

ULURU- KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

Ancient rock formations soar hundreds of metres into the desert sky, surrounded by the Red Centre's unique wildlife and the magic of the Anangu people's Tjukurpa.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park expands across more than 311,000 acres of Australia's desert outback and is home to two of the world's most iconic rock formations. Walking around the base of Uluru, you will see expansive rock faces of arkosic sandstone rise up to 348 metres above the red desert sand.

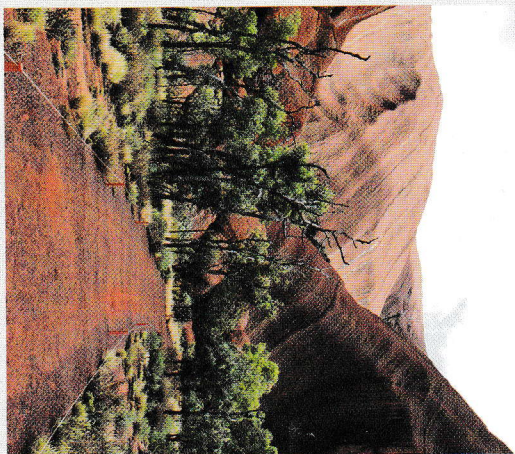
Often underestimated, the 36 domed heads of Kata Tjuta offer an experience in the true cultural significance of this red land. A guided tour will provide insight into the geology, resilient flora and fauna that seek refuge amongst the domes as well as stunning landscapes.

The park is never more alive than in the hours of sunrise and sunset. Watch Uluru and Kata Tjuta transform from grand grey silhouettes to a masterpiece of rich red hues as the light of the sun hits it. Or see the vibrant panorama of the outback lavishly bathed in the colours of sunset.

National Park
OPENING HOURS

Hours are subject to seasonal change

DEC, JAN, FEB	5am - 9pm
MAR	5.30am - 8.30pm
APR	5.30am - 8pm
MAY	6am - 7.30pm
JUN, JUL	6.30am - 7.30pm
AUG	6am - 7.30pm
SEP	5.30am - 7.30pm
OCT	5am - 8pm
NOV	5am - 8.30pm



DISTANCES FROM RESORT

- 20km** to Uluru :: 35 minutes
- 53km** to Kata Tjuta :: 47 minutes
- 8km** to Ayers Rock (Connellan Airport) :: 12 minutes
- 450km** to Alice Springs :: 4 1/2 hours
- 306km** to Kings Canyon :: 3 1/2 hours



ENTRY FEE

The entry fee for the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park is \$25, this park pass is valid for three consecutive days. For those staying a little longer an annual pass is available for \$32.50.

Entry is free for children under 16 years of age. Tickets can be purchased at the National Park entry station. Most tours do not include this fee, so please check with your tour operator.

WALKS + MAPS

You will receive a map and information on the walks at Uluru and Kata Tjuta with your National Park entry ticket. For more information visit the Tour & Information Centre in the Resort Town Square or the Cultural Centre within the National Park.

The most popular walk is the Uluru Base Walk which allows you to fully appreciate the natural and cultural beauty of Uluru. Start and finish from the Mala carpark, this walk is a 10.6 km loop and takes approx. 3.5 hrs.

NATIONAL PARK RANGER GUIDED WALK

Free guided walks run daily from the base of Uluru. Guided along a shaded track, the Rangers tell the story of the Mala (rufous hare wallaby) people, and describe the history and traditions associated with Uluru, including traditional and contemporary Anangu life and culture, rock art and the management of the park.

*Departs daily 8am
Meet at Mala Carpark
Duration 1.5 hours*

GETTING AROUND

Uluru Express offers a scheduled transfer service to and from Ayers Rock Resort and the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and picks up from all Hotels and the Campground. Hiring a car is also a great option if you're looking to experience the Red Centre at your own pace. For more information on both options refer to the Tours & Experiences section in this guide or visit the Tour & Information Centre at the Resort Town Square.

CULTURAL CENTRE

Visit the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park's Cultural Centre first to learn more about the history and culture of the local Anangu people. Grab a visitor guide to further enhance your experience.

*Open daily 7am - 6pm
Phone 08 8956 1128
environment.gov.au/parks/uluru*

ULURU ABORIGINAL TOURS

Uluru Aboriginal Tours is an Anangu owned and operated guide company that offers private, family, group, media and corporate touring options.

*Phone 0447 878 851
uluruboriginaltours.com.au*

ININTI CAFE & SOUVENIRS

Enjoy light refreshments or a main meal with a magnificent view of Uluru. Ininti offers a selection of souvenir gifts, books, videos and clothing.

*Open daily 7am - 5pm
Closed Christmas,
New Year's Day and June 30*

MARUKU

Displaying traditionally crafted punu (wooden) tools and artifacts, paintings, jewellery, pottery and other crafts from Anangu artists in the Central Western Desert region.

*Open daily 7.30 am - 5.30 pm
Phone 08 8956 2558
maruku.com.au*

The National Park is a World Heritage area, please ensure that you stay on marked paths, take notice of signs and not take rocks or soil as souvenirs.

Help protect this place for future generations.



SAFETY TIPS

- Always take a good supply of drinking water with you
- Wear sturdy walking shoes
- Wear a wide brimmed hat
- Wear loose, cool clothing
- Wear sunscreen
- Do not leave the designated tracks
- Walk in the cooler parts of the day

DEHYDRATION

Visitors to Central Australia should be conscious of the hot climate and its effect on the body. Carry and drink at least one litre of water per hour when you are engaging in outdoor activities. If you are undertaking strenuous activities you will need to consume additional water at regular intervals.

TO CLIMB OR NOT TO CLIMB

Aboriginal traditional owners would prefer visitors not to climb Uluru. Anangu have a responsibility to teach and safeguard visitors to their land. What visitors call 'the climb' is of great spiritual significance to the local Anangu. The climb is not prohibited, but we ask that you will choose to respect local Aboriginal law and culture by not climbing Uluru.

The path of the climb is associated with important Mala ceremonies. Anangu believe that during the time when the world was being formed, the Uluru climb was the traditional route taken by Mala men when they arrived at Uluru.

Anangu have a duty to safeguard visitors to their land. They feel great sadness if visitors to their land are killed or injured. As such, traditional owners would prefer that as guests to their land, visitors will respect Anangu law and culture by not climbing.

The climb is physically demanding. Do not attempt if you have high or low blood pressure, heart problems, breathing problems, a fear of heights, or you are not reasonably fit.

The climb is closed where temperature, wind or other weather conditions dictate and is always closed during the hot summer months Dec, Jan, Feb after 8am.

The climb may also be closed for cultural reasons. To find out if the climb is open enquire at your hotel reception or at the National Park entry station.

We encourage you to think about the other great ways to experience Uluru - taking a cultural tour or dot painting workshop, a ranger-guided tour or one of our many walks to discover the many surprising natural wonders of this landscape. Visit the Cultural Centre first and find out just what's in store for you at Uluru.

VALLEY OF THE WINDS



SUNSET VIEWING
To Kaitulkatjara and WA border (Docker River)

WALPA GORGE

KATA TJUTA
DUNE VIEWING
Sunrise and sunset

Yulara/Uluru to Kata Tjuta - 50 kilometres

Kata Tjuta

PARK ENTRY STATION

Connellan Airport

- sealed road
- - - unsealed road
- - - national park boundary
- Yulara (Ayers Rock Resort) area

SUNSET VIEWING
CULTURAL CENTRE



Uluru

TALINGURU NYAKUNYTJAKU
Sunrise and sunset



0 5 10 km



LASSETER HIGHWAY

Erdundda 241 km
Alice Springs 443 km

Yulara (resort)



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Australian Government
Designed by In Graphic Detail

WILDLIFE BUGS + BIRDS

Despite the often harsh climate, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is home to hundreds of different animal and bird species. One of the best things about a visit here is to see some of this wildlife in their natural habitat.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park has 21 species of native mammals, over 200 species of birds, 73 species of reptiles and literally thousands of invertebrate species including ants, spiders and bugs.

Some of the most commonly known and found are listed below, but for a more comprehensive look at what you could see while you're here, stop by the Visitors Centre located near Desert Gardens Hotel.

Mammals

SPINIFEX HOPPING MOUSE

Anangu :: tarkawara

Tarkawara are one of the animals you're most likely to see if you wander along tracks around the Resort at night. Their long legs, tufted tail and hopping gait are distinctive. Tarkawara are family animals, living in communal burrows.

They like the cool damp underground air that helps them preserve valuable moisture. Tarkawara do not drink water but get all the moisture they need from the seeds and plant shoots they eat - strategies that help them survive in a harsh dry environment.

BRUSH-TAILED POSSUM

Anangu :: wayuta

In the cities, these little possums like to nest in tree hollows or house roofs, but both of these are in short supply at Uluru. Wayuta once lived here in a few large trees, in caves and even in termite mounds, but they have now disappeared. They are an important Tjukurpa animal to the Anangu.

RED KANGAROO

Anangu :: malu

The enduring symbol of Australia is the kangaroo. The deserts of Australia have the largest - the Malu - with males two metres long from nose to tail tip, they bound across the open plains. At a top speed of about 60 km/ph a big red male can leap eight metres horizontally and three metres vertically. Females are smaller and often a blue-grey colour.

MULGARA

Anangu :: murta

Although only the size of a small guinea pig, Murta is one of the top predators of the spinifex country. It searches at night for prey of rats, mice, reptiles and large invertebrates. The young are carried in the mother's rudimentary pouch or ride on her back when they grow older. Murta spend their days in burrows with lined nesting chambers.

DINGO

Anangu :: papa inura



The dingo is the largest land predator in Australia. Scientists believe it descends from Asian dogs arriving in Australia about three and a half thousand years ago. It became a camp dog for Aborigines and also spread into the wild. Papa inura is a hunter but also scavenges dead animals and even feeds on insects and plants. Papa inura cannot bark but their howls sometimes penetrate still desert nights.



RUFUS HARE-WALLABY

Anangu :: mala

The Mala is a small wallaby that lives amongst spinifex, digging trenches or burrows beneath the tanpl hummocks to escape the summer heat. Once common, it disappeared from Uluru and Central Australia after European settlement. Changing fire-burning patterns created unsuitable habitat; this, along with introduced predators, probably caused its disappearance. Anangu are keen to reintroduce it once the environment has recovered and introduced predators are controlled. Approximately 30 Mala have been re-introduced into a Mala paddock to build the population. The Mala is an important part of the Uluru creation stories known as Tjukurpa.

Invertebrates

ANTS

Anangu :: minga

While mammals, reptiles and birds may be hard to see, ants are everywhere. They often have well-ravelled trails. No one knows exactly how many species live in Australia's arid zone but they probably number in the thousands. Like termites, they're an important part of the desert ecosystem. They are a source of food for some animals, such as the Ngyvari (thorny devil) and Tjilkamata (echidna), and they, like termites, aerate and turn over the soil. Some species also help to spread seeds.

BLOWFLY

Anangu :: pumpumpa

Flies have a bad name. They can be annoying, spread disease and remind us of horrible sights and smells. But they do have their place. They and their maggot young clean up dead animals and other rotting matter. Flies also provide food for many other animals.

KATYDID

Katydids are often heard but not seen. As they are a good meal for other animals, they employ camouflage to match their favourite food plants.

Related to grasshoppers, if discovered they can jump with strong hind legs. Their strong plant-cutting jaws are a last line of defence, at least against spiders and other animals their own size.



ANTS

Reptiles

GREATER DESERT SKINK

Anangu :: tjakura

Tjakura are the most abundant of the lizards at Uluru-Kata Tjuta with about 29 species found here. They have shiny scales and most will drop their tails when attacked. The twitching tail attracts the attacker, allowing the skink, minus tail, to sneak away. The tail later regrows. The Tjakura makes a burrow with an entrance under a shrub or grass clump. Unlike most skinks, it can be active at night.

WOMA PYTHON

Anangu :: kuniya

Is a large nocturnal snake that can grow 2.7 metres. It lives in burrows on the sand plains and will take over burrows made by more efficient diggers – ones with feet and claws. Imagine trying to dig a burrow with no hands or feet and you'll see why these snakes look for pre-built homes. Kuniya suffocates its prey of small mammals with its coils before extending its jaw to swallow them. The Kuniya is not poisonous and is not a threat to people.

THORNY DEVIL

Anangu :: nyiyari

This lizard looks frightening but the spines, though sharp, are harmless. The only thing that need fear them are the several types of ants that form its diet. The thorny devil sits beside an ant trail and snaps up each ant that passes. The Nyiyari can drink with its feet. It places them in a puddle and water moves up by capillary action along grooves to the corner of its mouth.



Thorny Devil

PERENTIE

Anangu :: *ngintaka*

At 2 metres long, the Ngintaka is Australia's largest, and the world's second largest lizard - only surpassed by the Komodo Dragon of Indonesia. Adult perenties have few enemies as they can defend themselves with a lashing tail, slashing claws, sharp teeth and a scary hiss! It's a fearsome predator to small animals, seizing them with curved teeth and shaking them or bashing them against objects to kill them. Fortunately they leave people alone.

MULGA SNAKE

Anangu :: *liru*

Liru means poisonous snake in one of the Anangu languages. Liru features prominently in the Tjukurpa creation stories. There are eight different types of Liru at Uluru-Kata Tjuta. Most are small and mildly venomous. But beware of the largest Liru, the Mulga or King Brown Snake. It is very dangerous. If it bites it hangs on, injecting large amounts of toxic venom. Mulga snakes have their place in nature, eating other snakes, rodents and lizards. They hunt by day and on warm nights.



Mulga Snake

UNINVITED
guests

Due to the ever changing climate and natural surroundings we operate in, a large variety of insects and small animals may be seen and experienced around the Resort. To minimise ants and mice entering your room we ask you to store any food items in your minibar refrigerator provided in room. During summer flies can be extremely persistent. For your comfort, especially whilst sightseeing, we strongly recommend the use of insect repellent and fly nets, these items are available for purchase at the supermarket and most Resort stores.

BIRDS

This seemingly harsh landscape plays host to over 200 different bird species, whether dwelling here year-round or offering seasonal appearances along their migratory route. Ayers Rock Resort invites you to partake in the joys of discovering some of the "local species". Keep your ears open and eyes peeled, as you may come across the following species of birds on your adventures through the National Park and as you move around the Resort.

5 tips for successful bird watching in the Red Centre.

1. Schedule bird watching trips for either the early part of the morning or at dusk.
2. Natural and man-made watering holes and wetland areas are terrific spots to monitor birding activity. Also keep an eye out for food sources such as flowering shrubs.
3. Listen out for birdcalls and other markers indicative of bird presence.
4. Study the many species you are likely to encounter prior to going out into the field.
5. Play it safe when venturing into the outback - observe National Park guidelines, adhere to designated walking trails and carry adequate water and other supplies.

WESTERN BOWERBIRD

Anangu :: *lkarka, tingkarkara*

This is a medium-sized stocky bowerbird with a rounded head and rather long neck. Adults are mainly dark on the head, neck and upper body, heavily marked with buff to rufous spots. The yellowish underbody has reddish scalloping. Males have a pink nuchal crest, smaller in females. The bill is slightly down-curved, hooked at the tip. Long legs are feathered at the top, looking like warm trousers.

Western Bowerbirds are found in open riverine woodland and shrub thickets in arid zones, in rocky gorges and ranges, near water. They also visit gardens, parks and camping areas.





Black-breasted Buzzard

BLACK-BREASTED BUZZARD

Anangu :: kalaya katapungku

The Black-breasted Buzzard is a large dark raptor (bird of prey) with a very short, square-tipped tail. Long feathers on the nape may be raised in a short crest. White 'bull's eye' marks are seen under the wings, which are long and 'fingered' in flight. The breast is sandy-brown



The Crimson Chat is a small bird with a short down-curved bill. Adult males are dark brown above with a brilliant red crown, breast and rump. They have a black mask around the eye and a white throat. Adult females and juveniles are much paler, brown above with a white throat and pinkish below. Chats, unlike most small birds, walk rather than hop, and are most often seen on or near the ground.

Crimson Chats are found in semi-arid and arid regions mainly dominated by open shrub lands, dunes, plains or grasslands.

Black-breasted Buzzards are found in lightly timbered plains, open country and tree-lined waterways through inland Australia and in semi-arid or arid regions.

GREY-FRONTED HONEYEATER

Anangu :: pitunkura, mityka, tiru-tiru

The Grey-fronted Honeyeater is a medium-small pale grey-brown honeyeater with a distinctive yellow tuft behind its eye. It also has yellow to olive wing patches and tail panels. It is pale grey below, darker olive brown above and has a long curved black bill. Young birds are paler with more yellow colouring and a yellow gape (open bill). It has a fast, undulating flight and is seen either singly, in pairs or small flocks in flowering trees and shrubs.

The Grey-fronted Honeyeater is found in a wide range of wooded habitats, usually near water. It is often found in mangroves and woodlands or dense forests along waterways. It can also be found in mallee, spinifex woodlands, low dense shrublands, heaths and saltmarshes, as well as in monsoon forests or rainforests in the Top End. It is common in parks, gardens and street trees in urban areas as well as on farms and in remnant vegetation along roadsides.

Grey-fronted Honeyeater



SLATY-BACKED THORNBILL

Anangu :: nytiru, yiru, tjintu-tjintu

Very much a "birdwatcher's bird" only experts find them easily and even then careful scrutiny is needed to separate them from the other two species they often associate with, the Chestnut-rumped and Inland Thornbills. The plain grey breast, a feature they share in common with both Chestnut

rumped and even juvenile Inland Thornbills in some places, is easy to see, but the diagnostic streaked crown is not. A couple of their calls are quite distinctive, but much of the time they sound remarkably like either Chestnut-rumped or Inland Thornbills.

The Slaty-backed Thornbill prefer mallee with a varied shrub layer such as *Acacia*, *Cassia*, *Eremophila* and *Dodonea* which unfortunately are regarded by some people as "woody weeds".



SPLENDID FAIRY-WREN

Atangu :: mirilyirilyi

The breeding plumage of the male is predominantly blue, varying from cobalt-blue in the east of its range to violet-blue in the west. It has black bands at the base of the tail (absent in the violet-blue birds), across the breast and from the beak, through the eyes to join a band across the back of its neck. Its crown and cheek patches are paler blue. Wings and long tail are brown with a blue wash.

His beak is black and his legs and feet are brown-grey. In non-breeding plumage, called eclipse, he is very similar to the female, being pale brown above and buff to white underneath although he retains the blue wash on wings and tail. The female does not have the blue wash on her wings, but does have a reddish-tan line from beak to eye that extends into a ring around her eye. Her beak is reddish-tan.

These birds live in arid to semi-arid areas, in mostly dense shrub lands or woodlands of acacia, and mallee eucalypt with dense shrubs.

SPINFEX PIGEON

Atangu :: ipuru, kataraji

The Spinfex Pigeon measures from 20 - 24 centimetres (8 to 9.6 inches) and have plumage that is rusty-coloured and blends into the red soils of the arid areas. They also have a bright red facial patch around the eye with a ring of black and grey facial patches. The pigeons have black striations on their wings. The sexes are difficult to distinguish. Their flight is low and fast, often flipping and gliding in the flight. Their call is a high-pitched coo or a deep "coo-r-r-r".

The Spinfex Pigeon is permanently found in the arid areas of north-western, northern, eastern and central Australia. Generally they live in stony areas with low woodlands and spinfex grasses. They are nomadic and terrestrial. They are often found in pairs or groups.



Spinfex pigeon



Splendid Fairy-wren

Thanks to BirdLife Australia for their content contribution and images. www.birdlife.org.au

GEOLOGY

THE MAKING OF ULURU AND KATA TJUTA

Anangu know how Uluru and Kata Tjuta were formed. This knowledge comes from Tjukurpa, the stories and lore that explain and govern about Kata Tjuta, is sacred and cannot be explained. Geologists have their own explanation. Read the brief scientific description on how Uluru and Kata Tjuta were formed.

CREATING THE FANS

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Around 550 million years ago the Petermann Ranges to the west of Kata Tjuta were taller than they are now. Rainwater flowing down the mountains eroded sand and rock and dropped it in big fan shapes on the surrounding plain. One fan had mainly water smoothed rocks. The other fan was mainly sand. Both fans became kilometres thick.

PRESSING THE FANS

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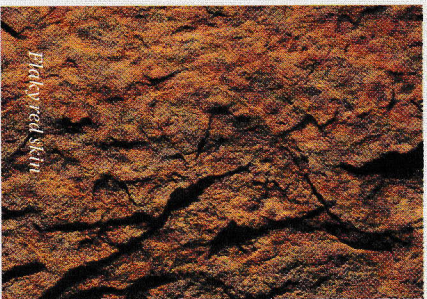
Later, 500 million years ago, the whole area became covered in sea. Sand and mud fell to the bottom of the sea and covered the seabed, including the fans. The weight of the new seabed turned both it and the fans beneath into rock. The rocky fan became conglomerate rock. The sand fan turned into sandstone.

FOLDING AND TILTING

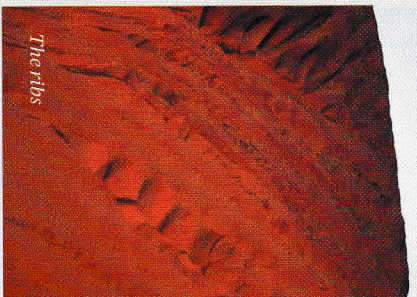
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About 400 million years ago, the sea had disappeared and the whole of Central Australia began to be subjected to massive forces. Some rocks folded and tilted. The rocky fan tilted slightly. The sand fan tilted 90 degrees so the layers of sandstone almost stood on end.

Multipillar Waterhole



Flaked red skin



The ribs

THE SHAPING OF ULURU AND KATA TJUTA

From a distance, Uluru looks smooth and featureless. But up close its face is weather-beaten - pitted with holes and gashes, ribs, valleys and caves. To Anangu, these features are related to the journeys and actions of ancestral beings across the landscape. These stories, known as Tjulkurpa, tell about the travels and actions of Kuninya (Woma python), Liru (poisonous snake), Mala (rufous hare-wallaby) and Lungkata (Blue-tongue lizard). Geologists have different explanations about how these features formed.

WEARING AWAY

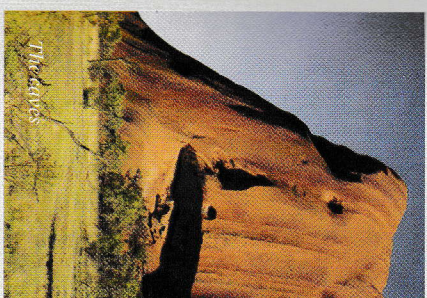
Over the last 300 million years, the softer rocks have eroded away, leaving the parts of the old fans exposed. Kata Tjuta is a hard part of the old rocky fan. Uluru is part of the sandstone nearly vertical. The area around Uluru and Kata Tjuta was covered in windblown sand plains and dunes 30,000 years ago. Uluru, like Kata Tjuta, is the tip of a huge slab of rock that continues below the ground for possibly 5-6 kilometres.

FLAKY RED SKIN

Close up, much of the surface of Uluru is flaky red with grey patches. The flakes are bits of rock that are left after water and oxygen in the air have decayed minerals in the rest of the rock. The red is the rusting of the iron in the arkose. The grey is the original colour of the arkose. You can see the grey rock, which is not rusted, inside the caves.

THE RIBS

Some layers of arkose, the rock that makes up Uluru, are softer than others and wear away more quickly. This leaves Uluru's characteristic parallel ribs or ridges.



The caves



Carved out by water

THE DOMES

When the huge slab of rock that is Kata Tjuta was being folded and faulted, vertical joints or fractures cracked through the rock. Water seeped down the cracks and over millions of years the rock eroded away - grain by grain, pebble by pebble, to form valleys and gorges that split the rock slab into blocks. Curved cracks called topographic joints formed on the surface of the blocks. Weathering and erosion wore away the rocks above the cracks to produce the rounded domes we see today. Kata Tjuta, the Anangu name for the collection of domes, means "many heads".

THE CAVES

There are many types of caves at Uluru - those that look like honeycombs, high up on the walls and wave-shaped caves at ground level. Small pits became bigger dimples, then hollows, then caves. Or they may have been eaten away by water when the land's surface was higher; then exposed as the land was eroded away.

GARVED OUT BY WATER

Water has shaped the valleys, potholes and pools of Uluru. Rainstorm after rainstorm over millions of years has sent water plummeting down the hard rock, wearing it away to form grooves, and chains of potholes and plunge pools.



Kata Tjuta

nature FLORA



AS ITS WORLD HERITAGE LISTING INDICATES, ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK 'CONTAINS UNIQUE, RARE OR SUPERLATIVE NATURAL PHENOMENA, FORMATIONS AND FEATURES'.

Anangu have, for centuries, divided the flora in the Park into a number of categories: Punu (trees), Puti (Shrubs), Tjulpun-tjulpumpa (flowers), and Ukiri (grasses). Perhaps the most prevalent tree is the Desert Oak, or Kurkara. Desert Oaks are slow to mature and grow in deep sand in large numbers. Juveniles look like Christmas trees and when matured to an adult form, spread massive limbs when the roots meet the water table. It is the only member of its family in Central Australia and its cones are the biggest of its kind. Fire burns its foliage but usually does not kill the tree.

Join an Indigenous guide on an exploration around the Resort gardens at Desert Gardens Hotel and Sails in the Desert on the free Guided Garden Walks. Or pick up your pocket guide from the hotel reception for a self-guided walk around these gardens.

Shrubs such as grevilleas and hakeas (corkwood trees) flower in the spring and winter and are known for their big bottlebrush heads. Kaliny-kalinypa (honey grevillea - Grevillea eriostrachya) flowers are bright yellow and green. Colourful ground flowers are called tjulpun-tjulpumpa. Daisies and other ground flowers bloom after rain and during the winter. Others such as the watles bloom as spring approaches. The prickly tjanpi (hard spinnifex - Tridodia basedowii) hummocks are prevalent throughout the Park. Their enormous root systems prevent desert sands shifting, spreading underground beyond the prickly clump and deep into the soil and forming an immense cone.



Sturt's Desert Pea

30,000 YEARS AGO

past + present

HISTORY

Archaeological work in Cleland Hills, north of Uluru, in 1987 suggests that Aboriginal people were living in this region at least 22,000 years ago, while work in the Macdonnell Ranges in 1994 suggests habitation in Central Australia dates back 30,000 years.

DISCOVERY OF ULURU (AYERS ROCK)

In 1873, Englishman William Christie Gosse became the first European to climb Uluru (Ayers Rock), after a three month trek from Alice Springs with a camel train. Afghan cameleers and eight months of provisions. Gosse named the Rock after Sir Henry Ayers, then Chief Secretary who later became Premier of South Australia, but it might well have taken another name had explorer Ernest Giles managed to reach and climb the Rock when he sighted it a year earlier. Giles did manage, however, to sight Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) in 1872, and named them after Queen Olga of Wurttemberg. He was then forced to turn back to Alice after being blocked by the treacherous salty marshes of Lake Amadeus, 50 kilometres to the north of Uluru.

THE FIRST FLIGHT TO AYERS ROCK

In 1930, the first aeroplane landed at Uluru, piloted by journalist Errol Coote. He was a member of Harold Lasseter's original support party when Lasseter made his unsuccessful attempt to locate a reef of gold in the south-west corner of the Northern Territory.

THE FIRST TRACK TO AYERS ROCK

The 1930s also marked the carving of the first rough track from Eridunda (193 kilometres south west of Alice Springs) to Uluru by pastoralist Sid Stanes of Eridunda Station. The track traversed sand dune country and, after heavy rains, was badly rutted, boggy and often impassable. It was not until the early 1940s that the first graded road linked the Alice and Uluru.