



## ARNHEM LAND WETLANDS & WILDLIFE

### CAIRNS - DARWIN

#### SAMPLE ITINERARY

*This is a sample itinerary and may be subject to change. We may need to alter or amend itineraries, excursions, accommodation, or sightseeing arrangements from those published, with little or no notice. This may be due to road conditions, weather, cultural considerations, safety factors and other operational considerations or government regulations. Final itineraries are sent to passengers approximately 2-3 weeks before travel.*

#### DAY 1 – Welcome to Arnhem Land

*Please check your required arrival time with the office before booking your flights.*

After meeting your group at Cairns Airport and travelling to Gove Airport with Airnorth, you will be greeted by our friendly and professional tour director. This afternoon we'll explore this frontier village, created in the 1960's after the discovery of Bauxite on the Gove Peninsula. Visit the Roy (Malpi) Marika Lookout for incredible views towards the coast, Gayngaru Wetlands and Gove Harbour before settling in for a two night stay at the Walkabout Lodge. **Meals (D)**

*Note: Passengers flying into Darwin will be met at the baggage reclaim area of the airport and transferred to the Walkabout Lodge.*

#### DAY 2 – Exploring the Gove Peninsula

The Gove Peninsula has been home to Yolngu people for over 60,000 years and is one of the most culturally significant regions in Australia. You'll get a true sense of this with a special 'Welcome to Country' ceremony at Wirrwawuy Beach, where we'll learn about Yolngu culture and kinship first hand. We'll also visit the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka art centre, which boasts many renowned Aboriginal artists whose work (particularly those painted on bark) can be found in galleries all over the world. Yirrkala is also where the Aboriginal Land Rights movement started, when the 'bark petition' was sent to Federal Parliament in 1963.

From the art centre it's a short stroll to Shady Beach, where we enjoy lunch followed by a special Bush Medicine and Women's Healing demonstration. Experience traditional healing ways and hear stories of how Yolngu live and heal on their land.

We return to Nhulunbuy late this afternoon for our second night at the Walkabout Lodge. **Meals (B,L,D)**

#### DAY 3 – Journey to Murwangi

Today our journey into the heart of Arnhem Land begins. Departing Nhulunbuy we follow the Central Arnhem road south west to the Goyder River, the main tributary flowing into the massive Arafura Swamp. Enjoy a picnic lunch before taking a track to the north, which follows an escarpment before descending on to the Arafura floodplains. This area, known as 'Murwangi', is the site of our exclusive safari camp where we'll be staying for the next two nights. Check in to your deluxe safari suite before dinner in the lodge dining room. **Meals (B,L,D)**

#### DAY 4 – Arafura Swamp and Murwangi Discovery Tour

The Arafura Swamp is one of the largest wooded swamps in Australia and covers approximately 1,300 square kilometres. This incredibly diverse wetland can support up to 300,000 waterbirds at any one time, including Magpie Geese, Egrets, Black-necked Stork and Brolgas. The swamp is of great cultural significance to the Yolngu People and was also the location for the 2006 film 'Ten Canoes'.

Today enjoy a tranquil cruise on the main lagoon, followed by a 4WD adventure around the edge of the swamp. For both activities we'll be accompanied by Indigenous guides who'll explain why this spectacular area is so significant to them.

Later this afternoon we return to camp for a little free time before dinner. **Meals (B,L,D)**

*Note: Today the tour splits into two groups for activities. Group 1 will follow the itinerary shown above, while Group 2 will do the activities in reverse.*



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### DAY 5 – Ramingining - Barramundi Lodge

This morning we head into Ramingining for a visit to Bula'bula Art Centre. Chat to local artists and watch them paint right in front of you. You can also purchase artwork if so desired.

After morning tea at the centre we head further west towards Maningrida. To get there we'll cross the Blyth and Cadell Rivers, arriving at the Barramundi Lodge early this afternoon. Acquired by Outback Spirit in 2015, the lodge is one of the most recognised fishing destinations in Australia. With special permission from traditional owners, the lodge enjoys exclusive fishing licenses for numerous remote waterways, including the Tomkinson and Liverpool Rivers. The lodge was fully redeveloped in early 2016 and now features 12 beautiful safari suites and a restaurant overlooking the floodplains below.

After lunch on the front deck, we'll enjoy a familiarisation talk from the lodge's managers. You're then free to settle in to your safari suite, with the remainder of the afternoon yours to relax, catch up on some washing or simply soak up the stunning view of the floodplains. We spend the next two nights here to explore the local area. **Meals (B,L,D)**

### DAY 6 – Fishing Adventure & Cultural Tour

This morning we enjoy an exclusive fishing adventure on the Liverpool and Tomkinson Rivers - pristine waterways teeming with Barramundi. Our expert fishing guides will take you to where the fish are biting aboard our sturdy Ocean Master vessels, the pinnacle for remote marine adventures featuring an onboard restroom and shade canopy.

Today's fishing adventure is also a wilderness tour, so even if fishing isn't your thing you'll still enjoy the amazing scenery and informative commentary.

This afternoon we visit the Maningrida Arts and Cultural Centre and the Djomi Museum for an immersion in the culture and spiritual richness of the area.

Later this afternoon we'll enjoy a sunset drink on the deck before dinner and tell everyone about the one that got away! **Meals (B,L,D)**

### DAY 7 – Maningrida – Mount Borradaile

Departing Maningrida after breakfast, our travels take us through the stone country of west Arnhem Land. Cross the Goomadeer and Liverpool Rivers before arriving at the turnoff to Davidson's Arnhem Land Safaris, Mount Borradaile. From here we travel along a 40km bush track into the safari lodge, arriving in time for lunch. We'll then check-in to our cabins, our home for the next two nights.

This afternoon the highly trained staff at Mount Borradaile will take you through 40,000 years of Aboriginal culture in a truly awe-inspiring landscape. The area contains some of the most stunning rock art galleries in the world, and in terms of artistic quality, quantity, colourfulness and state of preservation, it is virtually unrivalled. The walls of the many rock shelters are decorated with innumerable pictures documenting traditional Aboriginal life over many thousands of years. Subjects range from now extinct animals to twentieth century sailing ships and the iconic Rainbow Serpent.

This afternoon we return to the lodge for dinner. **Meals (B,L,D)**

### DAY 8 – Exploring Mount Borradaile

Today we jump into the open-back Toyotas and continue exploring the wonderland that is Mount Borradaile. Learn about the variety of techniques used in rock paintings as the styles changed over thousands of years of occupation and storytelling. We'll also wander through various occupation sites and view a range of artefacts from when these sites were still in use.

After lunch, it's time to explore the incredible wetlands of the Cooper Creek. Admire the prolific birdlife and massive crocodiles sunning themselves on the banks as you discover lagoons that seem more from a story book than from real life. As the sun seeks the horizon and sets over the floodplain, enjoy a drink and nibbles before returning to the lodge for our final night with Davidson's Arnhem Land Safaris. **Meals (B,L,D)**



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### DAY 9 – Cobourg Peninsula - Seven Spirit Bay

Departing Mount Borradaile early, we head north and venture into the Garig Gunak Barlu National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula. Travel up the eastern side of Port Essington to Black Point where we'll meet the marine crew from Seven Spirit Bay and board the lodge's custom-made adventure craft for the short transfer across Port Essington. Upon arriving at the lodge, you'll be allocated your room for the next three nights, a unique and luxurious 'habitat' villa. We meet again later this evening for dinner in the lodge restaurant. **Meals (B,L,D)**

### DAY 10 – Port Essington & The Historic Victoria Settlement

Today we enjoy a marine adventure down Port Essington aboard the lodge's specially designed vessel 'MV Arafura'. Designed by NAIAD in New Zealand and built in Australia, these amazing vessels are the ultimate marine sightseeing craft. Departing Seven Spirit Bay, we retrace the course of the early mariner's square riggers, passing landmarks like Gunners Quoin, Low Point, Turtle Rock, Observation Cliff and Record Point on our way to the historic Victoria Settlement. Surveyed in 1838, Victoria Settlement was the third attempt by the British at a northern settlement, after Fort Dundas on Melville Island and Fort Wellington at Raffles Bay. Conceived to facilitate trade with Asia, the settlement consisted of 24 houses and a hospital. Disease was rampant and living conditions poor, leading to its abandonment in 1849.

Upon our arrival at Victoria Settlement, we'll take an informative and fascinating tour of the old buildings and ruins and learn about life in the early British occupation. An optional extension walk will also lead to lonely gravestones in the forest, almost forgotten by history.

After a picnic lunch on the beach we'll get back on the water again and enjoy a leisurely cruise back to Seven Spirit Bay. The waters of the Cobourg Marine Park are alive, so keep your eyes out for dolphins, dugong, manta rays and crocodiles.

We return to Seven Spirit Bay where the remainder of the afternoon can be spent at your leisure. Perhaps take a dip in the palm fringed swimming pool, or just relax in your

luxurious habitat before enjoying sunset drinks on the veranda before dinner in the restaurant. **Meals (B,L,D)**

### DAY 11 – Fishing & 4WD Adventure

The Cobourg Marine Park is teeming with fish. After breakfast, we board the lodge's state-of-the-art fishing vessels for an exclusive half-day fishing adventure in Port Essington. Featuring an onboard restroom, shade canopy and comfortable seating, each boat takes only six people so everyone will have the chance to reel something in!

Seven Spirit Bay's fishing guides are true professionals with intimate knowledge of the marine park. They'll take you to the best fishing spots and share their marine sanctuary expertise while enjoying some of the most spectacular coastline to be found in northern Australia. Our expert guides fish these waters regularly and will have up-to-date knowledge of the many potential sites that are producing fish and that will give you the best chance of success.

A mix of small meandering creeks, mangrove-lined bays, rocky outcrops and deeper water "bommies" mean that there will nearly always be something to be found somewhere. Once we've tested our luck, we'll make our way to a sheltered beach landing at Low Point where we disembark and rendezvous with the lodge's chef for a delicious BBQ bush lunch under a shady tree.

After lunch we enjoy a 4WD safari to appreciate the wonders of Garig Gunak Barlu National Park. First up is a visit to the stunning Nypa Palm gallery (Nypa Fruticans), one of only three locations in Australia where they can be found (the others are Melville Island and the Wenlock River). A short drive further brings us to the upper reaches of Trepang Creek, one of many creek systems that are a mix of spring-fed and tidally influenced systems that help provide nourishment to the rich marine life of the park.

Next, we'll explore the savannah woodlands of the park, potentially spotting Banteng and Buffalo and gaining some insight into the interesting and varied coastal habitats, before a visit to Gunners Quoin lookout. We return to the lodge late afternoon for our third and final evening at Seven Spirit Bay. **Meals: (B,L,D)**



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*Note: The timings for the Port Essington fishing adventure are dependent upon tidal movements. As such, lunch arrangements are subject to change to suit the itinerary set by the Seven Spirit Bay marine managers.*

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### **DAY 12 – Our Last Big Adventure**

This morning we'll depart for the airstrip and board our Cessna Grand Caravan for the 45-minute scenic flight across Van Diemen Gulf. Upon arriving in Darwin this afternoon, we head to the city to check in to the Hilton Garden Inn on The Esplanade.

Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at your leisure before boarding the Charles Darwin for a delicious Territory-style sunset dinner cruise and celebrate a truly amazing trip!

**Meals (B,L,D)**

### **DAY 13 – Darwin**

Enjoy a relaxing morning before your transfer to the airport, or to your accommodation if staying on in Darwin. Time to say goodbye, until we meet again for your next outback adventure. **Meals: B**

*Every effort will be made by your crew to ensure that the above itinerary is followed. However, Outback Spirit reserves the right to alter the itinerary once on tour as required due to weather and track conditions or other operational considerations.*