



## Australian Walk-About

Trip No. 2003, March 16-April 4, 2020

Leader: Janis Stahlhut

Co-Leader: Merri Fox

### **An 18-day romp through Australia's Cities, Parks, Forests, Beaches, Reefs, and the Outback**

*Diverse, vast, sometimes cosmopolitan,  
sometimes so remote you'll wonder if  
there's anyone else on the continent!*

Australia is one of the world's most dreamed-of destinations. Let Janis and Merri show it to you in comfort, with easy-moderate walks and 3-4 star accommodations! This once-in-a-lifetime, authentic Australian experience takes us from the Tasman Sea to the Indian Ocean, the Coral Sea, and the Great Barrier Reef, with a stop off at Australia's Aboriginal culture center: Urulu (Ayers Rock), the heart of a vast and remote region known simply as the **OUTBACK**.



This trip can be paired with the AMC-AT New Zealand Comfort Style trip #2002 in March 2020. You can save a bundle on your international air package by combining both trips, while crossing two "must-see" countries off your bucket list with one GI-NORMOUS vacation! Contact leaders for information!

## Our incredible journey takes us to wide variety of iconic Australian landscapes, including:

- ❖ Sydney, one of the most beautiful cities in the world, home to Sydney Harbour National Park, famous surf beaches, colorful neighborhoods and perhaps the southern hemisphere's most recognizable structure, the Sydney Opera House.
- ❖ Blue Mountains World Heritage Area: scenic trails through deep canyons, panoramic views from cliff-top lookouts, unique flora and fauna.
- ❖ Perth, the world's most remote city and the nearby Margaret River and Southern Forests region: small farms and vineyards, long stretches of sparsely-populated coastline, National Parks and picturesque country towns.
- ❖ Alice Springs, Uluru and the surrounding Outback: unique geological features, ancient rock-art sites and the heartland of Australia's indigenous culture.
- ❖ Cairns and the tropical north: Daintree Rainforest World Heritage Area; Cape Tribulation; the islands, lagoons and undersea life of the Great Barrier Reef.



Most days of the tour you can choose to join either a short or long group hike. The shorter hikes, rated **easy-moderate** will typically be 3-4 hours in duration, a distance of 6-8 miles, with no climbs greater than 1,000 feet. The longer hikes, rated **moderate-vigorous**, will be 4-6 hours in duration, a distance of 10-12 miles, with no climbs greater than 2,000 feet.



There is also an option of not hiking on any day, and instead taking time to enjoy the brilliant locations we'll be staying in – each of them especially chosen for their character and quality. In addition to all the activities, accommodation and travel outlined in the following itinerary, our adventure will include opportunities for optional excursions such as scenic flights, camel-riding, bike-riding, sea-kayaking, snorkeling, theatre events, a cooking demonstration, and chances to view and learn about Australia's unique flora, fauna and marine life.

## Daily Itinerary

**Mar 16-17, Day 1 & 2:** We will leave the US, cross the international dateline, and arrive in Sydney on Mar 18, Day 3, to begin our outback adventure.

**Mar 18, Day 3: (D)** After transferring from the Sydney airport (if you arrive for the group airport transfer), and picking up some lunch, the group will rendezvous at 1:00pm in the foyer of our accommodation for introductions, logistical details, etc. We will then have a short transfer across the Harbour Bridge to Sydney's Headland Park for a "shake your legs out" hike through Sydney Harbour National Park. After a scenic ferry ride across Darling Harbour and past the iconic Opera House, the hike will continue through Sydney's oldest neighborhood, *The Rocks*, before arriving back at the accommodation for a special 'Welcome to Australia' dinner.



**Mar 19, Day 4: (B)** A free morning to sleep in and sleep off the jet-lag, or to shop, stroll, visit art galleries, museums, Sydney zoo and aquarium. After lunch, the group will head by private vehicle to the start-points for short and long hikes through Sydney Harbour National Park to Manly Beach, followed by a ferry ride to Sydney Opera House. From here it is a 10 minute walk back to the hotel. You have a free evening to choose from the numerous dining options in the area. You may wish to take advantage of this time to see a show at the Sydney Opera House.

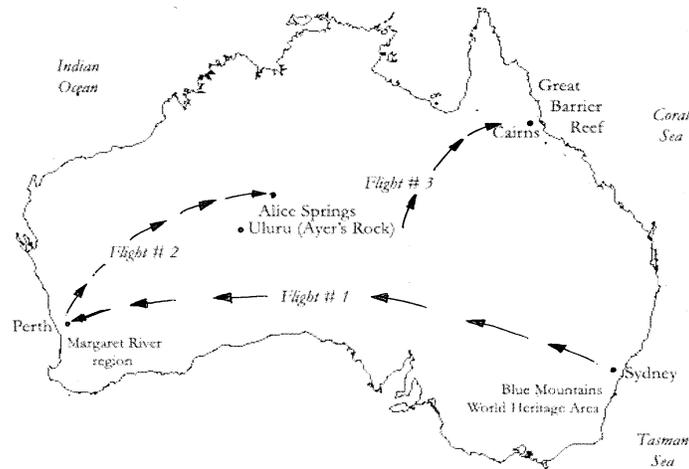
**Mar 20, Day 5: (B, D)** After breakfast at the hotel, we will transfer to Wentworth Falls in Blue Mountains World Heritage area, and an afternoon of short and long hikes, ending at the accommodation. Pre-dinner drinks are followed by dinner at the historic Carrington Hotel (est. 1882).

**Mar 21, Day 6: (B)** Short and long Blue Mountains hiking options in the Blackheath region. Free evening to choose from the many dining options within a few minutes' walk of the hotel.

**Mar 22, Day 7: (B)** You may want to join a sunrise hike along the Prince Henry Cliff walkway, followed by a private bus transfer to Sydney's Coogee beach, for a swim and lunch. After lunch, enjoy a short or long hike along the Tasman Sea coastal walk from Coogee to Bondi beach. Your evening is again open to choose your dining location or take another opportunity to see a show at the Sydney Opera House.



**Mar 23, Day 8: (no meals – we will be staying the next 2 nights in apartments with cooking facilities; cook-in or visit one of the nearby restaurants)** Today we hop a jet at Sydney Airport and head to Perth, the world’s most remote city. From Perth Airport we will transfer to the Margaret River region in the south-west corner of Australia, stopping in Dunsborough to purchase breakfast, lunch and dinner supplies for the next two days. We will make meal and refreshment stops along the way.

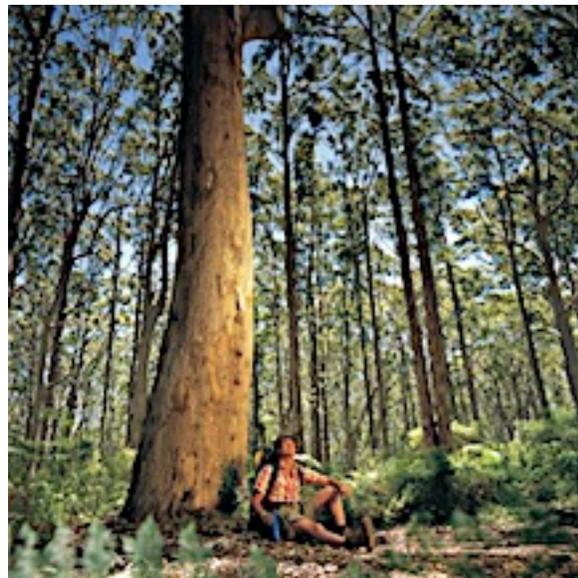


**Mar 24, Day 9: (no meals- cook-in or visit a neighborhood restaurant)** Today we will enjoy the day on short and long hikes along the Cape-to-Cape walkway in Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

**Mar 25, Day 10: (no meals- cook-in or visit a neighborhood restaurant)** We will visit a local farm for a demonstration of farm-dog skills and sheep shearing, and a talk on Australian country life. Later, we will take short and long hikes along the Cape-to-Cape walkway. Prepare your own dinner at the accommodation, or join the leaders for a meal at the local pub, the historic Caves House Hotel. [www.caveshousehotelyallingup.com.au](http://www.caveshousehotelyallingup.com.au)

**Mar 26, Day 11: (D)** Visit the country town of Pemberton in the Southern Forests region of West Australia. There will be free time to stroll around Pemberton and find lunch. In the afternoon we will have short and long hikes along the Bibbulmun Track (Warren National Park) amongst the stately, sequoia-like Karri trees.

[www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au](http://www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au) Après hikes we will head to our next accommodation, Foragers Farm. After getting settled, we can take a pre-dinner hike around the farm and surrounding forest to listen to the abundant birdlife at dusk, and even see kangaroos in the wild. We will enjoy a luscious dinner prepared by the farm’s owners.



**Mar 27, Day 12: (B)** In the early morning, take another opportunity to stroll around the farm and surrounding forest to listen to the birds’ dawn-chorus and

again look for kangaroos in the wild. After breakfast we will take short and long hikes along the Bibbulmun Track through Warren National Park, finishing at Pemberton's historic country pub. You have a free evening, but we suggest you enjoy a self-catered dinner at your farm cottage equipped with a full kitchen, or head out to a Pemberton restaurant.



**Mar 28, Day 13: (B)** A last opportunity to explore your surroundings and enjoy the local fauna before returning to Perth. Short & long walks, or a bike-ride along the Swan River walkway/bike-path to Kings Park botanical gardens. Free evening free to choose among numerous nearby dining options. You may wish to see a show at Perth Concert Hall, a minutes' walk from the hotel.

**Mar 29, Day 14: (no meals- prepare a takeaway breakfast from your leftover groceries)** Early flight from Perth Airport to Alice Springs in the heart of Australia's outback. From there we have a bus ride to Uluru (Ayers Rock), for the start of sunset walk options around the base of Uluru. Our resort accommodation has several dining options available, or self-catering in the apartments is also an option, with a well-stocked grocery store a few minutes' walk away.

**Mar 30, Day 15: (no meals- prepare a take-away breakfast and thermos of coffee or tea from your groceries)** Before sunrise, we will drive 30 minutes to Kata Tjuta sunrise viewing platform, then on to Kata Tjuta's Valley of the Winds for short and long walk



options. We will return to our accommodation for lunch, a swim, a rest, and/or to enjoy the available activities, all available through the resort's tour & information centre: Aboriginal cultural experiences, the National Park Visitor Center, astronomy classes, scenic flights, camel rides, biking, art galleries, shops, swimming pools, spa treatments and tennis courts. Later, we will have short and long walk options around the base of Uluru, with the chance to complete a walk around the entire monolith before heading to Talinguru Nyakunytjaku

wilderness and viewing area for a 360° view of Uluru and Kata Tjuta in the sunset. After the sun has disappeared, we return to accommodation and you have your evening free to make a dinner selection.

**Mar 31, Day 16: (no meals- pack a picnic breakfast)** Before leaving Uluru, we will take a pre-dawn drive to Dune Walk viewing area to see Uluru silhouetted in the sunrise, or to Talinguru Nyakunytyaku for the ‘sunny-side’ view. Then enjoy an Uluru guided walk/interpretive talk, led by a National Park ranger. Return to accommodation for lunch, a swim, and other resort activities. Our evening flight from Ayers Rock Airport will take us back to the east coast, to world renowned Cairns in tropical north Queensland. Our new home is Palm Cove, where we have apartments with full kitchens. You are free to choose between any of the several restaurants, or pick up some groceries at a nearby store and cook-in.

**Apr 1, Day 17: (L)** We now have the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area in our back yard! You can choose one of these options to begin your exploration:

- Frankland Island National Park – beginning with a river-cruise, followed by a reef and uninhabited island experience, snorkeling with a marine biologist-guide, a semi-submersible boat trip, hiking and free-time on the beach.
- Dedicated snorkeling trip: boat-travel to three different snorkeling sites along the Great Barrier Reef. (Scuba-diving is available with both options but not included in the AMC program. Scuba diving is not an AMC sanctioned activity; and as such, you will need to make sure you have appropriate insurance coverage in the event of an emergency.)



**Apr 2, Day 18: (no meals- prepare meals from the groceries you have obtained at the store, or enjoy local dining out)** Visit the Daintree Rainforest World Heritage Area beginning with a road-trip through Australia’s tropical far north to Cape Tribulation. Along the way we’ll stop for hikes, swims, views, wildlife encounters and a walk through Mossman Gorge, home to the oldest rainforest on earth.



**Apr 3, Day 19: (D)** Travel by historic railway to the small town of Kuranda for short and long hike options, café’s, wildlife parks, souvenir-shopping and a leisurely last day of our epic Australia tour. We will return to Palm Cove on the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway, with spectacular views of the rainforest and out to the Great Barrier Reef.

And then, with sad hearts, we celebrate the end of our amazing Australian walkabout with a final meal together in a restaurant a short walk from the accommodation.

**Apr 4, Day 20: (no meals- use your remaining groceries for breakfast or stop along your way out)** Check-out time is 10am. Transfers will be available throughout the day to Cairns airport for onward travel. End of trip.

**Fitness Level, Equipment, and Accommodations:** *This trip is designed for ease and comfort, though those with a need for a bit more strenuous adventure will be happy that we are able to offer different activity levels on most days. The activities and day hikes are rated as easy-moderate (2-3). We will walk about on mostly well-trod, maintained and marked trails varying in distance from 4-8 or 6-12 miles, and elevation gains of no more than 1,000 or 2,000 feet for the short and long hike options. Applicants should be comfortable and fit enough for the distances and terrains described.*

*Some rocky or uneven terrain may be encountered. You will need sturdy hiking boots or shoes (not sneakers), appropriate for traveling on varied, sometimes uneven terrain, and a daypack suitable for carrying lunch, water, rain gear, warm layers, and a small first aid kit. You may also wish to bring light sneakers or hiking sandals for the lighter days and beach/dune walking. Hiking poles are optional, though recommended. The concessionaire at Cairns will provide snorkeling gear. Please note that this trip includes domestic flights and van rides of up to 3 hours on some days. If you have problems with motion sickness please discuss this with the leaders before applying. There are several natural or prescriptive preventatives you may consider.*

*When you participate in this trip, you should be in proper condition for the challenges outlined in this prospectus and equipped with the appropriate gear as noted above and in subsequent informational mailings. You should always be aware of the risks involved and conduct yourself accordingly. You are responsible for your own safety. Prior to your acceptance as a participant on this trip, you will be asked to discuss your capabilities and experience with us. We may also request references to confirm your fitness level and suitability for participating in the trip's activities.*

**Accommodations will be in 3-4 star inns, hotels and apartments along the way. Meals will be in local restaurants or self-prepared from groceries purchased on days we are staying in apartments with kitchens. Though it is difficult to book a group this size into one restaurant, every attempt will be made to keep each other's company during mealtimes.**

*This trip is designed so that everyone may experience our Australian adventure through shared participation in activities and tasks in an organized group environment. AMC travelers are known for their cooperative efforts and camaraderie. Expectations are that all participants will be considerate of others sharing this AMC Adventure Travel experience.*

*It may happen on any trip that a participant is or becomes unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities. AMC Trip Leaders in their sole judgment, have the right and obligation to refuse participation in any activity to any group member for reasons of safety, whether it is of the group or of the individual. Examples of some conditions that might result in a participant's being unable to perform one or more activities include illness, injury, lack of proper gear, or inappropriate fitness level.*

*Leaders may try to find a substitute activity for the trip member, but this may not always be possible.*

## **TRIP PRICE: US\$6,295**

(Though every effort is made to estimate all costs of a trip conservatively – often as much as two years in advance, the price may fluctuate up or down due to exchange rates at time of invoice payments, unanticipated inflation, or other unforeseen expenses.)

### **THIS TRIP INCLUDES:**

- All necessary vehicle, train and ferry travel, from pick-up at Sydney International Airport on March 18 until drop-off at Cairns International Airport on April 4.
- All accommodations from arrival in Sydney, as follows:
  - 4 nights in double/twin rooms with en-suite bathrooms.
  - 2 nights in double/twin rooms with shared bathrooms.
  - 11 nights in 2-bedroom/1-bathroom or 3-bedroom/2-bathroom apartments.

*(Please note: Most of the accommodations offer a range of unique rooms, each individually-styled, with some rooms undoubtedly better than others – more space, more bathrooms, nicer views, etc. Great care will be taken to ensure the best rooms are shared around equally among all group members over the course of the trip).*

- 6 Breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners as indicated in daily itinerary by B, L, D.
- Guides traveling with the group throughout as logistics managers, driver and nature-guides.
- 3-day pass allowing unlimited access to Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park (Ayers Rock area) and cultural centre.
- A choice of one of the listed Great Barrier Reef/Daintree Rainforest World Heritage Area day-trips on Day 17.
- A combined ticket for the Kuranda historic railway and Skyrail Rainforest Cablewa on Day 18.

Also included: AMC-AT leaders certified for CPR and Wilderness First Aid, medical evacuation travel insurance (only), 24x7 emergency world wide assistance, 24x7 AMC-AT emergency telephone access.

If trip does not reach the minimum of 14 participants, it will be run as a small group with one local guide/driver and one AMC leader.

### **PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:**

- International airfare, which will be purchased independently by participants.
- 3 economy class domestic flights (Sydney-Perth, Perth-Alice Springs, and Urulu-Cairns) costing approximately \$1,000. Leaders will purchase group tickets at which time participants will send payment for these flights separate from other trip costs. *See Applications & Deposits.*
- Meals not listed on daily itinerary.
- Any entrance fees to museums, gardens, wildlife parks, Sydney zoo and aquarium, etc. not specified on the Daily Itinerary
- Optional excursions such as scenic flights, camel-riding, bike-riding, sea-kayaking, scuba-diving and additional snorkeling.
- Personal expenses such as laundry, between-meal snacks, phone and internet charges, etc.

- Additionally: tips, special order beverages with meals, between-meal snacks, phone and internet charges, cancellation charges, lost baggage, medical and evacuation insurance beyond that provided in AMC-AT trip price, and trip cancellation/interruption insurance.

**APPLICATION AND DEPOSITS:** *To apply, you must complete and submit a Participant Application, Confidential Health Questionnaire, and Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk and Release form, enclosing a **registration deposit of \$3,200**, \$100 of which is non-refundable should you decide for any reason to withdraw your deposit. Your application will be subject to a full screening, including contacting your references and conducting a brief phone interview. A spot on the roster is not assured until this process has been completed and you have been notified. Once your roster spot is confirmed, your check will be deposited and become subject to the full cancellation terms stated below. **A final payment of \$3,095 is due November 1, 2019.** Please make payments by check payable to the "Appalachian Mountain Club" and mail to the address shown on the Participant Application.*

*Leaders will work directly with Qantas Airlines for a group booking of the three domestic flights at a cost estimated at \$1,000, which will be due and collected by leaders when the group booking is made. We anticipate this will be about one year in advance of the trip departure date.*

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** The AMC Adventure Travel cancellation policy is based on the intent that your cancellation may not raise the cost to the other participants or to the leaders. If expenses already incurred on your behalf, and any unavoidable future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration and cancellation, cannot be applied to another suitable participant, they will be assessed to you and subtracted from any refund. If the leaders are able to replace you, you may be charged a reduced or zero penalties. In some cases, this may not be determined until *after* the trip. Please refer to medical evacuation insurance info in the section above, "This Trip Includes." This is the **only** insurance provided in your AMC trip price.

*Airline tickets may be non-refundable in accordance with the terms of the tickets you purchase for international travel. Domestic tickets purchased through the group booking with Qantas Airlines are non-refundable.*

**Travel Insurance:** *No one expects to cancel or interrupt a planned trip, or to incur costs due to emergency medical expenses or lost luggage. However, such events do occur. If you are at all concerned about this possibility, we recommend you purchase travel insurance. Policy information will be supplied to all participants upon acceptance into the trip. Or, you may use any travel insurance company of your choosing.*



## Your AMC Leaders



**Janis Stahlhut**, a lifelong outdoor enthusiast, has been an AMC-AT leader since 2009 and is also a Connecticut Chapter hike and bike leader. She has led and co-led AT hiking and biking trips to Cape Cod, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Sicily, Spain, France, Italy, Finland, Norway, South America and New Zealand. Having spent 15 years as a marketing and public policy specialist for major telecommunications firms, followed by 15 years as an exercise programming specialist, Janis now

enjoys being retired, teaching exercise classes part time, writing and leading adventure travel trips.



**Merri Fox** is a software specialist at a major CT aircraft engine company. Because she loves sharing her favorite outdoor destinations, over the past 22 years she has led hiking, snorkeling and cultural excursions in Belize, Paris, Hawaii, Arizona, the Tetons, Switzerland, California, Utah, New Zealand, and the Virgin Islands. Merri leads local hikes in CT, participates in training programs for new leaders, and serves as secretary for the AMC's Adventure Travel Committee. Merri lives with husband Rance in NW Connecticut, where she enjoys gardening, cooking, and entertaining guests.

As leaders our goals for the group are to have fun, utilize and enhance your skills, and savor a unique environment at reasonable cost in the company of other adventurers with similar interests. *AMC Adventure Travel trips are run in a manner supportive of and consistent with the traditions, principles and mission of the Club. Trip leaders encourage participant conduct consistent with Leave No Trace environmental and conservation principles and local regulations. Though AMC membership is not a requirement to participate, we hope that through your experience, you will be inspired to join and support an organization devoted to wilderness stewardship.*

*Please be aware that, in accordance with AMC AT policy, you are subsidizing the leaders' costs. Beyond this, the leaders are not allowed to realize any profit from this excursion. The trip price also includes an AMC administrative overhead fee to help cover the club's expenses of offering Adventure Travel excursions.*

*The price for this excursion is based on quotes or estimates obtained at the time the trip was submitted to the Adventure Travel Committee for approval, up to two years in advance. Trip participants will share any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases we incur. Our cost estimates are conservative, and so a refund is considerably more likely than a price increase. All AMC Adventure Travel trips are run on a non-profit basis and refunds, if any, are issued after the trip's financial accounting is complete.*

For more information or an application package please contact: Janis Stahlhut [jstahlhut@me.com](mailto:jstahlhut@me.com), 203-820-9275 or Merri Fox, [rbfox1949@gmail.com](mailto:rbfox1949@gmail.com), 860-485-1697. If telephoning, please call between the hours of 9am and 9pm.