

All About Opal

Australia has 95% of the world's supply of commercial opal and the largest percentage still comes from the 70 opal fields in Coober Pedy. Opal is a true precious stone composed of amorphous silica and water. 90% of all opal found is called potch (opal without fiery colours) and this has no value. The other 10% of vividly coloured opal qualifies as precious opal.

The colours in opal are created by light rays being diffracted within the molecular structure of the stone. Opal is classified as a solid, a doublet, or a triplet. A solid opal refers to all opals that naturally occur in one piece.

A doublet is a two part stone consisting of a precious opal glued to another stone; either potch or some other material like glass or ironstone.

A triplet is a three part stone with a precious opal centre, a clear top and darkened base usually glass or potch.

Here in Coober Pedy you will find different types of opal on display from all over Australia, including boulder, black and matrix opal. In fact Coober Pedy shops have more opal on display than anywhere else in the world. Shop around the opal stores to make your special choice. All reputable shops will guarantee their opals in writing. Please do not

hesitate to ask for an explanation of the opal of your choice.



SOLID OPAL



DOUBLET



TRIPLET

W E L C O M E T O

Coober Pedy

The Opal Capital of the world!

You will find us in the Outback of South Australia, which was part of the inland sea millions of years ago.

Our township and surrounding area is one of the most interesting destinations to visit in the World. Opal is the reason for Coober Pedy's existence and over 40 nationalities have settled in this unique town to search for our wonderful gem. Many of us live underground in "Dugouts". You can find modern accommodation, shops and restaurants underground as well as above ground.

It's easy to spend a few days here, do a mine tour, see the outback scenic Breakaways, meet the locals and seek out your own special opal from one of more than thirty shops.

The District Council of Coober Pedy fully supports this informative brochure as it provides visitors a broad overview on what our township and community has to offer.

We welcome visitors to our Tourist Information Centre which is part of our Administration Complex in Hutchison Street. Well informed Tourist Officers

Voala Ingram and Michelle Riha

are available to offer assistance and make your stay a memorable one.

**Come and see Coober Pedy for yourself...
We're different!**

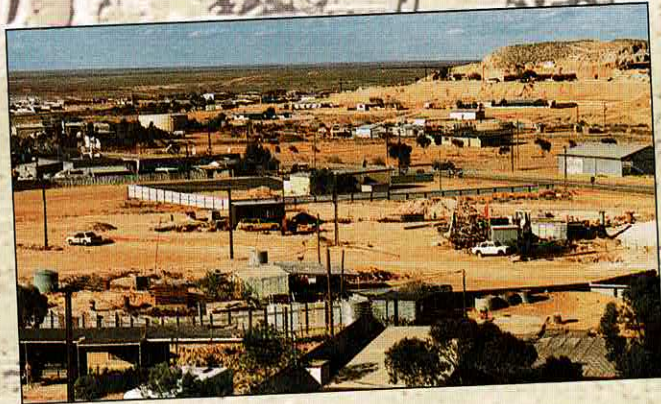


Accommodation

Like to sleep under the stars or 4 stars? Coober Pedy has a variety of 'rockbottom' priced camping (don't look for the lawn), to good hotels and motels, underground or on the top.



Desert Cave Hotel.....	(086) 72 5688
Opal Inn Hotel/Motel/Caravan Park.....	(086) 72 5054
Budget Motel & Backpackers Hostel.....	(086) 72 5163
Radekas Downunder Motel & Youth Hostel.....	(086) 72 5223
The Underground Motel.....	(086) 72 5324
Lookout Cave Motel.....	(086) 72 5118
Coober Pedy Opal Field's Motel.....	(086) 72 3003
Opal Cave Bedrock.....	(086) 72 5028
Umooona Opal Mine.....	(086) 72 5288
Best Western – Desert View.....	(086) 72 5396
Coober Pedy Apu Waru Tours Hostel.....	(086) 72 5333
Opal Dreaming... Underground Cottage.....	(086) 72 5985
Oasis Caravan Park.....	(086) 72 5169
Stuart Range Caravan Park.....	(086) 72 5179
Riba's Camel Mine.....	(086) 72 5614



Restaurants

Traditional Greek food or fancy new cuisine; our over 40 nationalities make a big impact on the restaurants. Try something different every night!

Opal Inn Hotel.....	(086) 72 5054
Opal Inn Chinese.....	(086) 72 5430
Traces Restuarant.....	(086) 72 5147
Breakaways Cafe.....	(086) 72 3177
Tom & Mary's Taverna.....	(086) 72 5622
Caltex Restaurant.....	(086) 72 5676
Ampol Roadhouse.....	(086) 72 5350
Ciccione's.....	(086) 72 5355
Miner's Store.....	(086) 72 5051
Old Miner's Dugout Café.....	(086) 72 5541
Mobil Roadhouse.....	(086) 72 5703
Coober Pedy Bistro.....	(086) 72 5222
The Last Resort Café.....	(086) 72 5072
Umberto's.....	(086) 72 5688
Crystal Cafe.....	(086) 72 5688
John's Pizza Bar.....	(086) 72 5561
Poppy's Red Head Rooster.....	(086) 72 5045
Opal Fields Motel.....	(086) 72 3003
Italian Miner's Club (Fri & Sat night).....	(086) 72 5101
Greek Community Club.....	(086) 72 5110
Croatian Club (Fri & Sat night).....	(086) 72 5851
Yugoslav Club (Fri & Sat night).....	(086) 72 5356
Serbian Club (Fri & Sat night).....	(086) 72 5356

Tours

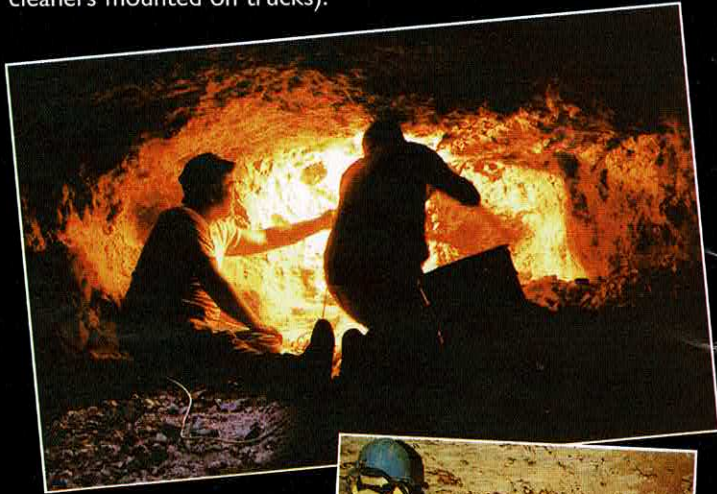
Walk around or get the gossip on a tour with Coober Pedy people who know the place. The town, mining, the Breakaways or even out further: a day tour with the mailman, or three days in the desert in a 4WD or on a camel.

Radeka's Breakaway Tour.....	(086) 72 5223
Coober Pedy Apu Waru Tours.....	(086) 72 5333
Desert Cave Tour.....	(086) 72 5688
Anne's Prospector Tour.....	(086) 72 5338
Joe's Tour.....	(086) 72 5163
Stuart Range Tours.....	(086) 72 5179
Treyor's Gem City Tour.....	(086) 72 5408
Perentie Outback Tour.....	(086) 72 5558
Mail Run Tour.....	(086) 72 5558

Facts & Things

Opal was first discovered by Willie Hutchison in 1915 just south of today's town. The first mining claim was pegged on 9th February 1915.

Today the miners with a Precious Stones Prospecting Permit (PSPP) peg a 50x50m or 100x50m claim to mine opal. Caldwell drills sink a one metre diameter shaft. Waste dirt from opal mines can be removed by buckets and hand windlass, power winches, elevators or blowers (large vacuum cleaners mounted on trucks).

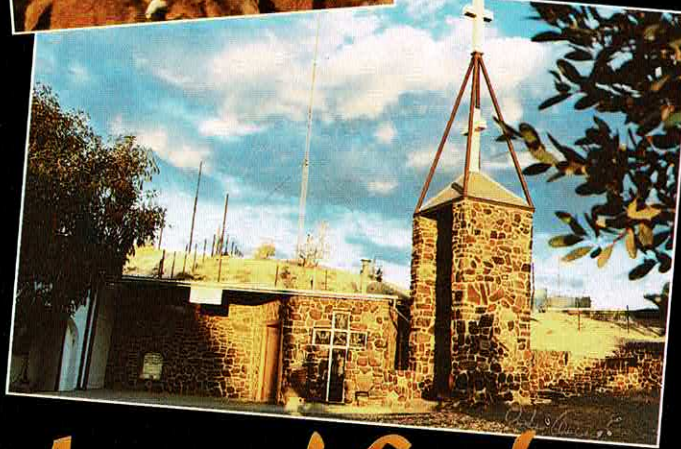


This all makes mining hard work and lots of luck. Beware, the opal fields are pitted with large abandoned drill holes up to 30m deep. After World War I returning soldiers introduced the unusual way of living underground in "dugouts".

Water has always been almost as precious as opal. At one time water rations were 108 litres per week (about 12 buckets a day) Approximately 400 Aboriginal people live in Coober Pedy.



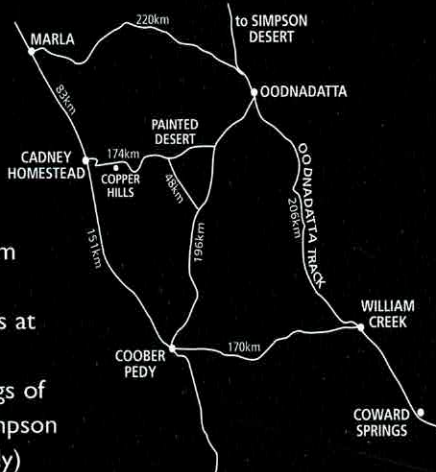
The people living here originate from the north-west communities Alice Springs, Port Augusta and Ceduna. Coober Pedy derived its name from the Aboriginal words "kupa piti", meaning 'white man's burrow or hole'.



Around Coober Pedy

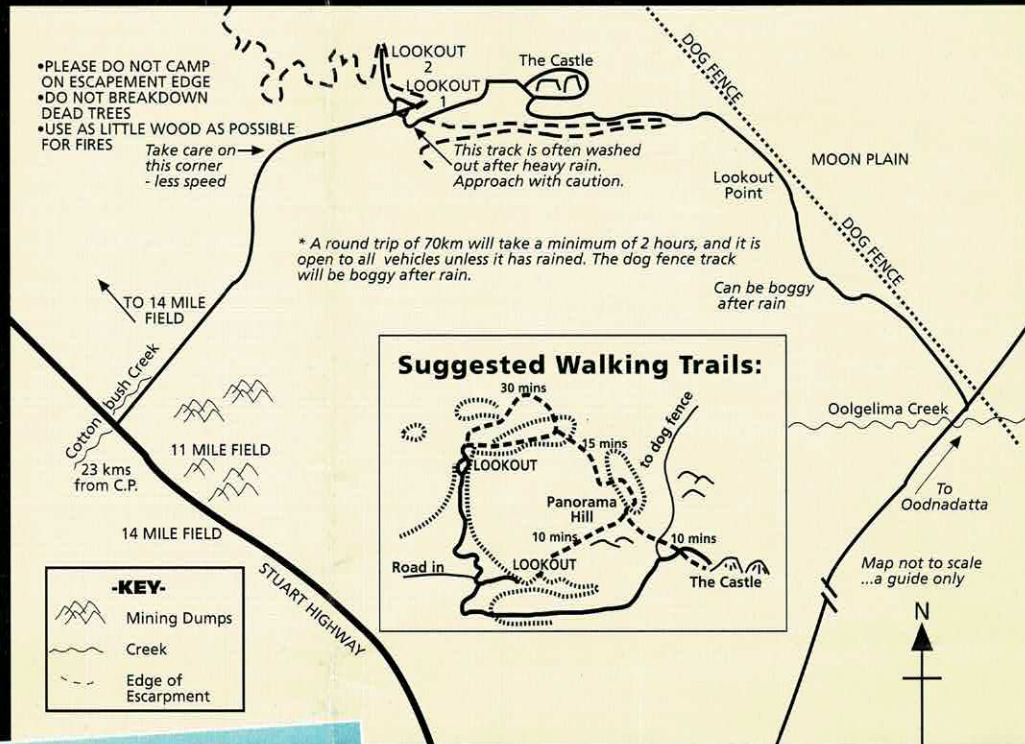
Stay in Coober Pedy for a few extra days as your home base and get out and about to see the following:

- the Painted Desert and Copper Hills
- the Oodnadatta Track and historic Ghan railway ruins
- the famous William Creek pub
- the mound springs at Coward Springs
- the thermal springs of Dalhousie and Simpson Desert (4WD only)



The Breakaways

Only 32km north of Coober Pedy is the colourful Breakaways, a low range of coloured sandstone outcrops broken away from the Stuart Range. This painted desert can be visited in a conventional car or on a tour. Locals enjoy picnics and walks throughout the Reserve. The 'Castle' has featured in many films and is believed to be significant in Aboriginal mythology. A round trip of 70 km can bring the visitor back along the dog fence to Coober Pedy. The dog fence, or dingo proof fence, is a 9,600 km barrier protecting sheep pastoral



properties from the wild dogs in the north. It stretches across Australia. Along the fence can be found fossilised shells, in the area the locals call the 'moon plain'.



Both the Breakaways and the 'moon plain' have featured in the films, Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome, Ground Zero and most recently Priscilla Queen of the Desert.