

**Sydney, Cairns, Alice Springs, Ayers Rock Itinerary**  
**May 1 - 12, 2008**

**Thursday, May 01, 2008**

**5:55 pm. Fly Washington DC to Sydney via Los Angeles (other air cities can be arranged)**

**Friday, May 02, 2008**

**Cross The International Dateline**

The International Date Line is an imaginary line on the earth's surface, that approximately coincides with the 180th meridian (longitude), and separates the calendar date. Traveling east across the line, takes the traveler back one day; traveling west, takes the traveler forward one day. Without the date line, calendar confusion would result for the traveler.

**Saturday, May 03, 2008**

**6:05 am. Transfer Sydney International Airport to accommodation with city sights tour**

After collecting your luggage, please look for your driver who will be holding a sign with your group name on it. You will then commence your private city tour visiting the landmarks of Sydney.

The tour will pass through the historical Rocks area and Circular Quay as your driver/guide points tells you about the history and significance of the areas. View the Sydney Opera House and the Harbour Bridge from Mrs. Macquarie's Chair. The historic chair was specially designed for the governor's wife to look out over the harbor, one of the best vantage points in Sydney. Travel to the exclusive harbor side suburbs of Vaucluse, Double Bay and Rose Bay. Then, it's on to Bondi Beach (pronounced bond-eye), Australia's most famous surf beach with some charming shops and cafés overlooking the ocean. At the conclusion of your tour you will be transferred to your city accommodation.

**Saturday, May 03, 2008 - Tuesday, May 06, 2008, three nights**  
**Travelodge Sydney**

Standard double occupancy rooms for three nights with breakfast daily. Travelodge Sydney on Wentworth Avenue is one of the new generation of Travelodges. Situated in the revitalised southern Sydney city, the hotel is conveniently located next to the best that Sydney has to offer. Travelodge Sydney is a 3-star/moderate hotel located in the centre of Sydney's central business district. Ideal for the business and leisure traveler, the hotel is close to Hyde Park, Oxford Street and within walking distance of Sydney's cosmopolitan restaurants, theatres and shopping. Travelodge Sydney provides all of the facilities required for a comfortable and pleasant stay. Rooms are modern and fresh with a range of facilities designed for both the business and leisure traveler. Early check-in can be requested but not guaranteed.

**Afternoon and evening at leisure**

Take time this evening to experience some of Sydney's world-famous venues, such as the trendy Darling Harbour area. Embark on a world-class shopping experience in Australia's leading shopping destination, Sydney. See how old meets new, where local meets international, and enjoy shopping, dining and being entertained. For dining experiences, Sydney caters for all tastes from international cuisine and fine dining restaurants through to contemporary eateries and pub fare.

**Sunday, May 4, 2008 (B,L)**

**12:30 pm. Captian Cook lunch cruise on Sydney Harbor**

Board the luxurious cruiser *The City of Sydney* for a delightful lunch cruise on one of the world's most beautiful harbors. A lively commentary on board provides you with knowledge of Australia's history as well as plans for its future. Depart from Jetty 6 at Circular Quay at 12.30pm for the 90-minute excursion, which includes a full buffet-style lunch. This is a share cruise, with private hotel transfers included.

### **Evening at leisure**

#### **Monday, May 5, 2008 (B,L)**

##### **8:00 am. Blue Mountains tour with lunch.**

This morning you will be picked up from your hotel for your private tour to the Blue Mountains, a scenic two hour drive from Sydney. First stop this morning will be at the famous Featherdale Wildlife Park, which will give you the opportunity to meet some of those very famous Australian's such as the Koala, Kangaroo, Wombat and Laughing Kookaburra bird. Rangers are on hand to answer all your questions about these delightful creature's and the facilities allow you to get up close to all animals.

Continuing into the Blue Mountains National Park, enjoy a stroll through the bush at Govetts Leap, and then visit the historic township of Katoomba. A highlight of today's trip will be an included lunch at the historic Hydro Majestic Hotel in the Blue Mountains. The Hydro Majestic commands sweeping views of both the Megalong Valley and Kanimbla Ranges within the Blue Mountains.

We then ravel to Echo Point where sheer escarpments, rugged bush land and awe-inspiring views from mountain lookouts await you. Learn about the 'blue haze' effect, giving the region its name. There are excellent photo opportunities of the Three Sisters rock formation, and spectacular views of Jamison and Megalong valleys. Discover the delightful village of Leura and explore the antique shops. Return to the city via Sydney's Olympic Site, before being transferred back to your accommodation later this afternoon. Lunch is included in today's tour but beverages are at your own expense.

#### **Tuesday, May 06, 2008 (B)**

##### **7:15 am. Transfer city to Sydney Airport**

Please wait in the lobby of your hotel. You will be met by your driver and transferred to the airport by private vehicle.

##### **9:50 am. Fly Sydney to Ayers Rock**

##### **12:45 pm. Transfer Ayers Rock Airport to accommodation**

#### **Tuesday, May 06, 2008 - Thursday, May 08, 2008, two nights The Outback Pioneer Hotel, Ayers Rock**

Located in the Ayers Rock Resort, the Outback Pioneer Hotel offers moderate three-star accommodations for your stay at Ayers Rock, with traditional Aussie hospitality. It is an easy walk to the Ayers Rock Tourist Information Centre for all the details you need to know about the area, and all tour coaches pick up from the hotel.

The comfortable, affordable hotel rooms are perfect for the demands of travelers looking for quality service in relaxed surrounds. All rooms are air-conditioned with mini-bar and movies on demand facilities. Enjoy a beer at the Outback barbecue, take a dip in the swimming pool, swap stories of your day's adventures, or sing along with the nightly entertainment. Alternatively, opt for the quiet atmosphere of the Bough House restaurant. Please note that all rooms are non-smoking.

##### **4:00 pm. Olgas Tour and Ayers Rock Sunset Tour**

Travel to the mystical 36 domes of Kata Tjuta (otherwise known as The Olgas), a very sacred place to the Aboriginal people. On the way, stop at a lookout for a panoramic view of the eastern side of Kata Tjuta. Continue on before arriving at the base of Walpa Gorge. As you enter the gorge, marvel at the sheer walls that surround you. Spend some time exploring the gorge and the unusual conglomerate rock formations.

The walking trail through Walpa Gorge follows the natural creek between two of the tallest domes of Kata Tjuta. Learn of the domes' formation and of the wildlife of the region. Some of the plants you will see here are so rare that they are only found among these rocky domes. Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in two stages, initially for its outstanding universal natural values and then for its outstanding universal cultural values.

We then travel to the sunset viewing area to watch the dramatic color changes that occur to Uluru (Ayers Rock) as the day's light starts to fade. At the conclusion of your private tour, your driver will return you to your accommodation.

### **Wednesday, May 07, 2008 (B)**

#### **6:00 am. Sunrise and Base Tour**

This morning you leave your hotel early to witness the show of color as the sun's first rays strike Uluru (Ayers Rock). This world-famous light show is a highlight of any Red Centre visit, watching as the sun's rays creep across the red sand of the desert floor, and then begin their ascent of the scarred surface of this great monolith, bathing it in brilliant, ever-changing colors.

With the sun climbing the morning sky, join a guided base tour with your driver/guide to the waterhole at Mutitjulu. View ancient cave paintings and learn about flora, fauna and Aboriginal history. We continue around the base of Uluru by coach and see various sacred areas, before our last stop at the Cultural Centre. The centre is dedicated to interpreting Anangu culture and law, as well as helping visitors learn about the cultural value of the region. You have an opportunity to purchase some locally made Aboriginal art, before returning to your accommodation later this morning.

#### **Afternoon and evening at leisure**

This evening, perhaps enjoy the optional "Sounds of Silence" dinner, a three-course meal prepared in an open desert location where you can enjoy the sights and sounds of the Outback at night.

### **Thursday, May 08, 2008 (B)**

#### **7:30 am. Transfer Ayers Rock accommodation to airport**

#### **10:05 am. Fly Ayers Rock to Alice Springs**

#### **10:50 am. Transfer from Alice Springs Airport to accommodation with city sights tour.**

After collecting your luggage, please look for your driver who will be holding a sign with your group name on it. En-route to your accommodation, enjoy an orientation tour of this fascinating town.

Situated close to the very centre of the vast Australian continent, Alice Springs is the country's best known 'Outback' town. Originally settled as a post along the Overland Telegraph route, Alice Springs today is a lively and laid back town, with something for everyone. On your informative town tour, you'll find the locals to be relaxed and friendly, and always keen for a chat. During your tour a stop will be made for lunch at your own expense.

Visit the base of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the School of the Air, two uniquely Australian organizations that provide medical care and education respectively to people in remote areas of central Australia. See the old Telegraph Station. Conclude the tour with panoramic views of Alice Springs and the

surrounding ranges from the top of Anzac Hill. You will then be transferred to your Alice Springs accommodation. Entrance fees to the attractions listed are included in today's tour. This is a private tour approximately six hours in duration.

**Thursday, May 08 – Friday, May 09, one night  
Alice Springs Resort**

Standard double occupancy rooms for one night with breakfast. The Alice Springs Resort is a convenient five-minute walk from the town center, and situated on the banks of the famous Todd River, with its magnificent Red Gum trees. Efficient, friendly outback service and modern, comfortable facilities contribute to the hotel's laid back atmosphere. There are 140 rooms and all are non smoking. The hotel has its own award winning a la carte restaurant - Palms Restaurant as well as the Gum Tree Lounge where you can grab a quick snack or drink.

**Friday, May 9 (B)**

**Morning at leisure in Alice Springs**

For something different, maybe take an optional camel ride along the Todd River to an early breakfast outing. Or, shop for Aboriginal artwork in the nearby town center.

**11:45 am. Transfer from Alice Springs Resort to airport**

**2:25 pm. Fly Alice Springs to Cairns**

**5:00 pm. Transfer from Cairns Airport to accommodation**

The moment you step off the plane in Cairns, you're greeted by moist, perfumed air that hints of palm trees, beaches and exotic flowers. While it's true that Cairns is the gateway to two of the worlds greatest natural wonders.....tropical rainforests and the Great Barrier Reef....it's also true that Cairns has its own tropical town charm.

**Friday, May 9, 2008 – Tuesday, May 13, 2008, four nights  
Oasis Resort, Cairns**

Standard double occupancy rooms for four nights with breakfast daily. This resort style hotel is set on two hectares of land in the heart of Cairns, featuring a vast central courtyard, free form swimming pool and surrounded by tropical gardens. You are a block away from the city centre, but the tranquil surrounds make it seem miles away. Rooms feature television, iron and board, hairdryer and tea/coffee making facilities. The resort has its own restaurant and bar for your convenience, or stroll to one of the many city restaurants nearby.

**Saturday, May 10, 2008 (B,L)**

**8:00 am. *Quicksilver* Outer Reef Cruise**

You will board the *Quicksilver* this morning for a fabulous full day tour out to the Agincourt Reef, part of the spectacular Great Barrier Reef of Australia. Agincourt is the most southerly link in the chain of ribbon-like outer reefs on the extreme edge of continental Australia. Here you will view some of the most beautiful reef life in Australia. The air-conditioned 30m *Quicksilver* cruises at 27 knots, reaching Agincourt in just 90 minutes. Once here, you have the opportunity to snorkel, swim or scuba dive (extra expense) among the reef. You may also view the reef from glass-bottom boats and semi-submersible subs - a fantastic experience. Lunch is served on board the vessel, and this is a shared cruise. Return to Cairns in the late afternoon.

**Sunday, May 11, 2008 (B)**

## **Day at leisure in Cairns**

There are numerous packages available for visitors to enjoy. You can go on a balloon flight in the morning and white water rafting in the afternoon. The Cairns Esplanade is peaceful during the day with visitors catching the early morning rays and watching the unique bird life feeding along the mudflats. Palm trees line the length of the Esplanade highlighting the Tropical feel of this warm city.

The Marketplace is a wonderful place to shop or just stroll and take in the atmosphere. Numerous stalls offer souvenirs, food, fashion and anything else you can imagine. Here you will also find Undersea World, where you can enjoy all the creatures of the Great Barrier Reef without getting your feet wet. The art gallery on the lower level has some superb paintings and prints of Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef. All these can be safely packed for overseas transport. Upstairs on the second level you will find restaurants and eateries offering a choice of Italian, Chinese and seafood cuisines whilst overlooking beautiful Trinity Inlet.

### **Monday, May 12, 2008 (B)**

#### **7:00 am. Kuranda, Skyrail and Tjapukai tour**

You will transfer you from your hotel to Freshwater Station, where you will board the famous Kuranda Scenic Rail for a breathtaking journey on one of the world's most scenic operational rail journeys. On arrival in Kuranda there is free time to explore the 'Village in the Rainforest'. Time will be allowed for lunch on your own.

After lunch you will board the Skyrail where you glide above the rainforest canopy in a gondola, experiencing amazing views. There is the opportunity to disembark en route for a short walk to a lookout. Skyrail ends at Caravonica Lakes, where you will take a short walk to the fascinating Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park. Discover this ancient culture through theatre, stage shows and demonstrations, providing an insight to Aboriginal culture and history, before boarding the coach for the return to your accommodation. Today's tour is a shared experience. Please note: a fuel levy of AUD \$2 per person will apply and will be collected by Down Under Tours on the day of your tour.

### **Tuesday, May 13, 2008 (B)**

#### **5:00 am. Transfer from Cairns accommodation to airport**

#### **7:00 am. Fly from Cairns to Washington DC via Sydney and Los Angeles**

#### **10:10 pm. Arrive Washington DC**

#### **## End of United Vacations arrangements ##**

Meal codes:

B = breakfst

L = lunch

Please note that transfer and flight times on this suggested itinerary are estimates only. Confirmed transfer and flight times will be noted on your final itinerary.