OVERVIEW: EXPEDITION SAND & STONE - $3990

“But it was in Australia that I gained my first impressions of the beauty of the world, and it was the Bush that taught me.”
– Tom Roberts, Artist

Welcome to the land where time began and one of the world’s last great wilderness frontiers. EXPEDITION SAND & STONE is a tri-desert tour, a once in a lifetime journey through some of the most remote and beautiful parts of outback Australia. Featuring the Great Sandy Desert, the Gibson Desert and the Tanami. This expedition is a 2600km traverse including some of Australia’s most iconic attractions.

[NOT AVAILABLE 2018]

Come with us – to where few ever travel. A beautiful gorge on Alice Springs’ doorstep – rarely seen, rarely heard – there’s roads, there’s tracks and sometimes we have to make our own. Just south of the gorge lie the eastern climes of the Great Sandy Desert and the fabled attractions of Uluru and Kata Tjuta. Gently undulating and sparsely vegetated, the Great Sandy is largely characterized by short ephemeral drainages, several lakes and wetlands, red sand dune fields, and remnant rocky outcrops.

We follow in the footsteps of the Len Beadell learning roading ways – why and how places like Sandy Blight and Schwerin Crescent got their names, before heading north and tracking through the Gibson Desert towards the magnificent Lake Mackay.

North towards Dwarf Well and Razor Bore the desert is very remote. This is not for the faint-hearted – sections of the track are narrow and wattle and acacia encroach left and right. The worst of it we’ve cleared but be prepared to get dusty and scrubbed.

After Balgo the expedition turns West through the Tanami Desert eventually joining the infamous “Corrugation Road” via Tanami Downs and following it back into Alice Springs.

Waypoint Expeditions supplies a support vehicle fully equipped with recovery equipment, satellite phone, GPS tracking equipment, emergency locator beacon and remote area first aid equipment.

Each Waypoint Expedition is a carefully thought out, planned, and researched route to provide you with a unique experience where you not just “tag along” but participate in culture of place. We hope, by the time you have finished your journey with us, you will have a new appreciation of the cultural and historical significance of the Simpson Desert as well as its importance as one of Australia’s great wilderness areas.

Travel with Waypoint – experts in outback adventuring for over 20 years.

*** ALL TAG ALONG TOURS***
Due to the nature of where we travel - the ever-changing track conditions and other influences itineraries should be taken as a guide only.
ITINERARY

Rendezvous Alice Springs
1530 - 1630 Meet and greet at the Diplomat Motel.
1630 - 1700 Russell from the ASP 4x4 shares his tips and tricks for tackling the Simpson Desert.
1800 - Welcome Dinner at the Uncles Tavern (Diplomat Motel).

Day 01
West Mac
Leave Alice Springs via Honeymoon Gap with visits to Simpsons Gap and Standley Chasm. Then onto Wallace Rockhole for a guided art tour, before heading onto Hermannsburg and the Finke River Gorge where we make camp.

Day 02
Uluru
We continuing travelling down the Finke River Gorge exiting onto the Ernest Giles Rd with a stop at Curtin Springs before heading onto Uluru where you may choose do a sunset tour or make your own way.

Day 03
Uluru Kata Tjuta
We spend the day in the National Park with the opportunity to make the amazing morning walk around Uluru and lunch, before heading on to the Valley of the Winds at Kata Tjuta before heading back into Yulara.

Day 04
Tjukaruru
We drive the Tjukaruru Rd (Great Central Rd) towards Lasseter’s Cave. We head onto to Katulkatjara (Docker River) to refuel and cross over into WA. We visit the Schwerin Mural and a Beadell Blaze tree before joining the Sandy Blight track to Pangkupirri Rockholes where we make camp.

Day 05
Sandy Blight Junction (SBJ)
We track north up the SBJ through some very pretty desert groves along a winding sandy track. We climb the Sir Frederick Range for amazing views over the surrounding landscapes. Descending get back on the track continue north crossing back into the NT. We make camp for the day.

Day 06
The Desert Rd
We track the last of the SBJ passing Beadell’s 200-mile stone and Tietkens Blaze Tree. We stop at Kintore for fuel, then westward on the Desert Rd towards Kiwirrkurra, crossing back into WA and past abandoned Muyin. Kiwirrkurra is a refuel stop - We head into Nyirla Warlayirti and camp in the region of Elizabeth Hills.

Day 07
Lake Mackay
We leave camp and head to Lake MacKay, the 2nd largest salt lake in Australia which sits on the border of NT & WA. We explore the shoreline and take a stroll out across the salt floor. We make camp and enjoy a fiery desert sunset and the Milky Way like you’ve never seen it before.

Day 08
Great Sandy Desert
Travelling North. We stop for water at Dwarf Well. Great for a freshen up and quick wash. We push further into the heart of the Great Sandy Desert where breakaways and claypans puncture a rolling desert landscape, and beneath one of these breakaways we make camp.

Day 09
Pintubi
Today we drive past the Bilbarrd outstation ruins and cross Laka Claypan. We pass Mangkala outstation and visit an ancient stone quarry just south of Lamanbundah. Further north the country opens up to breakaways. At Point Moody we make camp.

Day 10
Nyirla Warlayirti
Today we drive more breakaway country, home to the Lizard Dreaming of the Western Desert. The caves and holes that pockmark the countryside signify where they were digging for snakes. We pass through the abandoned community of Yagga Yagga where social decay undid promising dreams. All that remains is the infrastructure of a previous life.. we continue north and make camp somewhere.

Day 11
Tanami Desert
We skirt Balgo Pound with its spectacular breakaways and amazing views, before coming into Balgo to refuel and visit the art centre of the Warlayirti Artists. After lunch we follow the Kerney Range south east, along what was once the original Tanami Rd towards McGuire Gap where we make camp.

Day 12
Tanami Rd
We cross into the Northern Territory and onto the working cattle station of Tanami Downs. From the homestead it’s short drive to the Tanami Rd where we pass the Grantes Mine, Quartz Ride, Renahan’s Bore and Chila Well to our camp at Mt Doreen.

Day 13
West Mac NP
From Mt Doreen we head into the community of Yeundumu to refuel before turning south towards Mt Wedge. We cross over Central Mt Wedge and head down towards Pupunya before joining the Desert Rd, Haasts Bluff and back onto the blacktop of Namitjira Dve. We skirt the West Macs to Finke River we make camp.

Day 14
Alice Springs
Today we head into Alice Springs visiting the West Mac gorges including Glen Helen, Ormiston, Serpentine, before joining Larapinta Dve for the run into town where the will be a few hours to rest and relax before the final evening’s meal.
FAQs

WHAT IS THE DISTANCE OF THIS TOUR?
Expedition Sand & Stone tri-desert journey is 2698km.

WHERE ARE THE FUELLING POINTS?
- Alice Springs [389km] Curtin Springs
- Curtin Springs [105km] Yulara
- Yulara [232km] Docker River
- Docker River [381km] Kintore
- Kintore [183km] Kiwirrkurra
- Kiwirrkurra [515km] Balgo
- Balgo [561km] Yuendumu
- Yuendumu [365km] Alice Springs

DO I NEED TO CARRY EXTRA FUEL?
Yes - the longest distance between fuel stops is 561km through mostly 4WD terrain. Depending on the fuel capacity of your vehicle you may need to carry extra fuel. Recommend at least 1 x 20lt jerrys of additional fuel for most vehicles.

HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD I CARRY?
This question is about preference and capacity but recommended you carry at least 50lt of drinking water and 70lt of general usage water. There may opportunity to refill general usage but the longest time between drinking water refills is 9 days.

ARE CAMPER TRAILERS/CARAVANS ALLOWED?
Yes. However due the difficult nature of some of the tracks, the fragility of the environment and other considerations off-road caravans are not encouraged. But we can arrange for them to stored securely in Alice Springs.

WHAT TYPE OF 4WD IS SUITABLE FOR THESE EXPEDITIONS?
4WDs that have medium to high clearance and a high/low transfer case, with a quality set of springs and shock absorbers as well as All Terrain / Mud Terrain tyres with at least 70% tread. UHF Radio either hand held or fitted is a must as well. These expeditions are not suitable for AWDs.

DO WE GET TIME FOR SIGHTSEEING?
Absolutely! You will get plenty of time to explore, bushwalk, fish, photograph, stargaze and take in the beauty and grandeur of the places we visit.

LIMITED 4WD EXPERIENCE?
WayPoint will assist and guide you in the basic skills of 4WD driving and sustainable 4WD driving to suit the terrain in which we will travel however consider doing a 4WD course prior to the trip as some advanced off road techniques will be required.

HOW LONG DO WE DRIVE EACH DAY?
No more than 300km per day. Most days are between 50-80km. We discuss the following day’s events around the campfire at night, or at our morning briefing. We are usually on the road at 9.30am and stop for lunch between 12pm-1pm. We stop at all points of interest throughout the day and try to up camp around 3.30-4pm each day.

WHAT HAPPENS IF OUR VEHICLE BREAKS DOWN ON TOUR?
We will do our best to get you going again but if we can’t, we will discuss the options of getting your vehicle recovered and to where it can be repaired. We strongly recommend you have cover with a nationwide motoring association and also take out travel insurance.

HOW DO I BOOK?
EXPEDITION SAND & STONE is available once a season. Bookings can be made online via the payment gateway or an offline booking form.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO BRING?
The most important thing to pack is a sense of adventure. Don’t worry if you have misplaced yours as you will soon find it on the tour! Once your place has been confirmed a Briefing Kit with all the information you will need will be sent to you. It will contain list of suggestions, spare parts, maps, camping requirements, etc.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET SICK OR INJURED?
If you become sick on the trip all efforts will be made to maintain your comfort and enjoyment. Our Expedition Leaders are first aid trained (Remote Area First Aid) and experienced in emergency management. In the event of an emergency the tour leader carries a Spot Tracker emergency beacon for emergency assistance and a Sat phone. Vehicles are also fitted with UHF radios for local radio contact and satellite tracking.

RESPECT THE DESERT
Please make best efforts to minimise impact on the desert environment:
- Keep to well-defined access routes across the desert to avoid damaging the vegetation and fragile landscape
- Rubbish comes out – place in strong plastic bags (do not bury, it will be dug up)
- Keep the camp clean and tidy
- Burn or bury toilet paper
- Keep dirty/soapy water away from natural water supplies
- Conserve firewood
- Use of firearms and chainsaws is not permitted
- Abide by fireban regulations
- Do not feed animals
- Every animal, plant and rock is protected
- Aboriginal and European artefacts/sites are protected