

LeGrow's Travel

Inside Scoop: AUSTRALIA

Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey

It's the world's largest island, amid three oceans with 80% of residents within an hour's drive of any coast...yet stunning desert landscapes offer unbeatable adventures. Take this Inside Scoop to enjoy the spectrum!

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

Have a valid passport that doesn't expire within 6 months of your return, www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp

Ask your counsellor about LeGrow's Travel cancellation/interruption and medical insurance. We strongly suggest coverage as being repatriated (brought home), especially long distances, is very costly. Insurance covers numerous medical expenses such as care while awaiting clearance to be flown home.

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- advance seats and upgrades
- booking excursions ahead
- stopovers and travel times
- inter-country travel.

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We Know Travel Best.™
A Maritime Travel Company

Think of Australia as two territories with six states; just like Canada, each area offers distinctive experiences. Given the travel time to get there, most visitors take longer vacations with time to visit a few areas. Helpful tips:

- Plan a transition day before and after—with a longer travel time than some destinations, jet lag and airline flight changes, you'll be rested.
- Be realistic: we know you want value for money in balancing choices and amenities. Whatever your budget, aim to relax and enjoy. Special requests are only requests: unless paying for an oceanview suite, those are premium (why upgrade fees apply).
- For climate, think opposites...December to February is summer; June to August is winter. It's temperate year-round with the northern part warm most of the time, the southern states having cooler winters. Always take a hat and sunscreen.
- Electrical service is 220–240 volts, AC 50Hz.
- Excellent telephone, internet and cell phone service is available almost anywhere but be aware of expensive roaming and calling fees. Contact your provider in advance for cell use.
- The Australian Dollar (AUS) has similar denominations as our currency. Change funds at banks and airports. ATMs take major credit cards; some merchants don't take cards for purchases under \$15 so carry cash. Inform credit card companies of the dates you're away. Traveller's cheques are not widely accepted. A 10% GST applies to most purchases.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience!

Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags so put coloured tape or ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery and as all medicine must be declared, bring prescription drugs in original containers or a doctor's letter (don't bring in steroids—or feathers. True).

Items long distance travellers pack in carry-on: pen/notebook, disinfectant hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg), a change of underclothes and shirt.

Pack most liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size is 100ml (3.4oz). All must fit in a clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often available before airport screening), then place it in the tray. You may take baby formula, food or milk for a child under 2 years old (0-24 months).

Permitted in carry-on: laptops, portable music players, cell phones, disposable razors, umbrellas, canes and nail clippers. Items you can't take on: credit card knives, corkscrews and sports gear such as golf clubs, baseball bats, racquets and pool cues.

Check with your airline(s) for restrictions and be aware the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority controls security; extra measures mean allowing more time.

Tips: Most hotels provide hair dryers so save that space for souvenirs. Visiting New Zealand? See our Inside Scoop: New Zealand.

What To Do...What To Do...

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is home to **Canberra**, the capital city south of **Sydney** in New South Wales, the most populous state. If you're a culture aficionado or fan of Australian Rules football you'll want to visit **Melbourne**. Due to its extended winter warmth and sunshine, one of the most famous areas is Queensland with **Brisbane** and **Great Barrier Reef**—a must-see natural site. South Australia hosts **Adelaide**, the Festival City (more than 500 annually!). **Alice Springs** is the central spot, in the Northern Territory with **Ayers Rock** (Uluru) and **Darwin**. Western Australia has **Perth**. Consider taking the ferry to **Tasmania**, Australia's smallest state, visiting **Hobart** and its environs. Given Australia's size and airlines, it's easy to jet across country. Rail travel is terrific with cross-country trips a great way to see the Indian-Pacific route, from Sydney to Perth. Coach and bus tours are plentiful and affordable (ask your counsellor). If you aim to drive, take your driver's license; the states/territories have different requirements (ask your counsellor).

Your Airline

Sign up online for your airline(s) email or text flight notifications as your flight could be delayed (the plane might be flying in). CATSA notes “*Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).*” Airline staff are on duty some 3hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. Many airlines have reciprocal “code-shares;” your ticket for one airline, you travel on another’s plane. **For check-in or carry-on baggage allowances and restrictions**, see your airline’s website. Size and weight restrictions for checked and carry-on varies by airline. You MUST have the appropriate visa before leaving Canada (there are different types of tourist visas) so confirm with your counsellor. Keep a separate photocopy or a cell photo of your passport’s ID page.



Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips at www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops

☐ Your sense of adventure & humour!

Before Leaving

Don’t buy or accept anything suspect or that may be taken from you at customs: plants, meat/animal products, drugs or endangered species parts. Know your limits and exemptions, www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html such as on duty free alcohol and tobacco. With connections, unless in checked luggage, buy duty free before your last flight into Canada.



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadians: Emergency? The Consulate General in Sydney serves New South Wales, Queensland and Northern Territory. Canberra’s High Commission serves ACT, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, Pacific countries/territories (Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu). Or contact Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885, sos@international.gc.ca, www.canadainternational.gc.ca/australia-australie/contact-contactez.aspx.

When There

Go for adventure: You’d think we’d start off with a major site but one compelling tour is to **Coober Pedy** (Aboriginal, meaning “white man” and “hole”) which produces most of the world’s opals. Well north of Adelaide in Southern Australia, it’s not so well known or on major must-do lists but if you like quirky, this is for you. To escape the summer heat, half its 3,500 residents live in underground dugouts. Like golfing? How about a round where there’s no grass except for the piece of turf you take with you to tee off, playing at night with glowing balls? Restaurants, bars, hotels and yes, a church thrive underground. Take tours, talk to residents and join the nightly stargazing: www.cooberpedy.sa.gov.au/tourism. Otherwise, consider:

- **Bondi Beach**—one the world’s most famous beaches—10 minutes from **Sydney**, is a perfect place to learn to surf given its calm waters; a great place for families.
- **Great Barrier Reef** is a phenomenal “living masterpiece” (as Australia describes it) that celebrates water sports; you can swim, scuba, snorkel, parasail, kayak and just explore—for more than 2,000kms. In “sting season” (November to April), wear protective water shoes and clothing when swimming or snorkelling and always observe warning signs. Tons of excursions are available including dive schools, overnight sailboat and mooring, as well as the region’s national parks and **Whitsunday Islands**. Take a helicopter ride, also over the **Daintree Rainforest**. Consider an overnight package trip to see the turtles and manta rays of **Lady Elliot Island**, one of three island resorts (ask your counsellor) where you can feed fish and snorkel to see coral, stay in cabins or tents with buffet dinners.
- If you plan to hike in the outback or desert areas such as **Ayers Rock**, be prepared for extreme heat and sun (even cloudy days) and drink lots of water. With bushfire concerns spring to summer, use designated fireplaces if camping and observe bans. If not experienced, hire a guide; take maps/GPS and stay on track. Avoid spider and snake bites by wearing proper footwear, tuck pants into socks. Your counsellor can recommend onsite companies.
- In coastal areas, there can be rough surf and always swim between yellow and red flags. Most public beaches have lifeguards during warmer months (October to April), some all year. As anywhere, don’t swim alone or at night. While crocodile habitats are marked by signs avoid swimming in rivers and mangroves.

Food, wine and beer: As Australia’s climate is perfect for vineyards, there’s a plethora of wine and culinary tours whether **Melbourne’s Yarra Valley** 160+ wineries, **Tasmania’s** red wine festival (pinot noir does well here) or the major **Barossa** region wineries (why not take a master class?). **Swan Valley** (boat ride from **Perth**) hosts microbreweries (and yes, vineyards). If in **Darwin** on a Thursday, May to October, head to its 60-stall food market. Because of volcanic soil and rainforest, Queensland’s **Cairns** is known for tropical fruit (and catamaran rides to outer Great Barrier Reef and 3-day luxury cruises).

Culture: **Sydney** Opera House in the harbour isn’t just for music buffs, it’s an engineering and architectural marvel with a roofline (like a ship in sail) that’s become the iconic image of the city. **Melbourne’s** diverse cultural landscape dominates from Federation Square to Southside/Southbank; its outskirts has numerous museums, theatres, art galleries and music venues.

Tips: Australia has three time zones. Daylight Saving Time isn’t observed in some areas so determining Canadian time differences can be daunting: generally think a partial day ahead. To avoid making 3am calls, see www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html. Just enter your time (midnight in Halifax?), where you’re going (Sydney) = 1pm (3pm Coordinated Universal Time UTC, formerly Greenwich Mean Time GMT). For more information, www.australia.com.

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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