

ARNHEM LAND ADVENTURE

THE GHAN EXPEDITION

DARWIN TO ADELAIDE
DEPARTING MONDAY AND FRIDAY (SET DEPARTURE DATES)
(MAY TO SEPTEMBER)
16 Days / 15 Nights

Discover a sacred and mystical land in northern Australia on this extraordinary small-group journey through the heart of Arnhem Land. Immerse yourself in the world's oldest surviving culture, meet the wildlife, and find tranquility in natural sites crafted by time. Then, sit back and settle into The Ghan's gentle rhythm as you travel through the breathtaking arid beauty of the outback from Darwin to Adelaide.

INCLUSIONS

- Arrival flight from Cairns to Nhulunbuy
- 12 nights of intimate small-group touring with Outback Spirit, including hotel, lodge and safari camp accommodation, meals, beverages, all attractions, permit fees to enter Aboriginal land, and guided touring
- Departure flight from Seven Spirit Bay to Darwin
- Transfer from hotel to Darwin Rail Terminal
- 3 nights on The Ghan Expedition, Darwin to Adelaide, including all meals, beverages and Off Train Experiences in Katherine, Alice Springs and Coober Pedy
- 15 breakfasts, 14 lunches, 15 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'
- Participate in 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 the historic Victoria Settlement at Port Essington, circa 1838
- Explore the pristine waters of Cobourg Marine Park Sanctuary
- Cruise through ancient Nitmiluk Gorge in Katherine
- Explore the outback town of Alice Springs and the unusual underground town of Cooper Pedy

Please note, itineraries are subject to change.

DAY 1 – NHULUNBUY (GOVE)

Your 13-day Arnhem Land adventure commences with a 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, which came into existence 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

Please note: 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 Wirrwawuy Beach, where you will learn about Yolngu culture and kinship firsthand. We will also visit the Buku- Larrnggay Mulka Centre, which features works by many renowned Aboriginal artists whose art (particularly those painted on bark) can be found in galleries all over the world.

The gallery is in the small community of Yirrkala, which is 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 will have lunch followed by a special Bush Medicine and Women's Healing demonstration, where we will experience traditional healing ways and hear stories of



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how the Yolngu people 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 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, covering approximately 1,300 square kilometers. This incredibly diverse wetland can support up to 300,000 waterbirds at any one time, including Magpie Geese, Egrets, Black-necked Storks and Brolgas. The swamp is of great cultural significance to the Yolngu people and was also the location for the 2006 film 'Ten Canoes'.

We'll take 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.

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

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

DAY 5 – RAMINGINING TO BARRAMUNDI LODGE

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

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

After lunch on the lodge deck, you will hear 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, soaking up the stunning view of the floodplains. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Arnhem Land Barramundi Lodge

DAY 6 – FISHING ADVENTURE AND CULTURAL TOUR

This morning, an exclusive fishing adventure on the Liverpool and Tomkinson Rivers is one the agenda. These pristine waterways are teeming with Barramundi. The expert fishing guides will take you to wherever 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 if fishing is not your thing, you will still enjoy the beautiful scenery, birdlife and informative commentary.

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

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

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

DAY 7 – MANINGRIDA TO MOUNT BORRADAILE

Departing Maningrida after breakfast, our travel takes us through the stone country of west Arnhem Land. We'll 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 40km sandy bush track into the safari lodge, arriving in time for lunch. You



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will then check-in to your eco-friendly 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. 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 thousands of years. Subjects range from now extinct animals to 20th century sailing ships and the creator Rainbow Serpent.

We will return to the lodge in the afternoon, before dinner. (B, L, D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Mount Borradaile

Please note: The walk to Mount Borradaile Rainbow Serpent is a 1km, 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 in use.

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

Please note: The walk at Mount Borradaile is 3.5km with some rocks to climb.

DAY 9 – COBOURG PENINSULA TO SEVEN SPIRIT BAY

Departing Mount Borradaile early, we head north and venture into the Garig Gunak Barlu National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula. We'll travel up the eastern side of Port Essington to Black Point to meet the marine crew from Seven Spirit Bay. . Here, we'll 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 luxurious 'habitat' set amongst native tropical forest. We meet again later in the evening for dinner in the lodge's restaurant. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 3 nights Seven Spirit Bay Wilderness Lodge

DAY 10 – PORT ESSINGTON AND THE HISTORIC VICTORIA SETTLEMENT

Today, we'll explore 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 a fascinating tour of the old buildings and ruins and learn about life in the early British occupation. An optional extension walk leads to a few lonely gravestones in the forest, almost forgotten by history.

After a picnic lunch on the beach you will return to the water 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.

Back at Seven Spirit Bay, 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)

Please note: The walk at Victoria Settlement is a flat 3.7km in the sun along a downhill slope.



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DAY 11 – FISHING AND 4WD ADVENTURE

The Cobourg Marine Park abounds 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 equal 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 and you can admire some of the most spectacular coastline to be found in northern Australia. Our guides fish these waters regularly and have up-to-date knowledge of the potential sites that produce fish, giving you the best chance of success.

Barramundi is just one of the species we target. You may have the opportunity 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 there is nearly always 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, take 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 creeks that are a mix of spring- fed and tidally influenced systems that help provide nourishment to the marine life of the park.

Next, you will explore the savannah woodlands of the park, potentially spotting Banteng and Buffalo and gaining some insight into the 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)

Please note: Today the tour will split into two groups to undertake the day’s adventures. Group 1 will follow the itinerary 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 depart for the airstrip and board our Cessna Grand Caravan for the 45-minute scenic flight across Van Diemen Gulf. Upon arriving in Darwin in the afternoon, we head to the city to check in to the Hilton Garden Inn Darwin located on the picturesque esplanade.

Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure before boarding the Charles Darwin for a delicious Territory-style sunset dinner cruise to celebrate a truly amazing trip. 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, KATHERINE

Your 13-day Arnhem Land adventure came to an end this morning.

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. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 3 nights The Ghan Expedition



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DAY 14 – 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)

DAY 15 – 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 16 – 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)