

## TOP END EXPLORER

### THE GHAN EXPEDITION

DARWIN TO ADELAIDE

DEPARTING FRIDAY

(APRIL TO SEPTEMBER)

9 Days / 8 Nights

*\*Monday departure available with the order of Darwin arrangements different to below*

Connect with culture and country by combining two iconic national parks with one legendary rail journey. You'll deeply explore Kakadu and Litchfield National Parks before visiting incredible remote landscapes as you travel Australia by train on The Ghan Expedition.

#### INCLUSIONS

- 1 nights' accommodation in Darwin, including breakfast
- 2 nights intimate small-group Kakadu, East Alligator River and Litchfield touring with Outback Spirit, travelling on board a state-of-the-art 4WD Mercedes-Benz vehicle, including accommodation, guided touring and meals
- 2 nights' accommodation in Darwin, including breakfast daily
- Darwin Harbour Sunset Dinner Cruise
- Transfer from Darwin Convention Centre to Darwin Rail Terminal
- 3 nights aboard The Ghan Expedition, Darwin to Adelaide, including all meals, beverages and Off Train Experiences in Katherine, Alice Springs and Coober Pedy
- 8 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 6 dinners

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Cruise on the Mary River spotting wildlife, including saltwater crocodiles and an abundance of birdlife
- Visit the Ubirr art site within Kakadu National Park, home to some of the world's most outstanding rock art
- Swim in a waterfall at Litchfield National Park
- Take in the sparkling waters of Darwin Harbour over a delicious dinner of local seafood and produce
- Cruise through ancient Nitmiluk Gorge in Katherine
- Explore the outback town of Alice Springs and the unusual underground town of Coober Pedy

#### DAY 1 – ARRIVE DARWIN

You've arrived in Darwin – it's yours to explore. Spend the day at your leisure before checking in to your accommodation.

**OVERNIGHT:** 1 night Hilton Garden Inn Darwin

#### DAY 2 – DARWIN TO KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

As one adventure ends, another begins with Outback Spirit. This morning we depart Darwin and head towards Kakadu National Park. Much of the route is along the Arnhem Highway, passing the productive region of Humpty Doo, where some of the Top End's tropical fruits are grown. Cross the Adelaide River, with its vast wetlands, attracting migratory birds before arriving at Mary River, where you will take to the water on a cruise that showcases local wildlife, including saltwater crocodiles and an abundance of birdlife.

Continuing east, we enter the dual World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park, for both environmental and cultural values, stopping at the Mamukala Wetlands and the Bowali Visitor Centre before arriving at your accommodation, the Crocodile Hotel at Jabiru, so named for the crocodile shape it takes. (B,L,D)

*\*Due to the seasonal weather experienced in the Top End during March and April, we will visit the Bowali Visitor Centre on Day 2, and the cruise will occur on Adelaide River with crossings at Mary River, West Alligator and South Alligator Rivers.*

**OVERNIGHT:** 2 nights at Mercure Kakadu Crocodile Hotel

*\*Due to availability, some stays may be at Cooina Lodge*

#### DAY 3 – KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

This morning we rise with the sun for an early departure to Jabiru Airport. Here we take to the skies to gain a new perspective of this incredible environment. Enjoy a 60-minute scenic flight over ancient escarpments, floodplains and winding rivers, exhibiting the results of 1.8 billion years of continuous erosion. Your flight includes live commentary from your pilot as you glide over these spectacular ancient lands.

After landing at Jabiru Airport we depart for the East Alligator River region, known as the gateway to Arnhem Land. Take a spectacular local indigenous cruise on the East

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Alligator River and listen to the stories of the region as you spot the large saltwater crocodiles that dwell in these waters.

After the cruise, it's time to reboard the coach and head to the World Heritage Ubirr art site, home to some of the world's most outstanding rock art. Then, it's time to stretch your legs on a one-kilometre circular track walk. There will be time for those feeling fit to make the steep 250m climb to the top of the rocky escarpment for magnificent views across the Magela floodplain.

Enjoy a light lunch before heading to Nourlangie where we'll see more ancient rock paintings and spectacular vistas on a 1.5 kilometre walk around this special Indigenous site.

Head back to the hotel to relax and enjoy dinner. (B,L,D)

*\*Due to the seasonal weather experienced in the Top End during March and April you may visit the Bowali and Warradjan Visitor Centres in place of Ubirr, and the cruise will occur on Yellow Waters.*

### **DAY 4 – KAKADU NATIONAL PARK, LITCHFIELD NATIONAL PARK, DARWIN**

We depart Kakadu National Park and head towards Batchelor, the gateway to Litchfield National Park. Containing several types of typical Top End habitats, Litchfield National Park is abundant with lush monsoon forests, termite mounds, unusual rock formations, waterfalls, and cascades.

After stopping for morning tea, we head onto Wangi Falls; a large plunge pool surrounded by shady grassed areas. The falls flow all year round and after a light lunch, you can take a dip in the crystal-clear pool. Our next stop is Florence Falls. Here you can watch from the scenic viewing platform as the spectacular falls cascade into the plunge pool below.

We then head for Darwin, arriving early evening, where your Outback Spirit Tour concludes. (B,L)

**OVERNIGHT:** 2 nights Hilton Garden Inn Darwin

### **DAY 5 – DARWIN HARBOUR DINNER CRUISE**

Today is free for you to enjoy the sights of Darwin at leisure. Perhaps take a stroll along the Waterfront Precinct or visit the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens. In the evening, admire a spectacular sunset while feasting on a Territory-style dinner featuring local seafood and produce on a Darwin Harbour Sunset Cruise (B,D)

### **DAY 6 – BOARD THE GHAN EXPEDITION IN DARWIN**

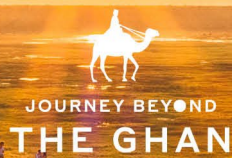
Settle into the comforts of The Ghan, relax in your cabin, or mingle with fellow travellers in the Outback Explorer Lounge. Enjoy lunch ahead of your Off Train Experience in Katherine. In a region renowned for jaw-dropping natural assets, Katherine boasts one of the Top End's best – the incredible Nitmiluk Gorge and a cruise is on offer to showcase the beauty of this spot. Alternatively, the Katherine Outback Experience lets you into the lives of those who call the outback home, while the Cutta Cutta Cave system is home to a variety of native wildlife and is rich in Indigenous culture and modern European history. Or, take it all in from the air, with an optional upgrade helicopter flight over Nitmiluk. (B,L,D)

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 nights The Ghan Expedition

### **DAY 7 – THE GHAN EXPEDITION, ALICE SPRINGS**

Your arrival into Alice Springs after breakfast provides you with time to explore this iconic town in the red heart of Australia on an Off Train Experience. There's an experience to suit everyone, including an off-road e-bike adventure, the Alice Explorer tour that takes in the historic Telegraph Station and Royal Flying Doctor Service, a cultural experience at Standley Chasm, meeting the wildlife at the Desert Park, or taking in the astounding beauty of Simpson's Gap. Alternatively, spot Uluru and Kata Tjuta from the air, with an optional upgrade scenic flight.

In the evening, the hallmark experience of The Ghan Expedition begins. Dine under a blanket of stars at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station, with red earth at your feet and white tablecloths at your fingertips. This will be a night to remember. (B,L,D)



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### **DAY 8 – 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 a gourmet lunch in the most unique of locations: underground. Off Train Experiences on offer include exploring the majestic Breakaways, touring the town, learning more about mining history on the Opal Experience, or an optional upgrade with the Painted Hills and Lake Eyre scenic flight.

Dinner is served back on the train, where you can enjoy a nightcap as your journey continues. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 9 – 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 Flinders Ranges before arriving in Adelaide, completing one of the world's great rail experiences. Your journey comes to an end here, leaving you with memories of awe-inspiring landscapes and unique outback experiences that will last a lifetime. (B)