

Draft Itinerary: Kakadu Charter: 16-21 November

Unless there is unreasonably early heavy rain, there are two good options: Jim Jim & the Rainforest Gorge and Barramundi Creek.

Jim Jim Option

- Mon 16 Nov Flight arrives 1:45 pm. We leave directly from the airport and head to Kakadu. We stop for dinner at Jabiru or Cooinda (meal not included in the price), then continue to the Garnamarr camp ground about 10 km from the Jim Jim car park.
- Tue 17 Nov Up early, drive to the Jim Jim car park, leave the vehicle and follow the Barrk Malam walk to the top of Jim Jim Falls. Drop packs and climb down to the pool above the main drop of the falls. There is good shade there so we'll stop there for lunch. Late afternoon, move upstream to the first good camp site. If water levels are particularly low, this could be some distance.
- Wed 18 Nov Continue up Jim Jim Creek to the Monoliths. These are four rock pillars in and next to the river. Stop at a major art site along the way. Visit other art sites nearby. This would be an easy day.
- Thu 19 Nov Cross to the top of the Rainforest Gorge. There is a waterfall here that should be flowing better than Jim Jim. There is good shade, but we might have to camp on rocks which have been in the sun. Another relatively easy day.
- Fri 20 Nov Easy option. Return to a camp site above Jim Jim Falls.
Hard option. Long and strenuous day's walk down the rainforest gorge to the edge of the plains. There is good shade, but down in the gorge there isn't likely to be much of a breeze.
- Sat 21 Nov Easy option. Follow the marked trail from the top of Jim Jim back to the car. We'd have time to go up to the plunge pool at the base of the falls without packs before returning to Darwin.
Hard option. Walk from the base of the Rainforest Gorge to where the Barrk Malam walk crosses Jim Jim Creek.. The walk is moderately flat with some minor ups and downs. Unlike the easy option, there is very little shade. We might or might not have time to do the walk to the Jim Jim plunge pool.

Barramundi option

- Mon 16 Nov Flight arrives 1:45 pm. We leave directly from the airport and head to Kakadu. We stop for dinner at Pine Creek or the Mary River Roadhouse (Goymarr). Dinner not included. We have the choice of staying in a bed at Mary River or continuing to the Maguk campground. The Maguk campground doesn't have all the facilities that Garnamarr does but it is reasonable (or was the last time I was there).
- Tue 17 Nov Drive to the end of the track, 10 min from the campground or 1½ hours from Mary River. From the end of the track, a short walk takes us to the main falls and the climb to the upper gorge. A walk through the upper gorge brings us to a lovely beach camp site.

When we leave the gorge, we find ourselves in a broad sandy valley. The only visible water is in a few isolated pools. All the flow is through the sand below our feet. After about five kilometres, we turn off into a side valley and suddenly find flowing water. Another kilometre brings us to the Emerald Pool, a beautiful, deep, clear, shady pool where we can relax and enjoy a swim. A short climb to the top brings us to more beautiful pools and waterfalls and a good camp site.

- Wed 18 Nov Over the top to the Buff Pool, the largest pool in the entire Barramundi system. Huge *Allosyncarpia* trees give deep shade on the wide sandy banks of the pool, another exceptional camp site. However, at this time of year, the falls that feed the pool are likely to be only a trickle or even bone dry. Leisurely day.
- Thu 19 Nov Leisurely explore upstream, or if there has been substantial rain, a day walk or pack-carrying walk over the top to the headwaters of Waterfall Creek. Spectacular views, and the steepest climb on either option. There's even a lovely swim through cave. **BUT**, if there hasn't been any decent rain, this is out of the question.
- Fri 20 Nov Walk down Barramundi creek to a spot only 2 km above the car park.
- Sat 21 Nov Return to the vehicle and return to Darwin, either the way we came or via a different route (the old Darwin road, shorter & gravel or via Jabiru, longer & bitumen).

General Terrain and Difficulty for all sections

Overall Level 3 to 4 depending on the options chosen. Walking down the Rainforest Gorge or to the head of Waterfall Creek would push it to level 4.

Terrain Little or 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 on our website, www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au, can give you a partial picture, 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 Jim Jim option includes a steep climb on a marked trail. If done, the walk down the Rainforest Gorge requires a lot of rock hopping and scrambling over boulders the size of small trucks. It is quite strenuous. Some of our clients who had never walked in this kind of terrain considered it to be one of the most physically demanding things they had ever done. The walk from the Buff Pool to the headwaters of Waterfall Creek is just as strenuous.

Climate October and November are two of the hottest months of the year with an average daily maximum of 38°C (100°F). The average minimum is 24-25°C (75-77°F). Temperatures below 20°C (68°F) have been known to occur, but they are rare. Leave your sleeping bag at home. Bring thermals for insurance if you want to insure against a chilly night.

We tailor our walking to the climate, starting early and having long breaks next to pools in the middle of the day. If you accept the climate, you should have a wonderfully relaxing holiday. If you want to march on regardless of the weather, you may find it frustrating. Thunderstorms are fairly likely so we recommend that you bring a lightweight tent or mossie dome with fly.

Vegetation	Level 2-3. Mostly open woodland or open areas along the creeks.
Hours	3-5 hours most days.
Packs	Pack weight - level 2. You need to carry food for four days. You can leave your sleeping bag at home but we do recommend a well ventilated tent or mossie dome with fly.
Art	There are a couple of major sites and a few minor sites on the Jim Jim option. There are only a couple of minor sites on the Barramundi option, more on the Waterfall Creek headwaters section.
Campsites	Sand or rock ledges. Excellent sites near the water. We should have them to ourselves.
Swims	Swimming is excellent. Good pools on both creeks.
Lowlights	Possible tourist crowds at the start and finish of either walk. Hot, sticky weather.
Highlights	Relaxing next to beautiful pools. Thunderstorms, if we are lucky enough to encounter one. The sights, sounds and scents of the land coming back to life after the long dry season.
Wildlife	Birds are concentrated near the waterholes at this time of year. You will see some, but perhaps not many.
Fishing	Not permitted.
Maps	Either the 1:50 00 Jim Jim Falls (Jim Jim option) or Goodparla (Barramundi option). The 1:250 000 Kakadu park map shows all of the first three sections.
Notes	<p>Unseasonable rains can close roads early. If this were to happen, we'd substitute something like Motorcar Creek which would have begun to flow again if there had been enough rain to close the roads.</p> <p>Make sure you have your lunch, a water bottle, and some money with you in the vehicle during the drives as it may be difficult to get into your pack during the journey.</p> <p>A day pack may be is useful.</p> <p>Bring a book or two if you'd like to read during the long breaks.</p> <p>Flies can be a nuisance at this time of year so it's a good idea to bring a lightweight insect net for use at lunch and during the longer breaks.</p>
Cost	<p>This trip costs \$1095 per person if we run it for two people. This is payable by cheque or bank transfer at the time of booking. Payment by credit card will incur a surcharge of \$25.</p> <p>If a third person books, we will drop the price to \$900 per person.</p> <p>If four or more people book, we will drop the price to \$800 per person.</p> <p>We will refund the difference in price to anyone who has booked and paid a higher price based on the numbers at the time they booked.</p>