

Title:

An Overview of Australia for Travelers

Word Count:

348

Summary:

Australia is a very diverse country geographically and a hot spot for tourism. If you are thinking about heading down under, here is some information on Australia.

Keywords:

australia, continent, british, captain cook, great britain, new south wales, australians, down under,

Article Body:

Australia is a very diverse country geographically and a hot spot for tourism. If you are thinking about heading down under, here is some information on Australia.

An Overview of Australia for Travelers

Australia is its own continent, the only country in the world that can say as much. It covers roughly 3 million square miles and is about the size of the continental United States. The capital is Canberra, but Sydney is the biggest city with 4.2 million people. The climate of Australia is extremely dry inland with more temperate conditions along the coast. The population centers are primarily along the coast due to soaring temperatures inland.

Australia was originally inhabited by Aboriginal tribes. In 1770, Captain Cook claimed the land for Great Britain. In 1788, the first colony was established in New South Wales. Most of the colonists were convicted criminals from Great Britain. Gold was discovered soon thereafter and Australia became a destination for immigrants seeking fortune and a new start in life.

On the far northern coast, Australia is home to one of the amazing sites in the world. The great barrier reef is a water enthusiasts dream. With incredible plant life, the reef is world renowned as a diver's paradise. A watchful eye is advised given the presence of the Great White Shark in the area.

Australia is a Commonwealth. The federal powers are mapped somewhat after those

in the United States, but no bill of rights exists. Unlike the U.S., the individual territories retain significant authority over their own affairs.

People in Australia are called "Australians." The country has a population of just over 20 million, and the population is growing at a rate of 1.1 percent a year. Australians ethnicity is 92 percent European, 6 percent Asian and 2 percent Aboriginal. No religion dominates, but 27 percent of Australians considered themselves Roman Catholics. Life expectancy for males is 78 years while females live to 83 on average. Literacy rates are a surprisingly low 85 percent.

Australia was often considered the forgotten country. Long distance transportation changed that designation. Now it is one of the hottest tourist destinations year in and year out.