

Bachsten in the Wet: 24 January - 6 February 2021

Walking along the Charnley River in July 2018, I couldn't help but marvel at the flood debris 10-15 metres above the water level at that time. I couldn't help but wonder what it would be like in flood.



Art site near Bachsten camp

Walking along the Charnley in the wet would be both difficult and dangerous. Flying over it would be both spectacular and possible. Flying over it while heading off to spend time visiting some of the smaller creeks in the area would make for an incredible trip.

Spending some of that time with a proper roof over our heads would make it even better. I've checked. It's possible.



Hut at Bachsten camp

There is a helicopter landing pad at Bachsten Camp. We've been told that we can use the camp and the landing pad in the Wet. If Bachsten Creek is down, we may be able to cross it and have a look at some of the views from the other side. I wouldn't, however, want to spend the night there in case we got cut off by rising water.



Honeycomb caves near Bachsten. Imagine sitting here in a wet season storm.



Bachsten Falls in the Dry. Imagine what it would look like in the Wet.

No matter, there are some great things on the camp side. Views of Bachsten Falls (admittedly better from the other side but good enough from where we'll be), amazing rock outcrops and art sites within easy walking distance. A few km each way brings us to Rockhole Creek



Rockhole Creek. Think what this would look like when it was flowing.

with some great pools and waterfalls that must be spectacular when they are flowing.

Wren Gorge and Creek are only 15 km from the camp along a scenic 4WD track where there will certainly be no vehicles. We can spend 3-4 nights doing a return walk to visit this amazing area. The three photos below show Wren Falls, upstream of the falls and one of the art sites. Imagine what it would be like in the Wet.



The best helicopter we can get comes from Derby. To get to Derby, you can fly to Broome and catch a bus. Or I might join this trip up with another and offer a free ride to and/or from Darwin. The helicopter takes five passengers plus packs. If we get more than five, we'll fly some in to a nearby airstrip by fixed wing aircraft and do a shuttle from there. Unless we get more than ten including the guide, everyone will get the flight between Bachsten and Derby.



Monjon. Spotlighting at Bachsten.

The helicopter flight is over an hour each way so the trip won't be cheap. I've done the sums – ouch.

The Cost – no discounts apply

For 4-6 people, the cost is \$6000 each.

For 7 people, the cost is \$5500 each.

For 8 or more, the cost is \$5000 each.

If anyone doesn't get the long helicopter ride between Derby and Bachsten they will get a \$1000 discount.

Finally, don't forget the little things. Wet season wildflowers are spectacular and the wildlife near the camp is bold enough to stick around in a spotlight at night.

If you think there is any chance you might be interested, please let us know so you can go onto a list and be among the first to get the details when they are finalised.

Note 1. If those people who book early wish to start a week earlier, we can change the date to suit.

Note 2. Extreme weather conditions could delay the flights in and out.

Special Offer. If enough people are interested, we may be able to offer a special tour from Darwin to Derby lasting about a week before the trip on a share cost basis. Please ask for details if you think you might be interested.

Terrain and Difficulty

Overall Level 3+

Climate Level 5. It will be hot and it will be humid.

In Derby, the nearest town, the average daily maximum is 35°C (95°F). There is a good chance that the temperature could reach 40°C (104°F) at times. The average minimum is 25°C (77°F). Sleeping bags are not needed. Rain is very likely but not certain.

On average it rains every third day, mostly in short, sharp bursts. Averages can, however, be misleading. Occasionally, it might rain for days at a time. (This makes it somewhat harder to walk but it also makes the waterfalls more spectacular and keeps it relatively cool.)

Occasionally, it might not rain at all over the course of the full two weeks. Rain in the Kimberley is highly variable.

Terrain Level 1-3. Much of the pack-carrying walking will be on a 4WD track, closed to vehicles in the Wet. Some will, however, be off trail along creeks. Some of the walking will not require carrying a full pack.

The waterfalls we see are at their best at this time of year.

Vegetation	<p>Level 1-3. Much of the walking is through relatively flat, open woodland with a grassy understorey. Some short sections of grass may hide a broken rocky surface where you will have to be particularly careful. There may be some slow sections where you will have to pass through thick scrub. As we have never done this trip, there could be some short sections which are more difficult than we anticipate.</p> <p>The vegetation can vary from year to year depending on when it was last burnt.</p> <p>Wildflowers are particularly abundant at this time of year.</p>
Hours	Generally 4-6 hours, not including breaks. A few days might be longer.
Packs	Pack weight - up to level 3 – our longest walk should be no more than five days.
Art	We visit several art sites.
Campsites	Bachsten Camp shelters plus a number of bush camps.
Swims	This is the best time to see the local waterfalls, many of which flow only during the Wet. There will be a chance for several swims per day. Many of these will be in pools we have all to ourselves.
Lowlights	Heat and humidity. Possible lack of rain can make it more uncomfortable than normal. Exceptional rain can force a change of itinerary.
Highlights	Amazing helicopter flight. Several waterfalls seen at their spectacular best. Great swimming. Aboriginal art sites. The lush green landscape that dry season visitors can only imagine. No one else but our group.
Wildlife	Birds are always present but spread out at this time of year. You are unlikely to see many large animals.
Fishing	May be possible in some areas.
Maps	The 1:50 000 Bachsten Creek, Edkins Range, Lushington