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Imagine drilling a deep, deep hole in Switzerland, we will come out in New-Zealand. How cool is that ? We go the more common and exhausting way. Take a plane and fly, how it seems forever. So the plan is, take it easy and enjoy.

First stop Hong Kong, after a 12h flight have the comfort of the Hotel transfer, smooth and on time. Welcome back to Hong Kong it has been a few years. 30 Minutes later it is already getting dark, I like to scream ' stop the film, I am missing a day '. But it wouldn't help, hello jet-lag. We walk around in Central to ease off some of the time differences and tiredness. Only a bit successful because the next morning we have problems to get out of bed at 9am !! Best thing in Hong Kong is always meeting, seeing some friends and former colleagues. This time we all have dinner together and we have a ball. I have very fond memories.

The 3 days pass quickly and here we fly again, to Auckland. That means another 6h to add to the jet-lag. Gosh I am getting old, it is no fun. Therefore we create a special fun part by taking a helicopter from the airport to our Hotel on Waiheke Island. What a treat, exciting and birds eye views.

The treat continues with a lovely Hotel, Delamore Lodge, which helps to eliminate the jet-lag. 2 days of easy walking, good food and exploring the island. Enough of being lazy, we go by public ferry to Auckland to embark our cruise-ship.

This will take us along the coast of the north- and south island over to Australia. Can't wait to see more of NZ. Who did not eat all their food ? The weather god was furious ! My grandmother always told me I have to empty my plate otherwise we will not have nice weather. A few people did not do it right, strong winds and cool air, we are taking the winter sweater out ! We see a bit of volcanic landscapes, rain forest, beaches with Albatross and Pinguin, picturesque villages, plenty of gum trees in different forms and shapes and have a devils ride on a 4x4 squad over rocky terrain. Help ! Last but not least we cruise in the Milford Sound. Beautiful, calm and dark. The sun is not generous and provides only a few spotlights. Now the roaring forties, the tasmanian sea. Be warned, that what the guide says. It is disappointing harmless, not that I want to feed the fishes. Even the captain says he has never done the crossing with such a calm sea. No roaring.

Melbourne, Australia welcomes us with heat. The sightseeing is done in 34 degrees. Don't stand in the sun you will boil. The last night on the ship, tomorrow we pick up our rental car and off we go, that was the idea. The Great Ocean Road, if we find the highway which should get us out of Melbourne. The GPS seems to have a life on its own and does not want to tell us which turn to take.

Finally we are on the right street but wrong direction.... crux to find an exit and entrance. Done, good bye Melbourne.

Apollo Bay, our first overnight stop. Small Hotel, Captains by the bay, nice modern rooms and a helpful reception, she makes a dinner reservation in walking distance. We arrive and the Resturant, The Vista, has plenty of empty tables at 7pm. We are offered a table squeezed into a corner against the wall, worst spot in the room. We have experienced this in other places too. How come ? What about the better tables ? Response is, let us check if we could offer another table. I am speechless. But we are getting another table. The food was good, fresh seafood but the price is high.



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Next day along the coast, our first stop is at a rain-forest walkway. Only 2 other people are here so it is pure solitude and enchanting. I am thinking of all the poisonous snakes, spiders etc and I am happy to walk on the wooden way 50cm above ground.

Next stop, it is a must, the twelve apostles, there are not really 12 anymore but who wants to be so picky? To make up for the loss of apostles in exchange there are many many tourists going around like on a trail for ants. The weather is perfect and we are able to take a photo just of the rocks and no people. Happy to continue our journey. Several cars stopping beside the road, what is there ? We also stop and try to find the attraction. It takes a moment before we discover it, despite the arms pointing in the direction, one Koala high up in the Eucalyptus tree. Our first one !

The overnight stop is in Port Fairy, a small lovely Hotel, Oscars at the waterfront, with a Manager who points out that after 8pm one can't order dinner anymore. Go early ! He will make a reservation for 6pm ! Until then we have a stroll along the beach and to a small protected island, here our first Wallaby, excitement pure.

Driving along to Robe, even smaller town where it looks like we meet others again which we see and talk to already in previous stops. It's a small world the tourist path to Adelaide. Last stop before Adelaide, the Barossa Valley. Beautiful Hotel, The Louise, in-midst the vineyards with a well known Restaurant. We enjoy, despite the 34 degrees, sitting on the terrace with a Raspberry muddler, non-alcoholic drink. Delicious.

Adelaide the GPS says go straight into the North Terrace but there is a detour and we confuse ourselves by listening to the GPS voice and not taking the signs as direction. Mistake. It is a sightseeing tour around a few blocks and there is the sign: Avis. But we are in a one way street and must go to the parking lot, guess where ? Finally we manage to park the car where it should be. The Hotel is just across the street. No worries, mate.

30 min flight to Kangaroo Island and a 1 hour drive to the Southern Ocean Lodge. Just to ensure we raise our expectations, we stop to see a Koala with a Joey in the tree beside the street on midlevel. The Joey (Koala baby) turns around so we could see more than just its bum. Great start !

The lodge is on the rim to the ocean all rooms have a great view and at dusk the Wallaby is hopping in front of our window. Can there be more ? Yes, it can! The guided excursions do show us Kangaroos, almost 100, sea lions and more Wallaby's. Last but not least amazing rock formations and bushes to the horizon. We love it. The 2 nights and days are going too fast and it is time to go back to Adelaide.

Tuesday we will board the Indian Pacific train to go to Sydney, 25hours ride. The chauffeur picks us up at the Hotel and gets us to the train station, where we are getting the red carpet treatment. That is included in the Platinum class which we choose because of the larger cabin. 7 qm !! including the bathroom !!! Just one piece of small luggage fits in the space beside the bed. I am curious how the Gold class looks like and I have a glimpse. Gosh, I am sure, there, one will not be able to take any luggage ! Small, smaller and last the red class, no bed at all. We enjoy the vistas from our window and the dining carriage. Changing landscape, from the residential part to the dessert, Emu's and Kangaroos can be seen, then the dryness for hours. Good night, let's try to sleep. It was better than expected and the breakfast is good. We are already approaching the Blue Mountains, huge gum tree forest which have this special mist which seems to be blue. Hence the name.



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It is already time to pack and prepare for Sydney, our final destination. Again a chauffeur drives us to our friends place, where we will stay for the next few weeks.

Sydney, laid back and relaxed city with lots of tourists. We do the tourist sightseeing by taking the hop- on hop-off bus. This provides a first impression and allows us to decide what we like to see. Impressive the Ibis and parrots which seem to be everywhere in the city, not shy at all. Not so impressive the food. Maybe we have chosen the wrong ones or a pure tourist spot as it is expensive but tasteless. We need to find other places.

The Circular Quay is the number one tourist spot and easy to reach. A boat tour is a must and we do those in hot weather. Soon we have to buy more sun protection! Instead hubby buys a strawhat, Cowboy style! Yee haw. Interesting places are the Skytower, we have lunch in the revolving Restaurant and have a great view, buffet is okay. The Botanical garden, which we discovered by tourist train, it was just too hot to walk. The fishmarket, here it is worth to go and have lunch.

The Centennial Park, we stroll around and spent the whole day there. At dusk the flying foxes (fruit bats) are coming to life. There must be thousands hanging in the trees. A bit scary the thought they could attack us. No worries mate, all safe.

Of course, there are plenty of shopping opportunities, many malls and streets to see. The one I like is the Queen Victoria Building for its interior. The City can't decide what the weather should be like, one day fresh wind and thunderstorm, next over 32 degrees and no breeze at all. Happy to escape to the Blue Mountains for 3 days. Approx. 1000m high, a few degrees cooler and more fresh air. We love it.

Our sightseeing is to visit Leura and have a good lunch/dinner there. The scenic world and with us a few hundred school children. The lookout in Wentworth Falls, Blackheath and other small villages. The gum trees are all around us and the atmosphere is pleasant and somehow calm.

For the last day we are back in Sydney to pack our suitcases and go for a last meal, yes, we have found good places for lunch and dinner, expensive and normal price. A last sightseeing drive to the Airport, today it is raining and foggy, makes it easier to leave. Singapore Airlines gets us to our hub Singapore and Swiss gets us home. Arrival at 6am, Good Morning Switzerland. We are back.

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Travel Treasures