Australia has managed to reduce new coronavirus cases without the severe lockdowns that [other countries] have endured.” The Atlantic Monthly

Australia: A Day Hiking & Cultural Walkabout
Trip No. 2140, March 3-20, 2021
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 moderate “bush” 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 at Australia’s Aboriginal culture center: Uluru (Ayers Rock), the heart of a vast and remote region known simply and familiarly as THE OUTBACK.
Our incredible journey takes us to a 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.

Many 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, marine, and cultural life.
This is a once-in-a-lifetime, authentic Australian experience for those who want a diverse experience that includes both day hiking and sightseeing, as well as cultural explorations and immersions, and optional excursion add-ons. It is literally a coast-to-coast journey from the Tasman Sea to the Indian Ocean, to the Coral Sea and the Great Barrier Reef, with a stop in the heart of the Outback, plus visits to Sydney, Perth, the Blue Mountains and the Southern Forests. Three flights with Qantas Airlines together with local trains, ferries and private vehicles will take us more than 5000 miles across this vast continent to see and experience the diverse Australian wilderness, the people and places that make it unique, and the flora and fauna that define it.

Daily Itinerary

**Your trip begins on March 3, 2021, the first day in our country of travel. (This is a change in policy by AMC on when a trip begins.)** To arrive in Australia no later than March 3, please ensure that you depart the US on a flight that will deposit you in Sydney on that date. Remember that you will cross the International Date Line, and thus lose a day in your travel. But don’t worry – you get it back on your return! Check your itinerary carefully to avoid costly mistakes. The AMC Leaders will assist you in choosing flights that will work for your travel plans.

**Mar 3, Day 1:** (D) There will be a single morning pickup at Sydney airport. The time will be determined once we see the flight schedules of the group. After picking up some lunch, the group will rendezvous at 1:00pm in the foyer of our hotel for introductions and an overall trip briefing with our tour operator, Tamarillo Active Travel. We will then have a short transfer across the iconic 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 another icon of this beautiful city, the Sydney 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. Overnight Sydney

**Mar 4, Day 2:** (B) You have 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 to the start of a hike through Sydney Harbour National Park to Manly Beach, followed by a ferry ride to Sydney Opera House. You may wish to book an Opera House tour (optional) as from here it is only 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. Overnight Sydney

**Mar 5, Day 3: (B, D)** After breakfast at the hotel, we will transfer by private bus (2 hours) to the town of Katoomba in Blue Mountains World Heritage area. After lunch we will enjoy afternoon hikes to views of this beautiful range. Dinner is at the historic Carrington Hotel (est. 1882) in Katoomba.

**Mar 6, Day 4: (B)** We will enjoy a short historic train ride to reach our hiking options in the Blue Mountains. Free evening to choose from the many dining options within a few minutes’ walk of the hotel. Overnight Katoomba.

**Mar 7, Day 5: (B)** Join an optional sunrise hike along the Prince Henry Cliff walkway. Afterward we will return to Sydney 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. Overnight Sydney.

**Mar 8, Day 6: (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 across the vast Australian continent 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. Overnight Smiths Beach

**Mar 9, Day 7: (no meals- cook-in or visit a neighborhood restaurant)** Today we will enjoy the day hiking along the Cape-to-Cape walkway in Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park. There are numerous varieties of wild kangaroos present in this region – even on the lawns surrounding our accommodation!
Mar 10, Day 8: (no meals- cook-in or visit a neighborhood restaurant) After a short drive, we will reach beachside Prevelly and the start of another day of hikes along the beautiful Cape-to-Cape Walkway. In the evening you can choose to prepare your own dinner at your accommodation or dine at the local pub, Caves House Hotel. Overnight Smiths Beach.

Mar 11, Day 9: (D) We will travel to the small country town of Nannup in the Southern Forests region of West Australia. Along the way we will stop to walk and swim at Barrabup forest and natural pool. There will be free time to stroll around Nannup and find lunch. In the afternoon we will have hikes along the Bibbulmun Track (Warren National Park) amongst the stately, sequoia-like Karri trees. [www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au](http://www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au). After this full day, we head to our next stop: Pemberton to check in and enjoy a group dinner at the Karri Valley Resort, where we will also be staying for two nights.

Mar 12, Day 10: (B) Take time in the early morning to stroll through the surround forest and listen to the birds’ dawn-chorus and see kangaroos in the wild. After breakfast we will take hikes along the Bibbulmun Track through Warren National Park, finishing at Pemberton’s historic country pub, where you might enjoy a pint and even an authentic pub dinner before taking a laid back stroll around town. Overnight Pemberton.

Day 13, Mar 13, Day 11: (B) A last opportunity to stroll around the lake and forest and enjoy the birds’ dawn-chorus and wild kangaroos. At 9am we will take the 4 hour journey back to Perth. There will be time for a alk (or ride) along the Swan River walkway/bike-path to Kings Park botanical gardens. Your evening is free evening to choose among numerous nearby dining options. You may wish to see a show at Perth Concert Hall, a minutes’ walk from the hotel. Overnight Perth.

Mar 14, Day 12: (no meals- prepare a takeaway breakfast from your leftover groceries) We will take an early flight from Perth Airport to Alice Springs in the heart of Australia’s outback. From there we have a private bus transfer to Australia’s most iconic sight, Uluru (Ayers Rock), for sunset viewing and hiking options. 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. Overnight Uluru/Ayers Rock.

Mar 15, Day 13: (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 hikes. (You may wish to pack a picnic breakfast with a flask of tea or coffee.) We will return to our resort for lunch, a swim, a rest, and/or take advantage of activities available for booking through the resort’s tour & information centre, which offers 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 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 resort and you have your evening free to make a dinner selection. Overnight Uluru/Ayers Rock.

Mar 16, Day 14: (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 Nyakunytjaku for the ‘sunny-side’ view. Again you may wish to pack a picnic breakfast with a flask of tea or coffee. Then enjoy an Uluru guided walk/interpretive talk, led by a National Park ranger. Return to our resort for lunch, a swim, and other resort activity options. 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. Overnight Palm Cove.

Mar 17, Day 15: (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. You will need to meet the PADI certification guideline for Scuba diving in Australia. During

![Image of the Great Barrier Reef]

The Great Barrier Reef
A World Heritage National Park

Photo: Andrew Griffiths
Design: David Burrows

Scuba diving you will not be covered under AMC’s medical and evacuation insurance.

You can choose your dinner option from local eateries or prepare a home cooked meal in your apartment’s kitchen. Overnight Palm Cove.

**Mar 18, Day 16:** Today we will 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 short hikes, swims, views, wildlife encounters and a walk through Mossman Gorge, home to the oldest rainforest on earth. Choose your own dinner option. Overnight Palm Cove.

**Mar 19, Day 17:** (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 resort. Overnight Palm Cove.

**Mar 20, Day 18:** Check-out time is 10am. Use your remaining groceries to prepare your breakfast before leaving for home or onward travel. Transfers will be available throughout the day to Cairns airport, a mere 15 minutes from our apartments. End of trip.

**Fitness Level and Equipment:** 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 moderate (3-4 of 6). We will walk and hike on mostly well trod, maintained and marked trails varying in distance from 4-8 miles, or 6-12 miles for those seeking a more vigorous experience, 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. Leaders may, at their sole discretion, dissuade or prohibit a participant from any activity deemed to be outside their range of safe participation. Where possible, alternatives will be made available.

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 – even if you don’t generally use them for hiking, some of our bush walks might encounter harmful, even threatening wildlife. A hiking pole can be useful.
to ward them off! The concessionaire at Cairns will provide snorkeling gear. Please note that this trip includes domestic flights and van rides of up to 4 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 preventative you may wish to consider. A packing/equipment list will be sent to participants at a later date.

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.

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.

**Accommodations:** We will stay 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. WiFi may not be available at all locations, or come with an additional charge.

**TRIP PRICE:** US$6,295 (a $100 surcharge will be assessed for those who are not members at the time of their application. Payment of the surcharge does not constitute membership. To join the AMC (2020 pricing $50 individual, $75 family) click [here](URL: www.outdoors.com/get-involved/join). If applicable, please include the $100 surcharge with your application deposit.

**THIS PRICE INCLUDES:**
- All necessary vehicle, train and ferry travel, from (group) 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 individually styled rooms, with some rooms unavoidably 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. For a single supplement option, see below.

**Price Does Not Include:**

- 6 Breakfasts, 1 lunch, 4 dinners as indicated in daily itinerary by B, L, D.
- Driver and Tour Manager traveling with the group throughout, local nature guides at significant nature and cultural locations, guides and boat operators during boating and snorkeling excursions.
- 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 Cableway on Day 18.
- Experienced AMC-AT leaders certified for CPR and Wilderness First Aid, medical evacuation insurance, 24x7 emergency world wide assistance, 24x7 AMC-AT emergency telephone access.

**Price Does Not Include:**

- International airfare, which will be purchased independently by participants.
- 3 domestic flights (Sydney-Perth, Perth-Alice Springs, and Uluru-Cairns) costing approximately $1,000, also purchased independently by participants.
- Single room occupancy. A single supplement is available for US$900 for the entirety of the trip. Where apartments are used, the single supplement will include a private bedroom with a bathroom shared by 1-3 others, depending on the makeup of the group. Every attempt will be made to honor individual requests, however, same-gender bathrooms cannot be guaranteed in the shared apartments.
- 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 (conditions apply, please inquire in advance) and additional snorkeling.
- Personal expenses such as laundry, snacks, phone and Internet charges, tips, special order beverages with included meals, etc.
- Trip cancellation or interruption charges, lost baggage, medical and evacuation costs beyond that provided in AMC-AT trip price (see Cancellation Policy and Trip Insurance below). Airline tickets are purchased separately and owned by the participant. Penalties and forfeitures will be in accordance with the terms of the tickets you purchase for international and domestic travel.

**Application and Deposits:** To apply for this trip, 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 $2,000 (plus $100 if you are not an AMC member at the time of applying). Until the trip is declared a ‘go’ by meeting its minimum requirement of 8, your deposit is fully refundable, less a $100 administrative fee, which may be waived at the leaders’. (See Cancellation Policy below) 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 $4,295 is due.
December 1, 2020. Please make payments by check payable to the “Appalachian Mountain Club” and mail to the address shown on the Participant Application.

CANCELLATION POLICY: The AMC Adventure Travel cancellation policy is based on the fact that your cancellation may not raise the cost to the other participants or to the leaders. Once you are notified the trip is declared to run as scheduled, the minimum cancellation fee is $100. If actual costs (expenses already incurred on your behalf and any unavoidable future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration and cancellation) are higher, they will be assessed instead, unless they can be applied toward another acceptable participant. Should the leaders be able to replace you, you may be charged a reduced penalty. This will generally not be determined until after the trip. Failure to make trip payment(s) in a timely manner will be considered a cancellation.

On rare occasions AMC Adventure Travel may need to cancel all or a portion of a trip due to force majeure [e.g. terrorism, local health conditions, natural disaster, changes in local regulatory environment, etc]. In the event of such a cancellation, your trip fee will be refunded less any trip expenses already incurred plus any non-cancellable future trip expenditures. AMC Adventure Travel is not responsible for additional expenses incurred by you in preparing for the trip (including non-refundable air tickets, visa fees, gear or medical expenses, etc).

Travel Insurance: Though every effort will be made to protect your investment and minimize any financial loss due to unforeseen emergencies, once payments are made by leaders to secure services and accommodations, we cannot assure you will bear no financial risk. As always, we strongly suggest you purchase trip insurance to cover any need to cancel or interrupt your trip. The AMC insurance does not cover these circumstances. Leaders will provide you with a link to AMC’s insurance provider, who offers an add-on to the medical and evacuation insurance that is provided. You are also encouraged to research other underwriters of travel insurance and make an informed choice. Leaders will help you, but are not insurance agents or experts. Detailed information about your coverage and options will be provided in the Letter of Acceptance and Trip Declaration that will be sent once we achieve the minimum number of participants on the trip.

Please note that the medical and emergency evacuation insurance provided through AMC and included in your trip price is secondary to your personal insurance. In the event of a claim, your personal medical insurance will be the principle payer and any subsequent expenses can be submitted to the AMC policy underwriter.

Your AMC Leaders

Janis Stahlhut, a lifelong outdoors enthusiast, has been an AMC-AT leader since 2009 and is a Connecticut Chapter hike and bike leader. She has led and co-led AT hiking and biking trips to Cape Cod, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Alaska, Sicily, Spain, France, Italy, Finland, Norway, Fiji, South America and New Zealand. Something of a “career-hopper,” Janis has worked in public art space
administration, telecommunications public policy and marketing, and fitness training and instruction. Janis now enjoys being retired, teaching exercise classes part time, writing, golfing, and leading adventure travel trips.

**Merri Fox** is a recently retired software specialist. 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 her 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. For those who are not members of AMC at the time of application, a $50 surcharge will be assessed. This surcharge will not constitute membership.

*In accordance with AMC-AT policy, you are subsidizing all or a portion of 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, sometimes up to two years in advance. Trip participants will share any savings we achieve, as well as any cost increases incurred. 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, [fmerri99@gmail.com](mailto:fmerri99@gmail.com), 860-485-1697. If telephoning, please call between the hours of 9am and 9pm.