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AAA Auto Pay is the convenient way to pay your membership dues! There are no checks to write, no stamps to buy, no late payments and no risk of having your membership lapse. Choose AAA Auto Pay and your membership dues will be automatically charged to your credit card, debit card, or checking account each year. When you enroll using your credit or debit card, your account will be charged seven business days prior to the membership expiration date. Enroll by using your checking account and your account will be charged one day in advance of the expiration date. To learn more or enroll in AAA's Auto Pay Program, call 1-800-441-5008 or visit your local AAA branch office. To sign up online, log in to your membership account at AAA.com and select "Enroll" in the Bill.

Free Battery Wellness Clinics from AAA

October is Fall Car Care Month and AAA East Central is hosting Free Battery Wellness Clinics to celebrate. State-of-the-art diagnostic equipment will confirm whether your battery will hold a charge. If a new battery is needed, one can be installed on the spot. The high-quality, AAA-branded battery comes with a three-year, free-replacement warranty, and AAA members receive a discount. Battery checks will be available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at these AAA office locations:

Thursday, Oct. 26

Rochester

- 300 Adams Street Rochester, 724-775-8000

No appointment necessary. If your battery fails the test, new batteries will be available for purchase and installed on the spot at a special AAA Member price.

REAL ID Extended to May 7, 2025

The Department of Homeland Security extended the REAL ID deadline to May 7, 2025. The REAL ID Act established minimum security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards and prohibits Federal agencies from accepting for official purposes licenses and identification cards from states that do not meet these standards. Beginning May 7, 2025, every state and territory resident will need to present a REAL ID compliant license/ID, or another acceptable form of ID for boarding commercial aircraft, accessing Federal facilities and entering nuclear plants. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) considers a current passport or military ID acceptable identification for boarding an aircraft. For more information on Pennsylvania's REAL ID compliant license, visit dmv.pa.gov/REALID/Pages/default.aspx.

Find Lower Gas Prices with Auto Club app

Eager to find the lowest gas prices in your location? AAA's Auto Club app can help you save time and money by comparing prices of the nearest gas stations. The Auto Club app also goes beyond finding the lowest fuel prices. Members can use it to request roadside assistance, book travel reservations for flight, car rental, hotel, or cruise, and much more. To get the app, text APP10 to 86792 and you will receive a link to download it.

Australia's Outback a geological playground

Landmarks, waterholes, majestic scenery, wildlife define desert

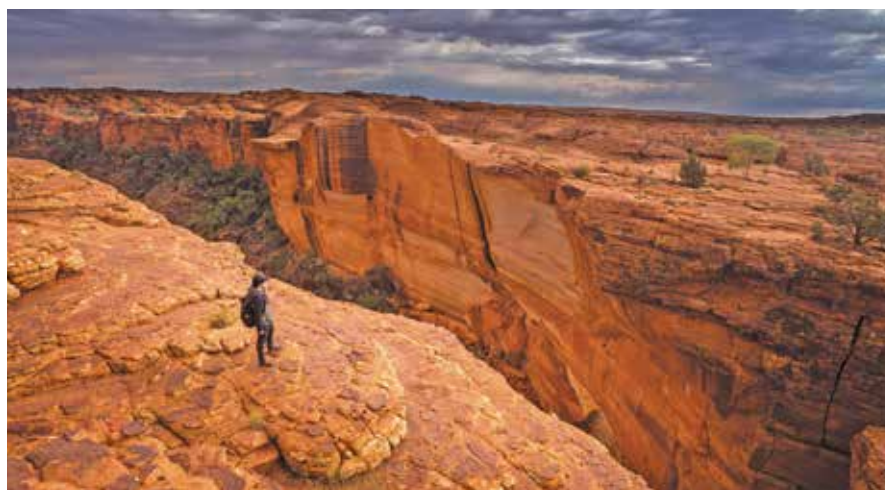
Synonymous with a steakhouse, the “real” Outback often doesn’t get the respect it deserves. The arid landmass comprises most of Australia. From an aerial view, it’s brown and yellow. Up close, it’s stunning and intriguing.

The Outback is more than 2.5 million-square miles of vast geological wonders. Canyons and mountain ranges grab your attention. Cliffs and waterfalls steal your senses. Hiking and camping challenge your stamina. And unique wildlife species wander the area.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is one of the Outback’s prime destinations. Ayers Rock is the main attraction and one of its most recognizable landmarks. Photos may capture its beauty, but its essence is best experienced in person.

Kings Canyon is a massive gorge. Its cliff walls stand more than 300-feet high and offer majestic views in all directions. A Kings Canyon Rim Walk is essential upon visiting. It’s nearly four miles in length and requires an initial climb of 1,000 steps to the top of the canyon. There are several places to stop along the way and absorb the massive scenery.

You’ll encounter the Lost City – a series of sandstone domes – which resembles the structure of an ancient town. Cotterill’s Lookout offers amazing sights and Garden of Eden is a permanent waterhole and has one of the Outback’s



GORGE-OUS – Kings Canyon is an overwhelming sight in the Outback. *Image: boyloso. Adobe Stock.*

most striking staircases.

Kakadu National Park is the largest of its kind in Australia. Known for its majestic waterfalls, it also has several types of landforms that include cliff walls, gorges and floodplains. Koolpin Gorge Track, Nawurlandja Lookout, Barrk Marlam Walk and Twin Falls Plateau Walk are pathways that lead to the best sights.

It only seems appropriate that the Outback would have a bizarre side to it. Devils Marbles Conservation fills that

role. Round rock formations precariously sit atop one another. Erosion and weathering has changed the shapes of the granite stone to resemble marbles. Unusual, indeed.

The surprises don’t end with stone marbles. The Outback also has pristine swimming holes. Simpson Gap, Stanley Chasm, Ellery Creek and Serpentine Gorge comprise a bevy of waterholes. Cool off after an intense day of hiking and take a break from remembering

you’re in a desert.

Had enough hiking? Mereenie Loop Road allows you to witness the Outback by vehicle. The road links West McDonald Range and Kings Canyon. It slices through aboriginal land. Mountainous landscapes light up your eyes from the comfort of a vehicle.

Oodnadatta Track, meanwhile, is a multi-day drive that follows the abandoned Ghan rail line with several stops, including uninhabited ruins, salt lakes and natural springs. Lake Eyre, Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs, Coward Springs and Hergott Springs are main stops. All capture the essence of the Outback.

Centuries of erosion have added mystical colors to the low hills of Breakaway Conservation Park. The overlooks are ideal places to watch the sunset. A colorful sky rests above unique rock formations, adding flavoring to their delectable appearance.

And don’t forget to admire the wildlife. The Outback is loaded with geological features, but the animals are equally as amazing. Australian feral camels roam the territory, along with wild hogs, a variety of lizards and snakes – perhaps steer clear from the snakes – crocodiles and kangaroos.

The Outback is a wondrous land. You’ll find magnificent landmarks and many species. Just don’t expect a blooming onion.

Maintain composure after auto accident

Save lives, return to road quickly by following AAA steps

The sound of our vehicles colliding with another is distinctive and dreadful. What follows doesn’t get much better.

There are many ways to avoid crashes, but they don’t always work. Defensive driving and educational courses will lessen the odds. So will avoiding distractions. Drivers, however, need to be prepared, despite these actions.

Motorists are responsible for knowing what to do should they be involved in an accident. The most important step is making sure no one is injured, no matter who is at fault. Drivers, too, should know what to do to protect themselves from legal or financial problems.

Preparation is the best defense. Drivers should have pen and paper in their vehicles and a disposable or smartphone camera. An insurance card should be accessible. These steps will have a driver organized and reduce stress following a collision. Use of a mobile app, such as AAA insurance, can help properly document the event.

AAA recommends motorists involved in a crash follow these steps:

- Assist the injured. Quickly observe with those involved in the collision to determine if there are injuries. Call 9-1-1 if medical attention is needed, and make sure no one is in imminent danger.
- Control the scene. Get to a safe place before taking time to exchange information. Safely move



CRASH COURSE – It’s wise to set up reflective triangles to warn oncoming drivers that they are approaching a crash site. *Image: Paolese. Adobe Stock.*

the cars if they are drivable and there are no injuries. Turn on hazard lights and set out warning flares or reflective triangles. Do not leave the scene.

- Notify the police and submit a report. Law requires this step. A report can be filed by visiting a local police department or automobile insurance agency days after the

crash if law enforcement does come to the scene to open an investigation. Having a report could help if a liability claim is filed.

- Document the scene and exchange information. It is critical to exchange and gather information with all parties involved, including witnesses. Having this on file will help complete future paperwork or

address potential problems. AAA suggests documenting home and email addresses, vehicle information (make, model and years for cars involved), vehicle identification/license plate numbers, insurance carriers and policy numbers, and take photos of the location, those involved and damaged vehicles.

- Notify insurance carrier. The carrier will need to be notified following a crash to begin proper claim filing. Many companies have staff available 24/7 and can assist immediately.
- Get your car repaired. The driver has the right to get the vehicle repaired at body shop of their choosing. AAA suggests considering a AAA Approved Auto Body shop, which can be found by visiting AAA.com/Repair.
- Unattended vehicle or property. Take action to inform the owner if involved in a crash that involves an unattended vehicle or property. Attach a written notice of the collision if the owner cannot be located and include contact information and the information listed above.

Drivers and owners of cars must be prepared to assume legal and financial responsibility if involved in a crash. AAA doesn’t recommend drivers to be pressured into admitting fault or providing information about the cause of the crash.