

## Australia



Name: Commonwealth of Australia  
Government: Democracy  
Population: 23, 6 million  
Capital: Canberra with 380,000 people  
Language: English  
Currency: 1 Australian Dollar=100 Cents  
Religion: mainly Christians  
National Symbols: Golden wattle (flower), opal (gemstone), green and gold (colours)



Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide – are coastal, but its capital, Canberra, is inland and nicknamed the “Bush Capital.” More than 80 percent of Australians live within 100 kilometres of the coast making Australia one of the world's most urbanised coastal dwelling populations. Over 200 different languages and dialects are spoken in Australia including 45 Indigenous languages. The most common non-English spoken languages are Italian, Greek, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese and Mandarin.



Australia has six states—New South Wales (NSW), Queensland (QLD), South Australia (SA), Tasmania (TAS), Victoria (VIC) and Western Australia (WA)—and two major mainland territories—the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and the Northern Territory (NT).



Canberra was selected as the capital because Sydney and Melbourne could not stop arguing which city should be the capital of Australia. Australia is the world's 6th largest country by area. Due to its large size and isolation from the rest of the world, Australia is sometimes known as the ‘island continent’ A desert area known as the ‘outback’ covers much of the land. The name ‘Australia’ comes from the Latin word ‘australis’, meaning southern. The indigenous people of Australia are Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Some aboriginal people live still in the sacred area around Ayres Rock, a huge rock formation in the centre of the continent.

The aborigines call this sacred mountain 'Uluru'. They also settle in the Northern Territory in Kakadu National Park, which they call 'Arnhem Land', the land of their ancestors.

The highest mountain on mainland Australia is Mt Kosciuszko, standing 2228m (7310ft) above sea level. The world's largest reef system, the Great Barrier Reef, is found off the north-eastern coast of Australia. The reef consists of more than 3,000 reefs in which live more than 350 species of corals and over 1,500 species of fish.



Australia is home to a variety of unique animals, including the koala, kangaroo, emu, kookaburra and platypus. Although they usually keep to themselves, there are a range of dangerous snakes in Australia, such as the Brown Snake, Tiger Snake and Taipan. Australia has over 750 different reptile species, more than any other country in the world. Most of Australia's exotic flora

and fauna cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

The vast majority of Australian animals are marsupials - animals whose young develop in a pouch instead of a placenta. Australia is also home to the only egg-laying mammals in the world, the amazing echidna and the extraordinarily odd duckbill platypus.



### Iconic Australian foods

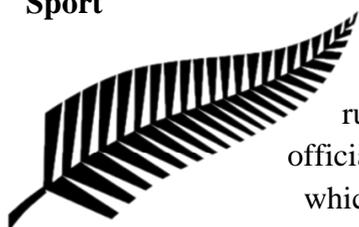
One iconic Australian food is Vegemite a vitamin-rich, somewhat bitter, yeast spread which is often thinly spread on buttered toast. Other unique or iconic national foods include macadamia nuts. ANZAC biscuits (a sweet biscuit, popular in Australia and New Zealand, made using rolled oats,



flour, desiccated coconut, sugar, butter, golden syrup, baking soda and boiling water) and the pavlova (a meringue cake with a crisp crust and soft, light inside, usually topped with fruit and, optionally, whipped cream) are both iconic Australian national foods. Kangaroo meat is widely available in Australia, although it is not among the most commonly eaten meats.



### Sport



At an international level, Australia has excelled at cricket, field hockey, netball, rugby league and rugby union. The New Zealand national men's rugby union team, officially nicknamed the All Blacks, represents New Zealand in men's rugby union, which is regarded as the country's national sport. The All Blacks perform a haka

**ALL BLACKS**® (Māori challenge) before each international match.

