

# Kakadu Charter: Barramundi Creek: August 4-9, 2015

This is a special trip created at the request of a family coming from overseas. As with all our family walks, this trip is designed to run at a slower pace than our other trips to allow families with children to enjoy the Kakadu bush. That makes it equally good for adults who like children and a relatively easy paced walk.



Setting off. We won't see the vehicle again for a week.

This walk takes you to some of the nicest permanently flowing creeks and largest pools we have found in the park. You see a variety of landscapes, deep gorges, beautiful swimming pools and cascades as well as a number of little known Aboriginal art sites.

We begin with a four to six hour, 350 kilometre drive from Darwin. The last 15 kilometres is on a

gravel road; the rest is bitumen. From the parking area, a relatively easy three kilometre walk brings us first to some pools, then up a hill for some good views, through a patch of forest and finally back down to the creek and our first campsite near a pool, perfect for swimming as are most of the pools we encounter..



At the first camp and loving it.



For most children, the pools are paradise.

During the next five days, we visit magical spots our clients have christened the Emerald Pool, Piccaninny Pools and the Buff Pool. Our route takes us along creeks, up a steep hill, across a plateau, down to another pool and back via the main creek. There are many possible campsites so we can make our decision according to how fast the group is going and how they feel at the time.



Setting up camp. It's hard to go any lighter than this.



At the highest point on the walk.

If we move reasonably quickly, we have the option of doing some of the walking without packs or, alternatively, doing a side loop up to one of the best high view points in the park, then down to an amazing swim-through cave and some Aboriginal art sites. As the photos show, we have had young children who were easily able to

do this option.

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



Dinner time.

## Terrain and Difficulty

**Overall** Level 2.

**Climate** Level 2. Although August is one of the cooler months of the year, the maximum temperature on most days will still average 32-33°C (90-91°F). Although the average nightly minimum is about 17-19°C (63-66°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** Level 2-3. The terrain ranges from open woodland to narrow rainforest gorges. Most is relatively flat and easy. A few places require scrambling over river stones of a variety of sizes. There are a few steep, but short climbs. The leisurely pace makes it easier than many of our other trips.



Young children – and parents – who have never done anything like this may find it difficult at first but most of them adapt very quickly.



In the cave.

The first part of the **optional** side loop is more difficult and would rate as level 4. It includes a steep climb up and an equally steep climb down. The decision as to whether or not to do this will be made during the trip when the group can see how they are all going. Those who do it usually consider the swim-through cave to be one of the highlights of the trip.

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. To get a good idea of what it is like, we recommend that you go to our website, click on the Photo Gallery link, scroll down

to the Kakadu section and click onto the walking with children gallery.

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. Mostly open woodland or open areas along the creek. There is likely to be one section of grass covered rocks on one short section.

**Hours** 4-6 hours most days.

**Packs** **Pack weight** - level 2-3. You need to carry six days food.

**Art** There are a few interesting sites along this route; more on the optional side loop.

**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 at all campsites.

**Lowlights** Very long drive from Darwin at the beginning and end.

**Highlights** The waterfalls and crystal clear pools. If you do it, the views and cave on the side loop.

**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.

## Notes

The guide will try and spend more time with the little things which might be interesting and unusual for the children: insects, lizards, etc. (Young children can bring a sense of wonder to things older people take for granted.)

We will have long lunch breaks to avoid the worst of the heat. How long will depend on the group and exactly how hot it is. The temperatures listed are August averages. In some years, early August is some degrees cooler.

Make sure you keep some money and a water bottle with you during the drives. It may not be possible to get into your pack until the vehicle is unloaded at the end.

Depending on camp site availability, we may have to begin and end this trip at Gunlom. The beginning and end would change, the middle part would be much the same.

Parents/guardians must keep an eye on their own children, especially on young children who may not be able to swim.

We plan to have more and longer breaks and do even more swimming than on our standard trips.

Although you will see some Aboriginal rock art, this may not be emphasised as much as on our standard trips.

If the children cannot carry their own food & equipment, their parents/guardians will have to do so.

**Dehydration** can be a major problem for young children. (See our *Bushwalking Guide*.) It is absolutely essential to make sure your children drink enough to need several "wee stops" during the day.

**Discounts** This trip is being run at the special price of \$1200. None of our normal discounts apply.

## 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, 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** 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 alternate arrangements at the pre-trip meeting. Otherwise, pick up is from Darwin Transit Centre at 69 Mitchell Street.  
Drive to Kakadu. There will be a stop along the way to buy cool drinks, etc.  
Begin the walk. Bush camp, carrying full packs.

**Day 2–5** Bush camping, carrying full packs.

**Day 6** Return to vehicle. Drive to Darwin. Drop off at your accommodation.