



Delta Kay leads a tour;  
(below) bush tucker snacks.

EXPERIENCE NORTHERN NSW

# Truth-telling on a windswept way

Storm clouds gather as ancient beliefs, childhood memories and brutal history collide. By Denise Cullen

**T**HE breeze tousles Delta Kay's hair as we gaze out over the foaming ocean at Broken Head, less than 10 kilometres south of Byron Bay. The Dreaming story of the local Bundjalung people states that a collection of rocky outcrops here formed when three drowned sisters were turned to stone.

Behind us is a grassy green slope popular for picnicking and whale watching. Kay, a softly spoken Arakwal Bundjalung woman, recalls how she and her siblings used to visit the local shop to buy lollies and grab old cardboard boxes, which would serve as sleds. "We'd run all the way up here and slide down - it was great fun and kept us really busy," she says.

I'm on the Broken Head Aboriginal Tour led by Kay, which follows the Three Sisters walking track through the Broken Head Nature Reserve, as a way to learn more about the area's Indigenous history, culture and lore.

The roar of the surf fills my ears as we continue to tread the sandy path, still damp from recent rain. When we reach the turning-around point, Kay leans on a guardrail, as if to gather strength, and retells the story of a massacre of her people that occurred nearly 200 years ago.

As she speaks, silver gulls whirl, storm clouds

gather and the wind picks up speed, all conspiring to underscore the import of her message. She reveals that mounted police from Brisbane, seeking a man suspected of wrongdoing, came upon a large group of sleeping Bundjalung people and indiscriminately opened fire. They killed dozens, leaving the rest to shelter in rocky coves that embroider the edges of the beaches.

"As the high tide pushed them out of the rocky coves, they were just shot at," says Kay. "That's why the southern end of Whites Beach holds a lot of sadness [so] Mum didn't feel comfortable with us going there as young ones."

Kay launched Explore Byron Bay Aboriginal Tours in 2020. "Covid just opened the floodgates - people wanted to connect with country and to start learning the Aboriginal stories about the places they visited," she explains. Her other tours explore locations including Walgun (Cape Byron) and Bangalow, but the Broken Head Aboriginal Tour is her most personal, revealing her ancestors' deep connection to the land.

On the way back, Kay points out tasty native bush foods like pandanus, pigface and sea celery. She then leads us to a picnic table with an appetising display of yet more treats - pink lilly pilly fruits, purple dianella berries, plum pine, macadamia nuts, sour oory plums, cups of lemon myrtle tea. We throw the scraps towards scrub turkeys that are scratching in the leaf litter. Demonstrating how the land, its creatures and the changing seasons speak as one in Aboriginal culture, Kay points out how the scrub turkeys' colours emerge as the weather cools down.

As I sip my tea and simply listen, I feel an expansive sense of the interconnection of all things, just as it was, and always will be.

*The writer was a guest of Broken Head Aboriginal Tour*

## SNAPSHOT

**What:** The Broken Head Aboriginal Tour takes about 90 minutes and covers a 1.6-kilometre return walk on easy terrain.

**How much:** \$75 (adults); \$19 (children)

**Explore more:** [explorebyronbay.com/broken-head-tours](http://explorebyronbay.com/broken-head-tours)

## FLIGHT REVIEW ROME TO BRATISLAVA



## No frills but ... it's complicated

Ryanair fares are famously low-fat. Whether it's bang for the buck is not so clear-cut. By Natascha Mirosh

**W**E'RE heading to Slovakia's capital, Bratislava, a convenient central European destination to activate our Eurail pass and slow-travel back to our base south of Rome. But we don't have time to be leisurely in both directions, so we're shortcutting the outward leg with one of Ryanair's famously no-fat airfares.

**CHECKING IN:** Ryanair staff at Rome's second airport, Ciampino, direct us away from the single open check-in (which can cost an extra 55 euros, or \$98, if you're on the lowest fare) to a self-check-in that uses the Ryanair app. We receive our boarding passes, then line up at a bag drop. The airline has a complex tiered fare structure when it comes to luggage. At the lowest fare, "Basic", you can only travel with a bag that fits under the seat in front of you and your seat itself is luck of the draw. The next tier up, "Regular" gets travellers a small under-seat bag, priority boarding, an assigned seat and 10kg of hand luggage. "Plus" allows a 20kg check-in bag, an assigned seat and free airport check-in, but no priority boarding and no overhead locker luggage. The highest level, "Flexi-Plus", gets you a 10kg overhead locker luggage allowance, an under-seat bag, choice of seat, priority boarding, free airport check-in, fast-track security and the possibility to change flights without a penalty. But you lose the 20kg check-in baggage allowance.

**THE FLIGHT:** We're on a Boeing 737-800 and are boarded in groups. It's not necessarily in order from back to front, though, as some travellers have paid for priority boarding. I'm in 18D. The plane's decor screams "budget airline", with the plasticky hard blue and yellow seatbacks making it look more like a bus. The overhead lockers fill quickly and people walk up and down the aisles trying to find space. It's a bit chaotic, but we take off roughly on time. Once airborne, staff walk the aisle selling scratch-it tickets.

**THE CLASS:** There are no classes per se, although you can pay more for extra leg room seats, or seats at the front or back. There's even a payment for the "best seats in the middle of the plane". Seats are in a 3-3 configuration and non-reclining with a 30-inch pitch, which is fine on a short flight.

**FOOD & DRINKS:** Luckily, we've already eaten at the airport, so we don't have to buy anything from Ryanair's menu. A coffee or tea is 3.75 euros and water is 3.50 euros. A glass of wine is 8 euros, spirits 9 euros. There are chips and sandwiches, and bundled "meal deals" are 12.50 euros. All Ryanair flights are cashless.

**ENTERTAINMENT:** There's no in-flight entertainment or WI-FI. Nor any charging points, so make sure your own device is fully charged if you intend to use it.

**THE SERVICE:** Fine. Friendly and efficient.

**IN A NUTSHELL:** If you're keen to save money and are a packing minimalist, Ryanair's a viable option. And while you don't have to pay to use the plane's toilet as per the urban myth, you'd be best not to take the cheap base price advertised at face value.

## SNAPSHOT

**Flight:** Ryanair flight FR4226, Rome to Bratislava

**Frequency and duration:** Three times a week; one hour, 40 minutes

**Class and price:** Economy Basic from 18 euros one way (about \$30); for Regular, add 31 euros, while Plus costs an extra 40 euros on top of the Basic fare, and Flexi-Plus an extra 106 euros.

**Explore more:** [ryanair.com](http://ryanair.com)