



The new South Wales Sydney Harbor Bridge and Opera House.

## The World's Top Travel Destination

WHAT IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST ISLAND, the only island that is a continent, and the only continent that is a country? Give up? It's the Land Down Under—Australia.

Here is another riddle to consider. What country resides on one of the driest, flattest, and hottest of all inhabited continents and can still be the leading bucket list destination for travelers in the know? Perhaps its location in the middle of the ocean inspires the wanderlust in people wanting to visit this exotic locale. Australia tends to rank close to the top destination in the world annually

on bucket lists of travel publications such as *Travel & Leisure*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, and *Virtuoso Life*.

I have visited Australia five times over the past 10 years and sent more than 500 clients to Australia on trips for adventure, opera and classical music, food and wine, honeymoon and anniversary celebrations, multi-generational experiences, scuba diving, deep sea fishing, cruises and tours, and general rest and relaxation. I could very easily live in Australia based on its quality of life and standard of living, especially with our favorable exchange rate.

### THE LAND OF OZ

Australia is not just a place you visit, it is a place you feel. "Oz" has it all: a unique history and culture, beautiful natural wonders and wildlife, world-class food and wine, picture perfect beaches, and something special for all of you adventure enthusiasts. Its year-round mild climate adds to the enjoyment.

So, what makes this destination so desirable? I believe it is the Australian spirit, which has been chiseled and honed away from the influence of its English roots and replaced with the irreverence of a laid-back California lifestyle. The Australians

know how to work hard and play hard, and many times they know how to do both at the same time.

Let's explore the country in a little more detail. There are six states and two territories to explore: New South Wales (Sydney), Victoria (Melbourne), Queensland (Brisbane), South Australia (Adelaide), Tasmania (Hobart), Western Australia (Perth), Northern Territory (Darwin), and the capital city, Canberra. There is something to be said for each of these pieces to the Australian experience.

### TRAVEL TIPS

How do we get there? First of all, the flight to Australia is about the same as flying to Europe. You fly all night and land in the morning, except you depart from either California or Texas for your 15-hour flight. Thank goodness for an endless supply of movies and a lot of very good Shiraz. Every mode of transportation is available to you once you have arrived in either Sydney, Melbourne, or Brisbane, which are the main entry points for your international flight, or you can travel there on your favorite cruise line.

Our exploration will begin with New South Wales. Sydney with its iconic Harbor Bridge and Opera House is the perfect place to begin and end your time in Australia. It is the major events capital of the South Pacific, and the perfect beginning for exploring the Blue Mountains, Hunter Valley, and the Pacific Coastline up to Byron Bay. I strongly recommend climbing the Harbor Bridge for enjoying the 365-degree view of the city, harbor, and ocean. Later on, treat yourself to a fabulous dinner at the Park Hyatt which is located harbor-side for a view of the Opera House.



*Victoria and the Great Ocean Road.*

As we head north from New South Wales, we come to Queensland which is the gateway to Surfers Paradise, natural wildlife, the Great Barrier Reef, and the Daintree Rain Forest. It is the only place where a barrier reef and rain forest come together at the top of the continent. If you want to learn to scuba dive, then take advantage of visiting the Great Barrier Reef and treat yourself to your very first discovery dive while visiting the Reef; it is a five-star rated experience below the surface. I would suggest going out to Heron Island for 2-3 days of Reef exploration.

If you headed south from New South Wales, you would come to Victoria and the gateway to the Great Ocean Road and the Twelve Apostles. This iconic drive travels the southern coastline of Australia and goes by the Twelve Apostles, a row

of limestone stacks which have been carved out of the land by the sea. Melbourne is the foodie capital of Australia and home to many of the top sporting events such as the Australian Open (Tennis), Formula One auto races, and the PGA Australian Open (Golf). The Yarra Valley serves up amazing dairy products and wine, but save time for the nightly march of the Fairy Penguins from the sea when you visit Phillip Island. Phillip Island is less than two hours from Melbourne.

If you headed west from Victoria, you would arrive in South Australia. You are now in wine country. Enjoy the highest-rated Australian wine from the Barossa Valley, Penfold's Grange. I recommend experiencing animals in the wild on Kangaroo Island, which is a short flight from Adelaide, or find that perfect precious stone from



*The Great Barrier Reef near Cairns, Queensland.*



*The Twelve Apostles near Great Ocean Road.*



A wallaby at Kangaroo Island in Adelaide, South Australia.



Aboriginal art found at Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory.

the below ground city of Coober Pedy, which is the Opal Capital of the world. For the true adventure aficionado, there are the Great White Shark cage-dives off the Eyre Peninsula southwest of Adelaide, an adrenaline rush.

Perhaps you may want to go by train north on The Ghan from Adelaide to either Alice Springs in the middle of the Outback or all the way up to Darwin on the north coast. The Northern Territory is the gateway to Ayers Rock (Uluru) and the Kimberlee Region, which are the spiritual homes to the Aboriginal people. Outside of Darwin is the Kakadu National Park which is known for its natural beauty, saltwater crocodiles, Aboriginal art, and for you bird watchers, home to over one-third

of Australia's bird population.

The last Australian frontier is Western Australia with its 7,500 miles of beaches on the Indian Ocean, some of the most amazing sunsets I have ever seen. It is home to one of the finest food and wine regions anywhere, Margaret River, and it is the surfing capital of Australia. I would recommend visiting the world heritage site of Ningaloo Reef and swim with the whale sharks, or take a camel ride on Cable Beach in Broome, or pan for gold in the Outback.

My hope is that I have piqued your interest for visiting Australia. Remember, Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere. Our winter is their summer. Many of our clients prefer to visit during

the year when it is not high season (December to March) to take advantage of better pricing and less congestion. I would recommend staying for a minimum of 10-15 days to fully enjoy Australia since you have come a long distance for a unique travel experience. I would also recommend a visit to New Zealand, but not at the same time unless you have unlimited means and time for both. Plan that visit for another time so you can fully enjoy the Kiwi experience by itself.

Perhaps you will agree there is nothing quite like Australia. You can visit it over and over again, but it is the rhythm of the fun-loving and free-spirited people which you feel. They truly inspire your imagination.

G'day! 🇺🇸



The wine region near Margaret River in Western Australia.



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