

Kakadu Highlights No. 6: July 16-30, 2023 22 Feb 23: single sec update at end

List price - \$4495

For information about our advance purchase and other discounts, see our discount page, www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/discounts

Summary. This trip consists of two separate walks either of which can be done on its own. Lots of waterfalls, lots of swimming and a chance to see Twin Falls at a time when it is likely to be closed to the general public. You spend a night at the Kakadu Billabong Safari camp where you do a short cultural tour between sections and finish with a cruise on the East Alligator River.



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

Itinerary: Kakadu Highlights No. 6

Note 1 Day 0 is the day before departure.

Note 2 This itinerary is subject to change.

Section 1 Jim Jim - Twin Loop

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. **This meeting is important.** If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance.

Day 1 7 to 8 a.m. pick up as arranged at the pre-trip meeting. Drive to Kakadu. Begin walk carrying full packs. Bush camp.

Day 2-6 Bush camping, carrying full packs most days.

Day 7 Return to vehicles. Drive to Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp. Lunch there. Short cultural tour. Overnight at camp.

Day 8 Anyone finishing with this section will be dropped at Cooina in time to catch a bus back to Darwin. See Day 7 below.

Section 2 Graveside

Day 7 Those beginning with this section catch a bus from Darwin to Cooina early in the morning. The cost of getting to and staying at Cooina is not included in the cost of the tour. **Special update at the end of these notes.**

Day 8 Drive to Cooina, then Graveside. Begin walk carrying full pack.

Day 9-13 Bush camping, carrying full packs most days.

Day 14 Walk down to car. Drive to Cooina. Visit Warradjan Cultural Centre. Drive to Jabiru. Overnight in accommodation at Anbinik.

Day 15 9 AM Guluyambi Cultural Cruise. Time permitting visit to Ubirr. Return to Darwin in time for evening (6 PM or later) flights.



Walking along Cascades Creek

Now for the details.

Section 1: Jim Jim - Twin Falls Loop: July 16-23

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.

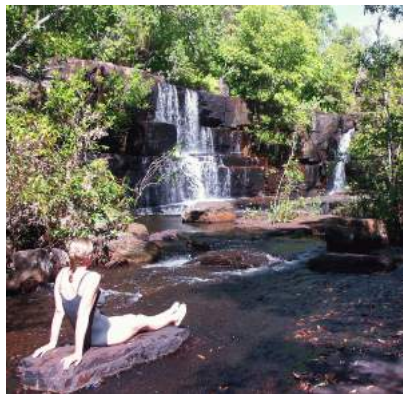


Getting ready for a swim at Amphitheatre Falls.

The drive from Darwin to the start of the walk is over 300 km, some of which is on a rough 4WD track. If the track to Twin Falls remains closed, we will have to do a loop walk beginning and ending at the Jim Jim car park. On foot, it is a fairly flat walk of 3 to 3½ hours to the Twin Falls car park. From there, 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. If the vehicle track is closed, we will be able to camp near the top of the falls. If not, we will have to move at least one km upstream.

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 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.



Relaxing below the falls at Anbadjgoran.

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.

The following day we head across the plateau to Jim Jim Creek. If we arrive early, those who want to do so can spend the afternoon following the creek upstream, visiting art sites and swimming in the pools. From here we put our packs back on and head downstream towards our final camp site above Jim Jim Falls stopping to examine

some more Aboriginal art and cool off with a swim or two along the way.

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. On the final morning we follow the marked trail down to the bottom of the gorge below the falls. We finish with something new, a night and a cultural tour at the Aboriginal owned Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp. See <http://www.kakadubillabongsafaricamp.com.au/> for more information.



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.



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

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).

Map 1:50 000 Jim Jim Falls

Notes on Section 1.

This walk may be done in the reverse direction.

Slow groups may not have as many two-night camps.

If the track to Twin Falls is open, we **may** be able to do a car shuffle and avoid the afternoon walk between the Jim Jim and Twin Falls car parks.

Section 2: Graveside Area: July 23-30

This walk takes us into the greatest concentration of permanently flowing creeks we have yet found in Kakadu. You see a variety of landscapes, deep gorges, beautiful swimming pools and cascades as well as a number of little known Aboriginal art sites. Although the start of the walk is only about 100 km from Coinda, the last 44 km is on such a rough track that it normally takes 2½ to 3 hours. Our first camp is only about a 5 km walk from the car park.



The pool above the main Graveside falls isn't very wide, but it is very deep.

The two main gorges at Graveside contain some of the nicest monsoon forest in Kakadu. We plan spend the second day exploring the gorges, enjoying the shade and relaxing in and around the large pools.

A short, steep climb the next morning gets us onto the plateau where we have a look at the upper reaches of the two creeks we explored the day before. At this time of year, the flow is often down to a trickle but there are still plenty of pools where we can cool off and relax in the midday heat. From here, a flat three kilometre walk through the open woodland of the plateau brings us to Cascades Creek.



We plan to spend two nights at this or another nearby campsite – a good pool below and another one with a small cascade just above.



As hard as it gets. On this trip an 8 year old had done the same step a few minutes earlier.

Cascades Creek is well known among local bushwalkers for its many pools, cascades and Aboriginal art sites. It is so pleasant that our trip up or down the four kilometre gorge normally takes a full day. There are a few places where you have the choice of edging along narrow rock ledges (close to water level, no big drops), floating your pack through the creek, or climbing up and around. The last 500 metres alone 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.



Age 8 or 80, almost no one we've taken past the slide can resist having at least one go. Most have several.

From the bottom of Cascades Creek, we follow the main valley downstream. We camp next to yet one final pool leaving us with only a short walk back to the vehicle in the morning. We drive to Coinda for lunch and a visit to the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Centre, then, after a night in Jabiru, we do the morning Guluyambi Cruise on the East Alligator River. Finally, if time permits, we visit the Ubirr artsites before returning to Darwin in time for late afternoon and evening flights.

Terrain and Difficulty (more info in the general description after section two)

Overall	Level 2.
Terrain	Level 2-3. The terrain ranges from open woodland to narrow rainforest gorges. Parts are flat and easy. Other parts require scrambling over river stones of a variety of sizes. There are a few steep, but short climbs. You walk through almost every type of terrain that it is possible to encounter in Kakadu. The leisurely pace makes it easier than many of our other trips.
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 number of interesting 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 at all campsites.
Lowlights	Rough drive from Coinda at the beginning, fairly long 4WD on the way out.
Highlights	The magical cascades and water slide on Cascades Creek. Spectacular Graveside Gorge.
Maps	1:50 000 Koolpin

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.
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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. Many people prefer floating packs to the rock scramble shown in the “as hard as it gets” photo.



Cascades Creek pack float

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 6 days food on section one and 7 on section two. This will include about 2½-3½ 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 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 and Twin Falls.

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 but, for those who look, there are plenty of smaller ones.



Up close with one of the locals, Graveside Gorge

Fishing Not permitted on this walk.

Map. The 1:250 000 Kakadu park map shows all areas but is not suitable for bush navigation.

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.

It will be possible to do some **basic** shopping at Coinda between sections.

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 would be useful on 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.

If anyone doing section two does not want to stay at the Kakadu Billabong Safari camp, we can drop them at Coinda on our way to the Camp. If anyone joining section two wants to come to the camp, we can collect them at Coinda on our way from Graveside. If you are interested, please ask us for details of how it would work.

The cost of camping at the Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp is included in the cost. Accommodation may be available at an additional cost.

Special update for those doing only one section. At the time these notes were updated, the only way to get to Coinda was on a one-day AAT Kings tour. They were no longer selling transport only. The tour was not running every day.

But, as of 22 February, we had some people doing only section one and some doing only section two. Unless we get cancellations, we will provide a self-drive hire car so that some can drive out and the others drive back. There will be no additional charge, but those doing only section two will need to come out the day before section two starts and will need to cover the cost for their camping or accom that night.