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Experience

Tennant Creek & Barkly Region

Avida Daydreams > Northern Territory

DURATION: 3 Days

TRAVEL: 520kms


DISCOVER THE EXPLORERS WAY AND HEAD TO AUSTRALIA'S HEART OF GOLD, TENNANT CREEK. HERE YOU WILL DISCOVER A TOWN RICH IN HISTORY AND CULTURE WITH LOTS TO EXPLORE.

During your three days you'll be able to meet local Aboriginal artists and learn about their craft, ride across the land on horseback and follow the course of the Overland Telegraph Line to the ancient rock formations of the Devils Marbles.

STAGE 1: JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF AUSTRALIA

Rise early and pack your RV ready to embark on your great Central Australian adventure. Travelling north, today's first stopover is the Tropic of Capricorn, just 30 kilometres north of Alice Springs. Be sure to get your photo taken next to the unique marker which was designed by a local Alice Springs man to mark Australia's Bicentenary.

Back on the road again, take in the beautiful desert scenery as you travel north. Approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes later you'll come to your next travel break, the Central Mount Stuart Historical Reserve. Stop a while and stretch your legs – you're standing in the dead centre of Australia! Visit the historical reserve that commemorates John McDouall Stuart's discovery of the Centre of Australia.

A photograph of the Tropic of Capricorn Marker in Australia. The marker is a tall, white, spherical structure with a grid pattern, mounted on a pole. In the foreground, a silver SUV is parked with its rear hatch open. Several people are standing around the car and the marker. The background shows a paved area, trees, and a clear blue sky.

Tropic of Capricorn Marker

Continue on to Wycliffe Well, a unique outback town well worth a pit stop. Known as the UFO capital of Australia for its hundreds of reported UFO sightings - look to the skies to see if you can spot anything unusual. Hang out in the roadhouse and enjoy some refreshments as you read about the details of paranormal sightings across the shop walls and from the Wycliffe Well Guest book, where many visitors document their encounters. It's the perfect place to pick up a souvenir or two.

Just before sun down tonight make your way to the Karlu Karlu/Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve to witness a spectacular Central Australian sunset over the mysterious giant boulders. These ancient rock formations seem to have dropped from the skies, appearing to defy gravity. They hold a great significance for the Aboriginal people and are the subject of many Dreamtime stories.

A photograph of the Karlu Karlu/Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve. The image shows large, rounded, reddish-brown boulders scattered across a landscape. The sky is a mix of orange and yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall scene is dramatic and scenic.

Karlu Karlu/Devils Marbles

WHERE TO STAY?

Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve - (08) 8962 4599

Devils Marbles Hotel - (08) 8964 1963

Wycliffe Well Holiday Park (United Petroleum) - (08) 8964 1966

STAGE 2: HIT THE ROAD FOR TENNANT CREEK

Enjoy a delicious cooked breakfast before you hit the road again. Tennant Creek is just over an hour's drive away. Tennant Creek has a rich gold mining and cattle droving history and has been shaped by its strong Aboriginal culture. It's a town that truly represents the real outback Australia. Apart from there being lots to learn about the Central Australian town, there is also plenty to see and do.

If you're feeling lucky, Battery Hill Mining Centre is the place you want to go, where you can noodle for your own gold. Learn about the outback gold rush of the 1930's and get a glimpse of what it was like living in Tennant Creek during the era.

Check out the world-class minerals display and the museum display 'Freedom, Fortitude and Flies', which looks at social life at the goldfields throughout that time. Join an underground mining tour where you'll get to see the machinery in action, as well as the Gold Stamp Battery, which has been fully restored and operates during tours. You can also check out the Borella Exhibit and learn the story of Albert Borella, the NT's only Victoria Cross recipient.

Relax with lunch today down at the popular man-made lake, Tingkarli/Lake Mary Ann. This spot is a cool oasis 5 kilometres north of Tennant Creek and provides a great area for swimming or canoeing. If you're feeling active, check out one of the walking paths around the lake, one of which winds its way through the beautiful Honeymoon Ranges.

Drop into one of the local bakeries or cafés for breakfast before making your way to the Tennant Creek Telegraph Station. The historic building played a significant role in the late 1800's when the Overland Telegraph Line was being constructed, and provided a refuge for linesman and travellers alike from the harsh surrounds. If you want to explore inside the historic buildings make sure you ask for the key from the Battery Hill Mining Centre.

Tennant Creek Telegraph Station



WHERE TO STAY?

Tennant Creek Caravan Park - (08) 8962 2325

Outback Caravan Park - (08) 8962 2459

STAGE 3: ENROSS YOURSELF IN LOCAL ABORIGINAL ART AND CULTURE

Immerse yourself in local Aboriginal art and culture this afternoon with a visit to the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art & Culture Centre. Here you can learn all about bush tucker and traditional medicines, as well as Aboriginal life and history in the Tennant Creek region. One of the main highlights is the audio tour which will take you through arid zone gardens, interpreting plants and landscapes through Aboriginal eyes. As you wind up your tour, relax with afternoon tea at the on-site café, which is well known for its great food and coffee. Check out local arts, crafts and other souvenirs for sale in the retail area and take a piece of Central Australia home.

Get in touch with your inner jillaroo or jackeroo and saddle up for an adventurous horseback ride at Kelly's Ranch. Your instructor and guide is owner Jerry Kelly, an experienced stockman and local Warumungu man. Sign up for a 1 hour riding lesson, or have a two and a half hour trail ride. Jerry will share stories about the life of a stockman over a cup of billy tea. Everybody is sure to have a great time, and no prior riding experience is required.

This afternoon, pack a picnic dinner and head north to Kunjarra/The Pebbles to see the sun set over these mysterious granite boulders. Also known as the smaller relatives of the Karlu Karlu/Devils Marbles, this is a sacred site where the women's dancing and healing rites of passage take place for the Warumungu people. The changing colours of the boulders as the sun sets are a sight to behold. Watch the colours vary from a glowing red and orange to a deep purple and grey as the sun fades over the horizon.



Kunjarra/The Pebbles

This article was written in conjunction with Tourism NT.

For more information about road trips in the Northern Territory go to northernterritory.com.