some “down time” to absorb all that you have seen and done. Use this time to rest and explore Darwin a bit more. Visit the Botanical Gardens, the marina, or drive to one of the nearby national parks – or do that last minute shopping for goodies to take home.

I hope that this day will be a Thursday, so you can enjoy the fascinating, multi-cultural Mindil Beach Market. This wonderful place has over 260 craft and food stalls. In a matter of minutes you can sample food specialties from Japan, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, as well as fish and chips and burgers. You might browse the stalls for a pocketbook made from barramundi skin, shell necklaces, heaps of leather goods, and all sorts of very strange “medicines” you will not want to buy....

If it is not Thursday, go to the Darwin Sailing Club for dinner at sunset – and for the last time, watch the sun as it sets into the Arafura Sea. I always think of Amelia Earhardt when I am here because she departed from Darwin toward this sea on her last flight.

Day 21 **Darwin to Sydney (Fly)**

(B)

This morning is free for you to spend at leisure. After lunch return the rental car at the airport and fly to Sydney, arriving early evening. (FYI: there is only one decent flight per day from Darwin to Sydney, in the afternoon. All the other flights depart at midnight and arrive 6 a.m.) Overnight at an airport accommodation.

Accommodation: airport hotel, Standard Room x 1 night

Day 22 **Depart Australia!**

Your flight to Los Angeles will depart mid morning. After arriving at LAX, depending on the connections to your home airport, you may need to spend a night at LAX.

Additional touring in Australia, or a visit to an exotic South Pacific island, can easily be added to this tour.

Land only, Person Cost in USD: \$13,297.00*

*subject to changes in the exchange rate, seasonal surcharges, and confirmation of the itinerary. Based on double occupancy. Please call for full itinerary and details about the accommodations.

Inclusions:-

- Accommodation range from bush camps to 5 star.
- Transfers as specified by private charter coach, scheduled flight and charter flight
- Rental car inclusions as specified in the itinerary
- Meals only as indicated by (B) Full Breakfast, (L) Lunch, and (D) Dinner
- Entry fees & touring to attractions as specified in the itinerary
- Emergency phone assistance
- Australian Goods & Services Tax

Exclusions:-

- International and Domestic Airfares with the exception of Adelaide to Kangaroo Island, charter flights from Darwin to Mt. Borradaile, to Bullo River, back to Darwin, which are included.
- Meals not indicated on the itinerary
- Rental car exclusions as specified in the itinerary
- Beverages with meals
- Items of a personal nature i.e. phone calls, liquor, and laundry
- Use of hotel rooms before/after normal check in/out times or pre-registration
- Costs of optional touring
- Any services not mentioned in the itinerary
- Hotel/Airport Porterage
- Personal travel insurance (baggage/medical/tour cancellations)
- Tips or gratuity
- Unforeseen expenses due to last minute airline rescheduling or delays (inclusive of baggage delay, missed departure and loss of passport & cabcharge vouchers)
- Medical or hospital expenses