DriveNow

Helping travellers since 2003 find the best deals on campervan and car rental

OUTBACK ROAD TRIP · 14 DAYS ONE WAY

14 days Cairns to Broome via the Savannah Way

In order to remain on sealed roads, a requirement for campervan and car rental, our itinerary varies slightly from the Savannah Way without detracting from the experience. It will take you through a top end odyssey of about 4,150 km. The one exception is a short stretch of gravel on the road into Forsayth (Day 3).

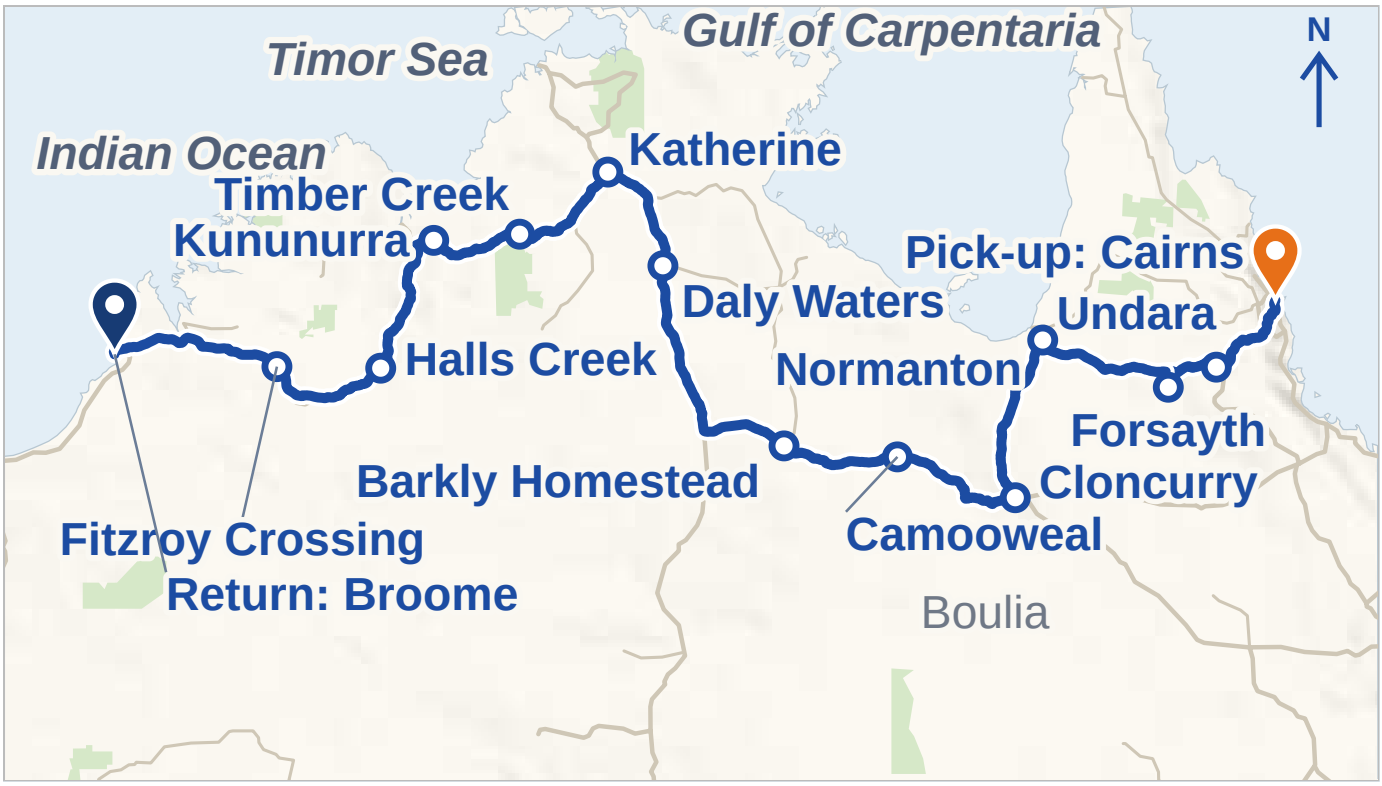
DISTANCE	DAYS	ROUTE	DRIVING TIME
About 4,145 km	14 days, 13 drives	One way, Cairns to Broome	About 57 h 30 min by campervan

LONGEST DRIVE	VEHICLE	BEST TIME
570 km, Barkly Homestead to Daly Waters	Campervan	April to November (dry season)

This trip crosses the Country of the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji, Yirrganydji, Ewamian, Kalkadoon, Jawoyn, Miriwoong, Gajerrong, Gija, Bunuba, Yawuru and other First Nations peoples. Traditional Custodians



Danggu Geikie Gorge, day 13 · Illustrative image



Planning overview, not navigation. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors · coastline Natural Earth · relief Terrain Tiles (Geoscience Australia, SRTM).

This journey should only be undertaken during the dry season and not the wet when roads are often impassable. Rental vehicle companies do impose restrictions on where and when their vehicles can be used – check before travelling (road restrictions).

Planning is important, be prepared. As you will be travelling in remote areas with limited mobile phone coverage in some areas it is critical that you take important supplies with you including spare water, food and any prescription medication. The Savannah Way website (http://www.savannahway.com.au/) is an excellent source of information.

Special caution and planning should be taken when travelling in remote areas to ensure sufficient provisions, fuel and prescribed medicines are carried. Weather conditions can make sealed roads impassable particularly during the northern Wet season.

BEFORE YOU BOOK

Hiring a campervan for this trip

Minimum hire

Apollo, Britz, Maui and Mighty need at least 21 days for this one-way, from April to November. You can still hire an Apollo, Britz, Maui or Mighty van for 14 days for this one-way, but you'll be charged for 21 days (minimum hires). If you're paying for 21 days anyway, the extra week gives you time to slow down: add a spare day in Katherine for Nitmiluk, or in Kununurra for a Purnululu flight.

When the branches are open

Apollo, Britz, Maui, Maui Elite and Mighty close their Broome branch, and their Darwin and Alice Springs branches, from 1 December to 31 March. With these brands, plan to pick up in Cairns from 1 April and return the van in Broome by 30 November.

One way to Broome

For pick-ups from 1 April 2027, Apollo, Britz, Maui, Maui Elite and Mighty charge a $310 one-way fee plus a $930 Broome location fee. Before then, they're $300 and $900. It's included in the total we quote. Fees change from time to time, so check them in your quote before you book (the Broome location fee).

2WD or 4WD

2WD campervans and motorhomes can only be driven on sealed/bitumen roads and cannot be taken off-road. This route keeps to sealed roads apart from 8 to 10 km of gravel on the road into Forsayth, which Apollo, Britz, Maui and Mighty allow (Day 3), so a 2WD van suits it. For the 4WD-only side trips, join a tour from town, or hire a 4WD camper and ask the brand's permission before you book (2WD campervans and motorhomes).

Booking ahead

Broome is busiest from May to October, and especially from June to September, when the Kimberley's roads are usually open. Some vans, such as 4WD campers, sell out, so our team recommends booking six to eight months ahead for trips from May to October.

Your route

All rental vendors in Australia have restrictions on where their vehicles can be taken, so discuss your planned route with the rental company when you pick up. Get the rental company's permission before taking the vehicle somewhere it restricts. If you take it there without permission, you may lose your excess reduction and be fully responsible for any damage. You may also have to pay for towing and recovery, and for damage to other people's property. See road restrictions and when you are fully responsible.

Picking up in Cairns

Most Cairns branches hand over vans until 3pm, and on Saturdays most close earlier (pick-up times and late flights). Apollo, Britz, Maui, Maui Elite, Mighty and Mighty Lite close their Cairns branch on Sundays from 1 October to 31 March, so starting in October or November, pick up from Monday to Saturday (Sundays and the wet season). Allow plenty of time at the branch so the rental company can show you how your vehicle works before you leave.

Branches are usually open from about 9am to 3pm and busiest from 9am to 10am, so pick up in the morning to reach your first stop in daylight (choosing a pick-up time). Do the online check-in beforehand, bring the documents you need, and if you're flying in, see picking up after a flight. More on picking up your campervan. Branch addresses and hours: Cairns branches.

DAYS 1–4

Days 1–4: Cairns to the Gulf

PICK-UP DAY IN CAIRNS

DAY 1

Cairns

PICK-UP

Pick up your campervan or car in Cairns today.

Cairns is home to many of the natural wonders found in Australia, including the Great Barrier Reef. Try snorkelling amongst the vibrant reef and colourful fish, or visit Green Island an hour or so ferry ride out of the Cairns Marina.

Just north of Cairns can be found Palm Cove, Port Douglas and the Mossman Gorge leading up to the Daintree Rainforest, one of the world's oldest and untouched rainforest habitats.

Stay Cairns Holiday Park.

DRIVE

265 km from Cairns | **about 4 h 45 min** by campervan

Via **Kennedy Highway**

DAY 2

Cairns to Undara

Directions Depart this morning and follow the National Highway A1 to Gillies Highway/ Riverstone Road/ State Route 52 in Gordonvale. Continue along the Gillies Highway/ State Route 52 to Malanda. Continue to Minnamoolka. Continue on National Route 1 to Undara.

On the way

Gillies Range Road

The Gillies Range Road climbs from Gordonvale to Yungaburra and Atherton, steep and winding. Repairs after Cyclone Jasper are expected to run to mid-2027, so check QLDTraffic (https://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/) before you set out.

Afternoon

Explore the Undara Lava Tubes, large underground walkways. Climb down into the depths of this volcanic rock and see this natural geological wonder for yourself. They are the world's longest and

largest tubes, and transport you back to the time of the dinosaurs. There are also plenty of bushwalks and opportunities to spot some wildlife, especially at sunset.

Book ahead:
You can only enter the lava tubes on a guided tour, and tours run in the dry season (1 May to 30 October in 2026).

Stay Outback Caravan Park and Camp Ground at Discovery Resorts – Undara (formerly Undara Experience).

DRIVE

185 km from Undara | **about 3 h 15 min** by campervan |
Via **Gulf Developmental Road** | **Partly unsealed**

DAY 3

Undara to Forsayth

Directions Depart this morning and take the National Route 1 and Forsayth-Georgetown Road to Forsayth.

Gravel into Forsayth
About 8 to 10 km of the 40 km road from Georgetown to Forsayth is still gravel, in short sections, and you drive it again on Day 4. Apollo, Britz, Maui and Mighty allow their 2WD vans on unsealed access roads under 12 km that lead to commercial campgrounds and major attractions, so you can drive in: mention it when you pick up. With another brand, check with us before you book. If you'd rather keep to sealed roads, stay the night in Georgetown instead.

Afternoon

Take a cruise through Cobbold Gorge and float peacefully by the ochre cliffs. The tour guide will take you through the geological and natural features of this sacred place, with added bonus of spotting some local wildlife including crocodiles. After your tour, try one of the many bushwalking trails, which will provide some great opportunities to go bird watching and take photos.

Getting there Cobbold Gorge is 45 km past Forsayth, 35 km of it on gravel, and you can only visit it on a guided tour from April to October. In a 2WD van, take the full-day tour from Forsayth, which includes transfers (Tuesdays and Thursdays, April to September), and leave the van in town.

Stay Forsayth Tourist Park. Its website now shows Finnigan's Rest, next to the Goldfields Hotel, so check it's open before you go, and book a powered site ahead.

DRIVE

340 km from Forsayth | **about 5 h 15 min** by campervan |

Via **Normanton Croydon Road** | **Partly unsealed**

DAY 4

Forsayth to Normanton

Directions Depart this morning and return to Forsayth-Georgetown Road. Continue onto St George Street. Turn left onto National Route 1, and stay right to remain on it. Turn right at National Route 1/ National Route 83 and follow until Normanton.

Morning

It's about 7 hours by campervan today, so start early and share the driving.

Afternoon

Take a ride on the Heritage listed Gulflander, affectionately known as the 'Tin Hare'. Speed through some of the most untouched pieces of land, from the wetlands to the orange Savannah territory. Ask whether its Billy Tea and Damper run is on while you're in town, for a truly authentic Australian afternoon tea of billy tea, coffee, damper and scones.

Gulflander The Gulflander's main service leaves Normanton for Croydon on Wednesday mornings and returns on Thursdays.

Whilst in town, take a selfie with Krys the Crocodile, a lifelike replica of the largest crocodile to be caught in Normanton. It will shock you how large the animals can get, longer than most humans.

Stay Normanton Tourist Park.

DAYS 5–9

Days 5–9: The outback to Katherine

DRIVE

380 km from Normanton | **about 5 h 15 min** by campervan

Via **Burke Developmental Road**

DAY 5

Normanton to Cloncurry

Directions Depart this morning and head southwest on the National Route 83 towards Haig Street. Turn left onto National Highway A2. Turn left onto Sheaffe Street and then turn right into Cloncurry.

Afternoon

Cloncurry has two great museums to offer for people passing through. The first one is the John Flynn Place, which honours John Flynn, the founder of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The service aims to provide medical assistance to those who live in remote places. The museum also commemorates the early pioneers of radio, and the work of Alfred Traeger, who invented radio that can be used in the outback.

The second museum is the Cloncurry Unearthed Visitor Centre and Museum. Here, you can learn the histories of the town, including the adventures of the explorers Burke and Wills. You can even see Burke's own water bottle, as well as photos and other memorabilia.

Stay Discovery Parks – Cloncurry.

DRIVE

310 km from Cloncurry | **about 4 h 30 min** by campervan

Via **Barkly Highway**

DAY 6

Cloncurry to Camooweal

Directions Depart this morning and take the National Highway A2 to Camooweal.

Afternoon

Camooweal is the last town before heading into the Northern Territory, with a population of only 197. The Camooweal Caves are just south of the town, where a series of caves have developed over millions of years. However, experienced climbers should only climb these caves. Enjoy relaxing in the remoteness of a small outback town, and watch the sun set over the sparse arid ground.

Camooweal Caves

The caves are in Wiliyan-ngurru National Park (formerly Camooweal Caves National Park), about 24 km south of town on unsealed roads, so they're only for a 4WD, with the rental company's permission. Only experienced cavers with climbing gear can enter the caves.

Stay Camooweal Roadhouse Motel & Caravan Park.

DRIVE

260 km from Camooweal | **about 3 h** by campervan | Via **Barkly Highway**

DAY 7

Camooweal to Barkly Homestead

QLD → NT

Directions Depart this morning and head west on the National Highway A2 towards Austral Street. Continue onto National Highway 66 and cross into the Northern Territory until you reach Barkly Homestead.

All day

Take in the Northern Territory and the outback at the Barkly Homestead. Enjoy seeing native animals run in the wild, or watch a world-famous sunset. Recharge and ready yourself for the driving of the next day.

Eat Have dinner at the Barkly Bar and Grill, and have one of their popular steaks.

Stay Barkly Homestead.

DRIVE

570 km from Barkly Homestead | **about 6 h 45 min** by campervan | Via **Stuart Highway**

DAY 8

Barkly Homestead to Daly Waters

LONGEST DRIVE

Directions Depart this morning and return to the National Highway 66. Turn right onto National Highway 87. Continue along National Highway 1 until you reach Daly Waters. This is the longest stretch.

All day

This is the longest stretch, nearly 7 hours by campervan, so start early and share the driving.

> ⚠ **Road trains**
> Road trains can be over 50 m long, and overtaking one can take up to 2.5 km. Only pull out with a long, clear stretch ahead: Tourism NT says at least 1 km. If one is overtaking you, keep to your lane and slow down only once it moves out.

> ⚠ **Stock and wildlife**
> Many roads aren't fenced. Cattle, kangaroos, camels and birds are most active at sunrise, sunset and night, so plan to arrive before dark (wildlife on the road).

Daly Waters is the original Australian pub. Nowhere else will you find something so quintessentially Australian. From the décor, to the food and people, you will find Daly Waters becoming a second home.

Eat	The Daly Waters Pub serves the classic Aussie meals such as parmas and steaks, but also don't be afraid to try some kangaroo or crocodile.
Stay	The Daly Waters Pub. Its caravan and camping sites are first come, first served, so arrive early.

DRIVE

275 km from Daly Waters | **about 3 h 30 min** by campervan |

Via **Stuart Highway**

DAY 9

Daly Waters to Katherine

Directions	Depart this morning and take the National Highway 1. Turn right onto Chamber Drive, and then left onto First Street to enter Katherine.

Afternoon

Discover Katherine through its waterways, and take a cruise through the mighty Katherine Gorge. View the landscapes as it slowly changes throughout your journey in Nitmiluk National Park, and try and spot the local wallabies. If you're up for something more adventurous, hire a canoe or kayak, and drift along the water.

The Top End is notorious for its crocodiles, so why not take a croc-spotting tour and see them for yourself. Visit one of the crocodile farms and research facilities, and watch the crocodiles jump out of the water as they are fed. A terrifying but mysterious animal, you will learn about its history in the indigenous culture, as well as the protective measures in place for the animals.

Crocodiles
Saltwater crocodiles live in Top End rivers, billabongs and the sea. Swim only in signed swimming areas. Never dive or jump into rivers or waterholes.

Stay BIG4 Breeze Holiday Parks – Katherine (formerly BIG4 Katherine Low Level Caravan Park).

DAYS 10–14

Days 10–14: The Kimberley to Broome

DRIVE
285 km from Katherine | **about 3 h 30 min** by campervan
Via **Victoria Highway**

DAY 10

Katherine to Timber Creek

Directions Depart this morning and head southwest on Giles Street towards National Highway 1. Turn right onto National Highway 1, and follow until you reach Timber Creek.

Afternoon

Timber Creek is the perfect place to stop off before reaching Western Australia. Relax in Judbarra National Park (formerly Gregory National Park), and maybe even have a go at a spot of fishing. Recharge and refuel before heading out driving the next day.

Stay Wirib Store & Tourism Park. It closed for repairs after Cyclone Ellie in 2023, so call ahead to check it's open.

DRIVE

230 km from Timber Creek | **about 2 h 50 min** by campervan

Via **Victoria Highway**

DAY 11

Timber Creek to Kununurra

NT → WA

Directions

Depart this morning and head northwest on National Highway 1 towards Wilson Street. Turn right onto Messmate Way and follow until you reach Kununurra in WA.

On the way

WA quarantine checkpoint

Generally, no fresh fruit or vegetables, and no honey unless it's certified. Eat or bin them before the border. The checkpoint on the Victoria Highway near Lake Argyle, east of Kununurra, coming from the NT, is open 24 hours, all year (crossing into WA: quarantine).

Afternoon

Take a trip to the El Questro Wilderness Park and see everything, from waterfalls and rainforests, to sandstone ranges and gorges. Try one of their self-guided hikes along the Emma Gorge Trail. The 1-hour walk takes you up close to the 65 metre high waterfall, where you can have a swim to cool off from the day.

El Questro and the Gibb

El Questro is reached from the Gibb River Road, and it's 4WD only, with the rental company's consent, and only in the dry season. In a 2WD van, keep to the sealed Victoria Highway and see El Questro on a tour from Kununurra. Emma Gorge closes for the season in September and reopens in April.

Stay

Discovery Parks – Lake Kununurra (formerly Discovery Holiday Parks – Lake Kununurra).

DRIVE

360 km from Kununurra | **about 5 h** by campervan |

Via **Great Northern Highway**

DAY 12

Kununurra to Halls Creek

Directions Depart this morning and head south on Coolibah Drive towards Banksia Street. Take a left onto Ivanhoe Road, and then right onto the National Highway 1. Turn left onto the Great Northern Highway/ National Highway 1, and look for signs to Halls Creek.

Afternoon

Visit the Bungle Bungle Range in the Purnululu National Park. The Bungle Bungles are giant orange and black striped beehive shaped mounds that change colours during the day as the sun passes over them. Explore the terrain on foot and try some of the bushwalking trails in the park, including the Piccaninny Gorge Lookout. Here you can see great views of the Bungle Bungle Range, and the gorge below.

Purnululu (the Bungle Bungles) The park is for high-clearance 4WDs only. It's reached by the Spring Creek Track, 53 km of unsealed road off the Great Northern Highway, and there's no fuel in the park. In a 2WD van, see the Bungle Bungles on a scenic flight or a tour from Kununurra or Halls Creek, and leave the van in town (Purnululu).

Stay Halls Creek Caravan Park. Check it's open before you go, and book a powered site ahead.

DRIVE

290 km from Halls Creek | **about 4 h** by campervan |

Via **Great Northern Highway**

DAY 13

Halls Creek to Fitzroy Crossing

Directions Depart this morning and head southwest on National Highway 1 towards Hall Street. Turn right onto Forrest Road, and you will reach Fitzroy Crossing.

Afternoon

Fitzroy Crossing is in the perfect place to see many natural wonders, found in the surrounding national parks. Visit Dimalurru (Tunnel Creek) National Park and explore the 750-metre limestone tunnel, as

carved out by the water. Take a flashlight and get ready to have wet feet as you climb through the cave underneath. Some permanent pools of water are home to freshwater crocodiles. Freshwater crocodiles are usually harmless, provided you do not annoy them. However, there is nothing wrong with remaining cautious.

Tunnel Creek The only access to Tunnel Creek is by unsealed roads in a four-wheel drive vehicle, so in a 2WD van, see it on a tour from Fitzroy Crossing.

Danggu Geikie Gorge National Park is only 20 km outside of Fitzroy Crossing, and has some beautiful walking and swimming spots to enjoy. It reopened in October 2026 after flood damage; its boat tours haven't restarted yet. Walk along the sandbanks, and maybe try some fishing. Once again, freshwater crocodiles can be spotted in this area, so remain cautious of your surroundings.

Stay Fitzroy River Lodge & Caravan Park.

DRIVE

400 km from Fitzroy Crossing | **about 5 h 30 min** by campervan | Via **Great Northern Highway**

DAY 14

Fitzroy Crossing to Broome

RETURN

Directions Depart this morning and return to the National Highway 1. Continue along Broome Street, and at the roundabout, take the first exit onto Short Street. At the next roundabout, take the first exit onto Carnarvon Street. At the final roundabout, take the second exit onto Chapple Street/ Grey Street.

Morning

Drive on to Broome and return your campervan.

Afternoon

If you're staying on in Broome, spend a day at Cable Beach, one of Western Australia's premier beaches. The pristine sand and turquoise waters contrast with the red ochre cliffs, and produces a magical landscape perfect for photos. The beach stretches for 22 kilometres, so you are sure to find your own peaceful place to enjoy the sunset. For something a little different, take a camel ride tour at sunrise or sunset.

Stay Cable Beach Caravan Park. From June to August it takes bookings for a minimum stay only, so book early.

Returning in Broome

When you return your campervan, allow time for the return inspection. Return it by the time on your booking, as rental companies charge for late returns. Apollo, Britz, Maui, Maui Elite and Mighty have no toilet or grey-water emptying service in Broome, so return their vans with both emptied. They charge $299 a tank if you don't. Every caravan park in town has a dump point (returning the van in Broome).

Most branches take vans back until about 3pm to 3.30pm, so plan your last drive to arrive early (choosing a drop-off time). If you're running late, call the branch (late returns). More on returning your campervan. Branch addresses and hours: Broome branches.

Enjoy the odyssey across the top.

Traditional Custodians

Cairns: Gimuy Walubara Yidinji and Yirrganydji, among the Traditional Custodians of the Cairns region (Cairns Regional Council (https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/experience-cairns/facts-figures-history/first-peoples-history))

Undara and Forsayth: Ewamian people (Etheridge Shire Council (https://www.etheridge.qld.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/council/documents/annual-reports/annual_report_2021_22_final.pdf))

Normanton: Gkuthaarn, Kukatj and Kurtijar peoples (Carpentaria Shire Council (https://www.carpentaria.qld.gov.au/Home))

Cloncurry: Mitakoodi, Kalkadoon, Yulluna, Waluwarra and Pitta Pitta peoples (Cloncurry Shire Council (https://www.cloncurry.qld.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/our-council/documents/annual-report-archive/annual_report_2020_21.pdf))

Mount Isa: Kalkadoon people (Mount Isa City Council (https://www.mountisa.qld.gov.au/City-Council/Welcome-to-Mount-Isa))

Camooweal: Indjalandji-Dhidhanu people (Mount Isa City Council (https://www.mountisa.qld.gov.au/City-Council/Welcome-to-Mount-Isa))

The Barkly region: Warumungu, Mudburra, Jingili, Wakaya, Wambaya, Waanyi, Warlpiri, Warlmanpa, Alyawarr, Anmatyerre and Kaytetye peoples (Barkly Regional Council (https://www.barkly.nt.gov.au/))

Katherine: Jawoyn, Dagoman and Wardaman peoples (Katherine Town Council (https://www.katherine.nt.gov.au/Profiles/katherine/Assets/ClientData/Documents/Municipal_Plan/Municipal_Plan_2024-25_WEB.pdf))

Timber Creek: Ngaliwurru and Nungali peoples (Victoria Daly Regional Council (https://www.victoriadaly.nt.gov.au/timber-creek/))

Kununurra and the East Kimberley: Miriwoong and Gajerrong, among the East Kimberley peoples the shire acknowledges (Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley (https://shapeyourshire.swek.wa.gov.au/kununurra-reimagined))

Purnululu: Gija and Jaru peoples (WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (https://exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au/park/purnululu-national-park))

The Fitzroy Valley: Bunuba, Gooniyandi, Walmajarri, Nyikina and other peoples of the West Kimberley (Shire of Derby/West Kimberley (https://www.sdwk.wa.gov.au/Profiles/sdwk/Assets/ClientData/Documents/PageCentre/2021-06-22_-_SDWK_SCP_-_Report_on_Community_Engagements_-_FINAL.pdf))

Broome (Rubibi): Yawuru people (Shire of Broome (https://www.broome.wa.gov.au/Council/About-the-Shire-of-Broome/Our-Heritage))

Country boundaries are approximate, and some are shared or contested. These names follow local councils and park managers. The AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia (https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia) shows the wider picture.

Pay your respects to the Traditional Custodians of the land on which you are travelling, and to their Elders past, present and emerging. The Australian environment is fragile, so tread lightly: take only photos and leave only footprints.

DriveNow Disclaimer

DriveNow receives no money or commission for any holiday park, campground, hotel, restaurant, cafe, pub, tour or attraction named on this page. We include them because they suit a campervan trip, and we check them from time to time.

DriveNow's suggested itineraries help you plan your own trip. Distances and times are from mapped routes and are a guide only; campervan driving times are car times plus about 20%. Road conditions, closures, opening hours and prices change, so check them before you travel. Any reliance on this itinerary is at your own discretion.

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