

LEICHHARDT'S SAVANNAH EXPEDITION

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 – Cairns

Today you will be greeted by our friendly and professional Tour Directors. We'll then check in to the Shangri-La Hotel located on the Marina, just minutes from the Esplanade.

Tonight, enjoy a welcome dinner and meet your fellow adventurers. **Meals: (D)**

DAY 2 – Atherton Tablelands - Undara

Departing Cairns early, we trek west and drive through the scenic Atherton Tablelands. Visit beautiful Millaa Millaa Falls before continuing to Undara Volcanic National Park, which protects the longest lava tube cave system in the world.

A local Savannah Guide will take us on a tour through the lava tube cave system. Created when the Undara Volcano erupted over 190,000 years ago, the lava that flowed was enough to fill Sydney Harbour 3 times over. The flows lasted a long time, allowing the outer edge to cool while the interior kept flowing, creating the tubes seen today.

This afternoon we arrive at Undara Lava Lodge and check in to our accommodation, consisting of homestead rooms. The lodge has recently been fully renovated and upgraded, with all rooms now featuring private ensuite bathrooms.

Tonight, enjoy dinner in the outdoor style restaurant as the outback sunset fades into a clear starlit night. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

DAY 3 – Undara - Karumba

We depart Undara and head west to Croydon passing by Blackbull and travel through to Normanton before heading into Karumba.

Located on the banks of the Norman River, Karumba came to importance in the 1930's when it became a stop-over point for flying boats on the run from London to Australia.

We will spend the next two nights at the End of the Road Motel. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

DAY 4 – Gulflander - Barramundi Centre

This morning we join one of the last great characters of rail travel - The Gulflander. This historic little train takes us on a journey from Normanton to Critters Camp.

Later today we discover the amazing secrets of the mighty barramundi at The Les Wilson Barramundi Discovery Centre, the only hatchery in the world to breed the Southern Gulf strain of this iconic fish! The brand new interactive and state-of-the-art Interpretive Centre provides the history, stories, lifecycle, and habits of these sought-after fish.

This afternoon we enjoy a special Sand Island sunset dinner cruise in the Gulf. Dine on local seafood while watching a sensational gulf sunset. (Includes wine and beer. Alternative meals are available).

Tonight we enjoy our second night at the End of the Road Motel. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

Note: Gulflander journey may change subject to operating hours.

DAY 5 – Karumba - Camp 119 - Leichhardt Falls - Hell's Gate

We follow the Savannah Way across the Gulf. Stop at Camp 119, the most northerly camp of the Burke and Wills Expedition of 1860/61. The exhausted party of Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills set up camp close to the seasonal Little Blynoe River, in the hinterland of the Gulf of Carpentaria, in their attempt to cross Australia from south to north. It was the northernmost point of their ill-

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fated expedition. From here we head to Leichhardt Falls (no swimming).

After lunch we'll make our way north and re-connect with the Savannah Way via Doomadgee. From here we head towards the Northern Territory border, arriving at Hell's Gate Roadhouse late afternoon. Here, we stay in new and modern accommodation with ensuite bathrooms for the next two nights. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

DAY 6 – Hell's Gate

Today is all about enjoying our visit on the station at Hell's Gate. Located on Clifffdale Station, Hell's Gate takes its name from a gap in the escarpment one kilometre south.

The activities will include a tour of the station, a scenic helicopter flight to the coastline of the Gulf of Carpentaria via Eight Mile Creek where you may see native birds, wild pigs, wild brumbies, wild bulls and cattle, crocodile's and native fish life all accessible from the air.

Enjoy some free time this afternoon on your second night with friends on this unique outback station. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

DAY 7 – Hell's Gate – Pungalina

This morning we continue along the Savannah Way and cross the border into the Northern Territory. Not far into the Territory we turn off and head north into Australian Wildlife Conservancy's Pungalina-Seven Emu Wildlife Sanctuary and check in to our new safari camp.

Built by Outback Spirit in 2019, the camp features unique safari tents with ensuite bathrooms and covered decks, the perfect spot for a two-night stay to discover the area. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

Note: Seven Emu is owned by Mr Frank Shadforth with 110,000 hectares of the property leased to the Australian Wildlife Conservancy for conservation. Pungalina is wholly owned by AWC.

DAY 8 – Exploring Pungalina - Seven Emu Sanctuary

Today, we'll explore Pungalina-Seven Emu Sanctuary and learn about what makes these two properties such important ecological habitats in northern Australia.

Together the two properties cover a combined area of around 305,000 hectares and include coastal monsoon rainforest, tall paper bark forests, palm fringed wetlands, deep gorges, and coastal flood plains. The sanctuary is home to over 40 species of mammals, 190 species of birds and 95 species of frogs and reptiles.

Take a cruise on the Calvert River and experience some rarely seen but truly spectacular scenery. We'll also enjoy an engaging presentation and discussion exploring the Australian Wildlife Conservancy's conservation work, wildlife research, and land management initiatives at Pungalina-Seven Emu Wildlife Sanctuary. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

DAY 9 – Savannah Way - Borroloola - Lorella Springs Wilderness Park

This morning we return to the Savannah Way and make our way west to Borroloola on the McArthur River. After a visit to the Borroloola Museum, we pass through Limmen National Park before arriving at the turn off to Lorella Springs. From here it's a 30km drive to Lorella Springs Wilderness Park, a spectacular one million-acre pastoral lease that stretches right to the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

We arrive late afternoon and settle in for our three-night stay in this extraordinary location. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

DAY 10 – Exploring Lorella Springs Station

Over the next two days we explore all the wonders of Lorella Springs Wilderness Park including pristine thermal springs.

We'll take part in an exhilarating helicopter flight over the southern 'Lost City' and also take a drive out to the area to explore ancient sandstone structures where we will enjoy a ground tour with your guides who'll tell you about the local geology, vegetation and birdlife.

At the end of each day's adventures, join your station hosts at the bar for happy hour and mingle with other likeminded explorers journeying across the Gulf. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

Note: Weight restrictions apply for legal and safety reasons on all helicopter flights. All passengers must be weighed prior to boarding the aircraft.

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DAY 11 – Exploring Lorella Springs Station

As Day 10. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

DAY 12 – Lorella Springs - Katherine

Our travels today take us along one of the most remote sections of Savannah Way. Used extensively by drovers in the 1870's, thousands of cattle have walked this route on their way from Queensland to the Northern Territory and the Kimberley.

We'll pass through the dramatic scenery of the Limmen National Park before continuing along the Savannah Way towards Roper Bar.

This afternoon we follow the Roper Highway east and press on to Katherine via Mataranka, arriving late afternoon for our two night stay at the Knotts Crossing Resort. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

DAY 13 – Katherine

This morning we enjoy Tom Curtain's national award winning Katherine Outback Experience, a new addition to our tour.

Later on today we take a 2-hour boat cruise on the Katherine River Gorge in Nitmiluk National Park. The NitNit Dreaming cruise is one of the most popular tours in the region and will take you to the end of the first gorge, where you will experience the beauty of the large boulders, rock pools and sands that make up the crossover to the second gorge.

We return to Knotts Crossing Resort for our second night. **Meals: (B,L,D)**

DAY 14 – Katherine - Edith Falls - Darwin

This morning we enjoy a leisurely start before the final stretch of the journey to Darwin. Departing Katherine, we'll pass through Pine Creek and Adelaide River before arriving in the Territory's capital early afternoon. Along the way we'll visit Edith Falls, where you can swim in the paperbark-fringed pool at the base of the waterfall.

After checking into the Hilton Garden Inn Darwin (Formerly The Doubletree by Hilton), 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 15 – Darwin

After breakfast enjoy a leisurely morning before being transferred. **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.