



## **Exploring Australia & New Zealand Fall 2023 – Winter/Spring 2024**

*Small group touring and the Lands Down Under – they add up to a perfect combination as we travel from Australia's spectacular Great Barrier Reef and the storied Outback to sophisticated Sydney; from New Zealand's towering Mt. Cook and breathtaking Milford Sound to high-spirited Queenstown and nautical Auckland.*

**With an Post-Tour Extension:  
Auckland – On Your Own**

**Itinerary**

Created on Feb 15, 2024

# Exploring Australia & New Zealand

## Day-by-Day Itinerary

### **DAY 1: Depart U.S. for Cairns, Australia**

### **DAY 2: Depart U.S. for Cairns, Australia**

### **DAY 3: Arrive Cairns**

This afternoon we arrive in Cairns, gateway to Australia's Far North and the Great Barrier Reef. We transfer to our hotel where tonight we enjoy a briefing and dinner.

*Accommodations:* Pullman Reef Hotel Casino

*Meals:* Dinner

### **DAY 4: Cairns/Kuranda**

We take an orientation tour of Cairns then board a historic railway to the mountain village of Kuranda. After time to explore here, we descend via the gondolas of Skyrail. We then return to our hotel, with the rest of the day at leisure.

*Accommodations:* Pullman Reef Hotel Casino

*Meals:* Breakfast

### **DAY 5: Great Barrier Reef**

This morning we board a boat for a day-long excursion to the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest living organism and richest marine resource at 1,200 miles long. We pull up at Michaelmas Cay where we can swim, snorkel, or view the reef from a semi-submersible vessel.

*Accommodations:* Pullman Reef Hotel Casino

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch

### **DAY 6: Cairns/Alice Springs**

We take an early morning flight to remote Alice Springs, where upon arrival we venture to Simpsons Gap and Standley Chasm for a picnic lunch amid the sheer rock walls. Then we visit the Alice Springs School of the Air, which provides schooling to widely scattered Outback children.

*Accommodations:* DoubleTree by Hilton

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch

### **DAY 7: Alice Springs**

This morning we embark on an Aboriginal “dreamtime” tour, where we meet Walpiri tribespeople and learn about their ancient culture. After this First Australians experience, we encounter the acclaimed Royal Flying Doctor Service then visit the Anzac Hill Monument to Australian and New Zealand soldiers. Tonight, we enjoy a traditional Outback Bushman’s Dinner around a campfire.

*Accommodations:* DoubleTree by Hilton

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### **DAY 8: Alice Springs/Ayers Rock**

We reach our Ayers Rock hotel early afternoon. After lunch on our own, we visit Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site that is the traditional land of the Anangu Aboriginal peoples and home to the Olgas rock formations and Uluru (Ayers Rock). This evening we watch the sun set over this fabled sandstone monolith that rises to a height of 1,114 feet.

*Accommodations:* Voyages Sails in the Desert

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### **DAY 9: Ayers Rock/Sydney**

This morning we visit the base of Uluru and the interesting museum here. At midday, we fly to Sydney, arriving late afternoon.

*Accommodations:* Sofitel Sydney Wentworth

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### **DAY 10: Sydney**

Today’s tour features The Rocks historic neighborhood, Darling Harbour and Mrs. Macquarie’s Point, Rose and Watson’s bays, and popular Bondi Beach. Then we board a catamaran for a lunch cruise around Sydney Harbour.

*Accommodations:* Sofitel Sydney Wentworth

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch

### **DAY 11: Sydney**

This morning we tour Featherdale Wildlife Park, where wombats, dingos, and koalas reside. Then the afternoon is at leisure; tonight we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

*Accommodations:* Sofitel Sydney Wentworth

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 12: Sydney/Christchurch, New Zealand**

After a late morning tour of the iconic Sydney Opera House, this afternoon is free for independent exploration. This evening we board a flight to Christchurch, New Zealand's "Garden City."

*Accommodations:* Rydges Latimer Christchurch

*Meals:* Breakfast

## **DAY 13: Christchurch/Mount Cook National Park**

This morning's orientation tour features the Botanic Gardens and Cathedral Square, the beating heart of Christchurch and site of Christchurch Cathedral. Then we board our motorcoach for the journey south to Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park in the Southern Alps. En route, we stop in the town of Geraldine for lunch and to see sheep dogs and a sheep shearer in action at a local farm. We continue on to Mount Cook, arriving late this afternoon.

*Accommodations:* The Hermitage Hotel

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 14: Mount Cook**

This morning's tour of alpine Mount Cook Village includes a visit to the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Center, where we see a 3D planetarium movie about the region. We also visit the Hillary Gallery, commemorating Sir Edmund's achievements, including the first ascent of Mount Cook's difficult South Ridge in 1948 (at 12,316 feet, Mount Cook is New Zealand's tallest mountain). After time in the village for lunch on our own, this afternoon is at leisure to relax amid the breathtaking scenery, hike, or take an optional scenic flight (weather permitting).

*Accommodations:* The Hermitage Hotel

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 15: Mount Cook/Queenstown**

We depart this morning for Queenstown, stopping en route in historic Arrowtown for lunch on our own followed by a visit to Kawarau Bridge Bungy, the world's first bungy jump operation open to the public. Mid-afternoon we reach Queenstown, New Zealand's "adventure capital." We dine tonight at our hotel.

*Accommodations:* Hotel St. Moritz

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 16: Milford Sound**

Our day-long excursion to Milford Sound includes a nature cruise through the breathtaking fjords. We have lunch on board then later have the opportunity to return to Queenstown on an optional scenic flight (weather permitting).

*Accommodations:* Hotel St. Moritz

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch

### **DAY 17: Queenstown**

Today is at leisure to enjoy New Zealand's adventure capital as we wish.

*Accommodations:* Hotel St. Moritz

*Meals:* Breakfast

### **DAY 18: Queenstown/Rotorua**

We depart today for the Maori center of Rotorua, with its geysers, bubbling mud pools, and hot thermal springs. Upon arrival, we take a panoramic tour of this city on the shores of Lake Rotorua. This evening we visit Te Puia Thermal Reserve and Cultural Centre for a traditional *hangi* dinner and M?ori performance.

*Accommodations:* Regent of Rotorua

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### **DAY 19: Rotorua**

This morning we visit Paradise Valley Springs, which showcases New Zealand's biodiversity with native flora and wildlife, including alpaca, llama, and wallabies. Then we drive to National Kiwi Trust, dedicated to rehabilitating injured kiwis, the national bird

*Accommodations:* Regent of Rotorua

*Meals:* Breakfast

### **DAY 20: Rotorua/Auckland**

En route to Auckland, we stop this morning at Ruakuri Caves to see the unique glowworms that illuminate the underground grottoes and caves. We reach Auckland late this afternoon; we're on our own for dinner tonight.

*Accommodations:* Grand Millennium Auckland

*Meals:* Breakfast

### **DAY 21: Auckland**

Our half-day tour of this city set atop 48 volcanic hills features glittering Auckland Harbour and the America's Cup Village. We also visit the War Memorial Museum, with its prized M?ori and Pacific Islander collections. Tonight we enjoy a farewell dinner at our hotel.

*Accommodations:* Grand Millennium Auckland

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### **DAY 22: Depart for U.S.**

This afternoon we depart for the airport for the flight to Los Angeles (via Sydney) and our return flights home.

*Meals:* Breakfast

**PLEASE NOTE**

This trip involves full days of sightseeing and significant amounts of walking on stairs and uneven surfaces. You should be in good physical condition to enjoy the tour to its fullest.

The order of your itinerary in the Outback may vary by departure.

This tour itinerary was generated for Exploring Australia & New Zealand on Feb 15, 2024. Please visit the Exploring Australia & New Zealand page at <https://www.odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/australia-the-south-pacific/exploring-australia-new-zealand/> for the latest and most accurate information.