

Idiots Guide to Aussie History!



If you want a crash course in Aussie history..... Then this is it!

*Learn the basis of Australian history
in less than 10 pages!*

A Brief History of Australia

approx. 60000 BP	<i>The first Aborigines arrive in Australia coming across the land bridge from South-East Asia.</i>
1642	<i>The Dutch Willem Janszoon searches for a sea route between Holland and Dutch India on behalf of the United East Indian Company. He lands on Cape York Peninsula. Also, the Dutch Abel Tasman discovers Van-Diemens-Land, which is later named after him: Tasmania.</i>
1688	<i>The English pirate William Dampier visits Western Australia</i>
1770	<i>The seafarer Captain Cook occupies the Eastern half of Australia in the name of the English King George III.</i>
1788	<i>Captain Arthur Philips reaches Australia's mainland with 736 prisoners on the First Fleet and he founds the first settlement called Sydney Cove. This happens on January 26th, which will later become 'Australia Day'.</i>
1789	<i>Mutiny on the Bounty. The expelled Captain Bligh becomes Governor of the colony New South Wales</i>
1793	<i>The number of voluntary immigrants searching for a new home is constantly increasing</i>
1797	<i>Import of merino sheep from Cape of Good Hope</i>
1798	<i>By sailing round the seafarers Matthew Flinders and George Bass get evidence that Tasmania is an island (therefore the ocean area between the mainland and Tasmania is today called The Bass Strait)</i>
1801-1803	<i>Matthew Flinders rounds the continent and is the first to map out the whole coast line</i>
1804	<i>Foundation of Tasmania's capital Hobart</i>
1814	<i>First mention of the name Australia by the English researcher Matthew Flinders. This name is generally accepted replacing the old name "New Holland"</i>
1825	<i>Prisoners cultivate the land of today's city area of Brisbane</i>
1829	<i>Foundation of Western Australia's capital Perth</i>
1839	<i>The fig cactus opuntia inernis - imported from Texas and first used as a potted plant in Queensland - was planted as a natural fence for paddocks. It propagated very quickly getting out of control and destroyed about 24 million hectares of grazing land until 1925! Controlling it did not succeed until 1936.</i>
1840	<i>Last prisoners transported to New South Wales</i>
1841	<i>New Zealand severs from Australia and becomes an original colony</i>
1850	<i>The English Crown gives New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia almost unlimited autonomy</i>
1851	<i>Gold is found in New South Wales & the new colony Victoria originates at Port Philip Bay</i>
1858	<i>Australia reaches a population of one million</i>

1859	The English Crown gives Queensland almost unlimited autonomy
1862	John McDouall Stuart passes through the continent on the central route, which is nowadays called Stuart Highway
1864	First sugar production in Queensland
1872	Laying of telegraph cables between Java(Indonesia) and Darwin in the Northern Territory, Australia is thereby connected to the rest of the world
1877	Australia reaches a population of two million
1888	100-year anniversary and EXPO in Melbourne
1889	Australia reaches a population of three million
1859	The English Crown gives Western Australia almost unlimited autonomy
1894	Installation of universal franchise for women in South Australia
1901	Foundation of the Commonwealth of Australia
1905	Australia reaches a population of four million
1913	Canberra becomes Australia's capital
1914	Norfolk Island becomes part of Australia
1918	Australia reaches a population of five million
1927	The parliament moves from Melbourne to Canberra
1928	First flight of the Royal Flying Doctor Service
1932	Opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge
1936	With biological treatment the controlling of the opuntia inernis (Prickly pear) plague succeeded. This plague had been rampant since 1839. The most effective insect was the caterpillar of the small Argentinean butterfly cactoblastis cactorum (phycitidae) that ate holes in the plant making way for rotting of the opuntias. In 1936 Queensland got rid of the plague and about 90% of the pastures in New South Wales could be used again.
1938	Sydney hosted the Commonwealth Games
1942	Australia is united with England during the war, Darwin suffers from Japanese attacks
1945	After WW II Australia becomes foundation member of the United Nations (UN) & start of the immigration programme Populate or perish increasing Australia's population from 7.5 million to 11 million within 20 years
1948	Installation of forty hours work per week in whole Australia & production of the first Holden car
1951	Opening of the School of the Air, which teaches pupils in the outback by radio
1952	Foundation of the Trans-Pacific ANZUS Pact for defence purposes consisting of the members Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America
1954	Widening of the ANZUS-Pact to a South East Asia Treaty Organisation SEATO with additional members France, United Kingdom, Pakistan, the Phillipines and Thailand with seat in Bangkok. The SEATO was disbanded

	in 1977.
1956	Olympic Summer Games in Melbourne
1959	Australia reaches a population of ten million
1961	Discovery of new mineral resources: ore in Pilbara (Western Australia) and oil in southwest Queensland
1962	Right to vote for aborigines in Northern Territory & Perth hosted the Commonwealth Games
1966	The Australian Dollar replaces the British Pound as the national currency & turning away from the White Australia policy the state allows many Asian immigrants to settle down in Australia
1967	Civil rights for aborigines
1974	Cyclone Tracy destroys Darwin
1977	Passing of the Land Rights Act, which for the first time lays down land rights of aborigines & Advance Australia Fair becomes the official national anthem
1981	Australia reaches a population of 15 million
1982	Brisbane & Gold Coast host the Commonwealth Games
1985	Ayers Rock and its surrounding area (Uluru/Kata Tjuta) become property of the aborigines
1988	200-year anniversary and EXPO in Brisbane
1992	Opening of the Harbour Tunnels in Sydney in order to ease the traffic across Sydney Harbour Bridge
1995	Australia reaches a population of 18 million
1997	The construction of the Olympic Village starts three years before the Olympic Games 2000 in Sydney
1999	Aa referendum the Australian people decide against the foundation of a republic but for keeping up the British Crown as their head of state
2000	Olympic Summer Games in Sydney
2003	The most devastating bushfires of the last decades destroy a whole suburb of Australia's capital Canberra
2004	Bendigo, Australia hosted the 2004 Commonwealth Youth Games
2005	One of the Twelve Apostles collapses on July 4th due to weathering for 6.000 years
2006	Melbourne to host the Commonwealth Games

Notable Moments in Australia History

The Continent

The continent of Australia (roughly equal in size to the continent of North America), was 'discovered' by a number of explorers before James Cook in 1770.



Some historians claim that it is at least possible that Marco Polo visited our shores, but it is definitely known that Dutch Navigator Plesart landed on the west coast in 1629; Abel Tasman in 1642-3; William de Vlamingh in 1697; William Dampier in 1699; Nicholas du Fresne (who is said to have visited Tasmania) in 1767 to mention a few.

At the time James Cook discovered the 'continent it was known as 'Tierra Austral del Espiritu Santo' (The South Land of the Holy Spirit). One early map showed a land with the

name 'Lave la Grandé' to the south of Java. It included the notation: 'Coste des Herbaiges' - French for 'coast of vegetation'.

Australia Day

Australia Day is the day set aside to commemorate the arrival of Captain Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet at Sydney Cove on 26th January, 1788. On the day of his arrival, Captain Arthur Phillip proclaimed the area that became the colony of New South Wales to be a British possession. This landing started the first permanent European settlement on this Island continent. 211 years later, we acknowledge with maturity that this wonderful continent of ours was not ours to begin with and we rightfully respect the original indigenous people of our land - The Aborigines.



The celebrations of Australia Day have changed over the years. The traditional flag-raising and commemorative events still play an important part, but are now augmented by activities that promote Australia and the diverse cultural backgrounds represented in the Australian society. Special celebrations associated with Australia Day include the presentation of Australia Day Citizen and Young Citizen Awards as well as naturalization and citizenship ceremonies.

Captain Arthur Phillip



Captain Arthur Phillip (1738-1814) is remembered as being the founder of the first European settlement in Australia. He originally commanded the flagship of the First Fleet, the good ship "Sirius". The First Fleet consisted of eleven ships. The "Sirius" and the "Supply" provided by the British Royal Navy. The other ships were transport ships. These were privately owned merchant ships that were hired by the British Government.

One official estimate of the First Fleet was 564 male and 192 female convicts, 450 crew with civil and military personnel appointed to official duties, 28 wives and 30 children (half of which belonged to the convicts).

It appears that Captain Phillip did not have an illustrious career as a Naval Officer. He became a ship's apprentice at the age of 15 and continued to serve both full time and part-time in the British and Portuguese Navy. In 1786 he was appointed to establish the settlement in New South Wales with a yearly salary of 1000 British pounds. Before the Fleet left Portsmouth, Phillip spent months in preparing for the journey studying every detail to ensure its success. He asked for an advance party to prepare the site for the new settlers but this was ignored. He was in command of "Sirius" as the fleet left harbour but later transferred to the "Supply" in an effort to get to Botany Bay first and make preparations before the main group arrived. When he arrived, he decided not to settle at Botany Bay. After exploring further north, chose Port Jackson for the settlement and named it Sydney Cove. Phillip has absolute power over the affairs of the Colony and proved himself to a very capable administrator. He remained as Governor of New South Wales until 1793 when he resigned because of ill health and returned to England. He was appointed Admiral just before he died in 1814.



British Settlement

Captain Cook's account of his discovery aroused much interest in England but Britain did not try to colonise Australia until its American colonies achieved independence. On 13 May 1787, the first fleet of 11 ships sailed from England under the command of Capt. Arthur Phillip. They reached Botany Bay on 18 January 1788 with 1530 people, 736 of them convicts. Finding the bay a poor choice, the fleet left eight days later to establish a settlement at Port Jackson, a few kilometres north. Here, Phillip began the first permanent settlement on January 26, now known as Australia Day. The settlement grew to be Sydney, Australia's biggest city with one of the world's best natural harbours. It was named Sydney for Britain's home secretary, Lord Sydney, (1733-1800), who was responsible for the colony. Phillip's domain covered half of Australia (from the eastern oceanic waters to as far west as the 135th meridian), but his human resources were limited.



Three major problems confronted the early governors: providing a sufficient supply of foodstuffs; developing an internal economic system; and producing exports to pay for the colony's imports from Britain. Land around Sydney was too sandy for suitable farming, and the colony faced perpetual food shortages through the 1790s. (Natural food sources were largely limited to fish and kangaroo.) Phillip established farms on the more fertile banks of the Hawkesbury River, a few miles north-west of Sydney, but this land was often flooded or still used by the Aborigines. Food supplies came mainly from Norfolk Island, nearly 1,600 km (about 1,000 miles) away, which Phillip had occupied in February 1788; the island later served as a jail.



In 1792 the Royal Marines were replaced with the New South Wales Corps, which had been specifically recruited in Great Britain. Given grants of land, members of the corps became the colony's best and largest farmers, but they also posed a serious threat to the governors by their power over the economy. With a sharp eye for enhancing their income, they specialised in controlling the price of rum, which served largely as the colony's internal means of exchange.

Phillip's successor as governor, Capt. John Hunter (1738-1821), who arrived in 1795, tried in vain to gain control of the rum traffic. The next governor, Capt. Philip G. King (1758-1808), who served from 1800 to 1806, was no more successful.

Gold Coast smile

a Friendly Face in a Friendly Place



The island settlement at Hobart in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) was established in 1803 to accommodate convicts and to quash any possible French claims to the island. In 1806 Capt. William Bligh replaced King. Bligh had gained notoriety earlier, when the crew of his ship, the *Bounty*, had mutinied in the Pacific. Bligh threatened the corps with the loss of their monopoly. He was met with the so-called Rum Rebellion, and on Jan. 26, 1808, Lieutenant Colonel George Johnston (a relative of mine) arrested him.

Bligh was later sent to London, where he successfully defended his policies, but he was not restored to his governorship. The Rum Rebellion thus gave the leaders of the corps immediate victory. Meanwhile, one of its ringleaders, John Macarthur (1767-1834), had found the solution to the colony's lack of valuable exports; in 1802 he had shown British manufacturers samples of Australian wool. It was only after 1810, however, with the breeding of the merino sheep, with its long staple wool, that sheep grazing gradually developed into a major economic activity.



John Macarthur

Bligh's replacement, Lachlan Macquarie (1762-1824), served as governor from 1809 to 1821. The New South Wales Corps was sent home, and because the economy had improved, the government gained stability. Macquarie began an extensive public works program, employing the ex-convict Francis Greenway (1777-1837) to design churches, hospitals, and government buildings in Sydney. The population of the colony also increased after Britain's defeat of Napoleon in 1814.

The arrival of more free settlers brought increased claims to farmland on which more convicts could serve as labourers. These two groups of colonists, however, reflected a growing tension within New South Wales. As convicts completed their sentences or were eligible for release due to good behaviour, they sought land and opportunities. They were known as the emancipists, and their leaders urged that they be given more rights. The free settlers, like the corps before them, maintained that convicts, even after their release, should not be treated as equals. These opponents to the emancipists were known as the exclusives. Macquarie, as had Bligh, tended to support the emancipists, granting them land and appointing them to minor offices. The exclusives became critical of both Macquarie and the emancipists.



Macquarie's government was expensive, and most of the burden had to be carried by the British treasury. Overseas punishment, however, did not appear to have reduced the number of convicts, and many wondered if New South Wales was the proper solution to Britain's crime problems. In 1819, the British Colonial Office sent Judge John Thomas Bigge (1780-1843) to inspect and report on Macquarie's administration. He recognised the colony's growing importance to the British Empire as a home for wealthy free settlers, and he popularised the name Australia for the southern continent. Bigge's reports resulted in a major change in the constitution for New South Wales in 1823.

New South Wales was granted the first constitutional charter by a British law, authorising the creation of a Legislative Council with limited power. In 1825, by an



executive order of the British government, the island settlement of Van Diemen's Land (present-day Tasmania) became a separate colony.

Aboriginal Art, History and "Dreamtime"



*He clutched the heart in his hands and ran in fear
But having trod there, his footprints are left
Where he trod and ran away
His marks still stand, clear and good
Where for fear of a whirlwind he fled.
And the story of the Emu is there,
The cutting and the eating.
And the wind still talks and will always talk,
The grass will light and the trees will light
And the big wind will blow.
I've finished now.*

From Pitjantjatjara
(Based on a translation by Thomas Murray)

The art of Australia's Aborigines reflects their traditional way of life. The artist is restricted to the materials of his surroundings and the natural environment to provide both the medium and the means to protect his fixed permanent art. The Australian Aborigines painted on sheltered cave walls, carved on living trees, engraved on flat exposed outcrops of rock. Their portable art was confined to such things tjuringa (small decorated stones) which held the spirit of their ancestors; they also decorated things they could carry around i.e. boomerangs, spears and dilly-bags.



Art was and is an essential part of the Aboriginal life; it permeates every aspect, both ceremonial and secular. It was sorcery and magic, and the expression of deeply held religious beliefs, the source of fertility and natural increase also the saga of achievements and the daily record of gossip.



Almost without exceptions the Aborigines tell a story of time beyond memory when the earth was flat and featureless and there were no food, no flowers and no people. Then sometime, somehow, out of the earth or out of the sea, came the creative heroes. They were very flexible with form, sometimes male, sometimes female, sometimes animal and sometimes not even human, and they created everything. They gave birth to man and the other creatures; they converted each other into rocks, trees and other formations.

Another recurring theme in the Aboriginal art is the "stick" like magic makers, of which the MIMIS of Western Australia are an example. The Aborigines say that these strange graceful paintings, depicting people in action (running, leaping, fighting, and dancing) are self portraits of fairy like creatures who live in the rock crevices and come out only at night.



Art also plays its part in Aboriginal mortuary rites. In north eastern Australia the skulls of the dead are decorated with personal and clan totemic symbols and may be carried around for years as a mark of respect; a widow may wear her husbands' skull as a pendant. In many northern areas the bodies of mourners and the dead are decorated with elaborate and often fantastic designs.



Cave paintings are the most common form of Aboriginal fixed art, this medium gave the artist more scope than did the techniques of rock engraving. The pigments used were easy to get (locally) they came from the earth, ochre's of red and yellow, white pipe-clay and black manganese oxide. If they couldn't be found near by they were bartered for. Though some Aborigines travelled hundreds of miles to collect ochre from a particular place because of special mythological associations.

It seems that the practice of painting on bark was widespread throughout Australia and Tasmania. There are only a few pieces of the bark art that survived the early settlers, because there was little attention paid to Aboriginal culture and by the time interest was aroused, bark painting was a lost culture. It must be remembered that the major part of the art of the Aboriginal people was only intended to last for a short period of time. Most of their art was intended to be destroyed during a ceremony almost immediately after its creation. Today the only people still painting on bark are the tribes of the tropical north.

Anzac History

When Great Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914 there was never any doubt which way Australia would go. As a dominion she was automatically and legally committed; but in any case Australian sentiment was overwhelmingly pro-British, and Andrew Fisher spoke for the whole country when he promised to support her 'to our last man and our last shilling.



Australia's first acts of war were to destroy German wireless stations at Rabaul, Yap and New Guinea, and to occupy German New Guinea and nearby islands including New Britain, New Ireland and Bougainville. Resistance was weak and casualties were few, meanwhile Brigadier-General W.T. Bridges had begun organising a volunteer army for overseas service, to be known as the Australian Imperial Force and now famous in history simply as A.I.F. The response exceeded all his hopes and in three months a complete first division of 20,000 men had been enlisted and partly trained and was ready to embark. It was joined by two brigades from New Zealand, and on 1 November the combined contingent sailed from Albany, W.A. in thirty-eight transports, escorted by the Australian light cruisers Sydney and Melbourne and a British and a Japanese cruiser.

Its destination was England, via Suez. Nine days later a wireless station in the Coco Islands signalled that it was being attacked by a German cruiser, Emden. HMAS Sydney left the convoy and in a classic running battle, disabled the enemy ship and ran her aground. Owing to a change of plan, the troops were disembarked at Alexandria to complete their war-training in Egypt. Here they were joined by a second mixed contingent and united as the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) with General W.R. Birdwood in overall command.



As a part of Allied strategy it was decided, early in 1915, to attack Turkey through the Dardanelles and so provide a safe sea-link with Russia. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, was sure the British Navy could force a way through the narrow passage but the attempt was defeated with heavy loss. The operation then became a military one against a forewarned and powerful enemy. On 25th April 1915 Anzac, British and French troops stormed ashore on the peninsula of Gallipoli against fierce opposition from five Turkish Divisions.

After a day of chaotic, heroic and bloody fighting the ANZACS had established a precarious foothold at what became known as ANZAC Cove and during the next two days they held on grimly against continuous and savage counter-attacks. Then both sides paused to lick their wounds and the ANZACS dug in.

During the next few months weeks of stalemate were interspersed with days of bitter fighting, with appalling casualties on both sides. From the start it was apparent that the campaign must fail - indeed many thought it should never have been launched - and in December evacuation of the peninsula was ordered. This was carried out with such skill that the enemy was completely deceived and by 8 January the last Allied troops had left Turkish soil.

In this futile holocaust of eight months Australian casualties had totalled 8,587 dead and 19,367 wounded; but from defeat the ANZACS had emerged as probably the best assault troops in history. One thing they never lost was their sardonic sense of humour and as they returned to Europe, battle-shocked and weary they sang:



*"We are the ragtime army
The A.N.Z.A.C.
We cannot shoot, we won't salute
What bloody use are we?"*