

South Australian Outback Safari



Highlights

Combine the best camping with an amazing nature watching experience and what do you get? A 4-day safari in the South Australian outback! This tour places you in a luxury camp far away from civilisation but close enough to the coastal region to make for the ultimate Down Under experience.

Australia is one of those places everyone with wanderlust should visit. It's too gigantic to effectively tour in one trip, but this 4-day safari is one heck of an introduction to the beautiful wilderness the country is famed for.

For the duration of the tour you'll be staying in a raised camp near Wudinna, a tiny settlement of around 600 people and surrounded by... well, pretty much nothing! There are no physical barriers between your party and mother nature, making this a great platform for exploration. During your time here you'll see some of Australia's endemic wildlife such as emus and kangaroos, and end the trip with a climactic swim in the clear oceans with dolphins and sea-lions.

It may be only four days, but this tour packs a punch. Every day of your safari is packed with focal points to such an extent you won't know what to put down in your postcard to the unlucky folk back home. You could start with having a camp dinner underneath the South Hemisphere stars, the bizarre salt landscape of Lake Gairdner or lagoon swimming with a sealion - the list goes on.

Your helpful guides for the tour are Aussies born and bred and have been running tours for over twenty years, so you'll be in good hands while you enjoy your break.

Is it for me?

The Gawler Range tours are safe, well designed and most importantly, fun! This particular four-day safari is excellent when coupled with other tours to give an extensive three or four week stay in Australia. It is also suitable for all ages and very family friendly - any kids on the tour can expect to see a wide array of animals, and the guides make it an incredibly educational experience.

Do note that swimming with sealions is not guaranteed during June, July and August.

Accommodation

You'll be using Kangaluna Camp as your base of operations, a raised set of high-quality tents decked out with queen size beds and en-suite bathrooms. You'll also have access to private showers and flushing toilets, and single beds are also available. Chances are however you're going to want to take your sleeping bag and sleep directly under the stars - this is always an option, and the guides know the best spots for doing this safely.

There is also a high-tech telescope in operation at the camp which will give you an unprecedented view of the planets and moon - that's something you don't get at Pontins!

The camp is usually populated with fellow travellers and there is always an opportunity to swap travel stories over a drink as the sun goes down. All meals are served on the trip from dinner on day one to lunch on day four, including morning and afternoon teas.

Itinerary

Prices from

1,311 GBP (4 days) per person

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Day One - You'll head out of Adelaide Airport with Regional Express and arrive at Port Lincoln around 09:50am to be met by your tour leader. You will then travel through farming land into the outback to Wudinna, a small town of 600 people, stopping for lunch along the way. After lunch the drive will take you past Wudinna Rock as you travel into the bush to Kangaluna Camp. There is an afternoon tour to begin your wildlife experience, and here the outback animals thrive. Along the way you'll get the chance to have some fun and paint your face with the multi coloured ochre rock the group will come across along the way, before heading back to camp for dinner.

Day Two - The morning begins with a drive to the spectacular Lake Gairdner, a site for many land speed record attempts, with its glistening white salt pan set in the red landscape. Here you can walk through the bush looking for some of the 146 species of birds recorded in the region. There is a good chance of seeing Wedge Tailed Eagles, cigar shaped volcanic rock formations 1500 million years old, and lots of bush wildlife.

The afternoon's drive will take you through a changing landscape, where you'll see emus and Red, Western Grey and Euro kangaroos as you travel through the ancient outback range and back to Kangaluna Camp.

Day Three - The morning today is a leisurely one and allows plenty of time to walk through the bush near the camp. You will get to see the organ pipes rock formations at Kolay Micra falls, Nukey Valley and the remote part of the National Park.

This is the best wildlife opportunity of the tour so far, and the landscapes are stunning in colour and formation. By late afternoon you will walk on the Corrobinnie Depression and marvel at the array of colours and patterns in the bed of the old river. Sunset drinks will finish the day at the lake.

Day Four - Today is quite possibly the highlight of what has already been an impressive tour as you head out by boat to Baird Bay. On the 5 kilometre journey to a lagoon near Cape Radstock (at 160 metres, it is one of the highest sheer points on the southern coast of Australia) you can watch Bottlenose dolphins ride the bow wave of the boat and join these magnificent mammals in shallow water.

Once at the lagoon you can visit a resident colony of rare Australian sea lions and experience playing face to face with these agile and friendly mammals. After lunch on the beach you'll leave Baird Bay and visit Streaky Bay, enjoying magnificent Coastal scenery before arriving at Ceduna.

Details

Getting there

International Flights serve to Adelaide Airport direct, from where you will need to transfer to Port Lincoln. The tour operator can book flights on your behalf, they cost from AUD350 return.

Price includes

Accommodation, 3 x breakfast, 4 x lunch, 3 dinners, morning and afternoon teas. Entrance fees to National Parks and Boat Charter and passes, snorkelling equipment.

When is best

Swimming with sealions may not be available in July & August.

Tours depart every Monday or Thursday if the Monday is full. Minimum of 2 people to depart.

Available

Jan—Dec

Typical Duration

4 days

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed

Reviews (1)

Reviews of this experience

“ It's a slog to get there with a 50-minute flight to Port Lincoln from Adelaide, plus a two-hour drive to Wudinna (pop: 680), but if you want to see the real thing, this is it. So far Geoff is the only person with a concession to run a camp on the boundary of the Gawler Ranges National Park, 1,500 sq km (600 sq miles) of film-set Australia with red-dirt tracks, sheep stations, gullies, creeks and gum trees.

Nothing beats seeing your first roo in the wild, and unless you really want to be a jolly swagman you may as well do it in comfort. Geoff's Kangaluna Camp equals five-star Africa, with three roomy tents, sleeping four each. They have sisal floors, sheepskin rugs, hot showers and flushing loos, plus extra touches such as beds made from local woods, silk throws and cushions painted with cockatoos, wombats and other Oz wildlife.

The Australian bush hasn't got the cover-girl cats and big game of Africa, and it helps if you love birds, but for me the kangaroos make any effort worthwhile. We had countless encounters with these gentle creatures, who always stop to stare back, gazing obligingly into the camera.

There were so many highlights: the emus of course, but also the time Geoff persuaded me at a slow limp to stalk a wombat. It twitched its cute piggy nose at my strange shuffle and let us get close before it ambled off down its hidey hole. Then there was the day he drove us to Lake Gairdner, a spookily beautiful white salt pan that featured recently in a series of BMW car ads. It's a famed beauty spot, but it was ours alone.

(Jill Hartley for The Times, October 27 2007, ”

Times reviewing South Australian Outback Safari