

# Welcome to Australia

*Australia is a wild and beautiful place,  
a land whose colour palette of red  
outback sands and Technicolor reefs  
frames sophisticated cities and soulful  
Indigenous stories.*

## Hip Cities

Most Australians live along the coast, and most of these folks live in cities – 89% of Australians, in fact. It follows that cities here are a lot of fun. Sydney is the glamorous poster child with world-class beaches. Melbourne is all arts, alleyways and stellar food. Brisbane is a subtropical town on the rise; Adelaide has festive grace and pubby poise. Perth breathes west coast optimism and Canberra showcases many cultural treasures, while tropical northern Darwin and the chilly southern sandstone city of Hobart couldn't be more different.

## Wild Lands & Wildlife

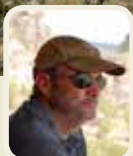
Australia is an extraordinarily beautiful place, as rich in rainforest (from Far North Queensland to far-south Tasmania) as it is in remote rocky outcrops like Uluru, Kakadu and the Kimberleys. The coastline – beset with islands and deserted shores – is wild and wonderful, too. Animating this splendour is wildlife like nowhere else on the planet – a place of kangaroos and crocodiles, of wombats and wallabies, platypus, crocodiles, dingoes and so much more. Tracking these, and Australia's 700-plus bird species, is enough to unleash your inner David Attenborough.

## Epicurean Delights

Australia plates up a multicultural fusion of European techniques and fresh Pacific-rim ingredients – aka 'Mod Oz' (Modern Australian). Seafood plays a starring role, from succulent Moreton Bay bugs to delicate King George whiting. Of course, beer in hand, you'll still find beef, lamb and chicken at Aussie barbecues. Don't drink beer? Australian wines are world-beaters: punchy Barossa Valley shiraz, Hunter Valley semillon and cool-climate Tasmanian sauvignon blanc. Tasmania produces outstanding whisky too. Need a caffeine hit? You'll find cafes pretty much everywhere these days.

## The Open Road

There's a lot of tarmac across this wide brown land. From Margaret River to Cooktown, Jabiru to Dover, the best way to appreciate Australia is to hit the road. Car hire is relatively affordable, road conditions are generally good, and beyond the big cities traffic fades away. If you're driving a campervan, you'll find well-appointed caravan parks in most sizeable towns. Or, hire a 4WD and go off-road: camp in Australia's national parks and secluded corners, or head off down a classic desert track.



## Why I Love Australia

By Anthony Ham, Writer

God I love this place. There is something in the wild lands of the outback that call to me in ways I only partly understand. It happens out on the lonely Carpentaria Hwy or down by the Victoria River near Timber Creek or watching platypus on the Bombala River. It is the possibility, even if I never see it, that a fabulous sighting of wildlife could happen at any moment. Boiled down to its essence: this is a wild land whose natural and human history are writ large on an impossibly beautiful canvas.

**For more about our writers, see p1104**