



AUSTRALIA

GENERAL INFORMATION



The gigantic Southern Cassowary can be found on our Australia: From the Outback to the Wet Tropics tour.

PASSPORT

Your passport must be valid for a period of at least 6 months after the date of your arrival in Australia. Please make sure that there is at least one full empty page available in your passport. Please make sure that you also bring a photocopy of your passport, to be kept in a different location from your passport, in case of loss/damage.

VISA

A visa or Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) is required for everyone entering Australia, but different rules apply depending on your nationality, your status, or your personal history. Please check [here](#) and follow the instructions for "visit and tourism". For most people, after completing the questions in the online form, the ETA Subclass 601 will be the result. This ETA can be applied for by downloading the new Australian ETA app, see [here](#) for more information. Some people may however need to apply for a different visa.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself against accidents, medical, illness, loss of valuables, luggage etc, and travel interruptions or delays of all kinds.

HEALTH

Please consult your doctor regarding any vaccine requirements. All travelers should be up to date with routine vaccination courses and boosters (e.g. tetanus). There is no risk of yellow fever transmission in Australia, however, there is a certificate requirement if travelers have visited/come from the following countries, see list [here](#). Some travelers may require Hepatitis B, Japanese Encephalitis and Rabies.

Suncream should be carried, and a hat should be worn to protect from the powerful rays from the sun, with sunglasses to help prevent glare. A plentiful supply of water should be carried at all times to maintain hydration.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please make sure that you are covered with medical insurance in case of an emergency while on this trip. Without insurance the cost of medical care can be extremely high. Please notify us at the time of registering for this tour of any medical conditions you think we should know about (including allergies, heart conditions, epilepsy, etc.). This will greatly help us to cater to your needs and update emergency services if required.

CURRENCY

Australian Dollar (currently weak against the GBP£ and US\$). Visa & Mastercard are widely accepted, including for drawing cash from ATM's (as everywhere, bank charges may apply). Note: US\$/GBP£ cannot be used for purchases. We will be able to exchange or draw money at the airport upon our arrival and in the various cities we pass through.

WEATHER/CLIMATE

Australian seasons are the reverse of the European/North American seasons, but the same of South America/Southern Africa. The summer months in Australia are from December to February and the autumn months are during March till May. Winter is from June to August with spring in from September till November.

Queensland and the Northern Territory are located closer to the tropics and generally have warmer and humid weather all year round. New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, South Australia and Perth all experience the four seasons during the year. In Tasmania, the weather is colder than the rest of Australia because it is closer to Antarctica (this can often be a result of the wind chilling the actual temperature).

During this tour a wide variation of weather (particularly temperatures) is to be expected. It may feel cool at night in Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales, with night-time temperatures dropping to around 8°C/46°F. Day time temperatures during the tour can range from 15°C/59°F in Tasmania, to 30°C/86°F in northern Victoria, with similar temperatures in Northern Queensland, however here it is much more humid and rainfall is likely at some point here.

ELECTRICITY

240V, three-pronged plugs used. Adaptors are needed for overseas appliances.

LENGTH OF DRIVES

There are a couple of days in which there are long drives, unfortunately this is a standard feature in this huge continent-country. Drives are broken up where possible with birding stops and stops for refreshments etc.

WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING

This is not a fashion statement trip! Casual and informal dress is fine in the hotels/motels. Loose lightweight field clothing works best, with a warm fleece or jacket for cooler weather. Shorts and T-shirts are fine – it's what the locals wear! You will also need to bring some warmer clothing, certainly a minimum of a warm fleece and a rain jacket. Rain is always a possibility in October/November, so an umbrella and or rain gear is always useful to have. Early mornings can

feel a bit chilly in some areas so come prepared, especially in the south (Tasmania/Victoria) which can have the wind coming straight from Antarctica.

Sunglasses, sunhat and sunscreen (rated SPF 30 or higher) are essential. A pair of trousers or a long skirt, and a long-sleeved shirt should be included to help protect against forest vegetation and the sun. Swimwear can be brought as there are swimming pools at some of the hotels/motels, and we will have time in the Great Barrier Reef where optional swimming is possible.

We would recommend lightweight walking boots for when out on foot. You might like to consider sandals/trainers (tennis shoes) for use in the vehicles and for walking between your room and restaurant in the hotels and lodges.

WHAT TO BRING: OTHER ITEMS

Do not forget – Binoculars, prescription drugs (also bring the generic names for these drugs), toiletries, prescription glasses (and a spare pair), insect repellent, sunscreen and sunglasses, camera, flashlight, batteries (for electronic equipment and chargers for the re-chargeable batteries if required), converter plug set if needed and plug adaptors, alarm clock, money pouch, field guide(s), daypacks. Your guide will have a Swarovski Telescope, however if you have your own scope it is recommended that you bring it too.

Key Documents and Cash – Passports, your travel or health insurance cards – photocopies of which can be carried by the tour leader, in case of emergency, credit cards - see info above, US\$, euro or GBP£ can be exchanged into Australian Dollars if you prefer not to simply draw from ATM's, cash for drinks, gifts, tips, items of a personal nature etc. not included within the tour cost.

LUGGAGE

Due to restricted space in the vehicles, please pack as lightly as possible. A medium soft-sided duffle bag (not the hard sided cases) works best for packing in the vehicles. This allows us to better fit the bags. Please bring a daypack to keep items that you wish to use or need on a daily basis.

DANGEROUS ANIMALS

There are a great many poisonous creatures (and plants) in Australia and extreme caution should be taken whilst out and about (e.g. check your boots each time before you put them on, watch where you put your hands and feet, do not touch, or approach any wildlife (e.g. specifically snakes, spiders etc.)). It is advisable to familiarize yourself with these poisonous species prior to your tour (there is a range of data online but see [here](#)). Sturdy walking boots are essential to give feet and ankles added protection. It is essential that you follow your guide/leader's advice and if you see any snakes etc. the information is passed on as quickly as possible so that everyone is aware of the potential danger.

CRIME

Australia is generally a safe place to travel, however as anywhere in the world at this time it is advisable to take care and remain cautious and observant for the unexpected.

LANGUAGE

Australia is part of the British Commonwealth and English is widely spoken. Local Aboriginal peoples have a huge number of languages however it is unlikely that we will need to speak these on this tour.

BOOKS

Birds

Finding Australian Birds: A Field Guide to Birding Locations – Tim Dolby and Rohan Clarke (2014). CSIRO Publishing.

Field Guide to the Birds of Australia (Eighth Edition) – Ken Simpson and Nicolas Day (2010). Viking (NB Helm have now published an undated version of this book).

A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia (Ninth Edition) – Graham Pizzey and Frank Knight (2012). Harper Collins.

The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds (Second Edition) – Slater *et. al.* (2012). New Holland.

Birds of Australia: A Photographic Guide – Campbell *et al.* (2014). Princeton University Press.

Several of the above publications are available to download as Apps for mobile phones. These apps also include bird sounds to complement the illustrations.

Mammals

A Field Guide to the Mammals of Australia (Third Edition) – Peter Menkhorst and Frank Knight (2011). Oxford University Press.

Reptiles

A Complete Guide to Reptiles of Australia (Fourth Edition) – Steve Wilson and Gerry Swan (2013). New Holland.

SOUND RECORDINGS

A wide-range of CDs with bird songs are available online or as Apps and are a recommended tool for learning bird calls. In addition it is possible to download bird calls from the excellent Xeno Canto website <http://www.xeno-canto.org/>.