

National Park

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park



Image courtesy of Parks Australia

Uluru

Uluru is one of Australia's most famous landmarks and is situated in the centre of Australia. It is a large red sandstone rock, surrounded by desert, in an area known as the 'Red Centre' in Australia's Northern Territory. This rock, along, with nearby Kata Tjuta and surrounding land, makes up Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. It has been designated a World Heritage Area due to the special geological formations, rare plants and animals and its exceptional natural beauty. The traditional owners of national park are the aboriginal people Anangu and they have lived there for at least 30,000 years. Anangu lease the land to Parks Australia and they jointly manage the park.



The best time to visit the national park is between May and September, during which Australia's winter occurs. As summer temperatures can reach 37°C, visiting during the Australian winter means it is cooler and safer to walk around. There is a charge to enter the park and this helps maintain the infrastructure and environment. Part of the money raised is also given to Anangu to help maintain their community.



The nearest large town/city is Alice Springs, which is 450 km away and a 4.5 hour drive. It would take 30 hours to drive from Sydney to Uluru!

A Question of Colour

Uluru's colour is caused by iron-bearing minerals in the rock, which rust when exposed to the air. It is more colourful at the beginning and end of the day when the sun's rays strike the rock at a particular angle.

Closed to Climbers in 2019

To protect Anangu's native heritage, Uluru will be closed to climbers from October 2019.

Formation

Uluru and Kata Tjuta were both formed at a similar time millions of years ago, when the world looked very different. They originally sat at the bottom of the sea having been formed over a long period from sediment and sand that erode from an ancient mountain range. When this material was compressed by the sea and other forces, it turned into rock. Tectonic forces then pushed the rock up to the surface and as softer rock eroded over time, Uluru and Kata Tjuta were left standing. Uluru stands 348m above ground and Kata Tjuta 546m. What can be seen at Uluru (above) and Kata Tjuta today, are just the tips of huge rock slabs that continue below ground for up to 6km! The stripes you see on Uluru once lay horizontally but when pushed up by the tectonic forces they twisted into the vertical stripes you see today.



Image courtesy of NASA

Uluru (above) and Kata Tjuta (below) are about 35 km apart.



Image courtesy of NASA

© 2018 Sherkin Island Marine Station & its licensors. All rights reserved.

Image courtesy of Parks Australia



Even though Uluru is in the middle of a desert, natural springs at the base of the rock allows vegetation to grow.