



## AUSTRALIA – ISLAND, COUNTRY AND CONTINENT

A land of deserts, coral reefs, tall forests, snow cloaked mountains and multicultural cities – Australia is one of the oldest countries on the planet as well as one of the youngest. From its rich indigenous history that dates back more than 50000 years to its legendary pioneers, you'll find an insight into what makes Australia the vibrant & multicultural nation it is today.

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### THE FACTS

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- Capital city is Canberra
- The official language is English
- The Head of State is HM Queen Elizabeth II
- Population is 22.5 million (December, 2011)
- Area is 7692 thousand sq km
- Major exports are Iron Ore & Concentrates, Coal , Gold, Crude Petroleum, Natural Gas

### Bright Lights, Big Cities

The main cities are Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. Each city has its own unique flavour. Sydney is bold, brash and beautiful; Melbourne is arty, cultured and slightly snobbish; Brisbane, third most populous city in Australia is often know as the City of Lights; Perth the nation's fastest growing state is a city on the move and Adelaide; Australia's wine capital is the city which loves to party.

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### A HOLIDAY DESTINATION

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Australia has a huge range of family holidays including intimate encounters with unique wildlife in stunning environments, authentic indigenous experiences that offer insights into the world's oldest living culture; many family learning opportunities and a whole host of fun.

### Animal Encounters

With seas and bays brimming with dolphins, whales, turtles, coral and tropical fish, you can get up close and personal with aquatic life from snorkelling on the Great Barrier Reef, hand feeding fish on Ned's beach on Lord Howe Island and swimming with the whale sharks on Ningaloo Reef. You can watch the turtles nesting and tiny hatchlings make their way to the safety of the water and you can even have shark and crocodile encounters – (if you dare!) at places like Townsville's Reef HQ, Australia Zoo on the Sunshine Coast, the Wilderness Wildlife Park outside of Broome, Darwin's Crocosaurus Cove and Oceanworld Manly.

### Adventure & Wilderness

From deserts to rainforests, from coral reefs to the outback, the Australian landscape is tailor made for adventurous family holidays. With 19 UNESCO World Heritage sites that range from the Great Barrier Reef, Fraser Island, Gondwana Rainforests, Tasmania Wilderness, Purnululu National Park and Lord Howe Island Group – and there is so much more waiting for families to discover.

Take a day trip to the pontoons on the Outer Barrier Reef off the Whitsundays, Cairns and Port Douglas where you can see the reef from the underwater viewing chamber and submarine as well as snorkelling and taking a beginners dive.

Enjoy an outback cattle station experience in the Kimberley, Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales. Horse riding is offered on a range of outback cattle stations in Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia and NSW.

## Culture – Art, Music, Dance & Theatre

All the major art museums/galleries in Australia's capital cities offer kids art programs that both help interpret exhibitions and offer hands-on art making activities. Some, like the National Gallery of Victoria, have dedicated kids' art centres.

The Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) is a world-leading state-of-the-art centre for experiencing the moving image in all its forms – film, television, internet, games. It offers kids' flicks and kids' hands-on workshops and production programs in its digital studio plus some fabulous exhibitions about the moving image.

## Learning

Australia has some unique settings for family learning experiences. There are a whole host of dinosaur adventures along Queensland's Tropic of Capricorn while you can journey to the stars at the Melbourne Planetarium. Budding science enthusiasts can visit the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex, test hypotheses with dozens of interactive hands-on exhibits at Questacon, the National Science and Technology Centre, and watch real scientists at work at CSIRO discovery.

For families more interested in social history, you can discover what it's really like living at sea at Darling Harbour's National Maritime Museum and learn for themselves how Australia's diverse communities have shaped the Australian national landscape at the National Museum of Australia.

The list is endless: there are farm based kids cooking classes at Tasmania's Agrarian Kitchen, circus skills work-shops at Circus Arts Trapeze School, opportunities to learn about how rich the desert is at the Alice Springs Desert Park and you can see how kids in remote parts of the country go to school at the School of the Air. All the major art museums/galleries in Australia's capital cities offer kids art programs that both help interpret exhibitions and offer hands-on art making activities. Some, like the National Gallery of Victoria, have dedicated kids art centres.

## Indigenous Experiences

An indigenous adventure is perfect for families who want to learn a little about the richness of Aboriginal culture.

Kakadu, Uluru and Kata Tjuta National Parks in Northern Territory and Booderee National Park in New South Wales and are all jointly managed by National Parks Australia and traditional owners. All offer remarkable Indigenous tours and adventures including tours to rock art sites, dot-painting workshops, spear throwing, bird watching, river cruises and introduction to traditional laws and sacred sites.

Bush tucker tours are offered everywhere from Kooljaman at Cape Leveque on the Kimberley's Dampier Peninsula to the Bama Way in North Queensland and Brambuk National Park and Cultural Centre in Victoria's Grampians National Park.

## Fun

Finally there's no better place than Australia when it comes down to having some plain old family fun. Families can swing through the trees at places like Victoria's Otway Fly and Tree's adventure, Queensland's Jungle Canopy Tours, go sand boarding on Strahan's Henty Dunes on the Stockton Dunes on the Central Coast of New South Wales or goes for a ride on Puffing Billy, Australia's oldest steam railway, in Victoria's Dandenong Ranges.

While Daydream Island in Queensland's Whitsunday's serves up the perfect family tropical island getaway whose highlights include one of the world's largest man-made living coral reef lagoon and an "Around Australia" 19 hole mini golf course.