All New AFS Best of Australia

March 29- April 7, 2023

 Click for printable PDF itinerary (Australia)

Our Glorious AFS Itinerary

29 Mar  -  Depart USA to Sydney Australia. In crossing the international date line, you lose a day but gain it back at the end. Air details to come in trip tips.

31 Mar - Arrive Sydney               (Land begins)

Welcome to wonderful Sydney, Australia’s cosmopolitan premier city.   Check into our fabulous hotel located in the best part of Sydney for two fun nights.  This capital city of New South Wales is draped around its breathtaking harbor, beaches and national parks. It's a laid-back city with so much to explore both by day and after dark. Check out hundreds of options found at www.sydney.com.  Later in the afternoon, attend an orientation meeting with your Tour Manager on the exciting journey that lies ahead, followed by a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant or Aussie cuisine.

Overnight:  Novotel Sydney Central (2 nights)    D

01  April - Tour of Sydney and its surroundings.

Experience the beauty of Sydney with this Full Day Tour with our driver & guide.

Tick off iconic landmarks like Sydney Opera House & Harbour Bridge. Stroll around vibrant districts like Bondi Beach, Kings Cross and explore the beauty of Mrs Macquarie’s Chair (gives the best view of Sydney Opera House & Harbour Bridge) & The Paddington.

Later visit Milson Point, a suburb of lower North Shore of Sydney, & the other Northern Beaches.  In the end, visit The Rocks, a place with some of the city’s oldest pubs and many of upscale restaurants. We can drop you off here to play into the night and you can make your way back to the hotel on own.

Overnight:  Novotel Sydney Central    B

02 April -  Fly to Cairns and Transfer to Silky Oaks Lodge

Depart on a flight to Cairns, the tourist capital of tropical North Queensland and gateway to the Great Barrier Reef. Then it's a short drive through Port Douglas to our incredible one of a kind experiences as we journey into the treetops. Immerse your sales in nature surrounded by ancient plants, exotic birds, reptiles and wildlife.

Check into Silky Oaks Lodge.  Welcome to the jungle! Silky Oaks is the ultimate luxury resort, rated in the top 10 of the world. Please read all about the adventure here at www.silkyoakslodge.com.   Set among the World Heritage-listed wilderness of the Daintree Rainforest and along the banks of the gently flowing Mossman River, Silky Oaks Lodge offers a stylish tropical rainforest escape.

Enjoy an evening meal together. Dining at Silky celebrating the abundance of fresh ingredients harvested here in Queensland. The open canopy restaurant sits 50 feet high in the tree tops. Before dark, head to the Jungle Perch or Silky Bar for designer drinks at sunset. So many magical moments here.

Overnight in Silky Oaks Lodge        B/D

03 April -  Cape Tribulation and Daintree Rainforest Tour

After a gourmet breakfast beyond your dreams, we head out on a day tour to gain a greater understanding of the Mossman Gorge ecosystem from top to bottom on this excursion to capture your best photos imaginable.  Stroll through the ancient Daintree Rainforest, cruise down the Daintree River, walk along the beach at Cape Tribulation and enjoy stunning views of the region from popular lookout points.

We travel to the Mossman Gorge Centre for morning tea before boarding the shuttle bus into the Gorge. Follow your informative guide into the Daintree Rainforest, breath in the fresh air, and soak up the enchanting woodland setting.

After exploring the Gorge, we make our way to the Daintree River for a 1-hour river cruise; marvel at the abundant wildlife species that call its calm water home including the estuarine crocodile.

Next stop is the private access rainforest of Noah Valley. Enjoy a walk through the creekside rainforest before a delicious BBQ lunch. Laid out under the sky-high forest canopy, this mid-day meal features fresh fish and tropical fruit, followed by a steaming cup of regional Daintree Tea produced from one of the world's oldest rainforests.  We then venture to remote Cape Tribulation on the coast. Amble along the beach and take in views of the stretching coastline and captivating coral reefs from the Kulki Lookout. Time for an afternoon refreshment at the Daintree Ice Cream Company. Here you will enjoy a delicious cup of fruit ice cream made from exotic fruits grown on their own on-site orchard.

Our final stop is at Alexandra Lookout. Situated over the Daintree River estuary, this breathtaking ledge offers expansive views of Snapper Island, the Alexandra Range and the glimmering Coral Sea. Now sit back and relax on the journey home after exploring the World Heritage Rainforest.  Return to the lodge

Overnight at Silky Oaks Lodge           B/D

04 April - Great Barrier Reef Day Tour

Guided yoga classes each morning take a gentle pace and suit all fitness and experience levels. Held in the open-air Marrdja Pavilion, cares slip away with the soothing sound of the Mossman River. There's also self-guided walks for explorers. Follow the properties in nature trails to Fig Tree Rapids.

Today, we head to Cairns for a day of snorkeling and sightseeing at 2 spectacular destinations in the Outer Great Barrier Reef. A modern boat carries you to exclusive, protected locations far away from the crowds, where the spectacle of nature is waiting. Our past AFS groups loved it but sailed with the masses.  Each day, your captain chooses from 12 exclusive moorings at 6 reef locations based on the water and weather conditions, making sure you get the best experience here.  Seasoned dive masters are on hand to provide an in-depth briefing on your gear and what to expect at each site. As we leave the Australian coast behind and get your gear ready for some quality time in the sea. With outer reef locations chosen for their variety and the striking contours of the ocean floor, you're in for an outstanding experience when you plunge into the water. Once you've had a chance to mingle with the amazing sea life of beautiful corals and tropical fish, kick back aboard the vessel as we sail back to Cairnes.

Overnight in Silky Oaks Lodge           B/D

05 April - Fly to Brisbane

Transfer to airport and depart Cairns on a flight to Brisbane. Upon arrival guide will greet us and transfer us to our hotel in the heart of the city for 3 nights.  The property is the best in Brisbane for dollar value and ideal location within walking distance to major sites.  Our guide will brief us on all the fun to be had here.

Welcome to Australia's sunny capital with laid-back charm and urban energy with a dash of adventure.  Blessed with sunshine nearly 340 days a year, Brisbane focuses on the outdoors – picnic by the river, alfresco dining, island hopping and national parks. Add to this abundant wildlife and a dynamic cultural scene, you can see why this is a favorite city for visitors!

Overnight Novotel Brisbane       B

06 April - Koala Cruise & Wildlife

After breakfast, join us on Brisbane's most popular tour of all on the Koala Cruise. Enjoy informative commentary as we sail out to Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary to get up close to Australia's cutest creatures. This is the worlds first and largest koala sanctuary. On arrival, enjoy ample time to meet the animals – 134 koalas, joeys, emus, exotic birds and more.  Keep an eye out for the wild lorikeets (Australian parrot) that come to feed here. Then glimpse the elusive platypus that lives at the Platypus House. Get your photo with dingos and raptors and then go hug a koala!

Brisbane has a fabulous night life. The most popular hangouts are Eat Street Market and the riverside bars at The Wharves right on the harbor.

Overnight Novotel       B

 07 April – Free day Brisbane!

So much to do here, we had to include leisure time. Your guide can offer ideas like; Scenic River Dairy where cows are milked by robots, Camel Land, Ottaba llamas, Walkabout Creek Wildlife Center or a dolphin cruise to Tangalooma Island. There are wine tours, hot air ballooning, brewery hopping tours, nature trails and more.  But if you’ve come this far, a must-visit is the Australia Zoo, home of the crocodile hunter and still owned by the Irwin family. See Tasmanian devils to wombats (my fave) as well as cheetahs, rhino, pandas, and tigers. Here you can book a range of one-on-one animal experiences you’ll never forget. Another favorite for visitors is to gear up and climb the famous Storey Bridge anytime from sunrise to sunset.

Overnight Novotel       B

08 April -  Breakfast and morning free followed by a transfer to Brisbane airport for all flights back to USA.