

Top Places in Australia

You might not be able to surf on it, but Australia's lovely Wave Rock is one of the most stunning swells in the world. Made out of millennia of layers of stone, this natural formation looks as though it is actually petrified water.

At almost 50 feet high and over 300 feet long, Wave Rock's impressive size and shape have been drawing crowds for decades. It's an example of what geologists call a "flared slope," which forms at the base of an inselberg (an isolated rock hill or mountain that juts from a plain). There are several other examples of this throughout Australia, though none as impressive as Wave Rock. The amazing formation is actually just one side of an entire hill known as Hyden Rock, The "wave" is just one side of it.

Along the top of the wave, a low stone wall has been built that looks too flimsy for protection and too ugly for decoration. In fact it is there to guide rain water to the nearby Hyden Humps Dam. The wall was built in the 1920s in order to help bring water to people living in the arid area, and it continues to serve the same purpose today.

The incredibly fluid undulations of the wave are not the only incredible geologic sites in the area either. After uncounted millennia of erosion and sedimentary activity, there are also locations such as the Hippo's Yawn, which is a natural cave that looks, as it says on the label, like the wide maw of a giant hippopotamus. Besides being a tourist hot-spot with over 100,000 visitors per year, Wave Rock has been an important site for the local indigenous people for thousands of years.