



Outback Spirit



ARNHEM LAND & RED CENTRE SPECTACULAR

THE GHAN EXPEDITION

DARWIN TO ADELAIDE

DEPARTING MONDAY AND FRIDAY (SET DEPARTURE DATES)
(MAY TO SEPTEMBER)

23 Days / 22 Nights

Discover a sacred and mystical land that few manage to discover on this extraordinary journey through the heart of Arnhem Land and the Red Centre. Immerse yourself in Arnhem Land and the world's oldest surviving culture before settling into The Ghan Expedition's gentle rhythm as you travel through the breathtaking natural wonders of Outback Australia before arriving in Alice Springs. From exploring the West MacDonnell Ranges to taking your place beside spiritual Uluru and Kata Tjuta, you'll understand why people travel great distances to see the Territory's remarkable landscapes and icons.

INCLUSIONS

- Arrival flight from Cairns to Nhulunbuy
- 12 nights of intimate small-group touring with Outback Spirit, travelling on board a state-of-the-art 4WD Mercedes-Benz vehicle, including hotel, lodge and safari camp accommodation, meals, beverages, all attractions, permit fees to enter Aboriginal land and guided touring
- Departure flight from Seven Spirit Bay to Darwin
- Transfer from Darwin Convention Centre to Darwin Rail Terminal
- 1 night aboard The Ghan Expedition Darwin to Alice Springs, including all meals and beverages, and Off Train Experience in Katherine
- 7 nights of intimate small-group touring with Outback Spirit, travelling on board a state-of-the-art 4WD Mercedes-Benz vehicle, including accommodation, meals and guided touring
- 2 nights aboard The Ghan Expedition Alice Springs to Adelaide, including all meals and beverages and Off Train Experiences in Coober Pedy
- 22 breakfasts, 21 lunches, 22 dinners

HIGHLIGHTS

- Journey through the heart of Arnhem Land on an exclusive touring route and immerse yourself in the world's oldest surviving culture
- Enjoy a 'Welcome to Country' performance in Nhulunbuy
- Visit award-winning art centres and enjoy a bush medicine demonstration
- Discover the vast and sacred Arafura Swamp by boat and 4WD
- View exquisite rock art at Mount Borradaile and visit the ancient 'catacombs'
- Participate in authentic cultural activities with Indigenous guides
- Explore the rugged Cobourg Peninsula by open-back 4WD safari
- Take a half-day Barramundi fishing adventure on the Liverpool River
- Visit the ruins of the historic Victoria Settlement at Port Essington, circa 1838
- Explore the pristine waters of Cobourg Marine Park Sanctuary
- Cruise through ancient Nitmiluk Gorge in Katherine
- Journey through the West MacDonnell Ranges, visiting Standley Chasm and Ormiston Gorge
- Visit Kings Canyon for a guided scenic walk
- See the spectacular Light Towers installation
- Visit World Heritage-listed Uluru and enjoy a guided base tour
- Early risers will experience the magic and beauty of the sun rising over Uluru
- Dine under the stars at the 'Sounds of Silence' dining experience
- Explore the rock formations of Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) and Walpa Gorge
- Admire the internationally acclaimed 'Field of Light' display at Uluru and watch as it illuminates the desert night
- Witness the breathtaking cultural experience of Wintjiri Wiru
- Explore underground sights in Coober Pedy



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DAY 1 – NHULUNBUY (GOVE)

Your 13-day Arnhem Land Wilderness Adventure commences with a flight from Cairns to Nhulunbuy. On arrival in Nhulunbuy you will be greeted by your friendly and professional Tour Director. This afternoon you'll explore this frontier village, which came into existence in the 1960's after the discovery of Bauxite on the Gove Peninsula. Visit the Roy (Malpi) Marika Lookout for incredible views towards the coast, Gayngaru Wetlands and Gove Harbour before settling in for a two-night stay at the Walkabout Lodge. (D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Walkabout Lodge

Please note: The walk to Nhulunbuy Hill look out is 64 steps (3 storeys).

DAY 2 – GOVE PENINSULA

The Gove Peninsula has been home to Yolngu people for over 60,000 years and is one of the most culturally significant regions in Australia. You will get a true sense of this with a special 'Welcome to Country' ceremony at Wirrawuy Beach, where you will learn about Yolngu culture and kinship firsthand. We will also visit the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre, which features works by many renowned Aboriginal artists whose art (particularly those painted on bark) can be found in galleries all over the world. The gallery is in the small community of Yirrkala, which is where the Aboriginal Land Rights movement started, when the 'bark petition' was sent to Federal Parliament in 1963.

From the art centre it is a short stroll to Shady Beach, where we will have lunch followed by a special Bush Medicine and Women's Healing demonstration, where we will experience traditional healing ways and hear stories of how the Yolngu people live and heal on their land.

Return to Nhulunbuy late this afternoon for your second night at the Walkabout Lodge. (B,L,D)

DAY 3 – MURWANGI

Today, your journey into the heart of Arnhem Land begins. Departing Nhulunbuy, we follow the Central Arnhem Road south-west to the Goyder River, the main tributary flowing into the massive Arafura Swamp. Enjoy a picnic lunch before taking a track to the north, which follows an escarpment before descending to the Arafura floodplains.

This area, known as 'Murwangi', is the site of your exclusive safari camp where we will be staying for the next two nights. Check in to your deluxe safari suite before dinner in the lodge dining room. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Murwangi Safari Camp

DAY 4 – ARAFURA SWAMP AND MURWANGI DISCOVERY TOUR

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

We'll take a tranquil cruise on the main lagoon, followed by a 4WD adventure around the edge of the swamp. For both activities you will be accompanied by Indigenous guides who will explain why this spectacular area is so significant.

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

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

DAY 5 – RAMINGINING TO BARRAMUNDI LODGE

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

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



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After lunch on the lodge deck, you will hear a familiarisation talk from the lodge managers. You are then free to settle into your safari suite, with the remainder of the afternoon yours to relax, soaking up the stunning view of the floodplains. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Arnhem Land Barramundi Lodge

DAY 6 – FISHING ADVENTURE AND CULTURAL TOUR

This morning, an exclusive fishing adventure on the Liverpool and Tomkinson Rivers is one the agenda. These pristine waterways are teeming with Barramundi. The expert fishing guides will take you to wherever the fish are biting aboard our sturdy Ocean Master vessels, the pinnacle for remote marine adventures, featuring an onboard restroom and shade canopy.

Today's fishing adventure is also a wilderness tour, so if fishing is not your thing, you will still enjoy the beautiful scenery and informative commentary.

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

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

DAY 7 – MANINGRIDA TO MOUNT BORRADAILE

Departing Maningrida after breakfast, our travels take us through the stone country of west Arnhem Land. We'll cross the Goomadeer and Liverpool Rivers before arriving at the turnoff to Davidson's Arnhem Land Safaris, Mount Borradaile. From here, we travel along a 40km bush track into the safari lodge, arriving in time for lunch. You will then check-in to your cabin, your home for the next two nights.

This afternoon the team at Mount Borradaile will take you through 40,000 years of Aboriginal culture in a truly awe-inspiring landscape. The area contains some of the most stunning rock art galleries in the world. In terms of artistic quality, quantity, colourfulness, and state of preservation, it is virtually unrivalled. The walls of the many rock shelters are decorated with innumerable pictures, documenting traditional Aboriginal life over thousands of years. Subjects range from now extinct animals to 20th century sailing ships and the creator Rainbow Serpent.

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

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Mount Borradaile

Please note: The walk to Mount Borradaile Rainbow Serpent is a 1km, 2 hour walk, over rocks, roots, caves and sand.

DAY 8 – MOUNT BORRADAILE

Today we jump into the open-back Toyotas and continue exploring the wonderland that is Mount Borradaile. Visit the ancient 'catacombs', where the sandstone has been eroded by wind and water over 600 million years resulting in a massive cave system that is full of incredible Aboriginal art. Learn about the variety of techniques used in rock paintings as the styles changed over thousands of years of occupation and storytelling. You will also wander through various occupation sites and view a range of artefacts from when these sites were in use.

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

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

DAY 9 - COBOURG PENINSULA TO SEVEN SPIRIT BAY

Departing Mount Borradaile early, we head north and venture into the Garig Gunak Barlu National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula. We'll travel up the eastern side of Port Essington to Black Point to meet the marine crew from Seven Spirit Bay. Here, we'll board the lodge's custom-made adventure craft for the short transfer across Port Essington. Upon arriving at the lodge, you will be allocated your room for the next three nights, a luxurious 'habitat' overlooking Coral Bay. We meet again later in the evening for dinner in the lodge's restaurant. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 3 nights Seven Spirit Bay Wilderness Lodge



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DAY 10 – PORT ESSINGTON AND THE HISTORIC VICTORIA SETTLEMENT

Today, we'll explore Port Essington aboard the lodge's specially designed vessel 'MV Arafura'. Departing Seven Spirit Bay, we retrace the course of the early mariner's square riggers, passing landmarks like Gunners Quoin, Low Point, Turtle Rock, Observation Cliff, and Record Point on our way to the historic Victoria Settlement. Surveyed in 1838, Victoria Settlement was the third attempt by the British at a northern settlement, after Fort Dundas on Melville Island and Fort Wellington at Raffles Bay. Conceived to facilitate trade with Asia, the settlement consisted of 24 houses and a hospital. Disease was rampant and living conditions poor, leading to its abandonment in 1849.

Upon your arrival at Victoria Settlement, you will take a fascinating tour of the old buildings and ruins and learn about life in the early British occupation. An optional extension walk leads to a few lonely gravestones in the forest, almost forgotten by history.

After a picnic lunch on the beach you will return to the water to enjoy a leisurely cruise back to Seven Spirit Bay. The waters of the Cobourg Marine Park are alive, so keep your eyes out for dolphins, dugong, manta rays and crocodiles.

Back at Seven Spirit Bay, the remainder of the afternoon can be spent at your leisure. Perhaps take a dip in the palm-fringed swimming pool, or just relax in your luxurious habitat before enjoying sunset drinks on the veranda and dinner in the restaurant. (B,L,D)

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

DAY 11 – TREPANG BAY MARINE AND 4WD ADVENTURE

The Cobourg Marine Park abounds with barramundi, Spanish mackerel, golden trevally, and coral trout, to name just a few. After breakfast, we board the lodge's state-of-the-art fishing vessels for an exclusive half-day fishing adventure in Port Essington. Featuring an onboard restroom, shade canopy and comfortable seating, each boat takes only six people, so everyone will have the equal chance to reel something in.

Seven Spirit Bay's fishing guides are true professionals with intimate knowledge of the marine park. They will take you to the best fishing spots and share their marine sanctuary expertise and you can admire some of the most spectacular coastline to be found in northern Australia. Our guides fish these waters regularly and have up-to-date knowledge of the potential sites that are producing fish, giving you the best chance of success.

Barramundi is just one of the species we target. You may have the opportunity to wrestle with an arm-stretching trevally or black jewfish.

A mix of small meandering creeks, mangrove-lined bays, rocky outcrops, and deeper water "bommies" mean there is nearly always something to be found somewhere. Once you have tested your luck, we will make our way to a sheltered beach landing at Low Point where we disembark and rendezvous with the lodge's chef for a delicious BBQ bush lunch under a shady tree.

After lunch, take a 4WD safari to appreciate the wonders of Garig Gunak Barlu National Park. First up is a visit to the stunning Nypa Palm gallery (Nypa Fruticans), one of only three locations in Australia where they can be found (the others are Melville Island and the Wenlock River). A short drive further brings us to the upper reaches of Trepang Creek, one of many creeks that are a mix of spring-fed and tidally influenced systems that help provide nourishment to the marine life of the park.

Next, you will explore the savannah woodlands of the park, potentially spotting Banteng and Buffalo and gaining some insight into the varied coastal habitats, before a visit to Gunners Quoin lookout. Return to the lodge late afternoon for your third and final evening at Seven Spirit Bay. (B,L,D)

Please note: Today the tour will split into two groups to undertake the day's adventures. Group 1 will follow the itinerary above, while Group 2 will do the activities in reverse. The timings for the Port Essington fishing adventure are dependent upon tidal movements. As such, lunch arrangements are subject to change to suit the itinerary set by the Seven Spirit Bay marine managers.



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DAY 12 – FAREWELL TO SEVEN SPIRIT BAY

This morning, we depart for the airstrip and board our Cessna Grand Caravan for the 45-minute scenic flight across Van Diemen Gulf. Upon arriving in Darwin in the afternoon, we head to the city to check in to the DoubleTree by Hilton Darwin located on the picturesque esplanade.

Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure before boarding the Charles Darwin for a delicious Territory-style sunset dinner cruise to celebrate a truly amazing trip. There is no better way to experience Darwin's renowned sunsets than from onboard the Charles Darwin. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 1 night Hilton Garden Inn Darwin

DAY 13 – BOARD THE GHAN EXPEDITION IN DARWIN

Your 13-day Arnhem Land Wilderness Adventure comes to an end this morning.

Transfer to the Darwin Rail Terminal. After boarding, settle into the comforts of The Ghan, relax in your cabin, or mingle with fellow travellers in the Outback Explorer Lounge. Enjoy lunch ahead of your Off Train Experience in Katherine. In a region renowned for jaw-dropping natural assets, Katherine boasts one of the Top End's best – the incredible Nitmiluk Gorge and a cruise is on offer to showcase the beauty of this spot. Alternatively, the Katherine Outback Experience lets you into the lives of those who call the outback home, while the Cutta Cutta Cave system is home to a variety of native wildlife and is rich in Indigenous culture and modern European history. Alternatively, take it all in from the air, with an optional upgrade helicopter flight over Nitmiluk.

Back on the train, you'll enjoy the cuisine and creature comforts of The Ghan, including a delectable on-board dinner, as you continue on towards Alice Springs. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 1 night The Ghan Expedition

DAY 14 – THE GHAN EXPEDITION, ARRIVE ALICE SPRINGS

Your eight-day Red Centre Explorer tour commences on arrival at the Alice Springs Rail Terminal. Here, you will be met by another passionate Outback Spirit crew, who will be guiding you as you take in all the Red Centre has to offer over the next eight days.

It all starts with a town tour of Alice Springs, including a light lunch at a local eatery.

Then, you'll check-in at DoubleTree by Hilton Alice Springs, where we'll stay for the first two nights. In the evening, the group will meet for welcome drinks and a short briefing on what you can expect during your tour. Tonight's dinner is at the hotel. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights DoubleTree by Hilton Alice Springs

DAY 15 - ALICE SPRINGS

Today, explore Alice Springs and its surrounds, taking in natural rock formations that are truly spectacular. After breakfast, venture to the West MacDonnell Ranges and enjoy a walk to Simpsons Gap. Known as 'Rungutjirpa' by the Arrernte people, Simpsons Gap is an important spiritual site and home to dozens of rare plants and a host of native wildlife.

We'll then visit Standley Chasm – Angkerle Atwatye – a cultural icon of Central Australia, which is 100% owned and operated by the Arrernte community. We'll break for morning tea before departing the West MacDonnell Ranges to visit the Alice Springs Desert Park. Here, enjoy a guided tour that will challenge your perception of the desert, leaving you with an understanding that the desert is full of life.

This evening, enjoy a classic-style outdoor BBQ and show under the incredible night sky. (B,L,D)

DAY 16 – ALICE SPRINGS TO KINGS CANYON

Today, we say goodbye to Alice Springs as we go deeper into the outback. First up is a visit to Ellery Creek for a short walk and morning tea, then we travel to Ormiston Gorge to see its towering red cliffs. We'll stop for lunch, before journeying to the mighty Kings Canyon and Watarrka National Park.



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As we drive through the outback, we'll take the scenic Mereenie Loop 4WD track through the West MacDonnell Ranges and arrive at Kings Canyon Resort, where we'll spend the next two nights.

Tonight, dinner is at Carmichael's, a relaxed restaurant situated in Kings Canyon Resort, surrounded by native trees and bushlands. If you're lucky, you may spot an inquisitive dingo wandering through the grounds. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Kings Canyon Resort

DAY 17 – KINGS CANYON – WATARRKA NATIONAL PARK

This morning, we depart early to experience the beauty of Kings Canyon. Two walks are available, including the spectacular 6km rim walk, which features breathtaking views of the Watarrka National Park before descending into the 'Garden of Eden'. For those who wish to save energy, a more relaxed walk is available along the creek on the canyon floor (2.6km).

There is also the opportunity to take a 15-minute helicopter flight over Kings Canyon and Watarrka National Park (at own expense).

After the morning's activities, return to Kings Canyon Resort for lunch and to rest and refresh. The afternoon is spent learning about Aboriginal culture with Karrke Aboriginal Cultural Experience and Tours. In the Aranda language, Karrke is the name for the western Bowerbird, which is native to Central Australia. Our guide will teach us about bush tucker and bush medicines used for spiritual and physical healing.

For those wishing to take the optional helicopter flight over Kings Canyon, you will take to the air in the afternoon to enjoy the aerial perspective.

As afternoon turns to evening, enjoy sunset drinks and canapes at Light-Towers, an immersive sound and light installation by acclaimed artist Bruce Munro, who also created the Field of Light. Tonight, we'll enjoy dinner at the newly renovated Kings Canyon Bar & Grill. (B,L,D)

DAY 18 – KINGS CANYON TO ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

We depart Kings Canyon for Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, passing through Kings Creek Station and lunching at Curtin Springs, a million-acre cattle station. In the early afternoon, we arrive at the award-winning Sails in the Desert Hotel, part of the Ayers Rock Resort.

This evening, we attend the Wintjiri Wiru Sunset Dinner. This is a breathtaking cultural storytelling experience, told through choreographed drones, lasers and projections illuminating the night sky.

After a short journey from the resort, we venture to an open-air theatre set atop a dune. Enjoy cocktails infused with native ingredients while taking in the incredible views of Uluru. As darkness descends, dine on a gourmet dinner hamper, where native ingredients are combined with modern techniques to create a balanced and flavourful meal as the night sky lights up before our eyes. Witness the ancient Mala story re-told and feel a powerful connection to country listening to a traditional Inma soundtrack and narration in the local Pitjantjatjara language. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 3 nights Sails in the Desert Hotel

DAY 19 – ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

After breakfast, we depart to discover Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) and admire the stunning rock formations on a guided walk into Walpa Gorge, an ancient temple crafted by nature.

Take in the cultural centre and take a guided tour around the base of Uluru, which stands 348 metres above the desert plains. Learn about traditional Anangu culture and why Uluru, one of the largest monoliths in the world, is such a sacred site.

In the afternoon, tour the Gallery of Central Australia followed by free time to relax by the pool or alternatively, take the complimentary shuttle to explore the Resort and activities on offer.



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Departing the resort before sunset, we head to an exclusive dune-top location, again with majestic views of Uluru. Enjoy drinks and canapes as artist Bruce Munro's global phenomenon Field of Light gently illuminates. Aptly named Tili Wiru Tjuta Nyakutjaku (looking at lots of beautiful lights), Field of Light features 50,000 slender stems, crowned with radiant, frosted-glass spheres, spread across an area the size of seven football fields. After your host provides insight into this remarkable installation, you can explore the stunning display via dedicated pathways.

This evening, return to the hotel for dinner. (Please note dinner will be at approximately 9.00pm). (B,L,D)

DAY 20 – ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

Early risers can experience the sun rising over Uluru this morning and the colours of dawn spreading across the landscape. Breakfast is at the hotel, before we depart for the Mala Walk. Admire the fine examples of rock art along this walk before arriving at Kantju Gorge, a place of profound peacefulness surrounded by sheer vertical walls.

This afternoon is at your leisure. You may choose to explore the Town Square, arrange a scenic flight (own cost) or relax in the comfort of your hotel.

This evening, enjoy the unique Sounds of Silence dining experience under the stars. Offering the best of the Red Centre distilled into four magical hours, the evening begins with canapes and chilled sparkling wine served on a viewing platform overlooking the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. As the sun sets and darkness falls, listen to the sound of the didgeridoo and enjoy a premium bush tucker-inspired buffet incorporating native bush ingredients. Afterwards, settle back and listen to the resident star talker decode the southern night sky.

After this incredible experience, we return to Sails in the Desert for our final night. (B,L,D)

DAY 21 – ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK TO ALICE SPRINGS, THE GHAN EXPEDITION

Enjoy a hearty breakfast at the hotel before making the journey by road from Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park to the Alice Springs Rail Terminal, where your Red Centre Explorer tour comes to an end.

Re-join The Ghan Expedition and enjoy a unique dining experience this evening. Tuck into a mouthy-watering meal as you sip on a cold beer or a glass of fine wine under a chandelier of stars at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station. (B,L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights The Ghan Expedition

DAY 22 – THE GHAN EXPEDITION, COOBER PEDY

From your morning stop at Manguri, you'll venture into the weird and wonderful opal mining township of Coober Pedy, where more than half of the residents live underground. Here, you'll enjoy a day of discovery, and a gourmet lunch in the most unique of locations: underground. Off Train Experiences on offer include exploring the majestic Breakaways, touring the town, learning more about mining history on the Opal Experience, or an optional upgrade with the Painted Hills and Lake Eyre scenic flight.

Dinner is served back on the train, where you can enjoy a nightcap as your journey continues. (B,L,D)

DAY 23 - THE GHAN EXPEDITION, ADELAIDE

This morning, you'll see a dramatic change in landscape as the rich ochre tones of the outback make way for the green fields of South Australia. Enjoy a leisurely brunch as you pass through the majestic Flinders Ranges before your arrival into Adelaide, completing one of the world's great rail journeys. (B)