Family Bushwalk: Graveside Area: September 26 - October 2, 2027

List price - $3095 For information about our advance purchase and other discounts, see our discount page, www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/discounts and the additional information at the end of these notes.


Swim at first camp

Summary. As with all our family walks, this trip is designed to run at a slower pace than our other trips to allow families with children to enjoy the Kakadu bush.

It takes you into the greatest concentration of permanently flowing creeks we have ever found in Kakadu. You see a variety of landscapes, deep gorges, beautiful swimming pools and cascades as well as a number of little known Aboriginal art sites.

Itinerary

Note 1	**Day 0 is the day before departure.**
Note 2	**This itinerary is subject to change.**
Day 0	**Pre-trip meeting, 6.30 p.m., Pool Side Bar & Restaurant, Hilton Gardens, 122 The Esplanade.** There are two Hiltons next door to each other. The correct one is closer to Daly Street, the taller of the two. **This meeting is important.** If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance.
Day 1	7 to 8 a.m. pick up. Pick up is as arranged at the pre-trip meeting. Drive to Kakadu. There will be a stop along the way to buy cool drinks, etc. Begin the walk. Bush camp, carrying full packs.
Day 2–6	Bush camping, carrying full packs.
Day 7	Return to vehicle. Drive to Darwin. Drop off at your accommodation.

Now for the details.

We begin with a four to six hour, 350 kilometre drive from Darwin. The last 45 kilometres is on a 4WD track which is so rough that it can take over two hours on its own. From the parking area, a relatively easy 4 to 5 kilometre walk across some fairly flat ground brings us to a lovely pool and our first camp site.


Three generations about to have dinner, first camp.


Walking up one of the shady gorges.

During the next five days, we visit Graveside Gorge, Cascades Creek and, if time permits, Gronophylum Creek.

The two main gorges at Graveside contain some of the nicest monsoon forest in Kakadu. We usually spend a full day exploring the gorges, enjoying the shade and relaxing in and around the large pools below the waterfalls at the tops of the gorges. It's a bit of a scramble to get up the gorges but the large, deep pools at the top of the two gorges make it more than worth while. Swims are almost always too much to resist for any member of the family.



The climb out of the gorge is and looks hard, but he was only 8 and he did it unassisted.

The next day, we do a short, steep climb out of the gorge, getting some great views before we return to the two branches of the creeks for still more swims.

A flat three kilometre walk from the top of Graveside brings us to Cascades Creek, well known among local bushwalkers for its many pools, cascades and Aboriginal art sites. It is so pleasant that our trip up or down the four kilometre gorge normally takes a full day. There are a few places where you have the choice of edging along narrow rock ledges (close to water level, no big drops), floating your pack through the creek, or climbing up and around. The two photos below right show you the alternatives.



The pool above the main falls isn't very wide, but it is very deep – and almost irresistible.

The last 500 metres alone often takes two hours or more as the deep pools and a natural water slide are much too inviting to pass by in a rush.







Most go down the slide one at a time. The four here decided that all together meant more fun.

The loop which joins the two creeks takes us through the open woodland of the plateau and through tall paperbarks and other trees which line the creek that drains the main valley.

The loop described above may be done in either direction.

On the final day, we return to the vehicle(s) and drive back to Darwin.

Terrain and Difficulty

Overall Level 2+.

Terrain Level 2-3. The terrain ranges from open woodland to narrow rainforest gorges. Parts are flat and easy. Other parts require scrambling over river stones of a variety of sizes. There are a few steep, but short climbs. You walk through almost every type of terrain that it is possible to encounter in Kakadu. The leisurely pace makes it easier than many of our other trips.

None of the walking is on a marked trail. If you have never done any off-track walking through moderately rough terrain, nothing we can say can adequately describe the experience. The photos here can give you an idea, but they cannot substitute for the real thing. Most of those who have not had any off-track walking experience find it more difficult than those who have done it before.

Anyone who does not regularly (average twice a month) go bushwalking carrying a full pack would benefit from doing some pre-trip training. Do this and you will almost certainly enjoy the trip more than if you do not. The relatively easy nature means that this walk should suit almost anyone who meets our minimum level of fitness.

Climate September-October is hot. The average daily maximum temperature is 36-37ºC (about 97-99ºF). Fortunately, the average nightly minimum is cooler at about 21-23°C (70-73°F). As the minimum temperatures have been known to drop below 15ºC (about 60ºF), we recommend bringing a lightweight sleeping bag. (Some people do, however, choose to replace their sleeping bag with thermals.)

Although past records suggest less than a 50% chance of rain, you can get hit by an isolated storm. Bringing a lightweight tent fly will ensure you stay dry if it does happen to rain.

As long as we get an early start in the mornings, we should have plenty of time to rest during the hottest part of the day.

Vegetation Level 2. Mostly open woodland or open areas along the creek. There is likely to be one section of of grass covered rocks on one short section.



Hours 4-6 hours most days.

Packs **Pack weight** - level 2-3. You need to carry six days food.

Art There are a number of interesting sites along this route.

Campsites Sand or rock ledges. Excellent sites near the water. We should have most or all of them to ourselves.

Swims Swimming is excellent. Good pools at all campsites.

Lowlights Very long drive from Darwin at the beginning, fairly long 4WD on the way out.

Highlights The magical cascades and water slide on Cascades Creek. Spectacular Graveside Gorge.

Wildlife Birds are always present but spread out at this time of year. You are unlikely to see many large animals.

Fishing Not permitted on this walk.

Maps 1:50 000 Koolpin. The 1:250 000 Kakadu park map shows all areas but is not suitable for navigation.

Optional Extra

In order to keep the cost as reasonable as possible, we have not included a Yellow Waters wetlands cruise or a night at Cooinda. We could organise the trip to include this or the Guluyambi Aboriginal Cruise on the East Alligator River for an additional charge. If done at the beginning, this could be an acclimatisation day.

Notes

The guide will try and spend more time with the little things which might be interesting and unusual for the children: insects, lizards, etc. (Young children can bring a sense of wonder to things older people take for granted.)

Make sure you keep some money and a water bottle with you during the drives. It may not be possible to get into your pack until the vehicle is unloaded at the end.

Parents/guardians must keep an eye on their own children, especially on young children who may not be able to swim.

We plan to have more and longer breaks and do even more swimming than on our standard trips.

Although you will see some Aboriginal rock art, this may not be emphasised as much as on our standard trips.

If the children cannot carry their own food & equipment, their parents/guardians will have to do so.

If numbers are small, we may combine this trip with section three of Kakadu Highlights No. 9

Dehydration can be a major problem for young children. (See our *Bushwalking Guide*.) It is absolutely essential to make sure your children drink enough to need several "wee stops" during the day.

Family discounts
⅓ off for age 12-16
½ off for children under 12
no discount for more than two children unless accompanied by two adults

Other discounts
Our standard advance purchase and past client discounts apply.
The other discounts listed in our brochure do not.
We need the equivalent of six adult fares to run this trip.