**ITINERARY | 6 Day Kakadu and Katherine Road Trip**

*Immerse yourself in Indigenous cultures on a road trip through the Top End. Cruise to tropical islands, go croc watching and indulge in bush tucker in Australia’s Northern Territory. Set aside six days to delve deeper into the Top End’s Aboriginal cultures, as well as this region’s Creation stories and its spiritual links to the landscape.*

**Day 1:**

Wake up in Darwin/Gulumerrdgen, then head to Cullen Bay to board the SeaLink NT ferry to Bathurst Island for your [**Tiwi by Design tour**](https://www.sealink.com.au/tiwi-islands/experiences/tiwi-by-design/). After the 2.5-hour ferry ride, immerse yourself in Tiwi culture at Tiwi Design, where you'll witness a traditional smoking ceremony, totem dances, and a morning tea service, engaging with friendly locals known for their cultural pride. Explore St Therese’s church with Aboriginal artworks, try screen-printing at Tiwi Design, and sail back to Darwin/Gulumerrdgen in the afternoon.

In the evening, visit the [**Mindil Beach Sunset Market**](https://mindil.com.au/)\*, Darwin/Gulumerrgen’s largest market along the foreshore, which embodies the city's multicultural spirit. Featuring diverse live performances, street artists, and a vibrant array of local and traveling talents, the market comes alive against the backdrop of the stunning Timor Sea sunset.

*\*Tiwi by Design tour operates Apr-Dec.*

*\*\*Mindil Beach Sunset Markets open May-Oct.*

Highlights:

* Connect with the warm and welcoming Tiwi Island locals.
* Unleash your creativity as you try your hand at screen-printing.
* Experience Darwin/Gulumerrdgen’s multicultural essence alongside a stunning Timor Sea sunset.

**Day 2:**

In your hire car, journey east from the city along the Arnhem Highway, flanked by wetlands and paperbark forests. After 45 minutes, stop at [**Fogg Dam Conservation Area**](https://nt.gov.au/parks/find-a-park/fogg-dam-conservation-area) teeming with freshwater crocodiles, waterbirds, and lotus flowers.

Next, continue the adventure with a thrilling [**Wildlands 45-minute Airboat Safari**](https://www.wildlands.com.au/tours/)\*, exploring the vast floodplains of the Mary River wetlands system, providing exclusive access to privately owned areas.

Continue on to Jabiru, the gateway town to Kakadu National Park, where you will spend the night at the [**Mercure Kakadu Crocodile Hotel**](https://kakadutourism.com/accommodation/mercure-crocodile-hotel). This unique hotel will see you enter through the croc’s mouth and cool down at a pool planted firmly inside the inanimate creature’s belly. The hotel is best appreciated from an aerial view on a scenic flight with [**Kakadu Air Services**](https://www.kakaduair.com.au/).

*\*Wildlands Airboat Safari operates Apr-Sep.*

Highlights:

* View freshwater crocodiles, waterbirds, and blooming lotus flowers at a conservation area.
* Enjoy the thrill of an airboat, exploring vast floodplains and exclusive areas.
* Experience a night like no other at a hotel shaped like a crocodile.

**Day 3:**

Embark on a comfortable 4WD bus journey across Cahill’s Crossing on the East Alligator River into Arnhem Land on a [**Kakadu Cultural Tours Arnhemlander tour**](https://www.kakaduculturaltours.com.au/index.php/tours/arnhemlander)\*. Marvel at the world-famous landscapes featuring sandstone escarpment outcrops, rock art sites, forests, and lively billabongs filled with abundant birdlife. Visit the scenic Mikkinj Valley entrance, enjoy a meal beside the Inkiyu Billabong, and explore the Injalak Arts & Crafts retail outlet at the Border Store in Kakadu.

This evening, drive along Kakadu Highway and stay in a luxurious Yellow Water villa at [**Cooinda Lodge**](https://kakadutourism.com/accommodation/cooinda-lodge) – Kakadu's first general store and accommodation site. Nestled beside the enchanting Yellow Water Billabong, the lodge offers a magical setting of water and wildlife.

*\*Arnhemlander Tour operates May-Oct.*

Highlights:

* Explore Kakadu’s iconic landscapes from sandstone escarpments to lively billabongs.
* Discover where the ancient art forms of the Kunwinjku people come alive through skilled artists in Gunbalanya.

**Day 4:**

Wake up early to experience a captivating sunrise and tranquil waters on a [**Yellow Waters Cruise**](https://app.respax.com/public/kt/?site=KT&categoryId=1) with [**Kakadu Tourism**](https://kakadutourism.com/explore-kakadu). Spot giant sea eagles, vibrantly coloured forest kingfishers, and crocodiles.

In southern Kakadu, the landscape transforms with towering waterfalls like Gunlom, Twin Falls, Jim Jim Falls, and Maguk. Experience one of these sites before heading to Nitmiluk National Park.

Located just beyond Katherine township, Outside Katherine, Nitmiluk, jointly managed by the government and Aboriginal Traditional Owners like Kakadu, is named after the cicada sound ('nit, nit!'). Its main attraction is a system of 13 gorges, rich with freshwater crocodiles, fish, and black cockatoos soaring above.

This evening, enjoy complimentary sunset canapés and drinks at [**Cicada Lodge**](https://www.nitmiluktours.com.au/accommodation/cicada-lodge/), your accommodation for the next two nights.

Highlights:

* Experience the magic of Kakadu's renowned wetland on a dawn cruise at Yellow Water.
* Explore the dramatic towering waterfalls of southern Kakadu.

**Day 5:**

Discover the beauty of Nitmiluk National Park with a variety of options. Start your day with a [Nit Nit Dreaming Two Gorge Tour](https://app.respax.com/public/nit/tourinformation/1NC?tourDate=2024-01-20), or a [Malappar Traveller](https://app.respax.com/public/nit/tourinformation/HDMT?tourDate=2024-01-20)\* experience to explore the second gorge (and possibly third) gorge from the water. Alternatively, for an immersive cultural experience which includes a cultural presentation at a rock art site and swim in the gorge, opt for the [Ancient Garlarr Safari](https://www.nitmiluktours.com.au/cultural-experiences/cultural-tours/ancient-garlarr-river-safari/).

This afternoon, drive out to Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park and explore the wonders of this cave system on a [**1-hour guided tour**.](https://www.nitmiluktours.com.au/cultural-experiences/cultural-tours/cutta-cutta-caves-nature-park/) Descend 15 metres below the surface and uncover the rich history of Indigenous culture and European heritage spanning millions of years.

This evening, experience Jawoyn culture and fine dining on a [**Nabili Dreaming Sunset Dinner Tour**](https://www.nitmiluktours.com.au/gorge-experiences/gorge-tours/nabilil-dreaming-sunset-dinner-tour/)\* along Nitmiluk Gorge. Enjoy a three-course meal of local Australian produce, prepared onboard, as the sun sets, complemented by a glass of sparkling wine.

*\*Malappar Traveller available Jun-Oct.*

*\*Nabilil Dreaming Sunset Dinner Tour operates May-Oct.*

Highlights:

* Discover the beauty of Nitmiluk's 13 gorges through water or heli exploration.
* Explore an ancient cave system rich with Indigenous culture and European history.
* Hear the Jawoyn people's stories on a relaxed cruise through the stunning first gorge with a local Jawoyn guide.

**Day 6:**

On your final day as you head back to Darwin/Gulumerrdgen, stop off at Top Didj & Art Gallery for a [**Top Didj Cultural Experience**](https://topdidj.com/cultural-experiences/)**: Tales & Traditions**\*. Engage with Aboriginal artist Manuel Pamkal and learn about Aboriginal culture, including the significance of his painting style, traditional weapons, and land survival.

Grab excellent coffee and delicious toasties at [**The Finch Café**](https://www.facebook.com/thefinchcafekatherine/) in Katherine before making a diversion to [**Litchfield National Park**](https://nt.gov.au/parks/find-a-park/litchfield-national-park). Take a rejuvenating swim at Wangi Falls, a stunning waterhole with twin falls and a natural 'spa’, before returning to Darwin/Gulumerrdgen.

*\*Top Didj Cultural Experience operates May-Sep.*

Highlights:

* View a live demonstration of the distinctive painting style of Aboriginal artist Manuel Pamkal.
* Witness the cascading waters of Wangi Falls as they flow into the expansive plunge pool below.

*Please be aware that some tours, restaurants, and attractions are seasonal and may not operate daily. For the most up-to-date information, kindly refer to each operator's website.*