

Search Lifestyle Search

Lifestyle.com.au » Travel Guide, Tips, Advice & Reviews » Things To Do While Travelling  
 » Is the Larapinta Trail Australia's Best Hike?

## Is the Larapinta Trail Australia's Best Hike?

by **Fiona Harper** • 3 minute read



**NEXT ARTICLE**  
 Let Your Heart Set Sail

[Pin it](#) [Tweet](#) [Print](#) [Share](#)

**Subscribe to our newsletters**

Your Email Address Subscribe

**Want to be on Selling Houses Australia?**

Wayback Machine | https://www.lifestyle.com.au/travel/is-the-larapinta-trail-australias-best-hike.aspx | 11 captures | 8 Sep 2016 - 15 Mar 2021 | Go | MAR 06 | 2017 2019 2020

lists worldwide. Travel writer Fiona Harper laced up her boots to find out if indeed it is Australia's best hiking trail.

"You've got to listen with all your senses when you walk on country," says Cultural Connections tour guide Deanella Mack. Known as Dee, she's a softly-spoken Arrernte woman bridging the cultural gap between blackfella and white fella. Dee encourages open and frank discussion in her tours, inviting questions that we're usually afraid to ask either through fear of offending or through ignorance of **Aboriginal customs**. "There's nothing you can't ask me," she declares, her eyes crinkling into a smile.

She's a bright young woman with a knack for putting Aboriginal culture and customs into perspective, although she eagerly awaits a day when she is doesn't have to act as an intermediary between the cultures.

Today, she explains the unique cultural **traditions of her ancestors**.

"Songlines are stories told through song, dance and painting and provide a passport for different tribes to pass through others' tribal country," Dee says, explaining how 390 **Northern Territory** tribes who speak 250 languages are able to roam unimpeded. "Songs are our library, they're how we learn about country. Songlines are our passport to other lands."



She compares these songlines to the Olympic torch relay where the baton is passed from one sportsman to another and is carried with high regard, respect and acknowledgement. As songlines are passed from one tribe to another, the bearer and their kin are welcomed and granted respectful passage through country.

I'm reminded of these songlines on day five of our Larapinta Trail hike with **Life's an Adventure**. We sip tea brewed by our guides at a traditional entry and exit point used by nomadic tribes. Shaded by cycads clinging to red iron oxide-stained rock walls, I imagine songs reverberating among the eucalypts of Inarlanga Pass.

The Arrernte people attribute the dramatic landscape we're hiking through to the mythical Rainbow Serpent. Geologists and scientists, however, have a different theory for the scalloped layers rising from the flatlands of a former seabed as the West MacDonnell Ranges. The Finkle River is considered one of the oldest rivers on the planet. Folds, faults and erosion over millions of years have created mountains slashed with gorges, chasms and gaps. It's an intriguing landscape that lures bushwalkers from the novice to hardcore multi-day hikers.



The Larapinta Trail is a marked trail starting just outside Alice Springs at the Old Telegraph Station, ending 223 km later at Mt Sonder - the trail's highest point. It's cleverly broken up into sections which can be tackled as day walks graded by ability. Our two guides take care of all logistics, meaning that for each day's hike we only need carry a small daypack for essentials like water, sunscreen and cameras.

Guide Joel leads most of our walks while Danny takes care of things back at camp for the first two nights. We hike into camp from the impressive Ormiston Gorge to find safari tents have been set up and beds made, amid wafting aromas of slow cooked lamb. Sitting around the campfire, Tasmanian Pinot Noir in hand (company director Mark Norek won't relinquish his Tasmanian roots), we finish off our first night on the trail with a tiramisu before retiring beneath a twinkling canopy of stars.

The next five days continue much the same. It's wildflower season with blooms of bright colours, a striking contrast to the rich reds of central Australia. Hikes are broken up with morning snack of brewed tea and muffins taken in one of many gorgeous scenic locations, trumped by an even more stunning lunch spot. There is an alternative shorter version each day for those who prefer to hang out at camp relaxing, reading or just admiring the birds, wildlife, and atmosphere of the West MacDonnell National Park.



We adopt an easy pace that allows us to connect with the country that holds such spiritual importance to the Arrernte people. Treading lightly, leaving nothing but footprints, Dee's parting words stay with me on the trail: "Our physical, sacred and human worlds are all interlinked: when one part is disturbed the repercussions are felt across our world."

This is just one part of the equation that indisputably puts the Larapinta Trail on most hikers' 'Top 10' lists. It's certainly on mine.

[Pin it](#) [Tweet](#) [Print](#) [Share](#)

Want more? We thought you might like this video.

An unanticipated problem was encountered, check back soon and try again

**Error Code:** MEDIA\_ERR\_UNKNOWN  
 Session ID: 2019-03-13.de24617a15e2ec6763b0370f Player ID: myPlayer

OK

**Trending This Week**

- 5 of the most instagrammable spots in Slovenia
- 5 of the most instagrammable spots in Indonesia
- Why Sonoma County isn't just a hotspot for wine lovers
- 5 of the most instagrammable spots in the Philippines

### Join the Conversation

Please note, LifeStyle cannot respond to all comments posted in our comments feed. If you have a comment or query you would like LifeStyle to respond to, please use our [feedback form](#).

1 comment

Please login to comment

Posted by **Russell219** • Report

I get Paid Over £80 per hour working from home with 2 kids at house. I never thought I would be able to do it but my best friend earns over £9185 a month doing this and she convinced me to try. The potential with this is endless.

===== <http://www.BuzzPay9.com>