

# West MacDonnell National Park



Fact Sheet

This vast and spectacular section of the MacDonnell Ranges is an outstanding example of an ancient landscape sculptured over time by climatic elements. The West MacDonnell National Park stretches for 161kms west of Alice Springs. Cool scenic gorges are important refuges for plants and animals, many of which are found only here and some are relicts of a bygone era of tropical forests. There are many opportunities for visitors to explore and appreciate the scenic beauty and history of the area. Features of the landscape are significant in the stories of Arrernte Aboriginal culture, and have existed for many thousands of years.

## Access

From Alice Springs vehicle access to the Park is via Larapinta Drive and Namatjira Drive. From Watarrka National Park (Kings Canyon) the unsealed Mereenie Loop Road (4WD recommended) connects with the West MacDonnell National Park. Simpsons Gap is also accessible via a 17 km sealed bicycle track which starts opposite Flynn's Grave, 7 km from Alice Springs along Larapinta Drive.

## When to visit

The Park is accessible all year round. The cooler months (April to September) are the most pleasant. All roads can be impassible for short periods after heavy rain.

## What to do



**Camping** - Ellery Creek Big-hole and Redbank Gorge provide basic facilities. Serpentine Chalet and 2-Mile (4WD only) provide camping sites with no facilities. Ormiston Gorge provides camping facilities including showers and flush toilets. Camping fees apply and are payable at each camping area. Fireplaces are provided at some sites, however most sites offer free gas BBQs to replace open fireplaces (refer to map). At Serpentine Gorge all fires are prohibited in this special zone. Commercial facilities are available at Glen Helen Resort, including caravan sites and motel accommodation.



**Swimming** - The Park has a number of permanent water holes ideal for swimming during summer. The larger water holes include Ellery Creek Big-hole, Ormiston Gorge, Redbank Gorge and Glen Helen Gorge. Swimmers should be aware that most swimming holes are extremely cold. Prolonged exposure, even during summer, can result in hypothermia. Beware of submerged logs and rocks. Do not jump or dive into the water.



**Walking** - A good way to experience the spectacular views in this Park is by walking. There are numerous marked tracks ranging from leisurely to adventurous.

## Safety and Comfort

- Observe park safety signs.
- Carry and drink plenty of water.
- Wear a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, suitable clothing and footwear.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the heat of the day.
- Consider your health and fitness when choosing a walk.
- Swim only where recommended.

## Please Remember

- Keep to designated roads and tracks.
- All historic, cultural items and wildlife are protected.
- Use the gas barbecues provided and fuel stoves where possible.
- Put your rubbish in the bins provided or take it with you.
- Pets are not permitted in this park.

Information about the natural and cultural environment of the NT is available at each site.



Sections of the Larapinta Trail stretch through the Park and offer extended and overnight bushwalks.

*Walkers planning extended and overnight walks are strongly advised to register with the Walker Registration Scheme (Phone: 1300 650 730).*

*Mount Sonder is a landmark and icon for the West MacDonnell Ranges*



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