



AUSTRALIA



Wild Australia: Reef, Rainforest and Cultural Exploration

12 days | Choose your dates

Best Season to Travel: **SEP - JUN**

Australia is a land of superlatives, and the best of it comes together in the North Queensland territory. This in-depth, small group expedition delves into aboriginal culture and also reveals rare wildlife and unique natural formations that exist only in Australia. You'll swim and snorkel on the Great Barrier Reef. Go bushwalking in ancient rainforests. Learn about aboriginal traditions and the dreamtime beliefs that offer a very different view of reality. Get close to koala, cassowary, kangaroos and platypus, the world's only egg-laying mammal. And visit the dramatic Wallaman Falls, the country's tallest single-drop waterfall.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel in a small group for the most up-close wildlife experience with koala, cassowary, kangaroo, kookaburra, platypus, and other species unique to Australia.
- Snorkel and swim the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral reef system and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Visit Magnetic Island, a refuge for an estimated 800 koalas.
- Experience Reef monitoring at Reef HQ, Australia's National Education Centre for the Great Barrier Reef.
- Explore rainforests, waterfalls, mangroves and mountains within the UNESCO-listed Wet Tropics of Queensland.
- Immerse yourself in aboriginal culture at Mungalla Station, an Indigenous Protected Area where you'll visit a museum, take an ethno-botany walk and toss boomerangs.
- Add an optional post-trip extension to the multicultural metropolis of Sydney, the birthplace of modern Australia.



TOWNSVILLE AND CASTLE HILL BY SEAN

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - DEPARTURE

Meet in LAX to depart the U.S. for the approximately 14-hour flight from Los Angeles to Brisbane, Australia.

DAY 2 - IN TRANSIT

Overnight flight crossing international dateline.

DAY 3 - TOWNSVILLE

Upon arrival in Brisbane and after collecting luggage and completing entry formalities, exit the airport and look for the orange shuttle bus stop and orange bus to transfer to the domestic airport for the flight to Townsville. Upon arrival in Townsville, visit Billabong Sanctuary for lunch and a talk on the birds and wildlife of Australia with emphasis on what makes them so unique. This 25-acre park boasts eucalyptus forest, rainforest and wetlands where animals are seen in their natural habitat. Highlights include koalas, wombats, dingo, Southern Cassowary, Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Wedge-tailed Eagle, free-range red and eastern grey kangaroos, and a variety of reptiles including an immense estuarine crocodile. Enjoy a photo op with a koala, and then visit the lookout point on Castle Hill. Check in at The Ville Resort & Casino. This evening buffet dinner in the restaurant. *Overnight at The Ville Resort & Casino. (LD)*

DAY 4 - TOWNSVILLE

This morning enjoy a scrumptious buffet breakfast, then visit the nearby Reef HQ Aquarium, the

world's largest living coral reef aquarium. Upon arrival enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of the exhibits and the Turtle Hospital. There will be also be a presentation on Australia's Great Barrier Reef and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Rapid Monitoring program. Next, change into stinger suits for a snorkel in the coral reef aquarium to practice snorkeling and to see examples of soft and hard corals and other sea life. After a quick shower visit the Museum of Tropical Queensland for an insider's look at the museum collections. Visit the taxidermy workshop to learn about the process of preserving and collecting specimens. Take a walk along the waterfront area, known as the Strand. Dinner on own. *Overnight at The Ville Resort & Casino. (BL)*

DAY 5 - TOWNSVILLE

This morning after breakfast depart for the marina to board the Adrenalin for a trip out to the UNESCO World Heritage Great Barrier Reef. The



SOUTHERN CASSOWARY

cruise is approximately two hours to Lodestone Reef (location weather-dependent). En route there will be discussion on safety and risk management, both on board and below the surface. Enter the water for snorkeling on the pristine coral bommies found here, where colorful tropical fish, hard and soft corals, mantled clams, starfish, and a variety of other sea creatures abound. After an approximately one-hour snorkel, have lunch on board and then continue snorkeling for approximately an hour and a half before journeying back to the mainland. Transfer back to the hotel, dinner on own. *Overnight at The Ville Resort & Casino. (BL)*

DAY 6 - PALUMA RANGE AREA

This morning after breakfast, check out and, if preferred, store luggage.

Depart for a visit to the TYTO Wetlands. Begin with the visitor center and then explore the wetlands, trails, and observation tower. Continue to the Paluma Range National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Stop along the way for birding and waterfalls at Crystal Creek. Continue to Hidden Valley Cabins and meet your hosts, Bonnie and Ian, who have owned the cabins for 30 years. Settle in and have lunch and then this evening visit a nearby river for a chance to see platypus in the wild. This evening dinner and stargazing with stories about dreamtime with an aboriginal elder. *Overnight at Hidden Valley Cabins. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - PALUMA RANGE AREA

Today spend a full day exploring the area on birding and wildlife safaris around Hidden Valley. This evening, go owling, take a nocturnal life walk, and have an Australian barbecue dinner. *Overnight at Hidden Valley Cabins. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - MAGNETIC ISLAND

This morning birding, breakfast and then check out of Hidden Valley. Visit the dramatic Wallaman Falls, a dramatic, horsetail waterfall plummeting 879 feet into Stony Creek, making it the highest permanent, single-drop waterfall in the country. Along the way, be on the lookout for the commonly spotted Southern Cassowary, a large flightless bird with a colorful blue head. Continue back to Townsville with a refreshing stop at a local favorite, Frosty Mango, for tropical

ice cream treats en route. Specialties include ginger, mango, and coconut ice cream to name a few temptations. Continue to the harbor and board the Sealink Ferry to Magnetic Island. After the approximately 15-minute ferry transfer, continue to check in at apartment style accommodation situated on Horseshoe Bay. Walk to a nearby restaurant for dinner with a local guide. *Overnight at Sails Apartments or similar. (BLD)*

DAY 9 - MAGNETIC ISLAND

This morning rise early and walk to nearby Bungalow Bay Koala Village for a special breakfast with the animals. After breakfast, transfer to a nearby beach for some time to enjoy the beach, go hiking and birding or snorkel from the shore. Have

a picnic lunch at the beach. This afternoon visit a local site to learn about the koala population study and look for koalas in the wild. This evening dinner on own to enjoy the variety of nearby restaurants. *Overnight at Sails Apartments or similar. (BL)*

DAY 10 - TOWNSVILLE

This morning birding with local guide on Magnetic Island with transportation included. Lunch is on own. Later afternoon ferry back to mainland and check in at The Ville. Dinner on own. *Overnight at The Ville Resort & Casino. (B)*

DAY 11 - TOWNSVILLE

This morning after breakfast visit Mungalla Station for a full day program exploring aboriginal culture. Learn about the history of European settlement, human atrocities as depicted in the on-site museum, and then experience an ethnobotany walk. Touch and hold weapons and tools used by early aboriginal people and even try your hand at tossing a boomerang. Have a delicious lunch cooked underground with a variety of vegetables and meats to choose from. Late afternoon return to hotel. This evening farewell dinner at Belize Yacht Club with drinks. *Overnight at The Ville Resort & Casino. (BLD)*

DAY 12 - DEPARTURE

This morning transfer to the airport for the flight to Brisbane, shuttle to international airport for flights back home or fly to Sydney for optional post program extension to Sydney. (B)



LAND PRICING

\$4,900 (10 participants + 1 leader)

\$4,700 (20 participants + 2 leaders)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, local guides in each region for duration of program, and carbon offset.

International airfare, gratuities, or items of a personal nature are not included.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure. Non-refundable final payment is due at 95 days prior to departure. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.



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