

RED CENTRE WAY

Northern Territory – Alice Springs

Alice Springs – West MacDonnell Range National Park – Finke Gorge National Park – Watarrka National Park – Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park – Alice Springs



Swim in Glen Helen Gorge and spot rock wallabies at Simpsons Gap, both in the West MacDonnell Ranges. Listen to the Dreamtime legend surrounding the comet crater of Gosse Bluff. Climb to the rim of Kings Canyon and swim in the tropical pools of the Garden of Eden. Do a dawn camel trek around Uluru and wander between the steep russet domes of nearby Kata Tjuta. Journey through red desert sands, spinifex and mulga forest. Learn about the area's Aboriginal history from the Arrernte people who have lived here for 20,000 years. Immerse yourself in Aboriginal art and pioneer history in Alice Springs. Don't miss this unforgettable adventure through Australia's ancient centre.

AT A GLANCE



- Alice Springs – Glen Helen Gorge (1.5 hours)
- Glen Helen Gorge to Kings Canyon (3 hours)
- Kings Canyon – Uluru (3.5 hours)
- 2 nights Uluru
- Uluru – Alice Springs (5 hours)

DAY ONE

ALICE SPRINGS TO GLEN HELEN GORGE OR FINKE GORGE NATIONAL PARK

Take a day to explore the plants, animals, tranquil waterholes and sheltered gorges of the West MacDonnell Range National Park. See rock wallabies in and around the steep ridges and huge ghost gums of Simpsons Gap. Take the short,

scenic walk to Standley Chasm and watch its steep walls blaze red in the midday sun. Get spectacular views of the narrow, winding Serpentine Gorge from a lookout above the cliffs. Cool off in the swimming holes of Ellery Creek Big Hole, Ormiston Gorge, Redbank Gorge and picturesque Glen Helen Gorge, a great place to pitch a tent for sunset.

Alternatively, you can stop at Finke Gorge National Park, where you can four wheel drive next to towering sandstone cliffs and the mighty Finke River, one of the world's oldest waterways. See fiery red dunes and salt pans. Watch mountain ranges turn from purple to burning ochre in the setting sun. Explore the desert oasis of Palm Valley, the only place in the world you'll find the Red Cabbage Palm.



DAYS TWO TO FIVE

GLEN HELEN GORGE TO KINGS CANYON

On your way west to Kings Canyon, stop to marvel at Tnorala (Gosse Bluff), a comet crater that is 20 kilometres (12 miles) wide and 140 million years old. The area is special to the Western Arrernte Aboriginal people, who believe it was formed when women dropped a baby while dancing across the Milky Way. Continue along the Mereenie Loop Road to Kings Canyon in Watarrka National Park, where you can pitch a tent or spend the night in a resort or wilderness lodge.

KINGS CANYON TO ULURU

Climb to the rim of Kings Canyon for sweeping views of the sheer sandstone cliffs, palm-filled crevices, valley floor and desert. See rare plants from a lone-gone wetter age. Swim in the tropical pools of the Garden of Eden and explore the weathered rock domes of the Lost City. See sunset at Carmichael Crag, take the Kathleen Springs Walk to a pretty waterhole or trek overnight on the Giles Track. Continue along the Red Centre Way to Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, and watch the changing colours of Uluru.

ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

Watch the rising sun light Uluru on a dawn camel trek, then contemplate its majesty over a breakfast of billy tea and freshly baked beer bread. Walk around Uluru on the Mala or Mutitjulu Walk with an Anangu guide and learn about how Dreamtime ancestors forged this huge sandstone icon. Afterwards take in the steep, rounded, russet domes of nearby Kata Tjuta on the Valley of the Winds Walk. In the evening, feast on classic bush tucker and Australian wine under a star-filled desert sky. In Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, accommodation ranges from campsites to luxury resorts.

RETURN LEG TO ALICE SPRINGS

It's a 445-kilometre (276 mile) journey back to Alice Springs, so stop and revive at the roadhouses lining the highway and the Mount Connor lookout, which offers sweeping salt lake views. Stop at the Henbury Meteorites Conservation Reserve to see 12 craters that were formed when a meteor hit the earth's surface 4,700 years ago. Before you arrive in Alice, you can detour off the highway to see the scenic sandstone bluffs and cliffs of the Rainbow Valley, part of the James Range. The multi-coloured bands that give them their name are particularly pretty in the sunshine of the early morning and late afternoon.