

11/03/2019

Hi,

Days twenty through twenty-two; now in Australia....

Day 20 (11/02/2019) – It was Kangaroo Island day and what a GREAT day it was! We left hotel at 6:15 am; on the bus to the ferry. The bus trip was to be 1 hours and 45 minutes. However, we followed another bus from the same company; also going to the ferry pulling a luggage trailer that developed a flat tire. It turns out the jack for the trailer was on our bus and apparently our bus driver was the only one that knew how to change a tire. After I'm not sure how long, we were back on the road. It turns out our concerns about maybe missing the ferry were not well founded; both bus company and the ferry company were one and the same. Well, we finally got to the ferry and 45 minutes later we were on Kangaroo Island!

We were met at the ferry by our guide, Gary, in a small mini-bus. Seven of us climbed aboard the bus; Joyce, Esther, me, a couple from Germany, a woman from France and another younger woman from Finland. We were strangers at the start, but friends by the time we completed our tour. Gary was born and raised on Kangaroo Island and very knowledgeable and friendly. So, we're in the mini-bus and off we go for a fantastic day. I have included pictures below of the significant events of the day.

Our first stop was to see kangaroos so off through the woods we went. All roads on Kangaroo Island are dirt except the main highways, but we went from dirt into the woods. As we spotted kangaroos we stopped and got out of the bus; cameras a blazing! Kangaroos we saw; even a baby in the mom's pouch.

By this time we were all ready for coffee or tea. Our next stop was to an absolutely gorgeous spot along the coast. We all walked down to the beach, cameras going wild again, while Gary prepared our morning snack. It was a beautiful spot and we all enjoyed the treat.

After our coffee/tea stop a toilet stop was long overdue. So we stopped at the Eucalyptus Distillery where Joyce and Esther actually pet a tame baby kangaroo, we all relieved ourselves and Esther bought me an official Australian hat; I think an early Christmas present.

From there it was on to find Koala Bears; they're actually not bears. So back on the road, I don't remember dirt or paved, and back into the woods we went again. This time we're looking for Koala bears up in the trees. It turns out they feed on the leaves from eucalyptus trees, but only five varieties of the 50 on the Island; spending their entire day in the trees sleeping most of the time. They only come down to move from one tree to another; guess the leaves are greener in the other tree. Well, at a point we found some. That meant it was time to get out of the mini-bus and walk around looking up toward the tops of the trees. As we were walking around, we were photographing (a usual activity on this trip) those high up in the trees. Well guess who got the gold star; Joyce. She found a Koala bear on a low branch in one of the trees which turned to be the most photographed Koala bear on Kangaroo Island.

You'll never guess what happened next. Driving further through the woods we came upon a white tent. We were told by Gary to walk around and enjoy ourselves for about ten minutes while he prepared our lunch. When we finally entered the tent we couldn't believe our eyes. He had prepared a formal meal; white table cloth, glass wine glasses and all! We feasted on chicken, two kinds of salads, rolls and both

red and white wine with cheesecake for desert. After our meal and a quick cleanup, we were on the road again.

This time we were off to see sea lions and we saw hundreds of them on a beautiful beach. We went to another section of the coast and down on the beach where they were lying all over the place; mostly sleeping. Since Southern Hemisphere sea lions have two back fins, they can walk; can actually run. They were up on the slopes, under the walks, latterly everywhere. You will never guess what all the cameras were doing! It turns out sea lions spend three days at sea eating and return to the beach, worn out, to sleep for three days. I asked what do nursing babies do while their mothers are at sea and was told they "get hungry"; during which time they play with our babies and wait for their mothers return. If they try to nurse from another sea lion, they get rejected.

It was now getting late in the day and it was time to get everyone to where they were going after the tour. For us it was to our lodge since we were spending the night on Kangaroo Island. Gary dropped us off at the Mercure Kangaroo Island Lodge. At first blush our rooms look nice and overlooked the water. While checking in we found that a large tour bus was there and filled up the restaurant until 8:00 pm. Being as we were out in the middle of nowhere, we had no choice but to wait till then for our dinner. About 7:30 pm we went to the bar for our routine glass of wine and to wait for dinner. We met a very nice couple that lived on the Island that were there celebrating their 21 anniversary and talked with them for a while. Since the final Rugby match was on TV, he tried to explain Rugby to me; I did learn a little. Finally, we sat down for dinner. To make a long story short, we didn't like the menu or the menu prices. Joyce and I ordered soup and an appetizer, Esther ordered just the soup and we had no entrées; then it was off to bed.

As for our room, the toilet stopped flushing in the middle of the night and I had to fill the waste can with water to flush it. Also, the hotel was having water pipe problems so we had slow running showers in the morning. So be it; it was a great day in the woods and on the beaches. Seeing the wildlife was fantastic!

Day 21 (11/03/2019) – Today, we returned back to our original hotel in Adelaide. We met the van taking us to the ferry at 7:20 am and a ferry ride, bus ride and Lexus ride later, about 11:00 am, we were back at our hotel. Joyce's room was available so we put all of our luggage in there and went for a walk through the Adelaide Botanical Garden, had an ice cream cone lunch, took a free bus ride around the Adelaide and walked back to the hotel. At the hotel; Joyce did laundry, Esther repacked for the next leg of our trip and I worked on this fantastic email.

I am sending this email after only two days because of its length and the number of included photos I thought you may like to see. Not included in website version.