

top end fact sheet
group guided walking holiday



group guided walking...

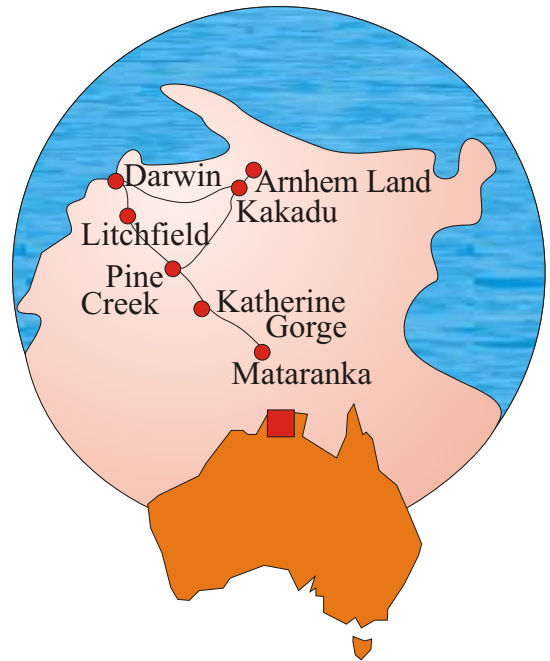
Group guided walking holidays are an enjoyable, informative way to explore new areas. On this trip, group sizes vary from 10-16 people. It is easy to get to know other people on the tour, and the small numbers mean that you and your guides can have some flexibility in the daily program. We have lots of fun on these tours, and people often make good friends with other people on the trips. You will need to carry a light day-pack each day, containing basic essential items, such as lunch and water.

guides...

Unlike some other tour operators in the area, this tour includes two guides to look after you. This means we can include more one way walks, and often provide you with a choice of walks. Our guides are also fun people to spend a week with! The guides' role is to lead the group, provide information about the environment you are walking through and generally assist you as needed.

9 day trip itinerary guide...

Day 1: Starts in Darwin at 7.30am or Darwin Airport at 8.00am. A fabulous introduction to Kakadu's wetlands today. Our first walk is at Fogg Dam wetlands where you'll get your first look at the wonderful diversity of bird life in the Top End (4km, 1.5hrs, easy walking). Next stop is the informative Window on the Wetlands Centre where you can find info about the loads of wildlife you'll encounter during this walking holiday. We enter the Kakadu World Heritage Area after lunch, and do our first walk there, a circuit loop in Mamulaka, passing tall termite mounds, swaying palm trees and typical savannah country (3km, 1hr, easy). No visit here is complete without a visit to the much-publicised Ranger uranium mine, before settling into our cosy bush bungalows for two nights. Accommodation: Bush bungalows at Jabiru for 2 nights





Day 2: Before today's walks, we'll have an early start and cruise on East Alligator River. This impressive river marks the boundary with Arnhem land, and we are pleased to have local aboriginal people guide this cruise. Will you see crocodiles? Sure will! There will be two walks for the remainder of the day, one passing through remarkable rock "islands" (7km, about 2hrs, moderate walking or an easier option of choice of 5km, about 2 hours, easy walking). Further north, our final walk is in the much photographed Ubirr area. The impressive rock paintings here portray stories and lessons for aboriginal food supply, customs and relationship with country. There are even paintings here done by Miri, spiritual beings who brought rocks to the ground for painting, then returned the painted rocks high up a vertical cliff (1km, about 1hr, moderate). There's also an optional rock scramble to a lookout for expansive views over the Nadab floodplain. Accommodation: Bush bungalows at Jabiru





Day 3: We've chosen a wonderful circuit walk for today, in another magnificent part of Kakadu known as Nourlangie Rock. This fairly challenging walk will occupy most of the day and pass through areas which most visitors could never expect to see. Of course, there will also be the usual Auswalk alternative walk available. This hike offers spectacular views of the Kakadu escarpment, culminating in a visit to the Nanguluwurr Gallery art site, far away from the tourist crowds (13km, about 6 hours, moderately challenging walking or an easier option of 10km, about 5 hours, easier grade). We'll head further south during the afternoon for a walk beside Yellow Waters lagoon, famous for its bird life and topped up year round by Jim Jim River (30 mins). Tonight will be spent in cute cottages at Pine Creek, where in December 1870 a work party drilling holes for the Overland Telegraph Line discovered alluvial gold. Pine Creek then became the site of one of the Territory's most frenetic gold rushes.

Accommodation: Pine Creek Resort - 1 night





Day 4: Continue southwards to Edith River in the Nitmiluk National Park (Katherine Gorge), another gem with waterfalls, pools and shady banks. We'll follow part of the long distance Jatbula Trail beside the river, to Sweetwater Pool. There are no saltwater crocodiles here, so swimming in the crystal clear water is definitely on the options list for today. This trail follows the route travelled by generations of Jawoyn Aboriginal people to access the escarpment country (12km, about 5-6 hours, moderate walking). A shorter option to the halfway point of Long Hole Pool will also be offered (6km, 3-4 hours, moderate walking). And at the end of the walk there's a series of large swimming holes with the impressive Edith Falls plummeting into the refreshing waters. Tonight's accommodation is beside the Katherine River, in Katherine, the third largest town in Northern Territory. Accommodation: Motel in Katherine for 3 nights





Day 5: We'll spend all of today in the Katherine Gorge section of Nitmiluk National Park. Our chosen route parallels the mighty river, dropping down to the banks for a refreshing swim from time to time. The harder option includes the Baruwei Walk, Butterfly Gorge and Southern waterhole (16km, about 8 hours, moderate walking). The easier option does not include Butterfly Gorge and will be offered at a more relaxed pace (10km, about 6 hours, moderate walking). If you prefer, you could do a cruise on the river (which we find a bit touristy) or go kayaking (at own expense).
Accommodation: Motel in Katherine





Day 6: Today we head south for a day trip to the Mataranka area for a fabulous walk to Mataranka Falls - one of our all time favourites. Two large rivers meet here and there are waterfalls and picture-perfect pools to swim in (4km, 2hours, easy). The afternoon walk follows the river upstream to the Mataranka thermal pool (option of 2-12km, easy). This fabulous day culminates with the amazing Bitter Springs where you can float downstream in a warm, crystal-clear stream.

Accommodation: Motel in Katherine





Day 7: Our journey finally heads north, towards Litchfield National Park, widely regarded by travellers as even more breathtaking than Kakadu. There's a photo stop to see massive termite mounds as well as two walks this afternoon. The first is to a viewing point over Tolmer Falls (2km, about 45 mins, easy). The second is to one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the park, Wangi Falls (choice of 2 or 4km, moderate walking). There will be time for a swim in the delightful waterhole at the falls.

Accommodation: Bungalows / resort hotel in Batchelor (the gateway to Litchfield)



Day 8: There's plenty of walking today, and more swimming opportunities. The harder, longer option is a section of the long distance Tabletop Track from Walker Creek to Florence Falls. This is remote, challenging walking and a dip in the pool below Florence Falls will be a welcome end to the hike (11km, about 5hrs, challenging). The easier option will include a visit to historic Bamboo Creek Tin Mine (1.5km, easy), and a swamp area that has many water birds (1km, easy). Then there's a walk from Florence Falls to Buley Rockhole with plenty of time for swimming en route (4km, easy walking).
Accommodation: Bungalows / resort hotel in Batchelor



Day 9: More walks in wonderful Litchfield, again featuring pools, cascades, waterfalls. The first is to Tjaetaba Falls (3km, about 1hr, moderate walking). Next is the fabulous Cascades and what a fitting finale it is! The track passes by a series of secluded water holes with cascading waters tumbling over boulders into crystal clear pools. The circuit walk takes you to the Upper Cascades away from the crowds for your final swim (4km, about 2hrs, moderate walking). An easier option of walking to the Lower Cascades is also available (2km, about 1hr plus swimming time, moderate walking). After lunch we'll travel back to Darwin, to arrive at about 5.00pm. It will be hard to leave, but all good things must come to an end.



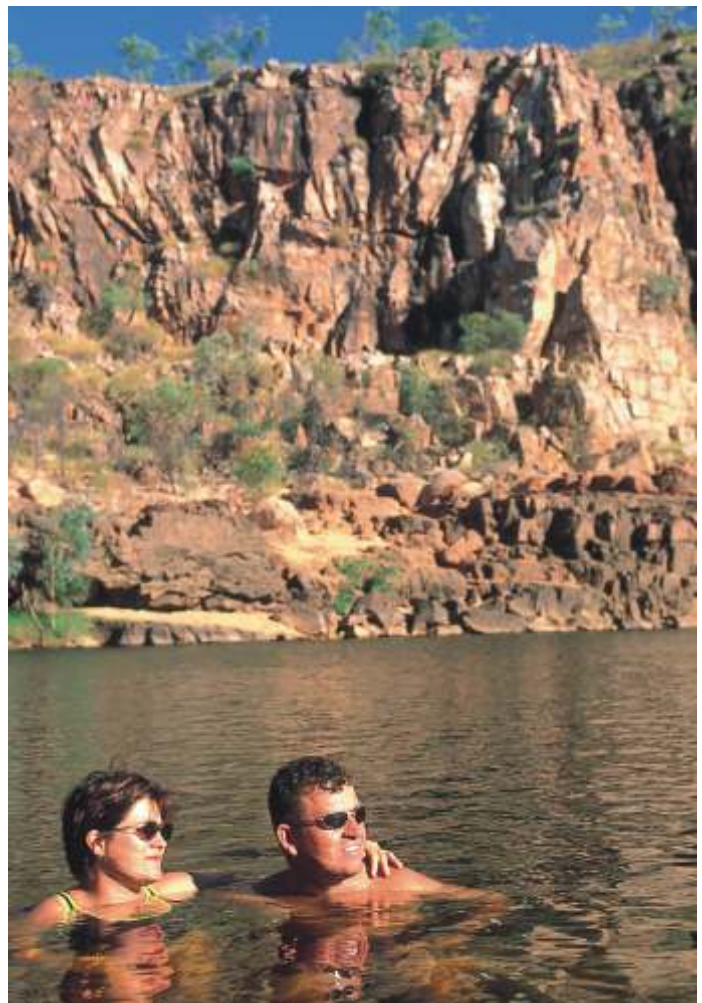
how hard is the walking?...

This walking holiday has about 4-6 hours of steady walking most days. For average healthy walkers this allows lots of time to take in the views, have a snack, a swim, photograph your delightful surroundings or simply sit and relax.

The walking distances are more than you are likely to do at home and you may be quite weary by the end of each day. The best preparation is a program of regular walking. We suggest at least one hour of walking each day, preferably in an area with lots of ups and downs. Do this for at least three weeks before the start of your holiday. Alternatively take up an active sport like aerobics, tennis or swimming. A bit of sweat now will make your walking holiday much more enjoyable.

Specifics: The walking in Kakadu National Park ranges from easy to moderate with one optional challenging walk. In Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) the walking becomes a bit more challenging with many of the tracks being rough and rocky. As always, easier options will be available. At Mataranka the walking is easy. At Litchfield there are a range of walking options from moderate to challenging. On this trip we have tried to schedule the hardest walking sections for the mornings and allow some time each afternoon for swimming, relaxing and just enjoying this special part of Australia.

We only offer this holiday during the winter months, when daily temperatures are the lowest for this region. It can still be quite warm to hot on occasions but, as mentioned above, there is usually a refreshing waterhole close at hand for a swim. The daily temperatures are likely to be in the high 20's, so we have generally scheduled less walking during the afternoons.



accommodations...

On this trip you will stay in comfortable accommodations with private or ensuite bathrooms each night. Accommodations in this region are very expensive, particularly at Kakadu. We have chosen a cheaper property for the first two nights of this trip but we are sure you'll enjoy it. Those first two nights will be spent at Jabiru, right in the heart of Kakadu National Park. The accommodation is in simple but spacious and characterful bush bungalows - a little like safari tents with high canvas roofs. Each bungalow has a private, lockable bathroom about 3-4 metres from the door. The bungalows are in a bushland setting that features outdoor dining facilities that we will have exclusive access to. Breakfasts will be served el fresco and we'll have a BBQ dinner on one of the nights.



The next three nights will be in a motel at Katherine. This motel is situated right across the road from the Katherine River and its extensive parklands. It features a restaurant, bar, atmospheric swimming pool and spa and is within easy walking distance of the centre of town.



On the final two nights the group will be split over a couple of properties in Batchelor (near Litchfield National Park). One property features smart bungalows and the other has resort style hotel rooms. Both have ensuite bathrooms.



what's included...

Two guides, all transport ex Darwin, 8 nights accommodation, 8 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 6 dinners, Guluyambi Cultural Cruise, National Park fees, information booklets, insulated lunch bag, map case, maps.

More details:

- Two guides - we do this so that we can offer you a choice of easier and harder walking options each day as well as some one-way walks where you don't need to retrace your route.
- There are less accommodation choices in the Top End than more populated locations in Australia. To keep the cost at a manageable level, we've deliberately avoided the expensive resort at Kakadu and opted for comfortable, spacious bungalows with private bathrooms (3-4 metres away from your bungalow). At Katherine we'll stay in a modern motel with all the usual facilities. There is no accommodation within the Litchfield National Park so we'll stay in the nearby small town of Batchelor. We'll split the group over a couple of properties, and you'll have a room or bungalow with ensuite bathroom. Each property is special and each is different. Don't expect luxury but do expect to be comfortable.
- Quality dining is an important aspect of all Auswalk walking holidays, and a good meal is even more appreciated after a day's exercise. The evenings in the Top End during winter are usually very pleasant so we will eat outdoors on some nights. As for all Auswalk tours, meals will be plentiful, nutritious and wholesome. Most meals are included on this holiday. Each day starts with a hearty cooked or tropical breakfast. On most days we will supply you with a picnic lunch which you'll need to carry on the walk, and on three days you will need to buy your own lunch at a café en route. The carry lunches will be packed in an insulated carrier bag (which we supply) to keep it fresh and cool. Dinner is included on six nights, leaving you free to enjoy your choice of local restaurants on the other nights.
- All transport ex Darwin. We will travel in a spacious, air conditioned mini bus with trailer.
- Cultural Cruise on the East Alligator River. The Top End is one of the best places to see indigenous art and culture alive and well and we've chosen this cruise because it is Aboriginal owned and operated. The river forms a border with Arnhem Land.
- Insulated lunch container. This will keep your lunches cool and fresh.

We will mail you a final information package about one month prior to your holiday and after you have paid for your trip in full. It includes:

- Maps. Your guide can highlight the routes for you.
- Waterproof map case. You can put your map and daily walking notes in this map case, so everything stays dry no matter what the weather.
- Additional information booklets. These provide useful information about the area.

If you are coming from overseas, we can mail the package to any address in Australia for no additional charge. However, if you want the documents sent overseas, we charge an extra \$30 to New Zealand and \$60 to other countries. The package weighs about 1kg so we recommend mailing it to your first Australian accommodation, so you can collect it when you first arrive in the country. It is important that you receive your package at least a few days before you start your walking holiday.

what's not included...

Travel insurance, meals not specified, drinks with meals (except for tea/coffee, and fruit juice with breakfast).

weather information...

For an overview of weather conditions in this area, click on the link below:

[Bureau of Meteorology](#)

what to bring with you

- Casual clothing for dinner - skirts and jackets are not required in the restaurant. Note that it can get cool at night so bring a light jacket.
- Suitable footwear. Boots should have ankle support and a strong patterned sole for good grip. Wear thick socks, or two pair of thin ones. Sandals and thongs are totally unsuitable for walking - bring them for use around the accommodations.
- Day pack. The best day packs have padded shoulders and a waist/hip strap. Make sure it is large enough to carry waterproof clothing, a jacket, water, picnic lunch, camera etc. Most packs leak in rain so bring a plastic bag to line the pack with.
- Walk clothing for warm weather - light weight materials, shorts, short sleeved shirts. Given that there will likely be lots of sun and warm to hot weather, bring some light long trousers and long sleeved shirts as well.
- Lightweight jacket. We'll be walking here during the Dry Season and are unlikely to have any rain. If it does rain, it won't be cold so most walkers are happy to get wet and then just dry out naturally. Umbrellas are not safe to use when walking in a group so please don't bring those on the walks.
- Sun hat - essential
- Sunglasses
- Water bottles. On some days on the longer, harder walk options, it is necessary to carry adequate drinking water for the entire day - between two and four litres per person.
- Sun screen (at least 15+).
- Insect repellent
- Toilet paper, just in case! Bury everything at least 15cm deep, and well away from water/streams.
- Small first aid kit containing blister treatments and personal medications etc.
- Camera / binoculars (optional)
- Walking stick (optional). Some people find that the use of a walking stick reduces stress on knees and ankles, particularly when walking downhill. Modern collapsible models fit neatly into most suitcases for travelling.
- Swimwear and a towel for swimming in waterholes on the walking route. A must! Even if you are not normally into swimming, we reckon there's a good chance you'll change your mind once you see these delightful places!
- Thermos for hot drinks (optional)
- Gaiters (optional) - they can help to keep grass seeds out of your boots.
- Wine/beer for a BBQ dinner on the second night of the tour when we are in Jabiru - you cannot buy takeaway alcohol anywhere in the Kakadu region due to local laws so bring it with you from Darwin or buy it at lunch time on the first day, just before we enter the National Park.

If you need anything at the last minute, there are outdoors equipment stores in Darwin. The only other place where there are shops is Katherine so bring everything you need with you.

luggage...

You can bring as many items of luggage as you wish. However, we strongly recommend that you limit the weight of each bag to a maximum of 20 kilograms (about 40 pounds). There are no portage services or luggage lifts. Your guides will help when they can.

insurance...

We charge a cancellation fee if you cancel your Auswalk holiday after we have confirmed it. Details are clearly listed in our AUSWALK BOOKING CONDITIONS in our brochure and web page. We strongly recommend you purchase a travel insurance policy, so you are insured if you have to cancel this tour. This can be arranged through Auswalk if you are an Australian resident or through any travel agent.

how to get there...

This holiday starts and finishes in Darwin. We will pick up and drop off at the airport and our preferred Darwin accommodation as per below.

pre & post tour accommodation

We can recommend the Mirambeena Resort Darwin. Set in tropical gardens, this resort has a range of room styles. In our opinion, the motel rooms are quite small and only have double beds; it's probably better to pay a little more and have a guest room. They have a restaurant, bar and lovely pool area. Check it out at www.travelodge.com.au/travelodge-mirambeena-resort-darwin / Ph: 08 8946 0111. This is the only place in downtown Darwin that we can pick you up.

If you prefer to self-cater, there's Quest Darwin just across the road from Mirambeena www.questdarwin.com.au / Ph: 08 8982 3100. Or, if you are arriving on a late flight, there are some good places right at the airport. Try the Darwin Airport Inn www.darwinairportinn.com.au or for a cheaper, simpler property, try the Best Western Darwin Airport Gateway Motel www.darwinairportgatewaymotel.com.au.

departure dates & prices...

These can be found on our website by clicking on these links:

[Departure dates](#)

[Prices](#)

photography...

From time to time Auswalk guides take photographs during trips for possible use in future brochures, newsletters or on our website, to promote Auswalk holidays. While we end up taking hundreds of pictures, we only ever use a few of the very best ones. If you don't want your image to be used in a photo for this purpose, please let the guide know before the trips starts. If you don't say anything, we will assume you have no objections.



auswalk's guided group trips...

- Australia's South West - circuit trip from Perth, 9 days, featuring highlights of the Bibbulmun Track plus the Porongorups and Stirling Ranges
- Blue Mountains Hiker - starts in Sydney, 4 days, based at Blackheath
- Cape to Cape Track - starts in Perth, 9 days, coastal hike in the Margaret River region
- Carnarvon Gorge - starts in Brisbane, 8 days, also includes the Bunya Mountains & Cania Gorge
- Flinders Island - starts on the island, 7 days, stunning hiking in the mountain ranges and coastline
- Flinders Ranges - starts in Adelaide, 8 days, hike Alligator Gorge, Dutchmans Stern, Wilpena Pound
- Gold Coast Hinterland Walk - starts at the Gold Coast, 6 days, hike in the Lamington National Park from O'Reillys to Binna Burra then up to Springbrook Plateau
- Grampians Hiker - starts in Melbourne, 7 days, highlights of the region, based in Halls Gap
- Great Alpine Walk - starts in Melbourne, 7 days, traverse the Vic Alps from one village to the next
- Great Ocean Walk - starts in Melbourne, 7 days, hike from Apollo Bay to the 12 Apostles
- Great South West Walk - starts in Melbourne, 7 days, walk the highlights of this track including the Lower Glenelg River and the Three Capes section.
- Kangaroo Island - starts in Adelaide, 7 days, staying in wilderness lodge and lighthouse cottages
- Lord Howe Island - accessible by plane from Sydney or Brisbane, 7 days, hike this World Heritage Area, cruise around the island by boat and much more
- Red Centre - starts in Alice Springs, 7 days, includes Uluru, Kata Tjuta (the Olgas), Kings Canyon and sections of the Larapinta Trail in the West Macdonnell Ranges
- Roof of Australia - starts in Canberra, 7 days, hike inn-to-inn, traversing the Snowy Mountains, stay in alpine ski lodges and climb the highest mountain in Australia
- Tasmanian Coastal Hiker - starts in Launceston & finishes in Hobart, 7 days, includes Bay of Fires, Freycinet & the Tasman Peninsula
- Tasmanian Wilderness Hiker - starts in Hobart & finishes in Launceston, 9 days, includes Mt Field, Lake Pedder, Lake St Clair and Cradle Mountain
- Tropical Hiker - starts in Cairns, 8 days, includes the Daintree, Mossman Gorge, Atherton Tablelands, Mission Beach and Dunk Island
- Waterfall Way - starts in Coolangatta, 7 days, includes stunning waterfalls and escarpments of New England National Park, Dorrigo, Wollomombi Falls, Dangars Gorge, Cathedral Rock and more

PLUS Sydney's Bushtracks, Bays & Beaches - based in Sydney, guided, 5 or 7 days, starts any day except summer, for a minimum of 2 people booking together, walk in National Parks close to Sydney

we also offer inn-to-inn walking holidays...

On an INN-to-INN walking holiday, you walk from one place to the next while your luggage is moved ahead for you. They are all available self guided and some can be done guided any day of the year.

- Blue Mountains Traverse & Blue Mountains Weekender - near Sydney, there's much more here than the famous 3 Sisters!
- Cape to Cape Track - near Perth, hike from Cape Leeuwin to Cape Naturaliste in Western Australia's Margaret River wine region
- Gold Coast Hinterland Walk - near Brisbane, traverse the Lamington Plateau then hike Springbrook
- Grampians Hike - near Melbourne, Auswalk's home base and our favourite place, rugged rocky ranges, a fabulous place to hike amongst native animals
- Great Alpine Walk - near Melbourne, traverse the Victorian Alps from one alpine village to the next, hike the Razorback Ridge and walk from Falls Creek to Mt Hotham
- Great Ocean Walk - near Melbourne, long distance track from Apollo Bay to the 12 Apostles, magnificent coastal scenery, secluded beaches, tall forests and lots of koalas
- Great South West Walk - near the Vic/SA border, hike the entire 250km track or do just the highlights
- Roof of Australia - in the Snowy Mountains near Canberra, hike from one alpine village to the next, see ancient glacial lakes, climb Australia's highest mountain

how to contact us...

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