

# Twin Falls to Jim Jim Falls Circle: June 28 - July 11, 2009

The 350 kilometre drive from Darwin to Jim Jim or Twin Falls normally takes most of the first day. If possible, we will climb up and camp at the top of Twin Falls as the camp below Twin Falls is in an area where swimming is neither safe nor permitted. The walk to the top goes up a fairly steep hill, through an interesting sandstone maze and out to the creek above Twin Falls.

If we arrive early enough, it may be possible to take a boat up the gorge and visit the base of the falls with an Aboriginal guide. There will be an extra charge for this.

After a look around the top of Twin Falls, we put on our packs and leave all signs of civilisation behind as we make our way upstream, exploring and enjoying the shady rock ledges, sandy beaches and cool pools that we find in the seven kilometre long upper gorge. Another six or seven kilometres up the creek brings us to an area where there is an incredible concentration of Aboriginal art sites. We visit some of these — to visit them all would take several days.

As we travel, we notice dramatic changes in the landscape. Small and scrubby vegetation in one location, towering paperbarks in another. Flat plains here and rocky outcrops of all shapes and sizes there. Many of the outcrops hide major Aboriginal art sites. Some shelters contain only a few paintings, others contain dozens. No group can possibly visit them all but all groups visit a good selection.

And, of course, there are the swims. Every day we find beautiful pools that seem to demand we stop for yet another dip. From Twin Falls Creek, we cross over to the upper reaches of Jim Jim Creek. At this time of year we can avoid some extremely rocky and scrubby country by walking up the dry creek beds or taking a short cut around the entire area.

We reach Jim Jim Creek and the first of many inviting pools about two and a half days upstream from the falls. The walk along Jim Jim Creek is generally flat and easy, with numerous stops for swims and visits to Aboriginal art sites. Jim Jim Falls is the highest in Kakadu, 200 metres overall with a final sheer drop of 160 metres. The view from the top is spectacular.

If we are moving quickly, we may cross over and visit the top of the nearby rainforest gorge. Some groups do a day walk to and from the gorge, some walk through it, some give it a miss. The guide will make the decision based on how fast the group is travelling and what the group members wish to do.

Depending on our route choice, our final camp may be just above Jim Jim or at the bottom of the rainforest gorge. If we camp at Jim Jim, we follow the marked trail to the bottom. From the rainforest gorge, we walk around the base of the escarpment and meet the trail where it crosses Jim Jim Creek. After one last swim in the gorge below Jim Jim Falls, we return to the vehicles and drive reluctantly back to civilisation.

These notes describe the trip in an anti-clockwise direction. Some groups do the walk in the opposite direction. Your guide will let you know which way you will be going at the pre-trip meeting.

## Terrain and difficulty

**Overall** Level 3

**Climate** Level 2. 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.

**Terrain** Level 3. Overall the terrain on this trip is among the flattest on any of our trips. There are, however, few steep climbs, none of which is over 200 m. As short as they are, these climbs are strenuous. Some may require using your hands to hold on as you climb up or down. None are technically difficult. None require ropes or other special equipment. There will be some places where you have to step from stone to stone as you walk along the edge of a creek.

The creeks are low enough so that swimming across with packs is unlikely to be necessary. It may, however, be necessary to wade across slippery rocks through waist deep water. Your guide can help if you need assistance.

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](http://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. 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.

<b>Vegetation</b>	Level 2-3. 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. At this time of year, the spear grass has finished seeding and dried out.
<b>Hours</b>	Generally 4-6 hours. A few days might be longer.
<b>Packs</b>	<b>Pack weight</b> - level 4. You need to carry 13 days food. This will include about 3½-4½ kg of the evening meals. You need a sleeping bag but are unlikely to need a tent.
<b>Art</b>	We visit a variety of art sites.
<b>Campsites</b>	Mix of sand and rock ledges. Most sites are excellent. You are unlikely to see anyone else at most of the campsites.
<b>Swims</b>	Most creeks are still flowing well and the swimming is excellent. We will have good pools at almost every campsite and lunch spot.
<b>Lowlights</b>	Possible tourist crowds at Jim Jim and/or Twin Falls.
<b>Highlights</b>	Perfect weather. Great swimming holes. Aboriginal art sites. Getting as deep into the Kakadu wilderness as it is possible to do on any bushwalk.
<b>Wildlife</b>	Birds are always present but spread out at this time of year. You are unlikely to see many large animals.
<b>Fishing</b>	Not permitted on this walk.

## Notes

If we have only one vehicle, the guide will do the 14 kilometre walk to Twin Falls to retrieve it while the group explores the gorge below Jim Jim Falls.

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.

Although carrying food for two weeks makes this a physically demanding trip, it is not an endurance test. Somewhat above average fitness is required; super fitness is not. Much of the weight you carry will be food so your pack will gradually become lighter as the trip progresses. We travel at a reasonably leisurely pace that allows us to enjoy our surroundings. If you have a spirit of adventure and possess the needed fitness, this trip offers you a chance to visit the most remote part of Kakadu that bushwalkers are permitted to enter. It is an experience to remember for a lifetime.

**Maps.** 1:50 000 Jim Jim Falls or 1:100 000 Jim Jim or 1:250 000 Kakadu park map shows all areas.

## Itinerary: Twin to Jim Jim Circle

<b>Note 1</b>	<b>Day 0 is the day before departure.</b>
<b>Note 2</b>	<b>This itinerary may be subject to change</b>
<b>Day 0</b>	Pre-trip meeting, 6.30 p.m., Pool Side Bar & Restaurant, Holiday Inn Darwin, 122 The Esplanade. <b>Note.</b> There are two Holiday Inns next to each other on the Esplanade. The meeting is in the taller one, closer to the roundabout at the end of the street. <b>This meeting is important.</b> If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance.
<b>Day 1</b>	8 a.m. pick up. Pick up is from your accommodation if you have notified us where you are staying at least a week before departure or have made alternate arrangements at the pre-trip meeting. Otherwise, pick up is from the Mitchell Street Tourist Precinct at 69 Mitchell Street. Drive to Kakadu. There will be a stop along the way to buy cool drinks, etc. Camp near vehicle or begin the walk. Bush camp.
<b>Day 2–13</b>	Bush camping, carrying full packs.
<b>Day 14</b>	Return to vehicles. Drive to Darwin via Jabiru. Drop off at your accommodation.