Uluru and Kata Tjuta

TWO MAJOR POINTS OF INTEREST

Each year hundreds of thousands of visitors make the journey to the World Heritage-listed Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in the heart of Australia’s Red Centre. There are two major points of interest within the park: Uluru, also known as Ayers Rock, and Kata Tjuta, also known as Mount Olga or simply The Olgas. Uluru is a magnificent rock formation that reaches 348 metres above the surrounding plain (860 metres above sea level) and has a circumference of 9.4 kilometres. It has smooth sloped sides and a mostly flat top. It has become an icon of the arid Central Australian landscape. Approximately 30 kilometres west of Uluru is Kata Tjuta, a group of large, intriguing rock domes – 36 in all. Its highest point is 546 metres above the plain (1066 metres above sea level). Uluru and Kata Tjuta are thought to have been formed about 500 million years ago. Both features have a distinctive orange-red colour.

▼ Uluru
ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

Situated approximately 450 kilometres south-west of Alice Springs by road, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park covers an area of 1325 square kilometres. Ayers Rock, as it was called then, was declared a national park in 1950. Eight years later Mount Olga was included in the park area. In addition to Uluru and Kata Tjuta, the landscape includes sand dunes, plains and desert, with vegetation ranging from spinifex grasses to shrubs and trees, some of which are rare or unique to the area. Among the fauna, 21 native mammals and 150 bird species are found.

KATA TJUTA

The first European to sight Kata Tjuta was explorer Ernest Giles in 1872. At the request of his benefactor Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Giles named it ‘Mount Olga’, in honour of Queen Olga of Württemberg, who had granted Mueller his title. The first European to sight Uluru was explorer William Gosse the following year. Gosse named it ‘Ayers Rock’ after the Chief Secretary of South Australia at that time, Sir Henry Ayers.

THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Anangu people are the traditional owners of Uluru and Kata Tjuta. They have lived in the region for tens of thousands of years. There are many examples of rock paintings in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, which reflect the Anangu’s long connection with the area. Guided by the traditional law of