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This train cut the outback in two

The *Ghan's* first journey through Australia's remote center happened 90 years ago this month

BEFORE 1929, THE HARSH DESERT CONDITIONS of Australia's Red Centre made the 1,851-mile journey bisecting the continent a treacherous undertaking. That year, however, a revolutionary railway route connected Darwin and Adelaide, and for almost a century, *The Ghan* has been one of the world's greatest luxury passenger train trips. We highlight the quirkiest stops along the way. —GIGI RAGLAND journeybeyondrail.com.au

DARWIN

pop. 142,258

Crococaurus Cove features the world's largest display of Australian reptiles. The attraction offers a "swim with the crocs" diving experience, as well as a croc-feeding option (the non-human kind).

KATHERINE

pop. 1,488

The livestock demos at Katherine Outback Experience are fascinating, but the showstopper is award-winning country-music artist Tom Curtain, who stands atop his expertly trained horse while circling the ring crooning cowboy songs.

ALICE SPRINGS

pop. 24,753

Honor a centuries-old tradition at Pyndan Camel Tracks by meandering with hoofed humpbacks to a scenic point on the West MacDonnell Ranges. Keep your eyes peeled for kangaroos, wallabies and other wildlife.

ABOVE: © TOURISM NT / STEVE STRIKE;
BOTTOM RIGHT: NEBRASKA TOURISM

Nebraska's getting tanked

Floating down a lazy river in a farm tank is a heartland cruise sensation

Who needs a yacht when you have a livestock tank? So say the wise drifters of Nebraska, the state with more miles of river than any other. The extremely laid-back “sport” of tanking involves clambering into a waterborne tub—galvanized steel or plastic normally used to hold water for cows, but often customized with benches and a table—and embarking on a pleasure cruise.

It's a gleefully unabashed embodiment of Nebraska's newly minted state slogan: “Honestly, it's not for everyone.” But what tanking may lack in glamour, it makes up for in friendliness: It's an especially social way to float away a summer day, and outfitters around the state offer a variety of trips for all ages. “You're not separated,” says Mitchell Glidden, whose Glidden Canoe Rental runs tanking expeditions on the Middle Loup River. “If it's a larger group, they can trade off and go back and forth into other tanks and visit all the way down that dang river.” —LAURA BEAUSIRE



The Ghan travels 1,851 miles from Darwin to Adelaide, a 54-hour journey

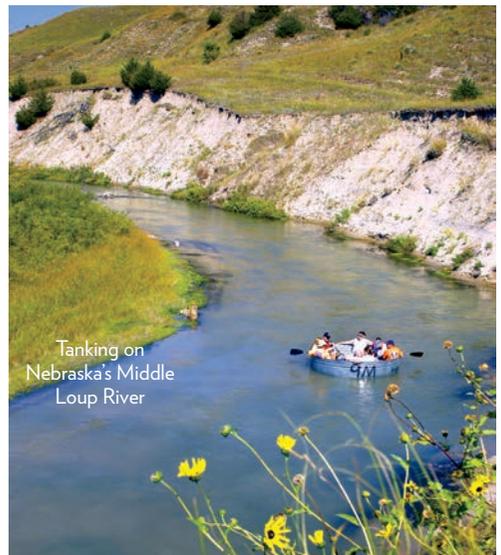


COOBER PEDY pop. 1,762

Considered the opal capital of the world, Coober Pedy is celebrated for its mines. Explore the hand-dug shafts and tunnels at Umoona Opal Mine and Museum, and opt for the three-course lunch in the underground cave.

ADELAIDE pop. 15,115

Featuring a unique five-story exterior, d'Arenberg Cube is a world-class winery in the McLaren Vale valley that offers tasting rooms, an art gallery, an “alternate reality” museum and a restaurant manned by acclaimed chefs.



Tanking on Nebraska's Middle Loup River