

## RED CENTRE SPECTACULAR

### THE GHAN EXPEDITION

DARWIN TO ADELAIDE

DEPARTING WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY

(APRIL TO OCTOBER)

11 Days / 10 Nights

Settle into The Ghan's gentle rhythm as you travel through the country and immerse yourself in the Northern Territory's breathtaking natural wonders on this spectacular 11-day journey. 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

- 1 night aboard The Ghan Expedition Darwin to Alice Springs, including all meals and beverages, and Off Train Experience in Katherine
- 7 nights of intimate small-group touring with Outback Spirit, travelling on board a state-of-the-art 4WD Mercedes-Benz vehicle, including accommodation, meals and guided touring
- 2 nights aboard The Ghan Expedition Alice Springs to Adelaide, including all meals and beverages and Off Train Experience in Coober Pedy
- 10 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 10 dinners

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit ancient Nitmiluk Gorge
- Travel through the West MacDonnell Ranges, visiting Standley Chasm and Ormiston Gorge
- Visit Kings Canyon for a guided scenic walk
- See the spectacular Light Towers installation
- Visit World Heritage-listed Uluru and enjoy a guided base tour
- Early risers can 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
- Witness the breathtaking cultural experience of Wintjiri Wiru
- Explore underground sights in Coober Pedy

#### DAY 1 – BOARD THE GHAN EXPEDITION IN DARWIN

After boarding the train, 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. Alternatively, take it all in from the air, with an optional upgrade helicopter flight over Nitmiluk. (B,L,D)

Back on the train, you'll enjoy the cuisine and creature comforts of The Ghan, including a delectable on-board dinner, as you continue on towards Alice Springs. (L,D)

**OVERNIGHT:** 1 night The Ghan Expedition

#### DAY 2 – THE GHAN EXPEDITION, ARRIVE ALICE SPRINGS

Your eight-day Red Centre Explorer tour commences on arrival at the Alice Springs Rail Terminal. Here, you will be met by the passionate Outback Spirit crew, who will be guiding you as you take in all the Red Centre has to offer over the next eight days.

It all starts with a town tour of Alice Springs, including a light lunch at a local eatery.

Then, you'll check-in at DoubleTree by Hilton Alice Springs, where we'll stay for the first two nights. In the evening, the group will meet for welcome drinks and a short briefing on what you can expect during your tour. Tonight's dinner is at the hotel. (B,L,D)

**OVERNIGHT:** 2 nights DoubleTree by Hilton Alice Springs

#### DAY 3 – ALICE SPRINGS

Today, explore Alice Springs and its surrounds, taking in natural rock formations that are truly spectacular. After breakfast, venture to the West MacDonnell Ranges and enjoy a walk to Simpsons Gap. Known as 'Rungtjirpa' by the Arrernte people, Simpsons Gap is an important spiritual site and home to dozens of rare plants and a host of native wildlife.

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We'll then visit Standley Chasm – Angkerle Atwatye – a cultural icon of Central Australia, which is 100% owned and operated by the Arrernte community. We'll break for morning tea before departing the West MacDonnell Ranges to visit the Alice Springs Desert Park. Here, enjoy a guided tour that will challenge your perception of the desert, leaving you with an understanding that the desert is full of life.

This evening, enjoy a classic-style outdoor BBQ and show under the incredible night sky. (B,L,D)

### DAY 4 – ALICE SPRINGS TO KINGS CANYON

Today, we say goodbye to Alice Springs as we go deeper into the outback. First up is a visit to Ellery Creek for a short walk and morning tea, then we travel to Ormiston Gorge to see its towering red cliffs. We'll stop for lunch, before journeying to the mighty Kings Canyon and Watarrka National Park.

As we drive through the outback, we'll take the scenic Mereenie Loop 4WD track through the West MacDonnell Ranges and arrive at Kings Canyon Resort, where we'll spend the next two nights.

Tonight, dinner is at Carmichael's, a relaxed restaurant situated in Kings Canyon Resort, surrounded by native trees and bushlands. If you're lucky, you may spot an inquisitive dingo wandering through the grounds. (B,L,D)

**OVERNIGHT:** 2 nights Kings Canyon Resort

### DAY 5 – KINGS CANYON – WATARRKA NATIONAL PARK

This morning, we depart early to experience the beauty of Kings Canyon. Two walks are available, including the spectacular 6km rim walk, which features breathtaking views of the Watarrka National Park before descending into the 'Garden of Eden'. For those who wish to save energy, a more relaxed walk is also available along the creek on the canyon floor (2.6km).

There is also the opportunity to take a 15-minute helicopter flight over Kings Canyon and Watarrka National Park (at own expense).

After the morning's activities, we return to Kings Canyon Resort for lunch and to rest and refresh.

For those wishing to take the optional helicopter flight over Kings Canyon, this afternoon offers some time to enjoy

Kings Canyon from the air (at own expense), or you can enjoy a relaxing afternoon at your leisure.

As afternoon turns to evening, we'll enjoy sunset drinks and canapes at Light-Towers, an immersive sound and light installation by the acclaimed artist Bruce Munro. Tonight, we'll enjoy dinner at the newly renovated Kings Canyon Bar & Grill and gather to recall the day's adventures. (B,L,D)

### DAY 6 – KINGS CANYON TO ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

Today is special. This morning we visit Karrke Aboriginal Cultural Experience and Tours, an indigenous owned and operated cultural tour. In the Aranda language, Karrke is the Aboriginal name for the western Bowerbird, which is native to Central Australia, and our guide will teach us about bush tucker and bush medicines used for spiritual and physical healing.

We then depart Karrke for Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, passing through Kings Creek Station to enjoy lunch at Curtin Springs, a million-acre cattle station. In the early afternoon, we arrive at the award-winning Sails in the Desert Hotel, part of the Ayers Rock Resort.

This evening, we are transferred to the Wintjiri Wiru Sunset Dinner. A breathtaking cultural storytelling experience through choreographed drones, lasers and projections illuminating the night sky.

After a short journey from the resort, we venture to an open-air theatre set upon a dune top. Enjoy cocktails infused with native ingredients while taking in the incredible views of Uluru. As darkness descends, enjoy a gourmet dinner hamper where native ingredients are combined with modern techniques to create a balanced and flavourful palette as the night sky lights up before our eyes. Witness the ancient Mala story re-told and feel a powerful connection to country listening to a traditional Inma soundtrack and narration in the local Pitjantjatjara language. (B,L,D)

**OVERNIGHT:** 3 nights Sails in the Desert Hotel

### DAY 7 – ULURU KATA-TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

After breakfast, we depart to discover Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) and admire the stunning rock formations on a guided walk into Walpa Gorge, an ancient temple crafted by nature.



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Take in the cultural centre and take a guided tour around the base of Uluru, which stands 348 metres above the desert plains. Learn about traditional Anangu culture and why Uluru, one of the largest monoliths in the world, is such a sacred site.

In the afternoon, tour the Gallery of Central Australia followed by free time to relax by the pool or alternatively, take the complimentary shuttle to explore the Resort and activities on offer.

Departing the resort before sunset, we head to an exclusive dune-top location, again with majestic views of Uluru. Enjoy drinks and canapes as artist Bruce Munro's global phenomenon Field of Light gently illuminates. Aptly named Tili Wiru Tjuta Nyakutjaku (looking at lots of beautiful lights), Field of Light features 50,000 slender stems, crowned with radiant, frosted-glass spheres, spread across an area the size of seven football fields. After your host provides insight into this remarkable installation, you can explore the stunning display via dedicated pathways.

This evening, return to the hotel for dinner. (Please note dinner will be at approximately 9.00pm). (B,L,D)

### DAY 8 – ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

Early risers can experience the sun rising over Uluru this morning and the colours of dawn spreading across the landscape. Breakfast is at the hotel, before we depart for the Mala Walk. Admire the fine examples of rock art along this walk before arriving at Kantju Gorge, a place of profound peacefulness surrounded by sheer vertical walls.

This afternoon is at your leisure. You may choose to explore the Town Square, arrange a scenic flight (own cost) or relax in the comfort of your hotel.

This evening, enjoy the unique Sounds of Silence dining experience under the stars. Offering the best of the Red Centre distilled into four magical hours, the evening begins with canapes and chilled sparkling wine served on a viewing platform overlooking the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. As the sun sets and darkness falls, listen to the sound of the didgeridoo and enjoy a premium bush tucker-inspired buffet incorporating native bush ingredients. Afterwards, settle back and listen to the resident star talker decode the southern night sky.

After this incredible experience, we return to Sails in the Desert for our final night. (B,L,D)

### DAY 9 – ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK TO ALICE SPRINGS, THE GHAN EXPEDITION

Enjoy a hearty breakfast at the hotel before making the journey by road from Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park to the Alice Springs Rail Terminal, where your Red Centre Explorer tour comes to an end.

Re-join The Ghan Expedition and enjoy a unique dining experience this evening. Tuck into a mouthy-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,L,D)

**OVERNIGHT:** 2 nights The Ghan Expedition

### DAY 10 – 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 11 – 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)