

Koolpin to Maguk: 4-14 July 2027

List price - \$4295 For information about our advance purchase and other discounts, see our discount page,

www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/prices.shtml

Summary. This is the shortest trip we offer that allows you to visit Koolpin Gorge, Cascades Creek and the largest waterfalls on Barramundi Creek. Most groups will have two two-night camps so there should be plenty of time to relax and enjoy your surrounds.

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. If you go to the Double Tree Hilton at 116 The Esplanade, you'll miss the meeting. **This meeting is important.** If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance.

Day 1 7 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 2–10 Bush camping, carrying full packs.

Day 11 Finish walk at pick up vehicles. Return to Darwin.

Optional Addition

Day 11 Finish walk at pick up vehicles. Drive to Jabiru or Cooinda. Night in accom or campground. Aboriginal tour and/or cruise.

Day 12 Possible morning tour or cruise. Return to Darwin

Now for the details.

The walk begins at Jarrangbarnmi/Koolpin Gorge in the southern part of Kakadu, about 350 kilometres and four to six hours from Darwin. The last 50 km are 40 km on a gravel road, then 10 km on a rough 4WD track.

A relatively short walk from where we get dropped off brings us to a sandy campsite and the first of our many private swimming pools.

Next morning, we arise with the birds and continue our journey upstream until a crossing on a sandy beach – that can either be a pack float or a rock hop. We now follow the Koolpin for a couple of hours along rock ledges until we emerge on the sand for morning tea.

Our afternoon is spent following the Koolpin to a fantastic water hole that will be our camp for the night.



Koolpin campsite above the gorge

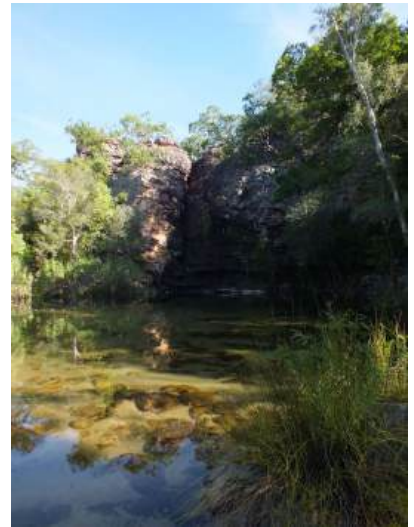


Fording the South Alligator River on the way to Koolpin



Walking through open woodland

Day 3 is an easy one, crossing open woodland & marsh country until we intersect one of the Koolpin tributaries that we follow to our camp where we set up our tents on nice grassy patches near to a cool deep pool for the afternoon. The photo at right shows how incredibly clear the water is.



Pool near camp 3

The next day we have to start out uphill before following a nest of creeks and side gullies to an open valley that we follow until we find a suitable camp – which could take 10 minutes or 2 hours depending upon water levels and group size. The afternoon can be spent exploring the locale for art sites or enjoying the time resting by and in the creek.



Flat rock walking, upper Koolpin tributary

Day 5 is the most challenging as we follow the creek upstream to

where it intersects the stone country and bump our way along the bottom of the stone until we find ourselves in open woodland. Many drosera / sundews in this section. A walk on a bearing for around an hour brings us to an new creek system that we lunch next to before another walk on a bearing to pick up our final creek – which leads us to our camp for the next 2 nights. Yes, a sleep in is in store!



Sundew



Swim stop near our two-night camp

Next day, relax in camp or enjoy an optional stroll (with day packs or one pack between 2) over to the top of Graveside Gorge will see us enjoying the many natural pools near the falls and great views where the creeks plunge 80m over the plateau and down to the low lands below. It's a full day out but a great day for swimming.



Cascades Creek pack float

Next day, we follow the creek we camped next to all day, stopping to float the packs down stream, enjoy an art gallery for lunch and a possible final swim into the top of the Cascades – our home for the next 2 nights. This creek, upstream of our camp, is alive with birds, natural pools and one low angled slab that is perfect for water slides



Walking down Cascades Creek below our two-night camp



Cascades Creek waterslide

We now have a day of rest, repair and relaxing. Water sliding, reading, exploring the creek are all options for day as we prepare to cross over to the Maguk System. If some are feeling particularly energetic, they can climb up for the high view shown at right.

Look carefully and you'll see a pink x showing where the cascades are.

We now have a relatively short day but a little technical as we head down stream to leave camp and then cross over the creek and start heading west and then southwest in an ever narrowing valley to a point where we can head northwest and cross over the stone. Depending upon conditions this can be tricky little day, but normally finishes by lunchtime next to a beautiful swimming hole with water fall.

The longest day of the trip. But by this time we have eaten early all of the food and have been walking for 9 days so fitness levels should be good.



Cascades Creek high view



Campsite, upper Gronophylum Creek



The biggest pool in the Barramundi system

We follow the creek upstream for around an hour until we reach a good place to fill up our water supplies and then head off into the stone country which is traversed by a meandering route thru very old sandstone ridges. Eventually we reach morning tea until the shade of some very old eucalypts before continuing our adventure down to the Barramundi System. Some walking along the side of the rocky creek, pack passing, sees us arrive at a huge cold pool with a waterfall for a well earned lunch. After lunch, we head out of the camp and cross over the Barramundi until we are walking on the true left hand bank – which we follow for the remainder of the afternoon.

A final creek crossing into a shady corner places us at our final campsite or nice flat rock platforms with only a short walk to good swim.

Next morning, sadly its time to head out of the gorge and towards the car park, via the magnificent Maguk Falls. We will start to bump into very clean looking visitors and their amazing aromas. This short morning follows Barramundi Creek for most of the time and provides an opportunity for quiet contemplation of our achievements on the walk that we have just completed. And plan the fresh food extravaganza that is soon to follow.

Once back at the pick up vehicles, we return to Darwin, or if the group decided before hand that they wanted a final cruise or cultural experience, we drive to Cooina or Jabiru for one final night, returning to Darwin the next day.

Terrain and Difficulty

Overall Level 3

Climate Level 3. Although July is one of the two coolest months of the year, the maximum temperature on most days will still average 30-31°C. Although the average nightly minimum is about 16-18°C (65°F), it is not uncommon for the temperature to drop as low as 10°C (50°F). Occasionally it goes lower still. Sleeping bags are essential. Rain is highly unlikely but possible.

Many people don't bother with a tent fly but we recommend bringing something you can pull over yourself if we do get a fluke rainstorm.

Terrain Level 3.

Koolpin Gorge. One or two steep climbs. Considerable rock hopping, moderately difficult in places. If water levels are especially high, a pack float may allow you to avoid one extra very steep and rugged climb.

Koolpin Creek above gorge. Relatively flat, some long stretches between pools. Scrub varies from year to year so the walking can range from quite easy to moderately difficult.

Koolpin to Cascades Creek. A mix. Flat easy stretches are interspersed with slow rocky ones.

Cascades Creek. Rock hopping all the way. Some sections are very slow.

Cascades Creek to Barramundi Creek. Flat and easy in places, slow rock hopping in others.

Variations in scrub due to fires makes it much easier in some years than in others.

Barramundi Creek to end. Two steep descents, one steep climb. Flat and easy in most places. Most people consider the terrain on the crossing from Barramundi Creek to Waterfall Creek to be the most difficult on the trip.

Overall. 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. Most of those who have not had any off-track walking experience find it more difficult than those who have done it before.

The photos on our old "Terrain & Difficulty" page, are small but they should help you visualise exactly what is involved in some parts of the trip.

www.bushwalkingholidays.org/rockhop.shtml, 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. If you are not an experienced off-track bushwalker and you don't do any training or any other form of strenuous physical exercise, you might feel that the trip is more of an endurance test than the pleasure most people experience.

Vegetation Level 2-4. Much of the walking is through relatively flat, open woodland with a grassy understorey. Some short sections of grass may hide a broken rocky surface where you will have to be particularly careful. There may be some slow sections where you will have to pass through thick scrub. The vegetation can vary from year to year depending on when last burnt.

Wildflowers are excellent.



Sometimes marshy ground near Koolpin. In July, we expect it to be fairly dry.



Gomprena

The spear grass normally reaches its peak in March, often three or four metres tall in some areas (much shorter in others). We are likely to encounter short sections of partially collapsed and seeding spear grass during some portion of the trip, but this late it is unlikely that there will be much.

Hours	Generally 4-6 hours. A few days might be longer.
Packs	Pack weight - level 3+. You need to carry 10 days food. This will include about 2½-3½ kg of the evening meals. We recommend both a lightweight sleeping bag and a tent or mosquito net and fly.
Art	Koolpin has one of the greatest concentrations of rock paintings in Kakadu. There are a number of good sites in other areas as well.
Campsites	Mix of sand and rock ledges. Most sites are excellent. You are unlikely to see anyone else anywhere along most of the route.
Swims	Excellent. This is a good time to see the waterfalls on this route. We will have good pools at almost every campsite lunch spot as well as other pools along the way.
Lowlights	Heat and humidity. Carrying food for 13 days. Pushing through thick grass.
Highlights	Great swimming. Aboriginal art sites. A still fairly green landscape that dry season visitors can only imagine.
Wildlife	Birds are always present but spread out at this time of year. You are unlikely to see many large animals. The Guluyambi cruise gives you a good chance to see large estuarine crocodiles.
Fishing	Not permitted on this walk.
Maps.	1:50 000 Koolpin & Goodparla. The 1:250 000 Kakadu park map shows all areas but is not suitable for navigation.



Swim stop, unnamed creek

Notes

Although most of the walking is *relatively* easy, you need to be prepared to carry your food for the full trip. There is no point on the route where you come anywhere near a road or 4WD track so a food drop is not possible.

If the group chooses the optional extension at the end, you should prepare a package containing a change of clothes and anything else you might want for our final night in Jabiru to come out with the pick up vehicle.

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