

Iconic Australia: 26 Days

Information Kit

Queensland, Northern Territory & Western Australia: Australia's premier long distance mixed surfaced adventure motorcycle tour, along the northern edge of the continent and via the haunting red centre



Few places in the world have captured the imagination of adventurers like “outback” Australia. An expansive region that provides an ancient, impossibly rugged landscape of vast Savannah, rocky escarpments and glowing red desert sands. The legendary Kimberly is the size of some European nations and the pervading sense of “remoteness” and silence is breathtaking, let alone the plethora of world heritage sights along the way. This once in a lifetime ride offers the biker some of the world’s finest desert scenery and a true sense of pure wilderness.

Itinerary

Joining Day: Cairns

Your Cairns airport transfer will take you directly to our joining hotel, ready for an early start tomorrow. Today you will meet your crew for your tour briefing and welcome dinner.

Day One: Undara Lava Tubes

Leaving the Coral Sea behind we ride the twisties of the Gilles Range as we ascend onto the Atherton Tablelands via the dirt tracks around Lake Tinaroo. We cross the Herberton Range and ride onto the geological phenomenon of the Undara Lava Tubes, the world's longest lava tubes.

Days Two & Three: Cobold Gorge

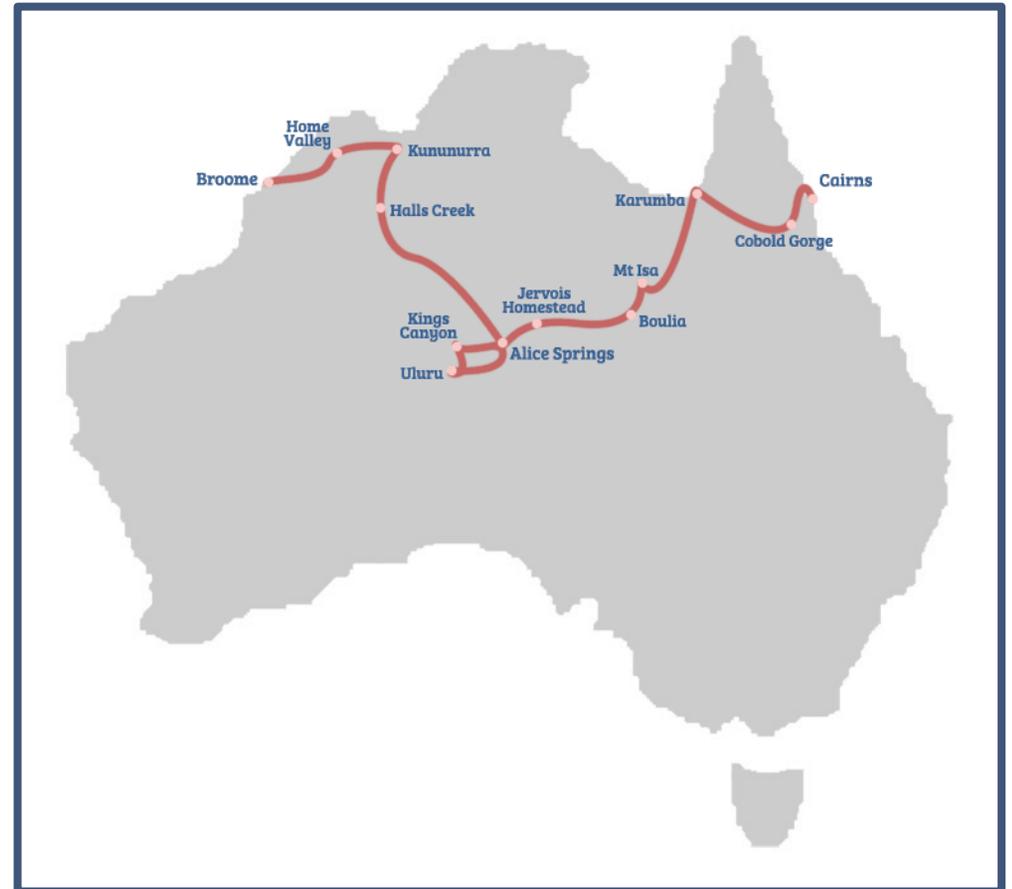
After a guided tour of the extraordinary lava tubes we continue on and cross the remote, rarely visited Rope Walk Ranges onto the spectacular Cobold Gorge. We spend two nights here allowing us to spend 3 hours cruising this stunning gorge and relaxing in this wonderful Gulf Savannah location or perhaps explore the nearby Robinhood Station.

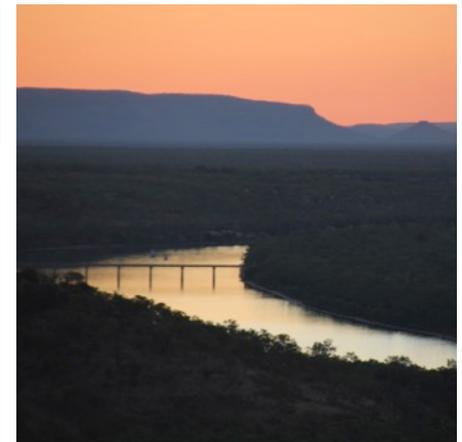
Day Four: Karumba

Another remote riding day as we cross through a vast empty landscape known as the Gulf Savannah. Today's ride is a mixture of dirt and paved roads before we arrive at the prawning capital of Australia, Karumba, on the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria in time to watch a spectacular sunset from the pub next door to our hotel. It's a wonderful way to end a great days riding.

Day Five: Gregory River

Leaving Karumba behind we hit the dirt after Normanton stopping en-route at Camp 119 where explorers Burke & Wills carved their famous “dig Tree”. The ride continues on more dirt from bore (waterholes) to bore through a landscape of termite mounds and golden Savannah. We round the day off with our first “Bush Camp” beside the beautiful Gregory River, real Australia!!!





Day Six: Lawn Hill

Heading off road again we take a wonderful remote 2 lane track through red termite mounds and sparse bushland. We cross the Gregory River lined with palms and ferns on our way to the UNESCO listed Riversleigh Fossil site. The afternoon is spent canoeing at the incredibly spectacular Lawn Hill Gorge followed by a short ride to our overnight camp at the wonderful Adel's Grove.

Day Seven: Mt Isa

We ride south today, initially on dirt, through a sparse golden landscape of spinifex and ancient escarpments. This is cattle country and the landscape is dotted with Brahms and the only vehicles are the giant roadtrains, synonymous with the outback. Tonight's destination is the "rough and ready" cowboy city known as "the Isa", where we have a chance to visit the extraordinary "Hard Times Mine".

Day Eight: Boulia

Leaving "the Isa" behind we enter "Channel Country, named for the myriad of channels crisscrossing the landscape and a tough remote sparsely populated south-western corner of Queensland. Boulia is renown for the mysterious Min Min lights; some say a supernatural light that hovers a metre above the ground some nights? A visit to the Min Min Encounter is a must.

Day Nine: Tobermorey

The ride turns west today as we hit the dirt of the legendary outback highway known as the Donahue Highway. The track travels through a spare landscape dotted with giant termite mounds and crosses into the Northern Territory before our overnight camp at the 6000 sq. km Tobermorey Station, located on the edge of the epic Simpson Desert, a real slice of Australiana!

Day Ten: Jervois Homestead

A day on the dirt as you cross the seemingly endless grass plains and termite mounds of this epic landscape, passing landmarks such as Heartbreak Bore & Cockatoo Waterhole. Our overnight camp is again at a working station, this time at Jervois Homestead, spectacularly situated in the shadow of the ancient Jervois Ranges.

Day Eleven & Twelve: Alice Springs

After a number of days riding across an impossibly vast & open "big sky" landscape we will be surprised to see the Harts Mountain Range loom into view. It isn't long before we hit the pavement and reach Alice Springs for a well-earned beverage and to wash off the layers of dust. We have a rest day in "the Alice" allowing us time to visit the wonderful Road Transport Hall of Fame, Royal Flying Doctor base or simply relax by the poolside.

Day Thirteen: Glen Helen

Leaving Alice Springs mid morning we arrive at the spectacular Stanley Chasm at noon to watch as the sun briefly fills the chasm in daylight turning the towering canyon walls a bright red colour. Continuing on along the "dreamtime Trail" through the scenic West MacDonnell Ranges National Park we arrive at our overnight stop of Glen Helen Homestead Lodge mid afternoon allowing us time to visit the stunning Glen Helen Gorge on the Finke River & maybe a cooling swim.

Day Fourteen: Kings Canyon

We hit the dirt of the iconic Mereenie Loop Road today that traverses ancient landscapes of red walled canyons, valleys, red desert sands and spinifex before arriving at the spectacular Kings Canyon in the Watarrka National Park. Watching sunset across the bright red desert floor from a remote deck complete with pop-up bar is a superb way to finish off another day.

Days Fifteen & Sixteen: Uluru

We spend the morning enjoying the "Rim Walk" around Kings Canyon, an amazing canyon of 100 m high sandstone walls with palm filled crevices. We hit the pavement again for an easy ride through the endless beautiful desert landscapes before arriving at one of the greatest natural spectacles on earth, Uluru, located in the geographical heart of Australia. We will ride out to the sunset viewing point for what will be one of the highlights of the ride; the spectacular sunset where the rock literally changes colour before our eyes. The following day is a rest day allowing us time to visit the "rock" and also the nearby Kata Tjuta, a striking group of domed rock formations 50 km west of Uluru.

Day Seventeen: Alice Springs

Today takes us, via the pavement, back to Alice Springs stopping en-route at the remote Curtain Springs and Erldunda Roadhouses. We will get great views of Mt Connor, which many people mistake for being Uluru and stop off at a camel farm for a coffee and maybe see a camel or two.

Days Eighteen & Nineteen: The Tanami Desert

We enter the legendary Tanami Desert via the longest "shortcut" in Australia, the Tanami Track, a remote desert ride from the heart of Australia to the renowned Kimberley's. The nights wild camping here under an immense carpet of stars surrounded by utter silence will possibly be the highlight of the trip. We shall visit the remote Yuendumu Indigenous community and the 2nd largest meteorite crater in the world at Wolfe Creek.

Day Twenty: Halls Creek

With the Tanami behind us we enter the vast Kimberley region of Western Australia, larger than some European countries. It's a rugged landscape of

escapements and stony gorges dotted with tropical waterholes surrounded by tropical forest. We overnight at Halls Creek, a service town located on the edge of the Tanami & Great Sandy Deserts.

Day Twenty-One: Lake Argyle

Lake Argyle is our destination and is Western Australia's largest and Australia's second largest freshwater man-made reservoir. We stay overnight at the wonderful Lake Argyle Resort and take a short ride up to Sunset Point to watch the sun dip over some absolutely breathtaking scenery. The contrasts of the blazing red rock against the deep blue of the lake is awe-inspiring.

Days Twenty-Two & Twenty-Three: Home Valley Station

A late start will allow us time to visit the Durack homestead, a reminder of the colonial story of the pioneering Durack family, and some well-hidden Aboriginal rock art. A short paved section brings us back to Kununurra in the beautiful East Kimberley region of Western Australia before we hit one of Australia's most iconic rides, the Gibb River Road. Two nights are spent at the outback station of Home Valley. There are two swimming pools to enjoy and activities such as horse riding, natural waterhole swimming, barramundi fishing and a variety of walks to nearby gorges.

Day Twenty-Four: Manning Gorge

The original Gibb River Road was constructed in the early 1960's to provide the isolated cattle stations with a transport link to the ports of Wyndham and Derby. The ride today is truly epic through an impossibly vast landscape. Manning Gorge, located within Mt Barnett station, is our destination with a beautiful swimming hole located right next to our campsite. There is the option for a 3hr return walk to the beautiful Gorge.

Day Twenty-Five: Derby

Today's section of the Gibb River Road is mostly gravel but the road turns to pavement as we approach Derby. We will have lunch at Tunnel Creek National Park which has one of the Kimberley's most interesting cave systems and makes a great place to see fruit bats, freshwater crocodiles and bird life. We enjoy the nightlife of Derby after so much remote riding over the last few days.

Day Twenty-Six: Broome

Our final ride takes us into Broome, the Kimberley's western gateway with an exotic pearling history. The white sandy beaches of the Indian Ocean contrast starkly against the amazing turquoise colour of the Indian Ocean and only add to the diversity of landscapes and tracks that we have covered in the last amazing month that took in so much of what makes iconic Australia.

Departure Day: Broome

Spend some time in Broome or fly home, the choice is yours.

Ride Grade: 4

Grade 4 doesn't mean we are climbing cliff faces and forwarding raging torrents, it means we spend considerable time on dirt roads as opposed to paved roads, these same tracks are used by 2-wheel drive cars and roadtrains, so NOT extreme.

60% of this ride is on pavement; some sections of pavement can be potholed, narrow and be not much more than a series of potholes connected by a thin ribbon of asphalt. Some roads have tall shoulders and massive potholes and are VERY remote. Riders must be prepared for wandering stock, erratic Kangaroos and the world's biggest trucks the roadtrains.

40% of this ride will be on dirt. The vast majority of dirt is hard packed and is used by heavy transport, so not technical or difficult however there are sections that can have loose gravel, washouts and can be rutted especially where roadwork's are being undertaken or experienced recent rains. Generally these sections don't last for long. Some sections are prone to "bulldust" holes, (super fine dust that covers a pothole) and some sections we will experience some sand, although very little. Australian tracks are notoriously changeable depending on how many 140 tonne roadtrains have been over them recently and of course any recent rains.

Distances

The biggest riding day is 480 km / 300 mi with the shortest being 125 km / 80 mi. Most riding days we average around 350 – 450 km / 230 – 280 mi with numerous rest days included where the bike is available for more riding if desired (subject to any maintenance requirements). The total distance is approximately 7020 km / 4390 mi.

Bikes

We operate 2 brands of bikes that need no introduction, both BMW & Suzuki. Our fleet consists of the BMW F700 (including low suspension) / F800 & R1200 GS and the DR 650. All bikes come equipped with crash protection and are maintained by us, as we own the bikes ensuring peace of mind reliable riding.

Experience required

Some off- road riding experience is preferred for this tour mainly due to the fact that we do cover significant distance off road other than anything being too technical or difficult. As mentioned above, limited sections of bulldust and sand sections can be encountered. Co-riders can travel in the support vehicle at anytime if any dirt becomes too challenging. Although not a requirement Compass Expeditions does recommend an off road training course that gives riders of all levels the tools to tackle off road riding. Contact us for more information on training events and recommended schools.

All riders **must** have a valid motorcycle license.

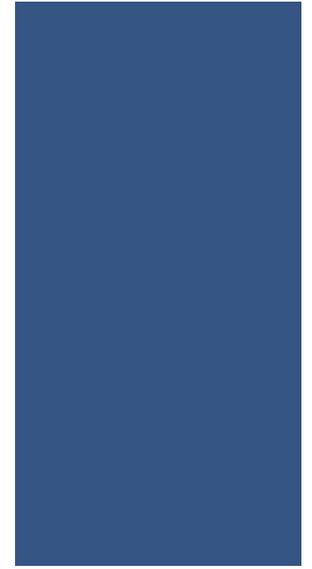
Weather

It is winter in Northern Australia, so we can expect some beautiful sunny ride days. Average daily temperatures are between 20 and 30 degrees C (68 to 86 degrees F) and some humidity should be expected on the coastlines. As we head south the temperatures will become slightly cooler to very cold in the evenings. Little to no rainfall should be expected although around Uluru and Alice Springs, rarely if it does rain, July / August is when it will, but rainfalls are generally brief.



Highlights

- Undara Lava Tubes
- Lawn Hill National Park
- Sunset over the Gulf of Carpentaria
- Riding the "Dreamtime Trail"
 - Uluru at Sunset
 - Kings Canyon
- Wild-camping in the Tanami
 - Lake Argyle
 - Gibb River Road
- Impossibly remote Home Valley Station on the Gibb River Road
- The epic ancient Kimberley's
 - Broome



Meals

The food options on the Iconic Australia are as varied as the landscapes; all types of western style meals are available as well as some local delicacies such as kangaroo steaks and camel sausages. Seafood is in abundance, as is beefsteaks, this is cattle and Barramundi country! On all ride days we include our legendary picnic lunches that we prepare out of our mobile kitchen, not pre-prepared sandwiches left festering in your top box all day. Our picnic lunches are wholesome and filling and our selected restaurants offer excellent food that we have used many times before. Of course all breakfasts are included.

Breakfasts: **27**
Lunches: **23**
Dinners: **13**

Accommodation

Our hotels are generally 3 & 4 stars and range from remote homesteads to resort style accommodations. They are chosen for their location, cleanliness, suitability for motorcycle groups and ambience. On a couple of occasions we shall be camping where no other facility exists. Some hotels have restaurants & bars attached. On another couple of nights we "wild-camp" this camp will often be the most enjoyable nights of the trip under an impossible carpet of stars! Accommodation is an important part of your ride experience and after many years of running tours in Australia we believe we offer a superb mix of excellent boutique hotels and camping sites.

Accommodation: **27 nights**

Tour Inclusions

- Airport Transfers
- Motorcycle rental as per your selection.
 - Fuel for those on Compass bikes
 - All accommodation
 - All meals as per itinerary
- Support vehicle with passenger carrying ability
- Services of ride leader and support vehicle driver
 - Pre-departure material and route maps
 - Access to satellite phone, pay per minute
 - Compass Expeditions polo shirt
- Entrances to all national parks mentioned in the itinerary
- Numerous excursions mentioned in the itinerary

Your Responsibilities

Riding equipment

You will need to bring the following riding gear:

Riding jacket and pants: Although famously hot, Australia can be cold even in the middle of the continent and some rain could be experienced, therefore a multi layer jacket / pants is essential. The jacket / pants needs to have internal removable liners, for when it heats up, and have Kevlar crash protection and a waterproof pocket for your documents and small camera. Ideally your jacket / pants should be 100% waterproof or carry a set of waterproofs in your day bag.

Helmet: Your helmet should be full faced and of a good quality. Ensure you have a spare visor or replace before departing if scratched. Motocross style helmets are unsuitable for long distance rides, on what may be sometimes dusty surfaces, as you will experience considerable dust ingress. Internal drop down tinted visors are great, but not so if you need prescription sunglasses.

Boots: Ideally, motocross style boots would be best, but bulky and impractical to carry. When choosing a boot, it is essential to choose a boot that offers the most rigid ankle protection possible; ankle injuries are the most common injuries we experience. Pack a set of walking boots in your day bag for those off bike excursions.

Gloves: We recommend the use of summer gloves, as the weather is extremely warm

Additional items: Silk neck warmer, great for keeping the wind out. Earplugs, great for keeping the noise out.

Travel insurance

It is compulsory for our overseas guests, and highly advisable for our Australian guests, to have travel insurance to tour with us. It just makes sense! Your insurance must cover you for any incident you may have whilst riding a motorcycle 700 cc. We have negotiated a 10% discount with various insurance providers around the world, who WILL offer coverage for you, for the activity of riding a motorcycle 700cc and over in foreign lands. For more information return to the "tour page" and click on the "insurance" tab.

Passport & Visas

If travelling from overseas your passport will need to be valid for at least six months AFTER completion of your ride. Your passport should have at least one full page available for Australia although most airports simply scan your passport, no stamp. Most nationalities DO require a visa for Australia and these are available electronically by way of an E-Visa available at <https://www.eta.immi.gov.au/ETAS3/etas>. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure they have any visas that may be required. If you ineligible for an E-Visa, Compass Expeditions has teamed up with the world leaders in visa procurement, CIBT, who have created a special Compass Expeditions visa application page with offices in Australia, USA, Canada, UK, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore and numerous European countries. Tour participants can obtain their Australian visa, (if needed), themselves, however for a small charge CIBT can obtain your visa and negotiate any issues that might arise.

Canada: <http://www.cibtvisas.ca/compass>
USA: <http://www.cibtvisas.com/compassexp>
France: <http://www.cibtvisas.fr/compassexp>
UK: <http://cibtvisas.co.uk/compassexp>

Vaccinations

No vaccinations are mandatory for travel within Australia, however it would be wise to ensure you have your tetanus jab at least and have plenty of insect repellent. We recommend that you speak with your doctor and/or check out the World Health Organization website at www.who.int/country and have a look at their excellent International Travel and Health book, available online. In Australia visit the Australian Medical Centre website at www.traveldoctor.com.au or phone 1300 65 88 44. For our U.S clients visit www.cdc.gov/travel/ and for our U.K clients go to www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice/ for travel health recommendations in general go to www.mdtravelhealth.com now part of red travel.



You've made a booking, what happens next?

Once a booking has been made, you will receive an automated booking confirmation. Soon after, you will receive a "welcome" email, and then receive our comprehensive pre departure booklet in the post. This booklet will prepare you for your adventure and has more details on what to bring and what to expect. We email a "tour dossier" 90 days before departure; this dossier is full of information, including historical and country information. The more you read, the more you will get out of your ride.



Thanks for spending your time reading this information kit. We hope it has inspired you to challenge yourself, if not riding with us then just riding and enjoying this remarkable world that we live in.

If you have further questions, please contact us.

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