



Who's been to the Red Centre? One of Australia's most iconic destinations to explore Uluru and Kata Tjuta. To meet locals and learn some of the history and culture of the region is a really wonderful experience. It's amazing to think that most international visitors to Australia list this as a must visit region of their trip to Australia yet so many of us have not ventured there ourselves.

As it happens I was living in London and travelling to Australia on a work trip – my role at the time was as a product development manager for British Airways holiday division. The trip was a classic Highlights of Australia journey – Sydney, the Red Centre, and the Great Barrier Reef – a whirl wind trip that opened my eyes to the vastness of Australia and the wonderful people and experiences.

Flying into Alice Springs with Bill Peach Journeys we visited the school of the air, the telegraph station, and artist studios. Then onto Ayers Rock as it was called then. Walking around the base with a local guide we were introduced to local fauna and flora and persuaded to try barbecue witchetty grubs ! The sunsets and sunrises were wonderful – the rock changing colour with the suns intensity and the night sky went on for ever with bright stars lighting our way.

All those years ago I felt cheated that I had not spent enough time in the area so when the opportunity arose I travelled on The Ghan from Adelaide to Alice Springs where we picked up a car and drove the surprisingly long distance to Uluru. This more recent trip found me exploring the region in different ways. Motorbike rides have become a favourite, as have the slower paced Camel rides; take a trip to the nearby Kata Tjuta rock formations; meet the locals for a dot painting class; witness the amazing Field of Lights art installation. Venture further afield to Kings Canyon where you can sit around the camp fire at night and see extraordinary views on hikes during the day.

There are a number of places to stay in the township of Uluru from motels to 4 star hotels, I stayed at Sails in the Desert. The accommodation was comfortable and the pool inviting at the end of a long dusty day exploring. There is also the extraordinary luxury lodge Longitude 131 – this amazing property brings you in contact with the land and her people, the all inclusive offering when you stay in these beautifully appointed permanent tents gives you insider access to unique experiences.

Oh and yes, as Queenslanders we can visit the Northern Territory and South Australia without any quarantine either on arrival or on our return. Contact Travelling Places to help design your style of exploration of our amazing Red Centre. P: 55451600.