

Kakadu Special: June 23 - July 6, 2013

Section 1: Twin Falls to Jim Jim Falls: June 23 - July 1



Relaxing at a campsite, upper Twin Falls Creek, one of the many pools we have to ourselves.

This walk takes you to the two largest and best known waterfalls in Kakadu plus many magical spots that will remain forever unknown to day walkers.

A large part of the first day is spent driving to the start of the walk. If possible, we will climb up and camp at the top of Twin Falls as the camp below Twin Falls is in an area where swimming is neither safe nor permitted. The walk to the top follows a marked trail up a fairly steep hill, through an interesting sandstone maze and out to the creek above Twin Falls. We must stay on this trail until we



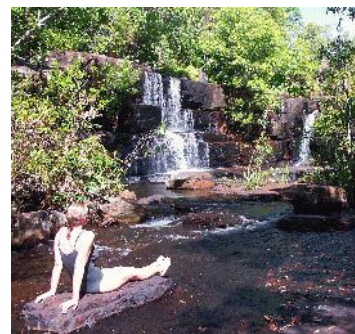
Getting ready for a swim at Amphitheatre Falls.

leave the restricted area about two km above the falls. If we arrive early enough, it may be possible to take a boat up the gorge and visit the base of the falls with an Aboriginal guide. There will be an extra charge for this. After a look around the top of Twin Falls, we put on our packs and continue to the end of the marked trail where we leave all signs of civilisation behind as we make our way upstream, exploring and enjoying the shady rock ledges, sandy



Rock scramble on the way from Twin Falls to the Rainforest Gorge. Hopefully we won't have anything this difficult, but you need to be prepared.

beaches and cool pools that we find in the seven kilometre long upper gorge which ends at the Amphitheatre Falls. We will spend two nights camping here to allow time to visit some interesting art sites in the area. The day we leave Twin Falls Creek may be tough for some. We head overland to the top of a rainforest filled gorge, known as Anbadjgoran to the local Aboriginal people. Along the way, we pass through some very rugged and broken sandstone country. But it is well worth it. The camp site on the flat rock ledges at the top of Anbadjgoran is magnificent. Beautiful waterfalls cascade through a series of inviting pools under a shady rainforest canopy. We will spend two nights here giving people time to relax and enjoy this special place and if anyone is feeling a bit more energetic we can also do a day walk from here.



Relaxing below the falls at Anbadjgoran.

The following day we head across the plateau to Jim Jim Creek. We spend the next two nights camping next to a beautiful pool known as the monoliths. This is a unique and special area where sandstone boulders rise out of a large pool of clear water. We will spend a day following the creek upstream visiting numerous art sites and swimming in the pools upstream. From here we put our packs back on and head downstream towards the Jim Jim Falls stopping to examine some more Aboriginal art and cool off with a swim or two along the way.



Sunset, Jim Jim campsite. Immediately behind us is our own private pool.



View from the top of Jim Jim Falls. This spot is less than 200 metres from the campsite pictured at left.

From the top of Jim Jim Falls, over 200 metres from top to bottom with a final sheer drop of 160 metres, we enjoy spectacular views down the gorge and across the plains to the distant escarpment on the horizon. If time permits, we climb down to the top of the main drop so that we can enjoy another pool and experience what it feels like to look over a sheer 160 metre drop. On the final morning we follow the marked trail down to the bottom of the gorge below the falls. After one last swim, we return to the vehicles on the morning of the last full day and drive to Koolpin via Cooina. Maps. 1:50 000 Jim Jim Falls or 1:100 000 Jim Jim.

Terrain and difficulty (see also the comments for both sections)

Overall Level 3

Terrain Level 3-4. Short sharp climbs at the beginning and end, both on well defined walking tracks. Fairly flat and reasonably easy along Twin Falls and Jim Jim Creeks. Similarly flat and relatively easy between the top of Rainforest Gorge and Jim Jim Creek. Depending on the exact route we take, some of the terrain between Twin Falls Creek and Rainforest Gorge can be **as rugged as anything we encounter on any of our walks.**

Highlights The magnificent campsites, swimming, art sites.

Lowlights Walking between the Amphitheatre and Rainforest Gully (although this can be a highlight for some).

Notes on Section 1.

This walk may be done in the reverse direction. If late rain keeps the Twin Falls track closed, we will have to do a complete loop, beginning and ending at Jim Jim.

This trip is being run at a more leisurely pace than most of our trips to allow for two-night camps and day walks exploring art sites.

Section 2: Koolpin (Jarrangbarnmi) and Freezing Gorges: July 1-6



Upper Koolpin campsite, dawn, August

Koolpin Gorge, known to the local Aboriginal people as Jarrangbarnmi, is beautiful. The name 'Jarrangbarnmi' comes from the Jawoyn words 'jarrang' meaning flood or big water flow and 'barn' meaning rift or gap.

At this time of year, the falls should still be flowing reasonably well. In any case, the pools are always perfect for swimming. The views are a photographer's delight. Aboriginal art sites tell us that this has been a special place for thousands of years. Although the gorge is only four kilometres long, it is too good to rush. We normally take most of the day to reach our camp site near the top of the gorge.

At this time of year, the falls should still be flowing reasonably well. In any case, the pools are always perfect for swimming. We plan to spend two nights, maybe three, in the upper gorge to allow ample time for relaxing, swimming and visiting some of the Aboriginal art sites in the hills near the gorge.

From Koolpin, we pack up and rock hop through a series of gullies as we make our way to Freezing Gorge. Freezing Creek is much smaller than Koolpin but it has carved a deep and narrow gorge



Freezing Gorge pack float

where the sun seldom reaches the water, hence the name. The pools are just as inviting as those in Koolpin, perhaps more so since very few of the 4WD campers are aware that it exists so we seldom see anyone at any point along the creek. You need to be prepared for a short pack float as the alternative to a 30 metre swim is an hour or two of strenuous rock climbing. (You can waterproof your pack by lining it with 2 garbage bags, one inside the other, and sealing them carefully.)

The walk down Freezing Creek below the gorge involves climbing over and scrambling around large boulders. A distance of about a kilometre may take two hours.

Although we do not rate this walk as difficult, the one km walk down Freezing Creek below the gorge can be a daunting experience for some people. People who have never done anything like this before may find it difficult. Progress down the creek may be quite slow.

On the final day, we return to the vehicle and drive back to Darwin.

Maps. 1:50 000 Koolpin or 1:100 000 Jim Jim.

Note for section 2. Some groups may do the loop in the reverse direction.

Terrain and Difficulty (more info in the general description at the end)

Overall Level 3.

Terrain Level 3. There are a few short but sharp climbs and a lot of rock hopping up the creek at Koolpin Gorge. As above, the walk up or down Freezing Gorge contains some serious rock scrambling.

Vegetation Level 2. Mostly open woodland, open areas along the creeks or closed canopy rainforest with relatively thin undergrowth.

Packs **Waterproofing.** We strongly recommend that you bring one or two strong garbags or something else you can use to keep your pack dry during the pack float on this section. The alternative to a 30 metre swim is a very strenuous climb.

Pack weight - level 3. You need to carry five days food.

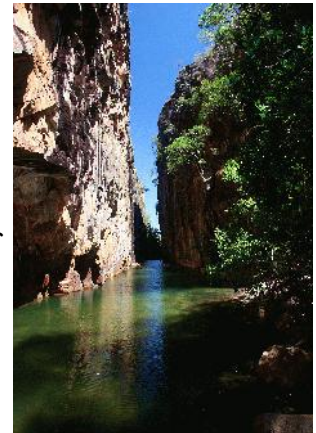
Art There are a number of interesting art sites along this route.

Campsites Sand or rock ledges. Excellent sites near the water. We should have most or all of them to ourselves.

Swims Swimming is excellent. Good pools along both creeks.

Lowlights Rough 4WD drive at the beginning and end, groups of other people in lower Koolpin.

Highlights Spectacular gorge scenery. Great pools for swimming. Aboriginal art sites.



Looking back through Freezing Gorge



Rock hopping up lower Freezing Creek. Some of the rocks are larger than these.

Terrain and Difficulty General for both sections

- 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 except in Freezing Gorge. 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 finished seeding and dried out.
- Hours** Generally 4-6 hours. A few days might be longer. On some days, there will be the option to relax in camp while the others do a day walk.
- Packs** **Pack weight** - level 3. You need to carry 8 days food on section one (8 dinners, 8 breakfasts and 7 lunches) and 5 on section two. This will include about 2½-3½ kg of the evening meals on section one, less on section two. 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, Twin Falls, Gunlom and/or Barramundi.
- 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.

Notes on both sections

Those doing both sections of the trip will have to carry only what they need on each section. Additional food and clothing can be left in the vehicle during the walks.

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 might be useful on one or both sections.

If you are meeting us in Kakadu, you will have to purchase a park entrance ticket on your way into the park. Our guide(s) should reimburse you automatically. Please remind them if this is not done soon after you meet.

Maps. The 1:250 000 Kakadu park map shows all areas 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.

Section 1 Twin to Jim Jim

Day 0 Pre-trip meeting, 6.30 p.m., Pool Side Bar & Restaurant, Holiday Inn Darwin, 122 The Esplanade. **Note.** There are two Holiday Inns next to each other on the Esplanade. The meeting is in the taller one, closer to the roundabout at the end of the street. **This meeting is important.** If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance.

Day 1 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 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 2–8 Bush camping, carrying full packs most days. At least one two night camp.

Day 9 Return to vehicles. Drive to Coinda for lunch. Continue to Koolpin Gorge.

Section 2 Koolpin - Freezing

Day 9 Those beginning with this section catch a bus from Darwin to Coinda early in the morning. The cost of getting to Coinda is not included in the cost of the tour.

Greyhound ran a scheduled service on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the time these notes were written. Check the current timetable when you book. If you can't make the connection with Greyhound, you should be able to book a seat on a tour bus. The two companies to try are: AAT Kings (08 8923 6555) and APT (08 8984 2999).

If you are doing only section two, you may have to come out a day earlier to meet those continuing. Please contact us well in advance to make sure.

On arrival, wait in the open air pub and meet the group there. Due to the fact that the members of the group are finishing a walk that morning, we cannot be more specific about the arrival time than to say it will be about lunch time.

Drive to Koolpin. Begin walk carrying full pack.

Day 10-13 Bush camping, carrying full packs most days. At least one two-night camp.

Day 14 Return to vehicles. Drive to Darwin. Drop off at your accommodation, late afternoon.