

Post



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# Visiting the twelve Apostles - April 14, 2025

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## ***SUMMARY***

Our Great Ocean Road adventure! We were driven through the countryside to the Twelve Apostles, a famous set of rock formations in the ocean between Melbourne and Adelaide. It was a long drive but well worth it. Trip included several short hikes, a favorite being in a very cool primordial rain forest. The drive home was along The Great Ocean Road with spectacular views. We made a long stop at an amazing, huge chocolate shop. Also got to see the big three in the wild: koalas, kangaroos and kookaburras. - Karen

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### ***DETAIL***

Another guided tour today, yay! In Melbourne proper we're on a bay and not seeing the wonders of the ocean nearby. An option for going from our current stop to the next (Adelaide) is driving, and we almost signed up for that. But it's an eight or nine hours drive and all the steering wheels are on the wrong side, so we nixed that. Had we driven, we'd have been driving what's called "The Great Ocean Road" with beautiful views of bays, beaches, and the ocean. Today we're doing part of that, with a driver (who hopefully knows what he's doing).

It's a ways out there so we're up at 6 am and at 7 am Ange (short for Angelo) is picking us up in a good sized van. Ange's a big, soft-spoken guy. Born of Greek descent in Utrecht, Holland. He's been around and has some stories.

We all agree coffee at this early hour is needed. We're stopping in the small working town of Colac. There's two coffee shops, one with good coffee and one with awful coffee. You can guess which one we're going to. Ange was badmouthing the coffee at the bad shop to the lady who owns the good coffee shop. She appreciated that, but said her husband owns and runs the other shop. In the coffeeshop window is a small poster advertising an upcoming dance event called "Spicks and Specks". We register our surprise and indignation and are told that first word has a totally different meaning here, not like the derogatory use in the USA, back in the day.

We see a kangaroo by the edge of the road. Road kill. Sad. It has two red stripes of paint on it. This means, we're told, that this animal's been reported and there's been a "pouch check" done, to ensure there's no Joey in there.

Other signs lead us to discuss different expressions here from in the states. A bathroom is a dunny, a collision repair shop is a smash repair, a roadside rest area is a power nap center, and a barf bag on a plane is a chuck bag.

Our first stop is at the 12 Apostles. They are rock spire towers out in the water, very tall and very impressive. The coastline is being worn away and some of the rock is harder than others. As such, some of these rock pillars can be left behind when all others around disintegrate from the surf and weather. Are there 12?

Absolutely! At times. The number goes down and then another is spawned as more coastline is eroded. It's a popular tourist stop and there are lots of people here getting their perfect insta shots with the spires in the background. It's cool and there's a strong wind trying to knock us down.

Back in the van we drive a short ways to the Loch Ard Gorge, named for the ship, the Loch Ard, that went down just beyond the gorge. Everyone died, save two people. A seaman, a beautiful maiden, and a few crates of brandy. All three washed up on the beach. They holed up in a cave til the storm blew over and stayed alive drinking brandy. There are precious few other details of what went on in that cave, reeking of brandy.

Eventually the seaman scaled the tall cliff and went for help. To our knowledge there's been no movie of this story.

We have lunch at Georges in Apollo Bay. Very good food at a popular restaurant in a popular tourist town. We see houses listed for sale in the window of the realty office. They're on or near the beach. You'd be lucky to get \$50,000 for them ten years ago. Now they're a million. Same everywhere, it seems. And what \$1,000,000 gets you looks pretty small and run down.

A ways down the road we stop at some tall eucalyptus trees (that doesn't narrow down much where we are, they're everywhere in this country). There are already a group of people here looking up and pointing. Koalas in the wild! (Koalas, not Koala Bears, they're not bears!) I can use the 's' to pluralize 'koala' as there are two of them. One is eating and one is sleeping. We later hear that despite there being dozens of varieties of eucalyptus trees, koalas only eat from one tree. Why? The leaves on this tree make the koalas drunk and thus the 18-22 hours of sleeping a day.

Further down the road we stop for a short walk in a rainforest. The walk is well marked and there are raised walkways and bridges between the ravines. Everywhere are tall fern trees, towering overhead. The eucalyptus trees are truly towering, those that are still standing. The fallen ones are covered in ferns and thick green moss. It's like we've gone back in time and there's likely a big dinosaur around the next bend.

We drive past The Pole House, something you can look up on Air BnB or VRBO. The living room is high atop a tall pole, giving the place an amazing ocean view. The walk from the main house to the living room is a long glass elevated walkway. Very dramatic.

Around a bend is a field of dozens of kangaroos. Further up the hill, to a lookout, we spot an Echidna eating ants at the side of the road, and then two kookaburra birds in a nearby tree. At a nearby golf course we see more kangaroos munching on the grass.

Our next stop is our last, a famous chocolatier. We sample some chocolate, buy some chocolate, and get a big cup of gelato (or maybe it is ice cream). Anyway, they're way too generous and we down many more calories than we should. But it sure is good.

Our drive back to Melbourne is through the Monday evening traffic. We're going against traffic, thank goodness. At our hotel, we say our goodbyes to Ange. He's been a great Guide. Earlier in the day, he purchased some lottery tickets and promised that if the tickets win, he will split the winnings with us. We're hoping to hear from him.

We say 'good night' to Tricia and Don, find a nearby place for takeout Thai food, and hike over there. The place is upstairs, off a dark alley. There are a ton of young adults in there, all socializing and eating. We enjoy our food back in our room, with the tasty red wine left for us by our hotel. The food is so good and so hot. We are crying through the whole thing. Another successful day and we're off to bed.

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## Photos



Our driver, Ange, from Greece/Holland, etc. Funny, fun guy.



Exit to a tunnel being built under Melbourne to speed traffic that currently travels on a freeway nicknamed "The Parking Lot"



Us four and some of the famous Apostles behind us



They are pretty striking. What they're not is permanent.



It's windy but we gaze at them for quite a while.



The coast reminds us of Northern California.



The Loch Ard Gorge. Where the Loch Ard shipwrecked is beyond the opening behind us.



Cool bridges carved by years of waves.



Look! A koala (or two).



One of the koalas, eating. Way up high.



The other cuddly looking koala napping.  
We're told drunk and sleeping it off.



Hiking through a fern canyon. Very cool.  
Thankfully no dinosaurs.



Drove past this AirBnB rental, The Post. US\$850 a night. This is just the living room. It has a good view, it would seem.



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side of the road.



One and 3/4 kookaburra birds.



Mom Kangaroo and her adult teenager, Joey.



Making chocolates. The kids were enthralled.



Waiting for takeout at a popular upstairs Thai restaurant off a dark alley. Great food, cheap!

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