

An underwater scene featuring a large sea turtle swimming towards the left, a diver on the right holding a camera, and a vibrant coral reef at the bottom. The water is clear blue with various small fish swimming around.

# ONLY IN AUSTRALIA

**It took the forces of earth, wind, fire and water over 250 million years to create the spectacle of nature we know as Australia, and our favourite place on the planet to take a holiday.**

Kiwis are nature lovers, be it on the water or land, we love to explore and immerse ourselves in nature based experiences to satisfy our greatest holiday desires. It makes perfect sense then, that the place more Kiwis choose to take a holiday than any other offers a bounty of unique flora, fauna and holiday experiences that are made up of some of the best natural elements on the planet.

From the smallest wonders such as the tropical fish of the Great Barrier Reef to giant natural treasures such as Uluru, or the whalesharks of Western Australia, to ancient rainforests and thousands of kilometres of coastline, Australia has something to satisfy the

nature lover within us all. Kiwis are also known the world over for their active lifestyles and a nature based Australian holiday will fulfill this to any number of levels. Australia's gateway cities are flanked by national parks making exploring easy and accessible, as is its vast and diverse coastline that stretches from the iconic city beaches of Sydney to the unique coasts of tropical north Queensland where the rainforest meets the reef.

This issue of 'Only in Australia' shares just a small sample of some of these experiences and offers up some very natural inspiration to turn an ordinary holiday into the extraordinary!



## Whale Of A Time On New South Wales's South Coast

Just 90 minutes from Sydney is the coastal haven of Jervis Bay which lies amidst the national parks of New South Wales's South Coast region. A scenic and easy drive down Grand Pacific Drive takes you through the Royal National Park via the spectacular 665 metre Sea Cliff Bridge into this pristine coastal region, as famous for its marine life as it is its laid back lifestyle. Visitors to the region will feel right at home amidst local seaside cafes, craft shops, spectacular seascapes and amazing marine experiences. These include seasonal whale and dolphin watching which can be enjoyed from May to November with [jervisbaywhales.com.au](http://jervisbaywhales.com.au). A range of cruises are on offer and around 2 hours duration. Don't forget to check out Hyams Beach – this 2 kilometre stretch of pristine white sand is claimed to be the whitest sand beach in the world and features highly in the top 101 best Australian beaches [101bestbeaches.com](http://101bestbeaches.com)



## Tasmania's Natural Treasure Island

Bruny Island is close to Hobart it is almost criminal to miss one of the State's most incredible natural treasures. Just a short drive and a ferry trip from Hobart, Bruny is an easy self drive destination, or treat yourself to a seaplane flight from Hobart's waterfront to the natural wilderness of nearby Bruny Island with [tasmanianairadventures.com.au](http://tasmanianairadventures.com.au). Bruny Island will feel like home to many kiwis, friendly locals, abundant marine life, sleepy seaside villages, but an exceptional ocean experience with one of Australia's most renowned eco-marine experts, Rob Pennicott of [pennicottjourneys.com.au](http://pennicottjourneys.com.au). Voted National Geographic Traveler of the Year 2012, Rob offers visitors an exceptional opportunity to experience this wild coastline and its unique flora and fauna that includes seal colonies, the world's largest giant kelp forests and diverse range of marine species. A journey aboard Pennicott Journeys custom built big yellow boats is a big tick for any nature lovers 'bucket list' and adds an extra thrill to an already special experience.

## Kangaroo Island's Seal Of Approval

Nature lovers will not be able to resist giving South Australia's Kangaroo Island a very big 'seal' of approval. Just over an hour from Adelaide along the Fleurieu Peninsula is the port of Cape Jervis and your Sealink [www.sealink.com.au](http://www.sealink.com.au) passage for you and your car to Kangaroo Island. The 45 minute crossing offers up wonderful views and is a fun start to an island adventure that promises a truly exceptional nature based holiday. Kangaroo Island opens onto the spectacle of the Southern Ocean and is home to everything from 'Remarkable Rocks' to Seal Bay [www.sealbay.sa.gov.au](http://www.sealbay.sa.gov.au), where under the careful watch of a ranger, visitors can enjoy a close encounter with the resident seal population as well as enjoy the abundant sea bird life and spectacular surrounds. A range of accommodation is available on the island from modest chalets to the uber eco-luxe of [www.southernoceanlodge.com.au](http://www.southernoceanlodge.com.au)



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## Barra Are Biting In The NT

'Fishianados' should head north now! The Barra are biting in the NT and conditions are perfect for catching this mouth watering fish. A number of fishing charter boat operators such as [topendbarrafishing.com.au](http://topendbarrafishing.com.au) operate out of Darwin and are experts in the regions favourite catch. There are also a load of other great nature based experiences to be had in the Top End, least of all fraternizing with the famous 'salty's' of the region. One of the best – and safest places to experience this is right in the heart of Darwin at [crocosauruscove.com.au](http://crocosauruscove.com.au) or out in the wild aboard a river boat cruise with [jumpingcrocodile.com.au](http://jumpingcrocodile.com.au)

The Top End is a nature lovers nirvana with epic, ancient landscapes, a rich cultural experience and extraordinary flora and fauna.

The gateway city of Darwin also offers a vibrant local scene typical of a frontier town with excellent dining, a range of accommodation and a revamped riverfront that is now a focal point of the city.

## Natures Canvas Blooms In The West

Western Australia is renowned for its extraordinary array of natural attractions. From Whalesharks to Wildflowers, the region is bursting with some of natures most unique attractions. Make the most of your WA getaway by planning ahead and put top of the list a wildflower extravaganza that the region has become world renowned for. The region bursts into bloom from August to October with carpets of wildflowers that can be found as close as Kings Park in the gateway city of Perth. The 400 hectares of parkland and natural bush that make up Kings Park is just minutes from the city centre and has an abundance of Western Australia wildflowers and colourful birds as well as offering up spectacular views and cultural experiences.

Look out for the Kings Park Festival in September when the park is in full splendour [eventful.com/perth/events](http://eventful.com/perth/events)

To see more of the regions wildflowers in the wild, look to the Coral Coast and Cape Range National Park where you will quite literally travel across a carpet of wildflowers during this season making it a favourite for flora lovers and photographers alike.



## Destination Daintree – Eco Indulgence

With direct flights to Cairns, the tropical north and far north of Queensland has never been easier. Hug the coastal road north of Cairns on an easy self drive journey with plenty to see and do en route. Pop into Palm Cove, lunch in Port Douglas and make your destination the world's oldest living rainforest, the Daintree [daintreerainforest.com](http://daintreerainforest.com).

At 135 million years old, this rainforest has a lot of stories to share, which it carries all the way to the white sandy shores of the regions magnificent beaches, the most well known being [capetribulation.com.au](http://capetribulation.com.au) and Cow Bay.

Nestled in the heart of the Daintree and overlooking the magnificent Mosman Gorge is [silkyoakslodge.com.au](http://silkyoakslodge.com.au), a haven of eco-indulgence. With riverside dining, the lodge has a sublime spa sanctuary, aptly named, 'Healing Waters' that uses Aboriginal botanicals and with treatment rooms featuring ceiling to floor glass windows overlooking the rainforest canopy. A nature lovers retreat with a touch of luxury that gives the very best of both worlds!



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## EVENTS

### Transform Your Holiday Into A ‘Natural Event’

With hundreds of events and festivals on all around Australia at pretty much any given time, chances are that a holiday can well become an event simply by turning up.

Planning a holiday around an event or festival is also a great way to explore a new region, experience something new and add an element of ‘eventful excitement’ to your Aussie holiday. From Camel Cups to outback races to sophisticated arts events and a plethora of sports events, Australia has something to capture the imagination of the most seasoned traveller. Australia’s natural wonders also offer up the opportunity to celebrate with many events and festivals showcasing nature based events and elements.

For inspiration on where to go and what to see in ‘Natural Australia’ click onto [australia.com/explore/things-to-do/natural-australia.aspx](http://australia.com/explore/things-to-do/natural-australia.aspx) and to see what’s on for nature lovers click through to Australia’s Natural Events listings at [australia.com/explore/australian-events/natural-events.aspx](http://australia.com/explore/australian-events/natural-events.aspx)

### Ningaloo Whaleshark Festival 24-26 May

Western Australia’s Ningaloo Whaleshark Festival [ningaloowhalesharkfestival.com](http://ningaloowhalesharkfestival.com) celebrates the annual visitation to the region of these mighty ocean creatures. Considered to be the only event of its kind in the world, the Whaleshark Festival is held at Exmouth with festivities kicking off at [novotelningaloo.com.au](http://novotelningaloo.com.au). Visitors to the region and the festival can embark on a close encounter of the most magical kind and swim alongside the whalesharks with [oceanecoadventures.com.au](http://oceanecoadventures.com.au)

Ningaloo Reef and Marine Park is regarded as one of Western Australia’s “best kept secrets” and at 260km is the largest fringing reef in the world. The reef and its pristine waters host a unique marine eco system as well as hosting the giant, but gentle Whalesharks during their annual migration, when these enormous filter feeders stop to feast from April to July.



### Splendour In The Grass –Byron Bay, NSW 26-28 July

Widely regarded as the ‘holy grail’ of camping festivals, ‘Splendour in the Grass’ is the Australia’s most popular mid-winter festival. More more than 70 big names in local, international, alternative rock and indie music perform to an audience of around 18,000 people on a rural property in Byron Bay. The three day festival is a great way to kick off or complete a holiday to this popular coastal spot, renowned for its surf culture, eclectic markets and vibrant cultural scene.

[splendourinthegrass.com](http://splendourinthegrass.com)

### Floriade – Canberra, ACT 12 Sep-12 Oct

The nation’s capital bursts into colour during **Floriade**, a massive spring festival held when more than one million flowers are in bloom. Aussie inventions, celebrities, landscapes, sporting culture and history are all represented in an incredible display. The month long festival has something for everyone by day and night. The hugely popular, Nightfest transforms the day festival into a light spectacular showcasing the gardens in an altogether new way. There are also dazzling light shows, comedy and cirque performances. Floriade is a celebration of Spring and offers up fun and entertainment for a wide range of ages and interests. [floriadeaustralia.com](http://floriadeaustralia.com)



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