



THREE SISTERS ROCK FORMATION IN BLUE MOUNTAINS

# AUSTRALIA

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COAST, THE OUTBACK, AND THE BUSH

16 DAYS | Choose your dates

*Experience both the breadth and depth of all Australia has to offer on this immersive 16-day journey. See the iconic skyline of Sydney on a harbor cruise, and take in the sprawling vistas of the Blue Mountains. Snorkel in the Great Barrier Reef, step into the Daintree Rainforest, and stroll along the shores of Cape Tribulation. Discover the spiritual significance of enormous sandstone formations in the red desert outback, and witness the “Penguin Parade” on Phillip Island. No matter the landscape, you’ll come face-to-face with Australia’s unique wildlife and learn more about the people—from ancient Aborigine to 19th century swagmen—who have called this striking country home.*

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Sail Sydney Harbour for views of the iconic Sydney Opera House and other landmarks.
- Snorkel and swim the Great Barrier Reef.
- Walk along the elevated platforms through the lush Daintree Rainforest and take a river cruise on Daintree River.
- Tour Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in the heart of the Outback and learn more about the ancient Aboriginal People that consider the site sacred.
- Try “billy tea” the traditional way, made in a billycan over fire.
- Take a bushwalk in You Yangs Regional Park to observe koalas, wallabies, kangaroos, and emus.
- Explore Phillip Island and see the daily arrival of the Little Penguins living there.



GREAT BARRIER REEF BY MADIS BØDKER



BABY WALLABY BY LAURIE MCLAUGHLIN





## ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER



### DAY 1 - DEPART USA

Depart on your flight to Australia. Departure day can be any day except Sunday or Monday.

### DAY 2 - EN ROUTE

### DAY 3 - SYDNEY

Upon arrival early this morning at Sydney International Airport, proceed through Immigration & Customs formalities, then into the Arrivals Hall. Meet our representative, who will provide you with your documentation for your tour arrangements in Australia. Then transfer by private vehicle to your hotel, located in Sydney's Central Business District. Your room has been pre-registered for immediate occupancy. Early this afternoon, walk from your hotel to Circular Quay to check in for the Captain Cook Harbour Story Cruise for harbour sightseeing at its best. Experience the most beautiful harbour in the world, aboard premium vessels specially designed for Sydney, with spacious outdoor decks and expansive viewing windows from all-weather indoor lounges, all accompanied with coffee to order, fine teas and a delicious selection of sweets. The cruise route can vary depending on what's happening on the harbor, but every cruise includes Sydney's iconic landmarks, such as the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Royal Botanic Gardens, Garden Island Naval Base, Taronga Zoo, Government House, palatial waterfront homes, Fort Denison, and more. On return to Circular Quay, make your own way back to the hotel. *Overnight at Grace Hotel or similar.*

### DAY 4 - SYDNEY

Today your guide will collect you from your hotel as you commence your journey into the heart of Blue Mountains National Park, one of seven national parks that make up the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. This wonderland of sandstone outcrops, deep ravines, and hazy blue eucalyptus forests boasts luxury retreats and the world's steepest railway. Today your guide will take you off the beaten path to visit remote lookout locations and discuss the history, flora, and fauna of the region. Your first stop of the day is at Euroka Clearing, located deep in the national park. You'll have time to wander at leisure and try to spot some of the abundant bird life and wild kangaroos that can be found here. Your guide will prepare a refreshing morning tea or coffee for you with some local delicacies. From Euroka Clearing, continue to ascend the Blue Mountains via the highway, stopping along the way for stunning views of Jamison Valley. Arrive next at Eaglehawk Lookout, a remote lookout point, for views of the famous Three Sisters, where your guide will discuss the legends behind this formation. You'll also have time for photos: the character of this formation changes throughout the day with the sunlight, making it a striking photographic subject. Lunch is around the mountain, in the village of Blackheath. This afternoon visit Govetts Leap, one of the most famous lookouts in Australia. The magnificent waterfall plunges 590 feet to the base of the cliff, and Grose Wilderness stretches out before you. From here, travel to the western boundary of the park and descend into Hartley Vale, a beautiful farmland valley rich in history and home to kangaroos, emus, and other bird life. Your last stop of the day is at the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, where there's time for a short inspection of the flora, including the ancient Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*), before returning to Sydney. *Overnight at Grace Hotel or similar. (BL)*

### DAY 5 - LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK

After breakfast, check out and transfer to Sydney Domestic Airport for your flight to Brisbane. On arrival, meet your driver for your two-hour transfer through open farmland, eucalyptus woodland, and coastal mountain range to Lamington National Park, home to Australia's most extensive remaining tract of sub-tropical rainforest and one of its richest wildlife areas. Amid mountain peaks, cliffs, and gorges is O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, a family-run guesthouse. Check in to your Mountain View Room on arrival, and spend the remainder of the day exploring your surroundings. Close to the Retreat you'll meet Crimson Rosellas and King Parrots, and you might even see the striking Regent and Satin Bowerbirds. You may wish to walk along the rainforest trail down to the ancient "Wishing Tree," an Antarctic Beech, for a chance



to spot Bassian Thrush, Brown Thornbill, and more Logrunners. Through open re-growth, you can look for both Variegated and Superb Fairy-Wrens. Enjoy watching the pademelons, a type of small marsupial, from the deck of the Sunset Lounge before dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat. (BD)*

#### DAY 6 - LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK

This morning, after breakfast, enjoy a four-hour private tour with a guide from O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat to learn about the flora and fauna of Lamington National Park. This afternoon, continue your own exploration of the Retreat's surroundings. *Overnight at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat. (BD)*

#### DAY 7 - CAIRNS

After an early breakfast, transfer by private vehicle to Brisbane Airport for your flight to Cairns in tropical north Queensland. On arrival at Cairns Airport, transfer by private vehicle to your hotel, located on the Esplanade. You will have the remainder of the day to explore your new surroundings. *Overnight at Pacific Hotel Cairns or similar. (B)*

#### DAY 8 - CAIRNS

After breakfast, walk the short distance from your hotel to the Reef Fleet Terminal and board the *Ocean Spirit*, a 105-foot sailing catamaran, for your day trip to the Great Barrier Reef. Arrive at Michaelmas Cay, the largest of the local uninhabited coral cays. Here, you can snorkel in the cay's protected shallow waters, cruise in the semi-sub for a diver's view of the reef, watch the fish-feeding presentation, and observe the island bird life. Throughout the day, the "beach buggy shuttle" will transfer you between the *Ocean Spirit* and the beach. If you prefer a more leisurely day on the Great Barrier Reef, relax on the beach or on the catamaran's spacious decks. Morning and afternoon tea, buffet lunch, snorkeling equipment, buoyancy vests, and Lycra suits are all provided. On return to Cairns and Marlin Marina, walk the short distance back to your hotel. *Overnight at Pacific Hotel Cairns or similar. (BL)*

#### DAY 9 - CAIRNS

Enjoy an early breakfast at your hotel, then meet your guide for your safari tour of Daintree Rainforest and Cape Tribulation. As this is a full-day tour, be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes and bring hats, sunscreen, insect repellent, and a water bottle. Driving north along the scenic Captain Cook Highway, you'll learn about the history of the area and admire spectacular views of the coastline and Coral Sea. Stop for morning tea and a guided river cruise on the Daintree River, where you will see estuarine crocodiles, mangrove forests, and endemic wildlife. After stopping for panoramic views along the Alexandra Range, take a guided tour of the ancient rainforest along elevated boardwalks. Search for the elusive, rare and totally unique Southern Cassowary as you learn about the flora and fauna of this particular habitat. After a barbecue lunch, your tour continues onto the 4WD Bloomfield Track to pristine Emmagen Creek, a hidden gem of this rainforest, where you'll have the opportunity to have a swim without any crowds. As you explore the creek area, sample a cup of billy tea, made in a traditional Australian billy. Then head to Cape Tribulation Beach for a stroll along the beach and the boardwalk to the photography platform. After a brief refreshment stop, cross the Daintree River by cable ferry and begin the journey back to the hotel. *Overnight at Pacific Hotel Cairns or similar. (BL)*

#### DAY 10 - ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

In the early morning, transfer to Cairns Domestic Airport for your flight to Ayers Rock in Central Australia. On arrival at Ayers Rock Airport, take the complimentary shared transfer to Yulara Village and your hotel. (Note that your room may not be available for check-in until 3 pm. However, the hotel's reception will be happy to hold your luggage.) After check-in and lunch (own expense), you will be collected for your small group tour through the Uluru



Kata Tjuta National Park, the most profound and culturally significant monolith in Australia. Please wear covered shoes and bring at least one liter of water, a fly net screen, and a full-brimmed hat. As you enter the park, your first stop allows for a photographic opportunity of Uluru and its towering presence. Your guide will take you to the Mutitjulu Waterhole, where you will learn the creation stories of *Liru* (the poisonous snake) and *Kuniya* (the python) as well as other prominent *Tjukurpa* (Dreaming) stories. You will also see ancient Aboriginal rock art and learn how Uluru has always been a culturally and spiritually significant site for local indigenous peoples. Then, you will head to the Talinguru Nyakunyjaku viewing area, where you can see an uninterrupted view of Uluru with Kata Tjuta behind it. Return to your hotel at approximately 7 pm. *Overnight at Voyages Desert Gardens Hotel.*

#### DAY 11 - ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

Rise early this morning for your small group tour of Kata Tjuta. Please wear covered shoes, and bring at least one liter of water, a fly net screen, and a full-brimmed hat. As you drive toward the rock formation of Kata Tjuta, observe the sunrise colors changing on its surface and the surrounding desert landscape. Upon arrival at a viewing area, walk to the best vantage point to see the 36 domes that make up this spiritual site. Then, head to the western side of Kata Tjuta, where you will have the opportunity to relax and enjoy an outback picnic breakfast. Walk through Walpa Gorge (named for the wind, *Walpa*, that blows between the domes of Kata Tjuta), and learn about the geological history and cultural significance of these formations. Return to your hotel, and enjoy free time in Yulara Village. Early this evening, attend the Sounds of Silence Dinner, a dining experience on a viewing platform overlooking the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. Enjoy canapés as the sun sets, and when darkness falls, enjoy a buffet incorporating native bush ingredients while you listen to the sound of a didgeridoo. After dinner, stargaze with a resident star talker, who will help you locate constellations, planets, and galaxies—visible due to the exceptional clarity of the atmosphere. (An upgrade to the internationally acclaimed art installation Field of Light is available at additional cost.) *Overnight at Voyages Desert Gardens Hotel. (BD)*

#### DAY 12 - KANGAROO ISLAND

After breakfast, check out from your hotel and transfer to Ayers Rock Airport for your flight to Adelaide via Alice Springs. On arrival at Adelaide Airport, collect your luggage and proceed to the Regional Express (REX) check-in. *\*Check-in baggage weight is restricted on this flight, and you may have to place some of your luggage in the secure locked area until your return to Adelaide Airport. If so, a small fee will be incurred.* From Adelaide, fly to Kingscote on Kangaroo Island (airfare included in tour cost). On arrival in

Kingscote, check in at your hotel and enjoy dinner. *Overnight at Wanderers Rest or similar. (BD)*

#### DAY 13 - KANGAROO ISLAND

This morning embark on a full day wildlife tour of Kangaroo Island. Begin the morning with a “cuppa” and homemade cakes before taking a trail walk through tall eucalyptus trees where koalas snooze overhead. Then travel to the north coast of the island and arrive at Latham Conservation Park, where you’ll take a guided bush walk. Look for wallabies, which are near-extinct on the mainland, and a subspecies of kangaroo that’s found nowhere else. Enjoy lunch at a private bush location, and sample local fish, fresh salads and fine South Australian wines. In the afternoon, head to Seal Bay Conservation Park, where you’ll take a guided beach walk among Australian sea lions. Watch pups playing in the surf, see old bulls and their scars from territorial disputes, and learn about their unique breeding biology. For the rest of the afternoon, explore more of the southeast island—destinations and experiences dependent on the season. Return to your hotel and enjoy dinner. *Overnight at Wanderers Rest or similar. (BLD)*

#### DAY 14 - PHILLIP ISLAND

Transfer to Kingscote Airport for your flight back to Adelaide (airfare included in tour cost). Collect any stored luggage from Regional Express (REX), then check in for your flight to Melbourne. On arrival at Melbourne Airport, transfer to your hotel. Check-in may not be available until 2 pm. After lunch on your own, walk the short distance to join The Little Penguin Bus for a small group tour to Phillip Island, with its famous penguin colony and “Penguin Parade.” Enjoy the two-hour scenic drive to Phillip Island, with commentary and a halfway break. (Extra time is built in for potential traffic delays, and if possible, for a scenic drive around part of the island upon arrival.) After some free time at the café and information center, join a wildlife ranger for a group tour. *\*Ranger tour groups are limited to 10 people, aged 12 years and older. You’ll have reserved “front row seats” for the arrival of the little penguins—the “Penguin Parade,” and you’ll also be taken to boardwalks to see penguins arriving there. After your ranger tour you will have some more free time for the visitor center, café and souvenir shops before returning to Melbourne. The tour duration is approx. 8 hours. Overnight at Clarion Suites Gateway or similar. (B)*

#### DAY 15 - PHILLIP ISLAND

Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, then meet your guide for today’s nature and wildlife tour. Please wear walking shoes, and bring sunscreen, a hat, a water bottle that can be refilled during the day, plus a light rain jacket in case of inclement weather. *\*Although this tour is vehicle-based, most of the day is spent outside the vehicle on a number of easy, flat terrain bushwalks so that you can get close to nature. Passengers must be able to walk unassisted at least one mile on uneven dirt surfaces to ensure wildlife sightings. There may be up to five walks of this duration during the day.* Travel just 45 minutes west of Melbourne, to the bushland of You Yangs Park. This area is of great significance to the local Aboriginal People of the Wathaurong Tribe; the granite rock formations of the You Yangs have served as a meeting place for Aboriginal People from all over southeastern Australia. The park is also home to a population of wild koalas that are researched and monitored to ensure the best possible sightings. Walk through the gum trees searching for koalas, wallabies, kangaroos, and birds in their natural setting. Your wildlife guide will introduce you to each koala as an individual, with a history, social life, and family. You will also learn about threats to koala habitats, how to approach koalas quietly, and how to watch them from a respectful distance without disturbing them. At one of five boneseed-removal sites, stop for a few minutes to improve the koala habitat by removing some of these noxious weeds. For lunch, enjoy a picnic served under the gum trees, including gourmet sandwiches, fruit and cakes, and Australian billy tea, the traditional tea of the swagmen.

Leave the You Yangs and travel just 10 minutes to nearby Serendip Sanctuary. Drive, then walk through gum trees and across grasslands, seeking mobs of eastern grey kangaroos. They are wild and secretive, and with the help of your guide, you’ll walk quietly along kangaroo tracks and use trees and bushes for shelter during your search. If you spot them before they see you, you’ll be able to observe natural kangaroo social behavior. Or, they might see you first, and you’ll witness the magnificent sight of a wild mob hopping—fast, powerful, and silent. Also look out for emus, and take a short walk to the billabong for a glimpse of the waterbirds that live there. *Overnight at Clarion Suites Gateway or similar. (BL)*

#### DAY 16 - DEPART

After an early breakfast, check out from your hotel and transfer to Melbourne International Airport for your homebound flight. Welcome home! (B)



### LAND PRICING

**\$6,860** per person (based on double occupancy)

Price includes accommodations, meals as indicated, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, entrance fees, activities, vehicle transportation, and two internal flights as indicated.

Price does not include international flights, internal flights (except where indicated in itinerary), visa fee, optional activities, gratuities, or items of a personal nature.

*Price valid until March 31, 2019.*

### TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants traveling in 2018 or beyond. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/ Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

### 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.*