

NATIVE

Aboriginal tourism is on the increase in Australia – with the country’s traditional custodians telling their stories, their own way. **Laura Millar** picks out some of the best experiences...



Great 'scape: The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape tour. Below: An Aboriginal hunter in the Outback

LANDS



Bush Tucker Talks & Tastings, Western Australia

Dale Tilbrook is a Wardandi Bibbulmun woman whose traditional Aboriginal country is in the Margaret River area. She now conducts her passionate and informative guides to bush food [food native to Australia which is used as sustenance by indigenous Australians] from the Swan Valley, just outside Perth.

You'll sample a variety of different fruit, vegetables, herbs and spices, find out how they were collected and preserved, and learn how to prepare them the way Dale's family have done for generations.

From £34 for two-hour talk, daletilbrookexperiences.com.au

Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, Victoria

This new cultural experience, found close to the Great Ocean Road, explores a section of south-west Victoria's Gunditjmara Country. It features the earliest known example of aquaculture – the controlled cultivation of aquatic organisms for food – in the world. In this case, the Aborigines of this region farmed eels, by weaving elaborate traps from grasses and storing them in fresh water ponds, which essentially acted as a fridge, keeping them edible for whenever they were needed.

Tours from £48 for two hours, budjbim.com.au

Wadna Aboriginal Cultural Tours, South Australia

Located in the rugged hills of the Flinders Ranges, around five hours north of Adelaide, Kristian Coulthard, an Adnyamathanha man, recently set up his tourism company with the aim of sharing his family's history and culture with visitors. The Yura Mulka (Sacred Canyon) tour leads you through an ancient canyon to learn about traditional Aboriginal rock art, as well as the local flora and fauna.

From £46 for 2.5 hours, wadna.com.au/tours

Hermannsburg Historic Precinct, Northern Territory

The Aboriginal settlement of Hermannsburg is famous as the home of Aboriginal watercolour landscape artist, Albert Namatjira. It's also one of five National Trust-listed historic precincts in Australia, after being established by German missionaries in 1877.

It's just undergone a two-year, multi-million dollar

Mast-have: The Australian Aboriginal flag



restoration, and now features digitalised interpretations and preserved 19th-century buildings with a museum and Namatjira Gallery displaying striking artworks by local artists.

Entry £10, hermannsburg.com.au

Nyungar Cultural Tours, Western Australia

Kerry-Ann Winmar, a Whadjuk Yorga from the Perth region, takes visitors around Kings

Park, in Perth – at 1,000 acres, it's one of the biggest inner-city parks in

the world. Here, she shares stories of how Aboriginal people lived on the land before colonisation, explains the role of women in Aboriginal society (basically, they were in charge), and guides you through the medicinal and nutritional properties of local plants and flowers.

£38 for 70 minutes, nyungartours.com.au

Gallery of Central Australia, Northern Territory

This newly-established gallery at Uluru features a remarkable collection of works from art centres across the Central and Western Deserts. These works represent around 20 communities from within the Northern Territory, South

Australia and Western Australia, many of which aren't easy to visit. They're displayed by region to highlight different artistic styles, from the bright and intricate dot paintings by local Keringke artists to grass-woven animals by the Tjanpi desert weavers.

Free, ayersrockresort.com.au

Dreamtime Dive & Snorkel, Queensland

Queensland is the only place in Australia home to both Aboriginal people and those from the Torres Strait Islands, and this experience is all about sharing the stories of these indigenous communities while showcasing innovative ecotourism. Cultural guides take you on a journey

to explore the Great Barrier Reef, while visiting pristine and spectacular underwater sites.

£145 for nine-hour trip, dreamtimedive.com

Bangarra Dance Theatre, New South Wales

Bangarra Dance Theatre is a touring company of professional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers. In June they are set to premiere a new work, Yuldea, at Sydney's Opera House. Featuring powerful storytelling and dynamic contemporary choreography, the piece draws on thousands of years of indigenous culture.

Tickets from £26, my.bangarra.com.au



Strait of the art: Torres Strait Islanders' traditional dance in Queensland



Picturesque:

The 1,000-acre Kings Park in Perth and, right, the Great Barrier Reef



Range of views:

The ancient mountains and spectacular gorges of Flinders Ranges