

Kakadu Easter Special: 18-25 April 2019

List price - \$1795. See our discount page for details of our advance purchase and other discounts. www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/prices.shtml See the notes at the end for additional information.

Summary. This is a special trip created for two people who wanted a trip on these dates. It combines a night at Coinda and a Yellow Waters cruise with some truly spectacular scenery among one of the greatest concentrations of Aboriginal rock art in the park.



The two photos above were taken from the same rock shelter on two different wet season trips. They look out over part of the central basin when the main creek is running at its wet season best.

Itinerary

18 Apr Pick up from your accommodation between 7 & 8 AM. Start the drive to Kakadu. If we can arrange it, we'll do the Pudukul Aboriginal Cultural tour and visit the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Centre. Overnight and bistro dinner at Coinda.

19 Apr 6:45 AM Yellow Waters Cruise. This gives you a good view of the Kakadu wetlands, a major landscape but not one for bushwalking.

We have breakfast after the cruise then drive to the end of the Gubara track where we begin our walk. We carry full packs to our first campsite.



20-23 Apr We walk further up the creek exploring as we go. There will be at least two nights at one campsite.

24 Apr We return to our first campsite.

25 Apr We return to the vehicle and drive back to Darwin, arriving in time for 6 PM flights.



Baroalba camp 1

Now the details

Baroalba Creek is the main drainage for Mount Brockman, a large, irregularly shaped massif sitting on the plains a few kilometres away from the edge of the Arnhem escarpment. Its maximum dimensions are about 11 kilometres east to west and 15 kilometres north to south. Its maximum height is about 300 metres above sea level, about 240 metres above the surrounding plain. While the edges of the massif are extremely rugged and steep, much of the centre consists of a large basin drained by Baroalba Creek. The best time to visit this area is during or immediately after the wet season when every creek is flowing and the waterholes are all full as should be the case on this trip.



Climbing to a high point for a view.

The rugged nature of the approaches prevented buffalo from reaching the basin, making this one of the few undisturbed areas in Kakadu. The area is full of rock shelters that were used by Aboriginal people over the millennia. It contains what may well be the greatest concentration of Aboriginal rock art in Australia, dating from the most ancient to the most recent.

You are likely to see more Aboriginal art in more different styles than on any of our other trips of a similar length. In deference to the wishes of the traditional owners, we have not included any art site photos in these notes.



On the marked trail. This is as easy as it gets.



On a day walk from our top base camp

The walk starts with an easy three kilometre stroll along an old four wheel drive track to Gubara (Baroalba Springs) just above which we can enjoy a refreshing swim. From here, we leave all tracks behind, beginning a somewhat strenuous scramble up a boulder strewn creek. Once inside the basin, the ground levels out and the walking becomes easier. There are a number of nice camp sites to tempt us as we work our way upstream, taking our time, stopping

every so often to have a swim or just to enjoy the shade of a cool rock shelter or the sight of a particularly colourful patch of flowers.



Baroalba swim stop.

The next few days are spent slowly working our way upstream, exploring the many wonderful rock shelters, art sites and pools. Some of the walking will be done with day packs from base camps. We finish by returning the way we came.

Terrain and Difficulty

Overall Level 3

Climate Level 4. It will be hot (although not as hot as you might think) and it may be humid.

The average daily maximum is 33-34°C (91-94°F). If we get a spell of relatively dry weather, the temperature could reach 40°C (104°F). The average minimum is 23°C (75°F) but it has been recorded as low as 16°C (60°F) Rain is probable.

On average it rains one day out of four mostly in short, sharp bursts. Averages can, however, be misleading. Occasionally, it might rain for days at a time. (This makes it harder to walk but it also makes the waterfalls more spectacular and keeps it relatively cool.) It may not rain at all. There will be many opportunities to swim and cool off, but you must be prepared for hot, humid conditions.

See our Knock em down season page for more info

<https://www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/knockdown.shtml>

Terrain Level 3. Variable. Going up Baroalba Creek at the beginning is a slow scramble over rocks of a variety of sizes. Frequent rest and swim stops make it easier. Once in the central basin, the walking becomes fairly flat and relatively easy until you do the high point climbs. People who have never walked in this kind of terrain may find that this is one of the most physically demanding things they have ever done.

Baroalba Creek has many rock shelters if we wish to get out of any rain which may be occurring. Camping, however, is not permitted in the shelters. We may choose to climb to a high point for the views. The climbs are relatively short but quite steep and rugged.

A few short sections of most of the climbs are quite exposed and some people may need assistance. People who have a severe fear of heights may stay back and relax near a pool if some are going to a high point.

The creeks are likely to be low enough so that swimming across with packs will not be necessary. Exceptional rain could cause this to change.

Very little of the walking is on a marked trail. If you have never done any off-track walking through moderately rough terrain, nothing we can say can adequately describe the experience. The photos on our website, www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au, can give you a partial picture, but they cannot substitute for the real thing. Most of those who have not had any off-track walking experience find it more difficult than those who have done it before.

Anyone who does not regularly (average twice a month) go bushwalking carrying a full pack would benefit from doing some pre-trip training. Do this and you will almost certainly enjoy the trip. If you are not an experienced off-track bushwalker and you don't do any training or any other form of strenuous physical exercise, you might feel that the trip is more of an endurance test than the pleasure most people experience.

Vegetation Level 2-3. 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. The vegetation can vary from year to year depending on when last burnt.

The spear grass normally reaches its peak in March, often three or four metres tall in some areas (much shorter in others). We may encounter short sections of partially collapsed and seeding spear grass during some portion of the trip, but this early it is unlikely that there will be much.

Hours Generally 4-6 hours. A few days might be longer. Section two rates as level four because of the long first day. Those who have already done section one seldom find it particularly difficult.

Packs **Pack weight** - level 2. You need to carry food for four days. This will include about 2-3kg of the evening meals. You do not need a sleeping bag but you do need a tent and fly.

Art Some of the best in Kakadu.

Campsites Mix of sand and rock ledges. Most sites are good to great but we have to avoid some of our dry season campsites which could get flooded. You are unlikely to see anyone else anywhere along most of the routes. The two photos above were taken at



Wild tomato flower. The wet and very early dry season is the best time for wildflowers.



our top campsite. Can you see the two tents in the one at right?

Swims	We will have good pools at almost every campsite and lunch spot.
Lowlights	Heat and humidity. Possible lack of rain can make it more uncomfortable than normal. Exceptional rain can slow us down. Carrying a week's food.
Highlights	Great swimming. Aboriginal art sites. The still green landscape that dry season visitors can only imagine.
Wildlife	Birds are always present but spread out at this time of year. You are unlikely to see many large animals. The Yellow Waters cruise is excellent for birds, many of which you are unlikely to see on the walk. It also gives you a good chance to see large estuarine crocodiles.
Fishing	Not permitted on this walk.
Map	1:50 000 Nourlangie Creek.

Notes

Rain remains possible at this time of year. It is very important that you pack well enough so that you can keep most things in your pack dry, even if you have to pack a wet tent or other wet items.

It is a good idea to have a change of clothes for the night at Cooinda.

The Cooinda store has a limited selection of foods. If you want anything even slightly out of the ordinary, plan to bring it with you from the start.

Extreme wet season rains can close roads and cause delays. This is very unlikely but you need to be aware that it can happen. If this were to happen before the trip, we might have to change the venue. If it were to happen during the trip, we might not be able to make flight connections.

Moderate flooding can mean that we have to walk a portion of the vehicle track leading to the Gubara car park.

You should keep a water bottle, your lunch and some money with you in the car during the drives as it may be difficult to get into your pack before the end of the journey.

The cost of the Yellow Waters cruise which includes a buffet breakfast is included in the price of the trip. The bistro dinner and accommodation is not as different people will want different things. We can, however, book the accommodation for you if you wish. As of the time these notes were written, a twin room cost \$199.

As we had not been able to confirm the Pudukul Cultural tour at the time these notes were written, we have not included in the cost. The tour lists for \$99. If we can do the tour and we get a discount, we will pass that along to you. See www.pudukul.com.au/ for more information.

Cooinda

Cooinda is a resort situated in the heart of the Kakadu wetlands. This is an area noted for its wildlife — and mosquitoes. The former make it a great place to visit, the latter make it an uncomfortable place for an overnight walk. The attractions at Cooinda include the Yellow Waters cruises, the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Centre and a short dry season nature walk along a marked trail.

The Yellow Waters cruise provides the best way to see the wetlands and allows you to approach the wildlife much closer than you could do on foot. The cultural centre is a few hundred metres from the hotel and campground and provides an insight into the lives of the Aboriginal traditional owners of the park. The nature walk is generally under water at this time of year.

Both the cultural centre and the shop offer a variety of souvenirs for sale. Bring extra cash or a credit card if you think that you might wish to purchase anything beyond the drinks, ice creams and lunches that most people purchase there.