2027 DARWIN CUP WITH GALA BALL

THE GHAN EXPEDITION

DARWIN TO ADELAIDE
DEPARTING SATURDAY 31 JULY 2027
8 Days / 7 Nights

The Darwin Cup Carnival returns in 2027, and four nights in the tropical capital puts you in the vibrant energy of the Top End. From a black-tie Gala Ball to exclusive access to The Ghan Marquee on race day, you'll be celebrating one of the Northern Territory's most anticipated sporting events in style. Take in the city itself too, with an evening cruise aboard Darwin Harbour Cruises' Charles Darwin catamaran and a Territory-style dinner as the sun goes down over the harbour. From Darwin, board The Ghan south to Adelaide on an all-inclusive journey the Australia's Red Centre. Chef-prepared meals, Australian wines and the company of fellow travellers make the days on board as memorable as the stops themselves, as the landscape shifts from tropical green to red outback earth along the way.

INCLUSIONS

- 4 nights' accommodation in Darwin including breakfast daily
- Darwin Turf Club Gala Ball entry, including dinner, premium beverage package and a one-way coach transfer to the Gala Ball venue
- The Ghan Marquee entry at Darwin Cup Carnival, Monday 2 August, including a deluxe buffet luncheon, 6-hour select beverage package and return hotel to racetrack coach transfers
- Darwin Harbour Sunset Dinner Cruise including a welcome drink, with return hotel to wharf coach transfers
- Transfer from Darwin hotel 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
- 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 5 dinners

HIGHLIGHTS

- Celebrate the 2027 Darwin Cup Carnival in style at the prestigious black-tie Gala Ball with live entertainment under the stars
- Experience the vibrant energy of the 2027 Darwin Cup Carnival with reserved table seating in a Marquee, a
- deluxe buffet luncheon including a selection of fresh seafood, and a 6-hour beverage package
- Enjoy dinner with a breathtaking tropical sunset view on your Darwin Harbour Cruise
- Cruise through ancient Nitmiluk Gorge in Katherine
- Explore the outback town of Alice Springs and the unusual underground town of Cooper Pedy

DAY 1 – ARRIVE DARWIN, DARWIN TURF CLUB GALA BALL

Arrive in Darwin and settle into the energy of the city before your evening at the black-tie Gala Ball at Darwin Turf Club begins. Dinner and drinks begin the elegant evening, then live entertainment and Darwin's vibrant atmosphere carry the night on, under Darwin's night sky. A one-way transfer to the event is included, departing your accommodation at 6pm. (D)

OVERNIGHT: 4 nights Hilton Darwin

DAY 2 – LEISURE DAY

Relax or discover Darwin and its surrounds at your own pace today.

This evening you might wish to visit the iconic Mindil Beach Sunset Markets and soak up the atmosphere, flavours and famous Mindil Beach sunset. (B)

WE RECOMMEND:

Darwin Heritage Walk – $65 per person (Additional Expense)

Providing the perfect introduction to Darwin City, your local guide connects you with the events that have helped to create this modern city. Stroll around Darwin City listening to stories about the early Northern Territory pioneers, Victoria Hotel, Star Cinema, the Administrator's Office, Government House, State Square – Parliament House and Supreme Court, and the significant events in Darwin's history.

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DAY 3 – DARWIN CUP CARNIVAL DAY
Today you're off to one of the biggest social and sporting events in the Northern Territory – the Darwin Cup!

As part of your entry to The Ghan Marquee, you'll have reserved table seating and a deluxe buffet luncheon. Included in entry is a selection of fresh seafood, a 6-hour beverage package with selected beers, premium wines, soft drinks, basic spirits and entertainment.

Upon conclusion of the days race events, you will have the choice of returning to your hotel with the included coach transfer or staying on to enjoy the after-race entertainment. (B,L)

DAY 4 – DARWIN HARBOUR CRUISE
Stroll around Darwin today, taking in the fascinating history of the northern capital at your own pace. Wander to the Stokes Hill Wharf area, stroll through the Botanic Gardens or the Chinese Temple and don't forget a visit to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

You haven't seen a sunset until you see a Darwin sunset, and this evening you'll understand why they're so special. Board Darwin Harbour Cruise's catamaran, the Charles Darwin, to savour the sights and enjoy the swirl of the sea breeze as you cruise the Harbour by water. Enjoy a sumptuous meal onboard focused on local produce and fresh seafood. Nothing is more relaxing than soaking up the splendour of the skies, champagne flute in hand.(B,D)

WE RECOMMEND:
Croc 'N' History Explorer Ticket – from $118 per person
(Additional Expense)

Combine three of Darwin's premier attractions with one ticket and save. The flexible Croc 'N' History Explorer package gives you full day entry to Crocosaurus Cove, RFDS Tourist facility and the Darwin Big Bus, for a hop-on, hop-off transport option.

DAY 5 – BOARD THE GHAN EXPEDITION IN DARWIN, KATHERINE
Begin your journey with a seamless transfer from your hotel to the rail terminal, where you'll celebrate the start of your journey with a welcome drink and light refreshments, then pause for a photo with the iconic red locomotive before stepping on board. For the next few days, The Ghan will be your home away from home. Settle into the comforts of your cabin or mingle with fellow travellers in the lounge carriage. Enjoy lunch on board as The Ghan makes its way south towards Katherine, before your first Off Train Experience.

Here, the choice is yours as to how to explore this remarkable region. Cruise through the towering sandstone cliffs of Nitmiluk Gorge, uncovering its deep beauty and cultural significance. Step into the Katherine Outback Experience for an authentic glimpse into the lives of those who call the outback home. Or venture underground to the Cutta Cutta Caves, where fascinating limestone formations, native wildlife, and stories of Indigenous culture are waiting to be shared. For a different perspective, upgrade to a helicopter flight and take in the scale of Nitmiluk's 13 gorges from above. (L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 3 nights The Ghan Expedition

DAY 6 – THE GHAN EXPEDITION, ALICE SPRINGS
This morning, wake to the wide-open skies of the outback as The Ghan rolls deeper into Central Australia and towards the iconic town of Alice Springs. After a hearty breakfast on board, step into the heart of the Red Centre with a choice of Off Train Experiences that offer different perspectives on this remarkable part of the country.

Gain a sense of Alice Springs through its pioneering history, distinctive character and connection to the surrounding desert, or venture into the West MacDonnell Ranges for a guided experience at Simpsons Gap or Standley Chasm. Here, sheer red rock walls rise from the ancient landscape, a place of deep spiritual significance for the Arrernte people. Visit Desert Park to encounter native wildlife and gain an insight into the unique desert environments of Central Australia, take to the red dirt on an off-road e-bike adventure, or for those seeking a grander perspective, upgrade to a scenic flight over Uluru and Kata Tjuta.

As night falls, a signature experience of The Ghan's southbound journey awaits at the historic Alice Springs Telegraph Station. Settle in beneath a canopy of stars, where white-clothed tables, fine food and live entertainment create a memorable evening surrounded by the red earth of the Australian desert. (B,L,D)

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DAY 7 – THE GHAN EXPEDITION, COOBER PEDY

Today brings you to the extraordinary outback town of Coober Pedy, where life is anything but ordinary. Known as the opal capital of the world, this desert settlement hides its treasures both above and below ground, with more than half of its population living underground.

Your adventure begins as The Ghan arrives at the remote outpost of Manguri, where you'll continue by coach to Coober Pedy. Explore the striking Breakaways, uncover the town's quirky character and attractions, or delve into the fascinating history of opal mining. For a different perspective, upgrade to a scenic flight over Painted Hills and Lake Eyre, taking in the vastness of this ancient landscape from above. A highlight of the day is a gourmet lunch served underground, offering a taste of the town's unique way of life.

Return to the train and settle in for your final evening on board The Ghan. Enjoy dinner in the dining carriage before raising one last nightcap in the lounge with fellow travellers as the train continues south towards Adelaide. (B,L,D)

DAY 8 – THE GHAN EXPEDITION, ADELAIDE

As the sun rises, watch the landscape transform as the rich ochre tones of the outback give way to the green fields of South Australia. Enjoy light refreshments as The Ghan travels through the Flinders Ranges before continuing towards Adelaide.

As your journey comes to an end, take with you more than memories. Carry the stories shared, connections made and a deeper appreciation for the vast landscapes and remarkable places encountered along the way. (B)