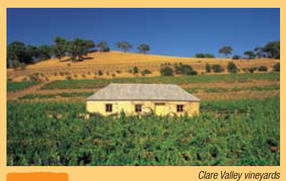
EXPLORER'S WAY ADELAIDE TO DARWIN – NORTHBOUND

These suggested itineraries are 14 days long, from wine country to the Outback to the tropics. They include routes that lead off the main Explorer's Way to iconic landmarks and experiences. Some roads are 4x4 only and of course, many places deserve longer visits and further exploration.

Day 1

- An hour and a half north from Adelaide you reach the Clare Valley, Australia's premium cool climate wine region. Spend some time in this picturesque country enjoying the fine food and wine at its many cellar doors and restaurants. There's an excellent range of accommodation including famous country estates, secluded bush retreats and elegant bed and breakfasts.

Adelaide to Clare: 134 km/1.5 hours



Clare Valley vineyards

Day 2

- Head to Wilpena Pound in the Flinders Ranges via Melrose, an historic town at the foot of Mount Remarkable. The national park here is an excellent place for walkers and cyclists to join the Heysen (walking) and Mawson (cycling) trails.
- Continue north to historic Quorn and ride the famous Pichi Richi Railway through the beautiful Pichi Richi Pass (April–October and other special times during the year).
- Travel on to Wilpena Pound, the great Australian landmark that forms the heart of Flinders Ranges National Park. Accommodation here and on nearby stations includes a motel, cottages, cabins, luxury eco-villas, caravan parks and campsites.
- For those preferring to stay on the main Explorer's Way route, Glendambo is a convenient and comfortable overnight stop en route to Coober Pedy.

Clare to Wilpena Pound: 382 km/4 hours

Day 3

- Spend today exploring the pound and the park on the 17 walking trails or on a guided 4x4 tour. Enjoy a scenic flight over the ranges and understand the grandeur and scale of the countryside.
- This afternoon travel to Parachilna for an overnight stay at the Prairie Hotel, an Outback pub that offers award-winning accommodation and dining.

Wilpena Pound to Parachilna: 77 km/1 hour

Day 4

- Drive north to Arkaroola, a private wilderness sanctuary in the Gammon Ranges. Walk some of the trails through the Sanctuary or join the famous 4x4 Ridgetop Tour for spectacular views of the ranges. Again, a scenic flight will help you absorb the sheer size and diversity of the landscape.
- At night, view the wide clear heavens at the Arkaroola Astronomical Observatory, which houses the largest privately owned telescope in Australia. Arkaroola offers several accommodation options of a good standard.

Parachilna to Arkaroola: 197 km/2.5 hours

Day 5

- En route to William Creek, stop at Iga Warta, an Aboriginal-owned and managed environmental and cultural centre, and learn about the Adnyamathanha people.
- At Marree, you join the legendary Oodnadatta Track. Good preparation is important – this is tough travelling country.
- Head to Coward Springs – the wetland created by these natural springs attracts a wide variety of birds.
- Continue on to William Creek, which boasts the world's most isolated pub. Spend the evening here, where basic cabin and hotel accommodation is available. Scenic flights over the spectacular Anna Creek Painted Hills are available at William Creek.

Arkaroola to William Creek: 450 km/7 hours

Day 6

- Travel to Coober Pedy, the opal capital of the world, where many homes and businesses are located underground to escape the heat of summer. Take a town tour to see the underground churches, homes and shops, and the spectacular Breakaways Reserve and Moon Plain. Visit a mine and go noodling for opals.
- Accommodation in Coober Pedy includes above and below ground hotels, hostels, and camping grounds (yes, you can camp underground!).

William Creek to Coober Pedy: 166 km/2 hours

Day 7

- Depart Coober Pedy and travel along the Stuart Highway to Alice Springs. At Cadney Park take the detour east to the stunning Painted Desert (allow at least 3 hours for this side trip).
- From Marla, the highway heads north through grasslands, granite country and over the Finke River and on to Alice Springs, the heart of the Red Centre of Australia.
- You can reach Uluru/Kata Tjuta National Park via Pioneers' Path Tourist Drive, which branches off the Explorer's Way at Erldunda.

Coober Pedy to Alice Springs: 680 km/7 hours

Day 8

- Heading north from Alice Springs, visit the Alice Springs School of the Air and hear a lesson being broadcast to the world's biggest classroom – the 1.3 million square kilometres of the Northern Territory.
- Stop off at Ti Tree and sample fine table grapes and sparkling mango wine produced in the Outback by visionary farmers.
- Enjoy the rich colours of the desert as you travel north to Wycliffe Well – reputed to be Australia's UFO capital – where accommodation ranges from pitching a tent to 3-star rooms.

Alice Springs to Wycliffe Well: 372 km/4 hours

Day 9

- Marvel at the extraordinary Devils Marbles, finely balanced piles of huge boulders believed by Aboriginal people to be the eggs of the Rainbow Serpent.
- Explore the friendly town of Tennant Creek in the afternoon. The site of Australia's last major gold rush in the 1930s, the town offers many opportunities to experience gold fever – with tours, heritage sites, fossicking and panning for gold. You can cool off with a dip in nearby Mary Ann Dam.

Wycliffe Well to Tennant Creek: 132 km/1.5 hours

Day 10

- Explore the scenic Elliott and Newcastle Waters Discovery Trail, a network of roads (some are 4x4 only) branching off the main highway to huge cattle stations, character-filled Outback pubs and landmarks of the Second World War. Discovery Trail brochures are available from Northern Territory Visitor Information Centres.
- Spend the night at the Hi-Way Inn, at the junction of the Explorer and Carpentaria highways, the gateway to the fishing paradise of the Gulf region, or continue on to Daly Waters, a tiny hamlet built around the Territory's oldest pub.

Tennant Creek to Hi-Way Inn: 394 km/4 hours

Day 11

- Call in at the historic Larrimah Wayside Inn for a cool drink – and make time for a visit to the Larrimah Museum for a fascinating look at the area's World War II heritage.
- Continue to the pretty town of Mataranka for a pleasant dip in the warm thermal springs. It's also worth wandering through the replica of the Elsey Station Homestead, which was the home of author Jeannie Gunn and birthplace of her famous Outback novel *We of the Never Never*. Stay at the motel or campsite at Mataranka, or camp overnight in Elsey National Park.

Hi-Way Inn to Mataranka: 161 km/2 hours

Day 12

- Explore the Katherine region, especially spectacular Nitmiluk National Park (Katherine Gorge). Boat cruises and canoeing are great ways to experience the grandeur of this special place, or you can go bushwalking in the area. If you're feeling active, do both: it's well worth experiencing the different perspectives of the countryside from land and water.
- A short drive from Katherine is Springvale Homestead, built from sandstone by explorer and pastoralist Alfred Giles in 1878. Enjoy a Devonshire tea while you learn more about the area's history.
- Stay overnight in the caravan park or motel.

Mataranka to Katherine: 106 km/1 hour

Nourlangie Rock Art, Kakadu

Day 13

- You can reach Kakadu National Park on the Nature's Way Tourist Drive, which branches off the Explorer's Way at Pine Creek.
- Meet some local characters at the Emerald Springs and Hayes Creek Wayside Inns on the way to the historic Second World War township of Adelaide River.
- Drive on to Lake Bennett Wilderness Resort, where you can swim, hire a canoe or go bushwalking. Meals and a range of accommodation are available.

Katherine to Lake Bennett: 260 km/3 hours

Day 14

- Visit nearby Litchfield National Park and see stunning waterfalls and amazing termite mounds – and swim safely in crystal-clear swimming holes.
- Enjoy your first glimpse of the Arafura Sea by following the Explorer's Way right into the heart of Darwin.

Litchfield Park to Darwin: 129 km/1.5 hours

AUSTRALIA'S EXPLORER'S WAY

FROM ADELAIDE TO DARWIN

South Australia. A brilliant blend.
www.southaustralia.com

AUSTRALIA'S OUTBACK NORTHERN TERRITORY
www.australiasoutback.com

EXPLORER'S WAY ADELAIDE TO DARWIN – SOUTHBOUND

Day 1

- Take a short flight or a ferry from Darwin to Bathurst Island and join an organised Tiwi Tour to experience life in a modern-day Aboriginal community. Wonder at the dense rainforest, secluded waterfalls and purchase beautiful arts and crafts. Overnight accommodation in Darwin. Note that Tiwi Tours don't operate any tours in the three months of December to February.

Darwin to Bathurst Island, part of the Tiwi Islands to Darwin: 80 km (each way)/20 mins

Day 2

- Head south on the Explorer's Way to explore the Territory Wildlife Park, a world class conservation park with magnificent bird and animal life. Set in 400 hectares of natural bushland, a free shuttle links the 26 major exhibits. Travellers may also wish to visit Mount Bundy and the Adelaide River Pub today. Drive to Lake Bennett Wilderness Resort, where travellers can go fishing, canoeing, bushwalking or swimming. Overnight accommodation at Lake Bennett.

Darwin to Lake Bennett: 65 km/1 hour

Day 3

- Re-join the Explorer's Way and continue south to Katherine. En route visit the historic township of Adelaide River, then turn right into the picturesque Douglas Daly Region, home to the Douglas Hot Springs and Butterfly Gorge Nature Park (4x4 only). Return to the Explorer's Way and take the Northern Goldfields Loop Road and visit the Grove Hill Heritage Hotel and Museum. This area, once the heart of the goldfields, is dotted with historic sites and ruins set amongst shady creeks and rocky outcrops. Stop off at the mining town of Pine Creek and look around its intriguing museum displays. Overnight accommodation in Katherine.

Lake Bennett to Katherine (via above route): 360 km/4 hours

Day 4

- Explore the Katherine region and be sure to stop at Nitmiluk National Park. Enjoy a canoe adventure or a boat cruise and marvel at the magnificent landscape and ancient Aboriginal rock art. Travellers can also book a guided tour of Edith Falls at the visitor centre. The Central Arnhem Highway begins 50 km south of Katherine – the Aboriginal-owned Manyallaluk community can be reached from here. Continue south on the Explorer's Way to the township of Mataranka and Elsey National Park, home to the Mataranka Thermal Pool, ideal for a refreshing swim. Overnight accommodation in Mataranka.

Katherine to Mataranka: 110 km/1 hour

Day 5

- Depart Mataranka and travel along the Explorer's Way to Tennant Creek. Discover World War II heritage at Larrimah and have lunch at the Daly Waters Pub, a fascinating rustic bush pub crammed with unusual memorabilia. Continuing on, pass through Dunmarra, Elliott, Renner Springs and Newcastle Waters, an historic droving town before arriving in Tennant Creek. This area is known as the Golden Heart owing to its central location, gold mining history and friendly locals. Overnight accommodation in Tennant Creek.

Mataranka to Tennant Creek: 555 km/6 hours

Day 6

- Before leaving Tennant Creek, visit the Nyinkka Nyunyu Cultural Centre featuring artefacts, paintings, bush tucker and dance performances. Just over 100 km south of Tennant Creek is the Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve where travellers will marvel at the gigantic granite boulders precariously balanced on top of one another. Wycliffe Well, famous for its UFO sightings, is worth a visit and enjoy a photographic moment at the Tropic of Capricorn marker, 35 km north of Alice Springs. Overnight accommodation in Alice Springs or try a station stay at Bond Springs – an outback retreat 25 km from Alice Springs.

Tennant Creek to Alice Springs: 505 km/5 hours

Day 7

- Detour: Visitors wishing to travel to Uluru/Ayers Rock can do so via the Pioneers' Path Tourist Drive which branches off Explorer's Way at Erldunda.
- Meet some of the friendly locals and be sure to visit some of Alice Springs' many attractions like the Alice Springs Desert Park, Cultural Precinct, Panorama Guth, School of the Air, Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Todd Mall with its alfresco dining, art galleries and souvenir shops. Take a day trip along the West MacDonnell Ranges and wander through spectacular gorges, swim in natural waterholes and see ancient rock paintings. Overnight accommodation in Alice Springs or at Ooraminna Station Homestead and Bush Camp, half-an-hour from Alice Springs.

Alice Springs to Glen Helen (West MacDonnell Ranges): 130 km each way/1.5 hours

Uluru/Ayers Rock

Day 8

- Head south on the Old Ghan Railway Heritage Trail (4x4 required) and visit the Ewaninga Rock Carvings. Over 3,000 of these Aboriginal engravings have been recorded on the surface of sandstone outcrops around a small claypan. Detour to Chambers Pillar, a spectacular sandstone column towering 40 metres above the desert plain. Continue south through the tiny town of Finke before finishing at Mount Dare, for an overnight stay in Witjira National Park. Accommodation options include the homestead, hotel or bush camping. Travellers can also extend their itinerary at this point for a truly indigenous experience at Gunya Titjikala, an Aboriginal community 120km south of Alice Springs.

Alice Springs to Mount Dare (4x4 only): 300 km/6 hours

Day 9

- Continue south on the Old Ghan Railway Heritage Trail, making a detour to Dalhousie Hot Springs for a soak and to see the wildlife that the springs attract. Pass through the stunning red Pedirka Sandhills before arriving at the town of Oodnadatta. Visit the quirky Pink Roadhouse and stay overnight.

Mount Dare to Oodnadatta: 285 km/4 hours

Day 10

- Continue south from Oodnadatta but turn right just out of town and head for Coober Pedy, detouring to see the spectacular Painted Desert, where the colours of the landscape are vivid and surreal. Alternatively, continue south along the Old Ghan Railway Heritage Trail to the famous William Creek Pub and spectacular Lake Eyre, an ephemeral salt lake covering 9690km². It usually has a fascinating hard salt crust, but on the rare occasions when it floods, the lake offers brilliant bird-watching opportunities. Stay overnight in the opal-mining town of Coober Pedy, where many residents (and visitors!) stay underground to avoid the high temperatures.
- A number of operators in Coober Pedy offer town tours that visit underground homes and opal mines, the underground art gallery, bookshop and pottery, the Umoona Opal Mine, opal cutting demonstrations, the Big Winch and Opal Cave Lookout. Other tours venture just outside town to the Dog Fence and the wonderful Breakaways Reserve. For something different, you can take the Mail Run tour to Oodnadatta and William Creek, or even enjoy a night-time Star Gazing Tour on the Moon Plain.

Oodnadatta to Coober Pedy: 195 km/3 hours

Day 11

- Head south out of Coober Pedy on the Explorer's Way. Pass through Glendambo, a resort designed on a homestead and woolshed theme that offers travellers modern comforts and services. Woomera, a town established in 1947 as a site for launching experimental rockets, also makes an interesting stop. An optional side trip can be made to Roxby Downs – built to support the nearby Olympic Dam mine (a giant ore mining operation). Take a night tour of the Arid Recovery Project that has seen native animals reintroduced into a reserve from which introduced species have been eradicated. Stay overnight in the modern city of Port Augusta.

Coober Pedy to Port Augusta: 535 km/7 hours

Day 12

- Take some time to explore Port Augusta. Visit the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden and learn about the incredible history of the Flinders Ranges and outback at Wadlata Outback Centre. You can also enjoy a boat cruise through the scenic waters of the upper Spencer Gulf. Alternatively, head north-east to the Flinders Ranges, a highlight for bushwalkers, budding geologists and wildlife enthusiasts. Here, the rugged wilderness of Wilpena Pound and Arkaroola is particularly good for exploring. On your return to Adelaide, take a detour though the picturesque Clare Valley wine region. Overnight accommodation in Adelaide.

Port Augusta to Adelaide: 305 km/4 hours

Day 13

- Kangaroo Island is one of the best places to see Australian native animals in their natural environment. To get to the island, drive 1.5 hours south-west of Adelaide to Cape Jervis. Join the 45-minute vehicle and passenger ferry service to Penneshaw on Kangaroo Island. Alternatively, fly from Adelaide to Kingscote and take a tour of the island by coach, smaller bus or four-wheel-drive vehicle. Set out and discover this island, but travellers will need at least a couple of days to experience the highlights. There is a variety of accommodation on the island, from wilderness resorts to backpacking hostels and campsites. Travellers staying right on the coast are likely to see Little Penguins at night, especially in Kingscote and Penneshaw.

Adelaide to Kangaroo Island – Road: 130 km/1.5 hours
Ferry: 20 km/45 mins

Day 14

- The amazing experiences continue on Kangaroo Island with a visit to Flinders Chase National Park, with the unusual rock formations known as Remarkable Rocks and Admirals Arch, the latter being home to a large colony of New Zealand Fur Seals. Seal Bay is arguably Kangaroo Island's most famous attraction, where you can enjoy a walk amongst rare Australian sea lions. Kangaroo Island also has a eucalyptus distillery, honey farms, wineries and sheep dairy. Returning to the mainland, consider extending your stay to explore the Fleurieu Peninsula.

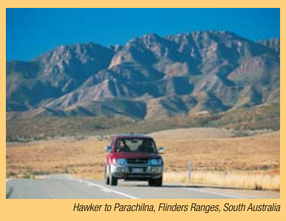
Kangaroo Island to Adelaide – Ferry: 20 km/45 mins, Road: 130 km/1.5 hours

Please note: These itineraries are based on good weather and road conditions. Some side roads are not sealed: wet weather can quickly change their condition and make an additional overnight stop (or stops) necessary. Travel time is an indication only, and does not include time for stops or detours en route. Use detailed maps on all these routes. Not all car hire companies allow their vehicles to be driven in certain areas (for example unsealed roads). Please ensure you check these details when planning your itinerary. Visit www.australiasoutback.com.au or www.southaustralia.com for further information.

EXPLORER'S WAY
BEHIND THE WHEEL TO ADVENTURE

A journey along the Explorer's Way is a journey into Australia's Outback, a journey that takes you through a modern nation to the heart of an ancient land. Crossing Australia from south to north, this is one of the greatest long distance drives in the world. It's an adventure through a land blessed with outstanding natural attractions and a unique indigenous culture over 60,000 years old. It's an exciting trip of extreme contrasts; from the rich farmlands in the south, through arid cattle grazing lands and desert to the magnificent wetlands of the northern tropics.

The Explorer's Way spans Australia from Adelaide, the charming and elegant capital of South Australia to vibrant Darwin, the tropical capital of the Northern Territory. The 3,016-kilometre route follows the fully sealed Stuart Highway, named after one of Australia's most famous explorers John McDouall Stuart, and travels to some of Australia's best known places: the lush wine country of the Clare Valley, Wilpena Pound and the Flinders Ranges, Coober Pedy, Uluru/Ayers Rock, Katherine Gorge and Kakadu.



Hawker to Parachilna, Flinders Ranges, South Australia

The southern half of the drive leads travellers through the undulating countryside that surrounds Adelaide to the awesome grandeur of the Flinders Ranges and into the remarkable South Australian Outback, full of compelling landscapes, rewarding experiences and rich in Aboriginal and European heritage.

The northern half of the journey takes travellers into the semi-arid and ancient desert regions of Outback Central Australia. Savannah woodlands give way to the tropical rainforest and wetlands of the north and the journey ends in the cosmopolitan city of Darwin. The highway takes you through an ancient landscape filled with unique wildlife and spectacular vegetation, and offers unique opportunities to interact with local Aboriginal people, custodians of the oldest living culture on earth.

Along the way there's a network of Explorer's Way signage with information on explorers, Outback characters and interesting destinations. There are ample opportunities for sightseeing, as well as regular rest stops, fascinating Outback towns to explore and a great network of pubs. There are special-interest drive trails that branch out from the main highway, with interpretive signs to enhance their unique experiences.

Adventurers can immerse themselves in Aboriginal culture, go swimming in billabongs, hot springs and waterholes with waterfalls, camp under the stars or underground, fossick for gold or noodle for opals and climb peaks and walk tree-lined gorges. There are also many opportunities for bush walking, bird watching, cycling, horse and camel trekking, fishing and canoeing.

From South Australia to the Top End of the Northern Territory, this is a land of contrasts and surprises. It's a place for adventure, a place to relax and a place to escape.

Front Cover: The Breakaways near Coober Pedy, South Australia

OLD GHAN RAILWAY HERITAGE TRAIL
PORT AUGUSTA TO ALICE SPRINGS

This remarkable journey through the Outback reveals the incredible story of the railway that changed Australia. The interpretive signs with stories and legends of the Old Ghan are located at 16 historic points on the route through the Flinders Ranges and along the Oodnadatta Track.

Day 1

- From Port Augusta (home of Wadlata Outback Centre and the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens) head north via the historic Railway Station in Quorn and the township of Hawker to the former Ghan siding of Parachilna.

Port Augusta to Parachilna: 196 km/2.5 hours

Day 2

- Head to Beltana, passing the site of a spectacular 1891 derailment and on to Leigh Creek, a major coal-mining town.
- Continue on to the fascinating ruins of the pioneer settlement of Farina and take the self-guided walk, then head to Marree, which offers a variety of accommodation.

Parachilna to Marree: 180 km/2 hours

Day 3

- Travel on to Coward Springs, another former siding for the railway, now known for its natural springs which attract a wide variety of birds.
- Continue to William Creek, South Australia's most isolated town. From here there's easy access to Lake Eyre, a large ephemeral salt lake (scenic flights available from Marree and William Creek). Camel treks are available here and at Coward Springs.

Marree to William Creek: 204 km/3 hours

Day 4

- Travel onward past the ruins of Peake Telegraph Station to the town of Oodnadatta. Once the railhead of the Old Ghan, it features the quirky Pink Roadhouse and is the gateway to the stunning Painted Desert.

William Creek to Oodnadatta: 202 km/3.5 hours

Day 5

- Head north via the Pedirka sandhills to Mount Dare, perhaps taking a side trip to soak in the Dalhousie warm springs, and see the wildlife that they attract.
- Stay overnight at Mount Dare Homestead in Witjira National Park. Accommodation includes homestead, hotel and bush camping.

Oodnadatta to Mount Dare: 249 km/4.5 hours

Day 6

- Travel north into the Simpson Desert, past the turn-off to Outback legend Molly Clark's Old Andado Station and onto the tiny town of Finke.
- Detour to Chambers Pillar, a spectacular sandstone column towering 40 m above the desert plain.
- Either camp the night, or continue on the Old South Road past the red sand dunes to the Ewaninga Rock Carvings. Over 3,000 of these Indigenous engravings have been recorded on the surface of sandstone outcrops around a small claypan.

Mount Dare to Alice Springs: 297 km/6 hours

Today's Ghan

A 4x4 vehicle is recommended for travel on this trail. Please note that not all hire car companies allow their vehicles to be driven in areas north of the Oodnadatta Track (this includes areas such as Dalhousie Springs, Mount Dare and Witjira National Park). Please ensure you check these details when planning your itinerary.

ABORIGINAL DREAMING TRAILS
PORT AUGUSTA TO HAWKER

For thousands of years the Flinders Ranges has been home to the Aboriginal peoples now called the Adnyamathanha (pronounced Adnamatna). Traditional stories and songs form their muda (history) and reveal the hidden meaning of the yarta (land). Embodied in the ancient landscape, these stories are vibrant and dynamic interpretations of the creation of the Flinders Ranges. The Aboriginal Dreaming Trails lead you through this dramatic and ancient landscape to key sites and special places.

Day 1

- Begin at Wadlata Outback Centre in Port Augusta and drive to Hawker, passing by sacred Death Rock, Kanyaka (ruins of pioneer farms), and Yura Billa (Yourambulla Caves), which features Aboriginal drawings and ochre paintings.
- Head to Flinders Ranges National Park and walk to Wangarra Lookout and learn the story of the creation of spectacular Wilpena Pound. Accommodation in the park and on nearby stations includes a motel, cottages, cabins, caravan parks and campsites.

Port Augusta to Wilpena: 158 km/2 hours

Day 2

- Enjoy some more bushwalking in the Park along the marked trails before continuing on to Blinman through Bunyeroo Valley and Brachina Gorge.
- Wander through the old Blinman Mine, now an historic reserve, or walk to Blinman Falls. There's a choice of accommodation at Blinman and nearby Angorichina.

Wilpena to Blinman: 59 km/0.5 hour

Day 3

- Head to Arkaroola. Just before Chambers Gorge, you can learn the story of Valnaapa (two law men) who created water and copper.
  Continue to Nepouie to hear more of this fascinating story.
- At Arkaroola, learn about the powerful Dreaming serpent who drank Lake Frome dry, and visit the observatory which offers a close-up view of the brilliant night sky. Stay overnight at Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary.

Blinman to Arkaroola: 165 km/2 hours

Day 4

- Return to Balcanoona and head west to Iga Warta (near Nepabunna),where you can learn the stories of the Adnyamathanha people of the Flinders Ranges.
- On your way back to Hawker, visit the bush bakery in Copley, historic Beltana heritage town and Parachilna.

Arkaroola to Hawker: 258 km/4 hours

A 4x4 vehicle is recommended for travel on these trails.

Iga Warta, Flinders Ranges, South Australia

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Feel your spirits soar as the car heads north from Adelaide for the many Outback adventures to be had in the northern regions of South Australia.

Past the vineyards and pastoral country north of Adelaide, the stone ruins of fallen houses are a testament to the fickle nature of this environment. These remnants tell of a rich history, of a colony built on farming and the land. The towns echo a similar story of a past reliant on mining and farming and the struggle to make a life away from the coast.

But this country is far from arid and barren. Adjust your view and you'll find remarkable flora and fauna unique to these parts. Behind serrated ridges of glowing rock are tree-lined gorges and clear waterholes. The beauty of the deserts lies in the colours and textures of the soil and vegetation – no two deserts are the same in this vast place.

Aboriginal legend says the Flinders and Gammon Ranges were shaped by the serpents and giants of the Dreaming, and are considered to be among the oldest mountains on earth. The Adnyamathanha people of the Ranges welcome visitors to share their culture and there are ample opportunities to see Aboriginal rock art and places of significance.

Special Events

Wilpena Under the Stars, February annually
Wine and dine in style under a star-filled Outback sky during this black tie dinner/dance at spectacular Wilpena Pound, benefiting the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

William Creek Races, March annually
The town's population of 16 swells to hundreds when people converge on the Oodnadatta Track town to try and win this famous Outback horse race. Enjoy camel exped-itions, an Outback Ball, gymkhana and night street party.

Coober Pedy Opal Festival, Easter annually
A fun weekend celebrating the town's unique opal heritage. Many prizes to be won (and found!) and sporting events include desert beach volleyball.

Great Australian Outback Cattle Drive
Staged biennially, the Great Australian Outback Cattle Drive is held over a number of weeks, with some of Australia's most famous and experienced drovers uniting to drove hundreds of cattle by horseback down the legendary Birdsville Track, to relive one of the world's greatest cattle drives. Droving tours are available for experienced riders through to complete beginners.

Visit www.southaustralia.com for more information about these and other special events.

Outback Station Stays

There are a number of working sheep and cattle stations in the Flinders Ranges and South Australian Outback where visitors can experience this amazing lifestyle first hand.

Visit www.southaustralia.com for farmstay and station accommodation options.

Essential 4WD Guide

Collect a copy of the 4WD Tracks & Repeater Towers guide from visitor information centres for maps, details on tracks, and safety tips.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Driving through Central Australia toward the Top End of the Northern Territory, is a brilliant way to experience this vast and amazing landscape at close range. Central Australia is the red heart of Australia, an ancient landscape shaped by powerful geological forces over millions of years. The sense of space is awe-inspiring: on a clear desert day, the rocks and ranges seem endless, and at night, immeasurable glittering stars stretch into infinity.

This land is home to Aboriginal people whose culture remains strong after tens of thousands of years. Although this is desert country, it's far from empty – wildlife of all sizes abounds, from kangaroos to thorny devils. As you travel, you'll come to appreciate the subtle variations in colour, texture and fragrance of the native vegetation.

The landscape changes as you head north, gradually becoming greener and more tropical. Closer to the coast, you can visit tumbling waterfalls and crystal-clear springs edged by palms and ferns. The birds and the huge termite mounds will amaze you.

On the coast is the city of Darwin, which looks north across the Timor Sea to Asia, and has a distinct Eastern feel.

Special Events

Finke Desert Race, Finke Desert, near Alice Springs, June annually
This is Australia's most exciting desert race for motorcycles and vehicles – a 440 kilometre return journey of rugged Outback competitive racing.

Voyages Camel Cup Carnival, Blatherskite Park, Alice Springs, July annually
The famous Central Australian camel carnival, is a fun-filled day with a variety of races, including the Camel Cup.

Assa Abbloy Henley on Todd Regatta, Todd River, Alice Springs, September annually
This unique event has four essential ingredients: a dry riverbed, bottomless boats, plenty of human horsepower and a delight in the ridiculous. Watching seemingly sane people race in bottomless eights, oxford tubs, bath tubs and yachts through the deep coarse sand of the Todd River provides an unique spectacle amongst world sporting events.

Darwin Festival, Darwin, August annually
The Darwin Festival, a vibrant arts and cultural event, is held over 18 days in the last 2 and half weeks of August every year. Experience the celebration of multicultural flavour and Asian connections showcasing Indigenous, Asian and multicultural artists, and a diverse and colourful program encompassing theatre, music, dance, visual arts, comedy, film, workshops and free community events in a tropical, outdoor venue.

Henley on Todd Regatta

Mindil Beach Sunset Markets, Mindil Beach, Darwin, May-October, Thursdays & Sundays from 5pm-10pm.
Over 200 local artisans and craft people display arts and crafts from around the world and a mouth watering variety of food stalls feature cuisine from over 20 countries.

Visit www.australiasoutback.com for more information about these and other special events.

NATURE'S WAY TOURIST DRIVE
DARWIN TO KATHERINE/DARWIN

This stunning drive takes you from Darwin through the lush wetlands of the Adelaide and Mary River systems into Kakadu National Park, then south to the gold-mining town of Pine Creek. Along the way, InfoStands tell you more about the nature and history of the area, including the adventures of crocodile hunters, buffalo shooters and early settlers.

Day 1

- Visit the Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve at sunrise to see a multitude of birds, then drive on to enjoy the birds-eye view of the Adelaide River wetlands from the Window on the Wetlands Visitor Centre. The hands-on displays and information give a whole new perspective on this unique environment.
- Head for the Mary River National Park for an unforgettable nature experience showcasing the wildlife and birds of the Mary River Wetlands. You can take a river cruise, go bushwalking or take a 4x4 tour. Overnight at the Mary River Park or the Bark Hut Inn.

Darwin to Mary River: 135 km/1.5 hours

Day 2

- Start exploring Kakadu. Don't miss the ancient Aboriginal art at Ubirr and Nourlangie, or the Bowali Visitor Centre and Warradjan Cultural Centre.
- You can stock up on essentials in the town of Jabiru, before spending the night camping under the stars or in a range of accommodation in Kakadu National Park.

Mary River to Cooinda: 140 km/1.5 hours

Day 3

- Continue exploring Kakadu and meet some wildlife – including crocodiles – on an early morning billabong boat cruise. You could also visit Jim Jim Falls (4x4 only) and stay overnight at the historic township of Pine Creek.

Cooinda to Pine Creek: 170 km/2 hours

Day 4

- Drive south to Katherine and spend some time exploring this amazing area, perhaps taking a boat cruise of Nitmiluk (Katherine) Gorge or canoeing down the crystal clear Katherine River with a specialist guide.
- Alternatively return to Darwin along the Explorer's Way, stopping at Emerald Springs and Hayes Creek Wayside Inns and Tjuwaliyn (Douglas) Hot Springs Nature Park. If you have some extra time, stay the night at Batchelor and take an extra day to relax under some of the many waterfalls in Litchfield National Park.

Pine Creek to Katherine: 90 km/1 hour
Pine Creek to Darwin: 224 km/2.5 hours

Top End Waterlilies

PIONEERS' PATH TOURIST DRIVE
ERLDUNDA TO ALICE SPRINGS

Erldunda, 200 km south of Alice Springs on the Explorer's Way, is the starting point for this amazing drive through Central Australia's dramatic Outback landscape, which includes Uluru/Ayers Rock and Kings Canyon. Info stands along the way tell stories of the pioneers who shaped this area's history.

Day 1

- The majestic desert oaks at Erldunda mark the start of your journey on the sealed highway towards Ayers Rock Resort.
- Call in at Curtin Springs for refreshments and a quad bike adventure to Mt Connor.

Erldunda to Ayers Rock Resort: 244 km/3 hours

Red Centre Dreaming

Day 2

- Understand the local Anangu people's spiritual connection with their land at the Uluru–Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre.
- Explore Uluru/Ayers Rock and Kata Tjuta/Mt Olga. Be sure to view the monolith at various times of the day and watch as it changes colour.
- Go bushwalking, take a scenic flight, or explore the Outback from the back of a camel or Harley Davidson.

Ayers Rock Resort to Kata Tjuta/Mt Olga: 48 km/1 hour

Day 3

- Drive along Lasseter Highway and Luritja Road to spectacular Kings Canyon in Watarrka National Park, where you can camp or book a room. Explore Australia's largest canyon and enjoy the fascinating walk along the rim.
- Marvel at the clear desert night skies during a magical dinner around the campfire.

Ayers Rock Resort to Kings Canyon: 304 km/3.5 hours

Day 4

- Head north on the 4x4 Mereenie Loop Road and east along Larapinta Drive, which will take you back to Alice Springs via Palm Valley (4x4) and the creative Aboriginal communities of Hermannsburg and Wallace Rockhole. Camping facilities are available at both communities.
- Alternatively, take the 4x4 Meereenie Loop and then the Namatjira Drive to Glen Helen Resort (accommodation and camping available) and back to Alice Springs via a series of spectacular gorges including Ormiston Gorge, Serpentine Gorge, Standley Chasm and Simpsons Gap.

Kings Canyon to Alice Springs via Larapinta Drive: 331 km/5 hours
Kings Canyon to Alice Springs via Namatjira Drive: 392 km/6 hours

TRAVELLERS' INFORMATION

Climate

Explorer's Way traverses three distinct climatic regions:

The **Top End** is the tropical region of the Northern Territory and includes Darwin, Kakadu and Litchfield and Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) National Parks. The temperature remains constant throughout the year, with higher humidity and localised afternoon storms in summer, which bring the wetlands and waterfalls to life.
Average temperatures:
Tropical Winter or Dry Season
(May–October), 21–31°C
Tropical Summer or Wet Season
(November–April), 24–32°C

Outback Central Australia and South Australia, including Alice Springs, Uluru/Ayers Rock, Kings Canyon, the MacDonnell Ranges and Coober Pedy, are semi-arid and have four distinct seasons. The summer months are hot and dry followed by cool weather and moderate rainfalls in winter and early spring.
Average temperatures:
Spring (September–November), 14–30°C
Summer (December–February), 20–35°C Autumn
(March–May), 13–28°C
Winter (June–August), 5–20°C

South of the Outback and Flinders Ranges, including Adelaide and Kangaroo Island, enjoys a temperate Mediterranean climate with four distinct seasons. Summer is hot and dry, and most rain falls in the cool winter and early spring.
Average temperatures:
Spring (September–November), 10–20°C
Summer (December–February), 16–29°C
Autumn (March–May), 11–22°C
Winter (June–August), 7–15°C

Air Access

Adelaide and Darwin are serviced by a number of major international airlines including Qantas. Flights to Australia from Europe, are generally via Asia and depart from many European cities. Ask your travel agent for further information.

Clothing

Outback days are often very warm, but nights can be extremely cold, so you should always carry a set of warm clothes. You should also use a protective hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and insect repellent. Dehydration is a constant threat: always drink plenty of water.

Car Rental

Car and campervan hire is available in Adelaide, Alice Springs and Darwin and some regional towns.

All Australian States and Territories recognise driving licences issued in overseas countries. Licences not written in English must be presented with an English translation or an International Driving Permit. For further information on rental cars and campervans, ask your travel agent.

Accommodation

There are many accommodation choices along the Explorer's Way. These include simple motels, luxury hotels and homesteads, farm cottages, station and bed and breakfast accommodation, hostels, basic cabins and campsites. It's best to plan where you are going to stay and book in advance.

OUTBACK DRIVING

The Outback is a wonderfully rewarding place to visit. Keep in mind that it is vast and there are often long distances between towns and facilities. You must prepare carefully for all travel in the Outback.

- Use detailed, up-to-date road maps and make note of where petrol is available.
- Road conditions can change quickly in wet weather. Always check road conditions before you leave major towns.

West MacDonnell Ranges, Northern Territory

- Inform a responsible person of your intended itinerary. Pre-arrange points from which to contact those expecting your arrival.
- Carry extra supplies of food and water.
- Driving for long periods causes fatigue, a common cause of accidents. Plan regular stops and breaks.
- Ensure you know where the safety equipment is in your vehicle and how to use it.
- Do not rely on your mobile phone as coverage is limited. Ask your hire car company about emergency communication equipment.
- Learn and observe Australia's road laws. Keep to speed limits, wear seatbelts and do not drink alcohol before or while driving. Remember to keep to the LEFT side of the road.

AUSTRALIA'S EXPLORER'S WAY

FROM ADELAIDE TO DARWIN

MAP LEGEND

- Explorer's Way
- Old Ghan Railway Heritage Trail
- Dreaming Trails
- Pioneers' Path
- Nature's Way
- State Border
- Sealed Road
- Unsealed Road
- 4x4 Track
- Railway Line
- National Park/Reserve
- Lakes
- Point of Interest
- Explorer's Way Information Bay/Shelter
- Old Ghan Interpretive Sites
- Dreaming Trails Interpretive Sites
- (NT) InfoStand

Distance Chart

ADELAIDE TO DARWIN

ADELAIDE														
96	Port Wakefield													
216	120	Port Pirie Turn-Off												
305	209	89	Port Augusta											
476	380	260	171	Pimba										
589	493	373	284	113	Glendambo									
841	745	625	536	365	252	Coober Pedy								
1074	978	858	769	598	485	233	Marla							
1252	1156	1036	947	776	663	411	178	Kulgera						
1525	1429	1309	1220	1049	936	684	451	273	Alice Springs					
1808	1712	1592	1503	1332	1219	967	734	556	283	Barrow Creek				
2032	1936	1816	1727	1556	1443	1191	958	780	507	224	Tennant Creek			
2284	2188	2068	1979	1808	1695	1443	1210	1032	759	476	252	Elliott		
2522	2426	2306	2217	2046	1933	1681	1448	1270	997	714	490	238	Larrimah	
2702	2606	2486	2397	2226	2113	1861	1628	1450	1177	894	670	418	180	Katherine
2903	2807	2687	2598	2427	2314	2062	1829	1651	1378	1095	871	619	381	201 Adelaide River
3016	2920	2800	2711	2540	2427	2175	1942	1764	1491	1208	984	732	494	314 113 DARWIN

These distances are in kilometres and represent sections of the Stuart Highway (marked in blue on map).

Facts and Figures

- The Northern Territory is home to 200,000 people (about 1% of Australia's population) and takes up one-sixth of Australia's land mass.
- There are hundreds of parks and reserves in the Northern Territory, ranging in size from less than one hectare up to Kakadu National Park, which covers 19,804 square kilometres.
- The Northern Territory has two World Heritage-listed National Parks: Kakadu National Park and Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park.
- Darwin Harbour is twice as big as famous Sydney Harbour.
- Uluru/Ayers Rock stands 860m above sea level.
- One and a half million people live in South Australia, with more than 1 million of these residing in Adelaide.
- More than 21% of the total area of South Australia is devoted to an astonishing 316 National Parks, Conservation Parks, Recreation Parks, Game Reserves and Wilderness Protection Areas.
- South Australia's coastline runs for 4,800 spectacular kilometres. Adelaide's metropolitan beaches alone stretch unbroken for more than 30 kilometres.

Maps, Permits & Road Conditions

This map is designed for informational and inspirational purposes. For detailed maps, expert information on driving in the Outback, road conditions and safety recommendations, please contact these major motoring organisations:

RAA
(Royal Automobile Association of South Australia)
Ph: +61 8 8202 4600 Website: www.raa.net
South Australia Road Conditions Hotline
(Transport SA): 1300 361 033 (call within Australia)
Website: www.transport.sa.gov.au (Road Reports and Traffic Restrictions – Outback Roads)

AANT
(Automobile Association of the Northern Territory)
Ph: +61 8 8981 3837 Website: www.aant.com.au
Northern Territory Road Conditions Hotline: 1800 246 199
Website: www.roadreport.nt.gov.au

Visiting National Parks, Conservation Reserves and Aboriginal Lands

National Parks and other reserves often require permits and passes for entry. For further information and contact details, visit www.parks.sa.gov.au for South Australian parks and www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks for Northern Territory parks.

Experiencing Aboriginal culture is both unique and rewarding, but you must have a permit to enter some Aboriginal lands. Allow 4 to 6 weeks for this process.

For further information contact:

Maralinga Tjarutja (South West SA)
Ph: +61 8 8625 2946
Fax: +61 8 8625 3076

Anangu Pitjantjatjara (North West SA)
Ph: +61 8 8954 8104 Fax: +61 8 8954 8110
Website: www.waru.org/resourses/permits/php

Aboriginal Lands Trust (South Australia)
Ph: +61 8 8226 4439

Central Land Council (Central Australia)
Ph: +61 8 8951 6211 Website: www.clc.org.au

Northern Land Council (Top End)
Ph: +61 8 8920 5100 Website: www.nlc.org.au

Tiwi Land Council (Tiwi Islands)
Ph: +61 8 8981 4898

Further Information

Northern Territory touring information
Northern Territory Holiday Centre
13 30 68 (call within Australia)
www.australiasoutback.com

South Australian touring information
South Australian Visitor & Travel Centre
Tel: +61 8 8303 2220 or 1300 655 276 (call within Australia)
Fax: +61 8 8303 2249
www.southaustralia.com

Your Travel Agency:

Melville Island
Bathurst Island
GARIG GUNAK BARLU NATIONAL PARK
Cobourg Peninsula
DARWIN
DJUKBINJ NATIONAL PARK
MARY RIVER NATIONAL PARK
Oenpelli
Jabiru
Nhulunbuy
Gove Peninsula
Arnhem Land
Bark Hut
Batchelor
LITCHFIELD NATIONAL PARK
Adelaide River
Jim Jim Falls
Twin Falls
KAKADU NATIONAL PARK
Hayes Creek
Emerald Springs
Pine Creek
NITMILUK NATIONAL PARK (Katherine Gorge)
Katherine Gorge
Katherine
ELSEY NATIONAL PARK
Mataranka
Larrimah
Daly Waters
Hi-Way Inn
Dunmarra
Elliott
Renner Springs
To Kununurra
Timber Creek
Victoria River
GREGORY NATIONAL PARK
To Borroloola
John Flynn Historical Reserve
Tennant Creek
Tennant Creek Overland Telegraph Station
Barkly Homestead
To Mount Isa
TANAMI DESERT WILDLIFE SANCTUARY
Devils Marbles
Wauchope
Wycliffe Well
Barrow Creek Telegraph Station Historical Reserve
Barrow Creek
Central Mount Stuart Historical Reserve
Ti Tree
Alleron
Tilmouth Roadhouse
Gemtree
West MacDonnell Ranges
WEST MACDONNELL NATIONAL PARK
Glen Helen Gorge
Simpsons Gap
Standley Chasm
Alice Springs
Arltunga
Ross River
East MacDonnell Ranges
McDonnell
Ooraminna
Ewaninga Rock Carvings Conservation Reserve
Glen Helen
FINKE GORGE NATIONAL PARK
Kings Canyon Resort
Kings Canyon
WATARRKA NATIONAL PARK
Stuarts Well
Rainbow Valley Conservation Park
Titjikala
Rodinga
Mt Ebenezer
Mt Liebig
Mt Doreen
Mt Zeil
Mt Sonder
Mt Razorback
Mt Gillen
Mt Hay
Mt Sonder
Mt Ruth
Mt Ainslie
Mt Stuart
Mt Chalmers
Mt Ainslie
Mt Ainslie
Mt Ainslie