



14 Day Kimberley Complete 4wd Self-Drive Experience

A comprehensive circuit of the Kimberley, this 14-day expedition visits all the major scenic icons of the Kimberley and traverses the notorious Gibb River Road and Mitchell Plateau tracks. Gorges, waterfalls, Wandjina and Gwion (Bradshaw) Art and the famous El Questro Station dominate the first part of the trip. After a stop in Kununurra to see the beautiful Ord River, the Bungle Bungle and Geikie Gorge provide a fitting finale as you take in the best the Kimberley has to offer.

Suggested Itinerary

Day 1 Broome to Windjana Gorge National Park

After departing from your accommodation early, travel up the Great Northern Highway to Derby. Ensure you have adequate alcohol supplies for the next 7 nights before leaving Derby. Walk and view the circular wharf, presiding over the 2nd greatest tidal variance in the World, and the Prison Boab Tree before heading off down the Gibb River Road (GRR) and turn right (signposted) towards Windjana Gorge. Deviate for the afternoon to explore Tunnel Creek, a 3/4 km subterranean passage through the Napier Range. Torches are needed but it's a cool place for the afternoon! Retrace your steps to Windjana Gorge turn off (signposted) to right, after a stop on the right at the ruins of Lillilmooloora, and set up camp for the evening.

Overnight camping Windjana Gorge National Park. (Toilet & shower.) (6 hours (451 km) driving, 1 hour (2 km) walking.)

Day 2 Windjana Gorge National Park to Bell Gorge National Park

A morning walking into Windjana Gorge will be very rewarding as you explore this ancient fossil reef forming imposing walls and see crocodiles basking in the sun. The Gorge is nearly 5km long and the energetic may wish to walk right to the end. Return to the GRR and turn right, Make your way to the Lennard River, where you may be able to stop for a swim. Travel past the Queen Victoria's Head Rock formation as you pass through the Napier Range before turning left to Lennard Gorge (signposted) in the afternoon and soak in the impressive scenery, although the track is usually very rough. Return to the Gibb, turn left and continue down to the Bell Gorge (signposted). Turn off to the left and make your way to camp.

Overnight camping Silent Grove, Bell Gorge. (Toilet & shower) (3&1/2 hours driving (140 km), 2 hours (4 km) walking)

Day 3 Bell Gorge National Park to Manning Gorge

After a drive to the Carpark and a morning walk into Bell Gorge; retrace your steps to the GRR. Head off left down the GRR to your next stop, picturesque Galvans Gorge (signposted) on the left for a lunchtime interlude. Park at the gate and walk to the fall. After a stop at Mt Barnett Roadhouse to pay camp fees, make your way to Lower Manning Gorge. You can walk that afternoon to beautiful Manning Gorge to see the waterfall and some Aboriginal Gwion (Bradshaw) figures. For the less energetic, you can stop for a swim and relax beneath shady paperbarks and perhaps take the walk in the morning.

Overnight camping Manning Gorge. (Toilet facilities.) (3 hours (155 km) driving, 3 hours (9 km) walking)

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Day 4 Manning Gorge to Miners Pool

After a morning stop at Mt Barnett Roadhouse, turn left back on the GRR and cross the Barnett River. Turn left to (signposted) Barnett River Gorge. Keep veering right until you get to the carpark or stop at the rocky creek crossing and walk from there. Time can be spent at Barnett River Gorge before heading left on down the road towards the Kalumbaru turn-off. Proceeding straight ahead and leaving the GRR, you can make a stop and perhaps a swim at Gibb River. Journey northwards for an hour to Drysdale River Station (signposted) to the left for fuel and to pay camp fees. Return to the Kalumbaru road, turn left and take the right track before the river crossing (signposted) to Miners Pool to set up camp for the evening and a swim.

Overnight camping Miners Pool. (Toilet facilities) (5 hours (320 km) driving, 1 hours (2 km) walking.) It is also possible to camp at Drysdale River Station to have shower facilities as well.

Day 5 Miners Pool to Mitchell Falls

Return to the Kalumbaru road, turn right and cross the Drysdale River. Turn left (signposted) to Mitchell Plateau and make a stop at King Edward River to inspect the crossing before attempting it. Turn immediately left and park in the carpark and walk to the Wandjina and Gwion (Bradshaw) art. Retrace your steps to the Plateau track and turn left. Turn right to the main King Edward River camping area and stop for a swim and lunch. Ascending the Mitchell Plateau, you enter a world of forests of Livistona Palms, ancient Aboriginal Wandjina and Bradshaw art, magnificent waterfalls and isolated swimming holes. The track can be quite rough all the way. Your overnight camp is on water at Merton Creek.

Overnight camping Mitchell Falls. (Toilet facilities.) (4 hours (139 km) driving, 1 hour (3 km walking))

Day 6: Mitchell Falls

A full day is available to fully explore this magnificent waterfall and its associated aboriginal art. Call in with the Helicopter pilots camp at the start and arrange a 'taxi' from the falls back to the carpark (about \$60), departing the falls about 3pm, or a longer scenic flight. Walk from the carpark to Little Merton Falls (down the hill to the left) and see wonderful Aboriginal art in overhangs under the falls. Continue through open woodland to another Gwion (Bradshaw) artsite, visible across the creek to the left. After a stop at impressive Big Merton Falls, you arrive at Mitchell Falls and spend time swimming and exploring this magnificent area. Cross the river and walk past the heli-pad to the wonderful lookout facing the falls. For the adventurous, you may find the track near this lookout down the other side of the hill to the river. Aboriginal Art may be found down the bottom on the other side of the river in overhangs. Walk or fly back to the carpark.

Overnight camping Mitchell Falls. (Toilet facilities). (3 hours (6km) walking, (the helicopter can usually be taken one way from the falls.)

Day 7 Mitchell Falls to Gibb River

Retracing your steps back to the Kalumbaru Road, stop for a leg stretch at the Lawley Lookout on the left. Continue off the Mitchell Plateau and stop and view more galleries of Aboriginal Bradshaw Art down a track off to the left when you come down off the Plateau. Stop again at King Edward River and relax for a while at its refreshing waters. Recross the river and turn right at the Kalumbaru road. If you were taking a Kalumbaru extension, you would turn left here. Continue back past Drysdale River Station, where you will need to fuel. Proceed on down to the Gibb River for a bush camp. Stop at Miners Pool or Drysdale Station if you prefer the facilities.

Overnight Bush Camp Gibb River. (No facilities) (6 hours (250 km) driving.)

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Day 8 Gibb River to El Questro

Returning to the Gibb River Road, turn left and continue the Gibb River Road Trek. Cross the Durack River (Check depth early in the season). After stopping to view the magnificent Cockburn Range at the lookout on the right, descend the range and ford the Pentecost River. Continue on to Emma Gorge (signposted to left) and call in to the office to purchase a wilderness pass and get a station map. Walk to the gorge and droplet waterfall for a refreshing swim. Retrace your tracks to the El Questro turn-off (signposted to left) and make your way through to the station. There are choices of riverside camping areas. Black Cockatoo at the Station is best if you want facilities.

Overnight camping El Questro Station. (Full facilities- laundry, toilet & shower.) (5 hours (281 km) driving, 2 hours (3km) walking)

Day 9 El Questro

Set off this morning to explore beautiful Zebedee thermal springs (signposted) to right to relax in the tropical surroundings. The energetic then have the opportunity to walk up El Questro Gorge before returning for lunch. This afternoon, hire an electric motor from the store and drive to Chamberlain Gorge (signposted) to give you an opportunity to view the Station Homestead from a distance. Take an electric boat up Chamberlain Gorge to see the Aboriginal Art at the end or do a spot of Barramundi fishing. Alternatively, arrange a boat cruise. Return towards the store and turn left to Branco's Lookout (signposted) for a sunset before returning to camp.

Overnight camping El Questro Station. (Full facilities) (1 hour (50 km) driving, 2&1/2 hours (6km) walking.)

Day 10 El Questro to Kununurra

Retrace your steps to the GRR and turn right. You make your way down to a right turn to MB Rocks (unsignposted) and some Aboriginal Art. Completing your traverse of the Gibb River Road, you reach the Great Northern Highway and have the option of turning left to Wyndham and the Five Rivers Lookout. Retrace your tracks and continue on to Kununurra. This afternoon you may wish to do an optional Boat Cruise or explore Hidden Valley National Park.

Overnight camping Kimberleyland Caravan Park. (Full facilities). (3 hours, (200km) driving, ½ hour walking.)

Day 11 Kununurra to Bungle Bungle

Departing Kununurra, travel 45-km back to the Great Northern Highway turn-off and turn left. After 50km, you come to the Ragged Range lookout to the left (signposted) for a detour down the old highway. Continue on to Warmun (Turkey Creek) and make a stop at the roadhouse. If you wish, ask directions at the roadhouse to the Warmun Aboriginal Art Centre. 52km along the Great Northern Highway turn left to the Purnululu National Park (signposted) before hitting the dirt to head west 55km to the Bungles. This road has many rough wash-aways at creek crossings. Travel through the Osmond Ranges to Calico Springs, with permanent water, which makes a pleasant stop. Stop at the Ranger Station and pay camp and entry fees. Turn left at 3 ways and make your way to Kurrajong Camp. Walk up the limestone ridge behind the camp for sunset.

Overnight camping Purnululu (Bungle Bungle) National Park. (Toilet facilities) (6 hours (322km) driving, 2 hour sightseeing and exploring.)

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Day 12 Bungle Bungle

Head off in the morning to the southern side of the massif to allow time to explore and appreciate the magnificent domes area of Piccaninny Creek. On the way, drop into the airstrip (signposted) to the right and arrange a time for optional helicopter flights, preferably lunchtime. An easy-paced walk up the creek, flanked by the curious, striped Beehive domes brings you to hidden gorges and a wide range of vegetation. Time can be spent wandering around these awe-inspiring, striped, beehive-shaped domes before an optional helicopter flight (app \$190) and lunch. This afternoon you can travel around to the Northern side of the massif and explore Echidna Chasm. If time allows, also visit Froghole Gorge.

Overnight camping Kurrajong Camp, Purnululu National Park. (Toilet facilities)
(3.5 hours (80 km) driving, 4 hours (8 km) walking,)

Day 13 Bungle Bungle to Fitzroy Crossing

Retrace your tracks to the Great Northern Highway and turn left. Cross the Ord River and continue on to Halls Creek. Turn left (signposted) down the Duncan Highway to Old Halls Creek. Turn left (signposted) to see the China Wall, a curious Quartz Ridge. Continue to Old Halls Creek and examine the ruins of the Gold Rush town. Return to the highway and turn left before continuing along the highway to Ngumban Cliff (lookout to left). Continue to Fitzroy Crossing and your overnight camping at the Lodge.

Overnight camping Fitzroy River Lodge. (Full facilities) (7 hours (492km) driving and 1/2 hours (1km) walking.) Ensure the cruise is booked for the following morning.

Day 14 Fitzroy Crossing to Broome

A delightful morning can be spent with Darngku Heritage Cruises, cruising and walking Geikie Gorge in the company of Bunaba Traditional Owners. The whitewashed cliffs and limestone eroded by massive Fitzroy River Floods are quite spectacular. After lunch and a look around the Old Town and crossing, continue through Kimberley cattle country to a stop at Willare and the mighty Fitzroy River before arriving at Broome, the Pearl of the North. (5 hours (400 km) driving, 2&1/2 hours cruising, 1&1/2hours sightseeing)

Recommended References

The above itineraries are not intended as the sole guide to the details of your route. Four Wheel Drive Hire Service recommends the following references be consulted or purchased prior to departure.

Map

Hema Maps – The Kimberley, Great Desert Tracks of Australia NW

Guide Book

The Kimberley- an Adventurers Guide by Ron and Viv Moon
Discover Australia by 4WD by Ron and Viv Moon.

Background Reading

Kings in Grass Castles by Mary Durack
The Australian Geographic Guide to the Kimberley.
The Explorers by Tim Flannery

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Websites

Moon Guidebooks- www.guidebooks.com.au

Hema Maps for an idea of the range of maps and information on suppliers - -

www.hemamaps.com.au

Detailed Track notes-www.mynrma.com.au/travel/go/outback_tracks/index.shtml

National Park Information- www.calm.wa.gov.au/national_parks/index.html

Aboriginal books- www.magabala.com.au

Darngku Heritage Cruise- www.darngku.com.au