



7 days in Darwin



Looking down into Florence Falls
Tourism NT/Carmen Hunter

A week in Darwin gives time to experience the culture and history of life in the Top End, with some day trips to the surrounding islands and natural attractions. Cool off under a waterfall in Litchfield National Park. Discover the colourful and diverse Aboriginal art of the Tiwi Islands on a day tour.

DAY ONE

Become a city explorer

Start the day with a morning coffee fix and breakfast at one of the many popular cafés in the city. Take the time to browse the local shops and boutiques for some unique goodies to take home.

Immerse yourself in art

Today, be immersed in the local **Aboriginal art scene**. Darwin City and

Parap are great places to view and invest in Aboriginal art pieces from around the Northern Territory.

The **Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory** is also a great place to find out more about Aboriginal art and to see local crocodile celebrity, Sweetheart. This famous 5-metre, 780kg taxidermied saltwater crocodile is on permanent display in the museum. The museum also houses a Cyclone Tracy exhibition which is well worth a visit to appreciate the scale of devastation the city suffered on 24 December 1974.

Absorb the beauty of the botanic gardens

Take a walk through the shady **George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens**, or better yet hop on a **Segway tour** to experience the incredible flora of Northern Australia from a completely different perspective. Wander through monsoon forests, coastal dunes, mangroves and open woodlands before relaxing with lunch at the onsite café.

Dinner with a view at the wharf

This afternoon, head over to **Stokes Hill Wharf** which is located within the Darwin Waterfront Precinct. This is a popular spot for fishing with the locals, and is dotted with a great choice of restaurants, eateries and tourist attractions.

Finish the day with some fresh fish and chips

and a cold drink while enjoying a beautiful Top End sunset. There might even be some local dolphins in the water below.

DAY TWO

Litchfield adventure

Set out on a day trip to **Litchfield National Park**, only 1.5 hours' drive from Darwin. Hire a car to explore Litchfield National Park on your own, or take one of the many tours available which include wildlife or Aboriginal cultural experiences.

Locals consider this one of their favourite locations with its cascading waterfalls, waterholes and bushwalks. For a cool dip, plunge into the crystal clear waterholes beneath the magnificent spring-fed waterfalls of Florence and Wangi Falls. Or, relax in the gentle three-tiered cascade waters shaded by rainforest at Buley Rockhole.

Take a hike

For the more adventurous, there are many bushwalks offered at Litchfield. There's a scenic **3.5 kilometre walk** that takes the bushwalker alongside the beautiful Walker Creek, or for the experienced trekker, there's an epic 39 kilometre **Tabletop Track** which will lead them to secret waterfalls. For the Tabletop Track you



A visitor aboard a yacht on Darwin Harbour
Tourism NT/Hayley Anderson



Dining at Hanuman
Tourism NT



Cruising Corroboree Billabong
Tourism NT/Corroboree Billabong Wetland Cruises

must be self-sufficient and register with Parks before you can begin your journey.

Settle in for a movie under the stars

Head back to Darwin in the afternoon and unwind with a flick at the **Deckchair Cinema** near the Darwin Waterfront. The open air cinema screens Australian, popular, family, foreign and classic films during the Dry Season (April–November). Make the most of the experience and relax under the stars enjoying their onsite bar and food stalls.

DAY THREE

Wartime history experience

While in Darwin take some time to learn about the city's wartime efforts during WWII. The **Defence of Darwin Experience** at the Military Museum is a great place to get your wartime history fix. Learn about the bombing of Darwin and the city's role in WWII through the gallery and multimedia presentations. Check out the displays of artillery pieces, vehicles, uniforms and firearms at the museum, or head to Stokes Hill Wharf and the Bombing of Darwin Harbour exhibit at the **RFDS Tourist Facility**. The VR movie and life-sized holograms bring the dramatic events to life.

Historical harbour views

Head towards the Esplanade where you'll find **Bicentennial Park** perched on the cliffs of Darwin Harbour. Visit the Cenotaph, Darwin's first war memorial commemorating Australians who lost their lives in WWI, and the Aboriginal men and women whose bush skills assisted the Army during WWII to protect the remote northern coastline. Take a stroll under the tropical trees along The Esplanade to Parliament House. Mitchell Street is close by where there are many lunch options to choose from.

WWII Oil Storage Tunnels

Continue on to the **WWII Oil Storage Tunnels** at the Darwin Waterfront Precinct. The Oil Storage Tunnels were created following the bombing of the oil storage tanks in the first Japanese air raid; today two of these tunnels are open for viewing. Follow an experienced guide through the tunnels and learn how they were constructed under harsh conditions to protect the city's diesel and furnace oil from aerial bombardment.

Cruise at sunset

As the daylight hours start to wane, head back to the waterfront to board a harbour cruise for a sunset drink or dinner cruise with **Spirit of Darwin**, **Darwin Harbour Cruises** or **Sail Darwin**.

DAY FOUR

Hop over to the Tiwi Islands

The Tiwi Islands are famous for Aboriginal arts and crafts, the passion for Australian Rules Football (AFL), and fishing. From Darwin the Tiwi Islands are accessible as part of an organised Aboriginal tour with **Sealink** or fishing expedition. Take a 15-minute flight in a light aircraft from Darwin with Air Tiwi or enjoy a trip over water on the ferry with **Sealink**.

Experience Tiwi art

Art is part of everyday life on the islands. Stop at one of the **art centres** where you can see artists at work and purchase local art and craft. See traditional art and depictions of the Tiwi creation stories on display at the Tiwi Museum, and wander through the unique Tiwi-style Catholic Church in the Early Mission Precinct.

Flavours of Hanuman

Head back to Darwin this afternoon and book ahead to secure a table at one of the city's culinary must-dos, **Hanuman Restaurant**. Capturing the flavours of multicultural Darwin, Hanuman combines Asian-style decor with a distinctive menu of Thai, Indian and Nonya cuisine. Chef Jimmy Shu's trumpet mushrooms and Hanuman oysters are highly recommended.

DAY FIVE

Breakfast with a view

This morning, head to **Darwin Waterfront** for breakfast with a view. From high-end restaurants to more casual cafés and bars – there's something for everyone. Paddle, swim, bodysurf or play in the Wave or Recreation Lagoons, with man-made waves of up to 1.7 metres generated at regular intervals. Both areas are safe for swimming and protected from stingers.

Go face-to-face with a croc

After lunch, make your way to **Crocosaurus Cove** located in the heart of Darwin on Mitchell Street. Here there's an opportunity to get up close and personal with the largest reptile on the planet, the saltwater crocodile, and learn about a variety of fish and reptile species at the aquarium. There are twice-daily crocodile and fish feeding shows that are not to be missed. For those feeling particularly brave, climb into the Cage of Death for a face-to-face encounter with one of the largest saltwater crocodiles in captivity. It's the ultimate adrenaline rush!

Sunset and shopping at Mindil Market

Darwin's popular **Mindil Beach Sunset Markets** are held every Thursday and Sunday evening between May and October. The region's incredible multicultural mix is well represented at the market's arts, crafts and food stalls, so go with a spare bag and an appetite. Enjoy free entertainment by magicians and buskers, then select from the array of food and enjoy dinner barefoot on the beach while taking in an iconic Darwin sunset.

If the Mindil Beach Sunset Markets are not scheduled for tonight, head to Cullen Bay Marina where you can watch the sunset on the lawns with takeaway fish and chips.

DAY SIX

Back to nature

For some R&R today, head to **Berry Springs Nature Park** (usually open from May - November), located just 47 kilometres south of Darwin. Used as a recreation camp for armed forces personnel during the war, today it's a popular spot for a barbecue and a dip in the clear freshwater pools, where native fish and other aquatic life can be seen.

For a bit more activity, check out one of the bushwalking tracks, or learn more about the wartime history of Berry Springs Nature Park at the interpretive centre.



Sunrise at Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve
Tourism NT/Daniel Tran



Crocosaurus Cove
Tourism NT/Shanaa McNaught

Go wild at Territory Wildlife Park

Discover the local wildlife at the nearby **Territory Wildlife Park** where you can take in a birds of prey show or hand-feed the whip rays and barramundi in the Ooloo Sandbar. Wander through treetop aviaries, around a natural lagoon and through the aquarium to see animals, including Graeme the saltwater crocodile.

Relaxing dinner with the locals

Make your way back to Darwin in the afternoon. Enjoy dinner at **Darwin Trailer Boat Club** and toast to a day well spent in the Top End.

DAY SEVEN

Wetland cruising

Cruising Top End wetlands teeming with wildlife should be on everyone's bucket list.

Today, immerse yourself in the wildlife on a one-hour cruise on Corroboree Billabong with **Wetland Cruises**, just a 1.5 hour drive from Darwin. It's the perfect way to photograph and find out more about the local wildlife. Expect to

see wetland birds, including jabirus, brolgas, magpie geese and many others, as well as crocodiles. Tours take place from June - September.

The billabong is said to have the highest concentration of saltwater crocodiles in the world. Be sure to make a stopover at **Window on the Wetlands**, where interactive displays explain the history and ecology, seasonal changes and abundant wildlife of the northern coastal wetlands.

Take in the wildlife at Fogg Dam

On your way back to Darwin, stop in at **Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve**. It is one of the few wetland systems that are generally accessible year-round. Here, boardwalks take visitors through different landscapes and observation platforms to view the large numbers of resident wading birds.

A send-off with style

Cap off the week in Darwin and say farewell in style at one of the many bars and pubs on the city's main **entertainment** strip, Mitchell Street. Choose from traditional pubs with beer gardens, popular live music venues, terrace bars with street-side dining, casual backpacker joints, swanky cocktail bars and night clubs.