

Kakadu Highlights No. 8: 6-19 September, 2020

List price: \$2995

Section 1: Twin Falls Creek: 6-8 September

This is normally one of the easiest walks we offer, minimal pack carrying combined with day walks and swim stops along one of the most scenic creeks in Kakadu. However, road construction this year means we will have an extra 3½ hour walk between the Jim Jim and Twin Falls car parks in each direction.

The drive from Darwin to Jim Jim Falls takes 4-5 hours. From there, we walk cross country (no track) to the Twin Falls car park where we take the marked trail to the top of the falls. With the road closed, we should have this magnificent spot to ourselves.



Twin Falls Creek, your own private pool



Twin Falls Creek, beach campsite

We spend the next day exploring and enjoying the shady rock ledges, sandy beaches and cool pools that we find in the seven kilometre long upper gorge. This section finishes with the climb back down to the plains and a walk to the Jim Jim car park.

If no one is leaving or joining at this point, we will immediately follow the trail to the top of Jim Jim. If the guide does go to Cooinda to drop someone off or pick someone up, those continuing on to section two will have the option of remaining at Jim Jim Gorge.

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

Overall	Level 1
Terrain	Level 1. The climb to the top of Twin Falls is steep but straightforward along a well defined track. The walk along Twin Falls Creek is mostly flat and easy with a minimal amount of rock hopping. This is one of the easiest walks we offer.
Vegetation	Level 1-2. Mostly open woodland or open areas along the creek.
Hours	You carry your full pack for only 1-2 hours on the way up and again on the way back. Day walk will be fairly long.
Packs	Pack weight - level 1. You need to carry only 2 days food. You need a sleeping bag but are unlikely to need a tent.
Art	We may visit a couple of minor sites on this walk.
Campsites	Sand or rock ledges. Excellent site near the water. We should have it to ourselves.
Swims	Swimming is excellent. Good pools all along the creek.
Lowlights	The very long drive to the start of the walk. Possible tourist crowds at Twin Falls.
Highlights	View from the top of Twin Falls. Good weather. Great swimming holes. Light packs.
Map	1:50 000 jim Jim Falls

Section 2: Jim Jim and Rainforest Gorge: 8-13 September

After replenishing our supplies at the vehicle, we follow the Barrk Marlam trail to the top of Jim Jim Falls, the tallest waterfall in the park. After a view stop, we move upstream to our campsite for the night. The next morning we do the four kilometre walk to the entrance to the top of one of the longest rainforest gorges in Kakadu, known as Anbadgoran by the local Aboriginal people.



View from the top of Jim Jim



Walking in the rainforest gorge

Although it is much smaller than nearby Jim Jim and Twin Falls Creeks, the creek which created this gorge continues to flow long after its neighbours have stopped. The camp site on the flat rock ledges at the top of the rainforest gorge is magnificent. Beautiful waterfalls cascade through a series of inviting pools under a shady rainforest canopy. We spend the rest of the day relaxing and enjoying this beautiful place.

As camping is not permitted in Rainforest Gorge, we normally camp at the base of the gorge. The walk down the gorge is only six kilometres long but it is strenuous — a continuous scramble over boulders and rocks of all sizes. However, it is very shady and the gorge contains several good pools where we can stop for a

swim so we normally take a full day for the walk. For more information about Anbadgoran see

www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/jrainforest.shtml

From our campsite at the bottom of the gorge, a walk of about 4 km brings us back to the vehicle we left at the car park.

We then drive to Cooina. After lunch, we plan to visit the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Centre before driving to the Aboriginal owned and operated Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp where we get a traditional Welcome to Country.



Enjoying the waterfall at the top of the rainforest gorge

The annual Mayali Mulil Festival begins the evening we arrive and continues all the following day so we will have two nights at the camp.

For more info, see <http://www.kakadubillabongsafaricamp.com.au/>

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

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

Overall	Level 3.
Terrain	Level 3-4. Most of the walk is relatively flat and fairly easy. There is a steep part along a marked track to Jim Jim Creek below the falls. The walk up or down the rainforest gorge requires a lot of rock hopping and scrambling over boulders the size of small trucks. It is quite strenuous. Some of our clients who had never walked in this kind of terrain considered it to be one of the most physically demanding things they had ever done.
Vegetation	Level 2-3. Mostly open woodland or open areas along the creek. Dense forest in Rainforest Gorge makes for slow going.
Hours	4-6 hours most days.
Packs	Pack weight - level 2. You need to carry four days food. You can probably leave your sleeping bag at home but we do recommend a well ventilated tent or mossie dome with fly.
Art	There is one major site that most groups visit as well as several minor sites we might see.
Campsites	Sand or rock ledges. Excellent sites near the water. We should have them to ourselves.
Swims	Swimming is excellent. Good pools all along both creeks.
Lowlights	Possible tourist crowds at Jim Jim.
Highlights	The view at the top of Jim Jim Falls. Perfect weather. Great swimming holes. Rainforest Gorge and Falls.
Map	1: 50 000 Jim Jim Falls

Notes for section 2

The walk down the rainforest gorge is so strenuous that some groups choose to miss the walk up the gorge and walk over and back from Jim Jim Creek. This drops the walk to level 2.

The changes caused by Covid-19 may cause the date of the Mayali Mulil Festival to be changed or perhaps even cancelled. If so we will incorporate something in its place. What that would be will depend on what is open at the time.

Section 3: Barramundi Creek: 13-17 September

Anyone joining this section will need to get themselves to Cooinda the day before the pick up.



Beach campsite, Barramundi Creek

If someone is joining or leaving the trip, we go to Cooinda for the drop off or pick up. If not, we drive straight to Maguk/Barramundi Gorge. A short walk from the car park brings us to the main falls and the climb to the upper gorge. A walk through the upper gorge takes us to a lovely camp site. The next good spot is about two hours away so we may decide to have a lazy day and stop here for the night or we may decide to push on so we can have a two night camp later.

When we leave the gorge, we find ourselves in a broad sandy valley. The only visible water is in a few isolated pools. All the flow is through the sand below our feet. After about five kilometres, we turn off into a side valley and suddenly find flowing water. Another kilometre brings us to a beautiful, deep, clear, shady pool where we can relax and enjoy a swim. A short climb to the top brings us to more beautiful pools and waterfalls. We may camp near here or we may decide to push on across the plateau and down to the largest pool in the entire Barramundi system. Huge *Allosyncarpia* trees give deep shade on the wide sandy banks of the pool, another exceptional camp site.



Top pool, Barramundi Creek.

If we have taken two days to get to this point, we will probably spend a second night there, doing another day walk without full packs. If we have taken three days, we will begin working our way back down the main valley, sometimes in the deep shade of a patch of monsoon forest, more often in the open woodland, stopping for the occasional swim along the way. Our final campsite is normally at a pool near the top of the upper gorge.



Swim stop, Emerald Pool, Barramundi Creek.

The first part of the walk is along a marked track. The next several kilometres are quite well defined and generally easy going although there is a bit of scrambling over river stones. Most of the terrain up to the large pool mentioned in paragraph three is fairly flat and relatively easy. There are, however, a couple of short but steep climbs at the beginning and end.

Vegetation	Level 2-3. Mostly open woodland or open areas along the creek.
Hours	4-6 hours most days.
Packs	Pack weight - level 2. You need to carry four days food. You can probably leave your sleeping bag at home but we do recommend a well ventilated tent or mossie dome with fly.
Art	There are a few minor sites that we may visit.
Campsites	Sand or rock ledges. Excellent sites near the water. We should have them to ourselves.
Swims	Swimming is excellent. Good pools all along both creeks.
Lowlights	Possible tourist crowds at the start of the walk. Hot, sticky weather.
Highlights	Relaxing next to two of the most beautiful pools in Kakadu.
Map	1:50 000 Goodparla

Section 4: Ubirr and the Mary River: 17-19 September

After a brief stop in Jabiru, we drive to Ubirr, site of one of the best collections of Aboriginal art in Kakadu. For most of the year, it is completely overrun with bus loads of tourists. By late September, most of these are gone. We will time our visit for dusk or dawn the next morning when we will have it almost to ourselves. The rest of our time will be spent relaxing and doing one of the short nature walks in the area. Perhaps we will be lucky enough to spot one of the large crocodiles which inhabit the East Alligator River. No swims here! But if we can't have a swim, we can enjoy a shower and a cool drink as we listen to the dawn and dusk choruses of the birds at Anbinik in Jabiru, <http://www.anbinik.com.au>



Mary River Houseboat

The area near the East Alligator River will have provided us with a taste of what the Top End wetlands have to offer. Our trip finishes with the most comfortable wetland experience we can offer — a day and night aboard a houseboat on the Mary River.

We cruise slowly along the Mary, watching the hundreds of birds that line the river banks and enjoying the changing scenery around us. Those who wish to try their hand at catching a barramundi have a chance to do so. We pull in to shore for the night and

enjoy a relaxing final meal in the bush as we listen to the night sounds around us. The following morning, we cruise back to where we began and get into the vehicles for the drive back to Darwin. The trip is over, but the memories will linger on.



Relaxing on the houseboat, a perfect way to finish the trip.

Note. We cannot book the boat until we have bookings on the tour. If we do not get early bookings, we may not be able to do the cruise as scheduled.

Map. 1:100 000 Mary River

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

Overall	Level 0.
Terrain	Level 0. The only walking is getting on and off the houseboat.
Vegetation	Level 0. No vegetation on the river, but we pass through a variety of habitats on the shores.
Hours	4-6 hours most days.
Packs	None.
Art	None.
Campsites	A bed on the boat.
Swims	None. Large crocodiles inhabit this section of the Mary River.
Lowlights	Hot, sticky weather. Not being able to swim.
Highlights	Wildlife and a wonderfully relaxing way to finish two weeks in the bush.

General Terrain and Difficulty for all sections

Terrain	Little or 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 more than if you do not. The relatively easy nature of sections one and three means that they should suit almost anyone who meets our minimum level of fitness. Anyone who has already done section two should find that section three is easier than it would have been if they were beginning with section three.
Climate	September is one of the hotter months of the year with an average daily maximum of 36°C (97°F). Fortunately, the humidity is normally still fairly low. The average minimum is 21°C (70°F). Temperatures as low as 12°C (about 54°F) have been known to occur, but they are rare. You might want to leave your sleeping bag at home. If you do, bring thermals for insurance against a chilly night. We tailor our walking to the climate, starting early and having long breaks next to pools in the middle of the day. If you accept the climate, you should have a wonderfully relaxing holiday. If you want to march on regardless of the weather, you may find it frustrating. Thunderstorms are possible so that we recommend that you bring a lightweight tent or mossie dome with fly.
Wildlife	Birds are concentrated near the waterholes at this time of year. You will see thousands at Yellow Waters and on the Mary River. The Mary River cruise gives you a good chance to

see large estuarine crocodiles.

Fishing Not permitted on the first three sections. Fishing can be good from the houseboat. Barramundi can sometimes be caught from the boat.

Notes

Those doing more than one section 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.

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.

Make sure you have your lunch, a water bottle, and some money with you in the vehicle during the drives as it may be difficult to get into your pack during the journey.

A day pack may be useful on all sections, especially on sections one and three.

Bring a book or two if you'd like to read during the long breaks. Flies can be a nuisance at this time of year so it's a good idea to bring a lightweight insect net for use during the breaks.

Those who book early may be able to get a bed at the Safari Camp. The cost of a bed is extra.; The cost of camping is included.

Our prices are based on an estimate of the cost of the Mayili Mulil Festival. If we got it very wrong, we may have to make an adjustment to the list price.

If anyone doing section two does not want to take part in the Mayali Mulil Festival, we can drop them at Cooinda on our way to the Camp. If anyone joining section two wants to come to the festival, we can collect them at Cooinda on our way from Jim Jim. If you are interested, please ask us for details of how it would work.

Map. The 1:250 000 Kakadu park map shows all areas but is not good enough for navigation. To get a better idea where these walks go see the links below.

The Top End showing Kakadu in relation to Darwin:

www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/images/top_end_map.jpg

Kakadu National Park: www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/images/maps/kakadu_350.jpg

Cooinda

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 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. 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.

Itinerary: Kakadu Highlights No. 8

Note 1 Day 0 is the day before departure.

Note 2 This itinerary is subject to change.

Section 1 Twin Falls Creek

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 and the only one with a swimming pool. **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 Bush camping, day trip with day packs.

Day 3 Return to vehicles. Drive to Cooina, to pick up and drop off or straight to Jim Jim if not required. Those ending here can catch a bus to Darwin. See the note at the end for details.

Section 2 Jim Jim Creek & Rainforest Gorge

Day 3 Those beginning with this section catch a bus from Darwin to Cooina. See the note at the end for details. 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 Jim Jim. Begin walk, carrying full packs. Bush camp.

Day 4-5 Bush camping, carrying full packs for part of day.

Day 6 Return to vehicle. Drive to Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp. Overnight at the camp.

Day 7 Mayali Mulil Festival at the camp.

Day 8 If anyone is finishing here, drive to Cooina to drop them off and collect anyone joining.

Section 3 Barramundi Creek

Day 7 Those beginning with this section catch a bus from Darwin to Cooina. See the note at the end for details. You will need to camp or book your own accommodation.

Day 8 Drive to Cooina if anyone is joining or leaving.
Drive to Barramundi Gorge. Begin walk carrying full packs. Bush camp.

Day 9-11 Bush camping, mostly carrying full packs. May include day walks without full packs.

Day 12 Return to vehicle. Drop off those finishing with this section. Drive to Ubirr.

Section 4 Ubirr and the Mary River

Day 12 Those beginning with this section catch the bus from Darwin to Cooina or Jabiru (their choice) at about 6.30 a.m. There is only one bus per day. Check the current timetable when you book. The cost of the bus is not included in the cost of the tour. Meet the group about lunch time and drive to Ubirr. Afternoon walk.

Day 13 Dawn walk near Ubirr. Drive to Mary River and begin houseboat cruise.

Day 14 Finish houseboat cruise. Drive back to Darwin. Drop off at your accommodation.

Note **Cooina Bus.** The cost of getting to or from Cooina is not included in the cost of the tour for those not doing the full trip. In recent years, the only way to get to Cooina was on an AAT Kings tour bus.
08 8923 6555. Ask for just the transport, not the full tour. (The people who answer the AAT Kings 1300 number may not have information about this possibility.)