



11 Day Legendary Outback Tracks 4WD Safari - Oodnadatta, Birdsville and Strzelecki

Day 1 (D)

You will be collected from our central Adelaide pick up at 1pm this afternoon for your 11 day 4WD Safari along the Oodnadatta, Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks.

This first leg of our South Australian Outback adventure, takes us to Port Augusta, situated at the head of the Spencer Gulf and known as the "*Crossroads of Australia*" and Gateway to the Flinders Ranges, the outback and Spencer Gulf.

After spending the afternoon getting to know each other, we'll enjoy our first dinner together as a group, in the hotel restaurant.

Overnight accommodation- motel room with en-suite, Port Augusta

Day 2 (B,L,D)

Our destination today is the opal capital of the world, Coober Pedy and it will take us all day to get here. En-route we'll stop for lunch and have a look at the salt lakes in the region including Lake Hart.

We also take a look around the Heritage Museum and Missile Park at Woomera, which holds a special place in Australian National heritage as it was the 4th country in the world to launch it's own satellite- after the US, Russia and France. The Woomera Rocket Range was established in 1947 as a joint British / Australian project for developing and testing experimental rockets, weapons and missiles. Nowadays the Woomera Prohibited Area (WPA) is the largest land testing range in the world.

Coober Pedy is as famous for it's underground homes as it is for it's opals and 50% of the population live underground (in homes called "dugouts"), as well as using underground shops and churches.

Overnight accommodation- underground motel room with en-suite, Coober Pedy (2 night stay)

underground rooms are limited and therefore subject to availability. We will do our best to get everyone an underground room but above ground rooms may be used if not enough underground rooms are available.

Day 3 (B,D)

There's some free time this morning for you to have a wander through the town, visit the Old Timers Mine and Museum, The Umoona opal mine and museum (also home to the "Footsteps in time" fossil display), visit one of the underground churches in the town or have a look around Crocodile Harry's Underground Nest, one of the weirdest dugouts of Coober Pedy and one of most famous in the world due to it's use in the movie Mad Max Beyond the Thunderdome.

After lunch we take a guided tour through a working Opal Mine, where we get an insight of what it means to be an Opal Miner.

Late this afternoon, we make our way out of town to the nearby Breakaways Reserve, offering a striking & unique example of arid scenery. From the flat - topped mesas to the stony gibber desert, remnants of millions of years provide a wealth of geological interests and breathtaking views. There are two lookout points which highlight the open spaces and colourful environment, leaving an impression of the long gone inland sea that our early explorers dreamt of. From the lookout, the locally named "Castle" or "Salt & Pepper" can be seen in an easterly direction. This outcrop has been used in a number of films and advertisements, while Panorama Hill situated in the middle, features in Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome and Ground Zero. As the day goes by, the passing of the sun changes the desert colours, creating photogenic scenes that appear surreal.

Overnight accommodation- underground motel room with en-suite, Coober Pedy

Day 4 (B,L,D)

This morning we depart Coober Pedy and head across the fascinating Moon Plain to the Painted Desert (Arckaringa Hills). The Moon Plain is rich in fossil deposits, evidence of the inland sea that covered this region 120 million years ago and offers a vast expanse of rocky plains unlike anywhere else. The strange lunar landscape has been used for many Hollywood movies including Mad Max Beyond the Thunderdome, Pitch Black, Red Planet and Priscilla Queen of the Desert. We'll also cross the Dog Fence for the first time today.

The Painted Desert is an ancient Inland Sea bed where the hills are the result of rain, weather and erosion. The slopes and shapes include many different colours and shades of orange, yellow and white- hence the name "Painted Desert".

After viewing the Painted Desert from the lookout, we continue along the Kempe Road to Oodnadatta. Famous for it's iconic pink roadhouse, the town was originally created when the Overland Telegraph Line was laid and then became the northern terminus for the Central Australia Railway.

After lunch we join the 615km unsealed Oodnadatta Track, which follows the Old Ghan Railway line and the Overland Telegraph, after it was originally mapped by the explorer, John McDouall Stuart. The track follows an old Aboriginal trading route through semi-desert country with artesian springs and waterholes along the way. The Oodnadatta Track is littered with ruins of old town sites, station ruins, homes, cairns and remnants of the old railway line, the short-lived gold rush and the Overland Telegraph Line. En-route to William Creek, we stop at Algebuckina Bridge historic site and some of the station ruins.

We arrive at William Creek, the smallest settlement in South Australia with a population of 3 humans and a dog ! It's located 165km's from the nearest town and sits in the largest cattle station in the world (Anna Creek-approximately the size of England).

Overnight accommodation - motel room with en-suite, William Creek Pub Hotel, middle of nowhere, Outback South Australia

Day 5 (B,L,D)

There's time this morning for optional 1 hour scenic flights over Lake Eyre (own expense).

Departing William Creek, we make our way out to Halligan Bay at Lake Eyre North for a look at the magnificent lake with it's incredible colours and patterns. Lake Eyre is Australia's lowest point, the largest inland lake in Australia and the largest salt lake in the world ! The Lake contains 400 million tonnes of salt and is 15 metres below sea level. Donald Campbell set a land speed world record of 649 kmh in his turbine car "Bluebird" on its dry bed back in 1964.

We continue exploring the Oodnadatta Track this morning, heading south towards Marree. We stop several times en-route, including the natural artesian springs within Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park. The Blanche Cup and The Bubbler mound springs are created from water deep within the Great Artesian Basin which filters to the surface forming mounds and bubbling ponds.

After stopping at the Lake Eyre South lookout, we pass the famous dingo fence again and then reach Marree, which is situated at the crossroads of the Oodnadatta and Birdsville Tracks. The town also has a rich Aboriginal, Afghan and European heritage.

After checking into our accommodation, you have some free time to look around the town or visit the Tom Kruse Museum.

Overnight accommodation – motel room with en-suite, Marree Pub Hotel

Day 6 (B,L,D)

Departing Marree, we now travel north on the famous stock route, which is the Birdsville Track. The track passes through the Tirari and Sturt Stony Deserts and is extremely remote but strikingly beautiful in its harshness.

The 517km track, which traverses vast gibber strewn plains and sand dunes, was established in the 1860s as the main stock route to bring cattle from central Queensland to the railway in Marree. In these days the track had a grim reputation, many people and mobs of cattle lost their lives, so the Track is rich in history and tragedy. It later became an important as a freight route into the outback and in the 1930's, it even had it's own mail route, on which the legendary mailman, Tom Kruse, worked for almost 20 years. You can still see one of his old mail trucks in Marree.

We have a look at the ruins of the Lake Harry Date Plantation and then stop at the Cooper Creek Crossing, before driving through the Natterannie Sandhills and Mungerannie Gap, which is the largest geographical sight along the Birdsville Track (150m).

We pass Mirra Mitta Bore, a hot flowing artesian bore, and the last leg of the track to Birdsville, takes us past Koonchera Dune.

After stopping at the border for photos, we cross into Queensland, arrive into Birdsville and then check into our accommodation. This evening you'll take a locally run tour out to "Big Red", the largest and most famous sand dune in the Simpson Desert. It offers fantastic photo opportunities, especially at sunset.

Overnight accommodation- motel room with en-suite, Birdsville Pub Hotel

Day 7 (B,L,D)

Leaving Birdsville this morning, we stop for photos at the famous Birdsville Racecourse and the Diamantina River. Today we're heading south again, through Cattle Country and back into South Australia to Innamincka, made famous by Victorian explorers Burke and Wills and their ill-fated exploration across central Australia.

En-route we enjoy the view at Deon's Lookout and visit The Dreamtime Serpent – a work of art representing a series of pathways travelled through Country to connect the river systems in the Channel Country of the Diamantina Shire. The Serpent has been created using gravel and gibbers found throughout the shire.

Reaching the end of the unsealed Arrabury Road, we visit the famous Burke and Wills Dig Tree (camp LXV). It was here that the explorers left a base camp while they continued north, along with King and Grey. In charge of the camp, Brahe waited longer than he'd been requested to but his decision to return south only hours before the Burke and Wills party returned, is one of the most unfortunate coincidences in Australian history. Grey died en-route to Innamincka, Burke and Wills died along Cooper Creek and King was the sole survivor, being cared for by Aboriginal people until the back up party found him.

Overnight accommodation- motel room with en-suite, Innamincka Pub Hotel, a short walk from the Cooper Creek.

Day 8 (B,L,D)

We depart Innamincka this morning and head south through the Strzelecki Desert and join the last of our legendary Outback Tracks- the Strzelecki Track. Explorer Charles Sturt named the track after Polish explorer and geologist Paul Edmund de Strzelecki and the 465km track runs north <>south from Lyndhurst to Innamincka. The Track was pioneered as a cattle route by bushman Harry Redford (AKA Captain Starlight), who brought 1000 stolen cattle from Queensland to South Australia in 1871 without a single death. Although caught with conclusive evidence, the jury at his trial admired this feat and refused to convict him !

Our first stop today is the viewpoint at the Moomba oil and gasfields. Natural gas was first discovered in the region in 1966 and was followed by the discovery of oil in 1970. Moomba is now a major supplier of both for Australian and overseas markets.

We continue down the Strzelecki Track and turn off towards the Northern Ikara-Flinders Ranges, heading towards Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary. The privately owned sanctuary was founded in 1969 by Reg Sprigg, Biologist, Oceanographer, Conservationist, scientist and pioneer of eco-tourism.

Many minerals are found on Arkaroola, including gold, sapphires, rubies, amethyst, several forms of quartz, uraninite and malachite (among others) and evidence of early mining is scattered about Arkaroola and the Gammon Ranges.

Arkaroola is also famous for it's clear night skies and offers some of the best viewing conditions in Australia.

Overnight accommodation- motel room with en-suite, Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary

Day 9 (B,L,D)

This morning you'll take Arkaroola's famous Ridgetop tour- an unforgettable encounter with the timeless terrain and unique natural beauty of Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary. Learn from your Arkaroola guides about Arkaroolas 1600 million year old geological history as they navigate the steep slopes and hair raising ascents of the Ridgetop Track. Inspiring images of red granite mountains and golden spinifex covered hillsides give way to a breath-taking view

across the Freeling Heights, Lake From and the desert beyond. Take in the 360 degree panorama as you enjoy morning tea at Sillers Lookout- a lofty pinnacle at the end of the track.

Departing Arkaroola, we make our way today into the central Flinders Ranges, known for their unique beauty, indigenous history, ancient geological formations, rich colours and textures and abundant wildlife. The Flinders Ranges are home to a huge array of plant species, birds, reptiles and mammals and the vibrant colours of the 800 million-year-old quartzite and limestone outcrop that is the Flinders, are truly spectacular.

Conditions permitting, we'll take the back road and stop en-route in the old mining town of Blinman.

Overnight accommodation- Wilpena Pound Resort- standard room with en-suite (2 night stay)

Day 10 (B,L,D)

This morning you have the option of taking a walk into Wilpena Pound or take a scenic flight (at own expense). Walk along the beautiful Wilpena Creek, framed by huge river red gums, into Wilpena Pound. Walking on to the Old Hills Homestead, you can learn about the hardships the Hills family had to face at the turn of the century with the option of walking up to the Wangara lookout to see the mystical heart of the Flinders Ranges with stunning views over Wilpena Pound. There is a shuttle available to shorten the walk, that can take you up and back again (extra cost- approx. \$5 each way).

After lunch we depart for an afternoon of exploring. Our first stop is the Bunyeroo Valley and Gorge, where we stop for photos at the spectacular Razorback Lookout. This leads us through the Heysen Ranges onto the Brachina Gorge Geological Trail, a trail that passes through 130 million years of earth history, including meteorite debris, stromatolites and fossilized plant and animal life. It offers an insight into past climates, the formation of the ranges and the evolution of early forms of life. It's also an important refuge for the rare and endangered Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby.

To take us back to Wilpena Pound, we take the Moralana Scenic Drive, which connects the Wilpena and Leigh Creek Roads and is known as one of the best drives through the Flinders Ranges. We'll see stunning scenery featuring the southern wall of Wilpena Pound, Black Gap Lookout, red Range, Elder Range and more.

Overnight accommodation- Wilpena Pound Resort- standard room with en-suite

Day 11 (B,L)

Departing the Flinders Ranges, we head south towards Hawker, the hub of the Flinders Ranges and a thriving railway town until the line was relocated west in 1956.

After a quick look around the town, we take the RM Williams Highway for a scenic drive through Orroroo, Jamestown and Clare. In Clare, we visit a local cellar door / bakery for tastings and lunch before continuing to Adelaide. We arrive at approximately 6pm and you will be dropped off at our central Adelaide accommodation (Ibis or Hilton).

END OF TOUR

B= Breakfast L= Lunch D= Dinner

Departs Adelaide in 2021 on April 21st, October 8th and October 22nd.

AUD \$5775 per adult, twin share.

\$5575 per child (aged 10-15 years), twin share.

\$6495 per person, single room.

****solo travellers must have single room unless twin share of the same sex can be found. Solo travellers can also request own room and pay single supplement****

****please note that we only pick up in Adelaide City at the Hilton Hotel on Victoria Square and the Ibis Hotel on Grenfell St. If you don't stay at either of these hotels or if you are flying into Adelaide that morning, you will need to make your way to one of them for the pick up****

Maximum 15 passengers

Prices include GST

Inclusions:

- Seat in 4WD vehicle, with professional driver guide
- All Meals as stated
- 10 nights accommodation, as listed
- Entry fees and permits
- Opal mine tour at Coober Pedy
- Big Red sunset tour
- Ridgetop tour at Arkaroola

Exclusions:

- Arrival/departure flights
- Pre & Post tour accommodation
- Travel Insurance
- Alcohol
- Any optional activities such as 1 hour Lake Eyre scenic flight (Please request flight when booking, to avoid disappointment- approx. \$295pp) and Wilpena Pound scenic flight- 20 mins is approx. \$186pp, 30 mins is approx. \$220pp and 1 hour is approx \$330pp ***Prices subject to change without notice, by Wrights Air*

Itinerary is exclusive to Sacred Earth Safaris and subject to availability, road, weather and cultural conditions.