

JOURNEY BEYOND
THE GHAN

Outback Spirit



ARNHEM LAND & RED CENTRE SPECTACULAR

THE GHAN EXPEDITION

DARWIN TO ADELAIDE

DEPARTING MONDAY / FRIDAY

(SET DEPARTURE DATES)

(MAY TO SEPTEMBER)

Discover a sacred and mystical land that few manage to discover on this extraordinary journey through the heart of Arnhem Land. Immerse yourself in the world's oldest surviving culture before settling into The Ghan's gentle rhythm as you travel through the breathtaking natural wonders of Outback Australia before arriving in Alice Springs. From exploring the West MacDonnell Ranges to taking your place beside spiritual Uluru and Kata Tjuta, you'll understand why people travel great distances to see the Territory's remarkable landscapes and icons

INCLUSIONS

- Arrival flight from Cairns to Nhulunbuy
- 12 nights intimate small-group touring with Outback Spirit Tours, travelling on board a state-of-the-art 4WD Mercedes-Benz vehicle, including hotel, lodge and safari camp accommodation, meals, beverages, all attractions, and permit fees to enter Aboriginal land and guided touring
- Departure flight from Seven Spirit Bay to Darwin
- Transfer from hotel to Darwin Rail Terminal
- 1 night aboard The Ghan Expedition Darwin to Alice Springs, including all meals and beverages, and Off Train Experiences in Katherine and Alice Springs
- Transfer from Alice Springs Rail terminal to hotel
- 1 night Alice Springs accommodation, including breakfast
- 5 nights intimate small-group touring with Outback Spirit Tours, travelling on board a state-of-the-art 4WD Mercedes-Benz vehicle, including accommodation, meals and guided touring
- 1 night Alice Springs accommodation, including breakfast
- Transfer from hotel to Alice Springs Rail Terminal

- 2 nights aboard The Ghan Expedition Alice Springs to Adelaide, including all meals and beverages and Off Train Experiences in Coober Pedy
- 22 breakfasts, 19 lunches, 20 dinners

HIGHLIGHTS

- Journey through the heart of Arnhem Land on an exclusive touring route and immerse yourself in the world's oldest surviving culture
- Enjoy a 'Welcome to Country' performance in Nhulunbuy
- Visit award winning art centres and enjoy a bush Medicine demonstration
- Discover the vast and sacred Arafura Swamp by boat and 4WD
- View exquisite rock art at Mount Borradaile and visit the ancient 'catacombs'
- Enjoy authentic cultural activities with Indigenous guides
- Explore the rugged Cobourg Peninsula by open back 4WD safari
- Take a half-day Barramundi fishing adventure on the Liverpool River
- Visit the ruins of historic Victoria Settlement of Port Essington, circa 1838
- Explore the pristine waters of Cobourg Marine Park Sanctuary
- Cruise through ancient Nitmiluk Gorge in Katherine
- Visit Kings Canyon for a guided scenic walk and journey through the West MacDonnell Ranges, visiting Standley Chasm and Ormiston Gorge
- Visit World Heritage-listed Uluru and enjoy a guided base tour
- Early risers will experience the magic and beauty of the sun rising over Uluru
- Dine under the stars at the 'Sounds of Silence' dining experience
- Explore the rock formations of Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) and Walpa Gorge
- Admire the internationally acclaimed 'Field of Light' display at Uluru and watch as it illuminates the desert night
- Explore underground sights in Coober Pedy



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DAY 1 – NHULUNBUY (GOVE)

Your 13 Day Arnhem Land Wilderness Adventure commences with your flight from Cairns to Nhulunbuy. On arrival in Nhulunbuy you will be greeted by your friendly and professional Tour Director. This afternoon you'll explore this frontier village, created in the 1960's after the discovery of Bauxite on the Gove Peninsula. Visit the Roy (Malpi) Marika Lookout for incredible views towards the coast, Gayngaru Wetlands and Gove Harbour before settling in for a two-night stay at the Walkabout Lodge. (D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Walkabout Lodge

**The walk to Nhulunbuy Hill look out is 64 steps (3 storeys).*

DAY 2 – GOVE PENINSULA

The Gove Peninsula has been home to Yolngu people for over 60,000 years and is one of the most culturally significant regions in Australia. You will get a true sense of this with a special 'Welcome to Country' ceremony at Wirrawuy Beach, where you will learn about Yolngu culture and kinship firsthand. We will also visit the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka art centre, which boasts many renowned Aboriginal artists whose work (particularly those painted on bark) can be found in galleries all over the world. Yirrkala is also where the Aboriginal Land Rights movement started, when the 'bark petition' was sent to Federal Parliament in 1963.

From the art centre it is a short stroll to Shady Beach, where we enjoy lunch followed by a special Bush Medicine and Women's Healing demonstration. Experience traditional healing ways and hear stories of how Yolngu live and heal on their land.

Return to Nhulunbuy late this afternoon for your second night at the Walkabout Lodge. (B,L,D)

DAY 3 – MURWANGI

Today your journey into the heart of Arnhem Land begins. Departing Nhulunbuy, we follow the Central Arnhem Road south west to the Goyder River, the main tributary flowing into the massive Arafura Swamp. Enjoy a picnic lunch before taking a track to the north, which follows an escarpment before descending on to the Arafura floodplains. This area, known as 'Murwangi', is the site of

your exclusive safari camp where we will be staying for the next two nights. Check in to your deluxe safari suite before dinner in the lodge dining room. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Murwangi Safari Camp

DAY 4 – ARAFURA SWAMP AND MURWANGI DISCOVERY TOUR

The Arafura Swamp is one of the largest wooded swamps in Australia and covers approximately 1,300 square kilometres. This incredibly diverse wetland can support up to 300,000 waterbirds at any one time, including Magpie Geese, Egrets, Black-necked Stork and Brolgas. The swamp is of great cultural significance to the Yolngu People and was also the location for the 2006 film 'Ten Canoes'.

Today enjoy a tranquil cruise on the main lagoon, followed by a 4WD adventure around the edge of the swamp. For both activities you will be accompanied by Indigenous guides who will explain why this spectacular area is so significant to them.

Later this afternoon we return to camp for a little free time before dinner. (B,L,D)

**Today the tour will split into two groups to undertake the day's adventures. Group 1 will follow the itinerary shown above, while Group 2 will do the activities in reverse.*

DAY 5 – RAMINGINING TO BARRAMUNDI LODGE

This morning head into Ramingining for a visit to Bula'bula Art Centre. Here you can chat to local artists and watch them paint right in front of you. There is also the opportunity to purchase artwork if so desired.

After morning tea at the Centre, we head further west towards Maningrida. To get there you will cross the Blyth and Cadell Rivers, arriving at the Barramundi Lodge early this afternoon. The lodge is one of the most recognised fishing destinations in Australia. With special permission from traditional owners, the lodge enjoys exclusive fishing licenses for numerous remote waterways, including the Tomkinson and Liverpool Rivers. The features 12 beautiful safari suites and a restaurant overlooking the floodplains below.



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After lunch on the front deck, you will enjoy a familiarisation talk from the lodge managers. You are then free to settle into your safari suite, with the remainder of the afternoon yours to relax, catch up on some washing or simply soak up the stunning view of the floodplains. Spend the next two nights here to explore the local area. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Arnhem Land Barramundi Lodge

DAY 6 – FISHING ADVENTURE AND CULTURAL TOUR

This morning enjoy an exclusive fishing adventure on the Liverpool and Tomkinson Rivers - pristine waterways teeming with Barramundi. Your expert fishing guides will take you to where the fish are biting aboard our sturdy Ocean Master vessels, the pinnacle for remote marine adventures featuring an onboard restroom and shade canopy.

Today's fishing adventure is also a wilderness tour, so even if fishing is not your thing, you will still enjoy the amazing scenery and informative commentary.

This afternoon we visit the Maningrida Arts and Cultural Centre and the Djomi Museum for an immersion in the culture and spiritual richness of the area.

Later this afternoon enjoy a sunset drink on the deck before dinner and tell everyone about the one that got away! (B,L,D)

DAY 7 – MANINGRIDA TO MOUNT BORRADAILE

Departing Maningrida after breakfast, our travels take us through the stone country of west Arnhem Land. Cross the Goomadeer and Liverpool Rivers before arriving at the turnoff to Davidson's Arnhem Land Safaris, Mount Borradaile. From here we travel along a 40 kilometre bush track into the safari lodge, arriving in time for lunch. You will then check-in to your cabin, your home for the next two nights.

This afternoon the team at Mount Borradaile will take you through 40,000 years of Aboriginal culture in a truly awe-inspiring landscape. The area contains some of the most stunning rock art galleries in the world, and in terms of artistic quality, quantity, colourfulness, and state of preservation, it is virtually unrivalled. The walls of the many rock shelters are decorated with innumerable pictures documenting traditional Aboriginal life over many

thousands of years. Subjects range from now extinct animals to twentieth century sailing ships and the iconic Rainbow Serpent.

This afternoon return to the lodge for dinner. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Mount Borradaile

**The walk to Mount Borradaile Rainbow Serpent is a 1 kilometre, 2 hour walk, over rocks, roots, caves and sand.*

DAY 8 – MOUNT BORRADAILE

Today we jump into the open-back Toyotas and continue exploring the wonderland that is Mount Borradaile. Visit the ancient 'catacombs', where the sandstone has been eroded by wind and water over 600 million years resulting in a massive cave system that is full of incredible Aboriginal art. Learn about the variety of techniques used in rock paintings as the styles changed over thousands of years of occupation and storytelling. You will also wander through various occupation sites and view a range of artefacts from when these sites were still in use.

After lunch, it is time to explore the incredible wetlands of the Cooper Creek. Admire the prolific birdlife and massive crocodiles sunning themselves on the banks as you discover lagoons that seem more from a story book than from real life. As the sun seeks the horizon and sets over the floodplain, enjoy a glass of wine and nibbles before returning to the lodge for our final night with Davidson's Arnhem Land Safaris. (B,L,D)

**The walk at Mount Borradaile is 3.5 kilometres with some rocks to climb.*



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DAY 9 - COBOURG PENINSULA TO SEVEN SPIRIT BAY

Departing Mount Borradaile early, head north and venture into the Garig Gunak Barlu National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula. Travel up the eastern side of Port Essington to Black Point where you will meet the marine crew from Seven Spirit Bay and board the lodge's custom-made adventure craft for the short transfer across Port Essington. Upon arriving at the lodge, you will be allocated your room for the next three nights, a unique and luxurious 'habitat' overlooking Coral Bay. We meet again later this evening for dinner in the lodge restaurant. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 3 nights Seven Spirit Bay Wilderness Lodge

DAY 10 – PORT ESSINGTON AND THE HISTORIC VICTORIA SETTLEMENT

Today enjoy a marine adventure down Port Essington aboard the lodge's specially designed vessel 'MV Arafura'. Departing Seven Spirit Bay, we retrace the course of the early mariner's square riggers, passing landmarks like Gunners Quoin, Low Point, Turtle Rock, Observation Cliff, and Record Point on our way to the historic Victoria Settlement. Surveyed in 1838, Victoria Settlement was the third attempt by the British at a northern settlement, after Fort Dundas on Melville Island and Fort Wellington at Raffles Bay. Conceived to facilitate trade with Asia, the settlement consisted of 24 houses and a hospital. Disease was rampant and living conditions poor, leading to its abandonment in 1849.

Upon your arrival at Victoria Settlement, you will take an informative and fascinating tour of the old buildings and ruins and learn about life in the early British occupation. An optional extension walk will also lead to lonely gravestones in the forest, almost forgotten by history.

After a picnic lunch on the beach, you will get back on the water again to enjoy a leisurely cruise back to Seven Spirit Bay. The waters of the Cobourg Marine Park are alive, so keep your eyes out for dolphins, dugong, manta rays and crocodiles.

Return to Seven Spirit Bay where the remainder of the afternoon can be spent at your leisure. Perhaps take a dip in the palm fringed swimming pool, or just relax in your

luxurious habitat before enjoying sunset drinks on the veranda and dinner in the restaurant. (B,L,D)

**The walk at Victoria Settlement is a flat 3.7 kilometres in the sun along a downhill slope.*

DAY 11 – TREPANG BAY MARINE AND 4WD ADVENTURE

The Cobourg Marine Park is teeming with Barramundi, Spanish Mackerel, Golden Trevally, and Coral Trout, to name just a few. After breakfast, we board the lodge's state-of-the-art fishing vessels for an exclusive half-day fishing adventure in Port Essington. Featuring an onboard restroom, shade canopy and comfortable seating, each boat takes only six people so everyone will have the chance to reel something in!

Seven Spirit Bay's fishing guides are true professionals with intimate knowledge of the marine park. They will take you to the best fishing spots and share their marine sanctuary expertise while enjoying some of the most spectacular coastline to be found in northern Australia. Our expert guides fish these waters regularly and will have up-to-date knowledge of the many potential sites that are producing fish and will give you the best chance of success.

Barramundi are just one of many species we target, or you may have the chance to wrestle with an arm-stretching Trevally or Black Jewfish.

A mix of small meandering creeks, mangrove-lined bays, rocky outcrops, and deeper water "bommies" mean that there will nearly always be something to be found somewhere. Once you have tested your luck, we will make our way to a sheltered beach landing at Low Point where we disembark and rendezvous with the lodge's chef for a delicious BBQ bush lunch under a shady tree.

After lunch enjoy a 4WD safari to appreciate the wonders of Garig Gunak Barlu National Park. First up is a visit to the stunning Nypa Palm gallery (Nypa Fruticans), one of only three locations in Australia where they can be found (the others are Melville Island and the Wenlock River). A short drive further brings us to the upper reaches of Trepang Creek, one of many creek systems that are a mix of spring-fed and tidally influenced systems that help provide nourishment to the rich marine life of the park.



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Next, you will explore the savannah woodlands of the park, potentially spotting Banteng and Buffalo and gaining some insight into the interesting and varied coastal habitats, before a visit to Gunners Quoin lookout. Return to the lodge late afternoon for your third and final evening at Seven Spirit Bay. (B,L,D)

**Today the tour will split into two groups to undertake the day's adventures. Group 1 will follow the itinerary shown above, while Group 2 will do the activities in reverse. The timings for the Port Essington fishing adventure are dependent upon tidal movements. As such, lunch arrangements are subject to change to suit the itinerary set by the Seven Spirit Bay marine managers.*

DAY 12 – FAREWELL TO SEVEN SPIRIT BAY

This morning we will depart for the airstrip and board our Cessna Grand Caravan for the 45-minute scenic flight across Van Diemen Gulf. Upon arriving in Darwin this afternoon, we head to the city to check in to Hilton Garden Inn Darwin located on the picturesque esplanade.

Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at your leisure before boarding the Charles Darwin for a delicious Territory-style sunset dinner cruise to celebrate a truly amazing trip! With beautiful views of the Top End city, there is no better way to experience Darwin's renowned sunsets than from onboard the Charles Darwin. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 1 night Hilton Garden Inn Darwin

DAY 13 – BOARD THE GHAN EXPEDITION IN DARWIN

Your 13 Day Arnhem Land Wilderness Adventure comes to an end this morning.

Enjoy an early breakfast at your hotel before checking out and making your way to the lobby ready to check in for your journey aboard The Ghan Expedition.

Settle into the comforts of The Ghan Expedition, relax in your cabin, or mingle with fellow travellers in the Outback Explorer Lounge. Enjoy lunch ahead of your Off Train Experience in Katherine. In a region renowned for jaw-

dropping natural assets, Katherine boasts one of the Top End's best – the incredible Nitmiluk Gorge. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 1 night The Ghan Expedition

DAY 14 – THE GHAN EXPEDITION, ARRIVE ALICE SPRINGS

After breakfast you'll arrive into Alice Springs, where a day of fascinating Off Train Experiences awaits. Once your experience is complete, you will be transferred to your hotel to enjoy the evening. (B,L)

OVERNIGHT: 1 night DoubleTree by Hilton Alice Springs

DAY 15 - ALICE SPRINGS

Today your 5-night Red Centre adventure with Outback Spirit Tours starts. Early afternoon, you will be met by your professional crew and enjoy a brief afternoon tour of Alice Springs, including Anzac Hill. You'll learn what makes this unique outback town tick before dinner at the hotel. (B,D)

OVERNIGHT: 1 night DoubleTree by Hilton Alice Springs

DAY 16 – ALICE SPRINGS TO KINGS CANYON

Today, depart Alice Springs and travel the Mereenie Loop through the Western MacDonnell Ranges. Visit Standley Chasm and Ormiston Gorge before arriving at Kings Canyon. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Kings Canyon Resort

DAY 17 – KINGS CANYON – WATARRKA NATIONAL PARK

Experience the wonders of majestic Kings Canyon with your choice of walk, including the 6-kilometre rim walk, featuring breathtaking views of the Watarrka National Park, or a less arduous 2.6 kilometre walk along the canyon floor. After returning to the resort in the afternoon, there is the opportunity to take a 15-minute helicopter flight over Kings Canyon and the Watarrka National Park. (B,L,D)

PLEASE NOTE: Additional costs are applicable and weight limits apply to all scenic flights.

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DAY 18 – KINGS CANYON TO ULURU

Pass through Kings Creek Station and enjoy an informative paper talk and lunch at Curtin Springs, before arriving at Uluru. This evening's unique 'Sounds of Silence' dining experience under the stars is a highlight. Beginning with canapes and chilled sparkling wine, listen to the atmospheric sound of the didgeridoo. The resident star talker will decode the southern night sky while you enjoy a premium bush tucker-inspired meal. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Sails in the Desert Hotel

DAY 19 – ULURU KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

Early risers will experience the sun rising over Uluru and the colours of dawn spreading across the landscape. After breakfast, visit Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) and admire the stunning rock formations on a guided walk into Walpa Gorge. Learn about traditional Anangu culture on a guided tour around the base of Uluru. This evening, head to an exclusive dune-top location with majestic views of Uluru. Enjoy drinks and canapes as artist Bruce Munro's global phenomenon 'Field of Light' comes to life, before exploring the stunning display via dedicated pathways. (B,L,D)

PLEASE NOTE: Dinner this evening will be at approximately 9pm.

DAY 20 – ULURU TO ALICE SPRINGS

After a leisurely breakfast, set your sights on Alice Springs. Pause at Mount Conner, known as the third desert giant, before arriving at your hotel in Alice Springs in the afternoon. (B,L)

OVERNIGHT: 1 night DoubleTree by Hilton Alice Springs

DAY 21 – THE GHAN EXPEDITION, ALICE SPRINGS

Checking out after breakfast, the day is yours to explore Alice Springs. Return to your hotel to join a scheduled transfer to the Alice Springs Rail Station to re-join the Ghan Expedition. This evening, enjoy a unique dining experience. Tuck into a mouth-watering meal as you sip on a cold beer or a glass of fine wine under a chandelier of stars at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station. (B,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights The Ghan Expedition

DAY 22 – THE GHAN EXPEDITION, COOBER PEDY

From your morning stop at Manguri, you'll venture into the weird and wonderful opal mining township of Coober Pedy, where more than half of the residents live underground. Here, you'll enjoy a day of discovery and lunch in the most unique of locations: underground. Dinner is served back on the train, where you can enjoy a nightcap as your journey continues. (B,L,D)

DAY 23 - THE GHAN EXPEDITION, ADELAIDE

This morning, you'll see a dramatic change in landscape as the rich ochre tones of the outback make way for the green fields of South Australia. Enjoy a leisurely brunch as you pass through the majestic Flinders Ranges before your arrival into Adelaide, completing one of the world's great rail journeys. (B)