



AUSTRALIA



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From cosmopolitan Sydney to the sun-drenched Outback and the teeming Great Barrier Reef, Australia is a world in one country. Combine that with the charm of the Aussie people, and you have a destination that can't be beat.

HISTORY

Australia's Aborigines enjoy the longest continuous known history in the world, with rock carvings dating back an amazing 30,000 years. Europeans didn't come on the scene until the sixteenth century, and no one laid claim to the continent until Captain James Cook flew the Union Jack over Australian soil in 1770. The vast, harsh island continent was initially used by the British to solve their problems of prison overcrowding; but soon an influx of free settlers followed, looking for fortune during the Gold Rush of the 1850s. Australia became a nation in 1901, although many of its legal and cultural ties with England remained. Over the years, waves of immigrants have made Australia their home, adding to the rich tapestry of the nation's culture.

FAST

FACTS

<i>Capital</i>	<i>Canberra</i>
<i>Population</i>	<i>20 million</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>English, aboriginal languages</i>
<i>Currency</i>	<i>Australian dollar (A\$)</i>
<i>Time Zone</i>	<i>EST plus 13-15 hours</i>
<i>Electricity</i>	<i>220-240V, 50Hz Ⓢ</i>

HOLIDAYS &

FESTIVALS

<i>January</i>	<i>Australia Day (Sydney)</i>
<i>February/March</i>	<i>International Arts Festival (Perth)</i>
<i>March</i>	<i>WOMADelaide (Adelaide)</i>
<i>April 25</i>	<i>ANZAC Day</i>
<i>April</i>	<i>International Comedy Festival (Melbourne)</i>
<i>May</i>	<i>International Jazz Festival (Melbourne)</i>
<i>May/June</i>	<i>Writers Festival (Sydney)</i>
<i>June</i>	<i>Sydney Film Festival</i>
<i>June</i>	<i>Queen's Birthday</i>
<i>October</i>	<i>Tasting Australia (Adelaide)</i>
<i>November</i>	<i>Melbourne Cup</i>
<i>December 26</i>	<i>Boxing Day</i>
<i>December</i>	<i>New Year's Eve Party (Sydney)</i>