

## Piccaninny Creek, Purnululu (Bungle Bungle) National Park: July 10-18, 2022

**List price - \$3095** For information about our advance purchase and other discounts, see our discount page, [www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/discounts](http://www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/discounts) and the additional information at the end of these notes.

**Summary.** The soft sandstone domes of the Bungles and the spectacular Piccaninny Gorge are the main attractions that gained its World Heritage status. We do a long walk up the gorge, stopping at a number of base camps from which we explore the beautiful side gorges. All our camps will be close to water.



Where would you rather be – here with a small group or in a dusty campground with dozens of others?

### Itinerary

**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., outdoor area, Kimberley Croc Motel/Lodge. **This meeting is important.** If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance.

**Day 1** Pick up between 6.30 and 7.00 a.m. Pick up will be arranged at the pre-trip meeting. Drive to the Bungles. Begin walk, carrying full packs. Bush camp.

**Day 2-8** Bushwalking. Carrying full packs some days, day packs at other times.

**Day 9** Finish walk, drive back to Kununurra.

### *Now for the details.*

There are many tours which will take you to Purnululu. No other tour will allow you to experience as much of the park in as intimate a fashion as ours.

In mid 2003, Purnululu joined the list of Australia's World Heritage locations. Here's what the Department of Environment and Heritage has to say. "Famous for the 45 000 hectare Bungle Bungle Range, with its huge expanse of striking banded beehive structures, sandstone cliffs and towers, Purnululu has been listed as an outstanding landscape that is a superlative natural phenomenon, revealing the history of its formation over hundreds of millions of years. Purnululu National Park has such outstanding universal natural values that it enriches the world and should be conserved for the benefit of all people. Before 1982, when aerial pictures were first released, it was virtually unknown except to pastoralists, scientists and the local Aboriginal community. It is now seen as one of the scenic jewels of outback Australia."

From Kununurra we drive almost 350 kilometres, the last 80 kilometres of which is a 4WD track. The drive takes most of the day but we should arrive with plenty of time to walk to our first camp site.



Easy day walk.



Depending on how we are going, we may push all the way up Piccaninny Gorge to a base camp from which we explore some of the smaller side gorges or we may stop and explore some of the smaller gorges in the lower section. In either case, the final base camp is about 12–13 kilometres up Piccaninny Gorge, where sheer red cliffs are silhouetted against the clear blue skies of the dry season. Piccaninny is by far the largest gorge in the Bungles. We spend three or four nights there using the days to explore the many fascinating side gorges.

Looking down Piccaninny Gorge from near the top.

These gorges offer a variety of delights — some are palm filled, some are very narrow and require swimming, some have caves which require the use of a torch. There is at least one gorge that allows us to reach a high point. No words can do justice to the beauty of the area. The only way to appreciate it is to come and see it for yourself.

*We cannot climb to the actual top as climbing up the domes themselves is not permitted because of their exceptionally fragile nature. We can, however, follow watercourses as far as they will take us ... and that gets us some amazing views.*

Eventually we turn back, camping one final night near the beginning of the gorge before returning to our vehicles for the drive back to Kununurra.

## Terrain and difficulty

**Overall** Level 3

**Climate** Level 3. Generally dry, average daytime max 29°C (84°F), average night minimum 12°C (54°F), but can get below 5°C (41°F) on occasion. These are **averages**. We once had a heat wave with a couple of 35°C days in July. It has gone as low as 1°C (34°F). Rain is extremely unlikely, but not unknown.

**Terrain** With packs - level 2: flat, minimal rock hopping, some ledging, some soft sand. The long walk up the Piccaninny Gorge, mainly over pebbles and sand can be quite tiring for many people. Going past our first base camp, done with full packs on some trips, requires some clambering over large rocks and includes edging along at least one narrow ledge. Daywalks without packs - level 4. Most of the day walks involve clambering over large rocks. Some include steep climbs. Some people find this very difficult, even without full packs.

Although this difficulty is often more psychological than physical, it can be very real. The only reason this section is not rated "difficult" is that the hardest parts are done without full packs.

The climb up one of the gorges is particularly strenuous. Few groups have had every member go all the way. If you don't wish to do the rock scrambling, you need to be prepared to relax and enjoy your surroundings while the others continue. Keen birdwatchers often find this especially pleasant. Some people become uncomfortable in the absence of the rest of the group. Please keep this in mind when choosing this trip.



This photo shows one of the more difficult rock scrambles. Look closely and you can see two people.



- Vegetation** With packs - level 1: minimal vegetation  
Without packs - level 2-4: some walks include dense sections of sharp and/or sticky spinifex, gaiters essential, long trousers recommended.
- Hours** You normally walk 4-6 hours per day.
- Packs** You carry food for eight days.
- Art:** Two minor sites
- Campsites** Mostly on sand, might include rock ledges on some nights. Rain rare but could cause change of site.
- Swims** Reasonable, often fairly cold. Depends very much on the previous wet season.
- Lowlights** Helicopters intrusive most of day, aircraft early and late.
- Highlights** Incredible and spectacular gorge scenery, each one uniquely different from the others.
- Fishing** No.
- Maps** Bungle Bungle 1:50 000 topographic map.



Easy walking in lower Piccaninny Creek

## Notes

You should always keep a water bottle, your lunch and some money with you during the drives as you cannot easily get into your pack during the journey. You should have enough money to pay for your drinks at the stops.

Those who wish to do a half hour helicopter flight over the Bungles will have an opportunity to do so either on arrival or just before departure from the park. Which time we choose depends on when we arrive The 2021 prices were listed as \$299 for a 18 minute flight, \$449 for 30 minutes and \$549 for 42 minutes. For further information please see their website: [www.helispire.com.au](http://www.helispire.com.au).

All this area is a stove only area. Campfires are not permitted.

You will need to bring a small bag for toilet paper as neither burning nor burying are permitted.

Bringing fresh fruit, vegetables or honey into WA is illegal whether you come by road or plane. (You cannot even bring in boxes or other containers that once contained fruit or vegetables.) Bags are checked both on the highway and at the airport. There will be time to do some shopping in Kununurra.

A day pack is useful. However, if you don't have a day pack, you can empty your main pack and carry that.

Air North is the main airline currently operating into Kununurra. They can be booked through Qantas but it's often cheaper to go direct. Phone: 1800 627474 or (08) 8920 4001; email: [reservations@airnorth.com.au](mailto:reservations@airnorth.com.au)

It's worth checking Virgin as well.

The prices are out of date, but the map at right shows where we hold out pre-trip meeting.

