

# Kakadu Highlights No. 7A

## August 15-27, 2022

List price - \$2995

For information about our advance purchase and other discounts, see our discount page,

[www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/discounts](http://www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/discounts)

**Summary.** This trip consists of two separate walks both of which visit areas we don't visit on any of our other walks. Lots of swimming, waterfalls, Aboriginal art and some amazing geological formations. You spend a night at Cooina and do the Animal Tracks tour and a Yellow Waters cruise between walks.



On the track to Graveside. The adventure begins even before the walk starts.

## Itinerary: Kakadu Highlights No. 7A

**Note 1** Day 0 is the day before departure.

**Note 2** This itinerary is subject to change.

### Section 1 Graveside

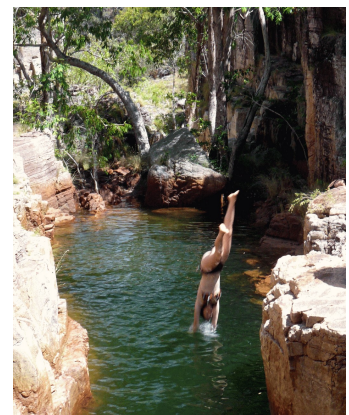
**Day 0** **Pre-trip meeting, 6.30 p.m., Pool Side Bar & Restaurant, Double Tree Hilton, 122 The Esplanade.** There are two Double Tree Hiltons next door to each other. The correct one is closer to Daly Street, the taller of the two. **This meeting is important.** If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance.

**Day 1** 7 to 8 a.m. pick up as arranged at the pre-trip meeting. Drive to Kakadu. Begin walk carrying full packs. Bush camp.

**Day 2-6** Bush camping, carrying full packs.

**Day 7** Return to car. Drive to Cooina and check into campground. Animal Tracks tour begins at 1 PM.

**Day 8** 6.45 a.m. Yellow Waters Cruise. Trip finishes. Those ending here will be driven back to Darwin.



The pool above the main Graveside falls isn't very wide, but it is very deep.

### Section 2 Dinner & Koolpin Creeks

**Day 7** Those beginning with this section catch a bus to Cooina. While we **may** be able to provide free transport to Cooina, we may not. The cost of getting to Cooina is not included in the cost of the tour. At the time these notes were written, the only way to get to Cooina was on an AAT Kings tour. (You could book the transport without the tour.) (08 8923 6555).

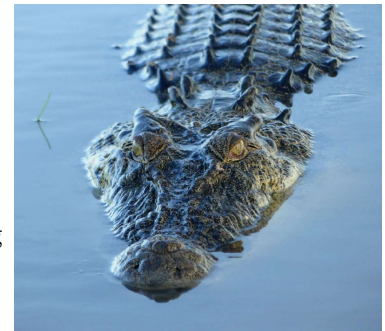
**Day 8** 6.45 a.m. Yellow Waters Cruise. Drive to Dinner Creek. Begin walk, carrying full packs. Bush camp.

**Day 9-10** Bush camping, carrying full packs sometimes, day packs at others.

**Day 11** Finish Dinner Creek walk, drive to Koolpin Gorge, walk to campsite.

**Day 12** Day walk from Koolpin campsite.

**Day 13** Walk back to the main track and back to the vehicle(s). Return to Darwin, drop off at your accommodation sometime that evening.



The Yellow Waters cruise is the only place you might see a croc like this.

## Now for the details

### Section 1: Graveside: August 15-22

The drive from Darwin to the start of the walk is over 300 kilometres, including about 45 kilometres on a 4WD track which is so rough that it can take over two hours on its own. From the car, we walk into the greatest concentration of permanently flowing creeks we have yet 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. Our first camp is only 3½ km walk from the car park.



We often spend two nights at this or another nearby campsite – a good pool below and another one with a small cascade just above.

A steep climb the next day brings us the top of the plateau where we visit the tops of the waterfalls we saw the day before. We may choose to camp on one of these creeks or we may do the four kilometre walk across the plateau to a small waterfall and the first of many pools and art sites that we find along Cascades Creek.

The walk down the four kilometre Cascades Creek gorge is a slow one. 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. (You can waterproof your pack by lining it with two garbage bags, one inside the other. On many trips, some people choose to swim while others choose to climb.)

The pools and art sites are too nice to pass by, so stops are frequent as we make our way down to the cascades for which the creek is named. The last 500 metres often takes two hours or more as the deep pools and a natural water slide are much too inviting to rush past. We camp below the last of the Cascades.

A relatively flat walk on the final full day brings us to our final camp, a sandy bank near a nice pool. The next morning, a short walk gets us back to the cars. We then drive out to Coinda where we check into the campground and meet those who are joining the trip for the second section. Opportunity to wash clothes and have hot shower. Animal Tracks tour begins at 1 PM and goes late. Includes food. Bring towel and toiletries and money for drinks.

This section finishes with the 6.45 a.m. Yellow Waters Cruise the following morning. The cruise gives you the opportunity to see the wetlands wildlife at close range, far closer than you could approach on foot. The early hour ensures you see more of the wildlife than those who do the midday cruises.

For more information, see our Graveside page <https://www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/graveside>

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

### Terrain and difficulty

**Overall** Level 3.

The two main gorges at Graveside contain some of the nicest monsoon forest in Kakadu. We usually spend two nights at our first camp so we can spend a full day exploring the gorges, enjoying the shade and relaxing in and around the large pools.

Cascades Creek is noted 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 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.



Age 8 or 80, almost no one we've taken past the slide can resist having at least one go. Most have several.

**Climate** Level 3. The average maximum temperature is 32-34°C. And the average nightly minimum is about 17-19°C. It is, however, possible for the temperature to drop as low as 10°C (50°F). Occasionally it goes lower still. Sleeping bags are essential. Rain is unlikely.

**Terrain** Level 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.



High view, Dinner Creek

**Packs** **Pack weight** - level 3. You need to carry 7 days food. This will include about 2-3 kg of the evening meals. You need a sleeping bag but are unlikely to need a tent.

**Vegetation** 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.

**Hours** Generally 4-6 hours. One or two days might be longer.

**Art** We visit a variety of art sites, some of which are in excellent condition.

**Campsites** Mix of sand and rock ledges. Most sites are excellent. You are unlikely to see anyone else at most of the campsites.

**Swims** Most creeks are still flowing well and the swimming is excellent. We will have good pools at almost every campsite and lunch spot.



Some people choose to float their packs rather than scramble around the rock ledges.

**Lowlights** The very long drive to the start of the walk.

**Highlights** Perfect weather. Great swimming holes. Aboriginal art sites.

**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.

**Note for section one.** Many groups do the walk in the reverse direction. The guide will make the decision based on the conditions at the time.

## Section 2: Dinner & Koolpin Creeks: August 21-27

This section overlaps the first and Animal Tracks tour and Yellow waters cruise. includes the bistro meal, night at Coinda and Yellow Waters cruise.

The drive from Coinda to the start of the walk is more than 100 km, about half of which is on a gravel road. To reach Dinner Creek from where we leave the vehicles, we have our choice of a five kilometre walk along an old 4WD track or a somewhat longer but shadier walk along the South Alligator River. Another easy two kilometres brings us to the first of the large pools on Dinner Creek.



Main falls & pool, Dinner Creek.

Unlike the rest of the pools we find on this section, this first pool could conceivably be home to a large crocodile so we continue up the main gorge to a base camp, a shady area next to another refreshing pool. No crocs here so swimming is fine.



High view, Dinner Creek

Dinner Creek is an environmentally sensitive area so group size may be limited to a maximum of nine people. Traditional Aboriginal beliefs restrict visits to the period from April through September. It is also one of the very few areas in Kakadu where it is possible to do interesting one-day loop walks.

One of these loops will bring us to a high point from which we get some excellent views. The other brings us to one of the most interesting geological features in Kakadu, for some, a truly special place. No photo can possibly do it justice, so we will not publish one, either in our trip notes or on our website.

After three nights on Dinner Creek, we return to the vehicles and do a relatively short drive to Jarrangbarnmi (Koolpin gorge). Koolpin Gorge is beautiful. Although the waterfalls may be little more than a trickle at this time of year, the pools are always perfect for swimming. The views are a photographer's delight. Aboriginal art sites tell us that this has been a special place for thousands of years. Although the gorge is only four kilometres long, it is too good to rush. For more information about the Koolpin area see <https://www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/koolpin>

Our final full day is a relaxing one as we leave our packs and do a day walk exploring the upper part of the gorge. On the final day, we return to our vehicles and return to Darwin, arriving some time in the late afternoon.

### **Terrain and Difficulty** (more info in the general description)

<b>Overall</b>	Level 3.
<b>Terrain</b>	Level 3. The first part of the Dinner Creek walk is along a 4WD track; the next two km along flat ground. There is some rock hopping along the creek further up. We may take our packs and spend a night next to a pool above the falls.
<b>Vegetation</b>	Level 2. Mostly open woodland or open areas along the creek.
<b>Hours</b>	4-6 hours most days.
<b>Packs</b>	<b>Pack weight</b> - level 2. You need to carry three days food.
<b>Art</b>	There are a couple of minor art sites on Dinner Creek, much more on Koolpin. There is an interesting stone arrangement near Dinner Creek.
<b>Campsites</b>	Sand or rock ledges. Excellent sites near the water. We should have most or all of them to ourselves.
<b>Swims</b>	Swimming is excellent. Good pools at the main campsites.
<b>Lowlights</b>	Relatively long drive at the beginning, walking along the old 4WD track.
<b>Highlights</b>	Gorge scenery and an amazing rock formation. Great pools for swimming.
<b>Maps</b>	1:50 000 El Sherana

### **Notes for both sections**

It is a good idea to have a change of clothes and a towel to take advantage of the hot showers at Coinda. You should have enough money to pay for your drinks at the pub.

You should keep a water bottle, your lunch and some money with you in the car during the drives as it may be difficult to get into your pack during the journey.

Those doing both sections will have to carry only what they need on each section. Additional food and clothing can be left in the vehicle during the walks.

**On the evening where we eat in a restaurant, your meal and drinks are not included in the trip price.** Please make sure to bring cash or a credit card to cover this.

We first included the Animal Tracks tour on one of our 2021 trips. Everyone who did it thought it was well worth while and gave an insight into the local culture in a way that no non-Aboriginal guide could ever do. The tour includes bush tucker. For more information, see <https://www.animaltracks.com.au/>



[On the Animal Tracks tour](#)

The Animal Tracks tour depends on one person and could be closed for cultural reasons.

If we cannot include the Animal Tracks tour, we will organise whatever seems the best option at the time.

### **Terrain and difficulty - General Information**

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](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 either section is more of an endurance test than the pleasure most people experience. Although both walks are level three, the lighter pack and shorter duration on section two make somewhat easier.