



East Arnhem Land & the Wessel Islands

Discover East Arnhem Land and the Wessel Islands - a raw, rugged, ribbon like archipelago off the Northern Territory, so untouched and remote, it is very likely you will have this secluded reach of Australia all to yourself as you explore by water on our exclusive charter aboard the eclectic M/Y Wildcard. Fly into Gove, deep into Australia's backyard and into one of the country's greatest untouched wilderness areas. Your mind will boggle as you become family with your crew over the next 8 days and learn of kinship, life on the water and many stories of creation, personality and incredible untouched landscapes. Learn to take only what you need from the land and the sea in this culturally rich part of Australia with a fascinating indigenous history. Sail between virgin islands, hike on stunning sand bars and off-piste trails, kayak through cascading waterfalls that tumble straight into the ocean. Be absorbed in the wilderness.

Every meal is prepared by our onboard cook, who takes delight in exceeding your culinary expectations. Our mouth-watering meals are not complicated, but the quality of the food will have you feeling as

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though you were being served at a 5-star restaurant. They understand that you are not escaping the hustle and bustle of the real world to then encounter complicated food.

The vast tidal rivers, mangrove lined estuaries and rich coastal waters will show you a side to the Australian wilderness that you did not know existed. Your experience will move you beyond words. Primitive, uninhabited, crystal blue ocean explored in a unique style.

Day 1 - Arrival

Welcome to East Arnhem Land! You will begin your adventures by flying into Gove (flight not included). This flight will be a great introduction to your East Arnhem Land experience as you take in birds eye views of spectacular landscapes below. Upon arrival in Gove, you will be greeted and transferred to the colourful M/Y Wildcard where you will meet the crew before setting off on an afternoon cruise.

Lunch will be served on board as you cruise towards Cape Wilberforce, located at the top of Arnhem Land before running the gap between Wigram and Cotton Island. Weave between virgin islands spotted throughout the turquoise waters. Depending on the tides, there may be an opportunity to go for a walk along one of the remote beaches for sunset. If the tides are not in our favour, we will enjoy the sunset from our deck. (B,L,D)

7 nights M/Y Wildcard

Day 2 – East Arnhem Land

After breakfast, you will cruise past Sphinx Head, an impressive 120m high cliff showcasing how wild, rugged, yet beautiful, this landscape really is. Jump into the zodiac and cruise north whilst trying your hand at fishing in these abundant waters as you explore the cliff faces with a few surprises along the way. Explore hidden caves (tide dependent), tucked away waterfalls and tread on what feels like virgin beaches.

Return to Wildcard for lunch. This afternoon, you have some hiking options to choose from. We offer no end of incredible walking tracks ranging from easy to hard. You may wish to try your hand further at some blue water fishing or simply put your feet up on the bow and enjoy the view. (B,L,D)

Day 3 - Mystery Bay

This morning following breakfast, you will set off on a scenic voyage towards Mystery Bay through a scattering of islands and islets.

This is an experience of a lifetime. Venture into a gorgeous bay tucked away between three large islands. A long, pristine white sand beach will greet you, an almost secretive tidal lagoon will lure you. Cruise into the lagoon where you will be dropped off at the entrance to an underwater cave system. Swim through the caves and walk through caverns as you weave between ancient limestone gorges, millennia old indigenous art galleries and significant ceremonial places. You will emerge at the top and be greeted with a spectacular panoramic view over the entire island. Following on, you will

be lead across to a beautiful set of caves all influenced by a nearby freshwater spring. During the wet season, this is a spectacular waterfall. Admire the wild gallery, with timeless art etched into cave walls. Take a dip in the fresh spring water lagoon which also enters the mouth of the cave. It really feels like time has simply stopped here. Enjoy a mini wildlife experience where you can find yabbies, and fish you won't see anywhere else in the world. Before setting off, enjoy a delicious meal served on the beach.

Now we start entering the Wessel Islands. The Wessel Islands constituted the homelands of the Nango or Yan-nhaŋu people. The islands were mapped and named by a Dutch expedition that sailed from Banda Neira to explore the coasts of Papua New Guinea and the South Land following up on discoveries made in 1623 by Jan Carstensz and Willem van Colster (who named Arnhem Land after his ship Arnhem). The islands were named after one of the two small vessels used on discovery voyages of the coastline, the Wesel. Learn from your crew about the fascinating history of the area you will spend the next few days exploring. (B,L,D)

Day 4 - Cray Bay

This morning following breakfast, steam along following the cliff line. This will be a spectacular cruise with the sun burning onto the rusty red cliffs. We edge closer towards the tropical tidal rivers which are only accessible to non-indigenous people carrying appropriate entry permits. Here is where our next adventure begins. Spend time fishing, beach walking and try your hand at spear fishing. Hunting for crayfish is also on the agenda. We take only what we need and the rest is released back into the wilderness. (B,L,D)

Day 5 – Picture Bay

Today, cruise to Picture Bay. Explore on foot as you follow a locally etched island track to reach a secret and private lagoon. Witness a picturesque waterfall flowing into the bay. The surrounding escarpment is influenced by rainforest – the backdrop is unexpected, yet spectacular. Follow the edge trail along the side of the cliffs leading to another waterfall and freshwater lagoon, where you can take a refreshing dip. Please note to reach the swimming hole, it is steep in parts and a high level of fitness is required. Spend the afternoon relaxing on board Wildcard, cruising through the beautiful sapphire waters. (B,L,D)

Day 6 – Finger Falls

Enjoy breakfast on board before heading to the unique Finger Falls, which tumbles directly into the ocean. Follow a steep track to the top of the falls where you will be surprised with a scattering of natural infinity pools. For those feeling like a buzz, you may sit in the pools as the water rushes over you and falls into the ocean below. Continue across Cumberland Strait, a tidal split between two islands, and over to Hopeful Bay which opens out into the Arafura Sea, part of the Indian Ocean. Visit Australia Bay and learn about the significant historical moment which took place here. This is the location where Matthew Flinders first referred to the indigenous people as Australian. Here, there is also a traditional indigenous stone fish trap. The horseshoe-shaped stone walls were built in the tidal zones to trap fish as water receded allowing easy access to the next meal. The traps traditionally caught fish, dugong, turtle, stingray, shellfish and mud crabs. (B,L,D)

Day 7 – Raragala Island

Weave around Raragala Island, home to the highest point in the Wessel Islands at 130m above sea level. Dock offshore as you stop off at Raragala Island for an early morning stroll among the dunes just back from the untouched beach. Witness an array of seabirds squabbling among the hindered bush scrub. Back on board, breathe in as you squeeze through the Gulgari Rip, also known as 'Hole in the Wall'. Gape at the narrowness of the passage, the birdlife and the large white paint graffiti on the rock walls which has been left by previous ships. Our resident crocodile lives in these waters, and if he's feeling social, he may put on a show to allow our guests an incredible close up look. This wild prehistoric creature is truly something beautiful to witness.

The sky this evening will be unlike anything you have ever seen. A true blanket of stars, more vivid than anywhere else you may have been. Take the time to star gaze and reflect upon the incredible journey you have just experienced. (B,L,D)

Day 8 - Departure

This morning following your last breakfast onboard, farewell your incredible crew as you head back to Gove. On arrival, you will be met and transferred to visit the world famous Buku Larrnggay Mulka, located in the Yirrkala community, which is one of the oldest and most respected Aboriginal Art centres in Australia. Enjoy exploring the interpretation of the historical Aboriginal Land Rights Bark Petitions and Church panels. There is also the opportunity to purchase some local works unique to this particular region for those who are keen to take home some keepsakes.

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. (B,L)

End of Services

An itinerary may at times be altered by our guides due to local conditions, the skill of participants and other unexpected circumstances such as homelands families moving around and weather. Our priority is always the experience and safety of our clients.

Our Services Include:

- Return Airport transfers
- 7 nights accommodation aboard M/Y Wildcard
- Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily
- Beer, wine & soft drinks
- Transportation in a private vehicle
- On board chef
- Local tour leader and full onboard crew
- Activities as per the itinerary

- Permits and fees for entering the homelands
- Fishing equipment

Our Services Exclude:

- Visas
- International and domestic airfares
- Travel and medical insurance
- All services, meals other than those indicated above
- Any changes to the proposed and confirmed program.
- All items of a personal nature e.g. laundry, telephone calls, tips etc.

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