



ESCAPE YOUR COMMUTE...

The commute. You either love it or loathe it. For some it's a magic window of time to yourself before a busy day ahead. For others it's a stressful battle for space. Either way, we think it's the perfect opportunity to escape for a while and imagine yourself somewhere entirely different. So, print this out and get yourself to Australia: red desert, caster-sugar beaches and cosmopolitan cities await....

...TO THE AUSTRALIA WE LOVE

Swim with whale sharks off Ningaloo Reef, sleep on an island with more turtles than humans, witness indigenous carvings, taste world-class wines, raft Tasmania's Franklin River and sleep under the stars in a luxury swag, true Aussie style: there is so much more than meets the eye in Australia. What's more, we have brought you the best of Aussie sport, world-class cuisine, top notch wine-making, aboriginal art, huge music festivals and jaw-dropping landscapes. We just can't get enough. Read on for a taste of why Australia is one of the hottest luxury destinations at the moment and why you should get yourself out there....

To get under the skin of Australia email info@blacktomato.co.uk or call 02074269888

OUR PICK OF AUSTRALIA: THE WILD WEST

With coral to rival the Great Barrier Reef, top notch surf instruction, some of the world's finest wineries, Wild West towns, and wildlife to die for, we think you'd be crazy to miss out on the West Coast. It's top-to-toe full of unbelievable experiences, and we think it's a gem.

Highlights include:

1. Exploring Perth's stunning coastline, alive with penguins and sea lions, and swim with dolphins in one of the world's most remote cities.
2. Top wine tasting in and around the Margaret River, home to the country's most acclaimed vineyards.
3. Sun and sealife in north-west Australia's stunning Ningaloo reef: swim with 14 metre long Whale Sharks (trust us they're not dangerous) an experience like nothing else on earth.
4. Staying in the luxury Sal Salis eco-tents from where you can kayak out to the coral in just minutes from a beach of beautiful powder white sand (much closer to your hotel than the corals at the Great Barrier Reef) and see fish, turtles and manta rays swim by.



Swim with Whale Sharks



Ningaloo Reef



Sal Salis tents



Perfect sunset

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WINE AND DINE IN AUSTRALIA

A million miles from cans of Fosters and shrimps on a Barbie, Australia is a nation of out-and-out food and wine lovers, and is leading the way with its culinary delights.

From its highly modern and open approach to elegant nouveau style and fusion food, to the beautiful wine regions of Hunter Valley and Margaret River and of course, their love affair with coffee (they even invented their own - the flat white) Australia is an endless gastronomic treasure trove to truly tickle your taste buds.



Fresh Fusion Flavours

Australia is without a doubt is the king of fusion food. Heavily influenced by its Asian neighbours it's no wonder that over recent years Australia has built up a reputation as the ultimate melting pot for cross-styled exotic cuisines. So if the sound of racy Riesling with hot chilli mud crab, or a crocodile sausage with wattle seed sauce gets you salivating, this could be your kind of place.

And our top tip for the ultimate in fine-dining in an unrivalled setting? It has to be Sydney's Cottage Point Inn in Cowan Creek. Accessed only by sea plane and surrounded by the 15,000-hectare Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, this is a true hidden gem in Sydney's culinary crown. Tuck in to the likes of pan fried Hawkesbury river squid in a squid ink risotto. Mmm... amazing.

Wonderous wine regions

Australia is the world's fourth largest exporter of wine, and despite its 'New World' connotations, contains some of the world's oldest and finest wines. The acclaimed wineries of the Barossa and Eden Valleys in South Australia are home to some of the oldest Shiraz vines in the world and a thriving wine community of boutique wine companies and artisan winemakers.

And why stop there? From the sumptuous Semillon and Shiraz varieties grown in the birthplace of Aussie wine: the Hunter Valley to the world famous crisp Rieslings of Clare Valley and McLaren Vale in South Australia, and the prize winning Cabernets in Western Australia's Margaret River, there's a whole world of grape goodness out there to discover.



Modern Pukka Tukka

Witchety grubs, mud crabs and Moreton Bay Bugs. Sound appealing? Ok, maybe not the food that first pops into your head when you think of Aussie fine dining. But in Australia you have a unique opportunity to take your taste buds on a 50,000 year journey back in time to explore the food that sustained Aboriginal people for thousands of years.

Don't worry; it's not all bursting bugs and crunching insects. In recent years 'Bush Tucker' has been overhauled to become a rather more refined affair. Some of the nation's top restaurants, featuring some of its leading chefs, have started to 'update' modern cuisine by using traditional indigenous methods and ingredients. Another step in Australia's ever evolving culinary history.

LUXURY SWAGS AND SYDNEY IN STYLE

Here at Black Tomato we're big fans of über-hip hotels so why not see Australia's glamorous capital of art and design, in serious style before camping in a luxury swag in mountains scattered with wildlife and valleys flooding with wine. We have found a way to refresh the trodden path. Read on for our new take on Sydney and its rich surrounding countryside.

Highlights include:

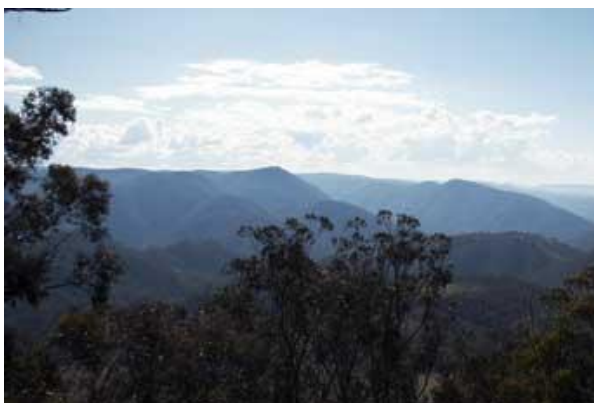
1. Investigating Sydney, Harbour Bridge and Opera House before flying by seaplane up to Cowan Creek for a slap-up lunch. Sydney's best-kept secret.
2. Camping in a luxury swag (that's a roll up camp bed to you and me) in the Blue Mountains sleeping under the stars.
3. A bush walk and drift down Wollondilly River in a canoe, with a chance to spot the ever-elusive platypus, and a 4WD safari to finish off with a well-deserved bush BBQ: a truly authentic off-road experience.
4. Ending your stay at Hunter Valley floating across the horizon in a hot air balloon accompanied with a glass of champagne. Perfect.



Sydney Opera House



The Establishment, Sydney



The Blue Mountains



A luxury swag deck

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AUSTRALIAN MUSIC: MORE THAN JUST POP

If someone asks you to name a famous Australian musician, the name that would jump into most minds is Miss Minogue (and sorry, but we're not talking about you Danni). However, Australian music is more than just saccharin sweet pop... a closer investigation uncovers world class opera houses, famous festivals and a contemporary take on indigenous music that will have you on the edge of your seats...



A quick musical low-down

Much like the UK and US, Australia has a huge array of styles and genres of music. Everyone from Rock legends AC/DC to Opera singer extraordinaire Dame Joan Sutherland, Black Tomato favourite Nick Cave and even the queen of pop herself, Kylie Minogue, Australian music is making itself heard on radio waves across the globe.

And it's not just the Sydney Opera House that hosts world class performances: the Ashton Raggatt McDougall Recital Centre in Melbourne is one of the most exciting venues, both architecturally and acoustically, a fitting rival to Sydney's most famous landmark.

Australia is also becoming more famous for its music festivals such the Byron Bay Blues, Big Day Out and Splendour in the Grass festivals which are easily as popular over in Australia as the likes of Glastonbury and Reading are here in the UK and showcase local legends alongside some of the biggest and best modern acts on the planet.

Indigenous roots

Australia also has a rather unique, distinctive and completely absorbing traditional music that is instantly recognizable the world over. Yep, the hypnotic drone of the didgeridoo conjures up the spiritual wonder of the world's most ancient living culture the second you hear it.

Though Aboriginal music, and in particular the Didgeridoo, has been around for thousands of years, it wasn't until the 1970's that these indigenous sounds graced the ears of music lovers across the globe. Traditional sounds were fused together with Western rock and Reggae as way of political process and way to bring attention to the cultural traditions that Australia's indigenous people lost in previous years.

Yep – even Aborigines had their own punk movement.



Gurrumul

More recently (and this has had us pretty excited) is the emergence of Aboriginal artists such as Gurrumul. Blind from birth Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, a member of the Gumatj clan of north east Arnhem Land sublimely adapts songs and stories from his own traditional clan, transforming them into contemporary styles that wow and treat our ears to something quite incredible (even though we don't understand the language).

Gurrumul is an amazing contemporary artist and proof that Aboriginal musical is still relevant (and extremely powerful) across all corners of the globe. If you get the chance to see this guy live, take it from us, do not miss it.

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