

Australia – Reefs and Rainforests Down Under

6 graduate semester hours

\$5140. With credit. \$4890. Without credit

Includes airfare from Denver. (Price may vary slightly based upon airfare.)

\$2600. without credit or airfare

July 17 - August 5, 2011

Our trip to Australia will focus on 5 things: Tropical Rainforest, Great Barrier Coral Reefs, Outback, Mangroves, and Aboriginal Culture. Well, let's throw in a little Aussie history and culture as well. This area of northern Queensland on the East Coast of Australia is the only area of the world where we can experience all of that. What a great chance to learn about some of the most treasured ecosystems of the world.

Australia has a great method for cheaper tourism, since the cost is so large to get there from anywhere. They have very nice campgrounds with hot showers and camp kitchens. By camping, we can keep the cost down by about \$700. per person. Whew, that helps. Plus, I love camping near the tropics. The sounds of parrots, Rainbow Lorikeets, Sulphur Crested Cockatoos and Kookaburras are a gentle wake up call each morning. I saw 92 species of birds during my 3 weeks in Australia. (Even if some of my birding friends say I'm only tuned in half the time.)

Other exciting sights: fruit bats colonies that darken the sky on their evening exodus, kangaroos and other marsupials (as road kill usually), maybe oh maybe duck billed platypus, wombats, koalas, emus, maybe the elusive cassowary.

Other interesting topics: sugar cane, bananas, coffee plantations, Flying Doctors, South Hemisphere Astronomy, keystone species, exotic species such as Cane Toad.

Australia Itinerary 2008

Day 1, 2 & 3. We will arrive in Cairns on July 20th close to noon. We leave Denver in the evening of July 18th and cross the International Date Line, which is why this flight is so long. No worries, we will make up the day on our return trip when we arrive back in the states before we leave Australia. Fly into Cairns, Queensland, Australia. We will arrive in time to tour the Tjpaikai Aboriginal Cultural Park, where we will learn about bush culture, food, music, and mythology. Camp on beach north of town.

Day 4: Ride the Skyrail Tropical Rainforest Canopy Tour to Kuranda. The canopy tour stops at three stations along the way for our exploration enjoyment. Drive up the coast to Port Douglas exploring the coast.

Day 5: Drive to Daintree Tropical Rainforest National Park. Tour Mossman Gorge within the rainforest. Take the KikiYalanji Aboriginal Tour into Daintree to learn how the natives use the forest to survive. Bruce Belcher's Crocodile Boat Tour on Daintree

River viewing amazing wildlife. Spend night in Cape Tribulation. Optional: Cape Trib. Rainforest Night Walk with Jungle Adventures. Port Douglas to Daintree 38 km.

Day 6 Finish up in Daintree. Mardja Botanical Boardwalk ???, Play on beaches and drive back to Cairns. Time to set up tomorrow's adventure.

Day 7: Scuba Dive, Snorkel, Shop, Rainforest 4WD Tours, or Jungle Ziplines. Me – I'm putting off to sea – dive Great Barrier Reef.

Day 8: Drive into the Atherton Tablelands. Maybe Mareeba Tropical Savanna and Wetland Reserve. (Open Wedn. To Sunday. 1 hour drive from Port Douglas.) Walk to see Cathedral Fig Tree in Rainforest. Stay at Lake Eacham NP or Crater Lakes Rainforest Cottages.

Day 9 Drive To Undara Lava Tubes National Park. (4 hours from Cairns) Hike, see wildlife. This is where we will see most of our kangaroos and Outback Wildlife. We are here as much for the wildlife as for the fascinating geology. Choose your own Adventure: Wildlife at Sunset Tour \$40. Campfire singing – Aussie style. (With lots of history of the outback and sheep ranching. It was a long way between watering holes out here.)

Day 10 ½ Day Lava Tube Tour Departs Lodge 8:00 a.m. Drive back to Bruce Highway and start south along the coast to Airlie Beach.

Day 11: Do beaches and gem shopping. Australia has such good deals on opals that I bought them as presents for people. Then, can you believe, I ended up keeping most of them. Shameful. Now I need to go shopping again. Get to Airlie Beach by evening.

Day 12: Sail for Hook's Island to snorkel the reef, bask in the sun, tromp the Mangroves and relax. Here is where we really learn about the Great Barrier Reef and the tropical mangrove habitats. No cars for 3 days.

Day 13: Ah, the Whitsunday Islands. Clear water, blue skies, Great Barrier Reef. I can't imagine a better life. Put your head beneath those crystal blue waters and suddenly enter the most colorful, bright, darting, mesmerizing habitat on this planet.

Day 14: One more day of snorkeling and mangrove explorations. Hook Island has rainforest at your back, sand beaches at your front, and mangroves around the corner. When the tide is up, grab your mask, fins, and snorkel. We actually swam with a Green Sea Turtle here. When the tide is out, the mangrove salt marsh is sandy, filled with crabs and all kinds of fascinating little critters

Day 15: August 1. Sail back to Airlie Beach and start driving for Cairns. You might have to drag me on board the boat back. Estimated 300 km. (240 miles)

Day 16: Drive to Cairns exploring beaches all along the way. The Great Barrier Reef runs along this entire way. At this point, it is only accessed by boat but the beaches are grand.

Day 17: Fly to Ayer's Rock. Take the sunset walk to explore Ayer's Rock.

Day 18: Explore the Anargu Culture Center and take the Aborigine Tour. Take a guided walk around the base of Ayer's Rock. Optional: Take a camel tour around the base.

Day 19: Fly back to Cairns: Get packed and ready to fly home. Final class exit interviews.

Day 20: Fly home and arrive in L.A. before we left Cairns. Love that International Date Line.