

Title:

Tour Central Australia

Word Count:

662

Summary:

Few regions of the world offer the range of stunning desert landscapes and unique flora and fauna that can be found in Central Australia. On top of these natural riches, Central Australia is also home to several rich and vibrant indigenous cultures producing some of the most interesting art in the world today. Whether you are seeking lavish luxury or an authentic safari adventure, Central Australia has something for everyone.

Keywords:

northern, territory, central, australia, uluru, ayers, rock, tour, travel, holiday, vacation

Article Body:

Few regions of the world offer the range of stunning desert landscapes and unique flora and fauna that can be found in Central Australia. On top of these natural riches, Central Australia is also home to several rich and vibrant indigenous cultures producing some of the most interesting art in the world today. Whether you are seeking lavish luxury or an authentic safari adventure, Central Australia has something for everyone.

Alice Springs has a population of around 28,000 and lies at 700 metres above sea level almost in the geographical centre of Australia, about 1500 kilometres from the nearest major city in any direction. As is typical of a desert environment, Alice Springs and Central Australia are predominantly dry, with blue skies from April to September. During the hot summer months (October to March), temperatures in the low 40 degrees C (104-108 F) are not uncommon, while throughout the winter months (May to September) overnight minimums can fall as low as minus 7 degrees C (19 F). Alice Springs has an average annual rainfall of only 275 mm, with rainfall typically occurring during the hotter months from October to March.

Alice Springs is the unofficial capital of Central Australia, and makes a great base from which to explore the region. Accommodation of every kind for every budget is available in this medium-sized desert town, and the town is also home to many quality indigenous art retailers. Alice Springs is accessible by air via

Australia's national carrier Qantas, by rail via the Ghan (one of Australia's great train journeys) and by road from Darwin or Adelaide.

Many spectacular natural locations including rock pools, gorges, mountains and dry river valleys can be found within an hour's drive of Alice Springs. Particularly popular with travellers are Simpsons Gap, Standley Chasm, Ormiston Gorge, Glen Helen and Palm Valley, all found in the West MacDonnell Ranges area. Several excellent destinations can also be found in the opposite direction in the East MacDonnell Ranges, including Trephina Gorge, Ruby Gap, and the remains of the historic gold-mining town of Arltunga.

From Alice Springs, a range of stunning locations can be accessed. The best known and most popular destinations are Kings Canyon, Uluru, Kata Tjuta.

Kings Canyon (also known as Watarrka) is among Central Australia's most stunning natural features, and is located about 400 km southwest of Alice Springs. The road to Kings Canyon follows the southern side of the Gill Ranges which gradually rise over a distance of 50 kms to over 100 metres by the time they reach the canyon. Watarrka National Park contains Kings Canyon and the western end of the George Gill Range. The scenic landscape of the area contains rocky ranges, rockpools and gorges, and is a refuge for many plants and animals. The canyon walls rise above the valley of Kings Creek and are spectacular at sunrise and sunset.

Uluru (also Ayers Rock or The Rock) is located in the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park about 450 km southwest of Alice Springs. This Central Australian icon is a monolith more than 318 metres (986 ft) high and 8 km (5 miles) around, and extends 2.5 km (1.5 miles) into the ground. It is about 21km from Uluru to the tourist town of Yulara, which has a population of 3000 and is situated just outside the park. Uluru is noted for appearing to change colour as the light strikes it in different ways at different times of the day and year, and is a particularly remarkable sight at sunset.

Kata Tjuta, also known as The Olgas, is a group of 36 rounded rock formations located about 30km from Uluru within the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. The tallest dome of the Kata Tjuta group, Mt Olga, is higher than Uluru and stands at 457 m in height. The name Kata Tjuta means 'many heads' in Pitjantjatjara, the local indigenous Australian language, and is as sacred to the indigenous people as Uluru. Many ceremonies were, and are still carried out at Kata Tjuta, particularly at night, and many Pitjantjatjara legends are associated with both Uluru and Kata Tjuta.