



## Jimmy's Practical Tips for Your Trip to Australia

(Please read all of this, right to the end!)

### LUGGAGE

- There is a strict (but generous!) luggage allowance on this trip. Please only bring one main suitcase. It is a pre-requisite that you can lift your own bag off the luggage carousel and take it to the bus. Porterage is not available at most hotels, so you must be able to take your own suitcase to your room.
- 1 x checked/stowed bag (23 kg, 50 lbs max)
- Carry-on allowance is 14lbs
- No Aerosol spray cans or sharp items in carry on eg scissors, pocket knives, nail clippers, corkscrew in carry on. These will be taken. However *liquids are allowed* on internal flights and you don't have to take your shoes off in security!
- Electronic (laptop, I-pad, phone) and metallic items must be removed from your carry-on luggage when going through security and placed in a tray for scanning.
- Batteries & power packs are to be kept in carry on, not in checked luggage.
- Overweight bags (especially checked) can incur extra charges.
- You can send stuff home while you are on the trip. Our post offices are very efficient.
- I will give you an extra luggage label so that both the top handle and side handle of each suitcase has one. We check in and out of hotels frequently and clear labelling expedites the process.
- It's also a good idea to take a photo of your suitcase in case it goes astray. Much easier to find if you have a photo. Or consider buying an i-tag.

### CALLING HOME

- When you call home, the best option is to use Wi-Fi (available free in all the hotels we stay in) with an app such as FaceTime, Messenger or WhatsApp, as these are all free. Just load them up and have a practice with your family and friends before you get here! (They'll need to have loaded the app as well)

## PASSPORT/ID

- Make sure you take a photocopy or photo on your phone of the picture page of your passport and keep one copy in your main bag and one with your other documents. If you lose your passport it will be much quicker to replace if you have this. You may need your passport or driver's licence for ID in Australia (eg. boarding a plane) and to get a concessionat museums etc. (or a senior's card)

## WI-FI

- All of the hotels we stay in offer free wi-fi, but none of the coaches have it. During the one night we are camping there will be no phone or wi-fi access. Due to the remoteness of some of the places we will go to wi-fi can be unreliable and drop out. However, in the cities it is excellent.

## MONEY

- US dollars are not accepted as payment in Australia. Cash machines are common, but finding a bankbranch can be harder (and in some of the places we visit there isn't one at all). Your credit cards will work, but it is much easier to make sure they have a PIN or chip otherwise you'll have to sign every time you use it. Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted but American Express is not widely accepted by Australian shops/restaurants. *Make sure you advise your bank you are travelling so that they do not put an automatic block on your card when it is first used in Oz. This happens! To be safe, bring two different credit cards.*
- I recommend changing approx. US\$100 into Australian money straight away (eg in advance or at the airport on arrival), as it is useful for small items or when splitting bills at a restaurant, and in markets.

## COSTS DOWN UNDER

- Although our dollar is weak at the moment, Australia is still expensive. Consider downloading an app on your phone in advance like Xe Currency or Calconvert
- A few examples of costs (in A\$): Coffee at a café, \$4-\$6, dinner \$35- \$45, glass of wine \$10-\$15, lunch \$15-\$25. The Australian economy has not been in recession for over 20 years and the combination of higher prices, high wages (our minimum wage is \$23+ per hour) and travelling in tourist areas means it's not cheap. Australia has a high standard of living and has a highly regulated and taxed system, which is reflected in the prices. Do you like our colourful currency?! (We even spell colour differently...)(The world's first polymer/ plastic bank notes and the only country in the world with a woman on every bank note)



## TIPPING

- We will take care of tips for you, as we go along. OAT includes tips for waiters, drivers and any speakers on your behalf. The only tips not included are when you are dining on your own or in a taxi. We suggest about 10% in a restaurant and rounding up in a cab.
- It's a little awkward to mention, but we are often asked by guests about the tip for the Trip Leaders. Of course it is entirely at your discretion. Your Handbook suggests a guideline of US\$8-10 per person per day, (and US\$ are preferred) but of course entirely up to you.

## WEATHER

- Expect a bit of everything while Down Under.
- It will be spring here in the Southern Hemisphere. Layering, layering, layering. It will be hot and dry in the Red Centre and could be snowing in New Zealand.
- Just Google the destination and the date and you'll know as much as I know!

Celsius to Fahrenheit Conversion Table and Formula									
<sup>°</sup> F	<sup>°</sup> C	<sup>°</sup> F	<sup>°</sup> C	<sup>°</sup> F	<sup>°</sup> C	<sup>°</sup> F	<sup>°</sup> C	<sup>°</sup> F	<sup>°</sup> C
0	-17.8	10	-12.2	20	-6.7	30	-1.1	40	4.4
1	-17.2	11	-11.7	21	-6.1	31	-0.6	41	5.0
2	-16.7	12	-11.1	22	-5.6	32	0.0	42	5.6
3	-16.1	13	-10.6	23	-5.0	33	0.6	43	6.1
4	-15.6	14	-10.0	24	-4.4	34	1.1	44	6.7
5	-15.0	15	-9.4	25	-3.9	35	1.7	45	7.2
6	-14.4	16	-8.9	26	-3.3	36	2.2	46	7.8
7	-13.9	17	-8.3	27	-2.8	37	2.8	47	8.3
8	-13.3	18	-7.8	28	-2.2	38	3.3	48	8.9
9	-12.8	19	-7.2	29	-1.7	39	3.9	49	9.4
50	10.0	60	15.6	70	21.1	80	26.7	90	32.2
51	10.6	61	16.1	71	21.7	81	27.2	91	32.8
52	11.1	62	16.7	72	22.2	82	27.8	92	33.3
53	11.7	63	17.2	73	22.8	83	28.3	93	33.9
54	12.2	64	17.8	74	23.3	84	28.9	94	34.4
55	12.8	65	18.3	75	23.9	85	29.4	95	35.0
56	13.3	66	18.9	76	24.4	86	30.0	96	35.6
57	13.9	67	19.4	77	25.0	87	30.6	97	36.1
58	14.4	68	20.0	78	25.6	88	31.1	98	36.7
59	15.0	69	20.6	79	26.1	89	31.7	99	37.2
100	37.8	110	43.3	120	48.9	130	54.4	300	148.9
101	38.3	111	43.9	121	49.4	140	60.0	350	176.7
102	38.9	112	44.4	122	50.0	150	65.6	400	204.4
103	39.4	113	45.0	123	50.6	160	71.1	450	232.2
104	40.0	114	45.6	124	51.1	170	76.7	500	260.0
105	40.6	115	46.1	125	51.7	180	82.2	600	315.6
106	41.1	116	46.7	126	52.2	190	87.8	700	371.1
107	41.7	117	47.2	127	52.8	200	93.3	800	426.7
108	42.2	118	47.8	128	53.3	206	96.7	900	482.2
109	42.8	119	48.3	129	53.9	212	100.0	1000	537.8

## SHOPPING

- 10% GST which stands for Goods and Services tax. You might see it listed when you purchase things on your receipt.
- If it is an item over \$300, you don't have to pay it. Some shops will sort it for you right there and then or claim it at the airport
- You can claim back the 10%. You can't accumulate it, like if you were to buy shoes, a boomerang and a handbag to make \$300. It must be at one shop, and usually for one item.

Art - Many guests love to buy a beautiful piece of indigenous (Aboriginal) art (eg dot paintings). Alice Springs (and Uluru) are the best places. I can show you some excellent galleries where the quality is guaranteed.

Souvenirs - We will have many opportunities to stop at gift shops where you can buy a variety of souvenirs – from the inevitable soft koalas and kangaroos to beautiful wooden chopping boards or bowls made from ancient Huon Pine.

Opals - Australia's national gemstone - Many OAT guests ask about opals, as they are virtually unique to Australia. However, they vary enormously in terms of quality and price. We recommend a long standing, family run opal business in Sydney where you can learn more about opals and see good quality jewelry at every price point. And OAT guests get 10% off.

## WHAT TO PACK

- Light short sleeved shirts, some with a collar (eg polo) to protect your neck from the sun, light long trousers, light long sleeved shirts, shorts, comfortable walking shoes (consider packing an old pair for when we go to Uluru – the red dirt underfoot will wreck new ones!)
- Sandals or flip flops for Queensland, swimsuit, (swim towels are provided by hotels), a sarong, a light warm sweater, light waterproof jacket, sun hat *with a brim* (a baseball hat does not offer enough neck protection), sunglasses, little binoculars if you'd like to, bug spray with DEET, fly head net (don't worry if you don't have one - we can buy one here), lip salve, factor 50 sunscreen (ideally reef safe), walking poles if you usually use them, a small light daypack, a "Cool Towel" to put round your neck if you feel the heat
- Your medications and requirements for travel/motion sickness (for our day on the boat at the Barrier Reef), headache pills, Sudafed.
- Also pack some dissolvable electrolytes to help avoiding/ replenishing dehydration (they are also good for jet lag!).
- Consider downloading an app like Dosecast or MedHelper to help manage any meds. Large sized drinking water bottle – ideally one that will keep water cold – as we will be in extreme heat and the recommendation is that you drink 4 pints of water an hour. (Tap water is drinkable and excellent quality all over Australia – no need to buy bottled water. .... It is very important to drink a lot of water here, as dehydration can be a real issue.....)...

- A foldable shopping bag, empty plastic bags (for wet clothes etc), some sandwich sized Ziploc bags, laundry stain stick, recharging cords, electrical plug adaptors.
- Don't bother bringing muesli bars or other foods. You will have to declare them and they are readily available here. Our grocery stores are excellent!
- Australia is very casual, so you can leave your tiara, tux and feather boa at home, but you may decide to pack a slightly nicer outfit for a dinner out, for example.
- Please note that in Australia we do not have home or school visits, so no need to bring any gifts.

### HOTEL FACILITIES

- All our hotels have in-room safes or safety deposit boxes at the front desk (having said that, Australia is a very safe places - I just put things in my suitcase). All hotel rooms offer complimentary tea, coffee, sugar, milk, electric kettles, refrigerators, irons, ironing boards and hair dryers....except on the camping night....

### ELECTRICAL PLUG ADAPTORS

- We recommend that you bring plug adaptors suitable for use in Australia and New Zealand(they are the same). We have three pins (the top two are angled and the lower earth one vertical). Our voltage is 230V. Some plugs only have the two angled pins. The sockets and adaptors look like this:

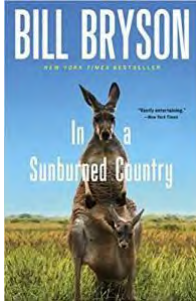


### LAUNDRY FACILITIES

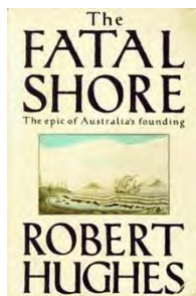
- Some hotels have laundry facilities for use by guests. Some are free, others charge a small amount.

## PRE-READING AND VIEWING

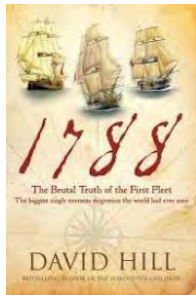
- I am happy to provide you with a list of my favourite Aussie books and movies, but for the moment I would recommend:



Bill Bryson “In a Sunburned Country” – A very funny and accurate overview of Oz. A little dated but really captures its spirit. Easy to read



Robert Hughes “A Fatal Shore” – an epic, huge but readable account of the colonization of Australia. A classic



David Hill’s immensely readable and interesting account of the First Fleet. Half the size of “The Fatal Shore” but just as interesting!

- Also, lots of great documentaries on Amazon, Netflix etc about Australia (eg “In My Blood It Runs”). Some classic films include Gallipoli, Rabbit Proof Fence, Crocodile Dundee, The Dish, Red Dog, The Sapphires.

Any questions, please email me:

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Really looking forward to sharing Oz with you!

Jimmy