

AMAZING AUSTRALIA

March 2, 2019 - 20 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$13,185 double/twin

\$16,075 single



> This tour is limited to 25 people. Early booking recommended!

25

> Please add 0.1% GST.

> **Early Bookers:** \$200 discount on first 8 seats; \$100 on next 4

> **Experience Points:** Earn 220 points; redeem 220 points by Nov. 15.

Includes

- Flight from Victoria to Vancouver and return
- Flight from Vancouver to Melbourne
- Current air taxes, fees and fuel surcharges
- 16 nights accommodation and hotel taxes
- 17 days of coach transportation
- Locally-guided tour of Melbourne
- Colonial Tram Car with dinner
- Phillip Island with Koala Conservatory
- Penguin Parade
- Yarra Valley tour with winery visit and tasting
- Blue Lotus Water Gardens & Yarra Chocolaterie
- Day-long drive along Great Ocean Road
- Otway National Park rainforests
- Port Campbell National Park & Twelve Apostles
- Flight from Melbourne to Adelaide
- Locally-guided tour of Adelaide
- Art Gallery of South Australia & Museum
- Ferry to/from Kangaroo Island
- Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary & sea lion colony
- Flinders Chase National Park
- Ghan Train from Adelaide to Alice Springs in Gold Class service
- Locally-guided tour of Alice Springs
- School of the Air & Royal Flying Doctor Service
- Alice Springs Telegraph Station
- Flight from Alice Springs to Ayers Rock
- Uluru sunset and sunrise events
- Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Center
- Uluru Field of Light
- Kata Tjuta sunrise spectacle
- Flight from Alice Springs to Cairns
- Catamaran excursion to Great Barrier Reef with glass-bottom boat ride and snorkel equipment
- Skyrail Cablecar and Army Duck drive
- Excursion on Kuranda Scenic Railway
- Flight from Cairns to Sydney
- Locally-guided tour of Sydney
- Sydney Opera House tour
- Blue Mountains tour with cablecar and funicular
- Featherdale Wildlife Park
- Dinner cruise on Sydney Harbour
- Flight from Sydney to Vancouver
- Gratuities for Australian guides and drivers
- Luggage handling at hotels, train and flights
- Gratuities to local guides, drivers and naturalists
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- **39 meals:** 16 breakfasts, 1 brunch, 9 lunches, 13 dinners

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* HIGHLIGHTS *

MELBOURNE
PHILLIP ISLAND PENGUIN VIEWING
YARRA VALLEY
GREAT OCEAN ROAD
ADELAIDE
KANGAROO ISLAND
GHAN TRAIN IN GOLD CLASS
ALICE SPRINGS
ULURU / AYERS ROCK
SUNRISE VIEWING OF ULURU

ULURU FIELD OF LIGHTS
CAIRNS
GREAT BARRIER REEF
SKYRAIL RAINFOREST CABLECAR
KURANDA SCENIC RAILWAY
SYDNEY
BONDI BEACH
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
BLUE MOUNTAINS
SYDNEY HARBOUR DINNER CRUISE

Itinerary

Saturday, March 2: *Meals: D*
Transportation is provided to Victoria Airport, then we fly to Vancouver. Get acquainted with your fellow travellers during dinner at Globe @ YVR in the Fairmont Hotel. Our flight to Melbourne, Australia, leaves tonight.

Sunday, March 3:
We cross the **International Date Line** and lose one day.

Monday, March 4: *Meals: L,D*
Our flight arrives in **Melbourne** this morning. We meet our guide and driver and enjoy an orientation tour. Australia's second largest city has a wonderful blend of architectural heritage, modern skyscrapers, and contemporary designs. We see the Bourke Street Mall, the tree-lined beauty of Collins Street, the splendour of St. Paul's Cathedral, the ornate Princess Theatre, and Federation Square. We stay four nights at Pullman on the Park and the rest of the afternoon is free time. Our Welcome to Australia Dinner is a unique experience aboard the **Colonial Tram Car** while driving through the streets of Melbourne. The tram has plush velvet seats, beautiful brass lamp fittings, background music, air conditioning, and even stabilizers to ensure a smooth ride.

Tuesday, March 5: *Meals: B,D*
Our guide leads a walking tour of Melbourne, featuring its famous lanes. Robert Hoddle designed the city's street map in 1836 but refused to include lanes because he saw them as detrimental to the respectable establishment. Melbourne's little laneways evolved to create access

to buildings and are fascinating to explore today. This afternoon, we drive to Phillip Island and visit the **Koala Conservatory and Nature Park**, home to koalas, seals, and shearwaters. When dusk arrives, we have admission to the premium viewing area to witness the **Penguin Parade** on floodlit Summerland Beach. The Visitor's Centre has excellent exhibits about the life of the Little Penguin.

Wednesday, March 6: *Meals: B,L,D*
The day is devoted to the **Yarra Valley**, east of Melbourne. During the 1850s, it was on the route to the goldfields of Warburton and, in the 1890s, the valley developed as the primary food production region for Melbourne. The Yarra Valley was Victoria State's first wine-making district, starting in 1838 and has become the world's leading cold climate wine region with internationally known names such as Domaine Chandon, St Huberts, De Bortoli, and Yering Station. We first visit the Blue Lotus Water Gardens, then a winery for wine tasting, and Fergusson's Winery for lunch. Another culinary treat is the **Yarra Valley Chocolaterie**. Back in Melbourne, we savour a seafood dinner on the South Bank.

Thursday, March 7: *Meals: B,L,D*
We head west from Melbourne for a day exploring the incredible scenery along the **Great Ocean Road**. Along the 200 km of awesome coastal vistas, we enjoy the sandy beaches of the Surf Coast, the rainforests of **Otway National Park**, quaint villages such as Lorne and Apollo Bay, and the renowned **Twelve Apostles** in Port Campbell National Park.

Friday, March 8:*Meals: B,D*

We fly to **Adelaide**, South Australia's cosmopolitan coastal capital. Its ring of parkland on the River Torrens is home to renowned museums such as the Art Gallery of South Australia, displaying expansive collections including noted Indigenous art, and the South Australian Museum, devoted to natural history. Our driver-guide provides an orientation to the city including Victoria Square, the grand boulevard of King William Street, and Trinity Church. We stay two nights at Stamford Plaza.

Saturday, March 9:*Meals: B,L,D*

We take a ferry over to **Kangaroo Island**, South Australia's premier nature-based tourism destination. Take a guided walk on the beach among a colony of rare and wild Australian sea lions with a National Park Ranger. Stroll the Admirals Arch boardwalk watching the long-nosed fur seals. Head to the Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary to see koalas relaxing in the trees. Spend the afternoon at **Flinders Chase National Park**, renowned as a sanctuary for native Australian animals including kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, and echidnas.

Sunday, March 10:*Meals: B,L,D*

Get ready for an awesome journey on the legendary **Ghan Train**. It pulls out of Adelaide at noon for the 25-hour journey to Alice Springs. A gourmet lunch is served soon after. You are travelling in **Gold Class** which offers a private lounge and restaurant. Beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) are complimentary throughout the trip. Your private compartment has seating for the daytime which converts to upper and lower bunks for the night, and a private bathroom. During the afternoon, we pass the **Flinders Ranges** which contain some of the oldest rock formations on the planet. Perhaps indulge in a pre-dinner drink, followed by a superb meal and conversations with fellow diners.

Monday, March 11:*Meals: Brunch, D*

Nothing quite prepares you for the spectacle of sunrise in the vast Australian Outback. Rising early, we alight the train for 1½ hours to a viewing area with benches, and a breakfast snack is served. You have never truly experienced a **sunrise** until you have seen this one, and as you look out to the horizon and admire its dramatic, gorgeous colours, you realize that the earth at your feet is equally vivid and deep red. Brunch is served on the train and soon you are crossing the state border into the Northern Territory. Then we glide through the MacDonnell Ranges and arrive at **Alice Springs** in early afternoon. Our driver/guide meets us at the train station. Alice Springs began

its modern history as Stuart, a telegraph station on the Adelaide to Darwin line, and the end of the Ghan railway. Until the early 1930s, Alice Springs was the name given to the waterhole that was discovered and named by a surveyor in 1871 during construction of the Overland Telegraph Line, then the name was extended to the growing town. Alice Springs was named after Alice Todd, wife of the Superintendent of Telegraphs. First we visit the **School of the Air**. Since 1951, it has provided an educational resource for isolated school children, servicing an area of over 1.3 million sq km. Next we tour the **Royal Flying Doctors Service**, an aeromedical organization that provides primary health care and 24-hour emergency service to anyone who lives, works or travels in rural and remote Australia. We stay overnight at the Doubletree Hotel.

Tuesday, March 12:*Meals: B*

Our first stop is the Alice Springs Telegraph Station which presents the story of the connection of Australia to the rest of the world in 1871. The actual spring or waterhole is nearby. Then we enjoy the panoramic view from **Anzac Hill** which is also the site of the War Memorial. This afternoon, we fly from Alice Springs to Ayers Rock (Uluru) and stay two nights at the luxurious five-star Sails in the Desert Hotel. A sunset tour is arranged.

Wednesday, March 13:*Meals: B,D*

The incredible monolith of **Ayers Rock** was named in 1873 for Sir Henry Ayers, Colonial Secretary, but was given the dual name "Uluru / Ayers Rock" in 2002, recognizing the aboriginal name. **Uluru** originally sat at the bottom of a sea, but today stands 348 metres above ground. Surprisingly, 2.5 km of its bulk is underground. Uluru is about 3.6 km long and 1.9 km wide, with a circumference of 9.4 km. We get up early to drive to Talinguru Nyakunytyjaku – the Uluru sunrise viewing area. Here we witness first light as it gently embraces the desert landscape. As the sun rises, so too does the remarkable birdlife that calls Uluru home. Listen as the birdsong welcomes the new day and experience the tranquility of nature. Next we visit the base of Uluru and the Mutitjulu waterhole, home of a wanampi, an ancestral watersnake, followed by the **Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Center**. The afternoon is leisure time at the hotel. As darkness falls and Uluru is thrown into silhouette, the acclaimed **Field of Light** illuminates. As far as the eye can see gentle rhythms of colour light up the desert. Created by artist Bruce Munro, the exhibition covers seven football fields and contains 50,000 spindles of light in a spectrum of ochre, deep violet, blue and gentle white.

Thursday, March 14:*Meals: B,D*

This morning, you can choose another sunrise spectacle that features the rocks of **Kata Tjuta** where 36 domes comprise this spiritual place. Walk between sheer rock walls into Walpa Gorge as the guide explains the significance of this sacred ceremonial site (Kata Tjuta tour is included). Alternatively, sleep in and have leisure time. In the afternoon, we fly to **Cairns** and stay three nights at the Pacific Hotel.

Friday, March 15:*Meals: B,L*

We board a catamaran for the hour-long trip out to the amazing **Great Barrier Reef**. Its protected shallow waters make it the perfect location from which to explore the reef, for both snorkelers and scuba divers. Equipment is supplied along with expert commentary by a naturalist, a glass-bottom boat tour, and a buffet lunch. About six hours is spent at the reef, so there is plenty of time to explore its wonders.

Saturday, March 16:*Meals: B,L*

Today is a unique experience riding from Cairns to Kuranda and back by cablecar, army duck, and train. We start on the **Skyrail Cablecar** which skims along the tops of the rainforest canopy for 7 km and provides awesome views of the Barron Falls. We get off twice at the mid-stations and take short walks through the jungle. In Kuranda, there is time to browse the shops of the Heritage Market and lunch is included at Rainforestation. Then we board an amphibious **World War II Army Duck** for a drive through the rainforest jungle. Next is the Pamagirri Aboriginal Experience which includes the Aboriginal Dance Show and the Dreamtime Walk. Then we board the **Kuranda Scenic Railway**, one of the world's spectacular train rides, to travel back down to the coast. Opened in 1891, the train crosses 37 bridges and goes through 15 tunnels during the 37-km journey.

Sunday, March 17:*Meals: B,D*

We fly to Sydney and stay four nights at the Park Royal Hotel which has an excellent location next to the bustle of Darling Harbour.

Monday, March 18:*Meals: B,L*

We start with a driving tour of **Sydney** highlights such as the historic Rocks district, Darling Harbour, the Parliament House, Hyde Park, Mrs. Macquarie's Chair, and popular Bondi Beach. Next is a guided tour of the renowned **Sydney Opera House**. This is Sydney's most recognizable building and officially one of the seven wonders of the 20th century, completed in 1973. Joern Utzon, the Danish architect, said the inspiration for his masterpiece was the sails of yachts on the harbour. There may be an opportunity to see a show in one of the four theatres and discounted tickets can be purchased after taking a tour.

Tuesday, March 19:*Meals: B,L*

An all-day coach tour features the scenic **Blue Mountains**. At Featherdale Wildlife Park, we meet Australian animals such as koala, kangaroo, wallaby, and Tasmanian devil. Along Cliff Drive, there are panoramic views of the Three Sisters, Katoomba Falls and Jamison Valley. We descend 600 metres by cablecar into the rainforest, then stroll along a boardwalk through the jungle, and ride the steep funicular railway back up to the rim, all with terrific views. Lunch is included at Lookout Echo Point.

Wednesday, March 20:*Meals: B,D*

Today is leisure time, so you can explore other sights around Sydney. A walk around Darling Harbour is recommended, crammed with shops and restaurants, and the huge Australian National Maritime Museum. Tonight is our Farewell to Australia dinner featuring a cruise on **Sydney Harbour**. Enjoy views of the Harbour Bridge, Opera House, Fort Denison, Point Piper, and Watson's Bay. A smorgasbord of fine Australian cuisine is provided while listening to live commentary about the passing sites.

Thursday, March 21:*Meals: B*

This morning, we drive to Sydney Airport for a noon flight departure. It is 14 hours to Vancouver, but we cross the International Date Line and arrive at 7:30 am on the same date. Another flight takes us to Victoria and a transfer is provided to your pickup point.

Tour Notes:

Currency & Expenses: The currency in Australia is the dollar and, as of May 2018, it is at par with the Canadian dollar. You should order Australian dollars from your bank 1-2 weeks before departure, or plan to use ATMs. Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere. Gratuities have been included for all group meals and for local guides, naturalists and driver-guides. Tipping is not expected for meals you buy on your own and tax is included on menu prices. Costs for meals and attractions you choose yourself are generally higher than in Canada. As this tour has been planned and priced 10 months before departure, it is possible that exchange fluctuations could affect the fare, in which case you will be notified of the increase or decrease.

Documentation: A passport is required and must be valid on the date of entry. An Australian Electronic Travel Authorization is required and is applied for on-line before you leave. Directions will be provided at final payment.

Accommodation is booked in superior hotels in the range of 3 to 5 stars. Hotel costs are similar to those in large Canadian cities, so many travellers would consider them expensive. However, on an extensive holiday like this, you want to be staying in well-located and memorable accommodations.

Beverages: In many countries outside Canada and USA, it is not standard practice to include beverages with tour meals. On this tour, a soft drink or bottled water is included with each meal and other beverages can be purchased. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages are complimentary on the Ghan Train.

Flight upgrades: Please enquire about current prices for upgrades on the flights between Vancouver and Australia. Premium economy and business class may be available.

Triples are not available on this tour.



Activity: Due to the historic nature of some attractions and the nature walks looking for birds and animals, it will be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces, and walk at least a kilometre, plus stand for an extended time on walking tours. This tour is not appropriate for people who require the use of a walker. Some days are long or have early departures, such as the sunrise events on the Ghan Train, at Uluru, and Kata Tjuta. There can be long walks in the airports and you are urged to request a cart at check-in if this could be a concern. The coaches, trains and vessels cannot carry a scooter. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, drivers and local guides have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be asked to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due November 15, 2018. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$200 discount on first 8 seats and \$100 on next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after November 15.

Cancellation Policy: Up to October 1, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$200 per person. From October 2 to November 15, the cancellation charge is \$1,000 per person (your deposit). From November 16 to December 14, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From December 14 to January 14, 2019, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After January 14, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to currency exchange rates or taxes and surcharges from airlines and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until the time of departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Home pickups and dropoffs may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and the size of the chartered vehicle. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

Tour 25: This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning the tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.

Photo Credit: Wikipedia (Sydney Opera House)

e-points: This tour earns 220 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until November 15.

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