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Craig
travel

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

A JOURNEY TO THE LANDS DOWN UNDER

FEB 10 - MAR 4, 2024 | 24 DAYS | 40 MEALS

JOURNEY LEADER: CATHY SEMLER

Enjoy a fascinating Maori show

Join us as we journey to the “Lands Downunder”, combining visits to two vastly different but enchanting nations. This has been our most popular tour for the past three decades.

Designed with leisure in mind, our itinerary features two or three-night stays, allowing for in-depth experiences in these fabulous lands. The tour moves at a comfortable pace while providing a host of special outings and meals.

From the moment of your arrival in Auckland to the dramatic lands of the South Island and through the vast outback, you will find that every detail has been carefully arranged to provide a truly insightful visit of both New Zealand and Australia. Quality hotels, warm friendly people, and a carefully planned itinerary, combine to make this the journey of a lifetime!

Read on... but don't delay. This tour always fills quickly.



Inclusive Features

- Return airfare to / from Australia and New Zealand plus domestic flights within each country with Air New Zealand and Virgin Airlines
- First class hotels, as indicated or similar
- All sightseeing and entrance fees as described
- 40 meals included as noted in the itinerary (B - 21 breakfasts, L - 7 lunches, D - 12 dinners) plus in flight meals
- Services of your Canadian journey leader and / or expert local driver / guides in each area visited
- All gratuities, surcharges, taxes and fees for included services
- Airport transfers in Canada or equivalent value with purchase of group airfare

Highlights

- Rooms confirmed for early arrival in Auckland, with 2 nights to enjoy the delights of this city
- 3 nights in Cairns and Queenstown (New Zealand's premier resort)
- 2 nights in Rotorua and Ayers Rock, the Outback
- 4 nights in Sydney
- Full day excursion to Milford Sound with lunch
- Full day cruise to the Great Barrier Reef
- Rainforest experience in Kuranda by rail and Skyrail
- Most meals included with many special outings:
 - Auckland Harbourside Restaurant dinner reception
 - "Hangi" dinner and Maori show, Rotorua
 - Cruise and gourmet BBQ dinner at Walter Peak, Queenstown
 - Bush BBQ lunch, Kuranda
 - Lunch cruise to Great Barrier Reef
 - Field of Light dinner, Uluru
 - Luncheon harbour cruise in Sydney
 - Special dinner at a local restaurant overlooking Darling Harbour in Sydney

Journey Leader

Cathy Semler retired as a High School Principal after devoting 35 years to the teaching profession. She is a seasoned traveller who loves the opportunity to learn from new adventures. Her travel has taken her to places like Alaska, Australia, New Zealand, India, Costa Rica, Ireland and many places in Europe. She enjoys visiting cities like Paris, Amsterdam and London as well as hiking in the mountains and cruising to different countries. Cathy is looking forward to this next adventure with you.



FEB 10-11, Saturday-Sunday

Depart Canada

Tour members from across Canada gather in Vancouver and fly to Auckland, losing a day en route.

FEB 12, Monday

Arrive Auckland, New Zealand

Arrive in Auckland early this morning and transfer to our hotel, where our rooms are ready for immediate check-in. Enjoy a leisurely day. This evening we gather for dinner at our hotel. **Grand Millennium** (2 nights) D

FEB 13, Tuesday

Auckland

This morning we will be introduced to the delights of New Zealand's most populous city. Highlights will include the National Museum with its excellent Maori displays, and a visit to the observation deck on the Sky Tower. Enjoy a free afternoon - we suggest a ferry ride to Devonport. This evening we will be treated to a Welcome Reception and dinner at the Harbourside Restaurant. BD

FEB 14, Wednesday

Waitomo

We follow the Waikato River to the famous Waitomo Caves

where we cruise in the Glow Worm Grotto. After some free time for lunch, we continue to Rotorua and our hotel, located moments from the lakefront. Later this evening we enjoy a traditional 'Hangi' dinner in a Maori village complete with a concert of Maori songs and dances.

Novotel Rotorua (2 nights)

BD

FEB 15, Thursday

Rotorua

This morning we will take in the sheep show at the Agrodome and enjoy the gondola ride to the Skyline Restaurant where we will enjoy a delightful buffet lunch. At the National Kiwi Hatchery, we will see New Zealand's unique national bird and symbol, the Kiwi. Visit the Te Puia Thermal Reserve to see the mud pools and geysers, and to learn about the life and crafts of the Maori. Balance of the day is at leisure, when you can enjoy the thermal baths or possibly take an optional helicopter ride over the region (approx. NZD 695.00pp).

BL

FEB 16, Friday

Rotorua / Auckland / Queenstown

This morning begin our exploration of the South Island. Our next three nights are in the heart of the South Island enjoying majestic mountain scenery and magical lakes of Queenstown, New Zealand's resort capital. This evening we cruise across the lake to Walter Peak sheep station on the ss Earnslaw where we enjoy a gourmet BBQ dinner.

Novotel Queenstown (3 nights)

BD

FEB 17, Saturday

Queenstown

Enjoy a day at leisure. Ride a jet boat on the Shotover River, take the Gondola to Bob's Peak or stroll by the lake in the beautiful Botanic Gardens.

BD

FEB 18, Sunday

Milford Sound

Travel through the rugged grandeur of the Hollyford Valley to Milford Sound. Enjoy a picnic lunch as we cruise to the sea, past towering Mitre Peak and cascading waterfalls. This afternoon we return to Queenstown by coach, or as an option, you can enjoy a flight back to town (approx. NZD 300.00pp), weather permitting. This evening we can try one of the excellent local restaurants.

BL

FEB 19, Monday

Queenstown / Mt. Cook / Twizel

Our morning drive will take us through some of the magnificent scenery for which the South Island is known, including a visit to the historic gold mining centre of Arrowtown. Enjoy a midday wine tour and tasting before we continue to Mt. Cook National Park, with free time at the Hermitage for views of the mountains and an optional flight over Mt. Cook (approx. NZD 490.00pp), weather permitting. **Mackenzie Hotel** (1 night)

BD

Feb 20, Tuesday

Mt. Cook / Christchurch

After breakfast at our hotel visit the Chapel of the Good Shepherd with its extraordinary altar. Continue across the rich farmlands of the Canterbury Plains to Christchurch, a city often described as more English than England. We will have a tour of Christchurch, with opportunities to stroll in the wonderful Botanical Gardens.

Crowne Plaza (1 night)

BD

Feb 21, Wednesday

Christchurch / Melbourne

Early this morning we transfer to the airport for our flight across the Tasman Sea to Melbourne. Explore Australia's second city and financial capital this morning, including the Botanic Gardens, Festival Centre, Captain Cook's Cottage and traditional residential areas. This evening's dinner will be at Meat & Wine Co, one of Australia's favourite steak houses. **Rendezvous Hotel Melbourne** (3 nights)

BD



Australia's iconic koala bear



Sydney's Opera House

Feb 22, Thursday

Phillip Island

After a free morning, we drive to Phillip Island to see the fairy penguins once they return from a day hunting out at sea. En route we shall visit the Nobbie's Antarctic Centre and Churchill Island.

BD

Feb 23, Friday

Yarra Valley

Our day begins with a steam train excursion through the Blue Dandenong hills, to enjoy the tranquil Australian countryside. After visiting a local wildlife sanctuary to see kangaroos and koalas, we explore the beautiful Yarra Valley. Enjoy a special lunch among the vine covered hills and sample several local wines before returning to Melbourne.

BL

FEB 24, Saturday

Melbourne / Ayers Rock

This morning we depart Australia's Southern Coast and venture to Uluru or Ayers Rock, in the heart of the Outback and the Aborigines' most sacred site. Enjoy vistas of the Rock before exploring Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) where we will take a walk deep into the gorge to experience the vastness of the landscape. On our way back to the hotel we stop for views of the Kata Tjuta and sand dunes before reaching the cultural centre to learn more about Aborigine history, law, language, and art. This evening we ride camels through the desert with Uluru and Kata Tjuta as our backdrop.

Voyages Sails in the Desert (2 nights)

B

FEB 25, Sunday**Ayers Rock**

Enjoy touring the base of this amazing monolith, the Mutitjulu Base Walk, that leads to a special waterhole plus inspiring views at Kantju Gorge. This evening, enjoy the changing colours of Uluru as the sun sets (weather permitting) during our special Field of Light experience which also includes the award winning 'Sounds of Silence' dinner under the outback sky. BD

FEB 26, Monday**Ayers Rock / Cairns**

After a leisurely morning, we depart the Outback to the Gold Coast and the wonderful city of Cairns. This evening enjoy a lovely dinner at Dundees Restaurant.

Pacific Hotel (3 nights) BD

FEB 27, Tuesday**Great Barrier Reef**

Embark on the catamaran Quicksilver and journey to the outer edge of the Great Barrier Reef, the largest and most spectacular undersea garden in the world. View the coral and sea life by glass-bottom boat, or better yet, while snorkeling. BL

FEB 28, Wednesday**Kuranda / Pamagirri / Skyrail**

After our scenic rail journey to Kuranda through the Barron Gorge, we venture into the rainforest to a wildlife park to see a variety of native fauna and to be entertained by the Pamagirri Aboriginal dancers. Following our bush BBQ lunch, we return to the lowland on the Skyrail with close up views of the rainforest. BL

FEB 29, Thursday**Cairns / Sydney**

Say goodbye to Cairns as we fly south to Sydney. On arrival, we shall transfer directly to our hotel in the city centre. **The Grace Hotel** (4 nights) B

MAR 1, Friday**Blue Mountains**

Enjoy a full day excursion into the beautiful Blue Mountains passing picturesque villages and enjoying spectacular views and waterfalls while hearing about the unique Australian forest species. We visit the quaint village of Leura and skirt around Cliff Drive to Katoomba for views of the magnificent Jamieson Valley and the Three Sisters. Following lunch at a local restaurant, we visit Scenic World for a ride on the Scenic Railway, Skyway or Cableway. BL

MAR 2, Saturday**Sydney**

This morning we discover the charms of Sydney, from its historic centre through the posh inner suburbs to the Heads and its famous southern beaches. Enjoy a luncheon harbour cruise, followed by a guided tour of the symbol of Sydney, the iconic Opera House. We can then return to the hotel or visit the Historic Rocks district. Our hotel is ideally located just steps from excellent shopping and the excitement of Darling Harbour. Balance of day at leisure. BL

MAR 3, Sunday**Sydney**

Enjoy a completely free day, with options for many excursions or simply to explore on our own. Take a stroll in the Botanic Gardens, discover the excitement of Darling Harbour, or explore the wonderful shops of the Queen Victoria building, just steps from our hotel. This evening we will gather for our farewell dinner at the Harbourfront Restaurant. Consider reserving in advance if a performance at the Opera House is on your bucket list! BD

MAR 4, Monday**Sydney / Canada**

All too soon our journey Down Under draws to a close as we catch our flights back across the Pacific. Regaining our lost day, we arrive in Canada today. B

CT Rating 3/5 - Moderately Challenging: This journey involves extensive travel with long flights and travel days. Temperatures will range from comfortable to very hot and humid. Travel in the Outback can be strenuous, involving rough roads and hot conditions. Hotels are comfortable and the locals are very friendly.



Book and deposit by September 28, 2023

and save \$300 per person



Tour Cost in Canadian Dollars per person

Land Only* (Join / Leave Hotel)	\$13,235
Vancouver	\$15,395
Victoria	\$15,495
Calgary / Edmonton.....	\$15,595
Toronto / Ottawa / Montreal.....	\$15,795
Regina / Saskatoon / Winnipeg.....	\$15,745
Halifax **	\$15,945
Saint John ** / St. John's	\$15,995
Single Supplement	\$3,295

**Members joining from these cities may receive an overnight hotel stay in lieu of home city transfers.

*Land only clients join at the hotel in Auckland and leave at the hotel in Sydney. Airfares and air carriers are subject to change and will be confirmed prior to final payment. Airfares from other gateways are available on request. Refer to inclusive features for details.

Land only price includes flight segments to and from the Outback and excludes all other flights. Tour price is based on sharing a twin-bedded room at hotels. Prices are based on a minimum 20 members and on rates, taxes and fees effective June 2023 and are subject to change due to factors beyond our control. Group to be escorted with a minimum 20 group members.

Visa Requirements: Travellers will need to apply online for e-visas for New Zealand (\$58 NZD) / Australia (\$20 AUD). Cost is subject to change. Craig Travel will provide assistance whenever possible.

Insurance is NOT INCLUDED but is highly recommended. Premiums are calculated based on the individual's age, destination (country), trip length, and trip booking window – please contact our staff to receive a quote. Your coverage starts on the effective date of your Confirmation of Coverage. Please discuss your insurance coverage prior to booking. Check our website for the most current information. Refer to the enrollment form for terms and conditions.

Final payment will be due November 7, 2023

Deposit will be \$800 per person.

To reserve your place on this tour, simply complete the enrollment form, indicating your home city, and forward it with your deposit to:



1092 Mount Pleasant Road
Toronto, ON M4P 2M6
416-484-0926 | 1-800-387-8890
tours@craigtravel.com
craigtravel.com

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