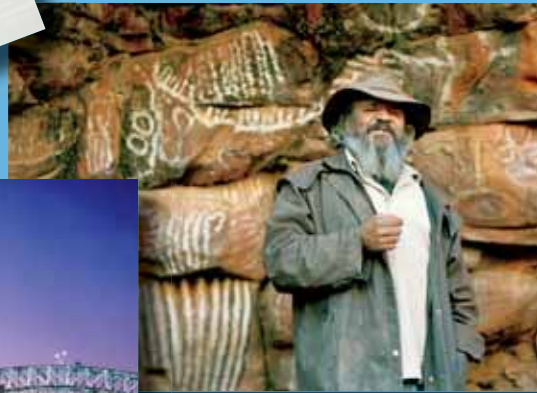


# Tell Me About Australia





**Australia's World Heritage Properties**  
(Heard, McDonald and Macquarie Islands not shown on map)



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# Introduction



Most American visitors find that Australia is a fascinating place. Americans feel comfortable there because the people speak English, have modern conveniences like mobile (cell) phones and iPods, and sometimes eat at McDonald's. Still, Americans can tell that they are not in the United States. They might hear Australians say "G'day mate", see kangaroos hopping through the bush, and notice that people drive on the left side of the road. They might see Aboriginal dot paintings in a museum, eat a meat pie at an Aussie Rules football game, or see the Southern Cross constellation in the night sky.

Australia is a sunny, wide-open place with beaches and mountains, rainforests, grasslands and deserts. There is something for everyone: the world's most beautiful and extensive coral reef, largest rock formation and unique animals, birds, flowers and trees.

The Embassy of Australia in Washington, D.C. published this book in response to the thousands of letters received from American school children asking about Australia. It is aimed at middle schoolers, but children from a wider age range will find it fun to read and look at the illustrations. Some topics in this book are examined in more depth than others, based on the information most requested by students.

For more detailed information, please ask your school or local library, or visit the Embassy's web site: <http://www.usa.embassy.gov.au>

**If you find an apparent spelling error  
do not be alarmed - one of the  
differences between the two countries is  
that the spelling of some words in Aus-  
tralia is different from that in America.  
Australian spelling has  
been used throughout to illustrate this  
difference.**



# Geography

Australia is the world's smallest continent, largest island and the only continent made up of a single country. People sometimes call Australia the "Land Down Under" because it lies entirely in the Southern Hemisphere, down under the equator. The Tropic of Capricorn runs through the northern part of the country. Australia is located between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. Its nearest neighbors are the countries of Indonesia, Timor Leste (East Timor) and Papua New Guinea.

Australia is the sixth largest country in the world in terms of land

## Official Name

Australia's official name is the Commonwealth of Australia. The name Australia comes from the Latin words terra australis incognita, meaning "unknown southern land" an early name for the land that explorers expected to find in the southern ocean. Matthew Flinders, a British explorer, was the first person to circumnavigate the Australian continent and the first person to apply the name "Australia" specifically to this land mass.

mass at 2.97 million square miles. That is almost the same size as the United States without Alaska or Hawaii (see map 1). It is made up of the mainland and thousands of islands around the coastline, the largest of which is the State of Tasmania to the south of the continent. It has a number of overseas territories that are thousands of miles from the mainland including Christmas Island, Cocos- Keeling Islands and the

Australian Antarctic Territory. It is about 2500 miles from east to west and 2300 miles from north to south.

Australia was one of the earliest lands formed on earth and some of its rocks have been dated to over 3.5 billion years old. It is very stable with no volcanic activity and little geological activity, which means earthquakes are rare. Nature has had plenty of time to wear down mountains and fill up valleys in Australia, making it the lowest and flattest of the continents. More than 90% of its surface is less than 2,000 feet above sea level, about the same height as the smallest Blue Ridge Mountains in Georgia. Australia has been separated from the other six continents for millions of years, which explains why its animals and plants are so different.



1. Australia superimposed on mainland United States

# Topography

Geographers divide Australia into three main land areas: the Eastern Highlands, the Central Lowlands and the Western Plateau (see map 2).

## Eastern Highlands

The Eastern Highlands run like a backbone down the eastern and southeastern sides of the continent and into Tasmania. Australians call them the Great Dividing Range. It is characterised by steep cliffs on the eastern side falling to a sometimes flat, sometimes hilly coastal strip that is rarely more than 60 miles wide. The Coastal Plain is a strip of land down the eastern coast, around the southeast corner of the continent, and in the southwest. It ranges from lush tropical areas to drier sandy plains. In good years, it is relatively wet. Because of the warm, moist climate and rich farmland, this is where most Australians live. The mountainous region separates the rivers flowing west to central Australia from the rivers flowing east into the Pacific. The highest peak in the range and in Australia is Mount Kosciuszko which is 7,310 feet high. The southern part of the Eastern Highlands in New South Wales and Victoria is called the Australian Alps because it snows in this area in winter. It also snows in the southern Eastern Highlands and in Tasmania.

## Central Lowlands

The Central-Eastern Lowlands stretch from the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north, through the Great Artesian Basin including the Murray-Darling Plains to the southern coast of the Great Australian Bight. Most of the area is flat and low lying with low mountain ranges in the south east (in the state of South Australia). The best land for farming

lies in the area formed by the Murray and Darling Rivers that flow southwest through the southern part of this region. However, much of the western part of the area is arid. The Great Artesian Basin that lies beneath this area contains underground water supplies that allows for irrigation of otherwise dry farming country.

## Western Plateau

The Western Plateau is a relatively flat area about 600 feet above sea level with low mountainous ranges in the north of Western Australia and isolated uplands in the Northern Territory. This area makes up more than half of the country. This region includes the vast desert areas of Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Some of this dry interior of Australia is carved into large beef cattle stations (ranches), some of which are the size of small countries. This is the area generally known as the Outback.



2. Topography of Australia

# Seasons

Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere so its seasons are the reverse of those in the Northern Hemisphere. Summer is from December to February, and autumn is from March to May. Winter is from June to August, and spring is from September to November. Australian seasons begin on the first day of the month (for example, summer begins on December 1). Australians do not call the autumn "fall" as most of its trees are evergreen eucalypts that shed leaves throughout the year as they age and die.

# Climate

Australia's climate varies greatly due to its vast size. Generally, it is warmer and drier than the United States. Most of the continent receives only five to 20 inches of rain per year. About one third of it is desert receiving less than 10 inches of rain a year, another third is arid (less than 20 inches of rain a year) and the most reliable rainfall occurs on the east coast along the Great Dividing Range and in the southwest corner of Western Australia. Parts of the northeast (Queensland), which include the tropical rainforests, have seasonal rains of up to 60 inches per year as does the west coast of Tasmania in the south. The northern third of the country is tropical (lying above the tropic of Capricorn) and the northern-most parts have a monsoon season.

Most summertime temperatures range between 70°F and 90°F in the cities. Winter is mild in most of Australia with temperature ranges from 40°F and 60°F in the cities. The warmest winter temperatures are in the north of the country which is closer to the Equator. The southern area is usually colder in winter (30°F-50°F). Unlike in the United States, going south in Australia means travelling to a cooler region. Australia rarely has tornadoes but does have tropical cyclones (hurricanes) in both the northeast and northwest. As the driest continent in the world, Australia is prone to long periods of drought.

## Australian States, Territories & Capitals

Australia has six States and two (mainland) Territories.

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Capital City</b>
Australian Capital Territory (ACT)	Canberra
New South Wales (NSW)	Sydney
Northern Territory (NT)	Darwin
Queensland (QLD)	Brisbane
South Australia (SA)	Adelaide
Tasmania (TAS)	Hobart
Victoria (VIC)	Melbourne
Western Australia (WA)	Perth



3. Australian States, Territories & Capitals

# Travelling to Australia

More than 450,000 thousand Americans visit Australia each year. Most Americans fly across the Pacific Ocean from Los Angeles to Sydney or Brisbane. The distance is around 7,500 miles, and travellers cross both the equator and the international date line. There are three time zones in Australia. Not counting daylight saving time, the east coast of the United States is 15 hours behind the east coast of Australia.

**The non-stop flying time from Los Angeles to Sydney is about 14 hours**

## History

Australia and the United States are similar in many ways. The two countries are good friends and long-standing allies. Our strong ties are due in part to our similar modern histories as colonies of Great Britain.

Each nation, however, developed in its own way. The American colonies fought for their independence from Great Britain in the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and issued their Declaration of Independence in 1776. Australia became an independent nation in 1901 when the British Parliament passed legislation allowing the six Australian colonies to govern themselves as the Commonwealth of Australia. Power was divided between the Commonwealth government and the governments of the six colonies, which were renamed "states" by the Constitution. (See Comparison Between the United States and Australia chart, p. 7.)

### First Settlers

Australia's original inhabitants were the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Aborigines migrated from southern Asia, and began living in Australia at least 50,000 years ago. Some

archaeologists argue that the migrations occurred closer to 65,000 years ago. Other early immigrants, the Torres Strait Islanders, arrived about 10,000 years ago. (See Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, p. 21).

Searching for terra australis incognita (the unknown southern land) was a great challenge for European navigators in the 17th and 18th centuries. Several of them passed by parts of the Australian coastline without realising how it fit into the puzzle of world geography. The first was Spanish navigator Luis Vaez de Torres in 1606. In 1770 a British explorer, Captain James Cook, sighted the east coast of Australia and claimed it for Great Britain. After the British lost their American colonies, they were unable to transport convicts to settlements in Virginia, Maryland and Georgia, and so Britain decided to send some of its convicts to Australia.

On January 26, 1788 - now celebrated as Australia Day - the first fleet of 11 ships arrived in Australia at Port Jackson, later known as Sydney. There were around 1,350 passengers. More than 700 were convicts. The remainder were officers, ship crew and marines who were sent to guard them and supervise their work.

### Early Economy

Free settlers also arrived from Great Britain to take advantage of the colonial government's offers of low-cost land and supplies. The British government had hoped that the settlers would be self sufficient and producing their own food within two years. This was quite difficult at first. The settlers faced poor soil, droughts and isolation. They also had problems with Aborigines, who were upset that colonists had fenced their land. The first settlers almost starved and had to depend heavily on Great Britain for supplies of food, clothing and equipment for a number of years. In 1797, some settlers introduced merino sheep from Spain. They had hoped to find an agricultural product that would do well in Australia's dry climate. They also wanted to provide income for themselves. Through careful breeding, Australian sheep farmers soon began to produce some of the finest wool in the world, and they still do today.

**Some Australians today are descendants of the First Fleeters - Australia's first settlers. They are proud of their heritage, just like US descendants of the Mayflower Passengers**



## New Settlements

As the colony grew, so did the need to find new land. From the early 1800s, explorers trekked and mapped the unknown parts of Australia. New settlements followed in Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart, Perth and Adelaide. These cities became the capital cities of new colonies (see Australian States, Territories and Capitals chart, p. 5).

# Historical Comparison Between the United States & Australia

	<b>United States</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>Earliest Immigrant</b>	At least 10,000 years ago - Native Americans from northern Asia	At least 50,000 years ago - Aborigines from southern Asia
<b>European Explorers</b>	Spanish, British, Dutch, French	Dutch, British, Portuguese, French
<b>First Settlement</b>	1565 - St. Augustine, FL (Spanish - not permanent); 1606 - Jamestown, VA (British - permanent)	1788 - Sydney, NSW (British - established as a penal colony)
<b>States Originally Settled with Penal Colonies</b>	VA, MD, GA	NSW, TAS, QLD
<b>Birth of the Nation</b>	1776 - proclamation of the Declaration of Independence	1901 - federation of the six colonies
<b>Number of States at Birth</b>	13	6
<b>Number of States Today</b>	50	6
<b>Original Capital</b>	Philadelphia	Melbourne
<b>Move to New Federal Capital</b>	1800 - Washington D.C.	1927 - Canberra, ACT
<b>Gold Rush</b>	1848 Sutter's Mill, CA	1851 - Bathurst, NSW
<b>Closest Neighbours</b>	Canada, Mexico	Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor
<b>Land Area</b>	3.63 million sq. miles (inc. Alaska)	2.97 million sq. miles
<b>Population Estimate</b>	300 million	22 million

## **Gold Rush**

The announcement of the discovery of gold in 1851 led to an Australian gold rush. Fortune hunters arrived from many parts of the world, including California. About 95,000 people migrated to Australia the following year. This coincided with the abandonment of convict transportation to the eastern coast of Australia (transportation continued until 1868 in Western Australia)

Australian bush towns sprang up during the Gold Rush era, just as rural towns did in the western United States. Distances between towns were great and few roads existed. Freeman Cobb (born in Massachusetts) arrived in Melbourne from San Francisco and started the Cobb and Co. Coach Line. Like Wells Fargo in the United States, it made transportation and communication quicker and more efficient. It also made the development of new settlements easier.

## **Nationalism**

A common feeling of being Australian, rather than British, was developing among the colonists. Great Britain also had difficulty administering colonies so far away. These issues convinced the British government that the colonies were ready for self-government. Great Britain granted all the colonies (except Western Australia) self-government in the mid- 1850s when they formed their own elected legislative councils and wrote constitutions. Western Australia followed in 1890.

Movement towards federation of the individual colonies began in the mid 1850s and was advanced in the 1880s as the sense of nationalism grew. In 1891 a convention was held of the Australian colonial governments followed by a second convention in 1897/98 to draft a constitution for the federation of Australia. After almost 10 years of debate in both Great Britain and the Australian colonies, the British parliament finally passed the Australian Constitution into law in 1900. On January 1, 1901, the federation of Australia became a matter of law and the 6 colonies became the six states of a new nation, called the Commonwealth of Australia.

Before federation there was much debate about where the new nation's capital should be. Both Melbourne and Sydney were growing cities. A compromise was reached in the constitution to locate the capital in New South Wales, but it had to be at least 100 miles from Sydney. A long search for a site led to former sheep grazing country in the highlands between Sydney and Melbourne. The Australian Capital Territory was carved out of New South Wales in 1911 (see map 3). An American couple, architect Walter Burley Griffin and his wife, landscape designer Marion Mahoney Griffin, won a competition to design the layout of the new city to be called Canberra - an Aboriginal word meaning "meeting place". The capital was officially moved from Melbourne in 1927.

## **The 20th Century**

Australian soldiers joined troops from other nations to fight in the First and Second World Wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945). Over 100,000 Australians died in these conflicts, and people around the world noted their bravery. Australians came to be proud of the sacrifices they had made toward the cause of democracy. As such a young nation, these experiences helped them to form their unique Australian identity. A national holiday, ANZAC Day, is held on 25 April each year to mark the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War. ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The soldiers in those forces quickly became known as ANZACs, and the pride they soon took in that name endures to this day.

Like Americans, Australians suffered through the Great Depression from 1929 to the late 1930s. About one third of the workforce was unemployed. There was widespread hunger and homelessness. The Australian economy began to recover during World War II as factories increased production for the military war effort.

# Modern Economy

In 1949, Australia embarked on an ambitious project to develop its economy through a major national development project to generate more electricity, and along with it, more jobs. It was called the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme. Construction workers and their families soon arrived from overseas to work on this project. Other immigrants, mainly Europeans, moved to Australia after World War II to escape the hardships caused by the war. Australian industries began to thrive by producing housing, goods and services for the large numbers of newly arrived immigrants.

An ambitious immigration program was commenced in the 1950s to support the growing economy leading to many millions of people migrating to Australia from around the world.

Australia's emerging economic strength led to an expanded role in the international arena with Australia being a leading supporter of the creation of the United Nations. Australian troops have participated in many of the United Nations' peacekeeping efforts, helping to restore order to war-torn countries, including Korea, Cambodia and East Timor.

Australia supported the United States in the Vietnam war from 1965 to 1973. More recently, Australians joined the fight against terrorism with the US and other allies.

In the 21st century, Australia is a country of peace and prosperity. Australia's standard of living is among the highest in the world, and people recognise and value Australian culture and technology. More than a century after federation, Australia continues to grow as a nation and find its place in the modern world.

Significant discoveries of coal, iron ore and other minerals stimulated a further boom in the economy in the early 1960s and 1970s with the development of the Japanese and then the Korean economies and more recently the US, China and India. The largest markets for Australian products and services are Japan, China, United States, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom, New Zealand and India.

Agriculture is very important to the Australian economy. Australia exports around two-thirds of its agricultural production and is a large supplier of red meat, dairy products, cereals and wine. With around 86 million sheep, Australia is the world's largest wool producer. The country exports 95 per cent of the wool, with most used to make clothing in other countries.

Australia is rich in many energy resources and minerals. The country exports uranium, crude oil and liquefied natural gas. Australia is also the world's largest exporter of coal, iron ore and diamonds. Australian mining industries are major producers of bauxite, mineral sands, gold, lead, zinc, iron, copper, nickel and manganese. Australians produce chemicals, plastics, electronics parts, processed food, ships, motor vehicles, and steel and aluminium products. They are also innovators in aerospace technology, medical science, computers and engineering.

The service industry, including financial, educational, health and tourism is the largest sector in the Australian economy. In recent years more than five million tourists have visited Australia each year with around 450,000 visitors from the United States.

Australia exports more than one-fifth of everything it produces, mostly to Asia. Japan buys almost a quarter of Australia's total exports, while the United States is Australia's largest source of imports; more than one-fifth of Australian imports come from the United States.

# Government Today

Australia's system of government is based on the liberal democratic tradition, which includes religious tolerance and freedom of speech and association. It is a parliamentary democracy, also known as the Westminster system of government. At the federal level, it has two houses of Parliament, the House of Representatives and the Senate. They were named after the two houses in the United States Congress. Australia's institutions and practices reflect aspects of both the British and North American models but are uniquely Australian.

Australia is an independent nation with Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom as its constitutional monarch and head of state. An appointed Governor-General represents the Queen in Australia and among other duties officially swears in the government of the day.

The Australian head of government is the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is the leader of the party that holds the majority of seats in the House of Representatives. The party that holds the majority becomes the government and the Prime Minister leads the Government (The Executive). Government Ministers (equivalent to US Departmental Secretaries) are appointed from either the House of Representatives or the Senate. Members of Parliament can seek re-election at each federal election. House of Representative members sit for a term of three years and senators for a term of six years.

All states and territories have their own legislative bodies, and the six states also have a Governor, who represents the Queen.

Voting in elections is compulsory and all Australians enrol to vote when they turn 18. The turnout at Australian elections has not fallen below 90 percent of eligible voters.

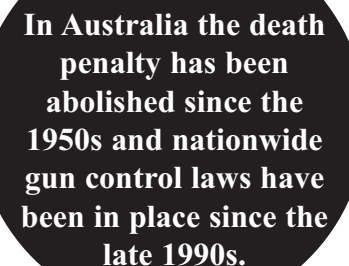
Voting in the House of Representatives, which has 150 members, is by a preference method where a voter indicates their preferred choice of the list of candidates for their electorate (by marking their names

1,2,3 etc) and candidates with the lower total vote count are eliminated from the count until a candidate achieves at least one vote more than 50 per cent of the vote. This ensures that the winning candidate has the support of the majority of electors in the electorate (even if not their first choice). In the Senate, proportional representation is used in multi-member single statewide electorate. Voters must number a preference against each candidate, and candidates must secure a quota of votes (just over 14.25 per cent) to win a seat.

Elections are publicly funded through the Australian Electoral Commission with full accountability on expenditure.

Australia has been the leader in many developments in the democratic system of elections. In 1855 the colony of Victoria introduced the secret ballot. In 1856 South Australia gave the vote to all men, ending the requirement for property or professional qualification to vote, and in 1892 gave the vote to women. In the 1890s the Australian colonies adopted the principle of one vote per person by electorate - ending the opportunity of multiple voting if an elector qualified as a land owner and a professional and had property in more than one electorate (or state).

There is a distinction between the Executive (the Prime Minister and his cabinet that run the Departments of State) and the Legislature which is the wider Parliament that debates and votes on the policies and programs proposed by the government through the Executive. A third arm of the system is an independent judiciary where the courts of the land are separate from the Government and the Parliament. The courts at their highest level interpret the constitution (the High Court), the application and interpretation of Federal law (the Federal courts), and the application and interpretation of civil and criminal law (mostly through state courts).



**In Australia the death penalty has been abolished since the 1950s and nationwide gun control laws have been in place since the late 1990s.**



# Environment & Conservation

Australians are very aware of the need to protect their unique natural environment. Many people belong to conservation groups. The state and federal governments all have programs to control pollution and to support conservation.

## **Clean Up The World**

One activity that involves many Australians worldwide is Clean Up Australia Day and Clean Up the World Day. On the third Saturday in September each year, individuals and groups organise to clean up their neighborhoods. Participants collect thousands of tons of trash from waterways, parks, roadways, and other community areas. Ian Kiernan, solo yachtsman and 1994 Australian of the Year, started Clean Up Australia Day. He was amazed at the garbage that he saw in the oceans when sailing around the world, and went home determined to do something about it. The United Nations helped him to make his project an international event. The 16th Clean Up the World event in 2008 involved communities in more than 115 countries, including the United States.

## **World Heritage Areas & National Parks**

There are 17 Australian sites on the World Heritage List, forming part of the cultural and natural heritage which the World Heritage Committee considers as having outstanding universal value. These are:

- Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Riversleigh, QLD; Naracoorte, SA)
- Blue Mountains (NSW)
- Gondwana Rainforests of Australia (NSW)
- Fraser Island (QLD)

- Great Barrier Reef (QLD)
- Heard & McDonald Islands (Australian Territory of Heard & McDonald Islands)
- Kakadu National Park (NT)
- Lord Howe Island (NSW)
- Macquarie Island (TAS)
- Purnululu National Park (WA)
- Tasmanian Wilderness
- Royal Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens (VIC)
- Shark Bay (WA)
- Sydney Opera House (NSW)
- Uluru-KataTjuta National Park (NT)
- Wet Tropics of Queensland
- Willandra Lakes Region (NSW)

Australia has 511 national parks and more than 2,700 other nature conservation reserves covering about 7.5 per cent of Australia's land mass. There are also 145 marine protected areas.

## **A Unique Wildlife**

Australia has 10 per cent of the world's biodiversity. Some 70 to 80 per cent of its plants and animals are only found in Australia. The country is known for its unusual mammals, called monotremes and marsupials. There are only two types of monotremes: the platypus and the echidna. Famous animals like the kangaroo, koala and Tasmanian devil are marsupials.

## Rare & Endangered Species

Australians have come to treasure their unique animals and plants. In recent years, they have taken steps to guard against endangering them. The federal and state governments have developed programs for habitat protection and restoration. They participate in captive breeding and release of endangered animals. The governments also aim to control predators and feral animals, such as foxes, cats, pigs, rabbits, dogs and dingoes. Since 1989 there has been a national Endangered Species Program to fund and coordinate these efforts.

State and territory governments now have programs to gather information about rare and endangered species and their habitats, monitor their conservation status, and actively work for their preservation. One result is that new species are being discovered. They are mostly plants and insects. Every now and then, scientists find species that they thought were extinct. In 1994, a tree was discovered in the Wollemi National Park only 150 miles from Sydney. Its ancestry is between 90 million and 200 million years old and it was previously considered extinct with only fossil evidence indicating it ever existed. There are three populations of the tree with less than 100 trees in total.

Unfortunately, like all countries, some species became extinct or endangered before people became concerned about their preservation. The two main causes for the extinction of certain species are human settlement and changes in the natural environment. Australia had dinosaurs, but like those in other countries, they died out 65 million years ago. Around 10,000 years ago, Aborigines may have contributed to the extinction of a series of giant marsupial species through hunting and their use of fire. They included giant kangaroos, large wombats, and even a marsupial lion.

European settlement has caused more recent extinctions and threats. The habitats of plants and animals were lost when people cleared land for farms and towns. An animal that probably became extinct in the early 20th century was the Tasmanian tiger, or thylacine. This dog-sized marsupial had disappeared from the mainland, but still survived in Tasmania. Farmers hunted it because it attacked sheep. There is a

stuffed specimen of this species in New York's Natural History Museum.

People sometimes report that Australia's popular cuddly symbol, the koala, is endangered. It is more correctly labeled "vulnerable." If people are not careful, it may become endangered. Hunters stopped taking koalas for their skins in the 1920s, but disease still makes them sick. Koalas may become endangered in the future if people continue to clear eucalyptus forests, their main habitat and food source.

Large mainland kangaroos are no longer in danger of extinction, although some culling is allowed of the most populous species. There are an estimated 30 million kangaroos in Australia, more now than when Europeans first arrived. These marsupials benefit greatly from irrigation and farmers' control of predators.



**The Northern Hairy  
Nosed Wombat is Aus-  
tralia's most endan-  
gered mammal, found  
only in Epping Nation-  
al Park in  
central Queensland**

# Mammals

There are three main types of mammals. All suckle their young with milk from mammary glands and have hair or fur.

## Monotremes

- Egg-laying mammals
- Young hatch from an egg
- Examples: (only two)
  - echidna
  - platypus

## Marsupials

- Pouched mammals
- Young born at an immature stage and grow inside the mother's pouch, called a marsupium
- Examples:
  - kangaroo
  - Tasmanian devil
  - koala
  - wombat

## Placentals

- Common mammals
- Young are born at an advanced stage of development
- Examples:
  - human
  - dog (dingo)
  - rabbit
  - sheep

# Monotremes

Monotremes, or egg-laying mammals, are the most primitive group of mammals. Monotremes are more closely related to reptiles than other mammals. After the young hatch from eggs, they are fed milk through pores in the mother's skin. Australia and the neighbouring island of Papua New Guinea are the only places where monotremes live. There are only two members of this mammal group: the echidna and the platypus. When the first platypus specimen was taken to Great Britain, it was so unusual that many scientists thought it was a hoax.

## Platypus

Distinguishing features:

- varies greatly in size and weight, with the average male about 20 inches long and six pounds in weight
- velvety brownish fur on its back and grayish fur on its belly
- soft, rubbery bill
- webbed feet with claws

Diet:

- insects, worms and yabbies (freshwater crayfish)

Habitat:

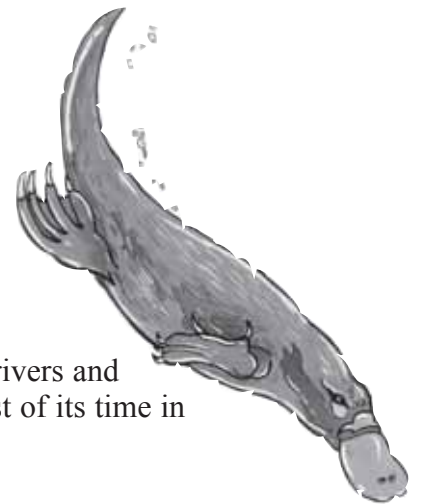
- burrows its nest into the banks of rivers and creeks, breathes air but spends most of its time in water where it hunts its food.

Region:

- south eastern mainland and Tasmania

Other information:

- also called the duckbilled platypus



- searches for food with its supersensitive bill in the water
- very secretive so rarely seen in the wild.
- does not have a pouch.

## Echidna

Distinguishing features:

- 14-21 inches long and up to 17 pounds in weight
- flattened body covered with coarse hair and two-inch sharp spines for protection
- long, slender snout
- long, sticky tongue for collecting food



Diet:

- insects, especially ants and termites

Habitat:

- dry forest and grasslands, hollow logs or piles of debris

Region:

- throughout Australia

Other information:

- sometimes called the spiny anteater
- two species only
- lays only one egg at a time into a pouch on the mother's body
- when attacked, it curls up into a ball of prickly spines or burrows itself quickly into the earth leaving its spines exposed for protection.

**The echidna can  
survive without food  
for up to one month**

# Marsupials

The most famous Australian mammals are marsupials, or pouched mammals. Their young are very immature at birth. They must crawl into the mother's pouch, formed by a fold of skin over the mammary glands. There they nurse and develop until they are able to live on their own. Koalas and kangaroos (including wallabies) are the world's best known marsupials, and most Australians consider the kangaroo their national animal.

## Kangaroo

Distinguishing features:

- large, powerful hind legs and small front legs
- small, deer-like head with long ears that stand straight up
- long, thick, powerful tail used for balance and support
- largest are gray and red kangaroos; both are more than six feet and 200 pounds

Diet:

- herbs and grasses
- graze mostly in the late afternoons

Habitat:

- generally open forests, grasslands and plains but some are highly adapted to specific environments.

Region:

- throughout Australia

Other information:

- the seven most populous kangaroo species are common all over the country
- 48 different-sized species, including wallabies
- Kangaroos are about the size of a large lima bean at birth



- baby, called a joey, climbs into mother's pouch at birth and stays there for more than four months
- red kangaroos can live to be 20 years old
- can leap up to 25 feet in one hop and travel up to 30 miles per hour
- if attacked, they deliver a savage kick with their hind legs

## **Tasmanian Devil**

Distinguishing features:

- about three feet long; about 14 inches high to shoulder
- thickset, with coarse, black and white fur
- huge, powerful jaws and teeth

Diet:

- rotting flesh, small birds and animals, and insects

Habitat:

- hollow logs, dense under growth or rocky caves
- builds nests of leaves and grass

Region:

- extinct from the mainland; now found only in Tasmania

Other information:

- lives alone, not in family groups
- its movement resembles the motion of a rocking horse
- nocturnal (active at night)
- has a rear opening pouch
- makes a harsh guttural noise
- very aggressive when feeding
- currently afflicted with a cancer like disease of the face that has reduced its numbers considerably (lots of research is underway to find a cure for the illness)

## **Koala**

Distinguishing features:

- 24-33 inches tall and 11-26 pounds
- thick gray fur, small eyes, a bright shiny nose, long toes and sharp claws
- no eyelids or tail
- about the size and weight of an American nickel when born

Diet:

- eats about two pounds of a few specific types of eucalyptus tree leaves per day

Habitat:


- mainly arboreal (living in trees)

Region:

- southeastern Australia

Other information:

- sleeps up to 20 hours per day and is usually nocturnal (active at night)
- very skilled tree climber
- not related to the bear family, despite common nickname “koala bear”
- currently afflicted with a disease across some of its range that reduces its lifespan and limits reproduction - research is underway to find a cure



**Koala means “no drink” in one Aboriginal language**

## **Wombat**

Distinguishing features:

- long, coarse fur ranging from yellow-black to gray-brown
- stocky sturdy animal with strong claws for burrowing
- up to three feet long and weighing up to 60 pounds

Diet:

- grasses, roots, vegetables and leaves

Habitat:

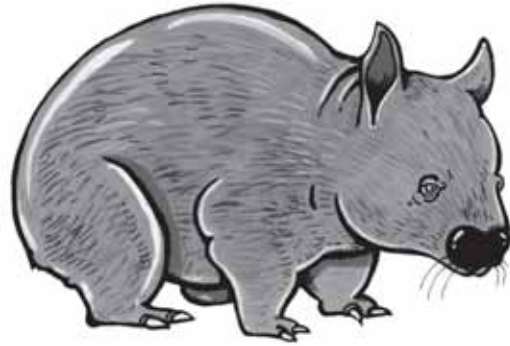
- burrows along tree roots and rocks

Region:

- Tasmania and southern mainland open forest and grasslands

Other information:

- three known species, all in Australia
- nocturnal (active at night)
- has extensive systems of burrows with many entrances and obvious runs or tracks through the bush.
- pouch faces backwards (so it won't fill with soil when the wombat is burrowing).



## Placentals

The most common type of mammal worldwide is the placental mammal. Unborn young grow inside the mother, attached to her by an umbilical cord and placenta. They are born alive, rather than as eggs. Few placental mammals are native to Australia. They include bats and some rodents. The dingo, a species of wild dog, came to Australia from Asia around eight thousand years ago with the Aborigines. Later immigrants brought other placental mammals to Australia for farming purposes. Some have since gone wild, with large feral populations of pigs, goats, water buffalo and camels as well as dogs, foxes, rabbits, cats mice and rats that are a problem for Australia's native wildlife.



## Birds

Australian birds include colourful parrots, magpies, pelicans, boobooks, owls and brolgas (cranes). Over 80 per cent of Australia's birds are unique to Australia. Descriptions of the emu, lyrebird and kookaburra are below.

### Emu

Distinguishing features:

- thick, brownish-black or dull gray plumage
- flesh on head and neck is bluish; bill is short and black
- small wings and long, sturdy legs with three-toed feet
- can grow more than six feet tall and weigh more than 80 pounds

Diet:

- pasture grasses, seeds, fruit, and insects

Habitat:

- open grasslands, semi-desert, scrublands and woodland refuges

Region:

- formerly inhabited the whole of Australia; now extinct in Tasmania

Other information:

- females lay 6-11 blue-green eggs; males make nests and hatch eggs
- cannot fly, but runs up to 40 miles per hour
- able to swim
- second largest bird in world after ostrich
- is considered Australia's national bird and is featured on the Coat of Arms



## Lyrebird

Distinguishing features:

- up to 20 inches long
- 30-inch tail reminiscent of a lyre (musical instrument)
- outermost tail feathers are two feet long with brown V-shaped notches
- long powerful legs with fowl-like feet



Food:

- earthworms, snails, beetle larvae and centipedes

Habitat:

- mountainous sclerophyll forests and subtropical rain forests
- normally roosts in tree branches

Region:

- southeastern Queensland to Victoria

Other information:

- two species are unique to Australia
- lays one large egg
- mimics the calls of other birds and bush noises
- males display their plumage and long tail during courtship

## Kookaburra

Distinguishing features:

- relatively large head and strong beak
- brownish-gray feather with short, blue-flecked wings

Diet:

- snakes, lizards, rodents, fish, young birds and insects

Region:

- eastern mainland Australia

Other information:

- world's largest kingfisher
- also known as the laughing jackass because its call sounds like a laugh
- kills snakes for food by taking them repeatedly to the top of a tree and dropping them



# Insects



There are more than 86,000 species of insects in Australia. One of the most interesting is the large termite, found in the north, which is about 3/4 of an inch long.

Colonies of large termites build rock-like nests up to 20 feet high.

Mosquitoes are found all over Australia. Australians call them mozzies. They can be a nuisance along coastal waterways, especially

at dusk in the summer. Some carry diseases such as malaria, but this is uncommon in Australia.

Blowflies breed in sheep and horse manure, cattle dung and pig waste products. Introduction of these animals has allowed the blowfly population to increase since ancient times. They thrive near animal grazing pastures. There can be as many as 9,000 blowflies per acre in some parts of Australia.

# Spiders



Australia has more than 2,800 recognised species of spiders. The most dangerous are the redback and the funnelweb. Some members of the funnelweb family are among the most venomous spiders in the world. It is found in south eastern Australia but is relatively rare. Funnelwebs have been responsible for 13 human deaths, but none have been recorded since 1981 when an antivenom was made available. The redback spider's abdomen is marked with different colors, but is mostly red. It is related to the black widow spider of America and is common across Australia.

# Reptiles

Australia also has many species of reptiles, including lizards, snakes and crocodiles. Some can be dangerous to humans, but the vast majority are harmless.

## Lizards

The goanna, a monitor lizard, ranges in size from 18 inches to six feet, depending on the species.

It has short legs with sharp claws and a long, forked tongue that it flicks in and out.

Some species are arboreal (tree dwelling). There is an Aboriginal story about their beautifully patterned skin.

The frill-necked lizard is a type of dragon lizard. It has an unusual frilly collar of skin that stands out around its neck when it is angry or frightened. If it cannot scare off potential enemies, it runs away at high speed on its long, hind legs.



## Snakes

Australia has more than 180 species of snakes. Some are among the most

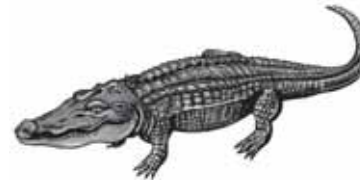


dangerous to humans. In fact, Australia is the only continent in which venomous species outnumber harmless ones, but fortunately fewer than 20 are dangerous to man and some are not common. They include death-adders, copperheads, tiger snakes and red-bellied black snakes. One of the deadliest is the taipan, which lives in the northern part of the country. It may grow to 10 feet long. Its close relative, the brown snake, has the most toxic venom of any Australian species. Venom can either destroy the linings of blood vessels, cause blood to clot, or destroy red blood cells. It can also cause death by blocking the nerves that control the heart and lungs. Antivenoms are available for the poison.

Some Australian snakes however, are harmless to humans. One is the carpet snake, or common python, patterned with black and brown. Another is the diamond back snake, greenish-black with yellow diamond-shaped markings. Pythons are non-venomous and kill their small prey by squeezing them until they cannot breathe. The largest is the rock python and the longest ever recorded was 23 feet.

## Crocodiles

There are two species of crocodile in Australia: the estuarine, or saltwater crocodile, and the freshwater crocodile. Both are found only in tropical waters and are protected. Freshwater crocodiles are found only in the upper reaches of



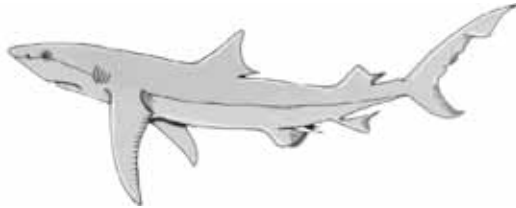
northern rivers, billabongs (water holes) and lagoons. They are harmless to humans, feeding only on small prey. They are rarely longer than nine feet and have a long narrow snout.



The estuarine crocodile makes its home both in estuaries and brackish upstream waters in large coastal rivers. It lives in all of northern Australia and throughout south-east Asia. These crocodiles feed mainly on small aquatic animals such as fish, crabs and water rats. They sometimes turn to larger prey such as cattle, horses and rarely, humans. They generally seize and drown their prey before eating it. The estuarine crocodile can reach a length of 23 feet and weigh up to 2,200 pounds.

# Sharks

Sharks are found all around Australia's coastline. The bronze whaler and the common or gray whaler are large and dangerous sharks patrolling much of eastern Australia. The grey nurse, a relatively sluggish shark, preys on Australian salmon and other fish. People often blame it for trying to eat swimmers and divers. The grey whaler actually makes these attacks. The tiger shark is dark grey with darker stripes and blotches. It lives in tropical and subtropical waters.



The white pointer, also called the great white shark or white death, can be almost 40 feet long. It is perhaps the most dangerous shark of all. It frequents the southern oceans and can be found in the waters off southern Australia in summer and off Queensland in winter. In Australian waters the white pointer is protected because it is considered a vulnerable species.

**In the past 150 years there has been, on average, less than one fatal shark attack per year in Australia. Almost all incidents take place in the summer.**

# Some Natural Wonders & Famous Landmarks

Australia has some of the most interesting natural wonders in the world. Visitors to Australia are willing to travel long distances to see them. They also enjoy looking at some of the country's famous man-made landmarks.

## Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef is the largest area of coral reefs and islands in the world. It stretches for about 1,300 miles off the northeastern coast of Australia along the Queensland coast (see map 2). The reef is made up of more than 3000 coral islands, atolls and reefs. Its total area is more than 130,000 square miles.

Certain types of marine animals, called polyps, form the beautiful coral structures from calcium carbonate in the sea water. They build it around themselves to make a stony tube in which to live. They cement the tubes together as the colony grows. The different species of polyps and the water conditions determine the various shapes of the colonies. There are about 400 species of coral in the Great Barrier Reef.

The reef is home to many other types of sea life, including sea anemones and jellyfish. About 1,500 species of tropical fish swim in its waters, and 40 species of seabirds fly over its islands. The United Nations has chosen the Great Barrier Reef as a World Heritage Area because of its complex and diverse habitat. The Australian government has also established programs to protect the reef. It tries to balance competing interests such as conservation, tourism, shipping and agriculture, which all affect the reef.



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Above: Platypus  
Below: Tasmanian Devil  
Right: Koala



Tourism Australia Copyright

Above: Kangaroo  
Below: Wombat

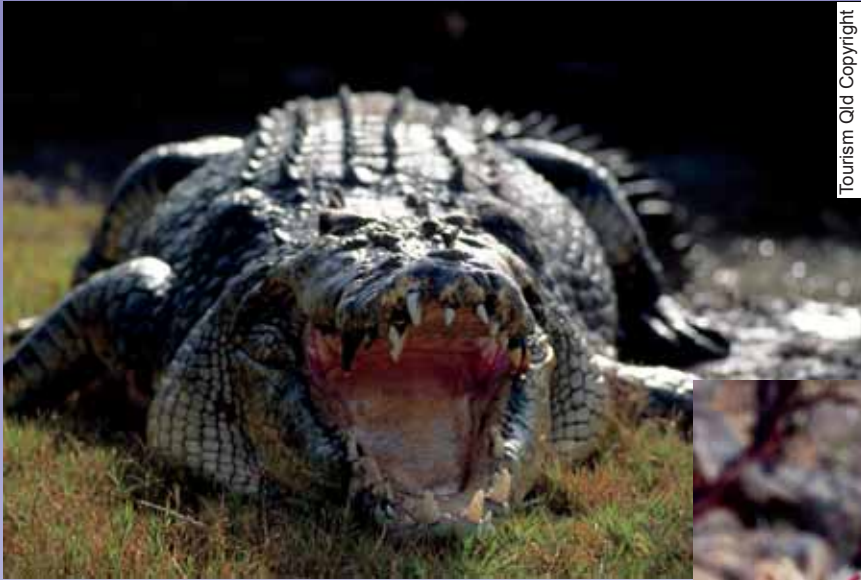


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Top left: Crocodile  
Left: Emus  
Top right: Rainbow lorikeets  
Right: Kookaburras  
Above: Waratah





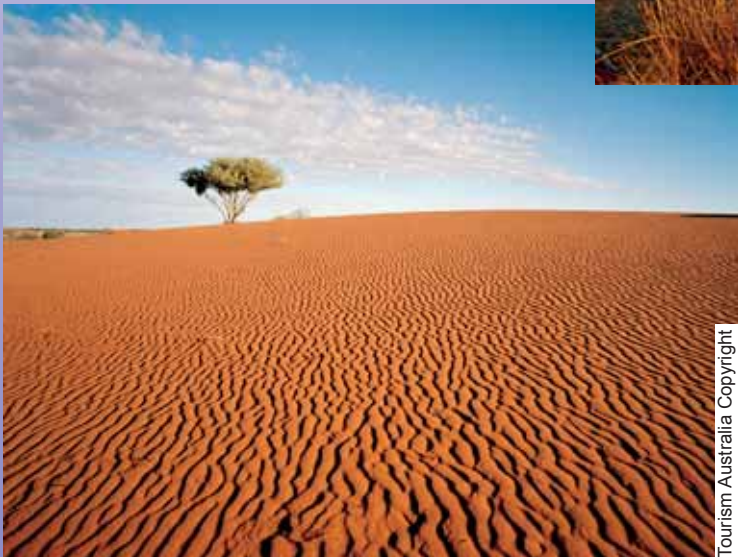
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Top left: Hoptoun Falls, Victoria  
Left: Desert dunes at Nilpena Station  
Top right: Twleve Apostles, Victoria  
Right: Great Barrier Reef  
Above: Uluru, Central Australia





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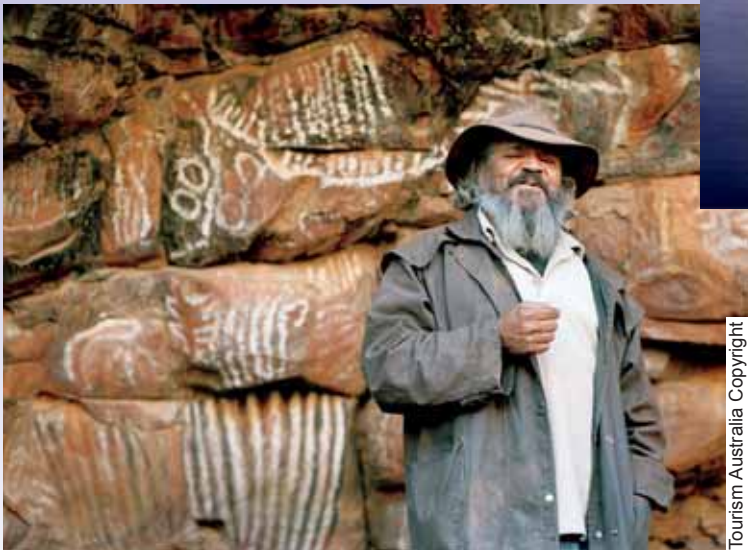
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Above: Painted boomerangs  
Below: Aboriginal rock art  
Right: Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge



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Above: Dawn face painting ceremony  
Below: Surf life savers



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## **Uluru**

Uluru (pronounced oo-loo-roo), formerly known as Ayers Rock, is the world's largest rock. It stands 1,132 feet high and measures just under six miles around the base. Uluru is located in a remote desert region in the Northern Territory. It is the eroded summit of a buried sandstone hill which extends deep into the earth. The rock appears to change colour throughout the day - from pink to red to brown to blue to violet and back again. The caves, boulders and cliffs of Uluru and smaller domes nearby play an important role in the legends of local Aborigines, Australia's first settlers (see Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, p. 21). It is now managed in partnership with the local indigenous people.

## **Sydney Opera House**

The Sydney Opera House is Australia's best known performing arts complex and was recently listed as Australia's 17th World Heritage Site.

Some of the country's best opera, theater and dance companies have performed there. Choirs, symphonies and bands also play at the Opera House. It was constructed between 1959 and 1973 and was one of the first large-scale construction projects designed using computers. It is situated on Bennelong Point, which reaches out into Sydney Harbour with the city as a backdrop.

Some people think that the Opera House looks like three sailing ships setting out to sea. The two larger "ships" contain the Concert House (seating 2,700), the Opera Theatre (seating 1,550) and a number of cafes and smaller theaters. The smallest "ship" has a restaurant. There are nearly 1,000 rooms in all. More than 2,000 precast concrete segments, like ribs, support the structure of the Sydney Opera House. The roof sections are covered with one million tiles.

## **Sydney Harbour Bridge**

The Sydney Harbour Bridge carries traffic between Sydney's north shore, the downtown area and eastern and southern suburbs. Before it opened in 1932, commuters had to travel across the harbour by ferry. The design of the bridge was an engineering achievement for its time. It remains wider and heavier than any other arch bridge in the world. The main span is about 1,650 feet long, and the crown of the arch is 430 feet above sea level. People affectionately call it the Coat Hanger because of its appearance. In 1992, a vehicular underground tunnel was opened beneath the harbour to ease congestion and to help with traffic. A popular tourist activity is to take a guided walk across the arch of the Bridge for spectacular views of Sydney Harbour.

## **Federal Parliament House**

Parliament House is the building where Australia's federal legislature meets. It sits in the summit of a low hill in Canberra, the nation's capital. The building was opened in 1988 to celebrate the bicentenary of European settlement of Australia. There are 4,500 rooms in Parliament House and more than 16 miles of internal corridors. From the air, it looks like two boomerangs meeting in their centres (see inside back cover - pictured on the \$5 note). Parliament House has beautiful marble and timber interiors made mostly from Australian materials and a large public forecourt with an Aboriginal-designed mosaic representing the desert art of central Australia. The building's most prominent feature is a flagpole 267 feet high, sitting squarely on top. The 21-by-42 foot flag flies day and night. People can see it for miles. Most of the grass-covered roofline of the building slopes downward and the public can stroll over it. From the top, visitors can look out over Lake Burley Griffin, the downtown area and the Brindabella Mountains.

# People

## Population

Like the United States, Australia welcomes immigrants from many different cultures around the world. In 2008 there were just under 22 million Australians, and about 70 per cent of the population lived in the 10 largest cities around the coast (see map 3).

**There are about 500,000 indigenous Australians: 90 per cent Aborigines, 6 per cent Torres Strait Islanders and 4 per cent of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lineage**

## Aborigines & Torres Strait Islanders

The first people to make Australia their home migrated from Asia almost 60,000 years ago. They formed many different tribes, who spoke around 200 different languages. Later immigrants called the settlers Aborigines. Aborigines were nomadic hunters and gatherers, moving from place to place in

different seasons to take advantage of food resources. In Aboriginal culture, this is called a walkabout. Aboriginal homes were generally temporary shelters, usually in bark huts or caves.

Torres Strait Islanders first settled on islands north of the mainland about 10,000 years ago. Their culture was distinct from Aboriginal culture because they came from Melanesia and settled in one place. They sailed in canoes to trade fish and agricultural products with nearby islanders.

Aborigines have very strong family ties. Most can trace their ancestors back many generations. They feel a sense of responsibility towards people whom we would identify as third or fourth cousins. Whenever someone goes through hard times, all relatives rally around to help. Many modern-day Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders now

reside in cities and towns but some still live a traditional lifestyle. They are proud of their contributions to Australian culture, especially in artwork and music.

## Later Immigrants

In 1788, the first Europeans settled in Australia from Great Britain at what later became Sydney Cove. They sailed to Australia to establish a penal colony for people from their overcrowded jails. It was a long trip by ship, taking about eight months. The colony grew slowly at first. Soon afterwards, other British people settled freely in Australia on farms that they cleared from the eucalyptus forests and range lands. They grew wheat and other crops, and raised sheep. They also found jobs in the cities as merchants and builders.

In the 1800s and early 1900s, other Europeans, mostly British and Irish, travelled to Australia as farmers and merchants. A small number of Chinese and Pacific Islanders also migrated. They worked as sugar cane cutters in the fields of northeastern Australia and later, as gold miners. After World War II ended in 1945, Australia accepted many European immigrants and many people emigrated from Italy, Greece, and the Middle East.

**Four out of 10 Australians were born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas**

Since the 1960s, Australia has encouraged immigration from all over the world. Many Asian people have settled in Australia in recent years. The majority come from Vietnam, Cambodia and Hong Kong. Overall, around 6.6 million people have immigrated to Australia since 1945.

# Religion

Australia has a long and strong tradition of religious tolerance. About 69 per cent of the population identifies itself as Christian. Of these, 27 per cent are Roman Catholic, and another 21 per cent are Anglican (similar to Episcopalian). Many other faiths are observed, including Islam, Buddhism and Judaism. About 18 per cent of the population is non-religious. In June 2008 Australia hosted World Youth Day with hundreds of thousands of young Catholic pilgrims traveling to Australia to participate.

## Dreamtime

The Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders have many stories that explain the changing of the seasons, the creation of the sun and moon, and the origin of their ancestors. Details of individual legends and ceremonies vary greatly from one part of the continent to another. Aborigines believe in a concept called the Dreamtime. The Dreamtime states that in the beginning, the earth was flat and gray. It had no mountains or rivers, and living things did not exist.

During the Dreamtime, huge creatures awoke after sleeping for ages. These beings looked like insects, plants or animals, but behaved like humans. They wandered across the barren earth looking for food and digging for water. Their tracks created the rivers and valleys, eventually creating the world as it appears today. Aborigines believe that traditional Aboriginal life came about during the Dreamtime. The spirits taught their ancestors about their tribal lands. It also told them how their descendants should behave. The teachings of the Dreamtime remain very important to Aborigines today and are reflected in traditional story telling.



# Language

Most Australians speak English. An American in Australia would have no trouble talking to people or reading signs. But some ordinary things, like school supplies, clothing, food or car parts have different names in Australia (see Education, p 29; Clothing, p. 28; Food and Drink, p. 24; and Transportation, p. 28). Australians also have a unique slang.

## Slang

### Australian Word/Expression

### American Equivalent

Arvo	Afternoon
Aussie	Australian
Barrack for	Root for (a sports team)
Beaut!	Terrific!
Bonzer bloke	Nice guy
Cri key!	Gee!
Crook	Sick
Dead set!	Really!
Dinky-di	Genuine
Fair dinkum	Honest or true
G'day, mate	Hi, friend/buddy
Give someone a fair go	Give someone a break
Have a go	Give it a try
She'll be right	It'll be okay
Ta	Thanks
Whinge	Complain
Yank	American
You right?	Do you need any help?

Some Australian items, like didgeridoos and kookaburras, are not found in the United States. These words also sound strange to American ears (see Australian Art, p. 35, and Birds, p. 16).

Around 15 per cent of Australians speak other languages, such as Italian, Greek, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Chinese with their families at home. There are over 300 languages currently spoken in Australia. Aborigines still speak around 30 native languages, but most speak English.



## Spelling

Australians spell most words the same way that Americans do. Some exceptions are listed below:

### Australian

#### OUR

Colour  
Harbour

#### RE

Centre  
Theatre

#### SE

Organise  
Realise

#### Include the 'E' With Endings

Ageing  
Judgement

#### Other

Co-ordinate  
Defence  
Tyre

### American

#### OR

Color  
Harbor

#### ER

Center  
Theater

#### ZE

Organize  
Realize

#### Exclude the 'E' With Endings

Aging  
Judgment

#### Equivalents

Coordinate  
Defense  
Tire

## Aboriginal Place Names

Some Australian place names sound strange to Americans. They were taken from Aboriginal languages, much like Americans have taken place names like "Milwaukee" and "Massachusetts" from the Native Americans. The following chart gives some Aboriginal place names.

### Aboriginal Place Names and their English Meanings

Bullumwaal VIC	Two spears
Canberra ACT	Meeting place
Coonabarabran NSW	Inquisitive person
Indooroopilly QLD	Gully of the leeches
Marrawah TAS	Gum Trees
Millngimbi NT	Mythical snake
Paringa SA	Whirlpool
Yoongarillup WA	Place where kangaroos scrape holes in the ground

From A.W. Reed, Place Names of Australia. Reed Books Pty Ltd: Frenchs Forest NSW (Australia)

# Food & Drink

Australian breakfasts used to include baked beans and spaghetti or minced meat (ground beef) on toast. Steak and eggs were also popular. Nowadays breakfast starts with fruit or juice. People also tend to eat one or more of the following: cold cereal or hot porridge (oatmeal); fried eggs; bacon or large link sausages; and toast spread with butter, jam, honey or Vegemite (see Vegemite, next page). Like Americans, adults often drink hot tea or coffee. Australians have many of the same brands of breakfast cereal as Americans, but some have slightly different names. For example, Rice Krispies are called Rice Bubbles in Australia, but taste the same.

Lunch time in Australia is very similar to the United States. Most people eat a sandwich with a piece of fruit. A hot meal might be a meat pie or sausage roll with hot chips (French fries). Those items are also typically sold at sporting events.

The evening meal is as varied as the ethnic groups that form Australian society. Many Australians still eat the traditional British supper of meat and three cooked vegetables, but the emphasis is on less gravy and fresher vegetables. Salad is widely enjoyed and a staple on most dinner tables. Most families now include rice or pasta dishes in their regular meals. Lamb is much more readily available in Australia but beef, pork and chicken are staples too. Seafood is very popular.

Wine and alcoholic beverages are popular in Australia. Australia is a large wine producer and exports wine and beer to many countries around the world. The minimum drinking age in Australia is 18.

**You can find Australian foodstuffs in many parts of the US, including beef (in hamburgers), cheese (as pizza toppings), and lamb (especially in restaurants)**

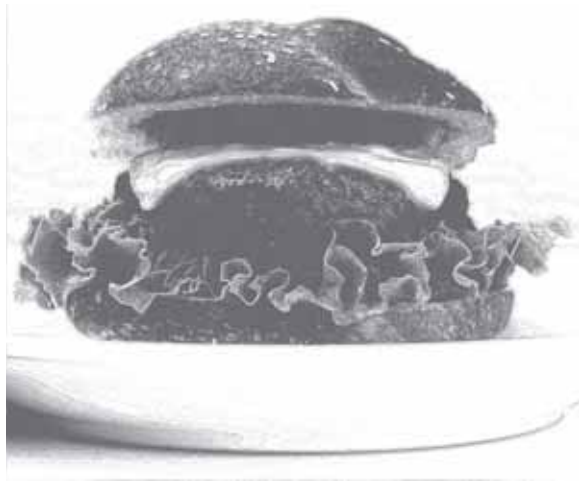
## Food & Drink Phrases

### Australian Phrase

### American Equivalent

Beetroot	Beet
Bicarbonate of soda	Baking soda
Biscuit/bikkie	Cookie
Brekkie	Breakfast
Crisps	Chips
Cuppa	Cup of tea
Fairy floss	Cotton candy
Chips (hot)	French fries
Hundreds and thousands	Sprinkles
Jam	Jelly
Jelly	Jello
Lemonade	Lemon soda/pop & Lemonade
Lolly	Candy
Ice block	Popsicle
Rockmelon	Cantaloupe
Savoury biscuit	Cracker
Scone	Biscuit
Soft drink	Soda/pop
Snag	Large sausage link
Take-away	Take-out/carry-out
Tomato sauce	Ketchup
White coffee	Coffee with cream or milk





# Fast Food

Fast food establishments, such as McDonald's, Pizza Hut and KFC, are very popular. They are not as widespread as in the United States. Burger King is also present in some parts of Australia, but it is called Hungry Jack's (although it uses the same color scheme, logo and menu as the American company).

As in the United States, many Australians love to eat hamburgers. An American might order one 'with everything' or 'with the works', while an Australian would likely ask for a hamburger 'with the lot'. Such an Australian burger would feature familiar toppings like lettuce, tomato, sauce (ketchup), cheese and bacon - as well as shredded carrot, a fried egg and a slice of beetroot.

Australian hot chips are about the same length but much thicker than French fries in the United States. They are similar to what Americans call steak fries. Some Australians like to eat them sprinkled with vinegar.



# Vegemite

Vegemite, a concentrated yeast extract, is a popular tradition in the Australian diet and high in the B group of vitamins. It is dark brown and tastes salty. People eat it as a spread on bread, toast or crackers.

Vegemite is very similar to Marmite, a British product available in some American supermarkets.

# Recipes

## Damper

Damper is an unleavened bread traditionally made by bushmen. They baked it in the hot ashes of a fire. The outside was burned, but they broke open the damper and ate only the center. Here is a modern version of the basic recipe.

---

### Damper

---

2 cups self-raising flour	1 tbsp butter
1/2 tsp salt	1 cup milk
2 tsp sugar	

Sift flour and salt. Add sugar. Rub in butter. Mix in milk to make medium soft dough. Knead lightly on board until smooth. Pat into round shape. Place on greased baking sheet and glaze with milk. Bake in hot oven, reducing heat until cooked (20 minutes). Turn out onto clean dish towel, wrap and cool. Serve with butter and jam.

## Pumpkin Scones

Scones (rhymes with John's) are called biscuits in the United States. Pumpkin scones are associated with the state of Queensland, where Australia's favorite pumpkin - the Queensland Blue - is readily available. It is similar to a giant-sized butternut winter squash. The Queensland Blue has hard, bluish-green skin, with firm, orange flesh inside. In the US, the more readily available butternut squash can be substituted in this recipe.

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### Pumpkin Scones

---

2 ozs softened butter	1 egg
1/4 cup sugar	1/4 cup milk
1 cup mashed, cooked pumpkin	2 3/4 cups self-raising flour

Preheat oven to 400° F. Lightly grease baking trays. Cream softened butter and sugar. Add egg and beat well. Add mashed pumpkin and milk. Fold in flour using fork, and mix well. Place on well-floured board or pastry sheet and gently press out to approximately 1/2" or 3/4" thickness. Cut into scone shapes using round cutter (2" diameter). Makes approximately 24.

Place on greased oven tray and brush tops with milk. Bake 10-15 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven, turn out onto clean dish towel, wrap and allow to cool slightly. Serve warm, split open and spread with butter.

## Anzac Biscuits

Anzac biscuits (cookies) are crunchy and economical. They are an Australian favourite. Anzac biscuits were created during World War I when there were egg shortages. Australians sent them in food parcels to the troops who became famous as Anzacs (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps - see p. 40). The unsweetened, desiccated coconut is available from health or Asian food stores.

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### Anzac Biscuits

---

1 cup Quaker Oats  
3/4 cup unsweetened desiccated coconut  
2 tbsp boiling water  
4 oz butter  
1 cup all purpose flour  
1 cup sugar  
1/2 tsp baking soda  
1 tbsp golden syrup (Tate & Lyle/King brands)

Preheat oven to 300° F. Lightly grease baking trays. Combine oats, coconut, flour and sugar. Combine butter and syrup in saucepan and stir over low heat until butter melts. Mix soda with boiling water; add to melted butter mixture. Stir into dry ingredients. Drop teaspoonfuls onto baking trays and press with fork. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Cool on trays for a few minutes, then carefully remove to wire racks. Store in airtight containers. Makes about 48.

## Pavlova

The Pavlova dessert has a meringue base and fresh cream and fruit topping. It is a refreshing summertime favourite. Both New Zealand and Australia claim the Pavlova as a national dish, but both countries agree that it was named after the famous Russian ballet dancer Anna Pavlova.

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### Pavlova

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4 egg whites	1 cup heavy cream
1 cup sugar	1/8 cup confectioner's sugar, if desired
3 drops vanilla extract	1 cup fruit (strawberries and sliced kiwi fruit are popular)
1/4 tsp cream of tartar	
1 pinch salt	3 tbsp passionfruit pulp

Preheat oven to 200° F. Cover baking sheet with aluminium foil, and grease foil -OR- grease 9" spring form pan. Beat egg whites with salt and cream of tartar until frothy. Gradually beat in sugar a little at a time. Continue beating until peaks are formed and sugar is dissolved. Beat in vanilla extract.

Mark 9" circle on baking sheet and spread meringue evenly within lines -OR- pile mixture into spring form pan. Make sides as vertical as possible, and create furrows with spatula to increase stability. Make slight hollow in center for filling. Bake one hour. Turn off heat and let cool at least 2 hours.

When ready to serve, whip cream until thick. Sweeten with confectioner's sugar, if desired. Spread on top of meringue. Decorate top with fruit, and drizzle with passionfruit pulp.

## Lamingtons

Lamingtons are delicious 2 inch cubes of sponge cake with a chocolate and coconut coating. They originated around 1898 in Queensland. They were named after Lord Lamington, a governor of that colony. The chocolate icing keeps the cake moist and protects it from drying out in the hot climate. Lamingtons are the most popular fund-raising item for school groups, Scouts and Girl Guides (see page 32 for more about these groups).

Bake the cake 24 hours before icing it. A slightly stale cake is easier to cut and frost, and the icing will moisten it up again. The unsweetened, desiccated coconut is available from health or Asian food stores.

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### Lamingtons

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1 pkg Duncan Hines butter cake mix	3 tbsp cocoa
2 cups powdered sugar, sifted	1 1/2 tbsp butter
4 tbsp boiling water	
2 cups unsweetened, desiccated coconut	

Day 1: Preheat oven to 375° F. Grease a 9" x 13" pan. Prepare cake mix, bake and cool as directed. Turn out on a rack, and when cold, wrap in foil and let stand in refrigerator 24 hours.

Day 2: Sift powdered sugar and cocoa into a bowl. Blend in butter and add boiling water. Mix well until smooth. Stand bowl in pan of boiling water and stir until runny. Leave bowl in hot water while dipping cake squares. Place coconut on sheet of wax paper or in large baking dish. Cut cake into 2" squares. Hold piece on fork or barbecue skewer and dip into warm icing, drain and toss in coconut to cover evenly. Place on wire rack to set. Repeat with remainder.

# Clothing

Australians dress very similarly to Americans. Depending on the climate, children wear jeans and a sweater, a sweatsuit and t-shirt, or swimwear and shorts (see Uniforms, p. 30). Business people, of course, wear suits or other tailored clothing. Australians follow many American fashion fads like wearing a baseball cap backwards and wearing jackets with American sports team logos.

## Shopping Malls

Like Americans, Australians enjoy shopping for clothing and household items in large shopping malls. Many people also like to browse or meet friends there. Shopping centers are similar to malls in the United States, with the exception that many also include supermarkets and fresh produce stands on the bottom floor.

### Clothing Phrases

Australian Phrase	American Equivalent
Alice band	Head band
Bathers/swimmers/togs	Bathing suit
Frock	Party dress
Hair clip	Barrette
Jocks	Boys' underwear
Joggers	Running shoes
Jumper	Pullover/sweater
Ladder	Run (in a stocking)
Pinafore	Jumper
Sand shoes	Sneakers
Skivvy	Turtleneck
Tracksuit	Sweatsuit
Waistcoat	Vest

# Transportation

Like Americans, Australians mostly travel around their country by car. There are, however, fewer highways because there are not as many people in Australia as there are in the United States.

Most families own one or two cars. There are four car manufacturers that produce cars in Australia for Australian conditions: Ford, Holden, Mitsubishi and Toyota.

Australians also travel by bicycle, bus or train. People who live in the Outback sometimes get around on horseback, but

almost all own motor vehicles. Commuters near Sydney Harbour can travel to work or school by ferry. In Melbourne there is a tram (trolley car) network. Australia has a wide network of airline routes connecting the major cities. Because Australia is an island, visitors have to take an aeroplane or ship to get there.

**Australians drive on the left-hand side of the road. The steering wheel is on the right**

### Transportation Phrases

Australian Phrase	American Equivalent
Bonnet	Hood
Boot	Trunk
Caravan	Trailer
Glove box	Glove compartment
Hire car	Rental car
Indicator/blinker	Turn signal
Lorry	Truck
Number plate	License plate/tag
Petrol	Gasoline
Rear vision mirror	Rear view mirror
Semi-trailer	Tractor trailer
Utility	Pickup truck
Windscreen	Windshield

# Education

Australian children start school in late January or early February and finish in mid-December. There are four terms of about 10 weeks each. School children get two-week vacations between each term in autumn (April), winter (July) and spring (September). The summer vacation is usually six weeks, starting just before Christmas. Private schools generally have slightly longer vacations than public schools. Public schools are government schools and around two-thirds of Australian school children attend a government school. Private schools are generally church (or faith-based) schools. These schools attract government funding to help them deliver their services. A non-compulsory preparatory school year for young children called pre-school is encouraged by the Government.

There are two levels of formal schooling. Students go to primary (elementary) school from prep to sixth or seventh grade, and secondary (high) school from seventh or eighth grade until 12th grade. In some states, the last two years of high school are separate, to give students better preparation for university entrance. Just over 25 per cent of Australian school children continue on to University and slightly more continue into vocational training and education. It is compulsory to attend school until at least the age of 15 or 16 (10th grade). Australia ranks very highly in the world for its literacy rate, which is around 99%.

Like in the US, students have one classroom teacher most of the time in primary school. In high school, they move from class to class and have different teachers for each subject.

## Subjects

Australian primary school children study many of the same subjects as American students. They learn reading, writing, spelling, math, science and social studies. Social studies classes include the history, geography and culture of Australia and the rest of the world, particularly Asia. Many students learn another language. There are also lessons in physical education, music and art each week.

**School buses are not yellow in Australia. Children ride regular public buses that drive along special routes before and after school**

## School Day

A typical school day for primary school students starts at 9:00 a.m. Halfway through the morning, there is a 15-minute recess, where children have a snack and go outside to play. Lunch starts around 12:30 p.m., and usually lasts for an hour. Students eat their lunch either in their classrooms or in the playground, and then play for the rest of the hour. Many schools have a "tuck shop" where students can buy hot lunch items and snacks, but most children bring their lunches from home. A typical lunch bag might have a sandwich, some fruit and a popper (juice box). There are no sit-down cafeterias in Australian schools.

After the afternoon school session, children go home at around 3:15 p.m. They do their homework or other activities. They might practice sports or a musical instrument, play with friends or watch television. Many primary school children with working parents go to an afterschool center, either at school or nearby.

## Education Phrases

### Australian Phrase

### American Equivalent

Biro	Pen
Canteen/tuck shop	Cafeteria
Corridor	Hallway
Deputy Principal	Vice principal
Drawing pins	Thumb tacks
Duster	Blackboard eraser
Go to the loo	Go to the bathroom
Maths	Math
Pinboard/notice board	Bulletin board
Posterboard	Cardboard/construction paper
Primary school	Elementary school
Secondary school	High school
Queue up	Line up
Rubber	Pencil eraser
Sticky tape	Scotch tape
Texta	Magic marker
Year 7	7th grade



## Uniforms

Most children in Australia wear school uniforms. In general, private school students must wear their uniforms, and public school students are encouraged to wear them. Each school has its own colours and styles.

The uniform for girls may be a blouse with a skirt or jumper, or a light dress. In summer they are made of cotton or other lightweight fabric. Winter uniforms are made of heavier material and worn with a sweater or blazer.

Boys wear shorts in summer and trousers in winter, both with a shirt. They also wear sweaters or blazers in cooler weather.

Many schools these days try to make the uniform more appealing to students. T-shirts are common in summer, and sweatsuits in winter. These often have the school logo or badge printed on them.

As the sun's rays are very strong in Australia, school children must wear hats when they go outside. Some hats look like baseball caps with a flap around the sides and back to protect ears and neck from sunburn.



Private school  
summer uniform



Private school  
winter uniform



Public school  
summer uniform



Public school  
winter uniform

# The Arts

Australia has a thriving arts community. Each state capital has major art museums, symphony orchestras, opera, theater companies, and libraries. In addition, the country has national ballet and opera companies. The Australian Government helps to support both creative and performing arts, including the film industry. The Government funds the national television and radio broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to support the development of Australian culture. The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) is also funded by the government to support multiculturalism - this broadcaster provides radio and television in a range of languages in support of the large migrant community. In addition there are three private national television stations and some 100 cable and satellite channels, an extensive commercial radio network and a strong community radio network. Aborigines operate both a government funded television and radio station in Central Australia.

Australians also have a strong literary tradition and an independent media sector. Storytelling has always been a part of the Australian tradition, from the dreamtime stories of the Aborigines, the bush stories of the early settlers, through to the poetry and literature of today.

"My Country" is one of the best known poems in Australia. A young Australian wrote it in the early 1900s in the form of a letter to a British friend. In the first verse, she explores her friend's favourite things about England - but in the following verses, she expresses her love for her new country, Australia. The second verse, beginning "I love a sunburnt country" is the most widely quoted.

## My Country -

By Dorothea Mackellar (1885-1968)

The love of field and coppice,  
Of green and shaded lanes,  
Of ordered woods and gardens  
Is running in your veins;  
Strong love of grey-blue distance,  
Brown streams and soft, dim skies-  
I know but cannot share it,  
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,  
A land of sweeping plains,  
Of ragged mountain ranges,  
Of droughts and flooding rains.  
I love her far horizons,  
I love her jewel-sea,  
Her beauty and her terror-  
The wide brown land for me!

The stark white ring-barked forests  
All tragic to the moon,  
The sapphire-misted mountains,  
The hot gold hush of noon.  
Green tangle of the brushes,  
Where lithe lianas coil,  
And orchids deck the tree tops  
And ferns the warm dark soil.

Core of my heart, my country!  
Her pitiless blue sky,  
When sick at heart, around us,  
We see the cattle die-  
But then the grey clouds gather,  
And we can bless again  
The drumming of an army,  
The steady, soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!  
Land of the Rainbow Gold,  
For flood and fire and famine,  
She pays us back three-fold.  
Over the thirsty paddocks,  
Watch, after many days,  
The filmy veil of greenness  
That thickens as we gaze.

An opal-hearted country,  
A wilful, lavish land-  
All you who have not loved her,  
You will not understand-  
Though earth holds many splendours,  
Wherever I may die,  
I know to what brown country  
My homing thoughts will fly.

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# Music

Music has always been an important part of Australian life, whether it be pop, classical or Aboriginal music. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Australian Chamber Orchestra are internationally recognised. Opera also has a substantial following, and Australia has produced some remarkable jazz.

Like many Americans, Australians also love country music. An annual country festival is held in Tamworth, NSW, and Australia has produced several world recognised country artists, like Keith Urban, who have become popular in the United States.

Australia is the third largest supplier of popular music songs in the English speaking world. In the 1980s and 1990s Australian bands like INXS, AC/DC, Midnight Oil, Savage Garden and the Aboriginal rock group Yothu Yindi gained world-wide popularity. More recently groups like Silverchair, Spiderbait and Powderfinger have made a name for themselves.

## National Anthem

Australia's national anthem, "Advance Australia Fair", is a version of a patriotic song written by Peter Dodds McCormick (under the pen-name Amicus). It was first performed in Sydney in 1878.

Arranged by G.S. English  
Composed by Amicus

## ADVANCE AUSTRALIA FAIR

Maestoso

The image displays a musical score for the song "Advance Australia Fair". It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The score is arranged in a grand staff format, with a treble clef for the vocal line and a bass clef for the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as "Maestoso".

AUS-TRAL- IANS ALL LET US RE- JOICE FOR WE ARE YOUNG AND FREE -- WE'VE GOL- DEN SOIL AND  
BE- NEATH OUR RAD- IANT SOUTH- ERN CROSS WE'LL TOIL WITH HEARTS AND HANDS -- TO MAKE THIS COMMON

WEALTH FOR TOIL OUR HOME IS GIRT BY SEA -- OUR LAND A- BOUNDS IN NA- TURE'S GIFTS OF  
OF OURS RE- NOWNED OF ALL THE LANDS -- FOR THOSE WHO'VE COME A- CROSS THE SEAS WE'VE

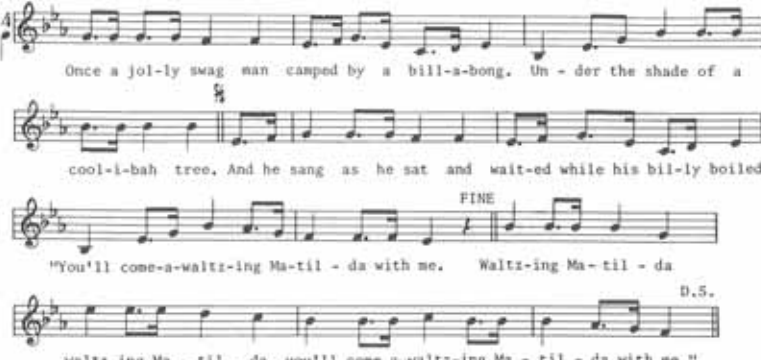
BEAU- TY, RICH AND RARE -- IN HIS- TORY'S PAGE LET EV- ERY STAGE AD- VANCE AUS- TRAL- IA FAIR  
BOUND- LESS PLAINS TO SHARE -- WITH COURAGE LET US ALL COM- BINE TO AD- VANCE AUS- TRAL- IA FAIR

"Advance Australia Fair" was chosen the national anthem in 1984. It replaced "God Save the Queen", the British national anthem, which is still played in the presence of British royalty.

## Waltzing Matilda

One of Australia's most popular poets, A.B. Banjo Paterson, wrote the ballad "Waltzing Matilda" in 1895. It is the best known Australian song in the world. Some people mistakenly believe that it is Australia's national anthem.

WALTZING MATILDA AUSTRALIAN FOLK SONG



Once a jol-ly swag man camped by a bill-a-bong. Un - der the shade of a  
cool-i-bah tree. And he sang as he sat and wait-ed while his bil-ly boiled  
"You'll come-a-waltz-ing Ma-til - da with me. Waltz-ing Ma-til - da  
waltz-ing Ma - til - da, you'll come a-waltz-ing Ma - til - da with me."

## Verses 2-4

Down came a jumbuck to drink at the billabong,  
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee,  
And he sang as he stowed that jumbuck in his tucker bag,  
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!"

Up rode the squatter, mounted on his thoroughbred,  
Up rode the troopers, one, two, three:  
"Where's that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker-bag?"  
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!"

Up jumped the swagman, sprang into the billabong.  
"You'll never catch me alive," said he.  
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong,  
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me!"

Waltzing Matilda. Music by Marie Cowan. Words by A.B. (Banjo) Paterson. Copyright © 1936, 1941, by Carl Fischer, Inc., New York. Copyrights renewed. Reprinted by permission.

## Waltzing Matilda Phrases

Australian Phrase	American Equivalent
Billabong	Watering hole formed by drying river beds
Billy	Can with wire handle used to boil tea waterover fire
Coolibah	Type of eucalyptus
Jumbuck	Large sheep
Squatter	Large-scale farmer of land owned by the government
Swag	Backpack/camp bed
Swagman	Hobo
Tucker	Food
Waltzing Matilda	Carrying a backpack

## Film

Australia has had the longest, continuous feature film industry in the world. In 1906 the film 'The Story of the Kelly Gang' was produced and ran for over 60 minutes. The industry has been relatively small, but reflects the size of the Australian population and also the difficulties of competing against the large industry in the US. In 1970 a revival of the industry through support from Government funding led to the industry producing about 25 feature films a year. Many of these have had international success such as Babe, Crocodile Dundee, Gallipoli, The Man from Snowy River, Mad Max, Strictly Ballroom and Australia. Many Australian actors and directors have become famous on the international stage. Nicole Kidman, Hugh Jackman, Cate Blanchett, Toni Collette, Geoffery Rush, Russell Crowe and Mel Gibson have all made a name for themselves in the US. Directors like Bruce Beresford, Peter Weir, Jane Campion and Baz Luhrmann also work mostly in the US. Australia has five large film studios that make films from around the world. Mission Impossible II, The Matrix and some of the latest Star Wars films were made in Australia.



# Aboriginal Culture

Aboriginal musical traditions stem from thousands of years ago, when they made the best of very sparse resources to create interesting sounds. They use their own voices and clap together boomerangs, sticks and hands. Many Aborigines also play a unique musical instrument, the didgeridoo (pronounced DID-jer-ee-DOO), particularly at ceremonies in northern Australia. The instrument was given its name by English settlers who thought it made the sounds "DID-jer-ee-DOO" when played. Similar to a wood trumpet, but shaped like a bassoon, the didgeridoo is a difficult instrument to play because the musician must breathe in while also blowing through the instrument. This skill is known as circular breathing and takes many years to master.

Artistic expression is a very important aspect of the Aboriginal culture. It can take the form of painting, dance or music. Paintings on bark, rock (on cave walls), wood or the human body are common. In Central Australia large paintings were made in the sand for important coroborees (ceremonies). Engravings and sculptures use stone, fibre, fur and leather.

## Subjects

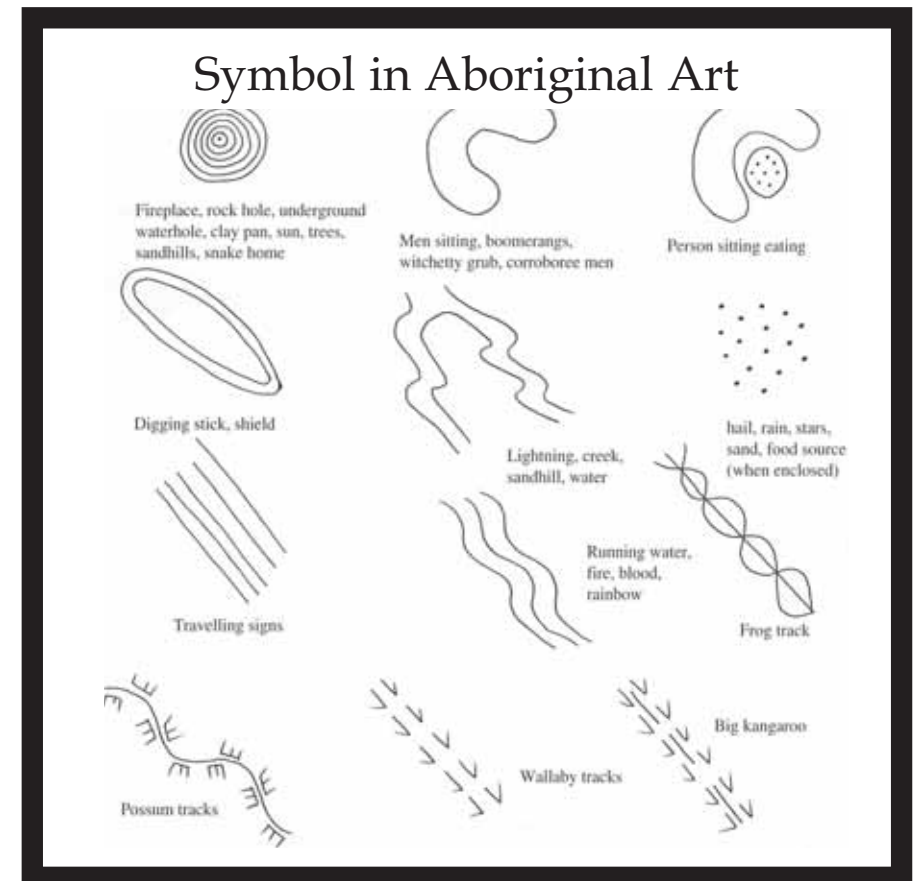
Aborigines make pictures of a wide variety of subjects. These include mythical beings, humans, birds, fish, reptiles and animal tracks. They can also be more abstract designs. Many are connected to the Dreamtime (see p. 22-23). Abstract designs often contained coded information; and only Aborigines who go through an initiation ceremony know the meaning of these designs.

## Colours

Aboriginal painters traditionally use earth colours: reds, browns, yellows, black and white. They make paints from natural ingredients such as ochre, ash and charcoal.

## Styles

Aborigines also make hand stencils on cave walls. The artist holds an object, frequently a hand, but sometimes a foot or a boomerang, against the rock. Then the artist sprays paint from the mouth as a form of stenciling. "X-ray" paintings show the internal anatomy of an animal, such as the skeleton and heart of a crocodile, fish or kangaroos. These paintings express many stories about the different animals. Until Aborigines began painting with dots on canvas in the 1970s, bark paintings with dots were the best known form of Aboriginal painting. The dots imitate the body and sand paintings that artists originally created directly on the ground. The symbols in the dot paintings represent a variety of items, including water holes, mountains, animals, tools and people. (See inside front cover for a reproduction of an Aboriginal dot painting).





# Sports

## Organised Sports

Sports are a way of life in Australia, and Australia is highly competitive at the international level in a number of sports. The country's mild climate allows people of all ages to enjoy a variety of sports throughout the year. Around one-third of all Australians are registered sports participants. Unlike in the US, there is not a strong university (college) based sports system with scholarships and training. Rather, the Government established The Australian Institute of Sport to undertake research into sport, develop new training methods and provide a training and educational base to help Australians perform at their best.

## Water Sports

Most Australians live on or near the ocean. Water sports are among the most popular forms of recreation. Swimming, surfing, scuba diving, sailing, power boating and fishing are many of the ways Australians enjoy the water. Surf lifesavers (lifeguards) patrol beaches and, if necessary, row or swim out to rescue people. More than 25,000 volunteers staff the country's Surf Lifesaving Clubs. They hold contests of speed and skill to improve their ability to react quickly and efficiently in emergencies.

Surf lifesavers have rescued more than 500,000 people in the past 80 years, with the number of rescues per season fluctuating between 8,000 and 10,000

## Football Codes

There are four popular forms of football played in Australia. While soccer is internationally known, Australian Rules Football (AFL) and rugby are less so. Australian Football, commonly known as Aussie Rules, and two codes of rugby: rugby union and rugby league are action-packed games with 18, 15 and 13 players per side respectively. The two rugby codes are somewhat similar to American football. The attacking team tries to drive the ball past a set area on the opposite side of the field. The opposing team tries to prevent this by intercepting the ball or tackling its opponents. They are played with balls that are slightly different in shape and size from American footballs.



All three games include more kicking than American football, however rugby players can only pass the ball backwards. Play is also much faster, with no huddles or time-outs taking place during the games. Aussie Rules is an aerial game where players frequently leap high off the ground to catch the ball. Despite the heavy tackling, players use little padding and no helmets.

## North American Sports

American football has a small following in Australia, but mostly as a spectator sport. Cable television stations broadcast games during football season. Baseball also has a growing fan base and more than one dozen Australians play professionally in the United States. Ice hockey is played in every capital city (except Darwin) but is still growing in popularity. Basketball is also played in Australia. Many school children play basketball on the playground and on local club teams. Many Australian players such as Luc Longley, Andrew Bogut and Lauren Jackson have played in the US leagues.

## Cricket

Cricket is also very popular. In the past, it was played mostly by men and boys. Cricketers play in the summertime on an oval field. There are two teams of 11 players each. The leather cricket ball is slightly larger and heavier than a baseball. It has one seam. The bat is round on the back side and flat on the facing side. It is about four inches

wide. There are two batsmen (batters) on the field at any one time, each with a bat in his hand. They each stand in front of a wicket, which is a pair of bails (horizontal wooden pegs) balanced on top of three vertical stakes. A wicket is located at either end of the 22-yard cricket pitch in the center of the field. The bowler (pitcher) must bowl (pitch, usually with one bounce) the ball to one batsman, who tries to hit the ball. The bowler and



**Hunting and shooting are not significant recreational activities in Australia although fishing is very popular.**

defensive players, meanwhile, try to knock off either wicket by hitting it with the ball. If this happens, the batsman who is batting at that end of the pitch is called out. He is also out if he hits a caught fly ball. All but the wicket keeper (catcher) must catch the ball with bare hands. The batsman scores a run when he changes places with the other batsman without either wicket being knocked off. A batsman can also score four runs for his team when the ball touches the boundary, or six when it flies over the fence. Every offensive player but one must be called out before the defensive team gets to bat. An innings is complete when both teams have batted. The winner is the team that scores more runs during its two innings. A 'Test' cricket game usually takes five days to play at the state and international level. A shorter version of the game, the One Day match, is limited to one innings each of 50 overs and is very popular. A shorter 20 overs game has also recently been introduced. Test Matches played over 5 days are the traditional form of the game. The players wear white or cream uniforms. Local men's and women's leagues and children's competitions frequently play one and two-day games with a single limited innings.

## Netball

Netball is Australia's most popular organised sport, as measured by registered participants. It is somewhat similar to basketball. Netballers play on a court between two goals, each with a ring but no backboard. Unlike basketball, however, players cannot dribble the ball. They move the ball up the court by passing it around. Netball is traditionally a female sport, but many men and boys now play it in community leagues.



# National Holidays

Many Australian holidays are different from those in the United States. It seems strange to American visitors that though religious holidays occur on the same dates, the seasons are reversed. For example, Christmas takes place in the summertime on December 25. Australian national public holidays are listed below:

## **New Year's Day**

Australians celebrate the New Year's Day holiday on January 1 the same way Americans do. People stay up late on December 31 with family and friends. They welcome the new year with a countdown, food and drinks. Many sing "Auld Lang Syne" when the clock strikes midnight.

## **Australia Day**

Australia's national day, Australia Day, is celebrated on January 26. This marks the date in 1788 that Europeans first settled in Australia. Captain Arthur Phillip, of the British Royal Navy, sailed into Port Jackson (Sydney Cove) with 11 ships full of convicts and guards. Phillip established the first penal colony on a site that is now in downtown Sydney, Australia's largest city (see p. 6).

## **Anzac Day**

Australians celebrate Anzac Day on April 25. On that day in 1915, troops from the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed at Gallipoli, Turkey to fight a critical battle in World War I. It was the first time Australians had fought under their own flag rather than Great Britain's. Thousands of soldiers were killed in eight months of terrible fighting. Finally they were forced to leave. Word soon spread of their courage under impossible conditions. Much of Australia's sense of national pride stems from this period in history.

The site in Turkey is an Australian Military cemetery and each year many thousands of Australians attend the dawn service at the site in Gallipoli on ANZAC Day.

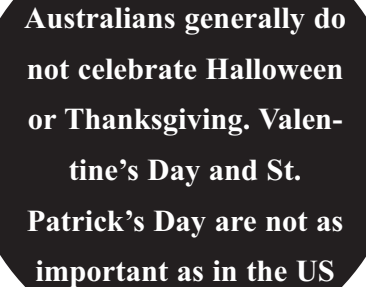
Much like on Veterans Day in the United States, Australians gather on ANZAC Day to honour those who have served. Veterans get together with active soldiers before sunrise for a "gunfire breakfast" that includes coffee and rum. Thousands of Australians gather for outdoor dawn services to honour all soldiers who have died in war since the First World War. Many attend military parades later in the morning. Afterwards, veterans and soldiers enjoy a betting game, Two-Up, traditionally played only on Anzac Day each year.

## **Good Friday, Easter & Easter Monday**

Christians celebrate the religious holiday of Easter with church services, hot cross buns, Easter baskets and egg hunts. Good Friday and Easter Monday are public holidays for all Australians. They take place in autumn in Australia. People do not associate Easter with spring flowers, as they do in the United States.

## **Queen's Birthday**

The Queen's Birthday holiday honours the birth of Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia. Her birthday is actually in April, but the British people have celebrated their monarch's birthday in June since the reign of King George V, who was born on June 3, 1865. This occasion is only commemorative in Australia and has no special traditions.



**Australians generally do not celebrate Halloween or Thanksgiving. Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day are not as important as in the US**

## Christmas

Christmas takes place on December 25, the summertime in Australia. People often spend part of Christmas Day with their families at the beach. Christmas dinner is just as likely to be salads, cold meat and seafood as the traditional meal of roast turkey and plum pudding. Santa Claus visits children in Australia, just as he does in the US. One popular Australian song states that six white boomers, or large kangaroos, pull Santa's sleigh.

## Boxing Day

Australians celebrate Boxing Day, a British holiday, on December 26. In the past, wealthy families required their servants to work on Christmas Day. As payment, they allowed the servants to celebrate the following day. They gave them boxed gifts, usually of money, to thank them for their service. The churches also distributed money from poor boxes on Boxing Day. Today everyone simply enjoys an extra day off in the summer. Outdoor events, especially sports, are a favourite past-time. Australia's biggest yacht race begins on Boxing Day. The yachts sail more than 600 miles from Sydney, NSW to Hobart, TAS. Thousands of spectators relax in sailboats on Sydney Harbour to watch the start of the race. A 'Test Series' cricket match also begins on Boxing Day in Melbourne.

# Flag

The Australian flag comprises three distinct parts: the Southern Cross, the Commonwealth Star and the Union Jack. The background of the flag is blue. On the right-hand side are the five white stars that make up the Southern Cross constellation, as seen in the skies of the southern hemisphere. Four of the stars have seven points, and one has five.

The large white star in the bottom left-hand corner has seven points, one for each of the six states and one for the territories. This symbolic star is called the Commonwealth Star.

In the upper left-hand corner is the Union Jack, Great Britain's flag. Australia has kept the Union Jack in its flag as a reminder of where many of the early settlers came from and because Australia is a member of the British Commonwealth. (See inside back cover for photograph of the Australian flag.)

# Coat of Arms

Australia is also represented by a coat of arms, which contains a red kangaroo, an emu and golden wattle blossoms. These symbols are widely accepted as Australia's national animal, bird and flower. The Commonwealth Star is on top. The coat of arms also has a shield which displays each of the states' emblems. (See inside back cover for an illustration of the Australian coat of arms.)

The coat of arms is used by the Commonwealth of Australia to identify its authority and property. It belongs to the Commonwealth, and in general, is for official use only.

# Currency

Decimal currency was introduced in Australia in 1966, replacing pounds, shillings and pence. The major unit is called the Australian dollar, made up of 100 cents. The value of the Australian dollar compared to the US dollar fluctuates. This is called the exchange rate, and it changes from day to day.

Australian coins are minted with these values: 5, 10, 20, 50 cents and, \$1 and \$2. Originally there were 1 and 2 cent coins, but these are no longer made. Australians do not have special names for their coins, as Americans do. For example, the 5 cent coin is not a nickel, but simply a 5-cent piece. All coins have a likeness of the Queen on the front. The reverse side of each coin depicts animals unique to Australia, except for the \$2 piece, which shows an Aboriginal elder (for examples see Animals, p. 13 and Aborigines, p. 21).

Bills are printed in 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 dollar values. Australians call them notes. Each note is a different size and colour, with the lower values being smaller in size. Each depict personalities or themes of Australian historical interest. All of Australia's notes are printed on a plastic material called polymer, with lots of colours and a hologram to prevent counterfeiting. These notes last longer than the previous paper ones because they are harder to tear or wrinkle. (See inside back cover for-photograph of Australian currency.)

# Stamps

Australia's stamps are colourful and among other things, they feature themes from Australia's natural environment, showcase famous Australians and Australian life.

## Australian Coins

<b>Coin Value</b>	<b>Image on Reverse</b>
5c	Echidna
10c	Lyrebird
20c	Platypus
50c	Kangaroo & Emu
\$1	5 Kangaroos
\$2	Aborigine



# Resource List

## ***Australian Catalogue Company***

146 Riverview Park Rd  
Jackson, GA 30233  
Toll Free: (1-800) 808-0938  
Website: [www.aussiecatalog.com](http://www.aussiecatalog.com)

## ***Koala Books of Canada Ltd***

14327-95A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5N 0B6  
CANADA  
Ph: (780) 452-5149  
Email: [jcarolan@nucleus.com](mailto:jcarolan@nucleus.com)

## ***Australian Tourist Commission***

2049 Century Park East  
Suite 1920  
Los Angeles CA 90067  
Ph: (800) 369-6863  
Website: <http://www.australia.com>

## ***Australia Stamp Agency in North America***

1 Unicover Center  
Cheyenne, WY 82008-0010  
Tel: (307)771-3000

## ***Australian Products Company***

3080 Neal Ave  
San Jose, CA. 95128  
Order line: (888) 422-9259  
Website: [www.aussieproducts.com](http://www.aussieproducts.com)

## **Useful Websites:**

Australian Federal Government  
<http://www.australia.gov.au>

Australian Prime Minister  
<http://www.pm.gov.au>

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
<http://www.dfat.gov.au>

Embassy of Australia, Washington, D.C.  
<http://www.usa.embassy.gov.au>

Australian Film Commission  
<http://www.afc.gov.au>

Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
<http://www.abc.net.au>

Australian Institute of Sport  
<http://www.ais.org.au>



Coat of Arms



Australian Flag



\$5.00 Note



\$10.00 Note



\$20.00 Note



\$50.00 Note



\$100.00 Note





*Cover images courtesy of Tourism Australia*