

# Travel

# Uluru splendour

The perfect place to enjoy the spectacular views of Uluru is from the comfort of a luxury tent at the Longitude 131° resort.

Danny Gocs reports.

**A**T Longitude 131°, the five-star outback resort of glamorous tents near Uluru, having a room with a view is taken to a new level. Each tent – there are 15 tented pavilions constructed on a solid base – feature luxury touches including air-conditioning, king-size bed, lounge chairs and magnificent floor-to-ceiling windows.

At the touch of a button on the bedside console, the electronic blinds rise up to reveal a stunning vista of Uluru and the surrounding World Heritage listed Kata Tjuta National Park.

There are equally spectacular views from the Dune House – the resort’s relaxation area, restaurant and open bar – and nearby viewing areas to watch the sunrise and sunset over Uluru.

Longitude 131° has been operating since 2002, and in 2013 it was acquired by Baillie Lodges, which also runs Kangaroo Island’s Southern Ocean Lodge and Capella Lodge on Lord Howe Island.

Longitude 131° is popular with overseas guests as well as local visitors who want to spend a few days experiencing the attractions of the Red Centre while enjoying a relaxing breakfast, three-course lunch and four-course dinner, luxury accommodation and private tours. Everything is included in the tariff, which currently starts from \$1200 per person twin share a night.

The tented accommodation with a wonderful view of Uluru is the main attraction of the resort. To honour the history of the region, each tent is named after an early Australian explorer – I checked out one named after Ernest Giles (1835-97), who put the Olgas, Kings Canyon and other landmarks onto the map. Inside the tent are maps and information about his expeditions, as well as items such as iPads,



Luxury tents at Longitude 131° close to Uluru.

Nespresso machine, pottery water purifier and free wifi to add to an enjoyable stay.

Guests at the resort have included royalty with Prince William and Kate Middleton spending a night during their visit to Central Australia in April last year. As a memento of their visit, they sent a large-size photography book that has pride of place in the library in the Dune House.

All meals are included in the tariff, along with a program of signature outback experiences. Among the most popular are the sunrise walk through Walpa Gorge at Kata Tjuta, complete with snacks from the resort, and the afternoon Mala Walk around the base of Uluru (climbing Uluru is not encouraged by the Aboriginal community as the rock is a sacred site). This walk culminates in a gorge where you can enjoy cocktails and snacks as the

sun sets, bathing the rock face in ever-changing colours.

One of the highlights of a stay at the resort is Table 131°, a four-course dinner in the desert under the stars, complete with an Indigenous dance performance and an astronomy talk.

The numerous stars in the sky make a spectacular sight thanks to the remote location and lack of pollution in the air. (This is a similar experience to the famous Sounds of Silence sunset dinner conducted by the Ayers Rock Resort.) Then return to the Dune House for after-dinner drinks. Remember to pack warm clothes as the desert temperatures drop sharply at night.

The Red Centre offers a host of tourist experiences such as scenic flights, hot air ballooning, tours on a Harley Davidson motorbike, camel rides in the desert, day trips to Kings Canyon and



Comfort with a spectacular view of Uluru.

the Olgas, and even a helicopter transfer to the airport. These can be organised at Longitude 131° at additional cost.

Enquiries: [www.longitude131.com.au](http://www.longitude131.com.au).

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