



13 Day Escorted Cape York 4wd Self-Drive Adventure

This journey contrasts the dry Savannah Grasslands and richness of the Quinkan Aboriginal Art with the splendour of the Reef and rainforest on the coast. From the waterfalls of the Cape to the history of Cooktown, you explore the Cape and all it has to offer in 2 weeks.

Your journey to 'the Tip' in your comfortable Land Cruiser with Rooftop tent. Drive parts of the challenging Old Telegraph Track and have plenty of time available for fishing, swimming, sightseeing and a spot of Bird watching. This is the Tropical north in all its splendour.

Day 1 Cairns to Laura (B.L.D) (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

We depart Cairns at 8am and head up the Captain Cook Highway and start ascending the Kennedy Highway to the quaint village of Kuranda. We have the opportunity here to take the Skyrail gondola above and through the rainforest to Kuranda. (We will drive the driver's back to their cars). After a stop to explore the area, we continue on to Mareeba and then on to Mt Molloy for a stop for lunch.

We pass the Palmer River Roadhouse and continue to Bob's lookout with views over the Desailly Range. Continuing on to Lakeland and its agricultural expanses, we stop for a locally grown coffee.

The road to Laura begins to get more corrugated and we stop at Split Rock Art site to view the wonderful galleries of Quinkan Aboriginal Art. The walk to Split Rock Gallery and return will take about 45 minutes. We continue towards Laura before stopping at the Caravan Park. The park must have one of the largest Caravan Park swimming pools in Australia!

Overnight camping Ang-gnarra Caravan Park, Laura. (Full facilities- shower, toilet and laundry) (258km (4 hours) driving)

Day 2 Laura to Archer River (B.L.D)

After a stop at Laura for a look, we continue up the Peninsula Developmental Road. A morning stop will be made at the Hann River Roadhouse. The corrugated Peninsular road continues to the town of Coen, Capital of the Cape. This frontier town has great atmosphere and fuel, groceries and a pub. After lunch, the road is bitumen to the airport and we pass through Rokeby National Park and on to Archer River.

Overnight camping Archer River Roadhouse. (Shower and toilet) (309km (5 hours) driving).

Day 3 Archer River to Dulhunty River (B.L.D)

Crossing the impressive Archer River is a lot easier these days with a bridge! The Peninsula Development Road continues on to the Weipa but we proceed ahead up the Telegraph Road. Some old poles, many bent by cyclones, are still standing at the side of the road. We continue on to cross the Wenlock River for lunch. After 41km, the track divides and the real adventure starts.

The Old Telegraph Track (OTT) to the left is narrow and slow and the creek crossings can be very tricky and steep. We travel slowly to avoid colliding with anything coming the other way. There are a couple of tricky creek crossings at Palm Creek and Dulcie Creek on your way to the lovely camping at the Dulhunty River.

Overnight bush camping Dulhunty River. (No facilities) (194km (5 hours) driving)

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Day 4 Dulhunty River to Eliot Falls (B.L.D)

After just over 3km, a track leaves to the right to Heathlands Ranger Station, avoiding the infamous Gunshot Creek crossing. Gunshot has a number of options, each as vertical as the other. One easier option, while not technically too difficult, has a narrow approach not much wider than the vehicle. From the Ranger HQ, another track to the left returns to the OTT. You pass the grave of a Linesman, a few more crossings and an Aboriginal Community. From here the road improves and we cross the Southern Bypass Track. After another kilometre, a turnoff goes 2.5km down to Fruit Bat Falls and a delightful swimming spot, also home to the carnivorous Pitcher Plant. We make our way to

Eliot Falls Camping Area for our overnight camping. The swimming is great at Eliot and Twin Falls! (60km (4 hours) driving.)

Day 5 Eliot Falls to Seisia (Cape York) (B.L.D)

Today we head for the tip! Continuing along the OTT, the first crossing has some rather deep holes so we take care. We return to the Northern Bypass track and travel 35km to the ferry over the Jardine. The drive from here to Bamaga takes about an hour. We follow the track through the Lockerbie Scrub Rainforest until the Pajinka Reserve Car park. The walking track leads through the rainforest, onto the beach and then over the headland to the Tip of Cape York. We've made it!

After lunch, we return and turn left to Somerset, Torres Strait's first administrative centre, with ruins of the historic outpost and remnants of the wonderful gardens left. We pass through the Lockerbie Scrub to the Cape York Souvenir store and buy a celebratory T-shirt, before returning to Bamaga and on through to Seisia. The camp ground is on the beach with some beach front shelters.

Overnight camping, Caravan Park, Seisia. (Full facilities) (173km (5 hours) driving.)

Day 6 Cape York (B.) Lunch and Dinner to be purchased.

A day to explore Thursday Is and Horn Is with an optional tour. Fishing, scenic flights or just relaxing are all other options. The Thursday Is and Horn Is tour costs about \$160 per person.

Overnight camping, Caravan Park, Seisia. (Full facilities)

Day 7 Cape York to Wenlock River (B.L.D)

Its time to reluctantly turn south. We retrace our steps to Bamaga and continue to a wartime wreck of the crashed DC3. We retrace our steps to the ferry and recross the Jardine. After a detour to Fruit Bat Falls for a swim and morning stop, we return to the Southern Bypass and travel through heathland and rainforest. We continue through the Heathland and down to rejoin the OTT to our evening camp.

Overnight camping, Moreton Telegraph Station. (Shower and toilet) (243km (4 hours) driving.)

Day 8 Wenlock River to Weipa (B.L.D)

After 24 km this morning, we turn off at Batavia Downs Station. This is a 40km shortcut to the Peninsula Development Road to Weipa. Reaching the Peninsular Development Road, we proceed to Weipa.

We will arrive late morning in time to set up camp and perhaps do some fishing or a 2 & 1/2-hour mine tour this afternoon at 1pm. Other places of interest are an Aboriginal Community Arts Centre at Weipa South and the Mining Museum at Nanum.

Overnight camping Weipa Camping and Caravan Park, Nanum (Full facilities) (129km (2 & 1/2 hours driving))

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Day 9 Weipa to Musgrave Roadhouse (B.L.D)

We retrace our tracks to the Peninsular Development Road and travel back to the OTT. Continuing down to Archer River roadhouse for lunch, we proceed to Coen and continue down to **the Musgrave Roadhouse to camp for the evening. (Full facilities)** (354km (5 & 1/2 hours) driving)

Day 10 Musgrave Roadhouse to Lakefield National Park (B.L.D)

Turning into Lakefield National Park, we continue towards the Hann Crossing and a stop. Taking the turnoff to Low Lake, we come to a birdwatchers delight. We make our way to Kalpower and camp near the crossing where we have access to barramundi fishing for the enthusiast.

Overnight camping, Kalpower, Lakefield National Park. (Shower and toilet) (138km (5 hours) driving)

Day 11 Lakefield National Park to Cooktown (B.L.D)

We return to the main track and continue on to the restored Old Laura Homestead, which is well worth a stop. Travelling to Battle camp, site of an Aboriginal massacre, we continue through to Endeavour Falls and have a delightful afternoon stop. This afternoon, we visit the Captain Cook Museum, the historic buildings of Cooktown with a walking tour and Grassy Hill lookout for sunset.

Overnight camping Cooktown Tourist Park. (Full facilities) (152km (4 hours) driving, 2 hours walking)

Day 12 Cooktown to Cape Tribulation (B.L.D)

Departing Cooktown, we head back on the bitumen to Black Mountain Lookout. We turn left and shortly arrive at Lion's Den Hotel on the right. The track takes us through Rainforest, the Cedar Bay National Park and numerous small communities. We pass the beautiful Bloomfield River and on through the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Community, detouring to Bloomfield Falls, a short walk up the track. A delightful diversion!

We return to the Bloomfield Track and cross the River. The track now begins to climb through the steep rainforest ridges. The track can be washed out and steep in parts. We arrive at Cape Tribulation, where world heritage rainforest and world heritage reef converge, early afternoon and have time to look, walk, swim and explore the wonderful Beaches. The Bat House is well worth a visit.

Overnight camping Cape Tribulation. (Shower and toilet) (105km (3 hours) Driving)

Day 13 Cape Tribulation to Cairns (B.L)

After a delightful morning in Cape Tribulation, we begin the trek to Cairns through the World Heritage rainforest. At Cooper's Creek, we take a 1-hour boat tour through the rainforest. The scenery is spectacular as we pass lookouts and make our way to the Daintree River.

Continuing towards Mossman, we detour to Mossman Gorge in the Daintree National Park to take a walk through the rainforest. The park is a nice place for lunch. Returning to the Captain Cook Highway, we detour to Port Douglas to see this resort of the rich and famous. There are some great views of Trinity Bay as we make your way homeward. We continue on to Cairns at the end of a wonderful Cape York experience that has unforgettable memories.

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INCLUSIONS

- Awnings and Rooftop camping facilities on the 'Zelt-Cruiser' or special price for the 'Aussie-Wanderer' (triple and quad share)
- unlimited km,
- all camping equipment in specially designed storage unit
- 12 v fridge, light
- GST and Stamp duty
- All meals as listed, Cruises, Barges and Entries as listed
- Basic Insurance
- Services of expert Guide/ Tour Leader and cook.
- All safety equipment, including GPS and Satellite telephone.

EXCLUSIONS

- optional touring and accommodation upgrades,
- Fuel
- Damage waivers.

Recommended References

Map

Hema Maps –Cape York.

Guide Book

Cape York- An Adventurers Guide by Ron and Viv Moon

Background Reading

The Explorers by Tim Flannery

Cape York- By the Australian Geographic Society.