

# First Draft: Kakadu Easy Walk No. 1: June 16-21, 2015

**Note.** This is the first of the special \$300 six-day trips advertised in our December newsletter. We may not be able to run it on these dates. If not, the trip or something similar will take place in late July or early August. We will make a final decision by 22 May. That decision will depend in part on the response we receive.

**The price is so cheap because this trip is an experiment.** We have never tried a trip like this before. Please bear that in mind if you are interested. If it works and we offer similar trips next year, the list price will be over \$1000.

This six day trip will consist of two walks during which you will need to carry a full pack a total of less than 15 km.

The first walk will be above Jim Jim Falls. We will walk from the car park to a base camp above the falls and set up camp for two nights. We will do two leisurely day walks from there, one to the top of the Rainforest Gorge and one to the Jim Jim monoliths.

The second walk will be at Koolpin Gorge. We will walk from the car park to a campsite a few km upstream. The following day we will do a day walk exploring the art sites and enjoying the pools and views along the upper gorge. On the last day, we return to the vehicle, collect a second vehicle which we need to drop at Gunlom, drive to Gunlom, drop the vehicle off and return to Darwin.

**Note 1.** If we don't have someone in the group who can drive a 4WD on relatively rough tracks for about 20 km, this trip cannot take place.

**Note 2.** At the time of writing (7 May), we had not been able to confirm the availability of our proposed campsites. If we can't do these exact walks, we should be able to replace them with something similar. The one criterion is that we are able to move the extra vehicle from Koolpin to Gunlom.

## Terrain and Difficulty

**Overall** Level 2

**Climate** Level 2. Although June-July is the coolest time of the year, the maximum temperature on most days will still average 30-31°C. Although the average nightly minimum is about 16-18°C (65°F), it is not uncommon for the temperature to drop as low as 10°C (50°F). Occasionally it goes lower still. Sleeping bags are essential. Rain is highly unlikely.

**Terrain** Both sections have a few steep climbs, none of which is over 200 m. As short as they are, these climbs are strenuous. Some may require using your hands to hold on as you climb up or down. None are technically difficult. None require ropes or other special equipment. There will be some places where you have to step from stone to stone as you walk along the edge of a creek.

The creeks are low enough so that swimming across with packs is unlikely to be necessary. It may, however, be necessary to wade across slippery rocks through waist deep water. Your guide can help if you need assistance.

None 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](http://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. At this time of year, the spear grass has finished seeding and dried out.
- Hours** Generally 4-6 hours, no more than three hours carrying a pack on one day.
- Packs** **Pack weight** - level 2. You need to carry 3 days food on the first section, two on the second. This will include about 1 kg of the evening meals. You need a sleeping bag but are unlikely to need a tent.
- Art** We visit a variety of art sites on both sections.
- Campsites** Mix of sand and rock ledges. Most sites are excellent. You are unlikely to see anyone else at most of the campsites.
- Swims** Most creeks are still flowing well and the swimming is excellent. We will have good pools at almost every campsite and lunch spot.
- Lowlights** Possible tourist crowds at Jim Jim, smaller crowds at Koolpin.
- Highlights** Perfect weather. Great swimming holes. Aboriginal art sites.
- Wildlife** Birds are always present but spread out at this time of year. You are unlikely to see many large animals.
- Fishing** Not permitted on this walk.
- Maps** The 1:50,000 Jim Jim Falls map shows the first walk, the 1:50,000 Koolpin map shows the second. The 1:250 000 Kakadu park map shows all areas but is not suitable for navigation.

## General Notes

You can leave food and clothing for the second walk in the vehicle during the first one.

Make sure you keep some money and a water bottle with you during the drives. It is unlikely that you will be able to easily get things out of your pack during the day.

A daypack will be useful on both walks. If you don't have a day pack, you will need to use your main pack.

None of our normal discounts apply at this price.

## Itinerary: Kakadu Easy No. 1

**Note 1** Day 0 is the day before departure.

**Note 2** This itinerary is subject to change.

**Day 0** **We will be unable to have our normal pre-trip meeting.** You must be fully packed with space for the group food parcel and ready to go the next morning.

**Day 1** 7-8 a.m. pick up. Pick up is from your accommodation if you have notified us where you are staying at least a week before departure. Otherwise, pick up is from the Mitchell Street Tourist Precinct at 69 Mitchell Street.  
Drive to Kakadu. Begin walk carrying full packs. Bush camp.

**Day 2-3** Day walks.

**Day 4** Return to vehicle, drive to Koolpin, begin the second walk. Bush camp.

**Day 5**

Day walk.

**Day 6**

Return to vehicles. Drop one vehicle at Gunlom. Return to Darwin.