

# Kakadu Circle No. 2: June 27 - July 10, 2021

**List price - \$2895** For information about our advance purchase and other discounts, see our discount page, [www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/discounts](http://www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/discounts)

**Summary.** In order to fit our most popular long distance walk into two weeks while allowing an appropriate food drop and without having to move at an exceptionally fast pace, a small section at the end of the full trip has been cut off so you exit at Barramundi Falls. The trip is divided into two sections, either of which can be one on its own.



Looking back from above the first falls, Koolpin Gorge.

## Itinerary

**Note 1** Day 0 is the day **before** departure.

**Note 2** This itinerary is subject to change.

### Section 1 Koolpin to Twin

**List price: \$1795**

**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.

**Day 1** 8 a.m. pick up. Pick up is as arranged at the pre-trip meeting. 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 2–6** Bush camping, carrying full packs.

**Day 7** Walk to Jim Jim Falls. Those finishing here will be driven to Cooina or Darwin in the late afternoon, their choice. If you would like to experience the Kakadu wetlands, we recommend booking a budget room at Cooina and doing the Yellow Waters cruise the following morning. We cannot take more than six people back to Darwin. If you want a ride back, please let us know well in advance, first come, first served.

### Section 2 Jim Jim to Barramundi

**List price: \$1895**

**Day 7** We can take up to six people out to Kakadu in the vehicle which brings out the food drop. If more than six are joining the trip, some of them will have to a bus from Darwin to Cooina at about 6.30 a.m. If you go out a day early, this gives you a chance to experience the Kakadu wetlands with a Yellow Waters Cruise. For more info, see the note at the end. Walk back to Twin Falls. Food drop meal, bush camp.

**Day 8–13** Bush camping, carrying full packs.

**Day 14** Return to vehicles. Drive to Darwin. Drop off at your accommodation.

*Now for the details.*

### Section 1: Koolpin to Twin: June 27 - July 3

The walk begins at Flying Fox Crossing on the South Alligator River in the southern part of Kakadu, about 330 kilometres and four to five hours from Darwin. A relatively flat eight kilometre walk along the banks of the river and across the plain brings us to the beginning of Koolpin Gorge.



Upper Koolpin campsite.



Walking through the grassy valley between Koolpin and Twin Falls Creeks.

Koolpin Gorge is beautiful. The pools are perfect for swimming, the waterfalls and views a photographers 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 through. We take at least a day to reach the top.

From the top of the gorge, there are a number of possible routes to Twin Falls Creek. Your guide will decide which one to take based on the availability of water and on the interests and energy of the group. All take about two days. None is particularly difficult. All offer the opportunity to view a number of Aboriginal art sites, either on the main route or as a side trip.

Continuing downstream from where we first meet it, Twin Falls Creek passes through a mix of sandy and rocky areas for about six kilometres to the Amphitheatre Falls where the river drops 20 metres into the upper gorge. Few groups have ever been able to resist spending at least an hour here just admiring the views and enjoying the pool below the falls. Another seven kilometres past sandy beaches and more pools brings us to the top of Twin Falls. The last two km of this route is in a restricted area where we have to stick to a marked trail.



Upper Twin Falls Creek campsite, dawn.



Surprise Falls swim stop.

Twin Falls consists of a series of drops of up to 20 metres and a final 80 metre plunge into the gorge below. Here we have a break and take time to enjoy the spectacular views. The route to the bottom of the lower gorge is follows

the same marked trail that we first met above the falls. It is moderately rugged in places with a steep climb at the end.

As the track to Twin Falls is likely to be closed, we leave most of our gear at the car park and take near empty packs to meet our food drop at the Jim Jim car park. The return walk will take most of the day.



Swim stop, top falls, Cascades Creek.

## Section 2: Twin to Barramundi: July 3-10



Surprise Falls swim stop.

The first day of this section is the longest of the entire trip as we make our way across the plains and climb up the escarpment to enjoy the views and pools at Surprise Falls. Those who are doing only this section need to be prepared for an exceptionally strenuous first day. Those doing the full trip will have had ample time to get used to carrying their packs.

From Surprise Falls, we continue across the plateau, passing through the largest patch of open country rainforest in the park, across the upper reaches of Koolpin Creek and over to the top of Graveside Gorge. Here a double waterfall drops 100 metres into a pool in

the gorge below. After taking time to have a good look at Graveside, we move along to Cascades Creek and the first of its many pools and art sites. The walk down the four kilometre gorge is a slow one. There are a few places where you have the choice of edging along narrow rock ledges



Swim stop, top falls, Cascades Creek.



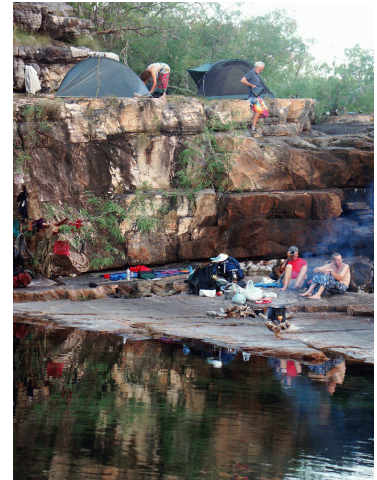


Cascades Creek water slide.

(close to water level, no big drops), floating your pack through the creek, or climbing up and around. The pools and art sites are too nice to pass by, so stops are frequent as we make our way down to the cascades for which the creek is named. The last 500 metres often takes two hours or more as the deep pools and a natural water slide are much too inviting to pass by in a rush. We've had people of all ages try out the water slide.

Next, we visit Gronophylum Creek with its unusual palms, beautiful, sandy camp sites and deep, clear pools. The rugged landscape away from the creek is

reminiscent of central Australia with its red rock and spinifex covered hills. A short, steep climb to the top of one of the hills presents us with an incredible panorama. Following the creek, you might walk three kilometres in an hour. Following a straight-line compass bearing, the landscape is such a jumble of broken rock that walking that distance might take you three days.



Gronophylum Creek campsite.



Emerald Pool, Barramundi Creek.

From Gronophylum, we cross to the Barramundi system with its beautiful pools and waterfalls. On the first creek we reach there are two waterfalls.

Piccaninny pools are above; the famous Emerald Pool below.

From there, we continue downstream and exit via Maguk, one of the most popular waterfalls in the park. After one final swim, we climb into the pick up vehicle for the return to Darwin.

## Terrain and Difficulty

**Overall** Level 3

**Climate** Level 2. Although June and July are the two coolest months 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** Level 3. There are 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 having to swim across with packs is unlikely. 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](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 has dried out.



Mossie dome, Barramundi Creek campsite. A free standing mossie dome suits our climate perfectly.

**Hours** Generally 4-6 hours. A few days might be longer. Section two rates as level four because of the long first day. Those who have already done section one seldom find it particularly difficult.

**Packs** **Pack weight** - level 3. You need to carry 7 days food. This will include about 2-3 kg of the evening meals. You need a sleeping bag but are unlikely to need a tent.

**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 the campsites.

**Swims** June and early July is a good time to see Kakadu's waterfalls. Most creeks are still flowing well and the swimming is excellent. We will have good pools at almost every campsite and lunch spot.



Happy swimmers above Twin Falls.

**Lowlights** The long walk between Twin Falls Creek and Surprise Falls. Possible tourist crowds at Jim Jim and/or Twin Falls.

**Highlights** Kakadu's biggest waterfalls seen early in the dry season. 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.

**Maps** Section 1: 1:50,000 Koolpin & Jim Jim Falls + a short section on El Sherana at the start.  
Section 2: 1:50,000 Jim Jim Falls, Koolpin and Goodparla  
The 1:250,000 Kakadu Park map shows the whole park but is not suitable for navigation.

## Notes

If you meet 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.

**Those doing the full trip will have to carry only what they need for the first section.** Additional food and other items for the second section can be left in a package and given to the guide at the pre-trip meeting. Those packages will come out with the food drop.

It should be possible to send unwanted food and gear back to Darwin with the food drop vehicle.

On long days such as the first day of section two, starting as early as possible makes the day much easier. Please do everything you can to assist the guide to get the group going quickly.

**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.

**If you are doing only one section and would like to visit Cooida.** At the time these notes were written, the only transport was a seat on an AAT Kings tour bus. Phone: 08 8923 6555. Do not use the national 1300 phone. Only the Darwin office can sell the transport without a tour. They will arrange pick up and drop off.

If the track to Twin Falls opens early, it may not be necessary to walk to Jim Jim for the food drop.

## **Notes for those doing only one section**

Cooinda is a resort situated in the heart of the Kakadu wetlands. This is an area noted for its wildlife — and mosquitoes. The former make it a great place to visit, the latter make it an uncomfortable place for an overnight walk. The attractions at Cooinda include the Yellow Waters cruises, the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Centre and a short dry season nature walk along a marked trail.

The Yellow Waters cruise provides the best way to see the wetlands and allows you to approach the wildlife much closer than you could do on foot. The cultural centre is a few hundred metres from the hotel and provides an insight into the lives of the Aboriginal traditional owners of the park. The nature walk offers a pleasant way to spend an hour or two, especially early in the morning or late in the afternoon.

Both the cultural centre and the hotel offer a variety of souvenirs for sale. Bring extra cash or a credit card if you think that you might wish to purchase anything beyond the drinks, ice creams and lunches that most people purchase there.

Our vehicles can take no more than six passengers. We will have only one vehicle available for the food drop so we can only take six people from or to Darwin.