



Gold Coast 2018: Extended stay options

AUSTRALIAN ICONS – 13 DAYS

From Melbourne, through the Red Centre, on to tropical Cairns and Sydney, you'll see Phillip Island's famous little penguins, discover ancient Uluru and Kata Tjuta, snorkel on the Great Barrier Reef and float high above the canopy to Kuranda on board Skyrail Cableway. All this is topped off with a visit to spectacular Sydney!

HIGHLIGHTS

- Marvel at the Phillip Island Penguin Parade – so cute!
- Travel along the magnificent Great Ocean Road and visit the Twelve Apostles
- Meet the Red Centre's wildlife in Alice Springs
- Enjoy wine while watching the beautiful Uluru sunset
- Experience a spectacular Red Centre sunrise
- Discover ancient Aboriginal rock art at Uluru and learn about sacred sites
- Snorkel and cruise on the Great Barrier Reef
- Experience Aboriginal culture in Cairns
- Ride Skyrail Rainforest Cableway
- Discover the village in the rainforest, Kuranda
- Journey through tropical rainforest on the Kuranda Scenic Railway
- Sail around Sydney Harbour on a lunch cruise
- Feel the sand between your toes on Bondi Beach
- Marvel at spectacular views in the Blue Mountains
- Get up close and personal to cuddly Australian wildlife
- A different experienced Driver Guide each day

DINING

- Full buffet breakfasts (12) B
- Lunches (3) L
- Dinner (1) D

Day 1: Welcome to Melbourne

On arrival at Melbourne Airport you will be transferred to your hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure to explore this cosmopolitan city.

Hotel: Mercure Hotel Welcome (standard) or Crown Plaza (superior), Melbourne, 3 nights.

Day 2: Great Ocean Road

Admire the panoramic views of the Melbourne skyline as you depart the city. Travel along Victoria's famous Great Ocean Road through the coastal towns of Anglesea and Wye River before arriving at the beautiful white sandy beaches of Apollo Bay. The rugged splendour of the approaching Twelve Apostles is breath-taking. These incredible limestone rock formations of up to 45 meters high are the result of erosion that began up to 20 million years ago. Enjoy the amazing shipwreck story of survival of the Loch Ard and visit its famous Gorge and Razorback Lookout. View the rock known as London Bridge, parts of which collapsed in recent years. **B**

Day 3: Melbourne & Penguins

Experience the sights of cosmopolitan Melbourne. See Parliament House, Queen Victoria Market and visit the Royal Botanic Gardens. Travel to the Maru Koala & Animal Park to see koalas, kangaroos, Tasmanian Devils and other native animals. View the Nobbies rock formations overlooking one of the most treacherous oceans in the world, Bass Strait. If you think the koalas are cute, just wait until you see the Little Penguins on Phillip Island. Head down to Summerland Beach and just as the sun sets, the wild Little Penguins emerge from the sea after a hard days fishing and waddle across the sand to their dune burrows. **B**

Day 4: Melbourne – Alice Springs

This morning you'll fly to Alice Springs. Tour the sights of this outback town including the School of the Air, which provides education to school children living in remote areas. Hear how this essential service is delivered via satellite across more than one million square kilometres. Stop at this historic Telegraph Station which marks the original site of the first European settlement in Alice Springs. Visit the Royal Flying Doctors Service where you will see how medical aid reaches those who live in the remote outback. Also stop at the Alice Springs Reptile Centre, where you can get up to close to enormous goannas and frill-neck lizards. The tour concludes with a panoramic view of the township of Alice Springs and the MacDonnell Ranges from the top of Anzac Hill.

Hotel: DoubleTree by Hilton (standard), or Chifley Alice Springs Resort (superior), Alice Springs B

Day 5: Alice Springs – Ayers Rock

Depart early for Ayers Rock Resort, stopping at a camel farm where you can take an optional ride. This afternoon travel around the base of Uluru with a local Driver Guide. Learn about the native flora, fauna and intriguing cultural traditions of traditional owners, the Anangu, and discover an array of fascinating sacred sites. Join your Driver Guide for a walk to Mutitjulu

Waterhole. You'll explore a number of caves and view Aboriginal rock paintings as your Guide interprets their meaning and significance. Later visit Uluru-Kata Tjuta Culture Centre where there is time to purchase some locally made Aboriginal art and learn more about the Western Desert region. Enjoy sparkling wine and nibbles this evening, while watching the sunset change the colours of Uluru (Ayers Rock) from the special viewing area known as the 'sunset strip'. Travel to our exclusive venue to enjoy an Aussie barbecue dinner. There is time for stargazing too (weather permitting).

Hotel: Desert Gardens Hotel (standard) or Sails in the Desert Hotel (superior), Ayers Rock Resort, 2 nights B D

Day 6: Uluru (Ayers Rock & Kata Tjuta (the Olgas)

Rise early to travel through the desert plains to experience sunrise at Kat Tjuta (the Olgas). Commence a 2-3 hour walk to the Valley of the Winds with your guide. With views across many of the domes of Kata Tjuta and out into the sacred Anangu men's area, you'll be in awe of natural and cultural wonder. **B**

Day 7: Uluru (Ayers Rock) – Cairns

This morning you are free to enjoy the facilities of Ayers Rock Resort or just relax. This afternoon you'll travel to Cairns.

Hotel: DoubleTree by Hilton (standard) or Hilton Hotel (superior), Cairns, 3 nights B

Day 8: Great Barrier Reef

Board your high speed catamaran for your cruise to the world famous Great Barrier Reef. The friendly, professional crew will take you to an underwater world that is a dazzling kaleidoscope of colour and brilliance. Enjoy a reef education presentation by a marine naturalist. Choose to snorkel (equipment provided) or you can stay dry and explore the stunning reef from the comfort of a Quicksilver semi-sub, just one metre underwater. Watch the fish-feeding from the unique underwater viewing platform and underwater observatory. A tropical buffet lunch is served before returning to Cairns this afternoon. **B L**

Day 9: Tjapukai – Skyrail – Kuranda

Visit the award-winning Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, where the legends of the Dreamtime are brought to life in a rainforest setting. Learn about this ancient culture through theatres, shows and dance demonstrations. Travel on the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway high above the canopy of the rainforest to the picturesque village of Kuranda where you'll have free time to stroll through the Kuranda Heritage Markets. Board the famous Kuranda Scenic Railway for a breath-taking rail journey over the Barron Gorge, through the coastal sugarcane fields to Freshwater Station. **B**

Day 10: Cairns – Sydney

You will be transferred to Cairns Airport for your flight to Sydney, where the remainder of your day is at leisure to explore on your own.

Hotel: Vibe Hotel (standard) or Sofitel Sydney Wentworth, Sydney, 3 nights B

Day 11: Sydney

This morning cross over the Sydney Harbour Bridge and stop at Milsons Point to photograph fabulous views of the city skyline. Next is North Head lookout for a spectacular panorama of the Sydney Harbour and beyond. See Sydney's white sandy northern beaches including Curl Curl and Freshwater, then feel the sand between your toes on Manley Beach. Return to the city for a buffet luncheon cruise on Sydney Harbour, and this afternoon see the Opera House, Royal Botanic Gardens and Mrs Macquarie's Chair. Finish your day with a visit to famous Bondi Beach, where you'll have time to wander along the shoreline and dip your toes in the clear cool water. **B L**

Day 12: Blue Mountains

Head west to the Blue Mountains and drive through the tourist town of Katoomba. At Scenic World enjoy 360° views of the Jamison Valley. Ride the Scenic Railway, the world's steepest incline railway (own expense). From Echo Point you'll be treated to a spectacular view of the famous Three Sisters. According to Aboriginal legend, this unusual rock formation represents three sisters who were turned into stone. Next stop is the quaint village of Leura for lunch. This picturesque spot will take you back in time and is famous for its antique shops and of course its Candy Store! On your way back down the mountain, you'll visit Featherdale Wildlife Park, where you can pat a cuddly koala. See our amazing Australian animals including kangaroos, crocodiles, goannas and possums. **B L**

Day 13: Farewell from Sydney

Your holiday concludes this morning after breakfast. You will be transferred to Sydney Airport to connect with your onward flight. **B**

If you would like to include this tour as part of your travel over to the Gold Coast for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, please contact us at games18@travelplaces.co.uk or call 01903 259 133.