

## TOP END EXPLORER & THE GHAN

### ADELAIDE TO DARWIN

#### SAMPLE ITINERARY

*This is a sample itinerary and may be subject to change. We may need to alter or amend itineraries, excursions, accommodation, or sightseeing arrangements from those published, with little or no notice. This may be due to road conditions, weather, cultural considerations, safety factors and other operational considerations or government regulations. Final itineraries are sent to passengers approximately 2-3 weeks before travel.*

#### DAY 1 – BOARD THE GHAN IN ADELAIDE

Your journey on The Ghan begins this afternoon, as you step aboard and settle into the rhythm of life on the rails. Watch the countryside roll past your window as the train makes its way north, a hint of the adventure to come.

By early evening, you'll arrive at Long Plains, where you'll step off the train and transfer to a celebrated South Australian wine region. Here, a special dinner experience awaits, showcasing the region's exceptional produce and fine wines. As the sun sets over the vineyards, raise a glass to the days of discovery ahead. After dinner, return to the train and retire for the night as The Ghan continues its journey towards north. **B.D**

Stay: 3 nights The Ghan

#### Day 2 – The Ghan, Flinders Ranges

Wake to the changing landscapes of South Australia as The Ghan arrives into Port Augusta, South Australia's gateway to the outback. After breakfast, step off the train and prepare for a full day discovering one of the nation's most remarkable regions: the Flinders Ranges.

Your Off Train Experience takes you deep into this ancient landscape, where rugged ranges, dramatic gorges and red rock outcrops tell stories millions of years in the making. From sweeping lookouts to encounters with native wildlife, the Flinders Ranges offers a striking introduction to the outback. After a day of exploration, rejoin the train for a relaxed evening on board recalling the days adventures. (B, L, D)

#### Day 3 – The Ghan, Alice Springs

After a night of fine dining and relaxed comfort aboard The Ghan, wake to a spectacular outback sunrise at Marla, a remote outpost 160 kilometres from the Northern Territory border and gateway to the legendary Oodnadatta Track. With red dirt beneath your feet and a bonfire casting warmth into the cool morning air, pause to take in the stillness of this extraordinary place. Back on board, enjoy a leisurely brunch as the desert landscape unfolds on the journey north to Alice Springs.

Here, a variety of Off Train Experiences awaits. Choose an off-road e-bike adventure across ochre-coloured earth, explore the town's key landmarks on the A Town Called Alice tour, or embrace a cultural experience at Standley Chasm. Nature lovers can meet the wildlife at the Desert Park or marvel at the striking beauty of Simpsons Gap. For a bird's-eye view, upgrade to a scenic helicopter flight and witness the sheer scale of this remarkable region.

Return to the train in the late afternoon, with time to refresh before dinner is served and another unforgettable evening begins. **B.L.D**

#### Day 4 – The Ghan, Katherine & Darwin

Your final day begins in the tropical north, where the landscape gives way to rocky escarpments and fast-flowing canyon streams. Here, you'll experience one of the Top End's greatest natural wonders on a cruise through the majestic Nitmiluk Gorge. As you glide along the water, your guide will share the cultural significance of this place to the Jawoyn people, weaving in stories that highlight their deep spiritual connection to the land. Alternatively, step into the lives of those who call the outback home at the Katherine Outback Experience, or venture underground to explore the limestone chambers of the Cutta Cutta Caves, rich in native wildlife, Indigenous culture and European history. For a different perspective, upgrade to a helicopter flight and witness the scale and grandeur of Nitmiluk from above.

After your day's adventures, return to the train and journey onwards to Darwin, where you'll disembark The Ghan and be transferred to your overnight accommodation. After checking in, you may wish to explore the Waterfront Precinct with its many restaurants and bars. (B, L)

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Stay: 1 night Hilton Garden Inn Darwin

### Day 5 – Darwin To Litchfield & Kakadu National Parks

As one adventure ends, another begins with Outback Spirit. This morning, we depart Darwin and head towards Batchelor, the gateway to Litchfield National Park. Containing several types of typical Top End habitats, Litchfield National Park is abundant with lush monsoon forests, termite mounds, unusual rock formations, waterfalls, and cascades. After stopping for morning tea, our next stop is Florence Falls. Here you can watch from the scenic viewing platform as the spectacular falls cascade into the plunge pool below.

Next, we move onto Wangi Falls; a large plunge pool surrounded by shady grassed areas. The falls flow all year round and you can take a dip in the crystal-clear pool. After a light lunch we cross the Adelaide River and continuing east, we enter the World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park before arriving at your accommodation for the next two nights, the Mercure Kakadu Crocodile Hotel at Jabiru, so named for the crocodile shape it takes. (B, L, D)

*Note: Swimming at Wangi Falls is subject to National Park No Croc Safety Clearance.*

Stay: 2 nights at Mercure Kakadu Crocodile Hotel

### DAY 6 – Kakadu National Park

An early start today as we head to Jabiru Airstrip, where you'll gain another perspective on this incredible environment. Take to the skies on a 60-minute scenic flight over ancient escarpments, floodplains and winding rivers, exhibiting the results of 1.8 billion years of continuous erosion. Your flight includes live commentary from your pilot as you glide over these spectacular ancient lands.

After landing at Jabiru Airport we depart for the East Alligator River region, known as the gateway to Arnhem Land. Take a spectacular local indigenous cruise on the East Alligator River and listen to the stories of the region as you spot the large saltwater crocodiles that dwell in these waters. After a peaceful cruise, it's time to reboard the coach and head to the World Heritage Ubirr art site, home to some of the world's most outstanding rock art.

Enjoy a 1-kilometre circular track walk and take in the amazing rock art. There will be time for those feeling fit to make the steep 250m climb to the top of the rocky escarpment for magnificent views across the Magela floodplain. Enjoy lunch before heading to Burrungkuy (Nourlangie) Art Site where you can take in ancient rock paintings and spectacular vistas whilst enjoying the 1.5 kilometre walk around this incredible indigenous site. Then it's time to head back to the hotel to relax and enjoy dinner. (B, L, D)

*\*Due to the seasonal weather experienced in the Top End during March and April you will experience Nourlangie after your scenic flight instead of Ubirr, and the cruise will occur on Yellow Waters.*

### Day 7 – Kakadu National Park to Darwin

This morning, we depart Kakadu National Park and travel along the Arnhem Highway through the Mary River National Park with its vast wetlands attracting many migratory birds.

On arrival at Mary River, you will take to the water on a cruise that showcases the local wildlife, including saltwater crocodiles and the abundance of birdlife in the region. From here we travel through the productive region of Humpty Doo, where an array of tropical fruits is grown before heading to Darwin, arriving early evening, where your three-day Simply Kakadu Tour comes to an end. (B, L)

*\*Due to the seasonal weather experienced in the Top End during March and April you will enjoy the famous 'Jumping Croc Cruise' in place of the Mary River cruise.*

Stay: 2 nights Hilton Garden Inn Darwin

### DAY 8 – Darwin Harbour Dinner Cruise

Today is free for you to enjoy the sights of Darwin at leisure. Perhaps take a stroll along the Waterfront Precinct or visit the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens. In the evening, admire a spectacular sunset while feasting on a Territory-style dinner featuring local seafood and produce on a Darwin Harbour Sunset Cruise (B, D)

### DAY 9 – Farewell

Your Top End experience comes to an end when you check out of your accommodation after breakfast and farewell Darwin. (B)