



AUSTRALIA BY RAIL, ROAD AND SEA

Cater for the two in three UK visitors making a repeat trip with **Lina Mollohli's** suggestions for alternative journeys

Australia is an awfully big place – so big, you'll probably need to come back a few times to see it all.

But with the rise of remote work allowing clients to do their jobs from anywhere, and short sabbaticals permitting more than two weeks' off duty, there's no better time to discover Australia's pristine coastal hideaways and wonderful and wacky wildlife.

And Australia's appeal endures: according to Tourism Australia, a whopping 70% of the 537,000 UK visitors (aged 15+) in 2022

were returning to the country.

For clients seeking to delve deeper into the Australian experience beyond the well-trodden paths, we've picked out three lesser-known journeys – one by rail, one by road and the other by sea – that promise adventures as thrilling as they are authentic.

From rugged outback ranches to cultural hotspots and offbeat culinary delights, these treasures invite second-time visitors to unearth a new side of Australia. And the best part? There's still plenty more to come back for.



LIKE THIS?

THE GHAN

Traversing a whopping 1,850 miles, this south-north railway connects the vibrant southern city of Adelaide with the terracotta landscapes of Alice Springs before arriving in tropical Darwin. Passengers on the 54-hour journey are treated to an immersive experience as the train's panoramic windows unveil mesmerising scenery, with off-train excursions such as biking and Indigenous experiences.

INDIAN PACIFIC

WHAT IS IT? Spanning 2,700 miles from the Indian Ocean in Perth to Sydney, the west-east Indian Pacific train takes four days and is the world's second-longest railroad.

WHY GO? On this transcontinental passage, passengers are treated to the floral Avon Valley before heading through the dusty Nullarbor plains (with a quirky stop at the ghost town of Cook). The train also chugs through the hilly majesty of the Flinders Ranges and the Blue Mountains. But the Indian Pacific offers more than just breathtaking scenery. From mouthwatering meals inspired by the regions the train passes through to immersive off-train experiences in towns like Broken Hill, the vibrant city of Adelaide and the boutique wineries of the Barossa Valley, passengers get a comprehensive view of the diverse cultures and pioneering communities that shape Australia's identity.

BOOK IT: Journey Beyond offers a three-night trip from £1,385 for a Gold Single cabin, travelling from Sydney to Perth, including meals, fine wines and off-train experiences. journeybeyond.com

TRY THIS





LIKE THIS?

GREAT OCEAN ROAD

Renowned for its sweeping views and natural wonders, the Great Ocean Road is a 150-mile stretch of chicanes and coastal beauty. Meandering along the southeastern edge of the continent, the road passes a series of stunning landmarks, including the majestic Twelve Apostles rock formations, the tranquil Great Otway National Park, and the sleepy seaside towns of Lorne and Apollo Bay.

THE GIBB RIVER ROAD

WHAT IS IT? This challenging 410-mile route is a magnet for intrepid clients seeking a true outback experience. Connecting Derby in the west with Kununurra in the east, clients will drive through ancient geological wonders, from cascading waterfalls and dramatic gorges to hidden freshwater pools teeming with life.

WHY GO? Travellers on the Gibb River Road can spy on freshwater crocodiles at Windjana Gorge National Park, fish along the remote waterways of Bell Gorge, and cool off in private oases such as Emma Gorge and Galvans Gorge. Cultural enthusiasts can visit remote cattle stations, including El Questro and Home Valley Station, or explore the intricate Indigenous Australian art of dot painting. As the sun sets, clients will find there's no better time or place to stargaze than under the outback skies in this serene wilderness.

BOOK IT: Inspiring Travel offers an 11-night Iconic Gibb River Self Drive trip from £4,399 per person, including UK flights, accommodation and car hire.

inspiringtravel.co.uk



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LIKE THIS?

QUEENSLAND

Queensland is renowned for its sun-kissed coastal cruising. Sailing routes allow for dives at the Great Barrier Reef to discover a kaleidoscope of marine biodiversity and vibrant coral under the waves. The bustling hubs of Cairns and Port Douglas combine history with lively attractions, while the Whitsunday Islands offer quiet coves and powdery white-sand beaches to unwind on.

KIMBERLEY

WHAT IS IT? For clients keen to delve deeper into Australia on their second visit, the Kimberley is a largely treasure trove in the northwest. The area is home to just 40,000 people and doesn't have a single traffic light.

WHY GO? The Kimberley's coast is dotted with 2,600 islands and is rich in wildlife, from basking crocodiles to breaching whales. One highlight is a visit to Montgomery Reef, where the ebb and flow of the tides reveals an aquarium-like array of corals and marine life, while the same tidal phenomenon creates the Horizontal Falls. Clients can also discover the soaring cliffs of Raft Point, adorned with ancient Indigenous rock art, and explore the stunning geology of the Buccaneer Archipelago – site of rock formations, peaceful peninsulas and hidden coves.

BOOK IT: APT offers an 11-day Kimberley Coastal Expedition cruise from £8,995 per person, based on two sharing, including experiences in 18 destinations and daily excursions by Zodiac, departing on June 21, 2024.

aptouring.co.uk



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