

6 Days
Luxury Safaris:
Aboriginal Tour.

Bamurru Plains, Kakadu, Arnhemland & Maningrida Area.

(Also available in a 5 Day Format)



Day One:

This morning your driver will collect from your accommodation (8.00am) before we begin making our way south for a short time on the Stuart Highway until we turn left on to the Arnhem Highway which leads to the World Heritage Listed Kakadu National Park. Our first stop en route is Fogg Dam Reserve, Fogg Dam has year round water coverage which assures its position as an important feeding and roosting site for a wide variety of both water birds and other animals. Next we travel onto the Adelaide River where we have the opportunity to witness the fabulous jumping crocodiles and other wildlife. These Saltwater Crocodiles are a magnificent sight - these animals are surprisingly powerful as they can project their boys almost totally out of the water - you will gain a good understanding of why they have survived for more than two hundred million years! This serves as a great introduction to how wild the Top End still is today. A short detour off the highway is the beautiful Learning Tree Lagoon; this Billabong is often covered in water lilies making it a popular quick stop for photographers.

Lunch is at the Bark Hut Inn; this Aussie Roadhouse was built during the buffalo era and is a reminder of earlier, wilder times.

After leaving the Bark Hut we then head onto Bamurru Plains which is an exclusive wildlife experience on the magnificent Mary River floodplains. Located on Swim Creek Station, this safari-style camp is surrounded by savannah woodland teeming with an amazing assortment of wildlife, reptiles and birds. The camp boasts of comfortable free-standing rooms that are spacious and expose guests to the sounds of the floodplains, a dining area with commanding views across the vast wetlands, a 10 metre wet edge pool and a library. The focus of your stay at Bamurru is in the environment around you and the wildlife and birdlife for whom it is home. Each individual safari suite is designed to blend with the surrounding bush and as such exposes

guests to the sights and sounds of the bush around you, whether it is the haunting call of a Whistling Kite, the raucous cacophony from the Blue-winged Kookaburras as dawn breaks or the sound of a full grown buffalo splashing its way through the floodplains just a short distance from your bed. The morning chorus of tens of thousands of Magpie Geese, after whom the camp is named, is an experience in itself. The Mary River catchments are home to some 236 species of bird, many of which are found at Bamurru Plains. The significance of this particular property comes in the variety of habitat: black soil floodplains, paper bark swamps, savannah woodland, river mangroves and coastal beaches support an extraordinary diversity of birdlife.

We will experience a sunset over the floodplains while enjoying a glass of wine.

Overnight: Bamurru Plains (L, D)

Day Two:

While we are at the camp we shall enjoy a variety of activities, from airboat rides to a four wheel drive safaris. The floodplains abound with waterfowl, wild buffalo, pigs and wallabies. The floodplains of the Mary River region form one of the most significant ecosystems in Australia. Dominated by the climatic extremes of the tropical monsoon, the wetlands and savannah woodlands that fringe the coastal regions between Darwin and Kakadu National Park harbor an extraordinary diversity of flora and fauna. This morning we will take an airboat ride across the floodplains of the Mary River catchments. The key natural feature of this area has some of the most important in the country, home to thousands of Magpie Geese, Plumed Whistling-Duck, Egrets, Ibis and a host of other birds. A morning trip out on the plains in an airboat is utterly exhilarating and the only way to truly experience this environment. We have the opportunity to explore one of the few remaining stations close to Kakadu National Park.

We will then travel to Coinda via the Old Darwin Road into Kakadu National Park. Next we will experience one of Kakadu's icons - a Yellow Water Cruise, On this 10sq. km pristine environment which supports a truly wonderful variety of plants, birds, crocodiles and Top End wildlife. The wildlife on this pristine billabong is too numerous to mention, you will see saltwater crocodiles, a Jacana bird walking on water, the magnificent sea eagle or any one of the many other 280 species that call this billabong home. Here we will witness at close hand the wealth of wildlife in this tranquil habitat and enjoy one of the Top Ends great sunsets.

Overnight: Crocodile Hotel in Jabiru. (B, L)

Day Three:

Today we visit Aboriginal Lands (Arnhem Land) access to this area is restricted to a select group of tour operators.

Visitors to Arnhem Land are able to experience a fascinating mixture of traditional and living culture. Arnhem Land is perhaps the one area in Australia where indigenous culture is still dominant, despite a long history interacting with other cultures. For example the Macassans who visited the shores of Arnhem Land for more then five hundred years to harvest sea slug. They came by sailing boats from Indonesian Island of Sulawesi and left their legacy with the Aboriginal people.

Then the Europeans, their impact on Aboriginal people was more far reaching and profound. Arnhem Land today has weathered all the storms and it has managed to stay as a last frontier and homeland of around 20.000 people.

While we are in Arnhem Land a traditional Aboriginal guide will show you excellent examples of rock art on Injalak Hill (Long Tom Dreaming), this area has some of the best rock art

examples in Western Arnhem Land and some say Australia. The view from the top of the hill is simply breathtaking, looking out across the floodplains and around the escarpment. When we farewell our Aboriginal guide back at the Injalak Art & Craft Centre there is an opportunity to browse or purchase goods from this non-profit Aboriginal organisation. At the award winning Injalak Arts and Crafts Centre there is time to watch the traditional Aboriginal people painting and to see the women weaving pandanus baskets.

From here your guide will escort you further into Arnhemland onto Maningrida where shall spend the next two nights. The drive from Gunbalanya to Maningrida is about 200km (3 hours), we will past a verity of landscape, from floodplains, rivers crossing through to savanna wood lands. On our arrival at the comfortable Arnhemland Nature Lodge which is a nature lodge located about 20 mins from Maningrida in Arnhemland. The Lodge is a joint venture with the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, who manages the land which is situated on an escarpment fringe overlooking the Liverpool and Tomkinson River Valleys. The purpose-designed, large, comfortable and breezy safari cabins with spacious en suite bathrooms and a small bar fridge offer a taste of luxury in an otherwise remote and unspoiled environment. The main lodge includes a large, kitchen/dining area, a bar and tasteful dining decor overlooking the river valley. A recent edition is a 96 square metre decked patio extending out over the escarpment precipice. Delightfully shaded, it provides a spectacular vista and sunset viewing while you enjoy a cool drink. *(Please note this tour requires a reasonable amount of balance and agility)*

Overnight Lodge (B, L, D)

(Please note that Injalak Arts & Crafts centre is closed on Sundays)

Day Four & Five

For the next two days you will have a unique opportunity to have a real Arnhem Land experience with local Aboriginal people. Your hosts are not professional guides but Aboriginal people who are keen to show you their country and to have you join them as they hunt and gather. Enjoy meeting people who are still speaking their own languages, living on their own country and practicing some aspects of their traditional culture. Expect the unexpected! You are joining the world of your hosts not vice versa so do come with an open mind and be prepared to go with the flow.

We depart the Barramundi Nature Lodge and drive towards the eastern beaches. Our Indigenous guides will drive across the floodplains which provide a major source of bush tucker for the Traditional Owners. The Maningrida region showcases a diverse range of pristine habitats that are traditionally owned and managed, thus providing an ideal opportunity to interact with Traditional Owners in a unique environment.

We then explore the monsoon vine thickets/jungles that border the freshwater plains and the coastal dunes and experience the many traditional uses of the plants that inhabit this diverse environment. After some exploration of the beach we head into the mangroves and experience a wide range of traditional information and food sources ranging from the delicious mud crab through to the adventurous mangrove worm.

The camping tour highlights a different environment and focuses on the Indigenous knowledge and use of that environment.

After a rewarding couple days of exploration of a productive natural landscape and a unique cross cultural experience we return on our journey back to civilization.

*The tour can cater for individual needs.

Options: Bird watching; rock art; fishing; hunting; art & craft activities or a day out on our comfortable boat with extensive shade canopy.

Day Five: Overnight Lodge (B, L, D)

Day Six:

After leaving the lodge we will visit the Maningrida settlement sits on the coast of central Arnhem Land at the estuary of the Liverpool River, home to about 2400 people. Maningrida (*'mann-in-gree-da'*) is a town that was established as a trading post in the late 1940s. It is 400 km (250 mi) by road east of Darwin. Maningrida and the surrounding outstations (small settlements), over 10 different languages are spoken and most people can speak three or four of these languages. **Maningrida Arts and Culture** is one of Australia's largest Aboriginal artist's co-operatives, concentrating on the marketing of traditional and contemporary arts, including bark paintings, wooden sculpture, fibre craft, prints and items of material culture. Maningrida artists are best known for their weaving, and while traditionally both men and women learn to weave, the most creative weaving is now produced by the women. At the Maningrida Arts and Culture Centre (the Djomi Museum), you may purchase quality traditional Arnhem Land Aboriginal Artwork.

The adjacent air-conditioned Djomi Museum and Cultural Keeping Place protects valuable artworks, artifacts, traditional fishing and hunting implements and an excellent photographic display depicting the region's history.

Then you will be taken to the Maningrida airport for your flight back to Darwin & on arrival you shall be picked up & transported to your Darwin accommodation (B)

(Please note, that the art centre at Maningrida is not open on a Saturday, Sunday or public holidays.)

(Access to Arnhemland is by invitation by the local Aboriginal people, and the traditional owners may deny access at any time.)

Inclusions:

- Luxury Toyota Air Conditioned GXL for Six days with experienced local guide
- Jumping Crocodile Cruise
- Bark Hut Lunch
- 1 Night Bamurru Plains
- Airboat Ride
- 1 Nights Croc. Hotel (Jabiru)
- Yellow Water Cruise
- Aboriginal guides at both Injalak Hill & Maningrida Area

- Both Art Centres (Injalak & Maningrida)
- 2 Nights Maningrida Lodge
- 1 Night camping with Aboriginal People (Maningrida Area)
- Royalties & permits to enter Aboriginal land
- Flight Back To Darwin
- Transfer to Your Darwin Accommodation
- All Meals where Marked (B, L, D)

Not included:

- Personal requirements
- Alcoholic Beverages



What to bring on Safari...

Luggage is restricted to 10 kilos per person. We recommend you include:

- **Good walking shoes or boots**
 - **Suntan lotion**
 - **Insect repellent**
 - **A hat**
- **Swimming costume and a towel**
 - **Light, comfortable clothing**
 - **Camera gear and video**
- **A jacket (Mainly for June July and August nights)**
 - **Medications and other personal requirements**
 - **Binoculars**