



# 50 UNDER \$50

— Experiences are the real magic of travel but they don't have to cost the earth. Here are the most exhilarating, immersive, uplifting and downright delightful activities you can do across Australia and New Zealand that cost less than a pineapple —

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# OMG.

## 01

### SPOT A CROC IN THE TOP END NT

> "If you like your arms, please keep them inside the boat," instructs our guide and skipper, Tony Webb, as our 29-seat launch glides alongside a lush, floating lotus garden. Peering into the murky water beside me, a thin trail of bubbles rising from the depths confirms he wasn't joking.

An estimated 100,000 crocodiles roam the Northern Territory alone. And just a 90-minute drive south-east from Darwin, the Mary River wetlands are home to the world's largest concentration of saltwater crocs.

Part of the stunning wetland, which transforms into an inland sea during the November-to-March wet season, Corroboree Billabong is the closest location from the NT capital to take a crocodile-watching cruise. On a road trip to Kakadu National Park, I discovered that if you can get to the dock by 8.45am, you can, er, snap up an hour-long tour with Wetland Cruises for \$40.



While most people visit Corroboree Billabong to eyeball the world's largest lizards, this thriving microcosm of Top End wildlife also offers some of Australia's best bird-watching (so don't forget your binoculars). Within the first 10 minutes, I've seen everything from a majestic white-bellied sea eagle guarding its nest to cute comb-crested juncos strutting along the tops of lotus leaves.

Between taking photos, soaking up Tony's immense knowledge of the region and its wildlife and, of course, gawking at the half a dozen or so dinosaur-like creatures that are casually sunning themselves on the banks just metres away from me, the tour goes by in a flash.

"We just let nature do its thing here," says Tony, as we near the dock where another group of travellers await their turn to experience this low-impact croc encounter. Not only do I disembark with my crocodile fix for the year but I have a new appreciation for the beauty of the NT's wetlands – not to mention the dangers that lurk beneath.

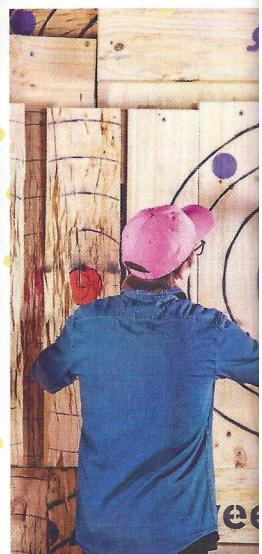
*Wetland Cruises' morning tours run daily from April to October. Transfers from Darwin are also available. [wetlandcruises.com.au](http://wetlandcruises.com.au)*



## 02

### RIDE A SHEEP

> If visiting MONA (25 minutes north of experience, taking it up. Head to the B aboard MONA's sp catamarans, where boiler suits and sh – a sheep (or tiger) while taking in stun [mona.net.au](http://mona.net.au)



Sean Alves Photography





02

**RIDE A SHEEP TO A MUSEUM TAS**

> If visiting MONA (Museum of Old and New Art), 25 minutes north of Hobart, isn't a quirky enough experience, taking the ferry there for \$22 will step it up. Head to the Brooke Street Pier and climb aboard MONA's special MR-I or MR-II camouflaged catamarans, where you'll be greeted by staff in boiler suits and ushered to your upper deck seat – a sheep (or tiger) statue – to cruise to the museum while taking in stunning views of the River Derwent.

[mona.net.au](http://mona.net.au)



Sean Alves Photography



03

**HUNT FOR GHOSTS WA**

> Not afraid of the dark? You might change your mind after signing up for a torchlight tour of Western Australia's historic Fremantle Prison. Opened in 1855 to house British convicts, the iconic limestone building, now a World Heritage Site, functioned as a prison until 1991. Held on Wednesday and Friday evenings, the 90-minute torchlight tour costs \$28 and explores the darker side of the prison's history, from executions gone wrong (more than 40 hangings were carried out here) to ghostly tales of pain and suffering, with plenty of spooky moments along the way.

[fremantleprison.com.au](http://fremantleprison.com.au)

04

**THROW DOWN THE AXE NZ**

> Got an axe to grind? At Sweet Axe Throwing Co, you can chuck one at a bullseye instead. Gather your friends – you need at least eight to play but they cater for groups of up to 50 – and spend an afternoon perfecting your technique. Each \$50 session includes one-on-one coaching, a demonstration and a competition to find the axe-throwing champion. Anyone over 18 can play, as can teens over 15 with supervision. Sweet Axe is located a 10-minute walk from Cuba Street in Wellington and Aucklanders now have their own location in the City of Sails, too.

[sweetaxethrow.com](http://sweetaxethrow.com)



# Relax.

## 08

### UNWIND IN A MODERN BATHHOUSE QLD

> Nothing beats a soak in an old-fashioned spa bath, followed by a stint in a sauna or even an essential oil-infused steam room. On the Gold Coast, you can enjoy all three in a hip communal bathhouse and relaxation space. The Bathhouse in Burleigh Heads offers a 90-minute rotation of its facilities, which includes a magnesium plunge pool. Did we mention herbal tea is included, all for \$40?

[greenhousethebathhouse.com](http://greenhousethebathhouse.com)



## 07

### TAKE A SOAK NZ

> Don't be put off by the smell of sulphur – in Rotorua, it signals geothermal activity and that you're on your way to some serious R&R. Choose from a complex of 28 hot and cold pools fed by two natural springs at Polynesian Spa – they're meant to rejuvenate the skin and target muscle aches. Prices vary depending on how many or which pools you enter but access to the family pools start at \$23 for adults and \$10 for kids.

[polynesianspa.co.nz](http://polynesianspa.co.nz)



Jenn Hadley, Jamie Bowering, Jessica Alence

## 09

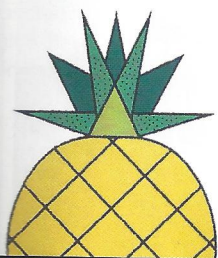
### ZEN OUT SA

> With its minimalist interior, cosy lounge-style seats and soaring ceilings, The Zen Room looks and feels more like a stylish hotel than a meditation studio. Its mission to bring meditation into the mainstream means the guided sessions are kept short – just 30 minutes each – and use a simple sequence of techniques, so forget any esoteric associations. Plus, you meditate on beanbag-style seats, making it comfy and relaxing. Try their \$10 trial offer.

[thezenroom.com.au](http://thezenroom.com.au)



# Food + drink.



## 17

### RAISE A GLASS NSW

> What does a rainforest gin taste like? The next time you're in the Byron Bay hinterland, you can find out at Cape Byron Distillery. With a handful of the 25 botanicals in Brookie's Byron Dry Gin sourced from a rainforest on the property, the two-hour distillery tour (\$35) begins in the bush. While sipping on a Brookie's G&T, you'll see, smell and touch the native rainforest botanicals used in the award-winning local gin before heading back to the distillery for tastings. Don't miss their delish macadamia and wattleseed liqueur, too. Bottoms up!

[capebyrondistillery.com](http://capebyrondistillery.com)



## 18

### GO ON A CULI

> You don't have to deal paella, panini on an Adelaide Cen \$35. You'll get intel of the market's 80 tr heart's content. Best so there's plenty of the bar Lucia's Fine Food [ausfoodtours.com](http://ausfoodtours.com)



And The Trees Photography, Natalie Mendham



# Learn.



## 22

### TAKE A HISTORY LESSON NT

> On 19 February 1942, 242 Japanese aircraft attacked Darwin in what would be the largest single assault mounted by a foreign power on Australia. Learn about this dark history at the Darwin Military Museum, where an incredible film experience immerses you in the drama of the bombing unfolding (entry \$20, or just \$10 for kids). You can also spot remnants of the air raids on the city's foreshore during a 75-minute Bombing of Darwin cruise with SeaDarwin for \$35. [darwinmilitarymuseum.com.au](http://darwinmilitarymuseum.com.au); [seadarwin.com](http://seadarwin.com)

## 21

### UP YOUR LIFE SKILLS VIC

> If you've ever Googled "How to make friends as an adult?" or "How to negotiate a pay rise without my boss noticing beads of sweat dripping down my face?" the Ladies of Leisure (LOL) workshop series is for you. A creative collective run by Savannah Anand-Sobti and Sally Tabart, LOL aims to empower women with the know-how to tackle modern life through a rotating roster of workshops in their Fitzroy headquarters (costing from \$25 each). The workshops are also a great way to change up your holiday routine and meet locals. [ladiesofleisurezine.com](http://ladiesofleisurezine.com)

## 23

### UNCOVER REEF

> Always wanted to know more about the underwater world? You can now join an entertaining and educational workshop with a qualified marine biologist to learn about the Great Barrier Reef, how to handle coral and so much more, including a few of the nifty tricks. [reefteach.com.au](http://reefteach.com.au)

## 25

### GET THE

> Love honey? You can now learn how to make it by The Farm and their workshops offer a hands-on experience. The 90-minute Flow Hive workshop covers the basics of beekeeping, from the apiary to the Flow Hive, a revolutionary invention that allows you to harvest honey without disturbing the bees. [thefarm.com.au](http://thefarm.com.au)



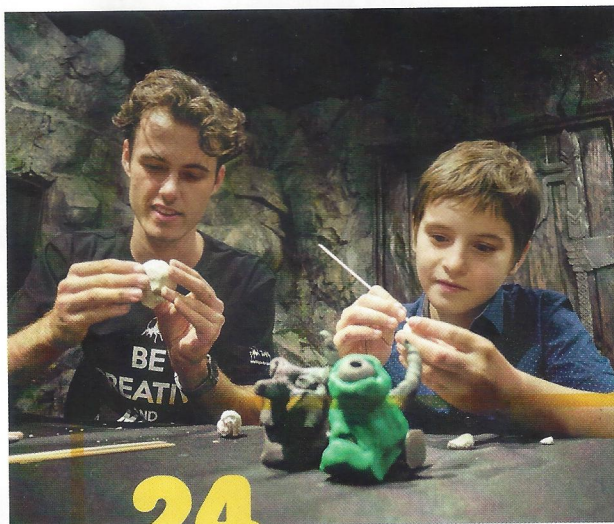


23

### UNCOVER REEF SECRETS QLD

> Always wanted to know more about the mysteries of the underwater world? At Reef Teach in Cairns, you can join an entertaining presentation by qualified marine biologists to learn what to look for and where to find it before you head out to the Great Barrier Reef. For \$23, you'll even get to handle coral and some marine specimens, including a few of the more dangerous types.

[reefteach.com.au](http://reefteach.com.au)



24

### GO BEHIND THE SCENES NZ

> Some of the world's biggest movie projects have been produced in Wellington's Weta Workshop, a creative studio responsible for the design and manufacture of costumes, props, sets and special effects. Happily for film fans, they offer a range of tours and workshops that offer a peek into the magic of making high-tech blockbusters such as *Avatar*, *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Book the combo option (\$46) for a visit to a miniature set and guided tour, where you'll learn how costumes and creatures are designed and brought to life.

[wetaworkshop.com](http://wetaworkshop.com)

25

### GET THE BUZZ NSW

> Love honey? It's time to go straight to the source. You can now learn beekeeping at a workshop held by The Farm at Byron Bay for \$50. One of an array of workshops offered regularly at this working farm, which is anchored by the Three Blue Ducks restaurant, the 90-minute Flow Hive Taster includes a crash course on the basics of keeping bees before moving to the apiary for a hands-on demonstration of the Flow Hive – a revolutionary new beehive invention that allows you to harvest fresh honey without opening the hive.

[thefarm.com.au](http://thefarm.com.au)





# Sport.



## 27

### PLAY FRISBEE GOLF NZ

> Hugging the shores of Lake Wakatipu, lush Queenstown Gardens is the stage for the adventure capital's most underrated outdoor activity. Tucked between the Douglas firs is New Zealand's original frisbee golf course, where the aim of the game is to whizz your frisbee from the "tee" to the "hole" in as few flings as possible. If you don't have your own disc, you can rent one from the Queenstown Ice Arena located in the gardens for just \$5. Add a scorecard and a map for only \$3.

[queenstownicearena.co.nz](http://queenstownicearena.co.nz)

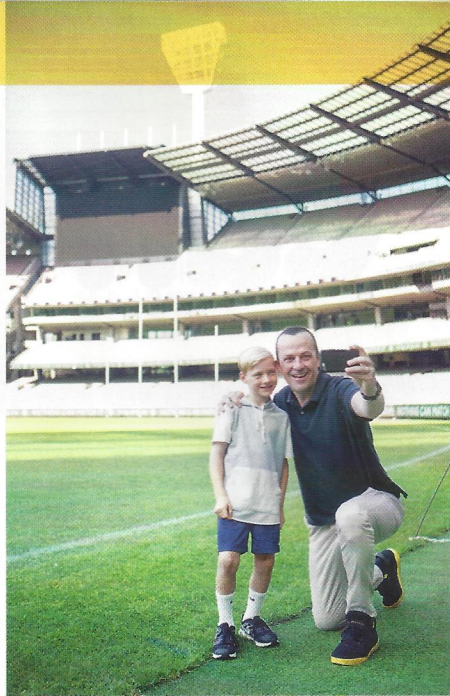
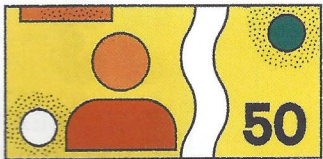


## 28

### SAIL AWAY QLD

> Always wanted to sail the high seas – or any seas for that matter? For \$35, you can learn the ropes at a two-hour Social Sailing class run by the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron in Moreton Bay, east of Brisbane. Each of its thrice-weekly classes is conducted in Elliot 6 sailing boats with a qualified instructor and there's an additional ladies-only class on Saturdays.

[rqys.com.au](http://rqys.com.au)



## 29

### TREAD THE TURF VIC

> Hear that? It's the sound of leather on willow or a Sherrin soaring through the sky or Eminem singing "Won't Back Down". Thousands of people visit the Melbourne Cricket Ground every year – over 100,000 packed into the stadium for the 2018 AFL Grand Final alone. For \$25, go behind the scenes on a 75-minute guided tour and see where sporting (and concert) memories have been made.

[mcg.org.au/tours](http://mcg.org.au/tours)

## 30

### CONQUER THE SEA NSW

> Push yourself to your limits and take on The Big Swim, a 2.8-kilometre open water-swimming race from the golden sands of Palm Beach to Whale Beach in Sydney's Northern Beaches. Registration is \$45 (if booked online in advance) for the January event; so grab your goggles and dive right in – the water's warm (we promise).

[thebigswim.org.au](http://thebigswim.org.au)



# Culture.

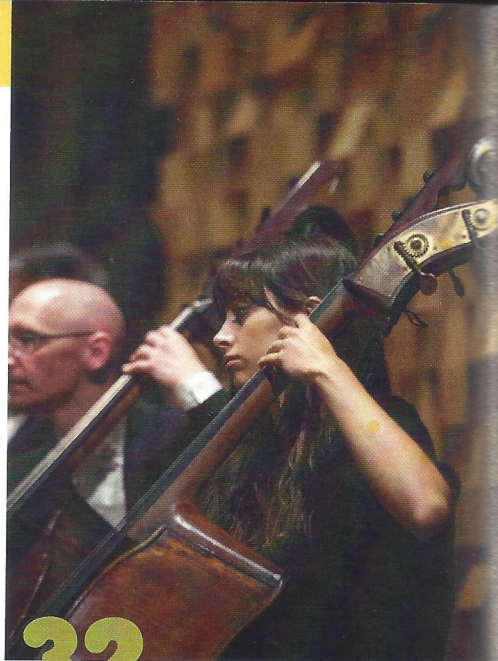


## 31

### HAVE AN ART PICNIC VIC

> Why would've thought that the perfect daytrip, combining art and nature, is just a 25-minute drive from Melbourne's CBD? The Heide Museum of Modern Art is a gallery containing the works of some of Australia's most well known contemporary artists, including Albert Tucker and Sidney Nolan, plus heritage-listed gardens and a sculpture park. Located on a leafy 16-acre property in Bulleen that once belonged to Australian art patrons John and Sunday Reed, the museum incorporates the couple's original home. Entry is \$20.

[heide.com.au](http://heide.com.au)



## 32

### SEE A CONCERT TAS

> Established more than 70 years ago, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra is a much-loved cultural institution with something for everyone. Regular concerts in Hobart and Launceston showcase everything from Mozart concertos to Broadway hits. Many shows offer tickets under \$50, including the eclectic TSO Live Sessions, which returns to the picturesque Huon Valley on 7 September.

[tso.com.au](http://tso.com.au)

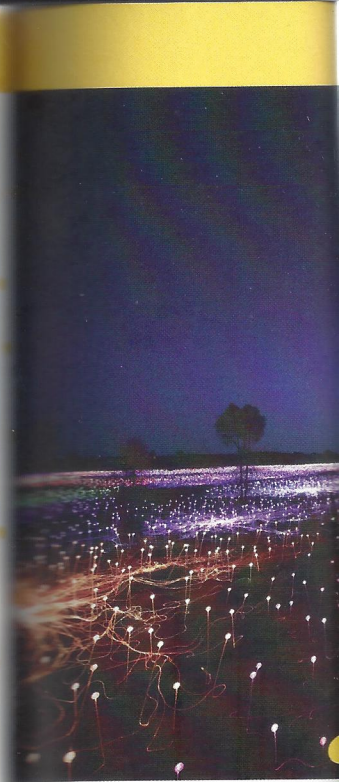


## 33

### HEAR DREAMTIME STORIES QLD

> An Aboriginal walkabout might not be the first activity that springs to mind when you think of the Gold Coast but the Jellurgal Aboriginal Cultural Centre offers a fascinating traditional landowner-led walking tour for \$30 that focuses on the Burleigh Headland, known to Yugambeh-speaking people as Jellurgal or Dreaming Mountain. Along the way, you'll learn creation stories associated with this lush pocket of rainforest.

[jellurgal.com.au](http://jellurgal.com.au)



## 35

### TAKE A BACKSTAGE

> Stickybeaks and theatre go behind the scenes. The QPAC Arts Centre Weekly Discover tour is one of the most affordable tours in the city. From 10.30am to 11.30am on Friday, the tour guide will explain the architecture of QPAC, opened in 1985, and take you through the Tony Gould Gallery, which showcases collections from the theatre's past shows in ever-changing exhibitions.

[qpac.com.au](http://qpac.com.au)

Chris Proulx