



7 days in Alice Springs



Swimming at Ormiston Gorge
Tourism NT/Jackson Groves

This itinerary will take visitors on a journey through the surrounds of Alice Springs where they'll come up close with local wildlife, visit historic landmarks and waterholes, and see the Red Centre from a bird's eye view.

They'll be introduced to Aboriginal desert art traditions and its famous artists, as well as unique bush food experiences and modern culinary delights. Discover the beauty of the MacDonnell Ranges and learn that the desert landscape is anything but barren.

DAY ONE

Start your engines

If you have arrived in Alice Springs by any other means than driving, it is highly recommended the first thing you do is **hire a vehicle** for the trip. There is so much to see and do in and around Alice Springs and having a reliable mode of transport means nothing will be missed.

First stop, Alice Springs Desert Park

Make your first destination the **Alice Springs Desert Park**. Situated on Larapinta Drive, the Desert Park is a 'must see' for every visitor to the Red Centre, where the desert comes to life. 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 separate habitat areas within the park. There are informative talks throughout the day, including a presentation on Aboriginal survival.

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

Take in the history at the Telegraph Station Historical Reserve

Make your way to the **Alice Springs Telegraph Station** Historical Reserve and learn about where the settlement of Alice Springs originated in 1871. Mountain bikes are available for hire and there are a range of tracks on offer.

Sleep easy

Check into your **accommodation**. There are many options available in Alice Springs, from luxury hotel rooms to camping under the stars including:

- **Quest Alice Springs**
- **Crowne Plaza Alice Springs**
- **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Alice Springs**

DAY TWO

Drift away on a hot air balloon ride

Rise early and take to the skies in a hot air balloon with **Outback Ballooning** 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 down below.

Looking down on Ellery Creek Big Hole
Tourism NT/Carmen Hunter



Ballooning over the Red Centre
Tourism NT/Laura Bell

mulga country and the gateway to the Central Australian gem fields.

Fossicking at Gemtree

Arrive in time to join a **Fossicking Tour** (bookings essential) where visitors can try their luck at finding their own gems, and have them appraised by experts on-site. With 250 acres of nature bushland to enjoy, Gemtree has lots of room to stretch the legs on one of the many self-guided nature trails or drive tours.

Settle in for the night

A set menu is on offer 2 - 3 nights a week in the Camp Oven Kitchen, followed by many entertainment options, including quiz and movie nights and drinks by the pool.

Accommodation ranges from air conditioned cabins, on-site caravans to camp sites, however make sure you call ahead to book, as cabins are very popular during high season.

DAY FOUR

Experience local Aboriginal art

Make your way back to Alice Springs to spend the day learning about local Aboriginal Art. First stop is the **Araluen Arts Centre**. Here, visitors get to see contemporary works by the region's most famous artists, including Albert Namatjira.

The centre also plays host to the annual **Beanie Festival** in June each year, which is a much-anticipated quirky, colourful exhibition and competition, and a 'must-do' if you are in town during this time.

Head back into town to the Todd Mall, which is lined with commercial galleries promoting Aboriginal art. Stop at **Papunya Tula Artists** to see the renowned dot paintings, then at **Mbantua Art Gallery** and Cultural Museum, which have one of the largest collections of Aboriginal art in Australia and specialises in art from the Utopia region. While you're in the area, enjoy lunch at one of the many trendy cafés dotted throughout the Todd Mall.

Indulge the senses at Olive Pink Botanic Garden

Once your feet are planted firmly 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 among 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.

Be inspired by the early pioneers

Next stop is the **Royal Flying Doctor Service**. Get among the interactive displays and step inside a full-sized replica of a modern PC-12 airplane, part of the exciting new collection. Here, visitors 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, specially blended for the RFDS by a local coffee roaster.

Meet new scaly friends

Get up close and personal with some of the Northern Territory's favourite wildlife at the **Reptile Centre**, which is home to the largest reptile display in Central Australia. Pre-bookings are required.

Here visitors 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 the variety of lizards and pythons, which is followed by a supervised handling session – a perfect photo opportunity!

Finish off the night with dinner from one of the many **restaurants** in town, and be sure to get a good night's rest. There's a big day ahead tomorrow heading out of town on an overnight camping trip.

DAY THREE

Get set for a day in the gem fields

Rise early to embark on today's adventure to **Gemtree Caravan and Tourist Park**. Located 140km north-east of Alice Springs, Gemtree is a true oasis in the

DAY FIVE

Soak up the spirituality of Simpsons Gap

Drive 18 kilometres west of Alice Springs 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 for the Arrernte Aboriginal people, where several dreaming trails and stories cross.

Head to Ormiston Gorge and Pound for a cool dip

Continue west along Namatjira Drive for about 120 kilometres to **Ormiston Gorge**. This is a great place for a cool dip in the near permanent waterhole surrounded by the towering red walls of the gorge.

Embark on a walk to see the sights

If you're feeling active, take on the 3-4 hours Ormiston Pound Walk which completes a full circuit from the walk's information shelter and finishes at the main waterhole. Delight in the beautiful local birdlife and admire the amazing Central Australian landscapes.

If you'd prefer a shorter walk, the 20 minute trek to the Ghost Gum Lookout is a must-do and is most popular with visitors. The view across the Gorge and down into the waterhole is a sight to behold.

Ormiston Gorge provides camping facilities including gas barbecues, showers and flush toilets. Camping fees apply and are payable at the camping area. Visitors can purchase basic supplies, food and drinks from the commercially operated kiosk. Phone ahead for opening times as hours may vary.

DAY SIX

See the beauty of Ellery Creek Big Hole

This morning, start the return journey back along Namatjira Drive towards Alice Springs to **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, with a spectacular waterhole surrounded by high red cliffs and sandy creek.

"Must see" Standley Chasm

Just 50 kilometres from Alice Springs, is **Standley Chasm / Angkerle Atwatye** an important cultural and geological icon of Central Australia. It is located in a private flora and fauna reserve and is owned and operated by the local Arrernte community.

A couple walking down Anzac Hill
Tourism NT/Jordan Hammond



Pyndan Camel Tracks Tourism NT



Visitors can enjoy fresh gourmet meals and barista-made coffee from the Kiosk Café, and walk a number of trails of varying difficulty in the surrounds.

See Alice by camel

Arrive in Alice Springs just in time for a sunset camel tour at **Pyndan Camel Tracks**. A camel ride will definitely be one of the most memorable experiences of an Alice Springs visit.

The camel ride 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, and climbs a slight incline to get sweeping views across the MacDonnell Ranges. Camels are led by Pyndan's camel experts who will enlighten you about these fascinating animals.

Sunrise is the perfect time to do this, as the sun slowly rises to light up the MacDonnell Ranges and beautiful desert town below. Drive your car to the top, or if feeling active, walk to the top via the Lions Walk.

Explore the East MacDonnell Ranges

Head east from Alice to explore the **East MacDonnell Ranges** for the day.

See Aboriginal rock art at **Yeperenye / Emily Gap** and have a picnic lunch at nearby Jessie Gap. Take the circular walking track at **Corroboree Rock** then head for **Trephina Gorge**, known for its walking trails, Aboriginal rock art, and dramatic ridges and bluffs.

Stargaze the night away

Before you say goodbye to Alice Springs, make the most of the clear skies in the Red Centre and gaze at the thousands of stars overhead at the **Earth Sanctuary World Nature Centre**.

Learn how to navigate and identify the zodiac and constellations in the night sky and hear ancient Aboriginal stories of creation.

DAY SEVEN

Climb Anzac Hill and watch the sunrise

A visit to the top of **Anzac Hill** is a must-do for a panoramic view of the town.