

Australia – Moving Forward! We'd like to think so.

We, in Australia, are not just fortunate to have an amazing country to explore but we have also come so far with the range of gluten free options available in supermarkets, fast food outlets, restaurants, cafes, bistros, pubs, resorts, and hotels with breakfast bars, buffet lunches and a la carte dinners, making it all so much easier to travel up, or down the coast or across the country.

Wouldn't it be great to know when you travel to Alice Springs, Broken Hill, Mt Gambier, Esperance, Charters Towers, Burnie, Swan Hill or Tharwa, a gluten free meal is waiting for you? Did you know where all these towns are?

Hopefully we will find more venues to report on with the 'Thumbs Up for your Town' competition (Page 17). So get your entries in.

In the meantime, your state Societies have extensive lists available of places to eat collated from member's recommendations. As members, you can check the Society website or contact each state office and request information for when you are visiting.

Please keep those travel stories coming in – whether travelling here or overseas. We all love to get new ideas or be tempted to venture further. Contact details can be found at the front of this magazine.

From bush bashing to island hopping, read on to entice you to take that holiday leave. Enjoy this edition and travel safely over the festive season.

Sue Black / Travel Editor

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

We love to hear our members' stories and share their experiences. Don't forget to send us an article. As well as sharing your gluten free finds, tell us about your travels. When sending photos, they need to be of high quality (one megabyte or more) and unaltered.

North to Cape York

Join Gabrielle Goodsir as she gives us a beautiful description of her journey to the Top End.

Finding it difficult to condense a journey of such diversity and magnitude in such a short space of time, I have tried to give a brief glimpse of our trip to Cape York, via The Binns Track and The Savannah Way. Our friends Jim and Thelma Minto accompanied us on this quest to the Cape, a journey of which we would travel 15,157 kilometres and take 9 weeks to complete. The trip to the Cape had been a dream of my husband Victor for years with serious research and planning beforehand. We left our home in June 2009 with our off road 'T Van' valiantly accompanying us through some of the most rugged terrain and the most amazingly beautiful wildernesses in Australia.

Thelma and I are both coeliacs with Thelma daily meeting the challenge of being both fructose and lactose intolerant. We have embarked on similar outback experiences before and we were well prepared to meet our daily nutritional requirements.

Leaving our homes and travelling through Broken Hill, Port Augusta, Coober Pedy and Oodnadatta, Thelma and I had pre-prepared meals of soups, casseroles and spaghetti bolognese that we could easily serve with pasta or rice, realising that the first part of our journey would be very cold. We were not disappointed, with temperatures well below zero. The prepared meals were most welcome at the end of a hard days drive. The 'T Vans', not like ordinary vans have no heating therefore the only respite was to snuggle up in bed after dinner in thermals, beanie, gloves and hot water bag. Not a pretty sight, but we remained snug and warm.

The visual pleasures of the 'Breakaways' and the 'Painted Desert' north of Coober Pedy are a sight to behold. The unique ochre coloured hills rising out in



Jim and Thelma, Gabrielle and Victor at the "Tip"

resplendent glory reaching upward out of the 'gibber desert'* to meet the azure sky.

The remoteness of the desert awaits us as we travel on to the Dalhousie homestead.

The homestead and out buildings lie in ruins and are a constant reminder to the traveller of the dreams, courage and determination of the pioneers of this harsh land.

Leaving 'Old Andaddo', we are following the western side of the Simpson Desert on the Binns Track driving through huge remote cattle properties. Jim and Thelma are travelling 4kms behind us as the "Bull Dust" is 12 to 18 inches thick and they need vision and respite from the dust. It is quite insidious and creeps into the vehicle and lies like soft talcum powder everywhere.

The track also introduced us to the 'real Aussies' of the bush, the gem fossickers at Gemtrees. Being lulled to sleep by Johnny Cash or Slim Dusty was a prerequisite to this overnight stay. In stark contrast The Policeman's Waterhole had its own choir where the male donkey was harmoniously braying to keep his harem of jennies within his sight. Then at daybreak we were woken to the morning chorus of bird life, the bush was alive with vibrant song, a joy to our ears.

The days were now reaching into the 30's and a swim at the end of the day was most welcome. Butterfly Springs provided the right venue. Unique in every way, exquisite rock formations

cradling down to a lagoon of water lilies and a profusion of butterflies clinging to the rock faces to gain respite from the heat. We feasted that evening on gluten free pasta with Thelma's Amatriciana sauce, a memorable meal at the end of a perfect day.

The following day we were totally unprepared for the magnificence of the Western Lost City. The sight of huge rock formations, carved sculptures and monoliths of great natural beauty spiralling high to the heavens is an overwhelming experience of visual splendour which very few people visit because of the remote location.

Lorella Springs is our next destination where the lure of a swim in the thermal springs is enticing us onward. What a joy! They have showers as well, which is a luxury by any stretch of the imagination. The showers are heated by a 'donkey' which is a 44 gallon drum of water outside the facility heated by a wood fire underneath. A huge campfire is burning and at day's end the weary traveller can bake bread or slow cook a meal in the provided camp

ovens - the simple pleasures of life.

The Savannah Way is unique and spectacularly beautiful and requires a story in itself. Cobbold Gorge, Copperfield Gorge and Undara Lava Tubes are a geological wonderland, an ancient land carved out of volcanic rock.

We travel on to Cairns for 4 days of respite and to restock our larder before the final assault, Cape York or the 'Tip' as it is affectionately known. Victor in his usual style has chosen to travel the Old Telegraph Track. 'Track' being the operative word as there are only 2 wheel tracks through the bush and countless river crossings. Each descent into the river crossings is hazardous and needs to be carefully evaluated. Walking the creeks to gauge the faultless passage is a prerequisite with some major road works with pick and shovel having to be undertaken before entering the river and ascending safely to the other side. Some decisions by fellow travellers unfortunately were made in haste with regrettable outcomes but we made it over the Telegraph Track with the last 29kms taking us

3 hours. Quite a ride!

The remoteness and the beauty of the Cape is breathtaking and to stand on the 'Tip' of Australia is an unbelievable event in one's life.

I have really not mentioned food at all, but we feasted each evening upon a great repertoire of gluten free food. My husband Victor, the master chef, barbecued butterfly legs of lamb, barramundi and we also feasted on gulf prawns. Thelma mastered the 'Cobb' oven with delicacies of fresh bread, chocolate cake and buckwheat pancakes.

The outback, like the sea, requires the traveller to regard it with both reverence and respect. The desert can paradoxically mesmerise one by its beauty and therefore one has to be ever vigilant in the isolation and be mindful of hidden dangers.

We travelled a diverse intoxicating landscape. A brief glimpse of part of this, our amazing land Australia.

Gabrielle Goodsir / Port Stephens, NSW

*A gibber desert is formed when wind blows away all the sand in an area, creating a stony desert.



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West to Perth

Patricia Addis has fun on the Indian Pacific.

During 2009, I spent a two week trip to Sydney and Perth and would like to share my experiences with my fellow members.

I travelled overnight by train from Melbourne to Sydney for the first time. I rang before we left and was told that they have just introduced a policy of carrying eight allergen free meals per trip. These cannot be prebooked, so I was told to "get in early".

I had read in our magazine that the Indian Pacific to Perth provided gluten free meals. This is certainly the case, and there is no need to pre-book as the majority of meals included a gluten free option (no desserts, however). The service in the dining car was wonderful.

Patricia Addis / Holmesglen, VIC

The following is an excerpt from Countrylink website regarding meals onboard:

'Travellers wishing to purchase a hot main meal will need to order it from the buffet staff when they board the service. Each service will be supplied with a limited number of hot main meals. Travellers with a special dietary requirement are advised to order as early as possible after boarding the service to ensure that their dietary needs are met. There will be a set hot main meal on each service which will encompass diabetic, gluten free, dairy free, egg free, low calorie and halal dietary requirements. In addition, a vegetarian meal option will be available on each service.' However, 'Breakfasts complying with these dietary requirements are no longer available.'

NEED TRAVEL INSURANCE?

The Society receives many enquiries regarding travel insurance. A number of companies provide insurance without adding a surcharge for coeliac disease, including Mondial www.onlinetravelinsurance.com.au or Aussie Cover www.aussietravelcover.com.au or phone 1800 888 448.

North East to Daydream Island

Cheryle Hawkins enjoys an amazing time on one of our beautiful islands.

Daydream Island was more than a piece of heaven within the Whitsundays; it was a safe place to eat.

I recently took a well deserved break from my life and embarked on a weekend getaway with my best friend of 27 years for our early 40th birthday celebrations. I was hesitant about how well I would be catered for when I sent email after email confirming that the restaurants could cater for me with gluten free food. I was assured they could and wondered how many 'plain steak and veg' I would have to suffer. Armed with my homemade muesli, Red Rock chips, plain Doritos and Columbines, my girlfriend and I sailed to the island.

Dinner for the first night involved a tense discussion with the chef at The Fishbowl at the north end of the island. All they could offer me was the steak and the obligatory vegies.

Feeling a little let down I faced breakfast with my muesli in hand. The Waterfalls restaurant is a buffet style restaurant and was where I was to have my prepaid breakfast for the next 3 days. After talking with Tanya the chef, it was realised that I could eat the fruit, plain yoghurt and the scrambled eggs.

It was recommended that if we were to dine at Mermaids, the al-a-carte restaurant, in the evening, I should speak to Josh the head chef beforehand to plan my meal. What a wonderful man he was! Josh took time out of preparing for the dinner rush to discuss with me in detail what I usually had so he could make me something different. It reminded me of 'Ready Steady Cook' when he said he just needed 20 mins notice to start preparing.

Josh's chicken on a bed of risotto



Whitsunday Island National Park

was so delicious that I felt it couldn't possibly be gluten free. He made caramelised pears just for me and Pattie, his assistant, made an amazing swan out of apple slices to accompany the banana and sweetened cream. I left feeling full and just a little special.

The next night I left Josh to surprise me with 'a creation' as I totally trusted that he would be mindful of my needs. The fillet steak with garlic baby potatoes was divine. I was so appreciative that the best way I knew how to say thank you was to recommend the restaurants to others. It was a brave step to eat out on an island at the hands of someone else and I thank Tanya at Waterfalls and Josh at Mermaids for making it possible.

The only thing I would advise with staying on Daydream is to contact the restaurants direct and make sure they know when you are coming. Everything comes from the mainland and if they had known that I was there, I would have had pancakes ready day one! The bread is baked on the island and is a gluten free premix with no preservatives.

If you are thinking of staying in the Whitsundays, then Daydream is a safe option for food, not to mention the beautiful surrounds and Rejuvenation Spa!

Cheryle Hawkins / Regentville, NSW

North West cruise to Broome

Feeling 'normal' for Margaret Hawley never felt so good!

My husband and I recently enjoyed a cruise with Orion Expedition Cruises across the Kimberley from Darwin to Broome. As a coeliac, and indeed one who has been rather ill over the undiagnosed years, I had found a tour operator who I could have every confidence in to cater for my needs. The crew on board made me feel 'normal' and totally at ease in the food they offered me.

Every day on the Orion I was 'tracked' by one particular crewman who would quietly greet me and serve me a specially cooked meal from the galley. This same service was available at breakfast and dinner. No fuss, no fanfare. I was a normal guest who was able to have complete confidence in the serving of all food on board. Any coeliac would have to be thrilled with that!



"...there's always
the Blue Umbrella."

The Orion is a special ship where you take frequent off-board cruises in zodiacs. Sometimes bushwalking, beachcombing, viewing Aboriginal rock art or swimming in rockpools but there's always the 'Blue Umbrella'. After about 2 hours off the ship some of the crew will sit under the umbrella with refreshments such as a sandwich and champagne or a drumstick icecream. I was always catered for - a gluten free sandwich and a plastic cup full of three scoops of icecream.

This was a holiday where I not only felt like a normal passenger, but indeed one where I felt so well the whole time, both physically and emotionally. It is to be hoped that other readers may be able to share similarly positive experiences so that we can all experience these joys of truly happy travel.

Margaret Hawley/Sandringham, Vic.



East to Lord Howe Island

Second honeymoon for Anne and Alan Prior

For our honeymoon in 1962, we flew to Lord Howe Island by flying boat. We visited again recently, now being diagnosed with coeliac disease and flying in a conventional plane, less than two hours from Sydney. With the airstrip being only 1km long, smaller planes are used and luggage weight and size is limited.

From the air, two mountains dominate the island, the scenery is spectacular and the water is aqua blue.

We were welcomed at the airport by the proprietor of Ocean View apartments where we were to stay. The accommodation was excellent with tennis court, pool, barbeques, pool room and library provided for guests.

Pushbikes were available for hire to ride to the shops each day for our regular groceries. Supplies from the mainland come by boat and plane providing gluten free choices at Joys Shop on Middle Beach Road and the Coop on Ned's Beach Road including polenta, muesli, flour and bread mix. Gluten free bread itself was not available.

We dined at a number of restaurants including the bowling club and Milky Way where I was well catered for. It is best to book and usually your accommodation can organise a taxi for you.

We had an afternoon in a glass

We dined at a number of restaurants including the bowling club and Milky Way where I was well catered for.

bottom boat and Alan, my husband, went snorkelling. We saw a shark and a stingray sleeping on the bottom as well as some unusual sea creatures. The coral was beautiful.

There are several walks, some difficult and requiring a guide. There are trips around the island by boat as well as snorkelling, swimming, fish feeding and scuba diving very much within reach of all accommodation.

The view from Mt Lidgbird and Mt Gower is worth the strenuous hike. The scenery around the island is breathtaking. Cats are not allowed on the island and the feral goats have been eradicated so the rare bird numbers such as the Woodhen, related to the Kiwi, are growing.

I am hoping that one day we will fly again to Lord Howe Island - perhaps for our 50th wedding anniversary.

Anne Prior / Wongarbron, NSW

Travelling Overseas?

When planning to travel overseas, contact your state Society for the translations and latest information on the countries you want to visit.