

# First Draft: Kakadu Day Walks No. 1: August 11-16 2015

**Note.** This is the first of the special \$300 six-day trips with long day walks as advertised in our December 2014 newsletter.

**The price is so cheap because this trip is an experiment.** We have never tried a trip like this before. None of the other tour operators offers anything like it. Please bear that in mind if you are interested. If we are correct and this is a niche that needs filling, we plan to offer similar trips next year. If we do, the list price will be over \$1000.

Kakadu has dozens of short marked trails. We will choose a variety to try and gauge which will be the best for inclusion in a similar tour in 2016. In some cases, our bushwalking tour license may allow us to take you well beyond where most day walkers can go. You can see a list of all the marked day walks in Kakadu at <http://www.parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu/do/walks.html>

We have the choice of staying in accommodation, camping in managed campgrounds or combining the two. Some of the walks we are considering may not be practical without camping. **The first three people to book can choose which they would prefer.**

If we stay in accommodation, we will probably choose to eat in a restaurant. If we camp, we will cook. Unlike our normal trips, the cost of the accommodation and/or camping and the evening and the cost of the evening meals is not included in the price of the trip. Evening meals which we provide will be charged at \$15 per dinner.

**Special note.** If we begin on 11 August, the first day of this trip coincides with the quarterly meeting of the Kakadu Tourism Consultative Committee. Your guide, Russell Willis, is a member of that committee. This means that you will be on your own for part of day one. During that time, we plan to book you on the 11 am Guluyambi Cruise on the East Alligator River, cost \$76, so that participants can begin the trip with a good awareness of the local people and their culture. See <http://www.kakaduculturaltours.com.au/guluyambi-cultural-cruise> for more information. The vehicle or vehicles we will use are registered as self-drive hire cars and will be driven by those taking part in the tour. All are manual shift Landcruiser troopcarriers with three rows of forward facing seats.

## Terrain and Difficulty

**Overall** Level 2

**Climate** Level 3. By August, it is normally starting to heat up again. The humidity is usually fairly low, but this cannot be guaranteed. The maximum temperature on most days will average 33-34°C. The average nightly minimum is about 18-20°C (65°F), but it has been known to drop as low as 10°C. If you bring a sleeping bag, you won't need a heavy one. Rain is unlikely but possible so you should have something to use as shelter if we do get rain.

**Terrain** Most of the walks 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 will not be necessary. It may, however, be necessary to wade across slippery rocks through waist deep water. Your guide can help if you need assistance.

While most of the walking is on marked trails, if we do the longer walks, some will be completely off-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 4-7 hours, none of which will involve carrying a full pack.
- Packs** **Pack weight** - level 0. Day packs only. However, if we camp, whether you bring a sleeping bag and/or tent is a matter of personal choice. But, if you don't bring a sleeping bag, you should bring something like a set of thermals in case we do get a cool night. Similarly if you don't bring a tent, you should bring something you can put over yourself to keep yourself dry in case we get a storm.
- Art** We will see some of the commonly visited art sites. If we do an extended day walk, we may visit sites that other day walkers will never get to see.
- Campsites** Managed campgrounds.
- Swims** Less than on most of our trips but there will be opportunities for swims most days. If we do the longer walks, you will have your own private pool on a number of occasions.
- Lowlights** Possible tourist crowds at the beginning and end of all the walks.
- Highlights** Good weather. Great swimming holes. Aboriginal art sites.
- Wildlife** Birds are always present and are beginning to concentrate near the waterholes as the land dries out. This would be an excellent walk for keen birdwatchers. You are unlikely to see many large animals.
- Fishing** Not permitted on this walk.
- Maps** Until we decide which walks we are doing, we can't say which maps cover the walks. The 1:50,000 Jim Jim Falls, Goodparla, Koolpin and Nourlangie Creek maps show the longer walks. The 1:250 000 Kakadu park map shows all areas but is not suitable for navigation.

## **Fitness Note**

While this trip is easier than any of our pack-carrying trips, we must emphasise some of the points made on our How Hard page, <http://www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/howhard.shtml>

**The absolute minimum level of fitness required for our easiest trips is to be able to comfortably walk 10 km in 2½ hours on level ground while carrying a small pack.**

You will not have to walk this fast on this trip but your ability to do so is a good indicator of whether or not you are fit enough to cope with the conditions you will encounter.

This test is not enough. Some of our walking may be off-trail. If you have done little or no off-track walking in rough conditions or you have not done extended walks in hot conditions, you need to study our information on rock hopping and climate before deciding to try one of our trips. Links to this information are on our How Hard page, <http://www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/howhard.shtml>

## General Notes

You can leave food and clothing for the second and/or third 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 all 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 Day Walks No. 1

- Note 1**            **Day 0 is the day before departure.**
- Note 2**            **This itinerary is subject to change.** The description below assumes three nights at the first campsite and two at the second. Depending on which walks we do, this may 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**            6-7 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. Drop guide at Bowali Visitor Centre, Guluyambi Cruise, collect guide, afternoon walk.
- Day 2-5**        Day walks.
- Day 6**            Return to vehicles. Return to Darwin.
- Final Note**     Don't think that this will be as easy as any of the other Kakadu tours that offer a bit of day walking as part of their tour. If we do the longer walks, we will cover longer distances than we normally do on our pack-carrying trips. On those walks, we will be off-trail some of the time. Anyone who participates needs a reasonable degree of fitness as specified earlier in this document.