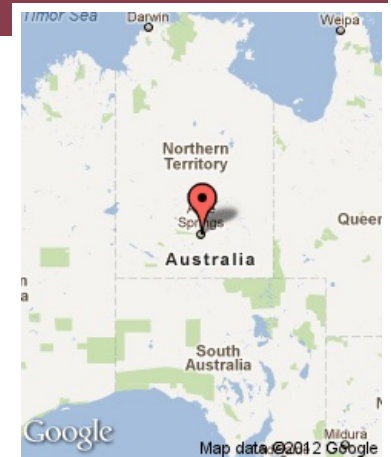


West MacDonnell Ranges 4wd Safari



Highlights

Alice Springs, in Australia's Northern Territory, is a perfect base from which to explore the natural sculptures and hidden waterholes of the West MacDonnell Ranges. The folded topography of this huge stretch of rock forms countless micro-climates, niches for species found nowhere else on Earth. Experience the timeless grandeur of this amazing place on a two-day four-wheel drive safari.

Over 200 km long, The West MacDonnell Ranges emerge from the land in Australia's Northern Territory like a vast blade, cutting through the city of Alice Springs in the geographical heart of the continent. The mountains in the region surrounding the city are riddled with canyons and unique rock formations bearing testament to their great age and the vicissitudes of Australia's climate, which provide a foothold for a host of plant and animal species, many endemic to the particular areas they occupy in these ranges. The folds and fissures of the rocks also hide old Aboriginal rock paintings, the echoes of ancient whispers caught in the stone, stories still meaningful to those who know how to listen.

On this Safari you'll visit the spectacular gorges at Ormiston and Glen Helen, the latter with a year-round waterhole, and see the only palm trees for 800km at the aptly named Palm Valley. At the Oak Valley Aboriginal Community you'll find out about Aboriginal life from the people themselves, and learn the finer points of spear and boomerang throwing, bush tucker, as well as the relationship between the art, myths and culture of the Aboriginal people and how they relate to the land. You'll also take in the 500m high distinctive rock formations of Gosse Bluff, which looks for all the world like a crater five kilometres wide. Indeed, it is the product of an ancient comet impact, though the crater itself, of which Gosse Bluff forms the central point, was perhaps 20km in diameter, but has since been eroded away.

Is it for me?

This is a great opportunity to explore a slice of Australia's outback in a simple, down-to-earth style. If you want to taste the timeless scale and ancient feel of the bush and find out about Aboriginal life firsthand, but don't fancy a lengthy trek, this safari tour may be just what you're looking for. There's a lot to take in, but the pace is leisurely enough and you'll have plenty of time to soak up the space at the major sites. Do bear in mind that a reasonable level of fitness is necessary, as well as a willingness to put up with the bumps and shakes of a four-wheel drive tour! Also, please note that children under eight are not accepted on this safari.

You will be travelling in a remote and sometimes challenging area. From time to time your itinerary may need to be adjusted due to a number of factors including road closures, weather conditions and requests from the Traditional Aboriginal owners of the lands. As you are travelling in a culturally sensitive area, it is possible that on occasions the Aboriginal people request we do not travel to certain parts of their lands due to ceremonies and other cultural considerations.

Accommodation

We'll just say it straight: accommodation is basic, a swag under the stars, and food is cooked over a campfire: hearty, nutritious and filling, with a smoky tang and as honest as the ground beneath your camping mat. This is real outback adventure, bush camping: no messing about, no fancy extras. Let's face it: if you wanted a four-

Prices from

265 GBP (2 days) per person

Why book with Tourdust?

- ✓ The Best Local Operators
We handpick the best local operators
- ✓ Local Price Guarantee
Pay what you would locally with our Best Price Guarantee
- ✓ Secure Online Payments
Safe and easy online booking



- ✓ ABTA Bonding for your protection
We even throw in complimentary Supplier Failure Cover



poster bed you wouldn't even be reading this. You'll be comfortable because your body will be outdoor-tired, and the food will taste fantastic because it's cooked together with a small group of folks sitting around a fire in the wild country. Okay; bring a few beers: how's that for luxury?

Itinerary

Day 1: You'll be collected from your accommodation at about 5.45am and then head off to Oak Valley Aboriginal Community, where you'll spend the morning checking out the sights of Oak Valley including Rock Paintings and carvings with your Aboriginal Host. From there you'll head along the Hugh River stock route on and into Owen Springs Reserve, 4-wheel driving along bush tracks through this old cattle station to emerge at the west MacDonnell Ranges. The Ranges stretch for over 200km, and you'll visit some stunning gorges, refreshing waterholes and walks through a landscape unique to this part of the world. The day will be packed with information, swimming, short walks and time out to enjoy your surroundings. Be on the watch for Rock Wallabies and other fauna that use the retreat of the rugged ranges as a safe haven. At the day's end you'll set up your bush camp for a night under the stars situated on the Finke River, where you'll cook dinner over the campfire with your friends and guide and share a few tales and an ale around the fire in true outback style.

Day 2: You'll wake to find morning is at its best -just as the sun starts to rise. Following a hearty breakfast and a fresh pot of coffee you'll break camp and head off around Namatjira Drive, stopping at Tyler's Pass to view Gosse Bluff, a comet crater, along the way. From this point it's on towards Hermannsburg, a Historic Lutheran Mission established in 1877. On arrival you can visit the heritage precinct (at extra charge) where you can explore the historic buildings and grounds while enjoying a cup of tea or coffee. Departing Hermannsburg, you'll four-wheel drive into Palm Valley. After lunch, you'll go for a hike through this picturesque valley to discover some of its hidden treasures, after which it's back into the vehicle and off home to Alice Springs.

Details

Getting there

You need to get to Alice Springs. You can fly there from most airports in Australia.

Price includes

Price quoted per person during low season. Price varies from high to low season.

The latest model air-conditioned 4WD vehicles, all meals (as listed on itineraries), camping equipment, swags (canvas sleeping-bag covers with zip-up sides) and pillows, sleeping bags (\$15 hire fee), laundered bed sheet (\$5 hire fee), reference books, chilled face cloths (summer), and supplies of drinking water (must have your own bottle). Bush showers and toilets available at most bush camps.

When is best

This trip departs on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed