



## ***Tour 2: Darwin, a Cattle Station, the Kakadu and Arnhem Land***

Meals included indicated by:

- (B) Full Breakfast
- (L) Lunch
- (D) Dinner

**Note: tour offered May – October only, due to weather conditions in the Top End.**

### **Day 1**

#### **Welcome to Darwin, Australia**

Welcome to Darwin! Upon arrival on board your flight, please enter into the arrivals hall. Here you will be met and welcomed by a representative from VIP Tours. Transfer by private sedan to the hotel.

Please note: Due to your early flight arrival your room may not be ready for immediate occupancy. Please store your luggage with reception until your room is available for check in.

Accommodation: Mantra on the Esplanade, Darwin x 2 nights  
(1 Double Hotel Room Harbour View)  
88 The Esplanade  
Darwin, Northern Territory 0800

### **Day 2**

(L)

#### **Darwin Touring (Private) / Northern Territory Museum / Sunset Cruise**

This morning, please meet your driver and tour guide in the hotel foyer for your private full day tour.

Enjoy your introduction to Darwin, with expert commentary by your local guide. See the Chinese Temple and the lush Botanic Gardens and view the historic sites of the city including the East Point Military Precinct. See the Mooring Basin & the WWII Oil Tunnels before lunch at the renowned Crustaceans on the Wharf.

Crustaceans is conveniently located in Darwin on Stokes Hill Wharf - hence you can truly experience the sea breeze and breathtaking views whilst enjoying the fruits of the ocean. After lunch you will be transferred to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

Set in a tropical garden on the Darwin Harbour at Bullocky Point, is the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT). The MAGNT collections place the region's art, history and culture in an Australian and international context through research, interpretation and collection development. These collections encompass Aboriginal art and material culture, visual arts, craft, Southeast Asian and Oceanic art and maritime archaeology, Northern Territory history and natural sciences. The MAGNT complex consists of five major permanent galleries, a touring gallery, educational facilities for school groups, a theatre, the Museum Shop, and the Cornucopia Museum Cafe. There is also a permanent gallery devoted to the tragic events of Cyclone Tracy.



Once you have completed your time at the Museum transfer by taxi (own expense) back to the Stokes Hill Wharf to board the "Tumlaren". Cruise the magnificent Darwin

Harbour where you can relax and enjoy a beautiful sunset. Your cruise includes a glass of sparkling wine and a "Territory" tasting plate. After the cruise you will need to make your own way back to your accommodation or alternatively spend a bit of time checking out the great restaurants in Darwin.

**Day 3**  
(L)

**7 Day Ultimate Top End Tour**

**\*\*Departs on demand, Min 2 pax, May till end November\*\***

Transfer to Darwin Airport and board your light aircraft for your 90 minute flight to Bullo River Station.

This flight will take you across tropical wetlands, through some of the most remote outback in all of Australia to the edge of the famous Kimberley plains, one of the greatest cattle-growing areas in the world. Our here, cattle stations start at half a million acres and go up (the largest station in Australia is the size of Belgium).

Bullo River Station is encircled by the coffee coloured waters of the Victoria River and rugged hills. The Station runs around 9,000 Brahman-cross cattle for beef, which is shipped out live "on the hoof" to markets in Australia and the Middle East. It also is home to wallabies, dingoes, wild buffalo, a myriad of native and migratory birds, fish and the omnipresent crocodile. The 'Boab' is Bullo's symbol and these proud trees dot the entire property.



Marlee & Franz Ranacher welcome you into their home and relish the opportunity to share their stories and encourage guests to participate in all that Bullo has to offer. Bullo River Station was made famous by Australian author Sara Henderson (Marlee's mother), whose American husband Charles Henderson developed Bullo River in the 1950's, with the story of station life vividly chronicled in Sara's books. Since 2001, Bullo River Station has belonged to Sara's eldest daughter Marlee and her Austrian-born husband Franz, with the noisy assistance of their two young sons Ben & Franzie. Marlee & Franz are charming and entertaining hosts and meeting with them in the informal surroundings of the family home and hearing Marlee's own stories of growing up on the property adds a fascinating dimension to any visit. Marlee has since written her own account of growing up on Bullo and the book "Bullo – the Next Generation."

Please note that due to the nature of running a property of this size, it sometimes means that either Marlee or Franz may be personally unavailable during certain periods – especially during the mustering season. A small team of dedicated guides are on hand to ensure we are well looked after and will miss nothing of the Bullo River experience.

A purpose built guest area consists of twelve double/twin rooms each with air-conditioning and en suite facilities. Located a few metres from the main house, all rooms have sliding door access to the lawns surrounding the homestead. Of course, guests are welcome to enjoy full access to the vast living areas of the homestead plus use of the small swimming pool. Breakfasts are usually served outside on the homestead verandah with dinners in the main dining room. Dinners are informal and the menu relies heavily on the two exceptional products of the property, namely fresh barramundi (hopefully one you have caught yourself) and organic prime beef.

There is much to do here! Upon arrival, for example, you might be taken over to the Bullo River to fish for barramundi at sunset. Even if you don't catch one of these great fighting (and great tasting) fish, you'll not forget the day you sat fishing on a cattle crossing by a river whose banks are guarded by a handful of salt water crocs. The boys, Franzie and Ben, might be serving you cheese and olives to go with sunset drinks (if they have finished their homework) or they might be helping their father catch bait – all with an eye on the old salties!

After dinner, Franz might teach you how to crack a whip... one just never knows what will happen at Bullo River

Accommodation: Bullo River Station x 3 nights (1 Double Room)  
East Kimberley Northern Territory

**Days 4**  
(B/L/D)

**Bullo River Station**

Cruise up the spectacular Bullo River Gorge to fish or spot crocodiles, visit an aboriginal rock art site, see a completely different bunch of birds than we've seen elsewhere, watch cattle mustering and bull catching, and tour the cattle yards. Do try to spend some time with the boys as they attended the "School of the Air."

They have a small schoolroom at the homestead, and a tutor works with them. But their teacher is several hundred miles away, in Katherine, and their fellow classmates live on stations that stretch over a huge area. The boys are taught by telephone and computer. They even have choral practice by the air! The tutor works with them because Mom Marlee is out catching bulls, grading roads, and running this amazing cattle station.

The station only takes tourists during the "dry" season (the Aussie winter). In early November, the station doesn't take tourists because it is the beginning of "the wet" - the cyclone season. The weather builds up until horrific storms break across the Kimberley, turning rivers into floodplains and putting roads well under water. Darwin gets a terrifying 10,000 lightning strikes a month. The station is totally isolated from the outside world until late April or early May, when Marlee gets on the road grader and opens Bullo up again. She and Franz have small fixed wing planes and helicopters to get them into town for emergencies.

Continue to enjoy the many activities offered at Bullo River.

**Day 5**  
(B/L/D)

Bullo River Station to Katherine.

Fly to Katherine on a charter flight from Bullo River to Katherine Airport, join guide for 2 nights comfortable camping.

Travel will be in a luxury Toyota GXL air conditioned vehicle. Camping gear includes swags, sheets, sleeping bags, pillow, tents, camp chairs, cooking equipment, tables, lamps/lights, torches, eskies etc. Your guide will prepare all the meals, and make sure the beer and wine is well chilled!

At each campsite there is access to showers and toilets, these are shared with other campers, though basic they are kept clean. At times you will be able to swim in fresh water swimming holes.

Drive out to Nitmiluk (Katherine) Gorge where the Jawoyn people invite you to visit their country and spend 2 hours cruising the mighty Katherine River that flows from the Arnhem Land escarpment to the sea. The mythical figure of 'Bula' travelled this land leaving his image as paintings in rock shelters. From here drive to Gunlom, was immortalised in the first 'Crocodile Dundee' movie, its white sandy beach and 120 metre cascading waterfall (runs until the end of July) is a great photo opportunity. A more challenging walk to the top of the waterfall is rewarded with a swim and the best view for miles around.

Accommodation: Campsite  
(Swag Accommodation)

**Day 6**  
(B/L/D)

On safari in Kakadu

Start the day at Maguk, a scenic and tranquil place to enjoy a refreshing swim in a series of small waterholes. The water is crystal clear and the walk to the top of the falls is well worth the effort. Continue to the Warrandjan Cultural Centre this excellent centre displays the creation era as interpreted by the Bininj (Aboriginal) people - Kakadu's traditional owners tell their story which is part of the area known as the Mt. Brockman Massif. Archaeologists estimate that the living shelters at



Nourlangie Rock were in use during the wet season as far back as 20,000 years ago. The area has a number of cave sites and there is evidence of quarries where the local Aborigines made their stone implements.

After setting up camp and having dinner join the Hunter Family, who are traditional owners, on Kakadu's only nocturnal boat cruise. Your guides are local Bininj (Aboriginal) Rangers and they will explain how they manage crocodiles and the plants and animals of the Park. Learn how to harpoon, tag (mark) and sex a crocodile. Keep an eye out for birds, dingoes, wallabies and even Barramundi in the shallows.

Accommodation: Campsite  
(Swag Accommodation)

**Day 7**  
(B/L/D)

A day in Arnhem Land ends at Bamurru Plains  
Full day exploring Arnhem land before driving to Bamarru Plains. Included are airstrip transfers all meals, beverages and activities.

Arnhem Land is perhaps the one area in Australia where indigenous culture is still dominant, despite a long history of interaction with other cultures; it remains a last frontier and homeland to around 20,000 people. Spend time with an Aboriginal guide viewing rock art and bush walking. At the Injalak Art and Craft Centre there is an opportunity to browse, watch the artisans at work and purchase goods from this non-profit Aboriginal organisation. The day will include billabongs, birds and the escarpment country. In the evening reach Bamurru Plains for a 2 night stay. Bamurru is an exclusive safari camp built on the edge of the Mary River floodplains; guest accommodation is in nine spacious and cool safari bungalows, each with an en suite bathroom and a private deck overlooking the surrounding wilderness. The lounge area is the perfect place to relax, with a well stocked library offering a collection of reference books. Likewise, the bar is well stocked, and at anytime of the day you may help yourself to a cold drink. Bamurru's chef prepares delicious meals which are shared around the dining table with your fellow travellers, hosts and guides. Lunch is often served on the deck, perhaps a BBQ, cooked as you cool off in the swimming pool after a morning's wildlife viewing.

Accommodation: Bamarru Plains  
(1Double Room)

**Day 8**

At Bamurru Plains.

This area is known for its wildlife and wallabies, dingoes, brumbies, buffalo and goannas all make regular appearances, however it is the prolific birdlife that makes this area a unique nature attraction.

A typical day at Bamurru may begin with an early morning coffee and muffin being delivered to your room as the sun rises. Climb aboard the airboats for an excursion across the flood plains, spotting crocodiles and startling the Magpie Geese into flight. Stopping in a quiet lagoon, shaded by paperbark trees and surrounded by lilies enjoy morning tea before returning to camp as the sun heats the day.

Now there is time for a siesta, a swim, to read a book or quiz your guide for more information on this remarkable place. Lunch is followed by an afternoon activity, perhaps a guided walk or a gentle cruise down the Sampan River, spotting crocodiles sunning themselves on the mud flats. Return to the camp in the evening and share dinner with your fellow travellers, guides and hosts.



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In addition to the included activities Bamurru Plains can arrange scenic helicopter flights and specialist fishing guide (these are at additional cost).

**Day 9:**

Transfer to Bamurru Plains' Airstrip for your charter flight to Darwin.

- (B) Accommodation: Mantra on the Esplanade, Darwin x 2 nights  
(1 Bedroom Apartment City View)  
88 The Esplanade  
Darwin, Northern Territory 0800

**Day 10**

**Territory Wildlife Park & Aquarium / Afternoon Free**

This morning, please meet your private driver for your transfer to the Territory Wildlife Park, a 45-minute drive south of Darwin to Berry Springs.

Established in 1992, the Territory Wildlife Park is a project of the Northern Territory Government, Parks and Wildlife division. At the Territory Wildlife Park, not only do you see wildlife up-close in their natural habitats, you meet them walking through tree top aviaries, strolling around a natural lagoon and even get to interact with them during daily presentations. You stroll beneath the surface in our walk-through aquarium and meet some of the Top End's most amazing aquatic life.



In the air-conditioned aquarium, you will take a journey along a typical "Top End" river. The journey begins where the river forms up in the escarpment country, travellers past the rock holes and billabongs until it finally merges with the sea. Featuring more 24 individual exhibits, each replicating a different "pocket" of aquatic life found along a Top End river system. As you move through the Aquarium you will pass rock hole and billabong exhibits that the water monitor, freshwater crocodile, and numerous turtle species call home. Lose yourself in the walk-through tunnel where barramundi, whip ray and other fresh water species glide gracefully above and beside you. The tunnel immerses you in a fresh water aquarium and is one of the Parks most popular and "soothing" attractions. Beyond the tunnel, get nose to nose with a 3.4 metre salt-water crocodile. See how effortlessly this "hunter in hiding" floats semi-submerged. The photographic opportunities are outstanding. Continue on through the coastal mangrove communities and then onto the coral reefs where you will see an astonishing variety of corals and colourful fish. Come closer and watch the interesting antics of our stable of seahorses and pipefish then meet Darwin's own black and white nemo and all his other colourful friends that exist in our beautiful harbour.

Please Note: A free shuttle train runs continuously around the Park's 4 km loop road, picking up and dropping off around the park.

At a designated time please meet your private car driver for your transfer back to Darwin. The remainder of the afternoon is free for you to spend at leisure exploring your local surrounds.

**Day 11**

**Depart Darwin**

Transfer by private sedan to the airport for your departure flight.

End of Arrangements.

**Cost per person twin share in USD from: \$11,457.00\***

\*subject to changes in the exchange rate, seasonal surcharges, and confirmation of the itinerary.

**Inclusions:-**

- Meet and greet upon arrival into Darwin airport.
- Accommodation based in 3 & 4 star properties with private facilities
- Transfers as specified by private vehicle
- Meals only as indicated by (B) Full Breakfast, (L) Lunch, and (D) Dinner
- Entry fees & touring to attractions as specified in the itinerary
- Emergency phone assistance
- Australian Goods & Services Tax

Exclusions:-

- International and Domestic Airfares
- Meals not indicated on the itinerary
- Beverages with meals
- Items of a personal nature i.e. phone calls, liquor, and laundry
- Use of hotel rooms before/after normal check in/out times or pre-registration
- Costs of optional touring
- Any services not mentioned in the itinerary
- Hotel/Airport Porterage
- Personal travel insurance (baggage/medical/tour cancellations)
- Tips or gratuity
- Unforeseen expenses due to last minute airline rescheduling or delays (inclusive of baggage delay, missed departure and loss of passport & cabcharge vouchers)
- Medical or hospital expenses