

Alice Springs & surrounds

Three-day itinerary



Alice Springs Desert Park



Anzac Hill

Ellery Creek Big Hole



DAY 1

There is so much to see and do in and around Alice Springs. If you don't have your own vehicle, hiring one is recommended to make it easy to get around the region. Many tours offer a transfer from your **accommodation**, but some are self-drive.

Make your first destination the **Alice Springs Desert Park**. Situated on Larapinta Drive, spot rare and endangered animals in the low light of the nocturnal house and discover the star attractions at the free-flying birds of prey show. Stroll along the 1.6 kilometre trail to experience three distinct habitat areas within the park. Choose from one of the informative talks throughout the day. Make your

way around the park at your leisure, and then relax with some refreshments at the onsite café.

After some lunch at the park or at one of the cafés in town, take a short drive to the **Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve**. Learn about the history of the people who established the overland telegraph station or try a more adventurous route on a mountain bike tour. Tours from the Trail Station leave at 2:30pm daily and are led by an experienced local rider, with all gear provided.

Check into your accommodation this afternoon. There are many lodging options available in Alice Springs, from luxury hotel rooms to camping under the stars.

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Alice Springs is the ideal base for a long weekend adventure. Just a 3.5 hour flight from most capital cities in Australia, it is easy to reach by road or via the legendary Ghan train.

This three-day itinerary will introduce you to the must-see sites around the capital of the Outback; set against the backdrop of the magnificent MacDonnell Ranges. You will be drawn into the rich history of the town and the ancient and prominent Aboriginal art and culture.



TOP 10

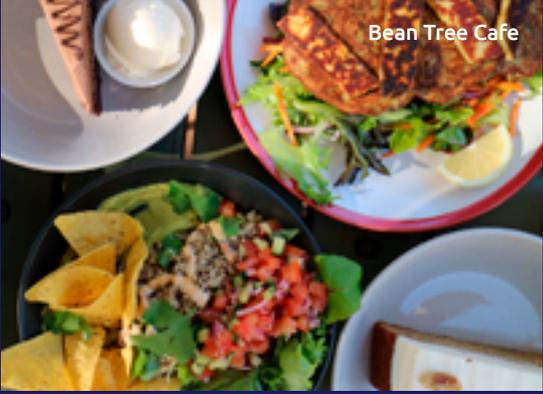
1. Discover the abundance of desert life at the **Alice Springs Desert Park**
2. Discover the history of Alice Springs at the **Telegraph Station** or see more moving on a mountain bike tour from the on-site Trail Station
3. Take to the skies and watch the sun rise over Central Australia with Outback Ballooning
4. Wander through native landscape at the Olive Pink Botanic Garden and indulge in a cooked breakfast or lunch at the Bean Tree Café
5. Get amongst the interactive displays at the **Royal Flying Doctor Service** visitor centre
6. Discover the many reptiles of Central Australia at the **Alice Springs Reptile Centre**
7. Enjoy a three-course led by an Aboriginal guide with RT Tours Australia
8. Immerse yourself in Aboriginal culture along the **Territory Arts Trail**
9. Explore and swim in the many gorges and waterholes along the **West MacDonnell Ranges** or view the ranges by helicopter
10. Join a sunset tour aboard **Pyndan Camel Tracks**



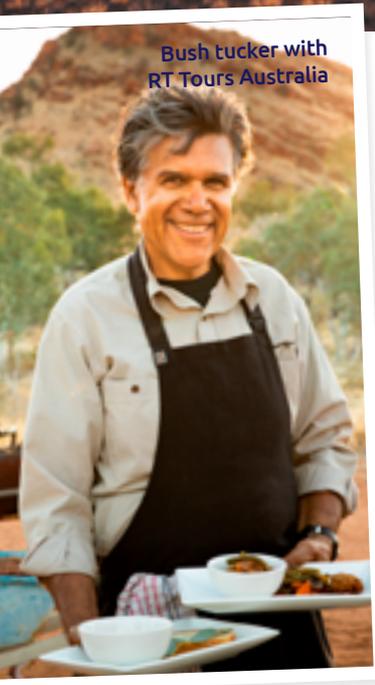
DAY 2

Rise early and take to the skies in a hot air balloon for a magnificent bird's eye view of Alice Springs and the Red Centre. As you drift into an outback sunrise of pastel blues, purples and yellows, keep an eye out for native wildlife and the iconic Red Kangaroo hopping down below. You'll need to book with **Outback Ballooning** a day or two in advance, and all tours are subject to weather suitability.

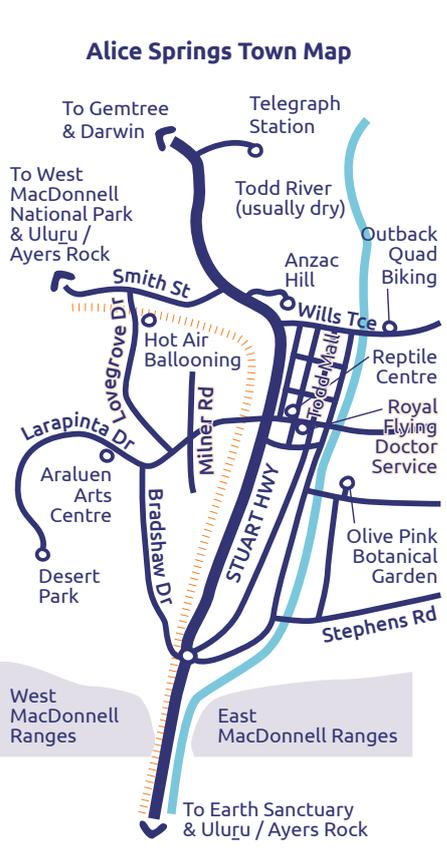
Once your feet are planted firmly again on the ground again, it's time to indulge in a cooked breakfast at the Bean Tree Café which you can find nestled in the **Olive Pink Botanic Garden**. It is Australia's only arid zone botanic garden and the perfect place to relax for breakfast or lunch amongst the native surrounds. Take the time to wander along the walking trails to see the hundreds of plant species that are native to the Red Centre, or spot some of the 80 bird species which have been recorded at the park.



Bean Tree Cafe



Bush tucker with RT Tours Australia



Next stop is the **Royal Flying Doctor Service** (RFDS). Get amongst the interactive displays and step inside a full-sized replica on a modern PC-12 airplane, part of the exciting new collection. Here, you will gain an insight into the iconic Australian outback service established by pioneers in 1928.

There is an onsite café, where you can dine under the original verandah and enjoy the amazing blue skies Alice Springs is known for. Sit back and relax with a coffee especially blended for the RFDS by a local coffee roaster. For more lunch options check out the Watertank Cafe, Page 27 or Epilogue Lounge in Todd Street Mall.

It is now time to get up close and personal with some of the Northern Territory's favourite wildlife at the **Alice Springs Reptile Centre**, which is home to the largest reptile display in Central Australia. Here you will get to meet Terry the Saltwater Crocodile, see huge perentie goannas, thorny devils, frill-neck lizards and some of the world's most venomous snakes. Join one of the daily shows to learn more about some lizards and pythons, which is followed by a supervised handling session – a perfect photo opportunity!

Tonight, enjoy a special dinner cooked in a bush setting and served under the Milky Way **with RT Tours**. Your host, a local Arrernte man, will introduce you to bush foods and traditional cooking for this spectacular three-course meal set in the West MacDonnell Ranges.





DAY 3

Get to know the outskirts of Alice Springs and hit the road heading 18 kilometres west along Larapinta Road to Simpsons Gap, which is an impressive opening between the towering cliffs of the **West MacDonnell Ranges**. The area is also an important spiritual site to the Arrernte Aboriginal people, where several dreaming trails and stories cross.



Simpsons Gap

Continue along Larapinta Drive, turning right at Namatjira Drive towards Ellery Creek Big Hole where you can stop for a refreshing swim. This location is one of the most popular and picturesque swimming, camping and picnic spots in the region. You will understand why when you set eyes on the spectacular waterhole surrounded by the high red cliffs and sandy creek.

Driving further west, stop over at Glen Helen Homestead Lodge. The landscape around **Glen Helen Gorge** is truly spectacular with towering sandstone walls greeting you as you arrive. You will be spoilt for choice with the delicious food available on the menu for lunch – however, not many people can go past the famous Glen Helen Burger.

Enjoy your meal teamed with a cold drink as you relax on the back verandah of the restored homestead overlooking the majestic Glen Helen Gorge. If you are feeling adventurous, sign up for a four-wheel drive tour or a scenic helicopter flight to discover more of the area.

Make your way back to Alice Springs in time for a sunset camel tour at **Pyndan Camel Tracks**. A camel ride will definitely be an experience you will want to tell your friends about. The camel tour starts at Pyndan Camel Tracks yard, through White Gums Station and follows an avenue of Iron Bark and Mulga trees across a clay pan flat. You will be led on your ride by one of Pyndan's camel experts who will tell you more about these iconic animals.

Finish the ride and the end of your journey with amazing views of the glowing MacDonnell Ranges as the sun goes down.



Ellery Creek Big Hole



Pyndan Camel Tracks