



Larapinta Trail & Red Centre Trekking Challenge

Trip notes

Welcome to RAW Travel... we hope that you enjoy exploring the world as much as we do. The Larapinta Trail is a trek through the central desert region, walking along the ridges of the western Macdonnell ranges.

It is fast becoming one of the great walks of Australia and a superb way to experience the Australian outback and local Aboriginal culture while using bush tracks and camping under the stars each night. We follow the trek with a visit to Uluru, Kata Tjuta and King's canyon to complete your outback odyssey.

Itinerary

Day 1 - 12/06 Arrive Alice Springs

Arrive at leisure today and check into your hotel.

Enjoy the sights and sounds of the bustling heart of the Red Centre before leaving it all behind for the desolate outback. Browse Aboriginal artworks at Central Australia's best art galleries, or take in a twilight didgeridoo performance. This is also a good time to ensure you have all articles needed for your Larapinta Trail walk.

We meet at in the evening to discuss finer points of the coming days with your guides.

Overnight Alice Springs accommodation (Twin share).

Day 2 - 13/06 Ormiston Pound Trek (L/D) Approx 8.4km

An early start and its bye bye suburbia – hello wilderness! The majestic and serene West MacDonnell Ranges are rich in natural wonders and traditional culture and are considered the best there is in Australia. Our first walk is regarded as the “primo” small walk of the Larapinta. The Ormiston Pound Walk is full of wow factor, wildlife and flora. A location inspirational to Albert Namatjira, tonight we camp in the vicinity of the mighty Finke River, synonymous in the dreamtime (Alcher-inga) of the Western Arrente Aboriginal people.

Day 3 - 14/06 Ormiston Gorge to Glen Helen (B/L/D) Approx 13.6km

Today we traverse the low lying regions surrounding Ormiston Gorge gradually working our way upward into the back reaches of the Finke River. This area is steeped in traditional folklore with several important sites being viewed including ‘Yapulpa’, which is part of the Carpet Snake Dreaming legend as well as the Emu and Kangaroo Man Dreaming.

Tonight our camp site is shadowed by Mount Sonder (The Pregnant Lady) and the imagery of the Yeperenye Hills (Caterpillar Dreaming). Relax at the campsite as the sun sets and the colours of the night desert erupt into million star accommodation.

Day 4 - 15/06 Glen Helen Gorge / Redbank Gorge (B/L/D) Approx 23km

The tempo lifts as a 23km trek awaits. This is a challenging section of the Larapinta. Variety is the theme for today with undulating open Spinifex plains giving way to a gradual climb to the Half Way Rocky Bar Gap, through constant up and down at the base of Mt Sonder. Enter the eerie caverns in one of the Red Centre's less traversed gorges. Squeeze through narrow passageways, between polished, multi-hued walls that block out the sunlight, its cathedral atmosphere and vivid colours are well worth the effort. Enjoy the evening around the campfire with your fellow walkers for another night of friendly banter and a hearty meal.

Day 5 - 16/06 Mount Sonder Climb (B/L/D) Approx 16km

An early rise is an understatement as we challenge the 8km climb to the Peak of Mount Sonder. The vision of sunrise and the 360 degree view will leave you speechless – a truly unforgettable achievement. After lunch we will travel towards Simpsons Gap where your walk tomorrow commences. Spend the night here where we will camp for your last evening under the stars of the Milky Way.

Day 6 - 17/06 Simpsons Gap / Alice Springs (B/L) Approx 21 km

Stretch those legs one final time en route to where Alice Springs all began – The Old Telegraph Station. Some beautiful views can be seen, particularly at Euro Ridge. Today, our 21km walk is



taken casually, a fitting way to relax and immerse in the memories of the previous 4 days. Visit the Old Alice Springs Telegraph Station and wander through the 19th century stone buildings. Enjoy the sweeping sunset across Alice and Mt Gillen from the giant stone boulders marking the end of the Larapinta Trail. Your vehicle will greet you at the Telegraph Station and transport you back to your hotel.

A return to normality (hot shower and life as you know it awaits). Tonight we will reminisce the past 6 days and share some banter over a refreshing ale or cool drink at one of Alice's finest restaurants (own expense).

Overnight Alice Springs accommodation (Twin share).

Day 7 – 18/06 Alice to Uluru (L/D) Approx 5km

Our journey this morning begins heading south to Eriksdalen travelling through the Waterhouse and James Ranges with a stop at The Camel Farm for refreshments and a Camel ride if you're keen +. We also stop at Mt Ebenezer Roadhouse where you can view or purchase Aboriginal artifacts.

On the way to Uluru (Ayers Rock) we stop to view Atila (Mount Connor), a mesa tableland and the first significant rock formation of our trip.

After a stop for lunch and our arrival at the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, we head to the Cultural Centre and the opportunity to learn about the local Aboriginal law and religion (Tjukurpa) before a short guided walk at the base of Uluru. At this point you can take a full base walk, climb Uluru if you choose to do so, or join the Aboriginal guided Kuniya walk +.

Of course no Uluru tour would be complete without experiencing the famous changing colours of Uluru at sunset, complete with sparkling wine and nibbles. It's a great time to kick back and contemplate the day and the vastness of the desert.

Day 8 19/06 Uluru / Kata Tjuta Approx 7km

From a lookout close to our campsite we can view sunrise over Uluru (Ayers Rock) and Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) before rolling up the swags and heading off to Kata Tjuta for a leisurely 7km walk through the "Valley of the Winds". After a stop at the Resort for fuel and refreshments, we're off to Kings Creek Cattle Station for our second night's camp.

With nobody else for miles, this camp has stunning views out over the George Gill Ranges and gives you a real feel for the outback. Dinner around the campfire makes for a very social time with another night out under the stars.

Day 9 20/06 Kings Canyon / Alice Springs Approx 6km

A leisurely start to the day before we head off to Watarrka (Kings Canyon) for a mind blowing 7km walk through the towering walls, crevices and plateaus of Watarrka. We'll visit the Amphitheatre and the Lost City plus a swim in the tranquil "Garden of Eden" if you wish.

Later we start making our way back to Alice Springs travelling on a typical outback dirt road and then 4-wheel driving, crossing riverbeds and sand dunes. We'll stop at our Alice hotel early evening and usually all meet later for a bit of a night on the town (Alice seems like the big smoke after 3 days in the bush).

Overnight Alice Springs accommodation (Twin share).

Day 10 21/06 Depart Alice . End of trip and you're free today to depart Alice at any time.



Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems (and nor should you!) but if for any reason you are unable to commence your group trip as scheduled, please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your trip leader.

No refund is available on missed transfers or portions of your trip owing to a different flight arrival or delayed flight arrival. Any additional cost incurred in order to meet up with your group is at your own expense.

Joining Point

Desert Palms Hotel
74 Barrett Drive
Alice Springs 0871
Phone: +61 8952 5977

Joining Point Instructions

Upon arrival at the airport a taxi into the city will cost approximately AUD30. Alternatively the airport shuttle costs AUD12 per person and meets every flight, and will also take you directly to the hotel.

Our Joining Point Hotel

The Desert Palms Resort is situated one kilometre from the centre. One of Alice Springs major entertainment spots is only 300 metres from the resort. The accommodation is in self contained villas with ensuite shower and toilet, air-conditioning, refrigerator, microwave, private verandah, telephone, televisions and a kitchenette. A pool, tennis court and BBQ area is available for guest use.

Finishing Point

Desert Palms Hotel
74 Barrett Drive
Alice Springs
0871
Australia
Phone: +61 8952 5977

Group Size

Minimum of 8 and maximum of 16 travellers per group

Accommodation

Hotels (3 nts), bush camp with basic shower and toilet (6 nts)

Meal Inclusions

6 Breakfasts, 8 Lunches, 6 Dinners

Where special Dietary Conditions are requested this will be catered for where appropriate and supply exists. It may require a trekker supplying some items. All meals are of great variety with a high emphasis on Fruit, Vegetables, Salad & Fibre. Meats of various formats Hot & Cold will be provided along with Pasta, Rice & Curry Dishes. Breads and similar are all Wholemeal/High Fibre. Snacks will include Energy Bars, Fruit, Dried Fruits, Nuts etc with Fruit Based Energy Drinks.



Transport

Air-conditioned 4WD, minibus, walking

Physical Rating

Have a look at the pre trekking guide for tips and advice on fitness levels. You will be walking on undulating terrain for between 5 & 7 hours a day carrying a daypack. We expect people to have a reasonable level of fitness where they are taking regular physical exercise in the lead up to the event. This can be from walking ,cycling or going to the gym.

Culture Shock Rating

Camping out in the open and sleeping in swags under the stars is one of those experiences that you will never forget. We provide as much comfort as possible with basic shower & toilet facilities which adds to the adventure and team spirit. Full participation is required in helping to set up camp and cleaning up after meals etc. (see notes below)

Important Notes

1. **Winter** (June, July, August) night time temperatures can reach below zero. Please ensure you pack your bags appropriately. Warm clothes, jacket, thermals, woollen hat is advisable for the colder months. A hat and sunscreen is essential at all times. Daytime temps are typically in the low to mid 20's
2. You will be camping under the stars in swags (canvas sacks). Purpose Designed Swags including Doona, Woollen Blankets, Sleeping Bags, Pillow & Fleece Sheets are provided. There is no need to bring a sleeping bag.
3. To participate in this trip you must be prepared to assist with preparing meals, cleaning dishes, collecting fire wood, setting up and packing up camp every day, in all conditions. You might even be needed to assist with helping push the vehicle when stuck in sand bogs.
4. Groups of up to 9 passengers will be travelling in a Toyota Landcruiser with side facing seats. Groups of 10 or more will be travelling in a larger vehicle with forward facing seats. For teh section from Alice to the Red Centre we will be travelling by minibus.
5. Please note this RAW trip is operated by our experienced local partners accompanied by a RAW guide (depending on eventual group numbers).
6. Passengers with special meal requirements must ensure they or their travel agent inform RAW of this at the time of booking. Food for the trip is purchased prior to commencement and special requirements cannot be catered for after leaving Alice Springs. Vegetarians and those with any special meal requirements will need to provide additional assistance to the leader for meal preparation.
7. There is limited space available in the vehicle for luggage storage so please only bring essential items on the trip. See 'What to Take'.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips overseas and highly recommended for Austral-



ian trips. We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a group trip overseas, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader. If you have credit card insurance your tour leader will require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Health

All RAW travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our group leader, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, RAW reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund. Although there are no specific health requirements for this trip please be aware you need to be in good health to undertake this trip due to the sometimes demanding conditions that exist in these areas. You should consult your doctor if you have any medical conditions to assess your suitability before departure.

We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements . Please be aware that we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities for some time during this trip, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc.

Your first aid kit should include:

- *headache tablets*
- *diarrhoea treatment (both a blocker to bring relief from the symptoms and an antibiotic)*
- *band-aids (blister pads)*
- *antiseptic for cuts & scrapes*
- *lip balm*
- *insect repellen- high factor sunscreen.*

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Any tip that you wish to give your local guides or leader in recognition of excellent service is always appreciated.

Optional Activities

Didgeridoo Performance Sounds of Starlight (Alice Springs) - AUD30

We suggest you bring along AUD150 for additional sightseeing

Emergency Funds

Please also make sure you have access to an additional \$300, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (e.g. a natural disaster, or an outbreak of bird flu)



necessitate a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence but it is well worth being prepared!

Keeping in touch - communication while on the road

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road, rather than relying on snail mail. Email has quickly become the preferred way for our leaders and travellers to stay in touch and email cafes are commonplace throughout the regions we visit.

Emergency Contact

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, our Melbourne HQ can be reached on:

Tel: +61 3 9597 0799. Outside of office hours please call: 0413 703 632

Your fellow walkers

We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

Group Leader

All RAW group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders. In Australia your group leader may also be your driver, taking you from start to finish in a 4WD vehicle. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the areas visited on the trip, including historical, environmental, cultural and social aspects.

Responsible travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. For more details please see our policy:

<http://rawtravel.com/resptavel/responsibletravel.pdf>

A couple of rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

What To Take

Generally speaking though, you should pack as lightly as possible and we recommend keeping the weight under 12kg. There is limited space available in the vehicle for luggage storage so please only bring essential items on the trip.

Suitcases are not recommended. Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an

overnight/sports bag with a shoulder strap would suffice. You will also need a day pack when out walking. Your luggage stays in camp each night while you are out walking during the day - so you only carry a day pack.

Recommended list of what to take:

Travel documents:

- Travel insurance, air ticket
- Credit card & spending money

Personal items

- Blister kit, rehydration salts and any personal medication you use
- Alarm clock (optional) and head torch (must have!)
- Water bottles or Camel Bak system (Min 3 litres total recommended)
- Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses (*very important*)
- Comfortable daypack
- Travel sickness tablets (*for long and bumpy journeys- optional*)
- Waterproof bags for rain protection while walking (*plastic shopping bags are fine*)
- Fly net (*can be purchased in Alice Springs but are recommended*)

Clothing

- 3 T-shirts (*lightweight quick drying fabric*) / long sleeved T-shirt
- 2 pairs of shorts / lightweight trousers (*for walking in*)
- Warm fleece, sweater, beanie hat (*cold evenings*)
- Warm clothes for evening are essential
- Walking shoes with good grip
- Swimming costume and towel
- Waterproof jacket
- Mosquito repellent
- Shoes to relax in at camp

During the day the temperatures will be between 20C to 25C and at night temperature can some times fall below zero.

Camping equipment and bedding including swags, pillows, sleeping bags and blankets are provided.

Other Suggestions:

- Binooculars
- Camera
- Spare batteries for camera (*no chance for recharging*)
- Reading & writing material

Local Dress

Australia has relaxed attitudes to standards of dress, however the extreme sunshine can cause sunburn- particularly at midday. We recommend that you bring loose, cool, cotton clothing to protect yourself from the harsh sun rays. A sunhat and sunglasses are a must.

RAW challenges newsletter

This is our free email newsletter. News, reviews, special offers - coming to you soon!,



The information in these trip notes has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the passenger and RAW Travel.