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TRAIL

ISSUE
19

APRIL / MAY / JUNE 2016

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COVER KERRY-ANN MARSHALL, DEVIL'S PEAK
PHOTO JACQUES MARAIS/SONY



WIN GREAT PRIZES

- + TOMTOM Runner 2 Cardio GPS watch
- + RYAN SANDES TRAIL BLAZER books

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BEV ATTFIELD of Eat.Run.See was immersed in the Red Centre of Australia while running along the bright dirt trail around magical Uluru (Ayers Rock). **More on page 68.**

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2016 TRAIL SURVEY

WIN TomTom Runner 2 Cardio!
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Richard and Bev are Team Eat.Run.See, two former South Africans now living in Vancouver. Follow their insights, experiences, and culinary quirks issue by issue from the countries and trails they visit on their multi-year vegan globe-running adventure.

A run in the Red Centre is unforgettable.

G'day Oz-trail-ia!

Team Eat.Run.See tackled a few of the wilds and wonders of Australia during our three months Down Under. Thanks to the hospitality and generosity of a wonderful friend, we had a true blue Aussie experience across this vast and unusual country.

From east to west, we ran on trails and tar, with a wonderful montage of beautiful bush, famous landmarks, and colourful characters as our backdrop. Here's a snapshot of a few rave runs off the beaten track.

BLUE MOUNTAINS New South Wales

The Blue Mountains is a gorgeous region that's part of the Great Dividing Range. The foothills begin roughly 50km west of Sydney, with an impressive playground of gorges, canyons, peaks, and plateaus stretching as far as the eye can see. And what a stunning sight it is! We hopped on a



train from Sydney to Katoomba, one of the gateway towns to the region. From Katoomba we ran to a trailhead at the **Bonnie Doon Reserve**, and spent a few fun hours picking our way down to a canyon floor and back up again along the historic Six Foot Trail.

Our roundtrip saw us cover roughly 20km of red dirt, rocky canyon, and outback bush terrain, even crossing paths with a group of trail runners training for the annual North Face 100 race held here.

To close an already satisfying day, we added a quick side trip to the gorge viewpoint in **Katoomba** (inset pic) to marvel at Nature's painstaking work of art and to learn about the Aboriginal Dreamland interpretation of the creation of this breathtaking landscape.

ROYAL NATIONAL PARK New South Wales

One of the best parts of trail running is the global community it connects. We became friends with a Sydney-based Aussie runner at our **Tarawera 100km** race in New Zealand (*read about it in issue 17*). He invited us to join him for a run on one of his favourite trails in the Royal National Park south of Sydney.

There's something really special about joining a local for run – and we jumped at the chance to explore a 25km stretch of coastal magnificence in one of the largest natural reserves in the region.



We began our run at the southernmost trailhead of the park, reached by taking an early morning train out of Sydney to Otford. Immediately we were treated to stunning ocean views and the strong scent of Eucalyptus trees as the forest began waking up (along with our legs and lungs as we power-hiked the first of many stiff climbs!).

We loved the diverse terrain, which is also the setting for the annual **Coastal Classic** trail race. We ran through palm forests, across beaches, above hanging cliffs, over limestone rocks, and even endured the sudden, rapid downfall of an intense coastal storm. Our one-way Coastal Track adventure terminated in the hamlet of **Bundeena**, launchpoint of the ferry to Cronulla where our well-earned lunch of mouthwatering veggie burgers and beer awaited us.

ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

Northern Territory

It's no easy feat reaching Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, home of the world-famous **Ayers Rock** (or Uluru). This region is called the Red Centre for two reasons. It's red. And it's in the middle of a very large landmass. There's not much else to see for thousands of kilometres in any direction.

It's possible to drive here if you've got time and patience, but since we had neither, we flew from Sydney to Alice Springs, and from there to Ayers Rock.

All services and accommodations are

provided by Ayers Rock Resort.

Despite the difficulty getting there and the expensive accommodation, the few days we spent in this region were incredible. There are two key parts of the park to explore. The first is Ayers Rock – that amazing 350m-high sandstone formation that suddenly appears on the otherwise flat horizon. It's easily explored with access to a non-technical trail that circumnavigates the base of the rock, along with a network of bush trails within the park. After seeing the rock light up at the break of dawn, we laced up and explored 15km of the sacred site. While not a challenging run, it was an ethereal experience that will linger with us for a long time – this is indeed a special place.

The lesser known but perhaps more magnificent formation in the park is **Kata Tjuta** (or the Olgas). This is an extensive series of large red boulders that provides exquisite terrain for trailseekers of our ilk. The highest point in the formation is Mount Olga, rising to 546 metres, almost 200 metres higher than Ayers Rock. After another spectacular sunrise view (it's a popular and worthwhile thing to do!), we set out to get our feet dirty and outrun some of the many Outback flies. Two hours later we were satisfied with our exploration and finally decided that we'd taken more than enough photos of this breathtaking landscape.

The trail we followed was rocky, and narrow at times as we squeezed through boulders, and then suddenly vast and desolate, as the red earth reached away and out into the distance.

Our exploration was capped off with a magnificent sunset over Uluru, bringing an unforgettable adventure to a close.

BIBBULMUN TRACK

Western Australia

This final snapshot is not technically a run, but the sharing of an experience and a region that could easily be the backdrop for a fantastic running adventure. We were invited to join a multi-day hike along the **Bibbulmun Track** in Western Australia. This is one of the world's great long distance trails, stretching 1,000km from **Kalamunda** near Perth, to **Albany** on the south coast, winding through the heart of the scenic South West of Western Australia.

Our adventure focused on the first 70km of the track, starting south of Kalamunda and making our way back to the trailhead over four days. The track is incredibly well

maintained, with overnight rest huts roughly every 10km with shelter and water.

With hard-packed red earth trail underfoot, we relaxed into our journey through the varied terrain of the region, from scrubby brush, to dense forest, to slippery granite outcroppings and boulders, at times accompanied by kangaroos, huge black spiders, and just the right number of humans (not many).

It was a real treat to explore yet another part of Australia's diverse, rugged, and beautiful landscape. We were itching to dump our packs and pick up the pace, as the Bibbulmun Track is spectacularly and invitingly runnable.

Oh well, that's for another trip altogether! 🐾

BEV & RICHARD ATTFIELD

Their journey started in Belize, Central America, and has taken them through 30 countries, including South Africa. www.eatrunsee.com
[eatrunsee](https://twitter.com/eatrunsee) [eatrunsee](https://www.facebook.com/eatrunsee)



GOOD TO KNOW

- There are **direct flights** from SA to Australia.
- SA citizens **need a visa** to visit Australia.
- Currency is the **Australian Dollar**.
- Official languages: **English** (and Aussie!)
- Most mammals, insects, amphibians, and reptiles in Australia **could kill you**. Seriously.
- Unless you want to be publicly humiliated like **Johnny Depp**, don't bring live animals (or anything else that was once alive) into the country.



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- trailrunmag.com runningwildnsw.com
- perthtrailseries.com trailswa.com.au



TRAIL RUNNING RACES

- May **Ultra Trail Australia** (50km / 100km) ultraustralia.com
- May **Kep Ultra** (75km / 100km) kepultra.com
- July **Australian Outback Marathon** (11km / 21km / 42km) australianoutbackmarathon.com
- September **Coastal Classic** (29km) coastalclassic.com.au