

Uluru-Kata Tjuta

Sweeping spinifex, red sand plains and drooping desert oaks stretch west into the formidable Gibson Desert in this iconic corner of the Territory. For thousands of years this arid, inhospitable land has been home to the Pitjantjatjara and Yankuntjatjara Aboriginal peoples, who might well still have the place to themselves if it wasn't for one thing. Right here, slap bang in the middle of the country, is Australia's most recognisable natural wonder. Uluru (Ayers Rock) and its partner Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) draw tourists to the Red Centre like moths to a big red flame.

Uluru has long graced postcards, posters and thousands of photo albums, and a trip here is something of a pilgrimage to the heart of Australia. The first glimpse of the Rock as you round a bend on the short drive from Yulara is unforgettable, and the changing colours, light and shadows can keep you captivated for days. There's plenty to do here: learn about Anangu Aboriginal culture through the eyes of the traditional owners, take a sunset camel ride through the desert, visit the superb cultural centre and raise a glass of champagne to the glowing ember-like monolith as the sun sets.

Some may see a visit to Uluru-Kata Tjuta as a cliché, but if you think this is a long way to go to see a couple of rocks in the desert, think again. The journey alone is epic, and the reward is ample. You won't be disappointed you made the journey.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Letting 'the Rock' conquer you on a leisurely **base walk** (p254)
- Learning about Anangu traditions, culture and Tjukurpa (law), on a **tour** (p251) or at the **Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre** (p253)
- Finding a space – and a glass of champagne – to watching glowing hues of Uluru at **sunset** (p255)
- Experiencing dinner in the desert under the stars at the superb **Sounds of Silence** (p258)
- Discovering the Valley of the Winds at sunrise in magnificent **Kata Tjuta** (p256)
- Gazing at a billion brilliant stars in the desert sky at the **Night Sky Show** (p257)
- Ending the day with a barbecue and beer at Yulara's **Outback Pioneer Hotel** (p258)

Kata Tjuta ★ Yulara
★ Uluru
Uluru-Kata Tjuta
Cultural Centre

■ TELEPHONE CODE ☎ 08

- Ayers Rock Resort: www.ayersrockresort.com.au
- Parks Australia: www.deh.gov.au/parks/uluru

LASSETER HIGHWAY

The Lasseter Hwy links the Stuart Hwy with Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, 244km to the west. Named after prospector and explorer Harold Lasseter who spent half his life (and ultimately died) searching for a lost gold reef, the road is sealed and takes less than three hours to cover.

MT EBENEZER

The first stop along the highway, Mt Ebenezer is an Aboriginal-owned station 56km west of the Stuart Hwy in the shadow of the Basedow Range and Mt Ebenezer to the north. The roadhouse is the art-and-craft outlet for the local Imanpa Aboriginal community and prices here are very competitive. A small gallery shows a picture board of local artists along with paintings (\$35 to \$65 for small pieces, or \$100 to \$700 for larger ones), wood carvings and printed T-shirts.

At **Mt Ebenezer Roadhouse** (☎ 8956 2904; Lasseter Hwy; camping free, powered sites per person \$8, s/d \$55/60; 🕒 8am-10pm; 📶 🚰 🚰), the original part of the building dates back to the 1950s, and is constructed of hand-sawn desert oak logs. The camping area is a bit parched, and there are refurbished motel-style rooms with en suite. Meals (\$12) and fuel are available and there's a bar.

MT CONNER

Mt Conner, the large mesa that looms 350m out of the desert floor about 20km south of the highway, is the outback's most photographed red herring. On first sighting many people mistake this for Uluru, but other than being a large mass protruding from a flat plain, it bears no resemblance. With a base circumference of around 32km, Mt Conner is much larger than Uluru. There's a rest area and lookout on the highway 26km beyond the Luritja Rd turn-off, which is a good vantage point to take in the scene.

Mt Conner was first recorded by explorer William Gosse in 1873, who named it after ML Conner, a South Australian politician. It has great significance for the local Aboriginal people, who know it as Atila.

Tours

Mt Conner lies on Curtin Springs Station and there is no public access, except by

joining an organised tour from Curtin Springs Roadhouse.

Camel Adventure Tours (☎ 8956 7748, 8956 2906; adult/child \$25/10) has 1½-hour morning and sunset rides from Curtin Springs out towards Mt Conner.

Uncles Tours (☎ 8956 2916; half/full-day tours \$85/170, two-hour sunset tour \$45, climb \$75), departing from Curtin Springs Roadhouse, has informative tours that take you out to Mt Conner, across salt pans and to the old Mt Conner homestead. The six-hour return Mt Conner climb requires a decent level of fitness.

CURTIN SPRINGS

Curtin Springs is a further 26km from the Mt Conner rest area and is the last stop before reaching Yulara, about 80km away. The roadhouse here gets plenty of traffic and can be quite lively. It's worth a stop to see the aviary behind the roadhouse, with a colourful collection of native birds.

Curtin Springs Roadhouse (☎ 8956 2906; www.curtinsprings.com; Lasseter Hwy; camping free, powered sites for 2 \$15, s/d \$45/55, d/tr/q/f \$100/115/130/150; 📶 🚰 🚰) is a popular accommodation alternative for those not willing to pay the resort prices at Yulara. You can pitch a tent in a grassy camping ground for free, and the cabins are neat and well maintained. The newest ones (with en suite) had a former life in the Olympic village at the Sydney 2000 games. There's pricey fuel, a store with limited supplies and takeaway food, plus a bar.

ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

For most visitors to Australia, a visit to Uluru is high on the list of 'must-sees', and for many Australians it's attained the status of a pilgrimage. Boasting one of the world's greatest natural attractions, this national park is one of just 11 places in Australia – and only two in the Territory – that are included on the Unesco World Heritage List.

But the park offers more than just the chance to see the Rock. Along with the equally impressive Kata Tjuta (the Olgas), the entire area is of deep cultural sig-

nificance to the local Pitjantjatjara and Yankuntjatjara Aboriginal peoples (who refer to themselves as Anangu).

Although many tour groups zip through the area in 24 hours, it's easy to spend at least the three days allowed by the park pass – there are plenty of walks and other activities, and the Rock never seems to look the same no matter how many times you see it. The service village of Yulara, which is just outside the park's boundary, offers comfortable accommodation and dining at premium prices.

Aboriginal Heritage

Archaeological evidence suggests that Aboriginal people have inhabited this part of Australia for at least 10,000 years. According to Tjukurpa (Aboriginal *stories* and law derived from the creation period) all landscape features were made by ancestral beings, and the Anangu today are the descendants of the ancestral beings and custodians of the ancestral lands.

According to Anangu legend, Uluru was built by two boys who played in the mud after rain; it is at the centre of a number

TJUKURPA – ANANGU STORIES

There are many creation *stories* associated with Uluru, but the most important ancestors to the Anangu are the Mala (rufous hare wallaby), the Kuniya (woma python), the Liru (brown snake) and Lungkata (bluetongue lizard), and evidence of their activities can be seen in features of the Rock.

Mala Wallabies

The Mala Wallabies travelled from the Yuendumu area to Uluru for ceremonies (*inma*). The men climbed to the top of Uluru to plant a ceremonial pole, while the women collected and prepared food at Taputji, a small isolated rock on the northeastern side.

During the ceremonies, the Mala were invited by the Wintalka (mulga-seed) men to attend dance ceremonies away to the west. Already committed to their own celebrations, the Mala refused and the angered Wintalka created a nasty dingo-like creature (Kurpany), which sneaked up on the women's dancing ceremonies at Tjukatjapi on the northern side of the Rock. The frightened women fled right into the middle of the men's secret ceremony, ruining it, and in the confusion a Mala man was killed and eaten by the Kurpany. The remaining Mala fled south towards the Musgrave Ranges.

Kuniya & Liru

The Tjukurpa tells of how the Kuniya (woma python) came from the east to hatch her young at Uluru. While she was camped at Taputji, she was attacked by a group of Liru (brown snakes), who had been angered by Kuniya's nephew. At Mutitjulu she came across a Liru warrior and performed a ritual dance, mustering great forces. In an effort to dispel this terrifying force she picked up a handful of sand and let it fall to the ground. The vegetation where the sand fell was poisoned and today remains unusable to Anangu.

The force within her remained strong and a great battle with the Liru was fought. She hit him on the head, trying to inflict a 'sorry cut', but overcome with anger she hit him a second time, killing him. The two wounds received by the Liru can be seen as the vertical cracks on the Rock near Mutitjulu.

Lungkata

The Lungkata (bluetongue lizard man) found an emu, which had been wounded by other hunters, at the base of the Rock. He finished it off and started to cook it. The original hunters, two Bellbird brothers, found Lungkata and asked him if he had seen their emu. He lied, saying he hadn't seen it, but the hunters did not believe him and chased him around the base of the Rock. While being pursued Lungkata dropped pieces of emu meat, and these are seen as the fractured slabs of sandstone just west of Mutitjulu, and at Kalaya Tjunta (emu thigh) on the southeastern side of Uluru, where a spur of Rock is seen as the emu's thigh.

SPEAKING ANANGU

Visiting the Cultural Centre or taking an Anangu Tour, you'll hear a number of words in the Pitjantjatjara language, the most prominent Anangu dialect. Here's a brief glossary of commonly used words:

inma dance, ceremony

itjanu flower

kali boomerang

karu creek

kulata hunting spear

Kuniya woma python

Kurpany devil dog

Liru brown snake

Mala rufous hare wallaby

miru spear thrower

nganampa ours

ngura all of us

Nguraritja traditional owner

palya OK, hello, goodbye

pila spinifex plains

piranpa non-Aboriginal people

piti wooden bowl

puli rock

puti woodland or bushland

tali sand dunes

tatintja climb

tjara shield

tjukuritja creation ancestors

Tjukurpa creation law, *stories*

walpa wind

wana digging stick

wari cold

wiya no, don't

of Dreaming tracks that crisscross central Australia.

The Anangu officially own the national park, although it is leased to **Parks Australia** (www.ea.gov.au/parks/uluru/index.html), the Commonwealth government's national parks body, on a 99-year lease. The traditional owners receive an annual rental of around \$200,000 plus 25% of the park entrance fees (about \$2 million a year). Of this, the Anangu devote about \$600,000 to community projects such as health and education. Decisions related to the park are made by the 12 members of the Board of Management, eight of whom are nominated by the traditional owners.

European History

The first white man to venture into the area was Ernest Giles, during his attempted crossing from the Overland Telegraph Line to the west of the continent in 1872. His party had travelled west from Watarrka, and sighted Kata Tjuta, which he named Mt Ferdinand after his financier, the noted botanist Baron Ferdinand von Mueller. However, von Mueller later changed the name to Mt Olga, after Queen Olga of Wurttemberg.

The following year a party led by William Gosse set out to cross to the west. He named Mt Conner and, sighting a hill to the west, stated:

The hill, as I approached, presented a most peculiar appearance, the upper portion being covered with holes or

caves. When I got clear of the sandhills, and was only two miles distant, and the hill, for the first time, coming fairly into view, what was my astonishment to find it was one immense rock rising abruptly from the plain... I have named this Ayers Rock, after Sir Henry Ayers the premier of South Australia.

The early explorers were followed by pastoralists, missionaries, doggers (dingo hunters) and various miscellaneous adventurers who travelled through the area. Among these was one Harold Lasseter, who insisted he had found a fabulously rich gold reef in the Petermann Ranges to the west in 1901. He died a lonely death in the same ranges in 1931 trying to rediscover it.

As European activity in the area increased, so did the contact and conflict between the two cultures. With the combined effects of stock grazing and drought, the Anangu found their hunting and gathering options becoming increasingly scarce, which in turn led to a dependence on the white economy. In the 1920s the three governments of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory set aside a reserve (the Great Central Aboriginal Reserve) for Aboriginal people. The Anangu shunned this and other reserves, preferring instead to maintain traditional practices.

By 1950 a dirt road had been pushed through from the east and tourism started

to develop in the area. As early as 1951 the fledgling Connellan Airways applied for permission to build an airstrip near Uluru, which resulted in the area of Uluru and Kata Tjuta being excised from the reserve in 1958 for use as a national park.

By the 1970s it was clear that planning was required for the development of the area. Between 1931 and 1946 only 22 people were known to have climbed Uluru. In 1969 about 23,000 people visited the area. Ten years later the figure was 65,000 and now the annual visitor figures are approaching 500,000.

The 1970s saw the construction of the new Yulara Resort some distance from the Rock, as the original facilities were too close and were having a negative impact on the environment. Many of the old facilities, close to the northern side of the Rock, were bulldozed, while some are still used by the Mutitjulu Aboriginal community. Yulara finally opened in 1983. Three years earlier, when camping was permitted near the base of the Rock, a dingo took baby Azaria Chamberlain from a tent, sparking probably the most famous legal case in Australian history – the trial and later acquittal of Lindy Chamberlain.

Increased tourism activity over the years led to Aboriginal anxiety about the desecration of important sites by tourists. The Federal government was approached for assistance and by 1973 Aboriginal people had become involved with the management of the park. In 1983, following renewed calls from traditional owners for title to the land, the Federal government announced that freehold title to the national park would be granted and the park leased back to what is now Parks Australia for 99 years. The transfer of ownership took place on 26 October 1985.

Geology

The Rock itself is 3.6km long by 2.4km wide, stands 348m above the surrounding dunes and measures 9.4km around the base. It is made up of a type of coarse-grained sandstone known as arkose, which was formed from sediment from eroded granite mountains. Kata Tjuta, on the other hand, is a conglomerate of granite and basalt gravel glued together by mud and sand.

The sedimentary beds that make up both formations were laid down over about 600 million years, in a shallow sea in what geologists call the Amadeus Basin. Various periods

of uplift caused the beds to buckle, fold and lift above sea level; those that form Uluru were turned so that they are now almost vertical, while at Kata Tjuta they were tilted about 20°. For the last 300 million years erosion has worn away the surface rocks, leaving what we see today. Yet it's believed that the Rock extends up to 5km beneath the sand.

The sculptured shapes seen on the surface of Uluru today are the effects of wind, water and sand erosion.

Climate

The park is in the centre of the arid zone, with an average annual rainfall of only around 220mm. The most likely time for rain and thunderstorms is during the hotter months (November to March), but drought is not uncommon and a year or two may go by without rain.

Many people are surprised at how cold it gets at Uluru in winter. Daytime temperatures from May to October can be pleasant, but if there's cloud and a cold wind around it can be bitter. Clear nights often see the temperature plunge to well below freezing – campers be prepared!

In summer it can be scorching, with temperatures peaking during February and March and reaching up to 45°C. Normally it's a mere 30°C to 35°C.

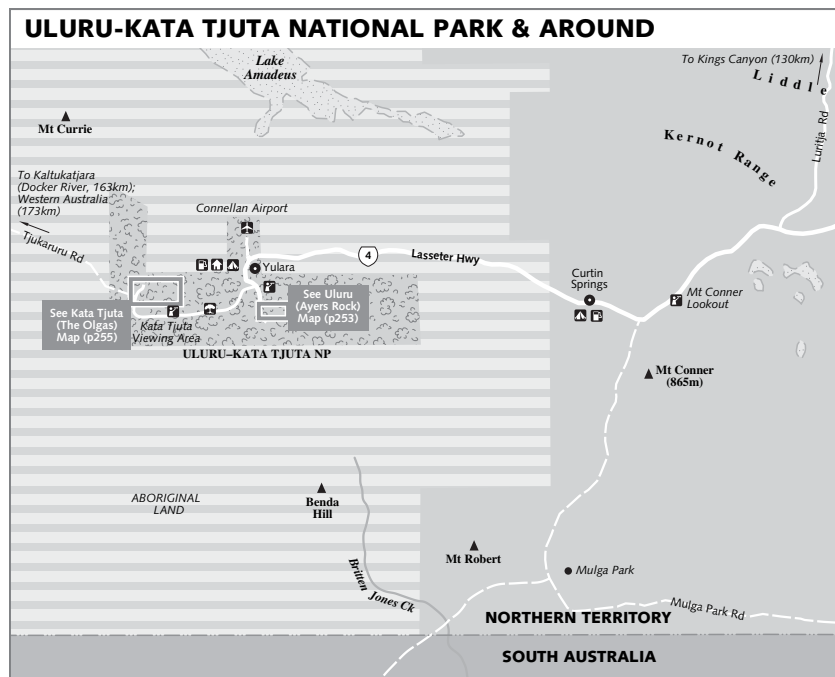
Wildlife

ANIMALS

Although the arid country around Uluru doesn't look very fertile, it is home to a wide variety of animals – the fact that most of the Tjukurpa sites within the park are animal-related is evidence of that. Anangu knowledge of ecosystems and animal behaviour is essential to wildlife surveys and provides background for conservation programmes.

The most common native mammals include red kangaroos, euros, dingoes and small marsupials such as dunnarts and marsupial moles. The moles have become specialised desert dwellers – they are blind and use their short, strong limbs to burrow through the loose sand, feeding on insect larvae and small reptiles.

The once-common rufous hare wallaby is classified as being extinct in the wild, wiped out by European settlement and feral predators. However, in 2005 25 animals were re-introduced to the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National



Park, protected by a 170-hectare feral-proof enclosure. The small wallabies (known as Mala to Anangu) are an important link to the Tjukurpa creation stories. It's hoped that the wallabies, reared in an enclosure within Watarrka National Park, will successfully breed and may eventually be returned to the wild.

Most of the park's mammals are active only at night, but you're bound to see some birds. Crested pigeons are common around Yulara and while walking round the Rock you'll probably see colourful galahs, budgerigars and zebra finches. A checklist of birds found within the park is available from the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre.

PLANTS

The plants of the red sand plains of central Australia – mainly spinifex grasses, mulga bushes and desert oak trees – have adapted to the harsh, dry climate. These plants remain virtually dormant during times of drought and shoot into action after rain.

The mulga has heavy, hard wood and so was used by Anangu for firewood, and for making implements such as boomerangs and

digging sticks. Stands of desert oaks are usually found in areas of deep sand. The rough corky bark protects and insulates the trunk, giving it a level of fire protection. Except in times of severe drought, numerous grevilleas and fuchsias thrive in the sand dunes.

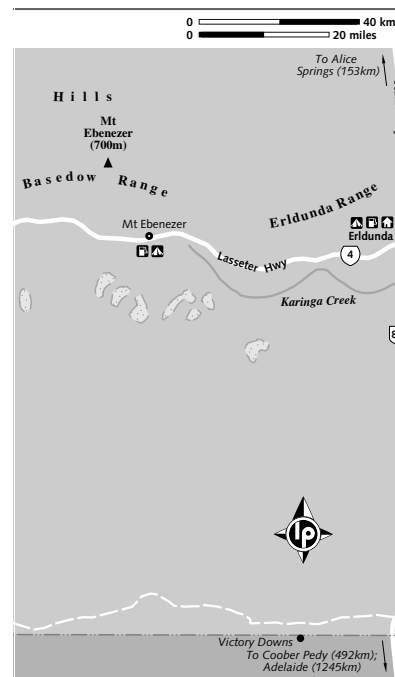
Common eucalypts found in the area include the Centralian bloodwood, the river red gum and the blue mallee.

Late winter and early spring (August to September) usually turn on a display of wildflowers with some surprisingly showy blooms.

As in the Top End, Aboriginal people in central Australia used fire to manage the land. Controlled burns encourage regrowth and limit the amount of accumulated vegetation. Large fires burn too hot over a large area and can be very destructive. These days the park managers are trying to re-create the 'mosaic' pattern of small burns that occurred before white settlement.

Information

The park is open from half an hour before sunrise to sunset daily (varying between



5am to 9pm in summer and 6.30am to 7.30pm in winter). Three-day entry permits to the **national park** (adult/child \$25/free) are available at the drive-through park entry station on the road from Yulara.

There are picnic and toilet facilities at Uluru (at the Cultural Centre and near the Mala car park) and at Kata Tjuta.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre (☎ 8956 3138;

🕒 7am-6pm Nov-Apr, 7.30am-5.30pm May-Aug,

7am-5.30pm Sep-Oct; information desk 🕒 8am-5pm)

Just 1km before the Rock, this should be your first stop for information on the park. Along with cultural displays and galleries, there's an information desk in the Nintirringkupai building where you can speak to park rangers and pick up informative leaflets and walking notes. Quality information packs cost \$5. See p253 for more information on the centre.

Visitors centre (☎ 8957 7377; 🕒 9am-5.30pm)

The visitors centre at Yulara is also a good source of park information.

Tours

BUS TOURS

Yulara's **Tour & Information Centre** (☎ 8956 2240; Yulara Shopping Centre; 🕒 8am-8.30pm) houses local tour operators.

AAT-King's (☎ 8956 2171; www.aatkings.com) has the biggest range of coach tour options around the park. You can choose from a range of guided walks and tours from Yulara, or buy a tour pass from one day (\$175) to three days (\$300). Check the website or ask at the Tour & Information Centre for details.

Discovery Ecotours (☎ 8956 2563; www.ecotours.com.au) has small-group day tours around Uluru for \$110 and Kata Tjuta \$80. There's also a seven-hour tour to Mt Conner including dinner for \$210.

CAMEL TOURS

Uluru Camel Tours (☎ 8956 2444; www.cameltoys.com.au; short rides adult/child from \$10/6; 🕒 10.30am-noon), owned by Anangu Tours, has a small museum and short but interesting (if you've never been on a camel before) rides. The most popular rides, however, are the Camel to Sunrise, a 2½-hour tour for \$95, and the sunset equivalent with champagne, which costs the same. At noon daily between April and October the Camel Express (\$60, 45 minutes) trudges through the desert to a view of both Uluru and Kata Tjuta.

CULTURAL TOURS

If you want to gain a true insight into the significance of the Rock through the eyes of the traditional owners, check out **Anangu Tours** (☎ 8956 2123; www.anangutours.com.au). Owned and operated by Anangu from the Mutitjulu community, these tours are the ultimate cultural experience at Uluru, and give you a greater understanding of Aboriginal culture.

The 4½-hour Aboriginal Uluru Tour starts with sunrise over Uluru and breakfast at the Cultural Centre, then takes in the Liru walk to the base, Aboriginal culture and law, and demonstrations of bush skills and spear-throwing. It departs daily and costs \$120/80 for adults/children.

The Kuniya Sunset Tour (\$90/65) leaves at 2.30pm (3.30pm between November and March) and includes a visit to Mutitjulu Waterhole and the Cultural Centre, finishing with a sunset viewing. Both trips can be combined over 24 hours with an Anangu Culture Pass (\$190/130). If you have your own transport you can choose to skip the preliminaries and join any of the tours at the Cultural Centre for \$60/30.

Another option is the Mala walk (\$70/50) at 9am, which starts with a vehicle tour of

the Rock then a guided Mala walk. Finally there's a three-hour dot painting workshop (\$80/60) at the Cultural Centre.

Cave Hill Safari (☎ 8296 8010; www.voyages.com.au; adult/child \$215/180) is a full-day cultural and adventure tour travelling by 4WD to the Cave Hill Aboriginal community, southeast of Uluru across the South Australian border, where local guides explain their creation *stories* and traditions and show rock art sites. This is a wonderful opportunity to escape the crowds and learn more about the lives of the traditional owners.

MOTORCYCLE TOURS

Sunrise and sunset tours can also be done on the back of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, though at a minimum \$85 for a 30-minute ride it's one for classic bike fanatics. **Uluru Motorcycle Tours** (☎ 8956 2019; ulurucycles@bigpond.com.au; rides \$85-255) offers a short trip to the Rock (sunset tour is \$155), or longer tours from one to three hours, including Kata Tjuta. Serious riders would prefer the **self-drive tours** (2/3/5/10hr \$260/340/440/650), which require a \$2500 deposit and full motorcycle licence.

SCENIC FLIGHTS

The view from the ground is one thing, but from the air it's something else – just be aware that flights must maintain a certain distance from the Rock itself. Bookings are essential (preferably a day in advance) and flights may be cancelled if weather conditions aren't perfect. The following operators can be booked at the Tour & Information Centre in Yulara. If you're wondering whether to go up by chopper or plane, the light plane gives you more time in the air and is slightly cheaper, but the helicopter flies lower, offers a better all-round view and is certainly more exhilarating. There are no child concessions on any flights.

Ayers Rock Helicopters (☎ 8956 2077; arhelis@bigpond.com.au; \$100-580) offers a 15-minute buzz over the Rock (\$100), a 30-minute Uluru-Kata Tjuta flight (\$180) or longer flights to Mt Connor or Kings Canyon.

Ayers Rock Scenic Flights (☎ 8956 2345; www.ayersrockflights.com.au; flights \$150-600) has a 40-minute plane flight over the Rock and Kata Tjuta for \$150; Uluru, Kata-Tjuta, Lake Amadeus and Kings Canyon is \$370.

Professional Helicopter Services (PHS; ☎ 8956 2003; phsrock@bigpond.com; flights \$115-830) has short

DETOUR

A lonely sign at the western end of the access road to Kata Tjuta points out that there is a hell of a lot of nothing if you travel west – it's 200km to the Aboriginal settlement of Kaltukatjara (Docker River), and about 1500km to Kalbarrie. But the **Great Central Rd** is a short cut to Western Australia and an opportunity for some remote outback driving. Although regularly graded and not a demanding drive, the road can get chopped up after rain and you may need a 4WD to get right through. Check the road conditions before you leave, and ensure you have a permit from the Central Land Council in Alice Springs (p177).

The route passes Irving Creek (where Harold Lasseter died), Kaltukatjara (Docker River), Warburton and Laverton. The **Gunbarrel Hwy** is an alternative route that leaves the Great Central Rd at Warburton and heads north and then west to the mining town of Leonorain Western Australia. This is definitely high-clearance 4WD territory.

flights over the Rock from \$115, Uluru and the Olgas for \$220 and the works, including Lake Amadeus and Kings Canyon, for \$830.

TOURS FROM ALICE SPRINGS

There's a whole gamut of tours to Uluru from Alice Springs from all-inclusive camping trips to more upmarket tours with hotel accommodation. Check out the company's vehicles, group size (and ages), accommodation, types of meals and whether it includes park entry (most don't) before deciding.

Emu Run Tours (☎ 8953 7057; www.emurun.com.au) has day tours to Uluru if you're rushed (\$195) or a two-day Uluru and Kings Canyon tour (\$390). Prices include park entry fees.

Mulga's Adventures (☎ 8952 1545; www.mulgas.com.au; 3-day tour \$250), departing from Annie's Place, is a popular tour with backpackers. It's certainly cheap and includes bush camping in swags and stops at Kings Canyon and a camel farm.

Northern Territory Adventure Tours (☎ 8981 4255; www.adventuretours.com.au) is an established outfit with a variety of vehicles and tour options including two-/three-/five-day trips for \$350/460/700. Group sizes can be larger

than some and your 'bush camping' will usually be in a camping ground.

Ossies Outback 4WD (☎ 8952 2308; www.ossies.com.au; 3-day tour from \$650) offers exciting 4WD tours via Finke Gorge National Park and Kings Canyon; includes resort accommodation.

Sahara Outback Tours (☎ 8953 0881; www.sahara.com.au) has recommended two-/three-day camping safaris (\$370/490), and a five-day safari (\$750) including West MacDonnells and Palm Valley.

Wayoutback (☎ 8952 4324; www.wayoutback.com.au) runs three-day 4WD safaris that traverse 4WD tracks to Uluru and Kings Canyon for \$490, and five-day safaris that include Palm Valley and West MacDonnells for \$730, bush camping in private camps along the way.

Wildway (☎ 8953 7045; www.wildway.com.au) has three-day Uluru and Kings Canyon tours for \$350, including park entry and meals.

ULURU (AYERS ROCK)

Towering above the surrounding pancake-flat plains like a lone iceberg in a rust-red ocean, the first sight of Uluru will startle even the most jaded traveller. No matter how many times you've seen it in postcards, nothing quite prepares you for the real thing, with its intricate grooves, pockmarks, shadows and sheer size.

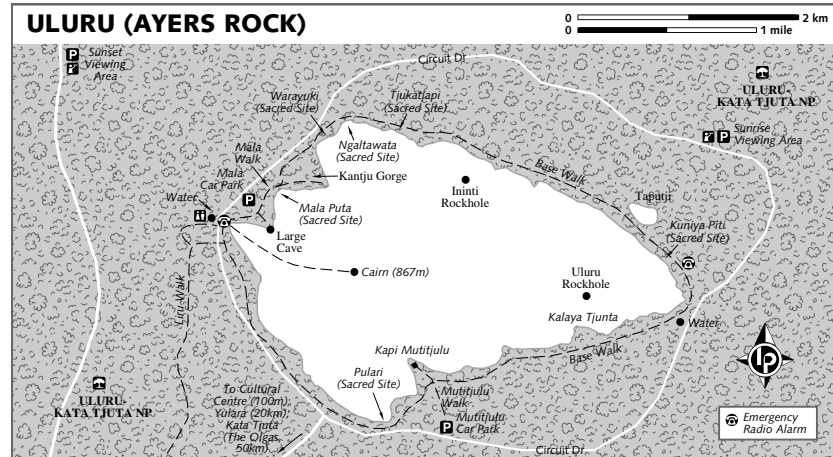
Although often touted as the world's biggest monolith (single piece of rock), that honour goes to another Australian rock, the little-known Mt Augustus in Western Australia, which is almost twice the size of

Uluru. But who cares? The landscape and the famous changing colours of the Rock (as the setting sun turns it a series of deeper and darker oranges, reds and finally a hazy purple before it fades into grey and blends into the night sky) are a photographer's dream. The dawn performance is more subtle but no less rewarding.

Sights & Activities

Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre

If you want to gain an understanding of the culture and lifestyle of the traditional Anangu owners and their relationship with the land, the superb **Cultural Centre** (☎ 8956 3138; ☎ 7am-6pm Nov-Apr, 7.30am-5.30pm May-Aug, 7am-5.30pm Sep-Oct) should not be missed. The two inspiring rammed-earth and timber buildings here represent the ancestral figures of Kuniya (woma python) and Liru (brown snake) and contained within them are two main display areas, both with multilingual information. Entering from the car park you pass murals of Anangu art and interpretive displays relating to Tjukurpa with detailed information on ancestral *stories*, ceremonies and bush foods. The next building houses the Nintiringkupai display, focusing on the modern history and joint management of the national park, as well as flora, fauna and Aboriginal tools. If you're thinking of souveniring something from the park, check out the pile of rocks and letters from people around the world who – in a fit of guilt or perhaps superstition – have returned rocks



A QUESTION OF CLIMBING

Of the 450,000-plus visitors to Uluru each year, there are no definitive figures on how many actually climb the Rock. For many people, the climb is regarded as a rite of passage, a pilgrimage to conquer the mighty monolith and a reason to visit.

But for the traditional owners, the Anangu, Uluru is a sacred place. The path up the side of the Rock is part of the route taken by the Mala ancestors on their arrival at Uluru and has great spiritual significance – and is not to be trampled by human feet. When you arrive at Uluru you'll see a sign from the Anangu saying 'We don't climb' and a request that you don't climb either.

Apart from the cultural significance, the Anangu are the custodians of these lands and take responsibility for the safety of visitors. Any injuries or deaths that occur on the Rock (and they do occur – check out the memorial plaques at the base) are a source of distress and sadness to them. For similar reasons of public safety, Parks Australia would (unofficially) prefer that people didn't climb. It's a very steep and taxing ascent, not to be taken lightly, and each year there are several costly air rescues, mostly from people suffering heart attacks. Furthermore, Parks Australia must constantly monitor the climb and close it on days where the temperature is forecast to reach 36°C and on days of high wind.

So if the Anangu don't want people to climb and Parks Australia would prefer to see it closed, why does it remain open? The answer is tourism. The tourism industry believes visitor numbers would drop significantly – at least initially – if the climb was closed, particularly from overseas visitors thinking there is nothing else to do at Uluru. Even a small drop in numbers would cost millions.

The debate has grown louder in recent years and many believe the climb will eventually be closed for good. Until then, it remains a personal decision and a question of respect. Before deciding, visit the Cultural Centre and perhaps take an Anangu tour. You might just change your mind.

after taking them! Removing natural objects from the park is prohibited anyway.

Also in the complex are two art galleries and a souvenir shop, and there's the **Ininti Café** (snacks \$2.50-9.50; ☎ 7am-5.15pm) serving breakfast, sandwiches, hot food and drinks. You can easily spend an hour or three exploring the centre.

WALKING

There are several walking tracks around Uluru, with an emphasis on their cultural significance. Informative walks, guided by both park rangers and Anangu Tours, delve into local Tjukurpa *stories*, plants and wildlife, and geology. Several areas of spiritual significance to Anangu are off-limits to visitors and should not be photographed – these are marked with fences and signs.

The *Insight into Uluru* brochure (\$1), available at the Cultural Centre, gives details on the self-guided Mala and Mutitjulu walks.

Base walk (9.4km loop, three to four hours, medium) A highlight for many. Circumnavigate the base of the Rock's mass and let it conquer you, as you peer at the caves and art sites along the way. It's an easy stroll but quite long, so plan to go in the early morning or mid-afternoon.

Liru walk (2km one way, 45 minutes, easy) This walking track links the Cultural Centre with the start of the Mala walk and climb, and passes a number of significant Anangu sites.

Mala walk (2km return, one hour, easy) From the base of the climbing point, interpretative signs explain the Tjukurpa of the Mala, which is of great importance to the Anangu. At Kantju Gorge you can either continue on the base walk or return to the car park. A ranger-guided walk along this route departs at 10am daily (8am in summer) from the car park. It's wheelchair accessible.

Mutitjulu walk (1km return, 45 minutes, easy) A short walk from the car park on the southern side leads to the only permanent waterhole, with links to the Kuniya and Liru Tjukurpa.

The climb (1.6km return, about two hours, difficult) If you insist on climbing (see the boxed text above), take note of the warnings. It's a demanding climb and there have been numerous deaths from falls and heart attacks. Plan to go early in the day, take plenty of water and be prepared to turn around if it all gets too much. The first part of the walk is by far the steepest and most arduous, and there's a chain to hold on to. After that it's a relatively easy (and safe) walk across the top of the rock to a cairn. The view is panoramic – you can easily see Kata Tjuta and Mt Conner. The climb is often closed due to strong winds, rain, mist and Anangu business, and from 8am on days forecast to reach 36°C or more.

SUNSET & SUNRISE VIEWING AREAS

About halfway between Yulara and Uluru the **sunset viewing area** has plenty of car parking space, although in peak season you'll have to arrive early to snare a space. You can't miss it – dozens of cars and buses unload camera-toting tourists from about an hour before sunset. There's a superb view of the rock and all the colours of its changing glory from here.

The **sunrise viewing area** is generally less busy, but you'll still have to make an early start. Parking is strung out along the road on the eastern side of the rock – the quickest route is to turn right at the T-intersection past the Cultural Centre.

Shopping

There are two art galleries and a souvenir outlet in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre.

Ininti Souvenirs (☎ 8956 2214; ☎ 7am-5.15pm), attached to the café, sells souvenirs such as T-shirts, ceramics, hats, CDs and a good variety of books on Aboriginal culture, biographies, bush foods and the flora and fauna of the area.

Maruku Arts (☎ 8956 2558; www.maruku.com.au; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Apr-Sep, 8am-5.30pm Oct-Mar) is an Aboriginal-owned art and craft gallery displaying dot paintings (\$700 to \$2500) and all sorts of carved wooden pieces such as *piti* (large bowls), *kulata* (hunting spears), *mirru* (spear throwers) and *wana* (digging sticks). There are also carved animals and music

sticks decorated with burnt wood designs. Everything is created in the surrounding desert regions, and you're buying direct from the artists. You can usually see artists at work each morning from Monday to Friday.

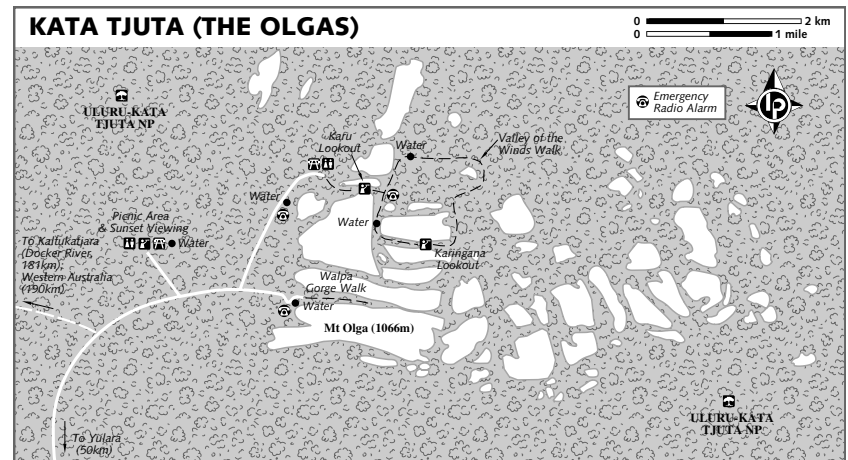
Walkatjara Art (☎ 8.30am-5.30pm) is a working art centre, focusing on paintings and ceramics.

KATA TJUTA (THE OLGAS)

If you think you've seen it all at Uluru, drive the 45km or so west (53km by road from Yulara) to Kata Tjuta, a group of smaller, domed rocks (36 in all) pushed against each other to form small valleys and gorges. Though they lack the star status of Uluru, these monoliths are equally impressive and many find them even more captivating – especially without the weight of expectation. The Valley of the Winds walk is one of the most rewarding in the national park. The tallest rock, Mt Olga, at 546m, is nearly 200m higher than Uluru. Meaning 'many heads', Kata Tjuta is of great significance to Anangu and is associated with a number of Tjukurpa *stories* relating to secret men's initiation ceremonies.

The main car park, close to the western edge of Kata Tjuta, has shade shelters, picnic tables and toilets.

Just to the west is a turn-off from the main access road, where you'll find the **sunset viewing area** with picnic tables and toilets. The views here are just as colourful as Uluru as the setting sun illuminates the



domes in vibrant, rich reds – but without the crowds.

Sights & Activities

WALKING

There are two marked trails at Kata Tjuta, both of which are well worth the effort.

Walpa Gorge (Tatintjawiya; 2.6km return, 45 minutes, easy) This is a short signposted track leading to a boardwalk into the extraordinary Walpa (Olga) Gorge from the car park. In the afternoon the sun floods the gorge.

Valley of the Winds (7.4km loop, three hours, medium) Many rate this as the most interesting walk in the park and it's hard to disagree. The track winds through the gorges giving excellent views of the domes and traversing varied terrain. Although not difficult, it requires a reasonable level of fitness, sturdy footwear and plenty of water. Starting this walk at first light may reward you with a track to yourself, enabling you to listen to the country and appreciate the sounds of the wind and the bird calls carried up the valley. The track is closed from the Karu Lookout from 11am on days forecast to reach 36°C or more.

KATA TJUTA VIEWING AREAS

Along the road between Yulara and Kata Tjuta there is a marked **dune viewing area**.

From the car park a 300m boardwalk through the dunes leads to a viewing platform with sweeping views over the surrounding dune country, with Kata Tjuta looming to the west and Uluru visible on the horizon. This is the best place to see Kata Tjuta at sunrise. Interpretive signs here outline the features of the complex dune environment. The **sunset viewing area** is just west of Kata Tjuta (there's a signposted turn-off to the car park).

YULARA

pop 2080 (including Mutitjula)

Yulara (the Anangu word means 'place of the howling dingo') is the service village for the national park and has effectively turned one of the world's most remote and least hospitable regions into an easy, comfortable – and in several cases luxurious – place to stay. Lying just outside the national park, 20km from Uluru and 53km from Kata Tjuta, the complex is administered by the Ayers Rock Corporation and is the closest base for exploring the area's renowned attractions.

Information

The *Resort Guide*, with a list of facilities and a map, is a useful sheet available from the visitors centre and hotel desks. Most of the town's facilities are in the shopping centre. There's a community notice board outside the post office with local job vacancies. As well as the services listed here, there are souvenir shops, a photo lab and a hairdresser.

Wheelchair access is possible throughout the Yulara Resort.

BOOKSHOPS

Ayers Rock Newsagency (☎ 8956 2177; ☎ 8am–9pm) Stocks interstate papers, magazines and some books on Australia.

EMERGENCY

Ambulance (☎ 0420 101 403)

Police station (☎ 8956 2166)

INTERNET ACCESS

Most accommodation has Internet access. **Tour & Information Centre** (per 6½ min \$2; ☎ 8am–8pm) Coin-operated terminals in the resort shopping centre. **Outback Pioneer Hotel** (☎ 8957 7605) Has an Internet café attached to the backpacker lounge.

MEDICAL SERVICES

There's no pharmacy in Yulara, but the supermarket stocks basic pharmaceutical products.

Royal Flying Doctor Service medical centre

(☎ 8956 2286; ☎ 9am–noon & 2–5pm Mon–Fri, 10–11am Sat & Sun) This is the resort's medical centre and ambulance service.

MONEY

ANZ bank (☎ 8956 2070; ☎ 9.30am–4pm Mon–Thu, 9.30am–5pm Fri) Currency exchange and 24-hour ATMs.

POST

Post office (☎ 8956 2288; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat & Sun) Opposite the supermarket, this is also an agent for the Commonwealth and National Australia banks. Payphones are outside.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tour & Information Centre (☎ 8957 7324; ☎ 8am–8pm) The hub for booking any sort of tour in the region. **Visitors centre** (☎ 8957 7377; ☎ 9am–5.30pm) The visitors centre acts as a tourist office with helpful staff, weather forecasts, and sunrise and sunset times. There's an interesting display on the geology, flora and fauna, history

and Aboriginal lore of the region, complete with stuffed wildlife. To get the most out of it, take the free audio tour.

Sights & Activities

When not visiting the park, most people will be content to spend their day lounging by the hotel pool, but there are some short **walking tracks** on Yulara's elevated central bushland. Also check out the **Mulgara Gallery** in the lobby of the Sails in the Desert Hotel, where quality handmade Australian arts and crafts inspired by the landscape are displayed.

Each evening there's the **Night Sky Show** (☎ 8956 2563; www.ecotour.com.au; adult/child/family \$32/24/95), an informative look into Anangu and Greek astrological legends, with views of the wonderfully clear outback night sky through telescopes and binoculars. There are trips in English at 8.30pm and in Japanese at 9.15pm year-round, with further English sessions at 7.30pm from May to August and 10.15pm from September to April.

Sleeping

If Yulara was transplanted to practically anywhere else in Australia, no-one in their right minds would pay the accommodation prices asked here. But in the middle of the desert and within cooee of the Rock, you're stuck with it.

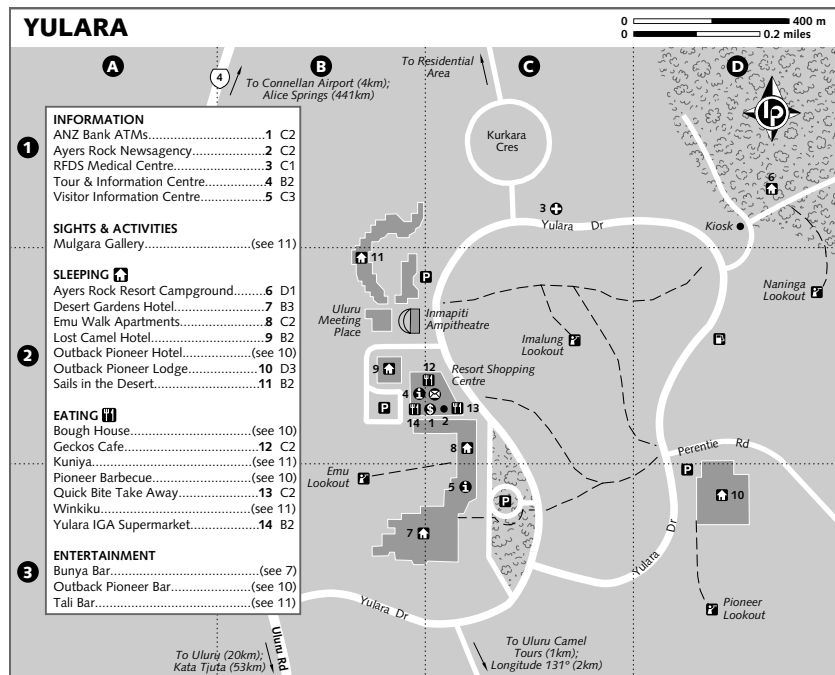
All of the accommodation in Yulara, including the camping ground and hostel, is owned by the Voyages Ayers Rock Resort. Even with almost 5000 beds, you should reserve all accommodation, especially during school holidays. Bookings can be made through **central reservations** (☎ 1300 134 044; www.ayersrockresort.com.au). The switchboard number at Yulara is ☎ 8957 7888.

If you have your own transport, **Curtain Springs Station** (p246) may tempt you with free camping and relatively inexpensive accommodation.

The following are high season (July to November) prices. At other times they're about 10% lower.

BUDGET

Outback Pioneer Lodge (☎ 8957 7605; dm/q \$35/200; P ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) With a lively bar, good eating and a range of accommodation, this is the budget choice for non-campers. The complex has two 20-bed YHA backpacker dorms (sardines, anyone?) and four-bed budget cabins with fridge and TV – some with en suite.



With a cosy common room, Internet café and the village pub, this is a bit of a social hub. The communal kitchen is top notch.

Ayers Rock Resort Camp Ground (☎ 89567001; camp.ground@ayersrockresort.com.au; unpowered sites adult/child/family \$13/6/37, powered sites for 2 \$31, cabins \$150; reception ☎ 7am-9pm; P ♻️ 🚰 🚰) Undoubtedly Yulara's saviour for the budget-conscious and anyone with a tent, swag or caravan, this ground is set among native gardens interspersed with manicured patches of green grass. There are good facilities including a camp kitchen, free barbecues, pool, laundry and a reasonably well-stocked kiosk. The air-con cabins are a disappointment – although they notionally sleep six, they're the size of a matchbox (no en suite) and would only really suit a young family.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Emu Walk Apartments (☎ 8956 7714; 1-/2-bed apt \$450/540; ♻️) For a family group looking for self-contained accommodation, Emu Walk is the pick of the bunch. The apartments are not fancy, but they're bright and comfy and have a lounge with TV, one or two bedrooms (accommodating four or six people), and a fully equipped kitchen with washer and dryer.

Lost Camel (☎ 8957 7605; d \$403; P ♻️ 🚰 🚰) This cute boutique hotel has been completely refurbished (it was originally a backpacker lodge) as a romantic couples' hangout. The rooms are certainly compact, with an en suite squeezed in behind the bed, but the décor is funky and there's a stylish pool and bar.

Outback Pioneer Hotel (☎ 8957 7605; r \$410; P ♻️ 🚰 🚰) The hotel section of this complex has standard motel-style rooms with kitchenette, TV and little patios. They sleep up to four people, so for a family or group they're almost affordable.

Desert Gardens Hotel (☎ 8957 7714; standard/deluxe r \$450/520; P ♻️ 🚰 🚰) One of the Yulara originals, this ageing hotel is nothing special, but around 30 of the 84 rooms have some sort of Rock view – request one when booking.

Sails in the Desert Hotel (☎ 8956 2200; standard d \$540, deluxe spa d \$630, deluxe ste \$940; P ♻️ 🚰 🚰) Until Longitude came along, this five-star hotel was the top property in Yulara and it still maintains a high standard. The exotic pool area, with its signature sails, is exclusive to guests and there are tennis courts, a couple of good restaurants and a piano

bar. The deluxe spa rooms feature a balcony spa.

Longitude 131° (☎ 8957 7888; www.longitude131.com.au; d \$1800; P ♻️ 🚰 🚰) If you can afford it, this is the last word in luxury desert accommodation. The selling points are the unbeatable Rock views, which open out from your doorstep, and the intimacy. There are 15 stylish 'tents' (actually raised steel rooms with a canvas tent-style roof), each facing the northern side of the Rock. The plush lounge/dining area also offers elevated views and an open bar. All activities, meals, drinks and tours are included in the price and there's a minimum two-night stay. The secluded location is right on the national park boundary.

Eating

Most eateries in Yulara are attached to accommodation places. At several of those with buffets, kids eat free with a paying adult, which can cut costs for families.

RESTAURANTS

Pioneer Barbecue (Outback Pioneer Lodge; barbecue \$20-25; ☎ dinner) This do-it-yourself barbecue is easily the best informal dining experience in Yulara. Choose from kangaroo, barramundi, beef or veggie burger (or a combination), cook it up on the barbecue and help yourself to the generous salad bar (salad bar only is \$16). It's fast and filling and there's a boisterous atmosphere in the bar most nights.

Winkiku (breakfast buffet \$24-34, dinner buffet \$60; ☎ breakfast & dinner) In the Sails of the Desert

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Sounds of Silence (☎ 8957 7448; www.voyages.com.au; adult/child \$130/65; ☎ dinner) Snappily dressed waiters serve champagne and canapés on a desert dune with stunning sunset views of Uluru and Kata Tjuta, accompanied by the droning of a didgeridoo. Then you retire to your table in the desert for a buffet of gourmet Aussie food and wine as the night descends. Afterwards the startlingly clear night sky is dissected and explained, with the help of a telescope. The Sounds of Silence dinner is a memorable experience. The price may have you seeing stars, but here it's worth every cent. Bookings are essential and pick up/drop off from your accommodation is included.

Hotel, this casual-but-stylish restaurant does mind-blowing buffets with seafood, carvery and all the trimmings. Kids eat free, so it can work out as good value for families.

Tali Bar (meals \$13-20; ☎ lunch) For a light lunch or snack overlooking the luxurious pool area at Sails in the Desert, the Tali Bar serves up sandwiches, salads, barra and seafood linguini.

Bough House (☎ 8956 2170; breakfast/dinner buffets \$25/45; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Another smorgasbord special, this family-friendly, country-style place overlooks the pool at the Outback Pioneer and has buffet spreads for breakfast and dinner. The dinner choices feature Australian fare – kangaroo, emu, crocodile and barramundi.

Kuniya (☎ 8956 2200; mains \$28-50; ☎ dinner) Yulara's most sophisticated restaurant, Kuniya is the place for romantic candlelit dinners. The walls are adorned with contemporary Australian art and the inspired menu features Aussie cuisine infused with native produce. Try Northern Territory quail in coconut vinaigrette for starters, followed by barramundi with Moreton Bay bug tails and bush tomato broth (\$45). Dress smartly.

CAFÉS & TAKEAWAY

Gecko's Cafe (☎ 8956 2562; mains \$15-28; ☎ 10.30am-10pm) In the resort shopping centre, Gecko's is the only café-restaurant not attached to accommodation, so it's a popular meeting place. There's a bright air-con section and tables outside overlooking the central courtyard. There's a large range of salads, off-beat wood-fired pizzas (try the spiced prawn, banana and coriander aioli) and more substantial dishes, plus wedges and nachos for the kids. It's licensed with a full bar. The attached ice-creamery (open 10.30am to 7pm) serves shakes and gelati.

Quick Bite Take Away (Resort Shopping Centre; snacks \$4-10.50; ☎ 7am-9pm) This is the place for lunch on the run with a range of quick fixes such as gourmet burgers (\$6.50), sushi packs (\$7.50), pies and chicken and chips.

SELF-CATERING

Yulara IGA Supermarket (Resort Shopping Centre; ☎ 8.30am-9pm) This well-stocked supermarket has a delicatessen and sells picnic portions, fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, ice and camping supplies at surprisingly reasonable prices.

GROG

The local Mutitjulu Aboriginal community, near Uluru, is a dry community and, at the request of the Mutitjulu leaders, Yulara's liquor outlet has agreed not to sell takeaway grog to Aboriginal people. Visitors must show their proof of staying at the resort to buy takeaway alcohol – if you are approached to buy alcohol on behalf of Aboriginal people, the community leaders appeal to you not to do so.

Takeaway alcohol is only available from the bar of the **Outback Pioneer Hotel** (☎ 6-10pm) – you'll need a room key or camping permit to prove you're a guest at the resort in order to buy.

Drinking

When the sun sets on Uluru, evening entertainment can be found in a handful of hotel bars.

Outback Pioneer Bar (Outback Pioneer Lodge; ☎ 8957 7605; ☎ 10am-midnight) If you're after a cold beer or a game of pool in a rowdy, convivial environment, this open-air bar is the social centre of Yulara. There's live entertainment every night – usually a guitar-twanging country singer – and plenty of chances to meet travellers and locals at the long bench tables.

Tali Bar (Sails in the Desert Hotel; ☎ 10am-1am) At this elegant little piano bar you can try cocktails (\$14 to \$18) inspired by the landscape, such as 'Valley of the Winds' and 'Desert Storm', while listening to the tinkling ivories and overlooking the pool area.

Bunya Bar (Desert Gardens Hotel; ☎ 11am-midnight) The lobby bar at the Desert Gardens has chess and games tables in a rather sterile cigar-lounge setting. There's also a bar at the hotel pool.

GETTING THERE & AWAY Air

Connellan Airport is roughly 5km from Yulara. **Qantas** (13 13 13; www.qantas.com.au) has flights from Alice Springs to Yulara departing at 12.25pm daily, from \$125 one way – if you book early enough. You can also fly direct to Yulara from other major centres, including Melbourne (\$200), Sydney (\$250), Perth (\$270) and Adelaide (\$350), while other flights stop in Alice en route.

These are the lowest available at the time of writing – full fare is at least double. Check the website for the latest deals.

Bus

If you don't have your own wheels or camel, the cheapest way to get to the Rock is to take a bus or tour. **Greyhound Australia** (☎ 13 14 99; www.greyhound.com.au) has a daily service from Alice Springs (adult/child one way \$85/65, five hours).

There's no direct service between Adelaide and Yulara – strangely the timetable doesn't make a connection at Erldunda so you have to stay overnight there or carry on to Alice. The one-way fare from Adelaide via Erldunda is \$270.

From Yulara, you can head back to Alice Springs or take a detour to Kings Canyon (\$60/45, four hours).

TOURS

Greyhound Australia offers two- and three-day tours with transport from Alice Springs to and around the main sights of Uluru, Kata Tjuta and Kings Canyon, then back to Alice Springs. The two-day tour (adult/child \$270) includes Uluru. The better-value three-day tour (\$300) adds in a visit to Kata Tjuta and an overnight stop at Kings Canyon.

Car

Renting a car in Alice Springs to go down to Uluru and back is a reasonable option between a group, but shop around and make sure you get unlimited kilometres (or a reasonable kilometre deal – you'll travel at least 1000km). Some operators offer special two- or three-day rental deals, but expect to pay at least \$100 a day for a small car. See p200 for a list of operators. Alterna-

tively you can hire a vehicle in Yulara. **Hertz** (☎ 8956 2244), **Avis** (☎ 8956 2266) and **Territory Thrifty Car Rentals** (☎ 8956 2030) have desks at the Tour & Information Centre.

There's a **service station** (☎ 8956 2229; ☎ 7am-9pm) just up the road from the Outback Pioneer Lodge that sells all types of fuel, snacks, maps and ice, and a mechanic is on duty every day.

GETTING AROUND

To/From the Airport

A free shuttle bus meets all flights and drops off at all accommodation points around the resort; pick-up is 90 minutes before your flight.

Around Yulara

A free shuttle bus loops through the resort – stopping at all accommodation points and the shopping centre – every 15 minutes from 10.30am to 6pm and from 6.30pm to 12.30am daily.

Bike hire is available at the **Ayers Rock Resort Camp Ground** (☎ 8957 7001; per hr \$7, per half/full-day \$15/20, deposit \$20; ☎ 7am-8pm).

Around the National Park

There are two park shuttle services between Yulara and Uluru or Kata Tjuta. Fares do not include the park entry fee.

Uluru Express (☎ 8956 2152; www.uluruexpress.com.au; adult/child from \$35/20) Runs shuttles to Uluru and back (sunrise \$40/20). Morning shuttles to Kata Tjuta cost \$45/25; afternoon shuttles include a stop for the Uluru sunset and cost \$50/25. The three-day pass (adult/child \$140/60) allows unlimited use of the service.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta Park Shuttle (☎ 8956 2171; adult/child from \$30/15) Offers similar services, including sunset and sunrise shuttles and park passes (1/2/3 days \$85/105/130).

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