Discover Arnhem Land
Arnhem Way

7 - 10 DAYS

729 km

Katherine to Mainoru Outstation

Start in Katherine (3 hours’ drive south from Darwin).

Begin your journey in the township of Katherine, where the outback meets the tropics. For inspiration on what to do in the Katherine region, check out the Kakadu and Katherine itinerary. Make sure you are well equipped with enough food, water and fuel.

The first leg of your drive will take you south of Katherine towards Mataranka, before turning off onto the Central Arnhem Road. Travelling just over 250km today on mostly unsealed road, this route is off-the-beaten-path. Take the driving easy and consider breaking your journey with stop offs at either the friendly community of Barunga (home of the Barunga Festival) or Beswick where you can browse local arts and crafts at Djilpin Arts. We suggest you contact well ahead to check opening hours. Take an overnight break at Mainoru Outstation.

Considered one of Australia’s last unspoilt areas, Arnhem Land is just waiting for you to discover. The Central Arnhem Road starts 50 km south of Katherine and finishes in Nhulunbuy on the Gove Peninsula. This route will take you on an adventure through open savannah woodlands as you cross creeks and spot a variety of wildlife. Please note that when travelling to Arnhem Land you will require a permit from the Northern Land Council. These permits are necessary to preserve the beauty of Arnhem Land.
DAY TWO

Mainoru Outstation to Nhulunbuy

The Central Arnhem Road continues for another 480km (unsealed) where you will reach the main town of East Arnhem Land, Nhulunbuy (also known as Gove). The road may be unpredictable, so ensure you take your time, be prepared and most of all, appreciate the remoteness of the land you are discovering.

When you arrive in Nhulunbuy, reward yourself with a sunset drink at the Gove Boat Club and take in a famous Top End sunset.

DAY THREE AND FOUR

Nhulunbuy and surrounds

For the next two days, enjoy the remarkable natural surroundings of East Arnhem Land. Stop off at Yirrkala to visit the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre (15-minute drive off the Central Arnhem Road). This art centre is worth the short detour; here you can view authentic pieces of art and craft created by local Aboriginal artists.

With Nhulunbuy as your base camp set out and uncover iconic landscapes at one of the Dhimurru Recreation Areas. Choose from a wide range of settings; from sandy white beaches and rugged coastlines to open forests and shaded inland waterways, all located just one to two hours from Nhulunbuy. Pack a picnic and head out for the perfect day trip exploring Arnhem Land. Visit Dhimurru for more information.

DAY FIVE AND SIX

Bremer Island

Leave the car for a couple of days in Nhulunbuy and escape to an island. Make your way to Bremer Island via a leisurely one-hour boat ride, or a 10-minute charter flight. Arrive at Banubanu Wilderness Retreat on Bremer Island, an eco-escape paradise in the Northern Territory. Take this opportunity to relax, recharge your batteries and live the island lifestyle for a few days. Take part in guided walks, spearfishing, turtle watching or just chill out on the pristine white beach.

Optional add-on

Bremer Island to Nhulunbuy

With so much to see and do why not stay for an extra day and have a blue water fishing experience with one of the charters available. If fishing isn’t your thing then charter a scenic flight to witness this amazing part of the world from the sky.

DAY SEVEN

Nhulunbuy

Take a day to recoup from your island escape. Get the car fuelled and packed up ready for the road trip back to Katherine.

Once you reach the Stuart Highway, you may choose to either head north towards Katherine and Darwin, south towards Daly Waters OR if you are really loving this untouched landscape, we recommend heading towards Limmen National Park and even detour to the fabulous Lorella Springs. Whatever way you choose to travel, there are many places still to explore in the Northern Territory. Explore the spectacular Victoria River region for some inspiration.

Food and drink

Mainoru Outstation store (make sure you get extra supplies – fuel, food and water), Gove Boat Club, Walkabout Lodge

Accommodation

Mainoru Outstation, Walkabout Lodge, Gove Peninsula Motel, deluxe (glamping) beach front accommodation on Bremer Island

Tours and activities

Djilpin Arts Centre, nature walks around the Mainoru Outstation, Giddy River, Buffalo Creek, Little Bondi (apply for permits through Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation). Beach combing, relaxing, turtle spotting, fishing, and Aboriginal cultural tours on Bremer Island