



CHEESEMAN'S ECOLOGY SAFARIS

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Northern Australia

Central Australia, Kakadu and the Top End, and north Queensland Wet Tropics

August 30 to September 16, 2021



Rainbow Bee-eater
© Bob Lewis

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Explore the highlights of the Northern Territory and northern Queensland, including the Great Barrier Reef! In the Northern Territory, you'll watch the sunset and sunrise transform Ayers Rock and Kata Tjuta. Explore Kings Canyon, Watarrka National Park, the richest botanical region in arid Australia, with an optional helicopter flight over the canyon (not included). Spend two days in Kakadu National Park with short walks, night spotting, aboriginal rock art, and a boat cruise on Yellow Waters Billabong. In northern Queensland, you'll spend two days at Atherton Tablelands to explore the tapestry of farmland, woodland, and rainforest, including another evening searching for mammals. Cruise the Daintree River early morning and then spend a day snorkeling the Great Barrier Reef. During this tour, you'll look for fabulous birds, several kangaroo species, various reptiles, and possibly platypus! We're excited to offer this tour in partnership with Inala Nature Tours owner, Australian biologist, and guide, Tonia Cochran. Join Tonia as she leads the group throughout these rich wildlife areas of Australia, assisted by some of the best resident naturalists in the region.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Watch the landscape's colors transform during sunset at Ayers Rock and sunrise at Kata Tjuta.

- Explore Australia’s famed national parks: Uluru, Watarrka, Kakadu, Crater Lakes, Mt. Hypipamee, and Curtain Fig.
- See a range of special mammals, birds, and plants from each area.
- Spend several nights looking for nocturnal mammals and other critters.
- Boat cruise the Yellow Waters Billabong and Daintree River.
- Snorkel the Great Barrier Reef.

LEADER: Tonia Cochran assisted by local guides.

DAYS: 18, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 12.

COST: \$10,410 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 6.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Aug 30–31	Travel to Uluru, Australia.		
Sep 1	Arrive in Uluru, Australia. Meet for a briefing in the afternoon before departing for Ayers Rock to watch the sunset transform the landscape.	Ayers Rock Resort – Outback Pioneer, Uluru	D
Sep 2	Depart for the sacred place of Kata Tjuta for sunrise and a stroll. Drive to Kings Canyon.	Kings Canyon Resort, Watarrka National Park	B, L, D
Sep 3	Visit the richest botanical region in arid Australia: Kings Canyon-Watarrka National Park. Chance for optional helicopter flight over the canyon (not included).	Kings Canyon Resort, Watarrka National Park	B, L, D
Sep 4	Drive to Alice Springs with stops en route to explore the scenery.	Aurora Alice Springs, Alice Springs	B, L, D
Sep 5	Fly to Darwin and spend the afternoon at the Botanical Gardens.	Travelodge Resort Darwin, Darwin	B, L, D
Sep 6	Visit Fogg Dam, known for its waterbirds. Drive to South Alligator (Kakadu) for a short walk on the lagoon and night spotting.	Aurora Kakadu, Kakadu National Park	B, L, D
Sep 7	Drive to Cooinda (Kakadu), stopping at Mamukala Wetlands for birds and reptiles and Ubirr for aboriginal rock art. Cruise Yellow Waters Billabong.	Cooinda Lodge Kakadu, Kakadu National Park	B, L, D
Sep 8	Early visit to Nourlangie Rock for bird watching, and en route to Darwin stop at Howard Springs Nature Park for reptiles and fish.	Travelodge Resort Darwin, Darwin	B, L, D
Sep 9	Fly to Cairns, with the option to visit intertidal sand flats and mangroves.	Holiday Inn Harbourside, Cairns	B, L, D
Sep 10	Make your way to the Atherton Tablelands to your lodge, adjacent to Crater Lakes National Park, so a great home base to explore.	Chambers Wildlife Rainforest Lodge, Atherton Tablelands	B, L, D

Sep 11	Explore the tapestry of farmland, woodland, and rainforest in several national parks of the area. Spend an evening looking for mammals.	Chambers Wildlife Rainforest Lodge, Atherton Tablelands	B, L, D
Sep 12	Travel north and visit Granite Gorge en route to Daintree River.	Daintree Riverview Lodge, Daintree Village	B, L, D
Sep 13	Early morning boat cruise on Daintree River, and then make your way back to Cairns.	Holiday Inn Harbourside, Cairns	B, L, D
Sep 14	Snorkel the Great Barrier Reef - Michaelmas Cay.	Holiday Inn Harbourside, Cairns	B, L, D
Sep 15	Depart Cairns for our Southern Australia tour or for home.		B
Sep 16	Arrive home.		

OPTIONS

- Continue your journey on our Southern Australia tour from September 13 to 29, 2021 and **SAVE 10%**. Explore the best of southeastern Australia, including six days in Tasmania, two days on Kangaroo Island and two days in Lamington National Park. See full itinerary at www.cheesemans.com/trips/southern-australia-sep2021.

LEADER



Tonia Cochran

Tonia is a wonderful guide, naturalist, and conservationist with a wide range of experience in Australian fauna and flora. Armed with a PhD in Zoology, she has had a varied professional career in science, conservation, and tourism. Tonia is a superb leader as proven by the many accolades she receives during our tours to Australia. Tonia is committed to promoting educational and ecologically sustainable tourism and is founding chair of Wildlife Tourism Australia.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Aug 30–31 ~ Travel to Uluru, Australia

Sep 1 ~ Arrive in Uluru and sunset at Ayers Rock

Arrive in Uluru, Australia (direct flights are available from most capital cities including Sydney and Melbourne and there are free transfers to the hotel). In the early afternoon, meet as a group in the foyer of the hotel for a briefing, before traveling to the famous Uluru (Ayers Rock). Watch the sunset change the remarkable monolith to spectacular and enjoy an Australian barbeque dinner. You will return to the hotel late in the evening.

Sep 2 ~ Sacred Kata Tjuta and Kings Canyon

This morning you will leave before sunrise and travel to Kata Tjuta (formerly known as the Olgas) to eat your picnic breakfast and watch the sunrise before taking a stroll around this cultural landmark. The remarkable

domed geological formations tower 1,500ft over the flat surrounding landscape. You will then travel to Kings Canyon in Watarrka National Park and settle into your cabins on arrival.

Sep 3 ~ Kings Canyon-Watarrka National Park

Spend the day exploring Kings Canyon and the Watarrka National Park today. The scenic landscape of rugged ranges, rock holes, and gorges act as a refuge for many plants and animals. With over 600 species of plants, Kings Canyon is botanically the richest region in arid Australia, making the park an important conservation area and a major attraction of central Australia. Kings Canyon features ancient sandstone walls sculpted by the elements over the millennia and rising 300ft to a plateau of rocky domes. There will be an opportunity to walk around the rim of the canyon and take some other shorter walks in the area, as well as the option of taking a helicopter flight over the canyon (not included).

Sep 4 ~ Drive to Alice Springs

Today will be mostly a day of travel towards Alice Springs with stops en route to explore the amazing Australian Outback scenery. One stop will include an area of waterholes off the Stuart Highway on the Hugh River. This fruitful area is usually home to a few patches of water and these, along with the fabled River Red Gums, attract a range of species. This is an excellent area for parrots, including Major Mitchell's cockatoo, little corella, budgerigar, galah, and cockatiel. Upon arrival in Alice Springs you will visit the local botanic gardens which is home to a multitude of resident birds including Australian ringneck parrot and western bowerbird (the male bowerbird is often seen around his bower trying to attract a mate). Euros and black-flanked rock wallaby can also be found here in the late afternoon. The hotel is situated on one side by the (usually dry) Todd River and on the other by a pedestrian mall where Indigenous art can be purchased.

Sep 5 ~ Fly to Darwin and Botanical Gardens

This morning after breakfast you will make your way to the airport for your flight to Darwin. Upon arrival, you will check into the hotel before spending the afternoon in the Botanical Gardens where you will enjoy your first views of the birds and flora of the area. Possibilities include red-collared lorikeet, orange-footed scrub-fowl, rose-crowned fruit-dove, little bronze-cuckoo, white-breasted woodswallow, magpie goose, Torresian imperial pigeon, rainbow bee-eater, sacred kingfisher, and brown honeyeater.

Sep 6 ~ Fogg Dam and South Alligator (Kakadu)

You will start the day with a visit to Fogg Dam. This well-known site is an excellent area for waterbirds including magpie goose, green pygmy-goose, pied heron, glossy ibis, the stately brolga, white-browed crane, and the quirky comb-crested jacana. En route to Kakadu you will enjoy a stop at the Adelaide River crossing for lunch where you may see mangrove golden whistler and a variety of flycatchers like shining, leaden, restless, and broad-billed flycatchers. On arrival in Kakadu you will enjoy a short walk to local lagoon not far from your cabins to enjoy sunset. After dinner, you may enjoy some spotlighting for nocturnal species such as barking owl, tawny frogmouth, large-tailed nightjar, and Australian owlet-nightjar.

Sep 7 ~ Mamukala Wetlands, Ubirr, Yellow Waters Billabong

This morning you will make a stop at the impressive Mamukala Wetlands where, if conditions are right, you can enjoy thousands of birds of many species. Plumed and wandering whistling ducks, radjah shelduck, black-necked Stork, magpie goose, and green pygmy-goose are possible bird highlights and file snakes and long-necked turtles can also be found here, a traditional hunting ground for the local indigenous people. There will also be an option to visit Ubirr, a site of rock outcrops in Kakadu that is home to some impressive aboriginal rock art. The art depicts creation ancestors and animals of the area, including several fish and turtle species, wallabies and possums. In the late afternoon, short-eared rock wallabies may be seen emerging from their shelters. Bird specialties found here include sandstone shrike-thrush, chestnut quilled rock pigeon, partridge pigeon (red eyed form), and rufous-throated honeyeater. Enjoy a rewarding sunset

cruise on the Yellow Waters Billabong, Kakadu's best-known wetland. This impressive wetland of channels, swamps, and floodplains is a delight to explore and is home to crocodiles and a variety of waterbirds including nankeen night-heron, black-necked stork, little kingfisher, and purple swamphen. Raptors such as white-bellied sea-eagle, whistling, and black kites are also commonly seen here, as well as plenty of crocodiles in the water and on the banks.

Sep 8 ~ Nourlangie Rock and drive to Darwin

Make an early visit to Nourlangie Rock where you have a reasonable chance of seeing the range-restricted black wallaroo, banded fruit-dove, white-lined honeyeater, little woodswallow, black-tailed treecreeper, and helmeted friarbird. You will then enjoy a last look around Kakadu before making your way out of the park and heading back to Darwin. On the way back you will visit Howard Springs Nature Park where large fish such as (delicious!) barramundi and reptiles like yellow-faced turtle can be easily viewed, you will also search for the elusive rainbow pitta. You will return to Darwin in the late afternoon.

Sep 9 ~ Fly to Cairns for wetlands

If time allows, before your flight to Cairns this morning, you will take an opportunity to visit a few local parks and beaches around the Darwin area before heading to the airport. Upon your arrival in Cairns, you will transfer to your hotel on the Esplanade overlooking the Coral Sea. There will be an option of visiting the intertidal sand flats, which are famous for migratory waders, and nearby mangroves to see a variety of birds like mangrove robin, shining flycatcher, and beach stone-curlew.

Sep 10 ~ Drive to Atherton Tablelands

Today you will leave coastal Cairns and make your way to the Atherton Tablelands, stopping at several sites on the way. In areas of farmland you may see brolga and sarus crane. In the afternoon, you will arrive at your accommodation for the next two nights. The lodge, set in lush rainforest brimming with birds and wildlife, is adjacent to Crater Lake National Park, and is a fantastic base from which to explore the riches of the area. The lodge grounds are home to an abundance of birdlife including wompoo and superb fruit dove, spotted catbird, tooth-billed bowerbird, white-throated treecreeper, Macleay's and bridled honeyeater, yellow-breasted boatbill, and Victoria's riflebird (a member of the Bird of Paradise family). Several mammals may also be seen here in the evening including long-nosed bandicoot, sugar glider, northern striped possum, and red-legged pademelon.

Sep 11 ~ Atherton Tablelands, Crater Lakes National Park

Explore the tapestry of farmland, woodland, and rainforest for a wonderful cross-section of wildlife, which will include several national parks: Crater Lakes National Park (comprising 2 volcanic lakes: Lake Barrine and Lake Eacham), Mt. Hypipamee National Park and Curtain Fig National Park. You will search for a range of bird species, including several bowerbirds, Victoria's riflebird and chowchillas and most importantly, southern cassowary! There will also be an opportunity to take an evening tour in search of more of the range-restricted endemic mammals in the area which include green, lemuroid, and Herbert River ringtail possums, coppery-tailed possums as well as Lumholtz's tree kangaroo. You may also see platypus!

Sep 12 ~ Granite Gorge and then to the Daintree

This morning you will travel northwards, stopping en route at some wetlands where a multitude of waterbirds may be seen. You will also visit Granite Gorge where you may enjoy encounters with squatter pigeon, and the Mareeba rock wallaby. Additional species you may see on your journey today include red-winged parrot, red-tailed black-cockatoo, and Australian bustard which prefer the dry savannah country in this region, and which makes a stark contrast to the rainforest areas of the Tablelands and the coast. In the late afternoon, you will arrive at your accommodation set on the banks of the fabled Daintree River.

Sep 13 ~ Cruise the Daintree River and back to Cairns

Enjoy an early morning boat cruise on the Daintree River where you may enjoy sightings of azure and little kingfisher, large-billed gerygone, varied triller, shining flycatcher and fairy martin, as well as a chance of the rare & localised great-billed heron. Additional species you may see in the area include bar-shouldered dove, Pacific koel, Papuan frogmouth, scaly-breasted lorikeet, helmeted friarbird, dusky myzomela and white-breasted woodswallow. You will then make your way back to Cairns where you will spend the afternoon visiting the Botanic Gardens and adjoining wetlands and conservation areas which offer a fine mix of water and bush birds. Australian brush turkey, orange-footed scrubfowl, Australasian figbird, black butcherbird, green oriole, the stunning noisy pitta, and lovely fairy-wren may all be seen here as might spectacled flying fox. In the wetlands you will search for comb-crested jacana, radjah shelduck, green pygmy geese, white-browed crane, and the handsome crimson finch.

Sep 14 ~ Snorkel the Great Barrier Reef - Michaelmas Cay

Today, you will transfer to the Cairns wharf to start your day trip to the Great Barrier Reef. You will cruise towards stunning Michaelmas Cay which is situated on the Outer reef about 25mi offshore from Cairns. This coral cay is an important nesting area for an array of tropical seabirds, including brown booby, sooty, bridled and black-naped tern, common and black noddy, lesser frigatebird, Pacific golden plover, and ruddy turnstone. More uncommonly masked booby, wandering tattler, roseate tern, and great frigatebird are seen. The cay is also surrounded by tropical coral reef where you will have the opportunity to snorkel. You will return to your hotel late in the afternoon and enjoy a farewell dinner, but no farewells are necessary if you join our Southern Australia tour (www.cheesemans.com/trips/southern-australia-sep2021).

Sep 15 ~ Join our Southern Australia tour or fly home

Transfer to Cairns airport after breakfast at the hotel. Continue on our Southern Australian tour (www.cheesemans.com/trips/southern-australia-sep2021) or fly home.

Sep 16 ~ Arrive home

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$10,410
Single Supplement	\$2,475

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler, we will find a roommate for you, but if we cannot find you a roommate, we may charge you a single supplement. Single rooms cost extra and are subject to availability.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$500
Second	November 1, 2020	\$2,000
Final	April 1, 2021	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, deposits are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$150 per person, which can be applied toward another tour if reserved within six months of the cancelled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferrable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- All leaders, transport, park entry fees, and permits for all activities unless described as optional.
- Meals from dinner on September 1 through breakfast on September 15.
- Transfer on September 1 from Ayers Rock Airport via free shuttle provided by Ayers Rock Resort and a group transfer on September 15 at around 8:30am from the Holiday Inn Harbourside to Cairns Airport for those continuing on the Southern Australian tour and those heading home.
- Non-alcoholic bottled beverages.
- Snorkeling equipment (mask, snorkel, and fins) for day at Great Barrier Reef.
- Trip Materials – information about flights, packing, entry and departure requirements, airport transfers, gratuities, etc.

Not Included

- All airfare, airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees. Airfare is approximately \$1,400 to \$2,000 from the US to Uluru, Australia, and back to the US from Cairns, depending on origin, plus approximately \$450 for two internal flights. **If continuing on our Southern Australia tour**, approximately \$200 for the one-way flight from Cairns to Brisbane.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Airport transfers in addition to the included group transfer on September 15.
- We can arrange extra hotel nights for an additional cost.
- Optional helicopter flight at Kings Canyon.
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, we suggest budgeting about \$10 to \$15 per participant per day for September 1 to September 15 with your local guides (about \$150 to \$225 total per participant).
- Wetsuits for day at Great Barrier Reef. We will send you more details about rentals in the Trip Materials.
- Emergency medical and evacuation insurance and trip cancellation insurance. For more information see www.cheesemans.com/travel-insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Reservation Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Reservation Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

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OTHER DETAILS

Climate

Temperatures vary depending on the location. Lows can be about 48 to 71°F (8 to 21°C) and highs can be about 78 to 89°F (25 to 31°C). Although it is the dry season, rain and thunderstorms are still possible.

Fitness Level

You need to be able to get in and out of the vehicle and boats on Daintree River, Yellow Waters, and Great Barrier Reef cruise. You'll take short walks during stops while driving between destinations. You'll take longer walks at Watarrka on uneven ground, but if you prefer shorter walks, we will make them available. Snorkeling is optional on the Great Barrier Reef cruise. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

Seasickness

Don't let a fear of seasickness scare you away! We have three boat trips on this tour, so it's a good idea to bring medication if you get seasick or are unsure. Read our suggestions for coping with seasickness at www.cheesemans.com/seasickness and contact us if you have any concerns.

Flights

Airfare is not included in trip costs. Detailed logistical information and the contact information for our recommended flight-ticketing agent are included in the Trip Materials we will send you. Please let us know if you are arriving earlier or staying later as we are happy to assist you with any extra overnights that you might want to arrange.

Flights you (or a travel agent) book: Arrive at Ayers Rock Airport, near Uluru, Australia (AYQ) by 2:00pm on September 1. Depart from Cairns, Australia (CNS) anytime on September 15, but if you'd like to take advantage of the included group transfer, depart around 8:30am. **If you are continuing on our Southern Australia tour**, see the *Flights* section in its itinerary for departure information (www.cheesemans.com/trips/southern-australia-sep2021).

Flights we book for you: Two internal flights; we'll add the flight cost to your final trip balance.

Terms and Conditions

Read our current Terms and Conditions at <https://cheesemans.com/terms-and-conditions>.

Conservation

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris is passionate about conserving the precious regions that we travel to and supports many conservation efforts. By visiting these areas, we contribute to sustainable conservation of these valuable wildlife habitats. We urge you to support conservation organizations that protect and restore natural habitats and write letters to tourism and government agencies to promote work in preserving wildlife.

We aim to make all our trips carbon neutral by splitting the cost of carbon offsetting with our participants. For your convenience, the optional donation amount for your half of the carbon offset will be indicated on your invoice. We source high quality offsets through CarbonTree Conservation Fund, a non-profit we helped found, supporting pioneering forest conservation in the Rio Bravo Reserve in Belize, a Nature Conservancy project (www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/latin-america/belize/rio-bravo-conservation-area/).