



21 Day Broome to Darwin 4wd

Self-Drive Adventure

Waterfalls and Aboriginal Art, Birdlife and Gorges. These are the scenic delights awaiting the 4wd exploration of Kakadu and the Kimberley. Visiting two of the most dramatic scenic, cultural and wildlife-rich areas of Australia, you travel via Geikie Gorge to the Gibb River Road and Mitchell Plateau, with its stunning array of Wandjana and Gwion (Bradshaw) Art. Explore El Questro and travel east through Kununurra and on to Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) National Park. Kakadu and Litchfield National Parks are the highlights of the NT leg as you finish in Darwin at the end of a great adventure.

Suggested Itinerary

Day 1 Broome to Fitzroy Crossing

Ensure the Darrngku Heritage Cruise is booked for this afternoon in Fitzroy Crossing. Conservation and Land Management (CALM) run a cheaper, shorter cruise if preferred. Depart early from your accommodation and drive through Kimberley cattle country for the morning. After a morning stop near the Fitzroy River at Willare, you can detour to Derby and visit the wharf and Prison Boab Tree. Ensure you have adequate alcohol supplies for the next 7 nights before leaving Derby or Fitzroy Crossing. You arrive in Fitzroy Crossing and head out to the gorge before enjoying an afternoon Darrngku Heritage Cruise on Geikie Gorge. Your camping this evening is at the

Fitzroy River Safari Lodge (Full facilities- washing machine, shower & toilet) (5 hours (400 km) driving, 1&1/2 hours (12 km) cruising.)

Day 2 Fitzroy Crossing to Windjana Gorge

Retracing your steps a short distance up the Great Northern Highway, you turn off to the right (signposted) to Tunnel Creek, a 3/4 km subterranean walk through the Napier Range. Continue on with a stop at the ruins of Lillilmooloora, (signposted) to right, site of the first dramatic chapter in the story of the Aboriginal resistance fighter, Jandamarra, before heading right towards Windjana Gorge (signposted) and establishing camp.

Overnight camping Windjana Gorge National Park. (Toilet & shower.) (3 hours (151 km) driving, 1&1/2 hours (3km) walking.)

Day 3 Windjana Gorge to Bell Gorge.

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. Continue on to the Gibb River Road and turning right, making 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,

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Day 4 Bell Gorge National Park to Manning Gorge

After a drive to the car park and a morning walk into Bell Gorge; retrace your steps to the GRR. Head off left down the road 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, you make your way to Lower Manning Gorge. You can walk that afternoon to beautiful Manning Gorge to see the waterfall and some 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.)

Day 5 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 car park 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. 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 perhaps a swim.

Overnight camping, Miners Pool. (Toilet facilities.) (5 hours (320 km) driving, 1 hours (2 km) walking.)

Day 6 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 down the track immediately left and park in the car park 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 Gwion (Bradshaw) art, magnificent waterfalls and isolated swimming holes. The track can be quite rough all the way. Your overnight camp is on water at Mertons Creek.

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

Day 7 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 car park (about \$60), departing the falls about 3pm or a longer scenic flight. Walk from the car park 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. 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 car park.

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

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Day 8 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, as 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. Continue back past Drysdale River Station, where you may need to refuel. 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.)

Day 9 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 the 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 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 camping areas. Black Cockatoo at the Station is best if you want facilities.

Overnight camping El Questro Station (Full facilities.) (5 hours (281 km) driving, 2 hours (3km) walking)

Day 10 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 a glimpse of 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 sunset before returning to camp.

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

Day 11 El Questro to Bungle Bungle

Retrace your steps to the GRR and turn right. Make your way down the Gibb River Road to a right turn to MB Rocks and some Aboriginal Art. Completing your traverse of the Gibb River Road, you reach the Great Northern Highway and turn right and travel for a few km to the Great Northern Highway turn-off and turn right. 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 fully 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 Bee hive domes brings you to hidden gorges and a wide array 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 hours (100 km) driving, 3 hours (6 km) walking)

Day 13 Bungle Bungle to Kununurra

This morning you revisit the northern side to Minipalms Gorge. The longish walk is rewarded with an amazing gorge blessed with an abundance of small palms in the gorge floor. Retrace your tracks to the Great Northern Highway and turn right to continue on to Turkey Creek. Retrace your tracks to Kununurra and your

Overnight camping at Kimberleyland Caravan Park. (Full facilities.) (7 hours (492km) driving and 3 hours (6 km) walking)

Day 14 Kununurra

Today is a good opportunity to explore this Irrigation town. The morning can be spent shopping for Argyle Diamonds or optional touring of the Diamond Mine, touring the agricultural area before an afternoon Ord River Cruise.

Overnight camping Kimberleyland Caravan Park (Full facilities)

Day 15 Kununurra to Timber Creek

Start your journey along the Victoria Highway with a visit to Hidden Valley National Park. Detour to Lake Argyle to marvel at the inland sea, many times the size of Sydney Harbour. Stop and view some Aboriginal Art on the right after you cross the Spillway Creek and make your way on to the NT border. A deviation to the Keep River National Park will be rewarding before finally ending up in Timber Creek for the evening.

Overnight camping Timber Creek. (Full facilities) (220 km (4 hours) driving, 1 hour walking)

Day 16 Timber Creek to Katherine

This morning you have the opportunity for a cruise on the Victoria River. You then head east along the Victoria Highway to Victoria River Crossing, travelling through the Gregory National Park. Continuing on to Katherine, you can make a stop in town before heading left out to the Gorge to set up camp and taking an afternoon cruise on the gorge.

Overnight camping Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge.) (Shower & toilet) (310km (3&1/2 hours) driving.)

Day 17 Katherine to Kakadu

Making your way back to Katherine, you turn right and head north. The detour to the right to Edith Falls is a well-worthwhile stop for a swim and explore. Return to the Stuart Highway and head north to Pine Creek, where you take the Kakadu Highway to the right. Follow the signs to Gunlom to the right and enjoy lunch at this delightful waterhole. Return to the Kakadu Highway and stop to pay your park entry. Make your way to Cooida and book in for the sunset cruise on Yellow waters. After the cruise, make your way to

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Mardugal campsite for overnight camping. (Shower & toilet facilities) (220 kms (4 hours) driving, 1 hour walking,)

Day 18 Mardugal to Jim Jim Falls

An early start today will bring great rewards as you take to the 4wd tracks to the magnificent Jim Jim Falls. Travel on to Twin Falls (approx.10kms) to the access point and walk 10 minutes and swim up the gorge (best to have air bed for this trip). After a great day of waterfalls, return to

Our overnight camp at Jim Jim Falls campsite. (Shower and toilet) (250km (5 hours) driving, 1&1/2 hours walking.)

Day 19 Jim Jim to Ubirr

Returning to the Kakadu Highway and deviate to Barramundi Gorge to take a walk to the gorge for a swim. Continue on to Nourlangie Road and visit the Anbangbang rock shelter and Nourlangie Rock. During the dry season there are ranger guided tours here for you to enjoy. You will find a great spot for lunch in the area Annabangbang Billabong site is where the famous shaving scene in Crocodile Dundee was filmed. After lunch you can make a stop at the Ranger station and then deviate to Jabiru if you wish. Make a stop at Cahill's Crossing on the South Alligator River, the border of Arnhemland. You then head to Ubirr and set up camp at

Merl Campsite. (Shower & toilet) (110 kms (2&1/2 hours) driving, 2 hours walking.)

Day 20 Ubirr to Lake Bennet

Make your way up to Ubirr to walk and view the X-Ray Aboriginal art here. Return to the Arnhem Highway and turn right. Continue to the Bark Hut Inn for a break. About 2 kilometres past Corroboree Park tavern, turn left down the Marrakai track. You traverse the Marrakai Plains for about 60km before arriving at the Lake Bennet and setting up for the overnight camp.

Overnight camping Lake Bennett (Shower and Toilet) (300kms (5 hours) driving, 1 hour walking)

Day 21 Lake Bennett to Darwin

This morning you head back to the Stuart Highway and turn left. After a few kilometres, turn right to Litchfield National Park. Stop to view some magnetic and Giant Termite mounds and visit Florence Falls for a walk through the rainforest to view the fall. After a stop at Buley Rockholes for a swim, continue on to Wangi Falls for a swim over lunch and walk to the lookout above the falls. This afternoon you detour to Tolmer Falls before making your way back to the Stuart Highway. Turn left and continue through to Darwin. Alternatively, there is a back road that continues on from Wangi Falls. Arrive in Darwin late afternoon and perhaps take in a sunset from Mindil Beach to celebrate the end of a wonderful Kimberley and Top End experience. (220km (4 hours) driving, 2 hours walking.)

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.

Road Conditions

It is important to seek up to date advice on road conditions as things can change rapidly.

Map

Hema Maps – The Kimberley and TopEnd

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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 Territory by Ernestine Hill
The Australian Geographic Guide to the Kimberley.
The Explorers by Tim Flannery

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
Outback tracks information -
www.mynrma.com.au/travel/go/outback_tracks/index.shtml
Kimberley National Parks-www.calm.wa.gov.au/national_parks/index.html
Nitmiluk and Kakadu- www.ea.gov.au/parks/index.html
Other NT National Parks- www.nt.gov.ai/ipe/paw/parks/index.html
Aboriginal books- www.magabala.com.au
Darngku Heritage Cruise- www.darngku.com.au