

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

2019 RV TOURS

- **Tour description: Darwin, The Outback, Ayer's Rock**
- **Tour description: Queensland & Sydney**
- **Tour description: New Zealand**

2019 Dates	Length	Tour	Per person double occupancy
Sep 17 to Sep 30	14 Days	The Outback	\$4,145
Oct 1 to Oct 21	21 Days	Queensland & Sydney	\$6,195
Oct 21 to Nov 10	21 Days	New Zealand	\$5,495
Sep 17 to Nov 10	55 Days	All of the above	\$15,835*

* Tours are priced individually and you can register for just one or two tours.

Price includes: Specific lists of included items are given in each tour description. In general, tours include RV rentals, hotels, some meals, entrance fees, guide fees, services of Wagonmaster team, additional transportation, and airfare between Australian cities and from Australia to New Zealand.

Additional expenses not covered: While most of your expenses are covered within the package, you still have the cost of groceries, dining out, fuel, and souvenirs. While we have highlighted (and included) many activities, you may wish to visit additional sites at your own expense. RV rentals include insurance, but with a deductible of about \$7500 AUD or \$7500 NZD. Optional additional RV insurance is available to bring the deductible to zero. The RV rental agency offers a "Liability Reduction Option" at approximately \$45 AUD or \$45 NZD per day. Trip cancellation and medical emergency is not covered, but a Travel Protection Plan can be purchased. Airfare from/to the USA or Canada is not

included. These days you are as likely to find a bargain rate as we are and especially if you are using your airline miles you will be able to beat today's group rates.

To register for these tours or for more information on this and other RV caravans, contact [Bert Frenz](mailto:bert2@bafrenz.com) at bert2@bafrenz.com

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AUSTRALIA EXPEDITION

Darwin, The Outback and Ayer's Rock Tour

Description

14 Day Tour September 17 to September 30, 2019



Enter a fascinatingly remote world when you join us for this RV tour from Darwin, through The Outback, and to Ayer's Rock. You can read stories and you can see photos, but until you experience it in person you really don't know The Outback. In our prior visit to Ayer's Rock, known now by its Aboriginal name, Uluru, we wrote, "Words fail, photos may illuminate, but this is one of those places you must experience to really understand. Uluru (pronounced ooh la roo) is one big rock! In sunlight it glows; in shadows it hides. Smooth graceful curves, crater-sized pock marks, 500-ft. cracks, dark waterfall lines. As an elephant touched by blind men, it changes perspective at every turn. With a composition of sandstone, 70% feldspar, its burnt orange color is striking. The enormity of a single rock is overwhelming, especially if standing in its shadow and looking up to the sky. It is the downspout for desert rainstorms, though they may be as infrequent as seven years. Gushing waterfalls bring the water to the base of the rock and submerge into red sand, a bit remaining for a small pool surrounded by tall ironwood trees. Mostly, though, Uluru is surrounded by a vast, flat desert, so arid that Aboriginal survival depended on knowing where waterholes existed."

While Uluru will be a highlight of the tour, you'll love The Outback as well: the stark silent beauty, the clear nighttime Southern Cross skies, the glimpses of Aboriginal culture. Our tour starts from Darwin, visits Kakadu, one of Australia's best national parks, threads its way through The Outback of Northern Territory to Alice Springs, past historic roadhouses, and thence to Uluru. Along the way we will encounter wallabies, kangaroos and the unique birds of this arid region, often surprised by the many parrots and finches that call this home.

Day 1: We will meet at Darwin for orientation and welcoming dinner. Darwin hotel for one evening.



Day 2: We will be renting RV's for travel, sleeping, and many meals. Typically, these are late model Class C turbo diesel vehicles accommodating two to four adults and including double bed, gas stove, refrigerator, microwave, shower, toilet, air-conditioning/heating, pressurized hot & cold water, and radio/TV/CD player. Also included are linen, bedding, and kitchen

equipment. All vehicles in our last tours were automatic transmission. After picking up our rental RV's we will purchase groceries and head to our campsite near Darwin, a two-night stay. If there are birders in the group we will make a quick visit to Howard Springs Nature Centre and search for the colorful Rainbow Pitta with its pitch black head and breast, bright green back and wings, a wide sliver of glowing turquoise patching the wings, a crimson red belly, and a subtle brown crown stripe. Camp at Howard Springs for 2 nights (15 mi.).



Day 3: We will visit Litchfield National Park, renowned for its variety of incredible termite mounds, some towering 15 ft. high while others align with the compass to produce a field of tombstones. On the way we will visit Batchelor Museum and learn the local history of uranium mines and WWII air bases, as well as watch a resident pair of Barking Owls. At the Batchelor Butterfly Farm we will be entertained by its quirky owner and tour his strange collection of artifacts, butterfly enclosures, and even pet rabbits. Within the national park we will visit spectacular waterfalls (Florence, Tolmer, and Wangi) with an opportunity to swim in the pools beneath them. Then we are off to the Darwin coast for Thursday Market, a kaleidoscope of good food, novel souvenirs, and Aboriginal entertainment. In the warm tropical evening we stay for the brilliant orgy of colors in the sunset over the Tasman Sea. Camp at Howard Springs (187 mi.).

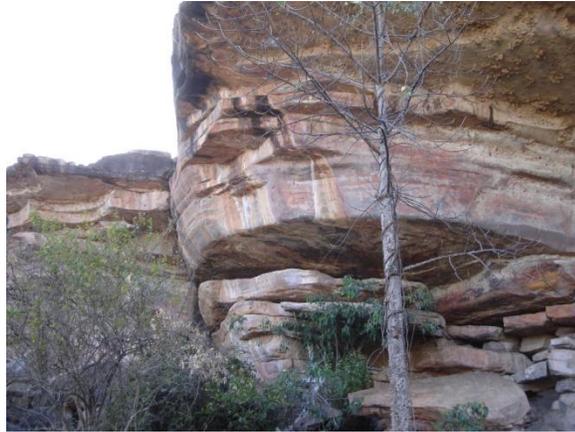


Day 4: We will visit Fogg Dam, a wet paperbark forest and flooded marshlands that support thousands of birds as well as Australian crocodile and Agile Wallaby. Next stop is Window on the Wetlands, perched on a high point overlooking the Adelaide River floodplain. Here exhibits explain the environment of Kakadu National Park. Camp at Jabiru within Kakadu (158 mi.).



Day 5: South of Darwin is Kakadu National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Park, famous for its landmark Aboriginal rock paintings especially at Ubirr and Bardedjilidjii. Aboriginal people lived here for at least 40 000 years and we will learn their stories through their art. With the aid of an Aboriginal guide, we will explore this vast 4.9 million-acre park, visiting the monsoonal forest and billabongs at the end of the dry season. The exhibits and artifacts at Warradjan

Culture Centre will give us even more understanding of Aboriginal culture. Camp at Coolinda within Kakadu. Both of the Kakadu campgrounds feature delightful expansive and refreshing swimming pools. (127 mi.).



Thousands-year-old Aboriginal painting of extinct Thylacine, often known as Tasmanian Tiger.

Day 6: Before dawn we will board a boat and set out on Yellow Water just as the sun rises over the marsh. Most exciting are the enormous Estuarine Crocodiles that glide silently past the boat. Here we should see thousands of Plumed Whistling-Ducks mixed with a few Radjah Shelducks, and in the trees, the incredible White-bellied Sea-Eagle. Water Buffalo plod through

the marshlands, often with Cattle Egrets perched on their backs. We could see a Dingo on the hunt. Wildlife sightings will come so often your camera will not keep up with the many opportunities for close-up shots. Our boat cruise will be followed by huge buffet breakfast. In the afternoon we head to our next campsite at Katherine. On the grounds we can find the bowers of the Great Bowerbird, a "bachelor pad" that the male bowerbird makes of upright sticks and decorates with green and white ornaments of stone, glass, bottle caps or anything else that catches his fancy. (160 mi.).





Day 7: Not far from Katherine is our first stop today, Nitmiluk National Park. From the viewing deck we have a panoramic view of a Flying Fox roost that includes over 50,000 macrobats. Here also we take a boat cruise on the Katherine River that takes us through the gorge. Leaving the park we penetrate deeper into The Outback, leaving Katherine, passing Larrimah, and reaching Daly Waters. We will camp at the curiously adorned outpost and enjoy a "beef-and-barra" dinner and entertainment at its restaurant. (210 mi.).





Day 8: Heading south now on the Stuart Highway which stretches half the length of Australia, we are likely to encounter the incredibly long road trains, semi's pulling three or four lengthy tractor trailers. Camp at Tennant Creek and visit Battery Hill Mining Center. (251 mi.).



Day 9: Continuing southward through Northern Territory, we reach strange rock formations called Devils Marbles which glow fiery red at sunset and dawn. We will cross the well-marked Tropic of Capricorn just before we reach Alice Springs. In this desert terrain, you might be surprised to find any wildlife at all. Yet here are flocks of Zebra Finch, as well as Mulga Parrot, Budgerigar (the popular North American cage bird "budgie"), and whimsical pink Galahs. Camp at Alice Springs for two nights. (321 mi.).





Day 10: Your choice today: some will want to visit the School of the Air, the Royal Flying Doctors Base, and the Historic Telegraph Station. Others will head out of Alice Springs to the low mountains called MacDonnell Range. At a stream passing through a gap in the mountains (Simpson's Gap) is a wonderful oasis that attracts wildlife, including the Splendid Fairywren. On the scree of the mountain side lurk Black-footed Rock Wallabies, and, above them, soar Wedge-tailed Eagles. Both groups will meet up at Desert Park, an environmental education facility where we learn of plant and animal life in the desert and how the Aboriginal people survive in this bleak environment. (31 mi.).



Day 11: Now we head west to Ayer's Rock, stopping at historic way stations like Stuart's Well, that are an oasis of fuel, food, water, and hospitality. Camp at Ayer's Rock for two nights and view the spectacular orange sunset over Uluru. (273 mi.).



Day 12: We will enjoy a full day to view Uluru, sometimes with a guide to explain its history and importance to Aborigines, but also walking the trails around the huge rock. A short drive away, we will be in view of the red rock mountains of Kata Tjuta National Park. Near dusk, we will watch the famous rock appear to be on fire with the glow of a setting sun. A lifetime experience will be our tickets to the Sounds of Silence dinner and entertainment. Under the stars (with a resident star talker to locate the Southern Cross) we will enjoy a bush tucker inspired buffet that includes native bush ingredients while listening to the sounds of the didgeridoo. (78 mi.)



Day 13: This is our last day of viewing Uluru and scenery of The Outback as we head back to Alice Springs, stopping at a few times at rest stops such as Erlunda Roadhouse. Camp at Alice Springs. (273 mi.).



Day 14: We will return our RV's in the morning and, in the afternoon, fly to Cairns for the start of our Queensland tour.



The Outback Price Includes:

- Services of professional naturalist and Wagonmaster team
- RV rental (13 days)
- RV park campground fees (all sites include electricity)
- Welcome to Darwin dinner
- Darwin hotel (1 night)
- Breakfast at hotel
- Dinner at Howard Springs campground
- Entrance fees to Batchelor Museum and Batchelor Butterfly Farm
- Tour of Litchfield National Park and its magnetic termite mounds
- Entrance fee to Kakadu National Park
- Aboriginal guide at Kakadu
- Boat cruise at Yellow Water
- Breakfast at Yellow Water
- Katherine River cruise at Nitmiluk National Park
- Dinner and entertainment at Daly Waters
- Entrance fee to Battery Hill Mining Center museum
- Entrance fees at School of the Air, Royal Flying Doctors Base, and Historic Telegraph Station
- Entrance fee at Alice Springs Desert Park
- Entrance fee to Uluru
- Naturalist and historical guide at Uluru
- Sounds of Silence dinner and entertainment
- Airfare to Cairns
- Ground transportation from airport to hotel
- Cairns hotel (1 night)
- Services of staff who will organize tours & optional activities
- Caravan jackets and nametags
- "What you should know before you leave" preparatory document
- Trip preparation packet & checklist
- Travel logs and regular briefings

QUEENSLAND & SYDNEY AUSTRALIA Tour Description

21 Day Tour

October 1 to October 21, 2019



Australia, the “land down under,” is a land of beauty, congenial hospitality, and comfortable travel. Part of its allure is the strange creatures with strange names like platypus, koala, cassowary, and chowchilla. Scientists theorize Australia separated from world’s once contiguous land mass much earlier than other continents, allowing diverse development of plants and animals. In fact, Australia boasts over 820 bird

species, 4000 different kinds of fish, and over 25,000 plant varieties, many of which are not found anywhere else in the world.

Or maybe we are attracted to the beauty of Australia: the white-sand beaches, sparkling seas, marine reefs, blue mountains, green rainforests, lush wetlands, and volcanic craters. Adding to the allure, the people of Australia offer a warm welcome to visitors. Their spoken English appeals to the ear and their words have an attractive ring. Friendly and laid back, they are often described as generous and humorous.

Queensland, the sunshine state is the premier state to visit in Australia and is readily amenable to traveling by RV. This tour particularly emphasizes the natural beauty of the area and focuses on viewing its wildlife, yet also includes cultural sites such as Tjapukai.

Day 1: We will start our trip in Cairns, a coastal city in North Queensland. After checking into our hotel we will have our orientation meeting and Welcome to Australia dinner. As night closes in, we will watch the incredible departure of flocks of huge flying-foxes as they ascend from roosting palms and circle the skies over the city. Cairns hotel for two nights.



Day 2: Queensland is noted for its white-sand beaches and, of course, the Great Barrier Reef which stretches 1240 miles from Bundaberg northward. We will visit the magnificent reef—the longest in the world—by charter boat from Cairns for snorkeling to view colorful tropical fish just an arm's reach away. Enjoy a presentation from a marine biologist followed by fish feeding at the reef. If you'd rather not snorkel, you can view the fish through a semi-submersible propelled above the coral reef. For the adventurous, scuba diving is available at a nominal cost and includes training for first-timers. Also, with a shuttle boat, we will be able to land at Michaelmas Cay where noddies and terns nest, and frigatebirds fly overhead. Since we will be out all day, our cruise includes a generous buffet lunch as well as snacks with afternoon tea and coffee.



Day 3: In the morning we will pick up our RV's. We will be renting RV's for travel, sleeping, and many meals. Typically, these are late model Class C turbo diesel vehicles accommodating two to four adults and including double bed, gas stove, refrigerator, microwave, shower, toilet, air-conditioning/heating, pressurized hot & cold water, and radio/CD player. Also included are linen, bedding, and kitchen equipment. We will be able to drive and camp right where the sightseeing action is best. Cairns campground for three nights. (Travel ~5 mi.).



Day 4: It's an easy walk to the Cairns Esplanade and Cairns Botanic Gardens. The Esplanade is famously known for close-up views of up to 2000 shorebirds at high tide in the extensive tidal mudflats. The nearby Botanic Gardens lie in lowland tropical rainforest and display the best of Australia's colorful flowers and unusual trees. Flocks of Torresian Imperial-Pigeons fly past our campground at dawn and dusk.





Day 5: Just north of Cairns we board the Kuranda scenic train that chugs up-mountain to the village of Kuranda. We have plenty of time to stroll around the tree-lined town and visit its art and souvenir shops. Then we descend to the coastal plain on the Skyrail, passing over the tops of the tropical forest. Camp again at Cairns.





Day 6: After an early morning walk on the Esplanade, we will visit Tjapukai Cultural Park, learn about Aboriginal culture, watch a fire starting demonstration, hear didgeridoo music, and be taught how to throw a boomerang and an atlatl. Then we'll drive northward along the coastal Captain Cook Highway, enjoying the scenery, turning inland through the tropical rainforest, and climb 1443 ft. to the Cairns Highlands. Our campsite is at Mt. Carbine located on the eastern edge of The Outback. We can search here for a tree where the strange wood-like Papuan Frogmouth roosts and at dusk meet dozens of Agile Wallabies. Our campchosts will prepare for us a traditional Australian campoven roast dinner. (Travel ~82 mi.)



Day 7: Our first stop today is Granite Gorge in the dry country where we will meet eye-to-eye with numerous Mareeba Rock Wallabies that have become accustomed to close approach and accept handheld food. The darling wallabies which hide out amongst the huge boulders are miniature relatives of kangaroos. We will pass a golf course where hundreds of Eastern Gray Kangaroos hop along the course. How about tasting peanut ice cream at The Peanut Place! This popular tourist destination sells 13 high oleic varieties of locally-grown peanuts. These peanuts have different oil chemistry than regular peanuts. Camp at Atherton for three nights. (Travel ~65 mi.)



Day 8: We will travel by tour bus with a well-known professional naturalist and photographer to a creek for Platypus and then to another site for Tree Kangaroos. We will visit the famous Curtain Fig Tree, where Yellow-breasted Boatbills can be seen from the boardwalk around the huge strangler fig tree and colorful tropical pigeons feed at treetops. This is one of the largest trees in North Queensland and displays a curtain of aerial roots almost 50 ft. to the ground. In the farmland fields between wooded sites we can watch tall Brolga and Sarus Cranes prance in mating dances. For lunch (included) we will enjoy culinary delights at a dairy, cheese, and

chocolate factory. We can walk through the barns of farm animals and see thousands of wild Magpie Geese sprawled across the pastures. In the afternoon, driving through blue gum (sclerophyll) woodlands we could see Emus and many Eastern Gray Kangaroos, as well as Common Wallaroo, Pretty-face Wallabies, and Whiptail Wallabies. From there we drive still higher in the Atherton Highlands to a private 300-acre tropical forest near Ravenshoe. We will visit the elusive Golden Bowerbird bower and stop at a 2000-year-old tree that harbors an Aboriginal secret. At night we will spotlight at the private tract, seeking rainforest possums such as Lemuroid Ring-tailed Possum, Herbert River Ring-tailed Possum, and Coppery Brush-tailed Possum.





Day 9: Your choice today: go birding with Bert and our excellent local guide or tour with Shari to The Coffee Works, Rainforest Bounty, De Brueys Botique Winery, and the Gem Gallery. The Coffee Works displays the world's largest collection of coffee and tea treasures, some as old as the early 1700s, and offers unlimited samples of coffee, tea, chocolate, and liqueur. The Gem Gallery specializes in cutting, polishing, and designing opal jewelry. You will learn about the unique qualities of Australian opals, a valuable education before you buy your travel remembrance.

If there are enough birders in the group, we will offer an alternative to Shari's tour and join Bert in visiting more of the Atherton Tablelands sites such as Green Valley, Hasties Swamp, Tumoulin, Lake Eachem, and enormous man-made Lake Tinarro. Birds of the day likely could include Cotton Pygmy-Goose, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, White-throated Treecreeper, and Jacky Winter. Near the Tinarro dam Scarlet Honeyeaters are attracted to the flowering eucalypts. The rainforests of Queensland yield a disproportionately high number of endemic birds, many localized to the areas we will travel. Along Tinarro Creek Road we can find Blue-winged Kookaburra and Silver-crowned Friarbird.





Day 10: Early risers can join Bert for a hike around Lake Barrine in Crater Lake National Park. The Tablelands is a World Heritage Site known as the Wet Tropics. Atop a high volcanic plateau rising to over 3200 feet, we walk in the dark, cool rainforests. A real prize would be finding the bird-of-paradise Victoria's Riflebird which, at this season, could be showing its strange display, arching its wings to silhouette its head as the male attempts to seduce the female. With a view of the lake, we'll join the rest for breakfast served with locally grown coffee and tea. Camp near Mission Beach and walk along the sandy beaches or go for a swim in the sea. (Travel ~67 mi.).



Day 11: At our secluded seaside campsite near Mission Beach often roams a Southern Cassowary, a threatened species whose numbers have dropped precipitously owing to introduced predators, auto collisions, and destruction of rain forests through storms and clearing. This amazing flightless bird can weigh over 130 lbs. and its Papuan name derives from its unusual horned head, a helmet of tough skin which acts like a bumper as it runs through the rainforest. You will certainly want to photograph this strange bird as it wanders along the sandy beach. En route to our next campsite at Ingham we will visit Patronella Park, a heritage-listed attraction centered on Jose Patronell's dream to build a castle beside Mena Creek Falls. Now it is a lush rainforest boasting 7500 tropical plants and trees. (Travel ~90 mi.).



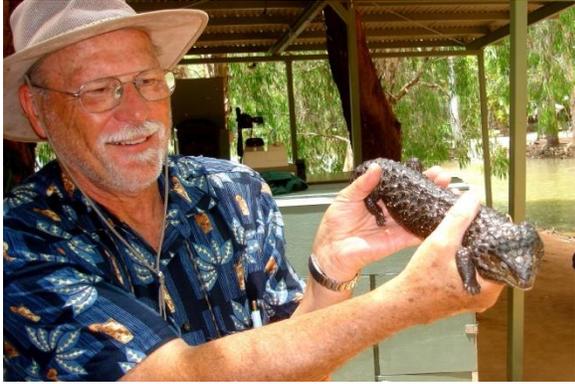
Day 12: If you are an early riser you could backtrack a few miles and hike grassy trails through Tyto Wetlands where dozens of Agile Wallabies roam. The wetlands sport a bonanza of wildlife, including colorful birds such as Crimson Finch, Green Pygmy-Goose, and Olive-backed Oriole. By mid-morning we will all be heading south to Townsville and climb aboard the ferry to Magnetic Island. Beaches to swim, restaurants for dining, and trails to seek eucalyptus-clinging Koalas. You might choose to rent a 4-passenger topless minicar and fully explore the island. Camp in Townsville two nights. (Travel ~69 mi.).





Day 13: Everyone will be anxious to visit the Billabong Sanctuary for the thrill of being close up and personal with Australian animals and learn of the plight of Koalas, Wombats, and other environmentally threatened species. Watch an estuarine crocodile leap half-length above the water trying to grab meat on a stick.





Day 14: Most of the day will be spent driving north to Cairns where we will return our rental RVs. There is time though for a stop at Frosty Mango for a delicious cold mid-morning snack. Overnight at a Cairns hotel. (Travel ~216 mi.).



Day 15: Air flight from Cairns to Brisbane. Van or bus transportation to Lamington National Park, high in the mountains south of Brisbane. Dinner at O'Reilly's, a fabulous resort atop the mountains. Overnight at O'Reilly's resort with stellar views of the valley below (3 nights).





Day 16: Breakfast at O'Reilly's. At the resort we have a smorgasbord of activities to choose from: nature outings, Segway safari, wildlife encounters, and trekking on a sample of the many half-day and full-day walks within the confines of the national park. We could easily be surprised by a Red-necked Pademelon, a cute miniature version of a kangaroo. Pamper yourself with an optional "mind-melting" massage and skin treatment at the Lost World Spa. We will also have available a local naturalist guide and 4-WD transport in Lamington National Park. Dinner at O'Reilly's.



Day 17: Breakfast and Queensland Farewell Dinner at O'Reilly's where meals are so good you will want to lick the plate. Guide and 4-WD transport in Lamington National Park. Also, try out the 200-yard zipline above the rainforest; they call it the Flying Fox Adventure.



Day 18: Breakfast at O'Reilly's. Van or bus transportation to Brisbane airport. Coming off our Queensland tour, we will fly from Brisbane to Sydney and a shuttle will transport us to our downtown hotel. We'll have time for a stroll in the city and enjoy dinner on our own. Sydney hotel (3 nights).

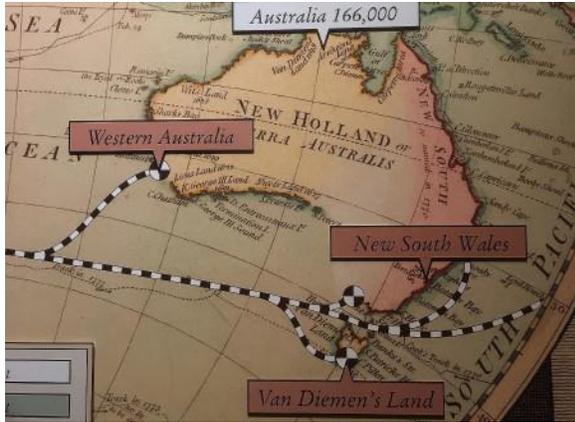


Day 19: Breakfast is included at our hotel. Then we board a double-decker tour bus (with commentary) that will take us to the highlights of the city and surrounding area. You will have a 2-day hop-on hop-off ticket, so you can spend as little or as much time as you want at each stop. We will see Darling Harbour and Cockle Bay, cross the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and get spectacular views of the Opera House from Milsons Point. Among many other stops, we will get great views of the Pacific Ocean from Arabanoo Lookout, Bondi Beach and Pavilion.



Day 20: After our hotel breakfast, we will visit the famous Sydney Opera House. Our guide will tell us the fascinating history of its design and construction. In the afternoon you will have plenty of time to see the city sites you passed the day before and spend more time at some of the historic museums - perhaps visit the convict building and museum through which passed some of the 166,000 convicts deported to Australia from European prisons. Or, shop for bargains at Market City among the hundreds of Asian-run booths. Or, how about visiting the Sydney's famous Botanic Gardens and its colorful floral exhibits above which a colony of Flying Foxes hang!





Day 21: Following the hotel breakfast, for those of us that are continuing on the New Zealand tour, we will be transported to the Sydney airport, fly to Auckland, New Zealand, and be transported to a hotel near the harbor.



Queensland & Sydney Tour Price Includes:

- Services of professional naturalist and Wagonmaster team
 - RV rental (12 days)
 - RV park campground fees (all sites include electricity)
 - Welcome to Australia dinner
 - Cairns downtown hotel (2 nights)
 - Charter cruise to Great Barrier Reef, including snorkeling and lunch
 - Kuranda train ride and skyrail
 - Tjapukai Cultural Park entrance fee and demonstrations
 - Australian camp oven roast dinner
 - Granite Gorge entrance fees
 - Local birding guide and naturalist at Atherton Highlands (3 days)
 - Tour bus transportation in Atherton Highlands (2 days)
 - Lunch at Mungalli Creek Dairy
 - Ravenshoe private reserve access
 - EPA land fees
 - National Park entrance fees
 - The Coffee Works and Rainforest Bounty entrance fee & guided tour
 - De Brueys Boutique Winery and Gem Gallery entrance fee & guided tour
 - Paronella Park entrance fees
 - Magnetic Island ferry
 - Billabong Sanctuary entrance fee and guided tour
 - Cairns airport hotel (1 night)
 - Ground transportation in Cairns
 - Airfare from Cairns to Brisbane
 - Bus/van transportation to/from Lamington National Park
 - Mountain resort accommodations at O'Reilly's (3 nights)
 - 4-WD transport within Lamington National Park with naturalist guide
 - Ziplining at Lamington National Park
 - Meals (6) at O'Reilly's, including Queensland Farewell Dinner
 - Airfare from Brisbane to Sydney
 - Ground transport to/from airport to downtown Sydney
 - Sydney hotel (3 nights)
 - Hotel breakfast each morning (3 days)
 - Two-day on-off tour bus pass for Sydney area, including Bondi Beach
 - Guided tour of Sydney Opera House
 - Airfare from Sydney to Auckland, New Zealand (if registered for both tours)
 - Ground transport to Auckland harbor and hotel (if registered for both tours)
 - Services of staff who will organize tours & optional activities
 - Caravan jackets (or gift certificate for alternatives) and nametags
 - "What you should know before you leave" preparatory document
 - Trip preparation packet & checklist
 - Travel logs and regular briefings
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NEW ZEALAND

Tour Description

21 Day Tour

October 21 to November 10, 2019



Hard to beat for spectacular scenery, New Zealand offers nutrient-rich blue seas teeming with sea lions, dolphins, and fur seals over which glide albatrosses; shorelines of penguins; rugged coastlines and dramatic capes hosting gannet and tern colonies; estuaries for spoonbills; mirrored lakes reflecting snow-capped mountains, sheep-grazed hills; mossy forests and ancient podocarpus forests where Kokako glide across the high canopy; alpine meadows and scree slopes; braided rivers spilling down from the Southern Alps; hanging glaciers; geysers, hot springs, boiling mud pools and volcanoes; and endemic birds with strange names like Kaka, Kea, and Kiwi. Curiously, New Zealand has no native land mammals. Enjoy adventures too, like boat cruises through mile-high fiords, across cold mountain lakes or into underground caverns. Thrill to a jetboat ride over river rapids or taking a luge down a mountain track. Visit Hobbiton, the miniature village where Lord of the Rings was filmed. Take a breath and enjoy it all!

Day 1: Our New Zealand tour originates in Auckland. Those travelers from our Queensland and Sydney tour will be flying to Auckland this day and be transported to the hotel near Auckland harbor. Hotel in Auckland for two nights.



Day 2: Hotel breakfast will be provided, at which time we will conduct our tour orientation meeting. Two choices of itineraries are available for today. Tiritiri Mantangi Island is a must-visit site for nature lovers hoping to see New Zealand endemic birds. We will take a 30-minute ferry ride from Auckland and a guided tour of the island that was once farmlands but now is native forests resulting from an enormous revegetation project from 1984 to 1994. Some 78 species of birds have been observed on or near the island, including endangered species such as Little Spotted Kiwi, Brown Teal, Takahe, Stitchbird, and Kokako. Other endemic species are New Zealand Pigeon, New Zealand Bellbird, Tui, New Zealand Robin, and Whitehead. A packed lunch is included.

Alternatively, an on-off narrated bus tour of Auckland is offered for those who would rather see city sights. The tour includes Sky City, Auckland waterfront, Parnell Village, Kelly Tarlton's, Mount Eden, Auckland Zoo, and many more stops. Lunch will be included.





Day 3: We will be renting RV's for travel, sleeping, and many meals. Typically, these are late model Class C turbo diesel vehicles accommodating two to four adults and including double bed, gas stove, refrigerator, microwave, shower, toilet, air-conditioning/heating, pressurized hot & cold water, and TV/radio/CD player. Also included are linen, bedding, and kitchen equipment. We will pick up our RVs in the morning, get groceries, and head to the Firth of Thames where thousands of Bar-tailed Godwits gather in the Austral winter. At the Shorebird Centre a local naturalist will explain the godwits phenomenal migration flight across the Pacific from Alaska. The Centre offers an attractive gift shop and a wide selection of New Zealand nature books. At the estuary, we will especially seek out Wrybills, the unusual shorebird with a bill that hooks to the right. At our Miranda campsite we can luxuriate in a swimming pool filled from thermal mineral springs pouring in from below at a temperature of 97-100°. (Travel ~82 mi.).



Day 4: After revisiting the beach in early morning, we drive toward Waitomo. In the afternoon we take a guided walking tour through Waitomo Glowworm Cave, first discovered 400-500 years ago by a young Maori hunting for birds. This tour is followed by a boat ride through the underground Ruakuri Cave where we will marvel at these bioluminescent insects (*Arachnocampa luminosa*) illuminating Glowworm Grotto. We camp at Waitomo for one night. (Travel ~100 mi.).



Day 5: Our first stop today is Hobbiton, the famous tiny village where the Hobbits lived when filming Lord of the Rings. For lunch we will feast at Shire's Rest Cafe right in Hobbiton. Next we drive in the direction of Rotorua and stop at a raptor facility that raises endangered New Zealand Falcons for release into the wild. Here we will view a falconry training session, affording amazing close ups of these birds in action and flying freely. We camp at Rotorua for two nights. (Travel ~90 mi.).





Day 6: Our travels today take us past Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake, and on to Napier. En route we can stop at Huka Falls where a turbulent turquoise river plunges through a narrow gap in the rock substructure. Near Taupo we'll take a wild ride on the Rapids Jet Boat as it jumps and turns over whitewater rapids. Some may choose to visit Ahuriri Estuary which offers a variety of birds such as Australian Shoveler, Rufous-necked Stint, and a high concentration of Silver-eyes. Others will want to check out the Classic Sheepskins Tannery where you could have a tour of the sheep tanning process and purchase sheepskin products, such as warm clothing made from the fur of Alpaca and possum. In the afternoon we have the unique experience of riding in a wagon pulled by a tractor, racing to beat the incoming tide along the narrow rock-strewn beach and vertical cliffs that graphically depict rock shifts caused by earthquakes. Then we visit Cape Kidnappers for a view of largest mainland colony (7500 pairs) of Australian Gannets and a colony of White-fronted Terns. Camp at Napier. (Travel ~164 mi.).





Day 7: On the way to Wellington we will stop for lunch (optional) at a brewery named after a well-known bird, the Tui, which also can be found in the area. At a stop at Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre (optional) we will be introduced to the comical antics of the Kaka, cross a foot bridge over a pool filled with monster eels, and learn what are Takake and Kokako. Camp at Wellington for two nights. (Travel ~200 mi.).



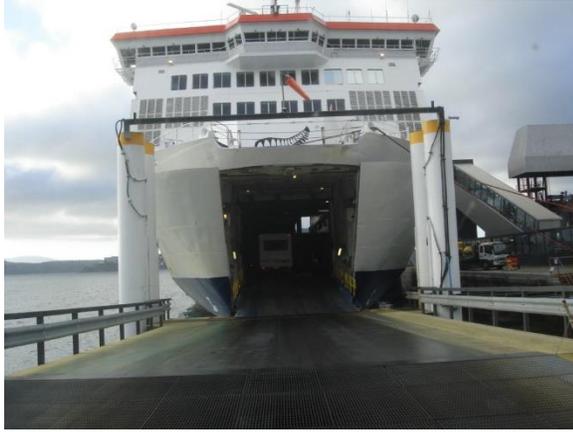


Day 8: A site enjoyed on our last trip is Kaori Wildlife Sanctuary. This unique protected area excludes the introduced predators that have plagued New Zealand endemics elsewhere on the main islands. A fascinating Kaori exhibition hall traces millions of years of natural history, giving real insight into New Zealand's loss of natural habitat and native animals. At the same time, the sanctuary illustrates the successful wildlife comeback in their enclosure. This sanctuary and its inhabitants are a delight to photographers. Here, in the wild, we can see Bellbird, Saddleback, Whitehead, Red-crowned Parakeet, and best of all, during a special night tour, Little Spotted Kiwi. We undoubtedly will hear many Morepork calling and might be lucky enough to see the owl as we did last trip. Here also is the prehistoric Tuatara that look like large lizards or small dinosaurs, but are neither.





Day 9: Cook Strait separates North Island and South Island. The 3-hr. car-ferry ride is touted to be one of the most spectacular ferry rides in the world. We have an excellent chance of seeing up to six species of albatross, Northern Giant Petrel, and Buller's Shearwater as well as Common, Dusky and Hector's Dolphins, and Killer Whales. If nature and sea breezes is not your thing, you can relax in the many comfortable lounges or catch breakfast in the cafeteria. Camp is on the South Island at Kaikoura for two nights (Travel by RV ~105 mi.).



Day 10: Again a choice: birds or dolphins. Some will take a pelagic boat tour 7 mi. offshore from Kaikoura. Because they almost never come near land, albatrosses are notoriously difficult to see close up, but here many come near the boat and we are likely to see Buller's, Black-browed, and Salvin's, as well as Giant Petrels and lots of an oddly named petrel called a Cape Pigeon. The rest of our group will choose the dolphin boat cruise and see dozens of high leaping dolphins put on a comical show at sea. Optionally, you can rent snorkeling equipment and wetsuits and swim with the friendly dolphins. Kaikoura, a small fishing town, is known for its crayfish (rock lobster) and also hosts a New Zealand fur seal colony.





Day 11: We travel to Christchurch, with a free afternoon to visit some sites on your own. You can view the incredible effects of several recent earthquakes and the slow rebuilding of this famous city, which also offers several great museums and a beautiful botanic garden. Camp at Christchurch. (Travel ~111 mi.).



Day 12: From Christchurch we travel into the Southern Alps to Twizel, Lake Ruataniwa, and in clear view of Mt. Cook at 12,136 ft. the highest mountain in Australasia. Take a break to see the old stone Church of the Good Shepherd with its marvelous view of Lake Tekapo, backdropped by snow-covered mountains. Then drive beside Lake Pukaki, past the alluvial fan caused by glacier melt water runoff, and climb to the end of the road for your closest view of Mt. Cook. For the bird enthusiasts, backtrack to that alluvial fan (Tasman Delta) and search for Black Stilt, the world's rarest wading bird. Last trip we found Pied Stilts, Black Stilts, and an odd hybrid of the two species. Camp at Twizel. (Travel ~177 mi.).



Day 13: Continuing through the Southern Alps, we pass a series of turquoise lakes and a salmon-raising pond popular for New Zealand Scaup. The braided streams have become flowerbeds for colorful introduced lupines, pretty to view but environmentally disruptive. In the evening we will take a Lake Wakatipu cruise on a 1912 vintage steamer from Queenstown and enjoy a gourmet dinner prepared from locally grown fresh products. We will also get a demonstration of sheep shearing and an exhibition of sheep-herding dogs. Camp in Queenstown (2 nights). The city was originally a sheep run, then a gold rush town, and now South Island's most popular ski resort, set on Lake Wakatipu among rugged peaks and hills smoothed by glaciers. (Travel ~124 mi.).



Day 14: Just because we aren't here in ski season doesn't mean we can't enjoy the mountains. We'll take a gondola ride to Bob's Peak and high in the mountains we can take multiple rides on a luge, an experience I doubt few have had. You are on your own for dinner, but we are sure many of you will want to try one of the many great restaurants this ski town has to offer. Overnight Queenstown.

Day 15: Passing through mountains, beside large lakes, and then descending to broad farmlands populated by thousands of sheep and large herds of Red Deer, we thread our way toward the west coast, stopping at Te Anau. In the afternoon we can explore part of the expansive 12,000-sq.km. Fiordland National Park, including its rugged snow-capped mountains, vast river valleys, dense forests, mirrored lakes, and cold rushing rivers. We should have enough time to reach Monkey Creek, home of the Blue Duck, or the Homer Tunnel, before we head back to Te Anau. At the last stop or two we will undoubtedly meet the comical Kea at the parking lot. A friendly alpine parrot, it has a fascination for tires, windshield wipers and checking out the roofs of RVs. Camp at Te Anau for two nights. (Travel ~106+ mi.).



Day 16: The day is dedicated to exploring Fiordland National Park, encompassing wet forests, lakes, braided rivers, alpine meadows, glaciers, snow-capped peaks, and fiords. Rudyard Kipling described magical, unforgettable Milford Sound as the eighth wonder of the world and to this day it is one of the most famous attractions in New Zealand. We will cruise by tour boat through Milford Sound to the Tasman Sea, viewing glacier-capped mountains that rise a mile high directly from the sea. Most spectacular are the many amazingly tall waterfalls including one that is the Fountain of Youth for those that catch its spray. We have a chance at seeing Fiordland Crested Penguins and undoubtedly will find New Zealand Fur Seals lounging on the rocks. In the evening we can visit (option) a favorite restaurant at Te Anau where locally raised venison is a specialty on the menu.



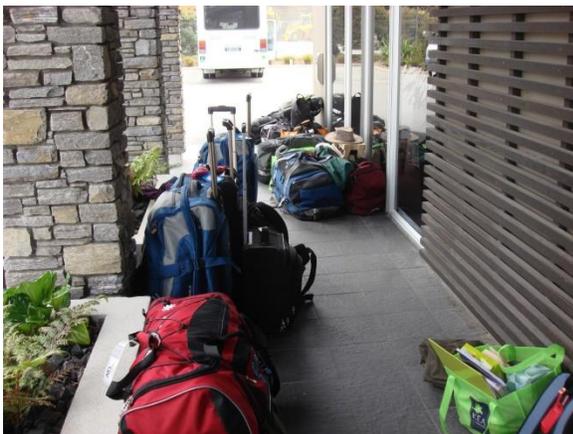
Day 17: Today we cross to the southeast coast of South Island at Dunedin, choosing among several routes, depending how much of the coastline you want to explore or taking a side trip to the preserve at Sinclair Wetlands. Camp at Dunedin. (Travel ~177 mi.).



Day 18: Rising at the peak of the Otago Peninsula is Lamach Castle and Gardens, billed as one of New Zealand's premier visitor attractions. On the tip of Otago Peninsula we will visit the only mainland breeding colony of Royal Albatrosses in the world. Heading north now along the coast, we'll stop to see Moeraki Boulders and then continue to Oamaru where we will camp near the Blue Penguin colony. We'll visit the colony to see the march of the penguins, a must-see for everyone. At dusk Blue Penguins emerge from the sea, pause to survey the beach for danger, and then march across the sand to the grassy spots where they spend the night in burrows. Overnight Oamaru (Travel ~72 mi. between campsites).



Day 19: We follow the coast to Christchurch. We will turn in our RVs and transfer to a Christchurch hotel near the airport. (Travel ~153 mi.).



Day 20. We visit the Antarctic Centre which includes a ride in the all-terrain amphibious Hagglund. The center also includes a Blue Penguin rehabilitation facility. In the late afternoon and evening we will tour a small wildlife reserve with a captive breeding program for Great Spotted Kiwi, enjoy a cultural performance by native Maori people and celebrate our farewell dinner. In darkness only illuminated by dim flashlights, we will visit the Kiwi enclosures for our farewell to the national bird of New Zealand...



Day 21: Return flights from Christchurch. Free shuttle transport to the airport.



New Zealand North & South Island Tour Price Includes:

- Services of professional naturalist and Wagonmaster team
- RV rental (18 days)
- RV park campground fees (all sites include electricity)
- Auckland breakfasts (2 days)
- Auckland hotel (2 nights)
- Tiritiri Matangi Island boat transit and island tour, including lunch
- Auckland city tour, including lunch (alternative to Tiritiri Mantangi)
- Entrance fees and naturalist talk at Miranda
- Waitomo Glowworm Cave Tour
- Ruakuri Cave Tour by boat
- Hobbiton entrance fee and guided tour
- Wingspan National Bird of Prey Centre falconry demonstration
- Seashore tractor-trailer tour to Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve
- Karori Wildlife Sanctuary entrance fee
- Nighttime Kiwi tour at Karori Wildlife Sanctuary
- Cook Strait ferry
- Kaikoura pelagic boat tour (choice: albatrosses or dolphins)
- Cruise and gourmet dinner on Lake Wakatipu
- Gondola ride to Bob's Peak
- Luge rides
- Milford Sound boat excursion
- Larnach Castle entrance fee
- Blue Penguin Colony night show
- Antarctic Center entrance fee
- Hagglund ride
- Christchurch hotel (2 nights)
- Shuttle to/from Willowbank
- Willowbank Wildlife Reserve entrance
- Maori cultural performance
- Kiwi nighttime tour
- Farewell dinner

- Shuttle to Christchurch airport
- Services of staff who will organize tours & optional activities
- Caravan jackets (or gift certificate for alternatives) and nametags
- "What you should know before you leave" preparatory document
- Trip preparation packet & checklist
- Travel logs and regular briefings



AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

RV Rental Details



Several companies rent RV's so some of the details might differ. In general, here is a description of the RVs we rent. Typically, these are late model Class C turbo diesel vehicles accommodating four adults and including two double beds, gas stove, refrigerator, microwave, shower, toilet, air-conditioning/heating, pressurized hot & cold water, and radio/TV/CD player. Also included are linen, bedding, and kitchen equipment. All vehicles in our last tours were automatic transmission and are very economical on diesel fuel with an estimated fuel consumption of 16 mpg. Recently the RV has been built on a Mercedes Sprinter chassis. They have a rear vision camera, two dining areas (both convertible for beds), and a large awning. Although they can accommodate 4-6 persons, they are ideal for two people accustomed to the large RVs owned in the U.S. and Canada.

Vehicle length is 25 ft. (7.7 m), width 7.5 ft. (2.3 m), height 11.5 ft. (3.5 m), interior height 6.5 ft. (2 m). Double bed length is 6.9 ft. (2.1 m).

Here is a more detailed list of supplies: plates, bowls, cups, glasses, knives, forks, spoons, bottle/can opener, mixing bowls, colander, saucepans, frying pans, cooking utensils, chopping board, kettle, teapot, coffee plunger, toaster and tea towel, linen and bedding (pillow, pillowcase, sheet and towel per person), general equipment (pegs, dustpan/ brush, fire extinguisher, bucket/hose, broom, coat hangers, toilet roll, sponge, scourer, customer care and emergency assistance numbers, travel wallet including maps and driving tips. Although the equipment usually suffices for our needs, we have found that they often do not include steak knives or ice cube trays.

The tour price covers the rental of the RV, including vehicle insurance with a deductible, GST, administrative fees, extra driver's fees, and unlimited mileage.

Additional expenses not covered: Diesel fuel cost on our last tours was US\$1250 total. For New Zealand diesel tax is added after the completion of the tour and was \$162. Expect these costs to vary with exchange rate and changing fuel prices. RV rentals include insurance, but with a deductible of about \$7500 AUD or \$7500 NZD. In New Zealand, auto insurance is not required, so if you are hit by an uninsured driver the damage expense to your RV is yours to pay unless you are covered by insurance. Optional additional RV insurance is available to bring the deductible to zero. The RV rental agency offers a "Liability Reduction Option" at approximately \$45 AUD or \$45 NZD per day. Although not required, almost all guests on our past tours have opted for a package costing \$58.75 AUD or \$58.75 NZD per rental day that includes the liability reduction option, a pre-purchased gas bottle, initial set of toilet chemicals, camp chairs, and table.

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