

# The Best IS IN THE WEST

With bigger and even better scenery than the Cape, see why the remote and rugged Kimberley is top of so many tourers' list!

WORDS BY LINDA BLOFFWITCH, PHOTOGRAPHY BY 4WD ACTION →





PART THREE:  
*The Kimberley*







- Best tracks off the Gibb
- Free natural wonders to explore
- Hidden hotspots only the locals know about

**T**he Kimberley region has absolutely everything an adventurous 4WDer could want. With less than 50,000 people across its entire 420,000 square kilometres, finding your own bit of space won't be an issue. Throughout the vast region, there is remote touring second to none anywhere in Australia. But there's also tougher 4WDing for those prepared to find the tracks. Whether your taste is mild or wild, there are more attractions to see in the Kimberley than you could do in one lifetime!

The first thing many of us think about when we hear 'Kimberley' is the mighty Gibb River Road, and

understandably so. The Gibb is to the Kimberley what the Old Tele Track is to the Cape. It's popular for a reason.

You will do no less than two dozen water crossings along the Gibb and can visit a similar number of stunning gorges. There aren't too many destinations in Australia which offers these stats along a 600 odd kilometre stretch of road. But the Kimberley is more than just the Gibb, and while we certainly recommend you see it, there's a long list of surrounding areas that are begging to be explored as well. Bring your sense of adventure and experience remote 4WD tracks, amazing coastline, jaw dropping waterfalls, and genuine outback campsites.







The Kimberley gives you that feeling of being incredibly remote, nearly everywhere you are.



## DESTINATIONS AND CAMPSITES THAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT

The Kimberley epitomises Australia – it's rugged, beautiful and chock full of adventure. Everything's big up here – the gorges, the rivers, the fish, you name it. It's like they're all on steroids! You owe it to yourself to see the best bits, especially the ones that aren't as well known.

Many of the drop dead stunning gorges are bigger than 20 Olympic sized swimming pools and not all are on the tourist path. Less popular Barnett Gorge is a cracker of a spot for exploring and camping. But to top it off, this would have to be the ideal place to have a tyre tube and float downstream with a coldie. The scenery is seriously spectacular.

But it's not all gorges and ranges up here as the beach culture is hot. The Kimberley has some of the best coastline in Australia and the fishing is adrenaline-pumping. If you travel to the Dampier Peninsula, this place must be the perfect destination. With 4WD tracks, incredible scenery and absolute waterfront camping, it's got the lot. Make the effort to get to Quandong or James Price Point and you can roll your swag out on your own piece of beachfront paradise. When it's just you and some mates wetting a line and sitting around a campfire, it doesn't get much better.

Search out and visit more of the remote stations like Charnley River Station and Mornington Wilderness Camp, as they too have stacks to offer. Getting to the stations is one thing, and then travelling to some of their wicked attractions can be an adventure in itself.

If you're craving some real remote and off the beaten track adventure, bring your tinny. The Calder and Meda Rivers are excellent for wetting a line, but keep watch for cunning crocs to avoid becoming croc bait. Another alternative is to stick a canoe on your truck's roof and use it to get to some cracking gorge backwaters. You may just find one of the thousands of Aboriginal art sites located in the region and it gets you away from the crowds.



## HIDDEN HOTSPOTS THAT MOST MISS

If you want to avoid following the typical tourist route, set yourself up with some extra fuel and supplies and go exploring. How about trying to get to the coast from the Gibb for a bit of fun? With some preparation and a thirst for adventure you will have serious fun driving the Munja Track from Mt Elizabeth Station. It can be challenging and you'll need a permit from the station to do it. Allow plenty of time as you'll quickly swallow up a minimum of 4-5 days.

The whole area is loaded with history and special sights from WWII and early settlers dating back to the late 1800s. Finding your way to those spots where vegetation is overgrown and tracks are almost non-existent needs local advice. Visit the Kalumburu Community Office for further details of some accessible WWII relics and carry some good maps and navigation equipment. Whilst you're there, visit the community's excellent museum as it's chock full of history and has one of the best collections in the Kimberley.

Around Kununurra and Wyndham, there are plenty of places to get your 4WD's wheels wet along the Parry Creek and Old Halls Creek Roads. These are accessible even while the Gibb is still closed from the wet, so they're great to hit early in the season!

Get off the bitumen and take the dirt road to Tunnel Creek and Windjana Gorge. The gorge is super stunning and best seen at first light or late in the day. It is chock full of freshwater crocs and the view in the gorge with its 100m high walls isn't too shabby either.

Located a stone's throw from Windjana is Tunnel Creek. Grab a good torch and some amphibious style shoes and get ready for a hell of an adventure. When you're in the tunnel, shine your torch around the roof and walls. It's not called the "cave of bats" for nothing! Get to see Australia's only carnivorous bat that calls this place home first-hand.

**AT 420,000 SQUARE KILOMETRES, THE KIMBERLEY IS THREE TIMES LARGER THAN THE CAPE**





## FIVE FANTASTIC CAMPSITES

**1 KOOLJAMAN** – Situated on Cape Leveque, Kooljaman is a wilderness camp that offers both high end luxury accommodation in safari style tents, or cheaper and much more exciting camping options in the form of palm frond covered beach shacks that give you a great place to roll out a swag onto a beach that is proclaimed to be croc and stinger free!

**2 EL QUESTRO** – Over one million acres, El Questro is labelled a homestead and wilderness park. Camping is available riverside with plenty of opportunities to 4WD and check out the local area.

**3 BELL GORGE** – Either the Silent Grove Campsite or Bell Creek Campground put you within striking distance of the beautiful Bell Gorge. These sites get busy and they are based on a first come first served basis. Get in early and try to avoid peak periods.

**4 HONEYMOON BAY** – Sites are available on the beach here and for a small fee you're greeted with some of the best sunsets in Australia. Follow the old Pago Mission Track to make getting here more of an adventure!

**5 WALARDI CAMPGROUND** – Located in the Bungle Bungles, Walardi is a bush campsite that offers good close access to some of the most spectacular geographical marvels in the Kimberley; Cathedral Gorge and the beehive domes. Bush toilets and bore water (must be treated) are available as well as shared wood barbeques with wood provided.



You're going to want to take your time when there is scenery like this throughout the Kimberley



The Kimberley takes remote touring and camping to the next level

Be warned – you're going to spend a lot of time taking photos and making memories that'll stay with you forever!





## OUR TOP TRACKS

**THE MUNJA TRACK** – One of the harshest in the region, but so long as you take your time you'll see it through without any troubles. That said, make sure you are carrying two spares and that you're self-sufficient for at least a few days, if you are travelling alone.

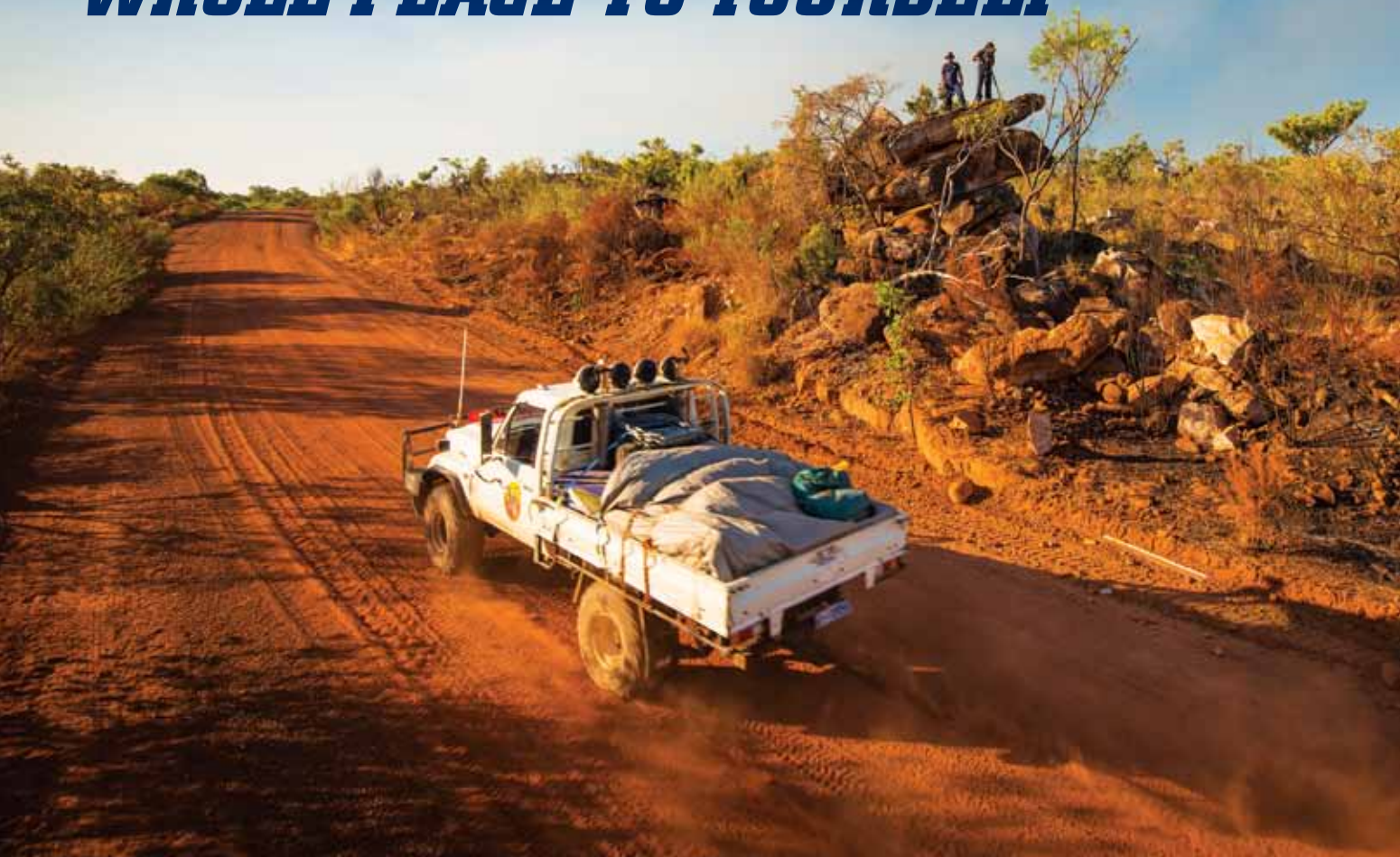
**MITCHELL FALLS TRACK** – Halfway along the Gibb the turn off for Mitchell Falls is another top track. Be prepared as it loves to kill tyres though!

**THE OLD PAGO MISSION TRACK** – Just south of Kalamburu, this is another challenge. Although it can be pretty wild, the reward waiting for you at the end is the pristine beach at Honeymoon Bay – perfect to set up camp on the beach and relax.



**KARUNJIE TRACK** – An old stock route that isn't maintained which means you're in for a rough couple of hours. The amazing scenery that looks over the Cockburn Ranges and varied terrain from dry lake beds to river-drifts make it worth every minute.

***VISITING IN EARLY MAY WILL  
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## FACT FILE

### WHERE:

The Kimberley is over 2000km north of Perth and covers a huge area from Broome in the south west to Kununurra in the north east.

### CAMPING:

There are plenty of free camps to choose from throughout the Kimberley but you'll need to consider the local wildlife. Be sure to not camp too close to water with the potential to accommodate crocs.

There is also a good range of paid camping options from the Dampier Peninsula on the west coast right through to Home Valley Station near Kununurra on the eastern fringe of the Kimberley. Prices range from \$11 to \$25 per night

### NECESSARY 4WD MODIFICATIONS:

Many of the areas throughout the Kimberley have signs that strongly recommend only well-equipped 4WDs on the tracks in the area. You are in a remote area and must be self-sufficient – you can be a long way from help! Make sure you are running good quality off-road tyres. A snorkel is necessary for some deep water crossings and a winch is a good idea if you are heading down remote tracks.

### WHAT TO TAKE:

Definitely take good maps and navigation gear, consider a sat-phone or HF radio if you intend to get off the beaten track. Make sure you have good spare tyres, a tyre repair kit and any consumable parts that your truck may need – think hubs, fuel line, belts and radiator hoses. An air compressor, extra fuel in jerry cans and extra water and food are also necessities. Nights during winter in the Kimberley can drop to below 10 degrees so pack warm clothes and decent sleeping gear.

### BEST TIME TO TRAVEL:

Some parts of the Kimberley are open year round, but the heat in summer can be excessive. The Dampier Peninsula, Gibb River Road and Purnululu NP are closed during the wet season and generally open in early May. The Munja track usually doesn't open until July. In general the best time to travel is between May and September when day temperatures are milder.

### FUEL AND SUPPLIES:

Most of the major towns in the Kimberley will have fuel and basic supplies. Along the Gibb River Road fuel is available at Drysdale River Station (ULP, D), El Questro (ULP, D, LPG), Imintji (D), Kalamburu (ULP, D) and Mt Barnett Roadhouse (ULP, D). Over the Range Tyres, 50km east of Imintji are able to affect minor tyre and mechanical repairs.

### TRIP STANDARD:

Trips are rated A through to E grade, with A meaning only suited to vehicles with an extreme level of off-road modification and E meaning perfectly suited to all types of 4WD vehicles. The Gibb River Road is well maintained and is rated between a D to E – there are several water crossings but they shouldn't be too much trouble. Tracks through the Kimberley vary greatly and can range from E to A grade. If you travel early in the dry season and tracks are still wet they will be significantly more challenging.

### WILDLIFE:

Throughout the Kimberley there are streams and gorges that accommodate freshwater crocodiles though there are several that are fine for swimming. Do your research and check with locals, tourist info centres or signposted warnings prior to swimming. Saltwater Crocodiles populate the tidal rivers such as the Pente-cost, the Fitzroy and the Ord. Be especially careful to be croc safe near these areas, as well as on the coast on the Dampier Peninsula as well as the northern coastline.

### MAPS AND GUIDES:

HEMA Kimberley

### CONTACTS:

### WA PARKS AND WILDLIFE

W: [HTTP://WWW.DPAW.WA.GOV.AU/](http://WWW.DPAW.WA.GOV.AU/)

PH: 08 9168 4200

### KALAMBURU COMMUNITY OFFICE

PH: 08 9161 4300

### MT ELIZABETH STATION

PH: 08 9191 4644

### OVER THE RANGE TYRES

PH: 08 9191 7887

### ROADHOUSES:

IMINTJI: 08 9191 7471

MT BARNETT: 08 9191 7007

DRYSDALE RIVER STATION: 08 9191 4326

The Kimberley will show you some stunning sunsets

