

The Top End Tour STAGE 2

Katherine to Kununurra (Stage 2)

Wednesday 29 May, 2019 to Tuesday 04 June, 2019

Day to Day

Imagine waking up in the early daylight and looking around and wondering where you are. You may have just spent the night under an impossibly starry sky in the great Australian outback, a lodge on the banks of a legendary river, or a donga room in a remote roadhouse. Either way, you want to get up and get on your bike again ready for another day on this legendary AllTrails long-haul cycle tour from Darwin to Broome.

After a hearty breakfast you head on your way as the AllTrails team load your luggage and head up the road to set up your morning tea. The food breaks are at set times enabling all riders to plan their day and the amount of time required to enjoy the sights along the way before arriving at the next food break.

You depart morning tea with a clear focus and understanding of the next leg of the day to lunch which is arranged and/or prepared by our crew. Lunch is a great time to relax, refuel your body and chat to your friends, be it in a bakery, a country pub, the rest area of a remote highway, overlooking a river, or deep in a National Park.

Our safety and support vehicles are never far away, one trailing the group as a warning to motorists of the cycling group ahead, and at least one other vehicle travelling among and ahead of the group preparing the food stops, arranging directional signage where required and being on-call for cyclists with mechanical failures or other requirements.

We have 2-way radio communications with trucks and other large vehicles on the road to further increase safety for our cyclists as well as first-aid qualified, and bike mechanic qualified staff. Safety is our number one priority and we strive to make each day as safe as possible - another great advantage of cycling on a tour with AllTrails.

After reaching your overnight destination, usually mid-afternoon, you check in and enjoy a cuppa and snack, shower, or soak in the bath. Sometimes there is a pool for you to lounge around and cool off in, or you may decide to explore the surroundings, go for a walk, share a cold drink with friends or simply relax. It is your life, it's your ride, enjoy it.

A briefing for all cyclists at 6pm before the evening meal is always interesting, finding out what happened that day, and a run-down on the sights and special attractions to look out for the next day. Lots of laughs and stories are shared before we settle down to a good healthy meal and a few drinks. The famous camaraderie developed on an AllTrails bike ride lasts a lifetime.

Bedtime is not far away, where you put your head down remembering the day and dreaming of tomorrow...

A typical day on the ride:

- Breakfast 7am, Depart 8am
- Ride 30-50km to morning tea around 9-10am, half hour stop, usually on the side of the road. Coffee/tea with home-made biscuits, slice, fresh fruits, served up, of course, with some entertaining banter and fun.
- Ride 30-50km to lunch around 12-1pm. Half hour to an hour, often in a bakery or cafe.
- Ride 30-50km to our overnight accommodation, usually arriving around 3pm. Check-in, make a cup of tea or have a drink by the pool, or a soak in the bath. Explore the town or visit the local attractions.
- Evening briefing at 6pm with lots of laughs and stories about today's ride and safety tips for tomorrow.
- Dinner at 6:30pm – usually at the motel restaurant.
- Free time and off to bed!

Location	Distance	Date	B	L	D	A
Katherine (rest day)	NA	Wed 29 May 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Katherine to Mathison Rest Area (overnight Katherine)	103km	Thu 30 May 2019	Y	Y	--	Y
Mathison Rest Area to Victoria River	92km	Fri 31 May 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Victoria River to Timber Creek	90km	Sat 1 Jun 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Timber Creek to Saddle Creek Bush Camp	118km	Sun 2 Jun 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Saddle Creek Bush Camp to Kununurra	111km	Mon 3 Jun 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kununurra (rest day)	NA	Tue 4 Jun 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Total distance cycled	514km		7	5	6	7
Average daily distance	103km					

Meal and accom inclusions noted as B, L, D, A (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Accommodation)

Katherine (rest day) — NA — Wed 29 May 2019 — B - D A

Day 8: Today is a rest day at the end of Stage One and the start of Stage Two so some cyclists may be coming and going today as they finish or begin their tour with us here. For those who want to check out Katherine Gorge we will be offering transfers to Nitmiluk National Park where you can canoe, cruise and swim between sheer cliffs to the sandy freshwater beaches of the main gorges, and view ancient Aboriginal rock paintings high on the rock faces. Waterfalls and rock pools are found along walking tracks and for those looking for some high-time excitement; you can also explore the area by helicopter (activities are at your own cost).

There is also plenty to see in town, visit the Katherine School of the Air, the Outback Heritage Museum or relax by the natural spring-fed crystal-clear pool of the Katherine Hot Springs set in picturesque surroundings with lush green lawns, shady paperbarks and pandanus palms. For those who just cannot stay off the bike visit Springvale Homestead, 8 kilometres south-west of Katherine and the oldest original homestead in the Territory, built in 1879 by Alfred Giles the former Overland Telegraph linesman.

This afternoon for new arrivals we will have a ride registration, check over your bike, meet and greet the group and have your pre-departure briefing. In the evening we invite you to join the staff and fellow riders for a welcome dinner. Both dinner and accommodation tonight are included in your tour price.

Katherine to Mathison Rest Area (overnight Katherine) — 103km — Thu 30 May 2019 — B L - A

Day 9: We are back on the bike after a great rest at Katherine and it's here that we leave the Stuart Highway which is southbound headed for Port Augusta and Adelaide, and take the Victoria Highway which will point us westward towards WA and Broome.

This section takes you into both dry and beautiful country with some nice undulations - as you get into your rhythm it won't be long before we reach Mathison Rest Area which in the past has been the first of our 'bush camps' on tour. This year however we have decided to transfer cyclists back to Katherine for another night of comfort before we head out into the remote expanses of western NT.

Mathison Rest Area to Victoria River — 92km — Fri 31 May 2019 — B L D A

Day 10: This morning we pack up our gear after breakfast and head back to Methison rest area and begin our riding along the Victoria Highway. Gentle to flat grades take you through open and arid Spinifex grasslands, until entering Gregory National Park within 40 kms of Victoria River Gorge, where there are some fantastic long to moderate downhill sections. The highlight of the day is the scenery of flat-top mountains and the colourful gorges nearing Victoria River, Northern Territory's largest River.

Victoria River Roadhouse is a friendly place with a stunning backdrop of the red Stokes Range. Early bookers will secure the roadhouse rooms here while later bookings will be campers for the night in the camping area with good facilities. We will all have dinner together.

Victoria River to Timber Creek — 90km — Sat 1 Jun 2019 — B L D A

Day 11: The superb and generally easy ride alongside the colourful Victoria River Gorge within Gregory National Park continues for another 8 km leading out into open country. It is mostly flat riding apart from a gentle 4 km climb at about the 58 km mark near Kuwang Lookout, which overlooks the plains to distant mountains.

Timber creek is a small outback town with huge boab trees lining the main street. There are some nice walks, a lookout, a museum at the old police station ruins and a river tour (at own expense). Keep an eye out for the rare and colourful Gouldian Finch as the area is home to 70 mating pairs. For those who consider themselves a tweeter there is even a bird hide on the Timber Creek Heritage Trail.

Timber Creek to Saddle Creek Bush Camp — 118km — Sun 2 Jun 2019 — B L D A

Day 12: It is a beautiful ride leaving Timber Creek alongside the Gregory River. Named after Augustus Charles Gregory who was the first European to see the magnificent country you will be riding through. Setting off on foot he completed the first trip across northern Australia from west to east, in the mid 1850s. He completed eight thousand kilometres overland, by the time he reached Moreton Bay, on the Pacific Coast amazingly without loss of life to his crew of six. Both the Boab tree (*Adansonia gregorii*), and the National Park here, are named in his honour.

Tonight everyone will sleep under the night sky looking out towards the Pinkerton range. With a nice fire, great company and facilities, even if they are a little basic, we are sure to have a great night.

Saddle Creek Bush Camp to Kununurra — 111km — Mon 3 Jun 2019 — B L D A

Day 13: The Boab trees that seem to have so much character in their squat, plump, almost human shapes, will have become a frequent roadside highlight. Over the last two days, you will have noticed some beautiful examples with many trees over 2000 years old! These trees were just as big and impressive when Gregory and his expedition team passed through this country over 150 years ago.

At around 69 kms we arrive at the WA/NT border and must leave behind all fruit, vegetables, farming equipment and cane toads that you may be carrying with you. Then it is a short walk across the line and we all become 1 ½ hours younger, adjustments should be made to your watches accordingly. Then it is a flat 40 km ride that crosses 'Golden Gate Bridge' to Kununurra where we rest up and enjoy the welcome change of a good size town with a nice hotel and plenty of things to do off the bike. Kununurra is a booming town on the eastern edge of the Kimberley. According to the Mirima Language Centre the name is based on the Miriwoong word "Goonoonoorrang", which simply means large river, and the vast majority of the attractions here involve water, lots of water. And water means life, amazing flora, abundant wildlife and excellent fishing.

Kununurra (rest day) — NA — Tue 4 Jun 2019 — B - D A

Day 14: Today is a rest day at the end of Stage Two and the start of Stage Three so we may have a few cyclists coming and going as they finish or begin their tour with us. Today cyclists can either take it easy and enjoy the day – have a look around town, visit a mango farm, take a swim in the Lake, tune your bike, relax – or take the opportunity to explore the Bungle Bungles.

Kununurra is about 300km north of Purnululu (Bungle Bungles) and is a base for scenic flights out to this spectacular hidden area of world-renowned rock formations. A number of tour companies offer trips and we will gather together our group and offer a couple of trips as an optional extra activity. There are a few highlights closer to town such as the Hidden Valley in Mirima National Park, which provides great views of the area and are similar, although much smaller, to the Bungle Bungle formations. If the landscape looks a little familiar, perhaps it is because the movie 'Australia' was filmed in the surrounding area.

For those leaving today – thanks for joining us on this wonderful outback adventure. To read more about Stage One and/or Stage Three [click here](#).

