



Discovering Our Planet Together



Australia North: Kakadu, Kimberley & the Outback

Explore Ancient Landscapes & Cross the Red Desert on The Ghan Luxury Train



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Trip Details:

Days:

14 Days / Jun–Aug

Price:

From \$18895
(+ Air)

Physical

Requirements:

Moderate

Australia North: Kakadu, Kimberley & the Outback

Explore Ancient Landscapes & Cross the Red Desert on The Ghan Luxury Train

Journey to the back of beyond on a singular itinerary that connects three of Australia's most remote tracts of wilderness via private chartered flights. In the vast Red Center, watch the sun set over the monolith of Uluru (Ayers Rock), and wonder at more stars than you've ever seen before. From Alice Springs, board *The Ghan* for the storied train passage across the desert to Katherine up north. Then head for the "Top End" of the Land Down Under—the tropical reaches of the Outback. With interpretation from our Expedition Leader and Aboriginal guides, delve into the watery wilderness of Kakadu, thick with crocodiles. Fly on to the Kimberley, where the beehive stacks of the Bungle Bungle Range form an otherworldly landscape. In Australia's far-flung north, the Dreamtime shapes primal terrain where human cultures have been integrated with the land for more than 65,000 years.

Trip Highlights

With your naturalist Expedition Leader and Indigenous guides, explore the iconic landscapes and Aboriginal heritage of Uluru, Kakadu and the Bungle Bungles

Gain an intimate view on nature on bush walks and river cruises, and survey its vast grandeur on scenic flights and a 750-mile rail journey aboard The Ghan

In five national parks and three World Heritage Sites, see 65,000-year-old rock paintings, and look for wallabies, wallaroos, dingos and saltwater crocodiles



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Itinerary At A Glance

Day 1

Sydney, Australia

Day 2

North Head Sanctuary /
Sydney Botanic Gardens

Day 3

Fly to Ayers Rock / Uluru–Kata
Tjuta National Park

Day 4

Traditional Uluru Heritage
Tour

Day 5

Uluru Sunrise / Kata Tjuta /
Private Flight to Alice Springs /
The Ghan Luxury Train

Day 6

The Ghan / Nitmiluk National
Park—Katherine Gorge Cruise
/ Kakadu National
Park—Jabiru

Australia North: Kakadu, Kimberley & the Outback Itinerary

Explore Ancient Landscapes & Cross the Red Desert on The Ghan Luxury Train

Day 1: Sydney, Australia

Arrive in Sydney, cosmopolitan capital of New South Wales, and transfer to our hotel in the heart of The Rocks, a district steeped in ancient Aboriginal history and site of the first European fleet landing in 1788, when ships carrying convicts arrived from England. After displacing the Gadigal First Nations people, British colonists established Australia's first town on this rocky point, creating the colony of New South Wales. This evening, join your Expedition Leader on a short walk to your welcome dinner at a waterfront restaurant overlooking Sydney Harbor.





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Itinerary At A Glance

Day 7

Rainforest Walk / Private
Guluyambi Cultural Cruise /
Ubirr—Rock Art & Wildlife
Viewing

Day 8

Private Billabong Cruise /
Warradjan Cultural Center /
Nourlangie Rock Art

Day 9

Fogg Dam Conservation
Reserve / Darwin /
Broome—Cable Beach

Day 10

Private Flightseeing in
Purnululu National
Park—Exploring the Bungle
Bungles

Day 11

Private Dolphin Cruise /
Broome Bird Observatory

Day 12

Private Flight over Buccaneer
Archipelago & Horizontal Falls
/ Pearl Farm & Cultural Tour

Day 13

Broome Dinosaur
Coast—Private Tour / Darwin

Day 14

Darwin / Depart

Day 2: North Head Sanctuary / Sydney Botanic Gardens

With your Expedition Leader, walk over to Circular Quay this morning to board the ferry across Sydney Harbor to Manly. Here, we join an expert local guide for a private walk at North Head Sanctuary, an Australian Wildlife Conservancy property that is an urban reserve of extraordinary biodiversity. Hidden on top of North Head in this oceanside suburb, the important scrub heath vegetation is a remnant of native bushland and the site of important biodiversity restoration programs, including the replanting of three locally extinct species. Numerous walking trails lace the scrubland that is home to echidna, bandicoot, pygmy possum and lizards, plus a host of birds including the wattlebird, wagtail, wren and raven.

After lunch in Manly, ferry back to Sydney and continue to the Royal Botanic Garden. On an Aboriginal bush tucker tour, hear from our Indigenous guide about native bush plants, how they were traditionally used by the Gadigal people, and how they have been adapted to modern palates. On this site, First Nations people lived off the land for centuries before European settlement, and we learn about their initial contact with those aboard the 11 boats that arrived from England in 1788. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure before dinner at The Glenmore, a 1921 heritage-listed building with one of the best views of Sydney Harbor and the city skyline from the rooftop terrace, including the iconic Sydney Opera House.

Day 3: Fly to Ayers Rock / Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park

After breakfast, we depart to meet our flight from Sydney to Ayers Rock Airport, then continue to our hotel where a light lunch awaits. This afternoon, we have our first encounter with Uluru, the legendary red sandstone monolith that rises in striking solitude 1,142 feet above the flat grasslands where we find an abundance of springs, waterholes, rock caves and ancient paintings. Uluru, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is sacred to the Anangu, the Aboriginal people of central Australia who are the original inhabitants of this region, with a presence established for more than 60,000 years. European explorers first arrived here in 1872. A year later, a surveyor observed Uluru and named it Ayers Rock in honor of the Chief Secretary of South Australia, Sir Henry Ayers. In 1993, Australia adopted a dual naming policy to recognize both the traditional Aboriginal name and the English name of landmarks, and Uluru/Ayers Rock became the first official dual-named feature in the Northern Territory.

On a guided walk to Mutijulu Waterhole, hear traditional Creation stories from the Dreamtime, then drive around the base of Uluru before returning to our desert resort hotel with time to relax. Tonight we gain another perspective on Uluru during the only evening dining experience inside Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park. Sample traditional local foods including native apple, bush tomato and quandong flavors, and savor renowned Australian barbecued steak, kangaroo and seafood, accompanied by Australian wines. After dinner, stargaze with a local expert under some of the darkest skies on Earth.



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Day 4: Traditional Uluru Heritage Tour

Accompany a traditional Uluru family to their homeland, called Patji, and spend intimate time learning about the oldest living culture in the world. A unique and exclusive experience for visitors, Patji is located just outside of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. Explore this extraordinary environment by 4-wheel-drive with your Aboriginal guide, stopping to hear personal stories from our Uluru family hosts, including how they survived in this desert environment prior to the advent of tourism, and how the Uluru inhabitants fought for land rights to their Aboriginal domain. Continue to a private sand dune for a panorama over the great expanse of desert overlooking Uluru and the jumble of rock formations that comprise neighboring Kata Tjuta. Later, head to a viewpoint to see the sun set over Uluru, watching the rock mass turn a multitude of colors as the light gleams and fades.

Day 5: Uluru Sunrise / Kata Tjuta / Private Flight to Alice Springs / The Ghan Luxury Train

Rise before dawn to witness the wonder of sunrise over Uluru. We drive across the desert landscape to reach our vantage point on the mighty rock formation, watching the sun's rays illumine Uluru's hulk, casting a golden glow that turns the sandstone a luminous red. As the sun ascends, continue to Kata Tjuta—also known as the Olgas—for an Outback picnic breakfast. Afterward, walk with a local guide into Walpa Gorge, named for the wind (walpa) that whistles between the massive conglomerate rock walls and domes that comprise Kata Tjuta, the result of eons of weathering. Learn how the forces of nature have shaped these dramatic formations over millions of years, as well as the cultural significance of this sacred ceremonial site.

At midday, take a private chartered flight from Ayers Rock to Alice Springs, with a spectacular view of Uluru from the air. "Alice" is a remote town in the middle of Australia, located halfway between Darwin and Adelaide. It's called the gateway to the Red Center, the arid interior desert known for its rusty sandstone geological features. On arrival, tour Alice Springs' most notable sights, including the Royal Flying Doctors Service, bringing medical care to the most far-flung sectors of the Outback; The School of the Air, facilitating distance learning for Australia's most remote students; and Telegraph Station, the site of the first European settlement in Alice Springs. Established in 1871 to relay messages between Darwin and Adelaide along the Overland Telegraph Line, the station connected Australia to the undersea telegraph network of the British Empire, allowing a message to reach London in as little as five hours versus the 3-4 months it took by ship. Our tour concludes with a panorama of the town and MacDonnell Ranges from Anzac Hill.

Then it's time to embark on one of the world's great railway adventures: board *The Ghan*, Australia's historic train that inaugurated service in 1929, for the journey across the Outback. *The Ghan* was named for the pioneering cameleers who blazed a permanent trail into the Red Center of Australia more than 150 years ago; its full route from Adelaide in the south to Darwin in the north spans 1,850 miles. We travel nearly half of it on our northbound journey to Katherine, enjoying luxury accommodations in a comfortable sleeper cabin, Aussie beers and wines in the Outback Explorer Lounge, and fine meals in the Queen Adelaide Dining Room, whose art deco atmosphere harks back to the train's original ambience.



Day 6: The Ghan / Nitmiluk National Park—Katherine Gorge Cruise / Kakadu National Park—Jabiru

Wake early for breakfast aboard *The Ghan* before arriving in Katherine, where we disembark the train. Entering Nitmiluk National Park, take a boat cruise on the Katherine River between the sheer sandstone cliffs. Learn about the region's history and culture through interpretations of Indigenous rock art dating back 40,000 years. Hear Dreamtime stories about the Creation and the significance of the gorge in the lives of its traditional owners, the Jawoyn people. A short walk to the top of First Gorge reveals a stunning rock art site where paintings remain even after thousands of years of exposure to the elements, evidence of the Jawoyn culture in the area during the last Ice Age.

This afternoon, drive north from Katherine to Jabiru in Australia's "Top End," with lunch en route and a stop to look for hooded parrots. Entering Kakadu National Park, we find the tropical side of the remote Australian Outback, home to one of the world's largest saltwater crocodile populations. On the coastal floodplains of Australia's most northerly reaches, the Greater Kakadu region contains stunning biodiversity, including 68 mammal species, more than 120 reptile, 26 frog and 300 tidal and freshwater fish species, some 2,000 plant species, more than 10,000 insect species, and one-third of all Australian bird species, including an annual migration of over 100,000 magpie geese. Kakadu's giant crocodiles are the world's largest living reptiles, having thrived unchanged for nearly 200 million years. Endemic to Australia, they live in floodplains, billabongs, gorges and coastal waters, and we expect to see plenty of them.



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Day 7: Rainforest Walk / Private Guluymbi Cultural Cruise / Ubirr—Rock Art & Wildlife Viewing

Take a morning walk through the monsoon rainforest of Manngarre to look for flying foxes, spectacular golden orb spiders, orange-footed scrub fowl and the exquisitely plumed rainbow pitta bird. At Cahill's Crossing, look for giant saltwater crocodiles from viewing platforms over the East Alligator River. Then, take a private boat cruise on the river, a tidal estuary packed with crocodiles, which bounds the vast Aboriginal Arnhem Land. Our Aboriginal guide on board provides insight into local culture, mythology, the river's rich food chain, traditional uses for many plants and animals, and bush survival skills. On the Arnhem Land side, disembark to view traditional hunting & gathering implements.

Following our cruise, discover the wonders of Ubirr on the Kakadu side of the river, where ancient people camped beneath its cool rocky shelters and used plants and animals from the nearby floodplain for food, tools and medicine. Ubirr's rock art galleries are some of the most renowned in the world, with fine examples of X-ray painting as well as contact art from the time when Indigenous people first encountered Europeans. Much of it features fish, turtles, goanna and other important food sources. One image shows a thylacine, or Tasmanian tiger, which became extinct on the mainland more than 2,000 years ago. An optional hike to the top of Ubirr Rock offers magnificent views across Kakadu, Arnhem Land and the Nadab floodplains. Ubirr is one of the few places where it is possible to view the diminutive Wilkins rock-wallaby. Special bird sightings include the blue-winged kookaburra, pheasant coucal and peaceful dove, among many others. Learn how the Kakadu Escarpment was formed millions of years ago as we scout for native species including the white bellied sea-eagle and sulphur-crested cockatoo.

Return to our hotel for dinner, followed by a night walk in hopes of a glimpse of northern brush tail possum and northern brown bandicoot.



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Day 8: Private Billabong Cruise / Warradjan Cultural Center / Nourlangie Rock Art

Head out early this morning for a cruise on the Yellow Water Billabong. Exploring this serene wetland, we look for saltwater crocodiles and prolific birdlife—about one-third of Australia's bird species are found in Kakadu National Park, with at least 60 right here, including brolga, cockatoo, gala and red-winged parrot. Other sightings might include agile wallaby and Gilbert's dragon lizard. Then tour the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Center, an interactive museum, art exhibit and gathering place to meet the traditional owners of these lands.

After lunch at our hotel, look for agile wallabies as we head to the Nourlangie region, offering views over the magnificent Arnhem Land escarpment and its unique wildlife. Here, ancient sandstone ranges rise from the floodplains in a powerful landscape that epitomizes the Aboriginal Dreamtime. We visit the Nourlangie rock art site, which contains some of the most powerful Aboriginal paintings in Australia, including a depiction of the Lightning Man, who creates thunder by banging stone axes together. Birds here may include emerald doves and sandstone shrike-thrush, and with luck, we might spy an endemic black wallaroo. Keep an eye out, too, for water buffalo. At the end of the day, look for wildlife around Lake Jabiru as the sun sets. The wetlands are a haven for waterbirds, including brolga crane, glossy ibis, magpie goose, black-necked stork (jabiru), egrets, herons and more. We often see huge flocks of little corellas coming in to roost, and many species of finches.

Day 9: Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve / Darwin / Broome—Cable Beach

This morning, we explore one of Kakadu's most famous wetlands and premier birding spots. Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve is part of the Adelaide River floodplain, one of several connected catchments that make up the Top End wetlands and are of international importance due to their beauty, natural systems and cultural significance. As we stroll the boardwalk through the paperbark forest, look for barn owls, comb-crested jacanas, myriad dragonflies skimming the surface of the water, and a gigantic carpet of blooming waterlilies. From the Pandanus viewing platform, survey the vast floodplains and drying billabongs, searching for dancing brolgas, black-necked storks, and thousands of egrets and herons. The reserve is also a haven for water pythons, freshwater turtles and other wildlife. After lunch, we drive approximately one hour to Darwin, scouting for dingoes along the way, which we may see throughout Kakadu.

At the Darwin airport, catch a commercial flight west to Broome to arrive by late afternoon. It's just a short distance to our luxury beachside resort, which fronts Cable Bay. We'll spend four nights at this dreamy outpost, our base for exploring the East Kimberley region of Western Australia, one of the most ancient and untouched corners of the country. The wild and remote Kimberley is known for its stunning coastal and interior scenery, comprising a massive central plateau of dissected sandstone ranges and an extensive limestone range formed from an ancient barrier reef.



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Day 10: Private Flightseeing in Purnululu National Park—Exploring the Bungle Bungles

Our focus today is World Heritage-listed Purnululu National Park, which lies within Gija and Jaru Country. This area is of enormous significance to these Indigenous custodians, and we learn about their intimate connection to this astounding landscape since time immemorial. Departing Broome on a private chartered flight, survey the surreal landscape of the Bungle Bungles from the air. One of the planet's most fascinating geological landmarks, the beehive-shaped cones consist of stacks of ancient seabed layered with dolomite in orange and gray stripes, rising a thousand feet above savanna.

When we land, join a local guide for a walking tour through the sandstone domes, viewing their dramatic stripes at eye level. Our hike takes us to Cathedral Gorge, a huge natural amphitheater where shrubs dangle from the vertical walls. Among the rock towers, observe the creek beds, gaps and crevices, evidence of wet-season waterfalls, and ponder how nature's forces have sculpted and scoured this setting over millions of years. Along the way, learn about traditional bush medicine as we observe native plants used in human healthcare for millennia. Look for some of Purnululu's 130 bird species, as well as unique animals including the nailtail wallaby and short-eared rock wallaby. We stop for a picnic lunch in the gorge, awed by the amazing natural acoustics. On our return flight to Broome, gain a dramatic aerial perspective over Horseshoe Valley, Windjana Gorge and the ancient Devonian Reef, as we cross the Wunaamin Miliwundi Ranges. This evening, enjoy dinner at our seaside hotel. Once darkness descends, trace the stars' movements across some of blackest night skies on the planet.

Day 11: Private Dolphin Cruise / Broome Bird Observatory

Meet Australia's rarest dolphin—the snubfin—on a morning eco-cruise aboard a 50-foot catamaran. This charming, round-headed cetacean is native to Australia's north coast and was identified as a distinct new species in 2005. With almost no beak, these dolphins have a sweet, cartoonish face, similar to the beluga whale. Threatened by fishing net casualties and coastal development affecting the shallow waters and brackish estuaries they favor, the snubnose dolphin has become a focus of conservation concern. The creation of several marine parks in northern Australia is having a positive impact on efforts to preserve their declining numbers. We also look for more common bottlenose dolphins, dugongs, sea turtles and manta rays among the rich marine life of Roebuck Bay. Enjoy morning tea on board as we learn about the bay's diverse ecosystem.

This afternoon, visit Broome Bird Observatory and explore the surrounding plains to look for wallabies as well. This research and education center was established to promote the welfare of migratory bird species that congregate in Roebuck Bay, the shorebird capital of Australia. This habitat, where the desert meets the Indian Ocean, comprises a host of ecosystems that draw varied birdlife, including mudflats, ocean, mangroves, beaches, floodplains, salt marsh, savanna, desert scrub and pindan woodlands. More than 330 bird species have been logged in Broome—a third of all that exist in Australia. Seek out yellow chat, Asian dowitcher, white-breasted whistler, red-headed honeyeater, brolga and impressive birds of prey that hunt the grasslands of the Roebuck Plains. Once the wet season floods subside, the freshwater wetlands attract a range of waterbirds. As the plains dry, waterbirds leave and the wide-open grasslands and salt flats become more accessible, drawing raptors.



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Day 12: Private Flight over Buccaneer Archipelago & Horizontal Falls / Pearl Farm & Cultural Tour

A second day of private flightseeing is in store as we follow the stunning Kimberley coastline, a jumble of crenellated sandstone indented with rugged gorges and waterfalls pouring off the plateau into turquoise bays. From on high, survey the hundreds of islands that comprise the Buccaneer Archipelago. Crossing the ancient Kimbolton Ranges and King Sound, we reach Horizontal Falls, an unusual feature that David Attenborough called “one of the greatest natural wonders of the world.” In the turquoise waters of Talbot Bay, the fast-moving tidal current squeezes through two narrow gorges of the McLarty Range, pushing the water into rapid-like formations which rush through the twin gaps at a forceful rate, producing waterfalls turned on their side. The powerful tides in the Kimberley can fluctuate more than 30 feet, and the direction of the flow reverses so the water moves two different ways each day.

As our flight continues, get an exhilarating vantage over Cape Leveque, where red sandstone cliffs meet white sand and clear aqua seas, then land at Cygnet Bay to visit Australia's oldest family-owned pearl farm. Although Aboriginal peoples along the northern coast harvested and traded pearl shell more than 20,000 years ago, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, pearling was a key industry across northern Australia, and Broome became the pearling capital of the world. Australia supplied most of the world's demand for pearl shell—called “mother of pearl,” the illustrious lining of the oyster shell—which was exported to Europe and the United States. As manufacturers turned to plastic as an inexpensive alternative to mother-of-pearl in the 1950s, the market for pearl shell collapsed, and today Australia's pearling industry is based on cultivation. Broome remains an important center in the production of South Sea pearls.

Lunch awaits, along with a cultural experience with our local Bardi Jawi tour guide. Through rich stories and demonstrations, he shares lore about the seasons, hunting methods and various types of shelters. We'll hear a traditional song and get to taste damper—Australia's classic rustic bread—and fresh seafood. Our return flight to Broome is just as spectacular as we fly over Pender Bay, Beagle Bay, Carnot Bay, James Price Point, Willie Creek and Cable Beach, looking down on our resort hotel from on high.



Day 13: Broome Dinosaur Coast—Private Tour / Darwin

On a final morning in Broome, walk in the footsteps of dinosaurs with a local guide as we dig into history dating back 130 million years, when giant Sauropods and carnivorous Theropods roamed this terrain during the Mesozoic Period. The Dinosaur Coast, a National Heritage-listed region that covers more than 60 miles of Dampier Peninsula coastline, includes thousands of dinosaur tracks from more than 20 different types of dinosaurs, preserved in Broome sandstone. Our guide works closely with paleontologists from the University of Queensland, but in addition to the science, we also learn about the ancient cultural connections with this region, as dinosaur tracks have strong links to Aboriginal creation stories. In one instance, a set of three-toed *Megalosauropus* tracks trace the journey of a Bugarrigarra (Dreamtime) creator-being called Marala. There are also fossilized cycad-like impressions associated with markings left by Marala's tailfeathers where he rested. After lunch, we board an early afternoon flight back to Darwin.

Darwin, a former frontier outpost that is the capital of the sparsely populated Northern Territory, is located on the Timor Sea just below Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. With roots into Aboriginal Dreamtime, Darwin's Indigenous heritage extends back tens of thousands of years. More recently, Darwin was an important transportation hub from the early days of European settlement and a strategic Allied base during World War II. Today the city blends Aboriginal, Australian and Asian cultures in a lively melange. Check in to our hotel overlooking the harbor just steps from the waterfront esplanade, then celebrate our adventures over a farewell dinner this evening.

Day 14: Darwin / Depart

Our grand Australia Outback journey concludes this morning, with a transfer to the airport included to meet your departing flight.



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Accommodation Details:

The Ghan

Sydney Harbour Hotel

Desert Gardens Hotel

The Billi

Mercure Kakadu Crocodile
Hotel

Hilton Darwin

For detailed descriptions, visit
nathab.com/asia-adventure-travel/northern-australia-nature-tour/accommodations/

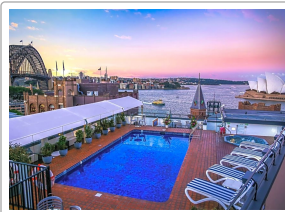
Australia North: Kakadu, Kimberley & the Outback Accommodations

Explore Ancient Landscapes & Cross the Red Desert on The Ghan Luxury Train



The Ghan

Spend a night aboard Australia's long-distance luxury passenger train that inaugurated service in 1929 and still today carries travelers in genteel elegance across the desert Outback.

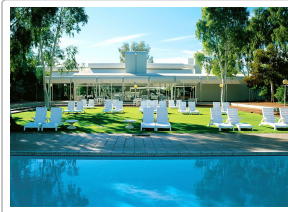


Sydney Harbour Hotel

Housed in a historic building in The Rocks district with views of the Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge, this contemporary 4-star hotel offers an ideal location and every modern comfort.



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Desert Gardens Hotel

Located inside Ayers Rock Resort, Desert Gardens Hotel offers a stylish, contemporary retreat and is the only accommodation with views of Uluru, as well as being the closest to Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.



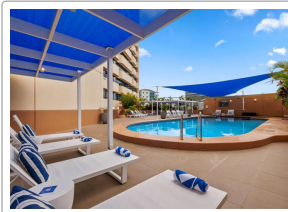
The Billi

Offering privacy and tranquility in a laid-back oceanside setting surrounded by tropical gardens, the Billi's luxurious air-conditioned eco-tents are our base for exploring Western Australia's wild Kimberley.



Mercure Kakadu Crocodile Hotel

Built in the shape of a crocodile and located within Kakadu National Park, the Aboriginal-owned "Croc" is the ideal base for exploring the park's many natural and cultural attractions.



Hilton Darwin

Enjoying a prime location just off the waterfront Esplanade with broad views of the harbor, this recently renovated hotel offers a tranquil transition from expedition to beyond.



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No One Offers You a Bigger Encounter with Australia's Untamed North

The Great Australian Outback—few places evoke a stronger sense of adventure. While Australia is hardly an unknown destination, the remote north is ripe for discovery. Our wide-ranging journey is crafted for the wildest possible encounters. Join a distinctly Nat Hab-style expedition as we delve into a montage of red deserts, sculpted gorges, tropical rivers and floodplains, sandstone mountains, waterfalls and springs.

1 An All-Encompassing Northern Australia Adventure

This isn't your typical Australia tour. Experience the unharnessed landscapes of Australia's Red Center and Top End, enjoying plenty of comfort though we never stray far from wilderness. Explore contrasting ecosystems on this in-depth nature immersion: the savanna, shrublands and sand dunes around Uluru; Kakadu's gorges, woodlands and wetlands; and the diverse terrain of the Kimberley, with its freshwater rivers, waterfalls, canyons, pockets of rain forest and layered sandstone mountains.

2 World-Class Nature Destinations

We visit five national parks and three UNESCO World Heritage Sites on this impressive and diverse itinerary, a collection of places that enjoy world renown for their stunning natural and cultural features, including endemic wildlife and rock art sites more than 60,000 years old.

3 Our Expertise Grants You Access to Rare Experiences

Australia's wild Top End—the northern tier of the Northern Territory—is immense, and its star attractions are hard to reach. Frankly, it's tough terrain to navigate on your own. But we've linked it up on a seamless itinerary uniting exceptional natural diversity. And through our connections, you'll be privy to locations and adventures not offered by more conventional companies.

4 An Overnight Journey Aboard One of the World's Most Famous Trains

Since 1929, The Ghan has been making the passage across Australia's vast Outback, connecting Adelaide in the south to Darwin, 1,850 miles north. We ride the rails for about half this distance, enjoying the train's refined elegance between Alice Springs and Katherine. Spend a night in your private sleeper car, which converts to a comfortable lounge space by day, and watch the expansive views roll past from the Outback Explorer bar and art deco environs of the Queen Adelaide Dining Room.



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5 Scenic Flights Give You Perspective You Won't Get Otherwise

We fly you from Uluru to Alice Springs, eliminating a full day of rugged driving while providing one of the most spectacular aerial experiences in Australia: a view on Uluru from above! You'll also enjoy a helicopter flightseeing adventure in the Kimberley that includes surveying the wondrous terrain of the Bungle Bungle for photos you'll never get on the ground. Plus our other chartered flights over northern Australia's wildest reaches!

6 Private Chartered Flights Get You Farther, Faster

This element is key to making this ambitious itinerary work. The only way to expeditiously get from one remote place to the next is via chartered flights, and we have included four. Otherwise, we would be looking at returning to distant cities and making inconvenient commercial connections that literally eat up entire days of your time. You've come all this way to explore wild nature—and we make sure that's what you are doing! Yes, it costs more—but the value added to your experience is exponential.

7 Private Boat Cruises

Exclusive excursions on chartered boats bring you closer to the regions natural wonders. Floating through Kakadu's vibrant wetlands, we'll see saltwater and freshwater crocodiles, agile wallabies, black wallaroos, and myriad species of birdlife. Another cruise will take us into an ancient gorge slicing through the rock art-adorned sandstone cliffs in Nitmiluk National Park.

8 Carefully Chosen Lodgings Immerse You in Australia's Wildest Places

Experience Nat Hab's signature brand of luxury: staying closest to nature! Plumb the watery reaches of Kakadu from our Indigenous-owned lodge, listen to the night sounds of the bush from your luxury tented safari camp in the Bungle Bungle, stargaze from our desert lodge in view of mighty Uluru, and spend a night on board The Ghan, one of the world's most famous trains.

9 A Distinct Nature Focus with Aboriginal Perspective

Nature is the primary force sculpting Australia's vast landscapes, but humans have been at home here for millennia. From savanna to swamp to tropical rain forest, this is Aboriginal homeland. Through private and intimate cultural encounters, including guided botanical walks, interpretive experiences at rock art sites more than 65,000 years old, and boat trips with Aboriginal-owned and operated ecotourism enterprises, witness how local people are bringing the wisdom of traditional sustainable living and land management to Australia's national parks today.

10 Some of the Best Stargazing on the Planet

The places we stay are so far away from urban areas and extensive artificial light that you are literally under some of the darkest skies on Earth. As the night sky becomes a vanishing natural resource worldwide, embrace this rare chance to see stars on a scale you simply can't imagine—and may never witness like this again.



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11 Explore with Just 12 Travelers

In a small group, we can seek out more remote nature highlights and stay in intimate lodges, surrounded by nature and close to wildlife. With fewer people, you get a deeper, more peaceful nature experience. And with local guides supporting our Expedition Leader throughout, you get the exceptional attention and interpretation you deserve.

12 Maximize Your Time in Nature with Flights Between Destinations

Australia is a huge country. That's why we fly between many of our itinerary highlights. Less time on the highway maximizes time in the wild among the landscapes and wildlife you came so far to see. Compare closely: Many companies offer longer itineraries that don't spend near as much time in nature.

13 The World's Finest Naturalist Guides

Natural Habitat Adventures has a well-deserved global reputation for employing the highest-quality guides in the industry. Our Expedition Leaders have years of experience and training, including resources from WWF's top scientists. You won't find more knowledgeable—or more personable—guides than those who work with us. Our philosophy is simple: a nature adventure is only as good as the guide who leads it, so we provide the very best!

14 Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures Your Outstanding Australia Adventure

Natural Habitat Adventures is proud to offer our exclusive guarantee that clearly states that we will meet the high expectations we set forth in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company.

15 Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.

16 Natural Habitat Adventures Is World Wildlife Fund's Travel Partner

Because of our commitment to environmentally friendly travel, as well as the exceptional quality of our small-group nature adventures, World Wildlife Fund, the world's leading environmental conservation organization, has named Natural Habitat Adventures its worldwide travel partner—a designation that makes us exceedingly proud!





Discovering Our Planet Together

Make It Private with Your Family or Friends

Travel privately, exclusively with your immediate family, multi-generational family or group of friends. And when you choose a private departure, you're assured the most exclusive and authentic Australia adventure on offer. Request your private departure by completing the form below.

Please note that on Australia North Make It Private departures we require a minimum group size of 6 travelers.

Also, please be aware that your per-person cost on a Make It Private trip will vary depending on the number of travelers in your group and may be as much as 10%-30% higher (ship-based trips may be even higher) than our normal trip cost unless you fill the trip.

This **Make It Private** option is available on nearly every Nat Hab trip for family and friend groups. Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917 or look for the "Make It Private" icon in the **pricing section** of a trip online at nathab.com to see prices based on your specific group size.



Discovering Our Planet Together



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:

From \$18895
(+ Air)

Group Size:

Please note that on Make It Private departures we have a minimum group size of half the maximum size of our regularly scheduled departures.

Physical Requirements:

Moderate

Australia North: Kakadu, Kimberley & the Outback Dates, Pricing & Info

Explore Ancient Landscapes & Cross the Red Desert on The Ghan Luxury Train

2025 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
Jun 1, 2025	Jun 14, 2025	
Jun 29, 2025	Jul 12, 2025	
Jul 20, 2025	Aug 2, 2025	
Jul 27, 2025	Aug 9, 2025	
Aug 3, 2025	Aug 16, 2025	
Aug 10, 2025	Aug 23, 2025	

2026 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
Jun 1, 2026	Jun 14, 2026	



Discovering Our Planet Together

Dates & Pricing Summary:

Prices:

From \$18895
(+ Air)

Group Size:

Please note that on Make It Private departures we have a minimum group size of half the maximum size of our regularly scheduled departures.

Physical

Requirements:

Moderate

Departure	Return	Notes
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Jun 29, 2026	Jul 12, 2026	
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Jul 20, 2026	Aug 2, 2026	
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Jul 27, 2026	Aug 9, 2026	
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Aug 3, 2026	Aug 16, 2026	
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Aug 10, 2026	Aug 23, 2026	
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2027 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
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Jun 1, 2027	Jun 14, 2027	
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Jun 29, 2027	Jul 12, 2027	
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Jul 20, 2027	Aug 2, 2027	
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Jul 27, 2027	Aug 9, 2027	
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Aug 3, 2027	Aug 16, 2027	
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Aug 10, 2027	Aug 23, 2027	
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Discovering Our Planet Together

Pricing

2023 Prices

➤ **Trip Price** \$11995 - \$12295 (+internal air)

Internal Air Cost: \$1987 per person (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

Single Occupancy: For a single room add \$2795.

Deposit: \$500 per person Trip prices are per person based on double occupancy and are given in U.S. dollars.



2024 Prices

➤ **Trip Price** \$14895 - 15195 (+internal air)

Internal Air Cost: \$2456 per person (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

Single Occupancy: For a single room add \$2295.

Deposit: \$500 per person Trip prices are per person based on double occupancy and are given in U.S. dollars.

2025 Prices

Trip Price

\$18995 - \$19495 (+internal air) **Internal Air Cost:** \$4688 per person (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

Single Occupancy: For a single room add \$3895.

Deposit: \$500 per person (nonrefundable) Trip prices are per person based on double occupancy and are given in U.S. dollars. Contact an Adventure Specialist for more details: 800-543-8917.

2026 Prices

We're still in the process of confirming 2026 pricing. Please contact an Adventure Specialist for more details: 800-543-8917.

Included

- **Trip price includes:** Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader, local guides and lodge staff, one night on The Ghan luxury train, private wildlife and cultural cruises, scenic helicopter flight over Purnululu, scenic helicopter flight over Mitchell Falls, private touring with aboriginal guides, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, airport transfers for those arriving by air on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.
- **Internal air fee includes:** Commercial flight from Sydney to Uluru, private scenic charter flight over Uluru and to Alice Springs, private scenic charter flight from Jabiru to Purnululu, private scenic charter from Purnululu to Mitchell Falls, commercial flight from Mitchell Falls to Darwin (these will be listed separately on our invoicing).

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, most alcoholic beverages, gratuities for



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Expedition Leaders, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry and internet, etc.), international airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Physical Requirements

Moderate Walks and hikes are typically on uneven, rocky terrain and can have uphill sections, sometimes with large steps up or down, requiring mobility and stability. All guests must be able to walk unassisted for at least two miles at a time over uneven, rocky and sometimes steep terrain, in high heat and with sun exposure.

There are several excursions where guests may not have access to a bathroom for hours at a time. Guests must be comfortable getting in and out of a small plane, being in a small plane for about two hours at a time for flight excursions, drive on rough, bumpy roads, walking on a moving train down narrow hallways, and be comfortable in a small sleeper cabin (for the train section of the trip).

In general, Sydney and Uluru do not have a high level of physicality. Walks are no more than 1.5 miles and are generally flat and gentle. Kakadu is incredibly hot, and while walks are short, they can involve a lot of rocky, uneven terrain and some elevation gain. There are two walks in Kakadu to see rock art that are about 1 mile with about 200 feet of climbing on uneven terrain. In Purnululu, we do a walk through the Domes and to Cathedral Gorge, this is about 2.5-3 miles with several hundred feet of elevation gain, and getting to the gorge involves using a ladder in one section. There is some smooth trail, some sections with handrails, and some uneven terrain. The section walking through the Domes is all on nice trail and there is some sand to walk through. Travelers who are not comfortable doing the entire trail can do a shorter loop through the Domes and opt-out of doing the section with the ladder. Flies are present in Uluru, and while we go when they are least present, they will still be there, and are most present at the heat of the day. A fly net head covering mitigates this issue. Uluru gets quite cold in the early mornings and in the evening, sometimes dropping to 32 degrees F, so guests must be prepared for that. Please note that all walks and activities are optional, and travelers should only participate in those activities in which they feel comfortable. While travelers are not required to participate in all activities, should you opt out of a scheduled activity, we cannot always guarantee alternatives will be available.

Important Information About This Trip

Our journey explores sectors of the Australian Outback that are least populated, most wild, and replete with rugged beauty. These are places that are most difficult to get to and experience fully on your own, where the expertise and guidance of our knowledgeable Expedition Leaders will be most appreciated. We explore in quiet hours and settings that facilitate secluded and intimate encounters with nature.

A Note About Our Private Chartered Flights

We have included these not for an extra element of exclusivity, but because they markedly improve our itinerary. Chartered flights allow you much more time in nature, rather than being beholden to the timetables and locations of commercial flights. By chartering our own planes, we can get where we need to go when we want to go. No big city connections, no layovers...just more time in the peace of nature, for you. You've come this far to experience the wild wonders of Australia...and we want to make



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sure you spend as much of your precious time doing that as possible!

It's crucial to be aware that the distances we cover on this itinerary are *huge*, and we are often traveling from one very remote place to another. The chartered flight from Jabiru to Purnululu National Park, for example, takes about two hours, and if we were to attempt to connect those locations that without this flight, we would need to go from Jabiru to Darwin (a three-hour drive), take a commercial flight from Darwin to Kununurra, and then either a long drive or another flight into Purnululu, which would mean a dawn-to-dusk travel day. Our chartered flights make this ambitious trip possible—combining these destinations without the chartered flights would add many extra days and extremely long drives. No one else is offering a trip with chartered flights, and that's why Nat Hab is the only one able to offer this itinerary in this timeframe.

In sum: Many people visit Australia, but only an intrepid few Nat Hab travelers will experience wild Australia in such a rare and exclusive way!

A Note About Drives

With our chartered flights, we are able to avoid otherwise essential long, rugged drives, since the remote destinations we visit are at great distances from one another due to the vastness of the country. However, even though we have minimized driving, we'll have one or two road transfers, and roads are often narrow, winding and/or unpaved. Wildlife is often found near the road, too, which means we must drive slower than you'd typically expect. Please understand that all this is part of nature travel in Australia—while knowing that we have arranged activities and chartered flights to minimize driving challenges wherever possible.

A Note About Our Accommodations

It is important to understand that Australia is a huge yet sparsely populated country, a remote and isolated continent filled with wildlife and landscapes that are truly unique. Australia is also an English-speaking country, which, aside from some left-side driving and happy accents, feels pretty familiar to life in North America. Yet while it may seem similar to the U.S. and Canada in many ways, the culture around travel is a bit different. Many Australians travel via camper or caravan (trailer) to remote destinations. Those who do stay at ecolodges don't expect the same level of accoutrements, service or maintenance that most North American travelers are accustomed to, even when such lodges are designated as 4- or 5-star accommodations. And since the Covid-19 pandemic, staff turnover at many lodges has been very high, making regular upkeep more difficult. So, please be prepared that while you can certainly expect our accommodations to be clean and comfortable, the standards overall may be a bit lower than what you are accustomed to.

However: there are good reasons we stay where we do! We choose our hotels and ecolodges based on their proximity to nature and wildlife, and the experiences we are able to have from these more remotely located bases far exceed what we could expect if our primary intent was finding the most luxurious accommodation. On this trip, the luxury is in the experience, including access to nature and wildlife, which is why we will choose an ecolodge that's just minutes away from a wild reserve, for example, rather than a luxury hotel that requires a 2-hour drive.



Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least \$250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

Getting There & Getting Home

Your adventure will begin in Sydney, New South Wales and ends in Darwin, Northern Territory. We recommend that you arrive in Sydney at least one day earlier so you can adjust to the time zone difference. If you plan to arrive on Day 1, we recommend getting to Sydney by 4 pm in order to join the group for our welcome dinner and orientation. You may depart Darwin any time after 12:30 am on the final day. We will have a farewell dinner at 6 pm on Day 13. Depending on your preference, you have two options for departure: 1. Take a redeye flight departing at or after 12:30 AM on Day 14 (after the farewell dinner) or 2. Depart the next day after breakfast (on Day 14), which will be provided at the hotel.

We can best serve you if our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk makes your reservations, as our staff is intimately familiar with the special requirements of this program and can arrange the most efficient travel. Please call us at 800-543-8917. Note that while we offer you the best possible rates available to us on airfare and additional nights' accommodations, you may find better fares online.



Natural Habitat & WWF: Discovering Our Planet Together

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WWF's membership travel program is operated by Natural Habitat Adventures (Nat Hab). To date, Nat Hab has provided more than \$6 million in support of WWF's mission and will continue to give 1% of gross sales plus \$175,000 annually through 2028. WWF® and ©1986 Panda Symbol are owned by WWF. All rights reserved.