

BINNS TRACK ADVENTURE

ALICE SPRINGS – 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 – ALICE SPRINGS

Today you will be greeted by our friendly and professional Tour Directors. We then head to the Mercure Alice Springs for check in, followed by a comprehensive trip briefing with your fellow travellers. (D).

DAY 2 – EAST MACDONNELL RANGES – N'DHALA GORGE – TREPHINA GORGE – HALE RIVER

Today the adventure begins as we depart Alice Springs and head east through the beautiful East MacDonnell Ranges. Our first stop is Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve, an impressive dolomite structure which is an important sacred site in Arrernte culture. We then head on to Trephina Gorge, where a 20-minute walk takes us to a lookout with dramatic views over the surrounding country.

After lunch, visit N'Dhala Nature Park and Ross River before arriving at Hale River Homestead on Ambalindum Station, right in the heart of the East MacDonnell Ranges. Set up camp and enjoy two nights in this beautiful location. Enjoy a late afternoon drink by the fire pit before dinner this evening in the Sydney William Shed, known as 'The Workshop'. (B,L,D)

DAY 3 – ARLTUNGA HISTORICAL AREA – RUBY GAP

Officially Central Australia's first town, Arltunga was once a site of hope, struggle and mateship for many fortune hunters who came to the area on foot to find gold in the 1880's. Enjoy a guided walk here (easy grade) to the Golden Chance Mine and visit some old stone houses that are perhaps some of the most well-constructed stone dwellings in the Northern Territory. Using only dry dirt due to a lack of water, the high level of workmanship is evident in their construction.

After morning tea we continue to Ruby Gap, driving along the Hale River bed for part of the journey. Enjoy lunch and explore the area before returning to Hale River late this afternoon. Dinner this evening is again in 'The Workshop' with an open fire (meals supplied by Hale River Homestead). (B,L,D)

DAY 4 – GEMTREE – PLENTY HIGHWAY – HARTS RANGE – DERRY DOWNS

This morning we bid farewell to Hale River Homestead and follow the official Binns Track through to Pinnacles Bore. From here, we follow the Pinnacles track through to the Plenty Highway before arriving at Gemtree mid-morning. After some morning tea, visit the original Mount Riddock Homestead, relocated to Gemtree where interesting story boards of a past pioneering way of life are displayed.

We then trek east along the Plenty to Harts Range, an area popular with gem fossickers and home to one of the most isolated police stations in the world. Interestingly, between the 1890's and the close of the mine in 1960, almost all the nation's mica came from this area in the Northern Territory.

Enjoy lunch and a look around before heading further north on the Binns Track past MacDonald Downs. The property was originally settled by Charles Chalmers and his wife Cora in the early 1920's. A school teacher from Mungindi in NSW, Charles dreamed of one day being a farmer and moved to the area, against all advice from family and friends. A fascinating story, and one of your guides will offer more details this evening around the campfire at Derry Downs, tonight's overnight stop. (B,L,D)

DAY 5 – SANDOVER HIGHWAY – IYTWELEPENTY / DAVENPORT RANGES NATIONAL PARK

This morning we depart Derry Downs and once again follow the Binns Track north. Briefly travel the Sandover Highway, the linking track between Mt. Isa and Alice Springs, before continuing north up to the Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park – one of the most beautiful and least known parks in the country.

Here we tackle the Frew River Loop 4WD track and make our way to an area known as Old Police Water Hole, one of

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the most scenic and tranquil parts of the national park and the perfect spot to set up for a two-night stay. (B,L,D)

DAY 6 – IYTWELEPENTY / DAVENPORT RANGES

The Iytwepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park protects the important environmental zone between the Top End and Central Australia. The park covers an area of 1,120 km² and is bordered by several pastoral leases and lands of the Anurrote Aboriginal Land Trust. It's a serene oasis that few have ever visited, and to this day it remains very much 'off the beaten track'. In terms of bird watching, black-faced cuckoo shrikes, rainbow bee-eaters, spinifex pigeons, diamond and peaceful doves, flocks of budgies and myriad honeyeaters are all common in the area.

Today we enjoy a number of short, guided walks exploring and embracing the park's peaceful waterways and stunning gorges. (B,L,D)

DAY 7 – WHISTLEDUCK WATER HOLE – KARLU KARLU / DEVILS MARBLES

Time to saddle up again and continue our journey along the Binns Track. Today we pass through Epenarra before turning west towards the Stuart Highway. Briefly travel south to arrive at Karlu Karlu / Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve for an early lunch. Marvel at this exquisite natural wonder before trekking further north to Tennant Creek, where we overnight in accommodation at the Bluestone Motor Inn. Catch up on some washing before enjoying dinner this evening in the motel restaurant. (B,L,D)

DAY 8 – TENNANT CREEK – BATTERY HILL – NEWCASTLE WATERS – MURRANJI

After breakfast we'll visit the Battery Hill Mining Centre for an underground mine tour before heading north on the Stuart Highway. Pass through Renner Springs and the historic Newcastle Waters Station before heading west on the Buchanan Highway. Shortly after crossing the Australasia Railway we'll make camp for the night.

Under the desert stars your experienced guides will fill you in on the area's fascinating droving history and infamous Murrnaji Stock Route. (B,L,D)

DAY 9 – TOP SPRINGS – VICTORIA RIVER DOWNS – JUDBARRA / GREGORY NATIONAL PARK

After an early breakfast we pack up camp and continue west to Top Springs. After a brief stop, we head on through one of the most iconic cattle stations in the country – Victoria River Downs (or VRD as it's commonly referred to). Still covering some 2.5 million acres and running 33,000 head of cattle, the station has been a stock breeding powerhouse since it was established back in 1880.

We then swing north towards Victoria River Research Station on Kidman Springs, the Territory's principal pastoral research centre occupying 34,000 hectares in the heart of the Victoria River district. The station's research projects have had a lasting impact on the productivity of the north Australian cattle industry and on the sustainability of the pastoral landscape.

We continue and travel through Jasper Gorge enjoying the spectacular scenery in the afternoon light before arriving at Lupayi Campsite located at the northern end of the gorge. (B,L,D)

DAY 10 – JUDBARRA / GREGORY NATIONAL PARK – BULLITA HOMESTEAD – BULLITA STOCK ROUTE

This morning we leave the Buchanan Highway and take the Tuwakam Track towards the old Bullita Homestead. On the banks of the East Baines River, the old homestead and stockyards are a reminder of the park's pastoral history.

Demonstrating the capability of our G-wagons we negotiate our first crossing of the East Baines River. This track is very slow with challenging limestone drop-offs to descend. The rough terrain is rewarded by spectacular scenery of majestic boab trees amongst limestone formations.

The track will eventually take us to one of our most remote campsites for the night at Drovers Rest. (B,L,D)

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DAY 11 – BULLITA – LIMESTONE GORGE

Today we will complete the Bullita Stock Route loop and travel south to Limestone Gorge. Here we can marvel at the peculiar geological formation of the Tufa Dams before taking a short walk to the scenic Calcite Flow Lookout with its 500-million-year-old fossilised stromatolites.

Returning to the Bullita Homestead we can explore the old buildings, admire the handmade timber cattle yards, and spend some time by the water for the afternoon. Here we will set up camp by the water for our last night of camping. (B,L,D)

DAY 12 – TIMBER CREEK – KUNUNURRA

Today we depart Judbarra / Gregory National Park and head into Timber Creek, the official end point of the Binns Track located on the banks of the Victoria River. We then head west and visit the Gregory Tree before continuing on towards the Western Australia border. After lunch we will arrive at Lake Argyle and time permitting visit the Argyle Homestead Museum to learn more about the pioneering Durack family.

For the afternoon we enjoy a spectacular cruise down the Ord River to Kununurra. Learn about the Ord River Irrigation Scheme from your knowledgeable skipper on this extraordinary 3-hour adventure, arriving at Kununurra just as the sun sets on the horizon.

Here you'll be met by your expedition crew before being transferred to the Kununurra Country Club Resort for the final night of the adventure. Tonight, we gather for dinner at the hotel restaurant and celebrate our adventure along the Binns Track. (B,L,D).

DAY 13 – KUNUNURRA TOWNSHIP – DARWIN

Enjoy a leisurely morning and then have a final lunch with the group before being transferred to the airport for your Air North flight to Darwin.

If you are staying on in Darwin, an airport to hotel transfer is included for you, please meet at the luggage carousel for your transfer. (B,L)