

Kakadu Special: Gunlom-Barramundi: April 14-19, 2015

Gunlom (UDP) Falls is about 300 kilometres from Darwin. We will meet a number of those joining the trip at Pine Creek on the way. Gunlom is a beautiful spot, the location of the waterfall scene in the original Crocodile Dundee movie. Gunlom is extremely popular and has been developed for intensive day use so, after a brief look and a swim in the plunge pool, we shoulder our packs and move up Waterfall Creek and into the wilderness where we will spend the week.



Enjoying the pool at camp 1.

A short steep climb takes us to the top of the falls and more pools, less crowded than the one below, a good excuse for another swim. Another four kilometres brings us to the end of a rocky section and a number of good pools, next to one of which we will probably make our first camp.

The following day, we walk about five kilometres across a flat plain to the entry to a pass. We walk through the pass and down into the Barramundi Valley, about 1½ km from

where we entered the pass. Our aim is to get to or above the Emerald Pool. But, there are several possible campsites along the way, so it doesn't really matter if we don't get all the way.

From a point on the plateau upstream of the Emerald Pool, a walk of about five km brings us past another creek and down to a large pool surrounded by huge, shady trees, a great campsite.



Enjoying the view from the highest point on the walk.

The next morning is rather strenuous. A one kilometre walk brings us to the steepest climb of the trip. From the spectacular vantage point at the top of the hill we enjoy a magnificent view out across the plateau and over the broken rock country that makes up the headwaters of Waterfall Creek. A climb down to a small rocky plateau brings us to a creek where nature has created a swim through cave. Water levels permitting, we take our time so that we can fully appreciate this location before dropping down to the plateau above Gunlom.

Our walk on the final full day takes us across the plateau, past the largest termite mounds we have found above the flood plains below

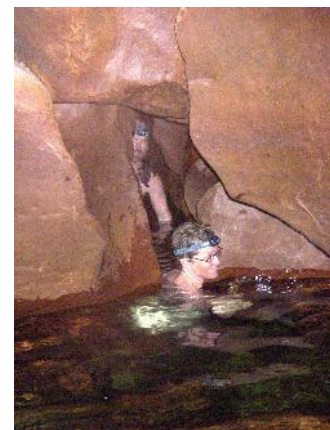
Notes.

This trip was created as a special trip for a couple from Sweden who have been walking with us for the past 20 years.

Make sure you keep some money and a water bottle with you during the drives. It is unlikely that you will be able to get into your pack at the stops.



Having a swim at the Emerald Pool, Barramundi Creek.



Exploring the cave.



Waterfall Creek plateau, termite mound

Terrain and difficulty

Overall Level 3

Climate Level 3-4. It will be hot. It will also be humid although the humidity normally drops substantially between March and May. The average daily maximum is 33-34°C (91-94°F). The average minimum is 20-22°C (68-71°F). It can, however, get much cooler. Rain is unlikely but possible. We recommend that you bring a tent or mosquito net with a fly.

Terrain Level 3. Most of the walk is fairly flat and relatively easy. However, there is some rock hopping and a couple of fairly strenuous climbs. One climb might require using your hands to hold on as you climb up or down. None of the climbs are 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, 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 normally finished seeding and dried out.
Hours	Generally 4-6 hours. A few days might be longer.
Packs	Pack weight - level 3. You need to carry 6 days food. This will include about 2-3 kg of the evening meals. You need a very light sleeping bag or something to keep you warm if it's a bit chillier than the average. As mentioned under climate, you should bring a tent or mosquito net with a fly.
Art	We visit a variety of art sites.
Campsites	Mix of sand and rock ledges. Most sites are excellent. You are unlikely to see anyone else at most of or all 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 Gunlom. Probable heat and humidity.
Highlights	Great swimming holes. Aboriginal art sites. The swim through cave.
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	1:50 000 Goodparla or 1:100 000 Mundogie. The 1:250 000 Kakadu map shows the whole park but is not suitable for navigation.

Itinerary: Kakadu Special

Note 1 Day 0 is the day before departure.

Note 2 This itinerary is subject to change.

Day 0 **Pre-trip meeting, 6.30 p.m., Pool Side Bar & Restaurant, Double Tree Hilton, 122 The Esplanade.** There are two Double Tree Hiltons next door to each other. The correct one is closer to Daly Street and is the taller of the two. **This meeting is important.** If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance. Both Double Tree hotels were Holiday Inns until early 2013.

Day 1 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 or have made other arrangements at the pre-trip meeting. 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 2-5 Bush camping, carrying full packs.

Day 6 Return to vehicles drive back to Darwin aiming to arrive before 5 pm.