

BROOME AND BEYOND

Broome and the Dampier Peninsula are your gateway to the Kimberley, one of Australia's most iconic touring destinations

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The Kimberley is one of the most iconic Australian destinations with its stunning landscape luring adventurers from everywhere. The wilderness meets the sea at Broome and the Dampier Peninsula, and these two destinations alone with pristine white sandy beaches, magnificent camping opportunities, and a laid back feel have always been a huge drawcard for us.

If you weren't travelling any further, Broome is a holiday destination in itself. It's full of history, cultural diversity and loads of attractions, and the sunsets are simply stunning. Gazetted as a town in 1883, the town was built on the back of the pearling industry when thousands of people flocked from Asia looking for work. Today, Broome's pearling industry is still strong and Australian South Sea

■ WHERE:

Broome and the Dampier Peninsula are located in Western Australia's Kimberley region. Access is via the Great Northern Highway from Fitzroy Crossing or Port Hedland, or north from Derby.

■ MAPS AND GUIDES:

The Kimberley by HEMA Maps.

■ INFORMATION:

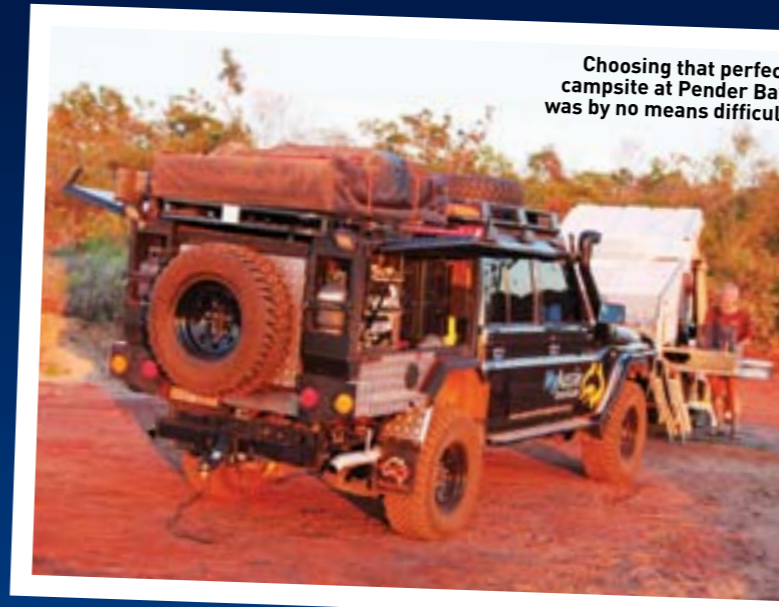
The region offers amazing natural attractions, spectacular scenery, swimming, fishing, bushwalking, 4WDing and excellent camping locations.

■ FUEL & SUPPLIES:

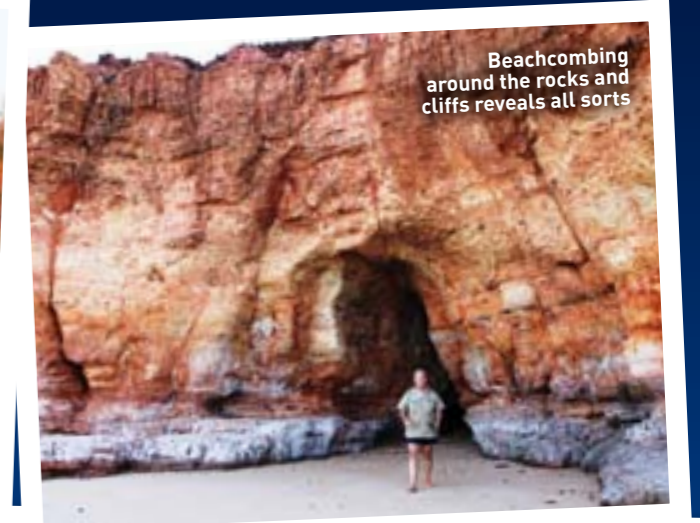
Fuel and supplies are readily available from Broome. Along the Dampier Peninsula, fuel and basic supplies are available at Beagle Bay, Lombadina/Djarindjin, and One Arm Point (limited times).

■ BUDGET ATTRACTIONS:

This region is full of family fun! Drive onto Broome's Cable Beach for a game of beach cricket, amazing sunsets and to watch the camels walk by. Walk in the footsteps of dinosaurs and try fishing from the town's wharf. Up on the Dampier Peninsula, there are plenty of fishing, swimming and beachcombing opportunities, and if visiting during July and August, keep watch for whales in the Indian Ocean.



Choosing that perfect campsite at Pender Bay was by no means difficult



Beachcombing around the rocks and cliffs reveals all sorts

Pearls are sought after worldwide.

We have visited Broome on several occasions and only had a couple of days this trip to soak up the atmosphere and restock our supplies. As with every visit, our mandatory first stop is still the visitor's centre. There is always something on in town, so we picked up the latest visitor's guide to see what was happening. Broome's population significantly swells during winter months so if your visit coincides with an activity or festival, book your accommodation well ahead.

Settling in at the caravan park, we unhitched and were off exploring in no time. Just like the many thousands of visitors to Broome each year, we too love Cable Beach. It has such a relaxed



The Cape Leveque road conditions can vary once you're on the dirt

THE KIMBERLEY COAST HAS THE BIGGEST TIDES IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE



■ **WHAT TO TAKE:**

Broome has all the facilities you'd expect from a town this size, although items needing to be ordered in could take several days. When travelling to the Dampier Peninsula, be self-sufficient. Take recovery gear, air compressor, basic spare parts and a repair kit.

■ **BEST TIME TO TRAVEL:**

Broome can be visited all year around whereas the Dampier Peninsula can be closed due to wet season rains. Rain may also close roads in the area at any time so if any doubt, check road conditions with the Broome Visitor Centre. Burning off along the peninsula occurs so allow extra time in your travelling schedule.

■ **TRIP STANDARD:**

Air down your tyres before driving onto any of Broome's beaches and when following the coastline north. Refer to the tide chart as the Dampier Peninsula experiences extreme tides and there are many tidal creeks and obscure tracks north of Broome if driving along the coast. These tracks would be B-grade and local knowledge is required to travel this area. The main Cape Leveque Road is E-grade and is suitable for off road camper trailers. It's difficult to cover all tracks off this road but many would be D-grade as they can be soft, boggy sand.



and tropical feel with its towering palms and restaurants along the beachfront, and there are always a few families having a game of beach cricket closer to the water's edge.

On the northern end of Cable Beach, 4WDs are permitted. So after airing down our tyres, we drove along the beach which was a hive of activity and chose our sunset spot. We pulled out some chairs, drinks and nibbles

and before we knew it, the sun dipped into the Indian Ocean to end what was another magical Kimberley day.

If you're a first-timer to Broome, include a night out at Australia's oldest outdoor movie theatre, Sun Pictures. Dating back to 1916, it's a unique way to enjoy current movies sitting in canvas-slung chairs watching a movie and eating popcorn as planes fly overhead! Two

movie sittings are offered each night with the earlier session suitable for kids.

Eventually, you'll be itching to hit the dirt as we were. We fuelled up and restocked supplies before leaving for the Dampier Peninsula. We had only travelled the Cape Leveque Road for 10kms before taking the Manari Road which leads to Quandong Point and Prices Point for some excellent free camping. Be warned -

travelling any further north on Manari Road to places such as Coulomb Point and Barred Creek takes local knowledge as you drive along the beach and contend with tidal creeks.

There is some simply spectacular scenery along the peninsula and the Kimberley coast has the biggest tides in the southern hemisphere. Our first night was at Prices Point and we were a little surprised to have the place to ourselves.

With a backdrop of rich red cliffs set against pristine white sands that flowed into the brightest of blue seas, anyone would have thought we were in paradise. Walking down to the water's edge took only minutes and we spent the rest of the day beachcombing around the rocks.

There was much more of the peninsula to explore, so we continued our trip to Nature's Hideaway at Middle Lagoon. We found the sandy

THE DAMPIER PENINSULA IS ONE OF VERY FEW PLACES WHERE YOU FIND A WATERFALL AT SEA



There is nothing more Kimberley than camels and a sunset on Cable Beach



track can be a bit of fun when towing, so maintain your momentum. This place has some sensational campsites with views of the bay that are postcard perfect. Based here for a couple of nights, we had lunch one day at the Whalesong Café, only a 15 minute drive away. The café is renowned for its pizzas and smoothies and they didn't disappoint!

Our next stop was the popular Kooljaman towards the top of the peninsula. Powered and unpowered campsites are available in their campground, but we chose to set up our camper next to one of their beach huts for our

stay. Overlooking the water, the "Gilligan's Island" style hut was perfect! The basic huts are available for both couples and families, and a tent or a few swags can easily be rolled out in the hut for protection.

Using Kooljaman as a base, we did a day trip to the tip of the peninsula visiting One Arm Point's Ardyaloon Trochus Hatchery. It was an interesting tour as we learnt about the community's fishery traditions and their reef maintenance programs.

Arriving back at Kooljaman later in the day,



CAMPsites:

Broome has several caravan parks where campsites can quickly book out during the main tourist season (June to September). Camping options are numerous on the Dampier Peninsula with both payable and free camping available.

QUANDONG POINT

17° 35' 28"S 122° 10' 11"E



MIDDLE LAGOON



MIDDLE LAGOON



THINGS TO DO:

Broome
Courthouse Markets, Cable Beach sunset, Staircase to the Moon, Malcolm Douglas Crocodile Park, Sun Pictures, camel riding, swimming, and many tours are available.

Dampier Peninsula
fishing, swimming, landscape photography, 4WDing, bushwalking, mud crabbing and a range of tours.

RESTRICTIONS AND PERMITS:

Permits are required to visit some of the aboriginal communities along the Dampier Peninsula. For more information, obtain the Ardi Travellers Guide from the Broome Visitor Centre.

KEY CONTACTS:

BROOME VISITOR CENTRE
PH: (08) 9195 2200



we joined many others who drove down to the western beach for sunset. On this side of the peninsula, the sunsets along this whole coastline are nothing short of spectacular.

With the Kimberley renowned for its extreme tides, we had to visit Cygnet Bay for their Giant Tides tour on our way down the peninsula. The high speed boat ride to the Sunday Island group of islands definitely had our blood pumping. The tides along here created large whirlpools which we experienced firsthand as they threw us around like we were in a washing machine. But just as

thrilling was seeing an exposed reef where water cascaded over its edge with a 2 metre drop. The Dampier Peninsula is one of very few places where you'll find a waterfall at sea.

Further down the Peninsula, we called into Lombadina. A walk around the community revealed a unique bush church, a general store (where you can buy magnificent wood oven bread if you time your visit right), and an excellent art and craft centre.

Our last stop on the peninsula before continuing our trip to Derby and the Gibb



YOU CAN WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF DINOSAURS AT BROOME



It was a hard day at the office!



TRAVEL

Kimberley, WA Part 1

■ AUTHOR'S OPINION:

What was your favourite part of the trip?

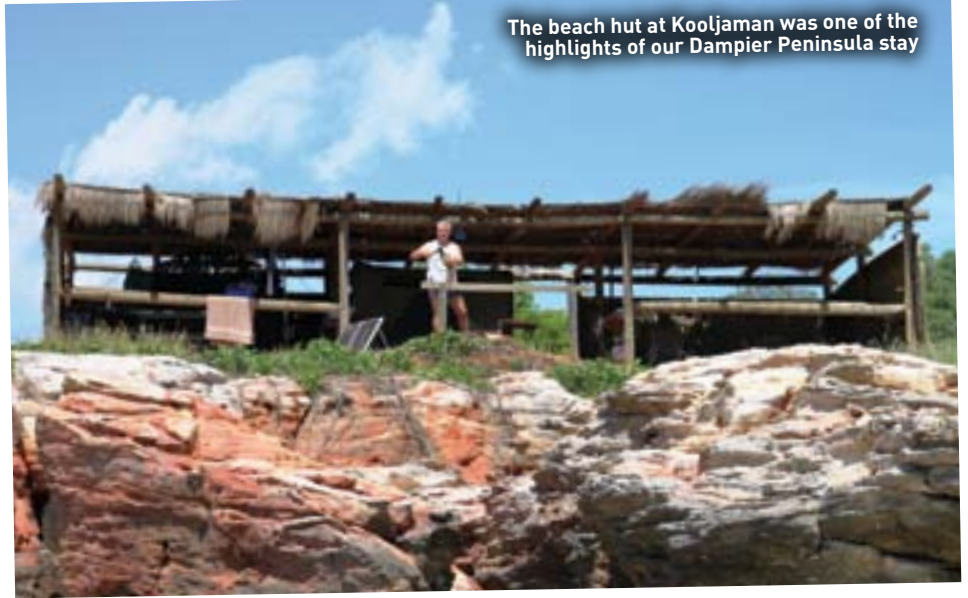
The camping on the Dampier Peninsula was unbelievable. We were perched high up on the cliffs overlooking the turquoise coloured water and witnessed amazing sunsets.

Where else have you been recently?

On our way to the Kimberley, we travelled the Buchanan and Buntine Highways. The remoteness of this route topped off with some sensational campsites and birdlife made it a great area to explore.

Where are you heading next and why?

We continue our adventure up to Derby and the infamous Gibb River Road as the region keeps drawing us back.



The beach hut at Kooljaman was one of the highlights of our Dampier Peninsula stay



On our way to Prices Point for some free camping

River Road was Beagle Bay. The interior of the community's church is just simply stunning. Dating back to 1903, its interior is decorated with shells, and the distinctive altar covered with local mother of pearl shell.

Broome and the Dampier Peninsula may not have hard core 4WD tracks, but driving on sand shouldn't be underestimated. It is an incredibly spectacular area so make sure you add these destinations to your must-see list and it's a great way to whet your appetite if you continue travelling to other areas of the Kimberley. For this visit, we spent a week around Broome and the Dampier Peninsula, but time permitting you could easily spend much longer. ■

DON'T MISS PART 2 OF LINDA'S SPECTACULAR KIMBERLEY ADVENTURE!

Next issue, Linda hits the iconic Gibb River Road, and reveals the best parts of that sensational bit of Australia!