

Australia

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION



On a JOURNEYS' trip in Australia you'll find cities with extraordinary personality, the vast red Outback, the unique natural wonder of Ayers Rock, northern tropical rain forests, the world's largest barrier reef, world class wildlife parks, a pervading good-natured charm among the people, and, the most famous of all marsupials, kangaroos and koalas!

Lying between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Australia is approximately the same size as the United States and 33 times the size of Great Britain - and it is the only nation to cover an entire continent. It is the world's sixth largest country, being a federation of six states and two territories. Many visitors are unaware of the size and the travel times involved when traveling throughout parts of Australia. To illustrate and help give a sense of scale, the distance between Sydney and Alice Springs is roughly the same as from New York City to Denver, and between Sydney and Melbourne is just slightly less than the distance from Paris to Rome.

GETTING READY FOR YOUR TRIP

Passports

- ❖ Passports are required of U.S. Citizens
- ❖ Must be valid for at least 6 months after your trip – if not, apply or renew immediately
- ❖ Keep a copy of the picture page of your passport in a separate place while traveling
- ❖ Carry an extra passport photo in case you need to apply for a quick replacement

Visas

- ❖ You will need a visa, called an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA), to enter the country
- ❖ The agent who issues your tickets will give your passport information directly to the airline who then has the Australian government approve the ETA.
- ❖ We can also do this for you at no charge, and will need your complete passport details – full name, passport number, passport issue & expiration date, nationality, and your country of birth and birthdate. You MUST notify us if you would like us to get the ETA for you, we will not do it automatically.
- ❖ You can also acquire your ETA directly through the Australian government's website for a fee: <http://www.eta.immi.gov.au/>
- ❖ Nationalities of other countries please inquire with the embassy regarding visas
- ❖ For further information regarding entry requirements, travelers should contact the Embassy of Australia at 1601 Mass. Ave, NW, Washington DC, 20036-2273; Tel: (202) 797-3000; Fax: (202) 797-3168; <http://www.austemb.org/>

Health, Immunizations

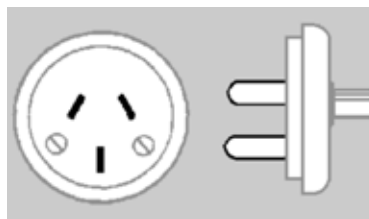
- ❖ Australia has no unusual health problems or serious endemic diseases, and no special health precautions are necessary for tourists.
- ❖ The chance of getting sick from eating in Australia is minimal.
- ❖ The water supply, especially in cities and towns, is safe to drink.
- ❖ SEEK INDEPENDENT MEDICAL ADVICE from your physician or local travelers health service
- ❖ For the latest recommendations for immunizations or malaria prevention contact the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia: 800-311-3435, or visit their website: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>
- ❖ Many universities have immunization clinics that can assist you

Time Difference

- ❖ Australia has three time zones: Eastern Standard Time, Central Standard, and Western Standard.
- ❖ CST is a half hour behind EST, and WST is two hours behind EST.
- ❖ All states except Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia have daylight saving time during the summer, from October through March, during which time clocks are advanced one hour.
- ❖ Depending on the time of year, Sydney (EST) is 13 hours ahead of California (or 16 hours ahead of America's Eastern Time Zone).
- ❖ Daylight saving time in the USA and Australia are usually reversed. So, from April to September, the time in Sydney is 14 hours later than New York; and from October to March, it's 16 hours later.

Electricity

- ❖ The electric current on the national grid is 240/250 volts, AC 50Hz.
- ❖ You will need an adapter for the Australian 3-pin outlets.
- ❖ Hair dryers, shavers and battery rechargers brought from the U.S. will sometimes require a voltage converter. Check your appliances for a 110/240V switch if they are 110V; if not you will need a converter.
- ❖ Many leading hotels have universal outlets for 240V or 110V shavers.



ARRIVAL

Entry

- ❖ Many travelers fly to Australia via a number of carriers including Qantas, Air New Zealand, or United. Most travelers arrive in Sydney or Melbourne.
- ❖ You will be greeted at the airport by a JOURNEYS representative if you arrive with a group or if we have specified that “Meet and Greet” service is included in your individual arrangements.
- ❖ If you are connecting to a domestic flight directly from Sydney you’ll transfer to the domestic terminal. You will not have to worry about claiming your checked luggage if you had it tagged in the U.S. for the city that is your final destination.
- ❖ Jet lag is a real problem that results from confusing biological clock functions located at the base of the brain. Effects may take several days to disappear. We feel that a practical way to adapt is to convince yourself to accept the rhythms of your destination as soon as possible. You will probably want to get up very early the day after arrival in Australia. This is an advantage in setting a pattern of early rising that many participants appreciate for making the most of daylight hours. (See enclosed additional information on Jet Lag in the General Pre-Departure Information.)

Customs

- ❖ Going through Customs you will present your visa/ETA and show your tickets for returning home.
- ❖ There are stringent regulations that virtually ban the importation of plants and certain fruits, vegetables and animal products. Heavy fines are imposed if these restrictions are disregarded.
- ❖ Australia Customs will allow you one liter of liquor, and 200 cigarettes or the equivalent in tobacco or cigars per adult, and dutiable goods to the value of A\$400. There are no charges for personal items that you intend to use for your stay.
- ❖ No restrictions are placed on bringing U.S. dollars into or out of Australia. No more than A\$5,000 in Australian currency notes may be taken out. Letters of credit, travelers checks, and U.S. currency are freely negotiable.
- ❖ A departure tax of A\$10 must be paid by every person 12 or over, except for 24-hour transit passengers. This is payable only in Australian currency, and can’t be prepaid with your airline ticket. You can purchase the tax stamp at any Australian airport or post office. It’s wise to attach it to your return airline ticket or baggage check so that it can be shown when you leave the country.
- ❖ An arrival fee of A\$5 is collected at the same time. You may also pay this at the airport, or at a post office, and only Australian currency is accepted.

GETTING ALONG AS A VISITOR

Food & Restaurants

- ❖ Australia’s restaurants, like those in the United States, reflect a “melting pot” population of many nationalities. In the large cities you can find everything in food from Greek to Italian, Chinese to Lebanese.
- ❖ Beef and lamb are popular throughout the country. You’ll have delicious shellfish nearer the coast.
- ❖ Be sure to visit the local pub at lunchtime for a taste of Australia’s famous “barby” grill.
- ❖ Camping food (“bush tucker”) will be hearty and usually cooked on the open fire.
- ❖ Aussies have traditionally been big meat eaters, but this is changing with the same wave of health consciousness that we find in the United States. Fruits and vegetables are grown year round.
- ❖ Take-out and fast food businesses are popular. Popular meals include fish and chips, pasties (a turnover filled with meat), and sausage rolls.
- ❖ Perhaps the most thoroughly Aussie food item of all is vegemite, a dark brown gooey spread with a strong salty taste, spread on toast.
- ❖ The main meal of the day is eaten in the evening and is called “tea,” and “supper” is a snack before bed.



- ❖ Lunch is referred to as “dinner” if the meal is a large one; otherwise it is called lunch. In fact, any large (formal, special) meal may be called dinner to distinguish it from a regular meal.

Money and Currency Exchange

- ❖ The currency is the Australian dollar. The denominations are \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100, etc. Coins are 5c, 10c, 20c 50c, \$1 and \$2.
- ❖ Traveler’s checks usually offer a better exchange rate than foreign currency and can be cashed at international airports, banks, hotels and motels.
- ❖ Some banks charge a fee, so be sure to ask.
- ❖ Any well-known international travelers checks are acceptable and widely used in Australia.
- ❖ All major credit cards are accepted virtually everywhere.
- ❖ You will find ATMs are widely available as well.

Tipping

- ❖ There are no general rules on tipping in Australia, and it is not customary to tip for most services
- ❖ In all cases tipping is discretionary and subject to the quality of service received. (Wages paid to workers are good and tips are not relied upon for supplementary income.)
- ❖ Hotel porters and taxi drivers are generally tipped a small amount (AUD\$1-2)
- ❖ In a restaurant, 10% of the bill is adequate. There are usually no service charges added to bills.

Emergency Services

- ❖ Hospitals are modern, clean and fully-equipped, and health care is generally accessible in case of emergency illness while you are traveling.
- ❖ Even in the distant Outback, medical care is provided for residents and visitors through the renowned Royal Flying Doctor Service.
- ❖ Aussies boast that no one, at any time, is more than 2 hours from emergency medical treatment.
- ❖ Prevention of injury is always the best policy, however.
- ❖ Your guide will advise you in the case of urgent medical need during your tour.

Climate and Weather

- ❖ Australia is a year-round destination. Because of its gigantic size and location, the climate is varied, and divided into 3 general regions. The north is tropical. The south is temperate. The center is desert.
- ❖ Fact: it is the driest of all the continents.
- ❖ Winter snow typically falls only in the mountains, south of Sydney.
- ❖ Sep-Oct-Nov is spring, Dec-Jan-Feb is summer, Mar-Apr-May is autumn, and Jun-Jul-Aug is winter.
- ❖ Along the southern coast, rainfall is steady year-round, but averages more rainy days in their winter.
- ❖ In Sydney the day/night temperature ranges from 60°F in the winter months to 78°F in summer, and nights from 46°F in winter to 65°F in summer.
- ❖ Similarly, Melbourne’s winter days are around 55°F, and summer around 78°F.
- ❖ Cairns is tropical with daytime temperatures around 80°F during the winter and 90°F in summer
- ❖ The optimal time to visit Queensland & the Reef is May to October when the weather is warm and mild breezes offer the best conditions for snorkeling. Most rain falls from December to April, though it can be wet all year in the rainforest.
- ❖ In places like Alice Springs and Ayers Rock, winter days are warm (60-70°F) and nights are cold (39°F), spring months progress from 80 to 90°F, and summer days can reach an average of 97°F, dropping back down through the fall from 90 to 70°F.
- ❖ In the far north around Darwin, the only meaningful seasonal distinction is between “The Wet”, from November to April, and the rest of the year, which is dry.
- ❖ Darwin and the Top End’s daily temperature range is around 87-94°F, with nights in the 70’s.
- ❖ In the far south, Tasmania’s capitol, Hobart, ranges from 52°F in winter to 71°F in summer; across the island temperatures can vary widely, with a lovely sunny day on the coast of Freycinet to snow at Cradle Mountain in one day.

SPECIAL REMARKS

People

- ❖ Never hesitate to ask questions in Australia! The people are helpful, friendly, and justifiably proud of all the attractions in their vast country.
- ❖ English is the official language all over Australia, and it's easy to interact well in a place where one understands and is understood.
- ❖ There are some language differences, however, and the trip will be more enjoyable if you take time to learn some of the charming colloquialisms heard only in Australia.
- ❖ On the whole, Australian and American mainstream cultures are similar and compatible, and the same general rules of etiquette apply.
- ❖ When one visits a family, the guest is greeted warmly at the door before being invited to enter the home. Flowers or a bottle of wine are often brought to the hostess when a guest is invited for lunch or dinner. At a private home, one does not serve himself from various dishes at the table, but receives a plate already served.

Local Norms

- ❖ Australia is a very clean country and visitors are expected to maintain its standards. In fact, there is a stiff fine for littering.
- ❖ Punctuality is also extremely important in most of the country; if breakfast is served between 7am - 8:30, don't arrive at 8:30!

Safety

- ❖ Observe the same precautions taken at home
- ❖ Do not flaunt a bulging wallet, always lock unattended vehicles, do not leave baggage unattended in public
- ❖ Make use of security facilities provided for valuables in your accommodation and on the boat
- ❖ In towns, the best place to carry your passport and money is in a pouch worn around the neck inside of the shirt or in a money belt around the waist
- ❖ It is highly recommended that you buy travel insurance that covers your baggage before you leave
- ❖ Don't take anything you can't afford to lose or can't replace

Shopping

- ❖ Shopping in Australia's cities is comparable to shopping in all other major cosmopolitan cities of the world. Even in smaller places there are department stores, arcades, malls, gift shops, boutiques and specialty stores.
- ❖ Quality Australian opals and other precious or semi-precious stones are good buys, as are sheepskins, leather goods, and aboriginal artifacts and paintings.
- ❖ Main post offices have philatelic desks where sets of souvenir stamps can be bought.
- ❖ There are duty free shops in city centers and international airports.
- ❖ The Northern Territory, specifically Darwin, is probably one of the best areas in which to shop for aboriginal art and artifacts. A close second would be Queensland.
- ❖ Other items to look for are bags, clothing and rugs made from animal hides, and iron ore jewelry.

Packing Tips

- ❖ Lightweight clothing can be worn year-round, except during winter or for cold nights in the outback.
- ❖ If your visit is in summer, it is still a good idea to include a warm sweater or jacket for the occasional cold evening or comfort in air-conditioned rooms.
- ❖ Most hotels in Australia have coin-operated laundry facilities for guests, but it is helpful if your clothes are easily washable and wrinkle-resistant.
- ❖ Dress is informal most of the time. We recommend versatile clothes that can be worn both in the bush

and in towns.

- ❖ If you will be dining in a nicer restaurant in a large city, a tie and jacket is recommended for men, and something similarly dressy for women.
- ❖ Lightweight & light colored clothes will help keep you cooler. Also keep in mind that synthetic fabrics dry faster than natural fibers like cotton, especially in humid areas, so you can pack less if you are able to wash and dry your clothes easily.

Equipment Tips

- ❖ A good goal is to fit everything into a single piece of checked luggage and a carry-on daypack
- ❖ We recommend a durable, water-resistant, soft duffel bag or lightweight soft-sided suitcase as your checked luggage. Hard suitcases are not practical due to space limitations.
- ❖ A small backpack or hip-pack is ideal for carrying bottled water, camera, extra sunblock, etc, while on excursions where the terrain requires your hands to be free.
- ❖ Choose a distinctive, easily identified bag, and use a JOURNEYS luggage tag for bag identification by staff, and your name and address should be also indelibly affixed inside the luggage.
- ❖ Camping gear is provided if necessary but you might consider bringing a small travel pillow.
- ❖ Be aware that weight limits on checked luggage for in-county flights are usually 35-44 lbs per person
- ❖ You may want to bring an extra smaller, collapsible (lockable) duffel, to leave items in a city hotel while you are on an excursion or to use on your return for souvenirs

CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT SUGGESTIONS CHECKLIST

Pre-Departure Tasks

- Obtain or renew passport
- Buy travelers checks in low denominations
- Evaluate and obtain trip cancellation, baggage and medical insurance
- Consult with physician for immunizations and prescription medicine recommendations
- Break-in primary footwear
- Make final payment to JOURNEYS at least 60 days before trip departure

Clothing

- Lightweight hiking boots or comfortable athletic or walking shoes
- Sport sandals with Velcro strap, flip-flops or sandals
- Shorts
- Comfortable, lightweight pants
- Nicer outfit: shirt & tie or blouse (optional)
- Nicer pants or skirt (optional)
- Lightweight long-sleeve shirts
- T-shirts, short sleeve shirts and/or tank tops
- Sweater or sweatshirt
- Light weight jacket
- Rain gear - poncho or jacket and pants
- Sun hat or cap with wide brim
- Bandana
- Swim suit
- Socks
- Sleepwear
- Under clothes

For "Winter" trips (southern regions, May-Sep)

- Medium or heavy weight jacket
- Long underwear for camping and cold nights



- Warm socks
- Warm hat and gloves

Personal Items

- Sunblock (waterproof, high SPF)
- Lipbalm with SPF
- Insect repellent with DEET content
- 2 spare passport photos (in case of lost passport)
- Wrist watch and/or travel clock
- Sunglasses (with strap, case)
- Extra eyeglasses/contacts
- Money belt or pouch for valuables
- Small flashlight with extra batteries
- Copies of all important documents
- Day pack (can also serve as an airline carry-on bag)
- Camera, memory cards, film, batteries, charger
- Underwater camera (disposable kind is very handy)
- Lead bag/containers to protect film in X-ray machines
- Lightweight binoculars
- Plug adapter (if needed)
- Soft duffel with shoulder strap or durable suitcase
- Luggage tags
- Ziploc-type bags for packing shampoo or other liquids
- Stuff sacks or plastic bags for organizing inside luggage (also useful for dirty laundry)
- Thread, needles, safety pins for minor repairs
- Small packable umbrella

Personal First Aid Kit

- Aspirin or other pain killer
- Cold relief tablets, antihistamine, cough drops
- Band-aids, gauze pads
- Antibiotics
- Prescription medicines
- Aloe gel or lotion in case of sunburn
- Anti-diarrhea medicine
- Antibiotic cream/ointment
- Supply of feminine hygiene items
- Motion sickness tablets
- Earplugs

Essential Items For Your Carry-On Bag

- Passport
- Domestic and international air tickets
- Travelers checks, money and credit cards
- Insurance certificates
- Address and telephone number of emergency contact
- Prescription medicines
- Extra set of underclothes
- Toiletries in small leak-proof bottles
- Camera gear, film and other valuables



Optional Items

- Binoculars
- Address book, writing paper, or journal, pen/pencil
- Small washcloth
- Wet wipes/moist towelettes and Kleenex
- Favorite snack foods (pre-packaged)
- Pictures of your house and family
- Mask, snorkel, fins, wetsuit (if applicable)
- Map
- Silica bags for moisture (protect camera equipment)
- Video camera
- Phrase book

