

ALICE SPRINGS

7-DAY ITINERARY

Introduction

A week is a great timeframe to explore the highlights of Alice Springs and its surrounds - and there are such diverse experiences on offer. Base yourself in the well-equipped town and try this weeklong itinerary that takes in the best of the area.

Day 1

Alice Springs itself is easily explored on foot. Climb ANZAC Hill and enjoy a 360-degree panoramic view of the town and the surrounding MacDonnell Ranges.

Then join a hop on and off town bus tour to watch a lesson in progress at School of the Air and visit the Royal Flying Doctor Service - both will give a sense of the challenges facing people in a remote area and the ingenuity used to overcome them. Afterwards, drop into the Alice Springs Reptile Centre to meet some unusual outback critters.

Day 2

Explore the fringes of the Simpson Desert today, taking in the most accessible of its natural wonders. Used as a navigational landmark by explorers and pioneers, Chambers Pillar is a towering red and yellow sandstone formation located 160 kilometres south of Alice.

On the way, stop at Ewaninga Rock Carvings Conservation Reserve, where rock carvings and petroglyphs provide a record of the beliefs and history of local Arrernte people. Spend sunset photographing the colourful sandstone bluffs of Rainbow Valley and then return to Alice Springs.

Day 3

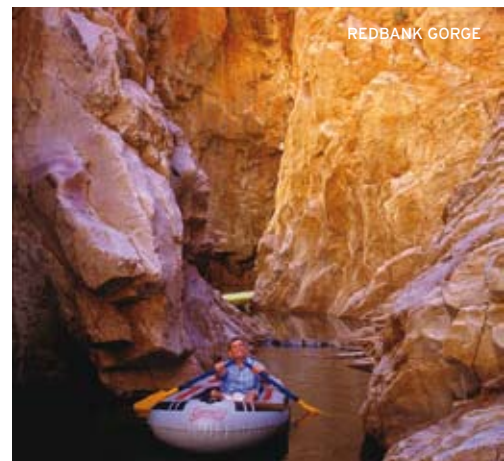
Get up early for an overnight excursion into the West MacDonnell Ranges and spend the morning at the Alice Springs Desert Park on your way. The Park informs visitors about the diverse arid region landscapes. Highlights include an introductory movie taking you through 4500 million years of evolution in the desert and the rare creatures exhibited in the nocturnal house.

Continue to Glen Helen Homestead, 133 kilometres west of Alice, for an overnight stay, stopping for scenic breaks at Simpsons Gap and Standley Chasm. Take off in a helicopter from the Resort for a bird's eye view of this magical place.

Day 4

Explore the natural attractions of the West MacDonnell National Park as you slowly make your way back to Alice Springs. Start the day by heading 20 kilometres west to Redbank Gorge, where sheer cliffs shade a narrow gorge and you can swim in picture-perfect pools.

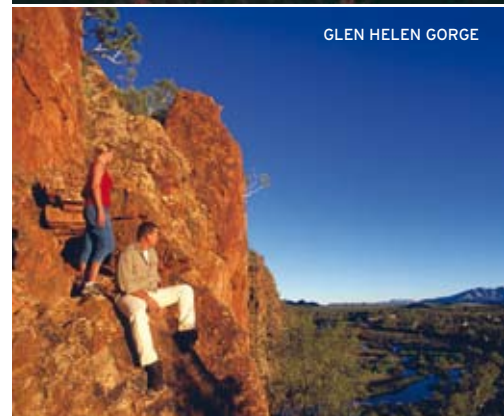
Backtrack east to Ormiston Gorge and Pound, the Ochre Pits (once used by Aboriginal people as a mine for their natural paints) and Serpentine Gorge. Enjoy a swim at Ellery Creek Big Hole before cruising back into Alice Springs.



REDBANK GORGE



SUNSET FROM ANZAC HILL



GLEN HELEN GORGE

Did you know?

- At Chambers Pillar there is a 'historical roll call', a slab of sandstone with engravings made by early pioneers, some in the early 1800s
- At the Gemtree, visitors can join in the unique sport of paddy melon bowling
- The Telegraph Station was the original site of the Alice Springs township

Day 5

Spend the morning relaxing in town. Check out a few of the galleries in the Todd Mall that stock fine indigenous art from all over Central Australia and shop for local opals and other souvenirs.

In the afternoon, join a quad bike tour of a cattle station based just out of town. Keep your eyes peeled for red kangaroos and other local wildlife as you're guided through spinifex plains and sand dunes on a dust-churning quad. Back in Alice for dinner, go and have your jeans red-hot branded at the Overlanders Steakhouse.

Day 6

Hire a car and head 120 kilometres north-east to Gemtree in the Harts Range on the Plenty Highway for a day of gem fossicking. You can join a tag-along tour (driving your own vehicle behind a guide) to find gold, garnets and zircon. You'll need to take your own lunch and lots of water. Back at the Gemtree Park, on-site gem cutters can polish and set your treasures into jewellery pieces. Drive back into Alice Springs for dinner.

Day 7

Stock up on bacon and eggs before heading out to the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve, located four kilometres north of Alice Springs. You can cook breakfast on the barbecues in the Reserve's parkland before exploring the Station's restored buildings and historical exhibitions.

Take the scenic walk to a nearby cemetery where workers from the Station in the 1800s are buried, before making your way home.



ELLERY CREEK BIG HOLE



QUAD BIKES



ALICE SPRINGS TELEGRAPH STATION