

Section 7 Information for visitors

In this section

There are a variety of things to see and do in Nitmiluk National Park. People can find out about them before they arrive by contacting Parks & Wildlife on 8972 1886 or checking our website: <http://www.nt.gov.au>.

Alternatively, the Katherine Visitor Centre can provide information about the variety of things to see and do at Nitmiluk and in the Katherine Region and make bookings for visitors, telephone 8972 2650.

Once in the Park, visitors can get information at the Nitmiluk Centre or read Fact and Information Sheets. There are also directional, management, safety and interpretive signs throughout the Park.

As visitors like to ask tour guides and visitor centre staff for information, it is important that you are familiar with what there is to see and do in Nitmiluk.

This section describes Nitmiluk National Park's two visitor areas:

- Leliyn (Edith Falls)
- Katherine Gorge

Leliyn (Edith Falls)

Access to the Leliyn is via the Stuart Highway, 45 km north of Katherine. Leliyn is 20 km in from the Highway.

The sealed road to Leliyn may be impassable due to flooding at times during the wet season.

Contact the Katherine Visitor Centre for information about shuttle services between Katherine and Leliyn.

Camping area

Grassed sites, laundry, hot showers and flushing toilets are available at the campground. There are no powered sites and generators not permitted. Camping fees apply.

Picnic area

Picnic facilities at Leliyn include free gas barbecues and tables in a grassy picnic ground.

Kiosk

A concessionaire operates a small kiosk near the picnic area. This is where campers pay their fees before entering the campground. Walkers finishing the Jatbula Trail de-register and collect their deposit at the Leliyn kiosk.

What Nitmiluk tour guides need to know

This section is provided for information only.

While it is expected that Nitmiluk tour guides know enough about the Park to provide visitors with appropriate advice, they are not assessed on this information.

Visitor information contacts

PWSNT
Phone: (08) 8972 1886
website: <http://www.nt.gov.au>

Katherine Visitor Centre
(08) 8972 2650

Swimming

Leliyn is popular for swimming because of its excellent facilities and large pool that is easily accessed by people of all levels of fitness. Upper rock pools are accessed via a steep walk.

For the safety of swimmers, only non-motorised craft of soft material (inflatable plastic or rubber) are permitted in the pools at Leliyn.

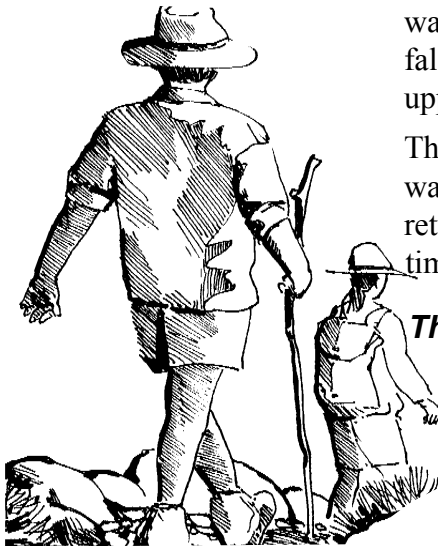
The upper pools are closed to swimming when they are considered unsafe due to currents. This may be for the duration of the wet season.

The lower pool may be closed to swimming at times during the wet season when high water levels cause currents that are unsafe for swimmers.

Walks

There are two moderate grade walks at Leliyn that reward walkers with magnificent views of Leliyn and the upper falls, an experience of the stone country and access to upper pools.

These walks may be closed during the wet season when water crossings become unsafe, although the 1.6 km return walk to the Leliyn Lookout remains open at these times.



The Leliyn Trail

A 2.6 km loop walk to the Upper Falls and Bemang Lookout on the plateau above Leliyn. Allow about one hour. It involves a steep walk up a hill followed by a walk down to the pool and back up the other side before a final descent.

There are two walks at Leliyn.

Edith to Sweetwater Pool Walk

An 8.6 km return walk to Sweetwater Pool and back. The walk includes a steep climb at the start, but is otherwise gently undulating. With less people opting for a longer walk, Sweetwater Pool is ideal for enjoying a quiet swim. Allow four hours to enjoy the walk.

Tours

Bush tucker walks are operated by members of the Jawoyn Association from time to time during the dry season. They provide opportunity for visitors to learn about plants and animals in the Leliyn area from a Jawoyn perspective. Bookings can be made directly with Ryan Baruwei or through the Jawoyn Association.

Bush tucker walk bookings

Jawoyn Association
(08) 8971 1100

Fishing

For the safety of swimmers, fishing is not permitted at the Leliyn plunge pool.

Katherine Gorge

Katherine Gorge is located about 30 km northeast of Katherine along the Gorge Road. It is accessed by turning onto Giles Street from the Stuart Highway in Katherine. There are regular bus services from Katherine to the Gorge during the dry season and services on demand during the wet season. Contact the Katherine Visitor Centre or Nitmiluk Tours for information and bookings.

Although the Gorge Road is sealed, the Gorge may be inaccessible at times during the wet season when Maud Creek floods. PWSNT run a ferry service across the creek for Nitmiluk residents when it is safe to do so.

The Katherine River in the Park is closed to swimming and canoeing when strong currents make them unsafe during the wet season. There is also an increased potential for Estuarine (Saltwater) Crocodiles to enter the Park undetected at this time.

Nitmiluk Centre

Visitors can get the information that they need to enjoy the Park and purchase tour tickets, food and drinks at the Nitmiluk Centre.

The Centre has a:

- kiosk / restaurant with tables both in the air conditioning and outside overlooking the Katherine River
- souvenir shop
- tour booking desk
- Park visitor information desk
- visitor display
- outdoor children's activity area.

The Jawoyn Association and the Northern Territory Government jointly built the Centre which is owned by the Jawoyn Association. Parks and Wildlife lease the display area and Nitmiluk Tours leases other parts of the Centre.

Camping areas

Commercial camping with full amenities – powered sites, laundry, hot showers and flushing toilets – is available at the Gorge. Camping fees apply.

The free Gurriluk Education Campground is available for use by schools, youth groups and other community organisations. Facilities include pit toilets, shower blocks, picnic tables, gas and wood barbecues and a picnic shelter. Bookings are essential, telephone (08) 8972 1886.

Bus and tour bookings

Katherine Visitor Centre
(08) 8972 2650

Nitmiluk Tours
(08) 8972 3150

Picnic area

Picnic facilities available in the grassed area at the Gorge include picnic tables and free gas barbecues.

Swimming

During the dry season, visitors may swim from the swim jetty in the first gorge and further along the gorge system. For safety, swimming is prohibited in the boat tour launch area, as shown on the map.



The river is generally closed to swimming throughout the wet season due to unsafe currents and increased potential for Estuarine (Saltwater) Crocodiles to swim upstream into the Park undetected. This closure is advertised in the Katherine Times and sign-posted along the road near the Ranger Station, at the PWSNT information desk (Nitmiluk Centre), swim jetty, boat ramp and gate to boat ramp.

The Southern Rockhole and Northern Rockhole, respectively located south and north off the main river channel, are considered safe for swimming most of the year. However, they may be closed under flood conditions and due to poor water quality late in the dry season.

Walks

Walkers in the Park are rewarded with spectacular views from lookouts, Aboriginal art sites and opportunities for swimming in the main gorge and side-gorges.

Day walks vary from one hour to a full day. Overnight walks can be up to five or six days. A permit is required from Parks and Wildlife for the overnight walks and can be obtained from the information desk at the Nitmiluk Centre from 7:00 am on the day of departure only.

Camping is permitted only at designated campsites. Some campsites have fire pits and / or pit toilets. Walkers should carry fuel stoves as fires are not permitted outside of the fire pits.

Overnight walks

Overnight walkers are required to register their intentions and pay a deposit. This is so that Parks and Wildlife know who is out there and if/when they should send out a search party. The deposit will be refunded when the walkers register their return at the Nitmiluk Centre or arrival at Leliyn (Edith Falls) kiosk.

Emergency Call Devices (ECDs) are part of an emergency radio system within the Park. They are for emergency use by walkers in remote sections of the Park. Locations of ECDs along the Jatbula Trail and Southern Walks are shown on the information sheets for these walks.

Although PWSNT does not encourage solo walkers or non-emergency ECD use, if someone is doing an overnight walk on their own they are asked to use the ECDs to check in at the end of each day.

Southern Walks

The Southern Walks is a 35 km network of walking tracks on the southern side of the Gorge. They traverse the sandstone plateau and meet the Gorge at six locations.

The Nitmiluk National Park brochure and Southern Walks Information Sheet contain detailed information about these walks.

Further information

PWSNT information desk, Nitmiluk Centre

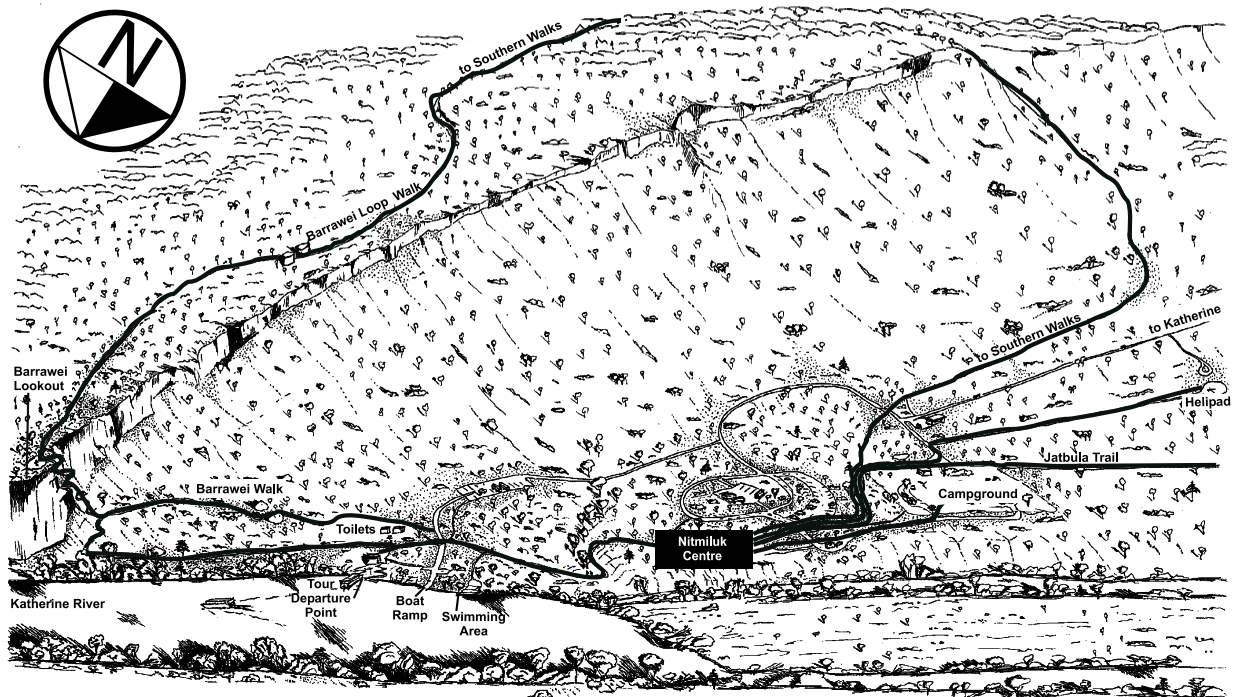
Nitmiluk National Park brochure, Maps NT

PWSNT Fact Sheets:

- Nitmiluk National Park
- Nitmiluk National Park Leliyn (Edith Falls)

PWSNT Information Sheets:

- Walking in the Park
- Southern Walks
- Jatbula Trail



The Southern Walks are located on the southern side of the Katherine River, beginning in the Nitmiluk Intensive Use Area west of the Nitmiluk Centre.

Walk	Distance	Return time	Grade
Nitmiluk Centre to Baruwei Lookout	900 m	20 min	medium
Baruwei Lookout Loop Walk	3.7 km	2 h	medium
Windolf Walk	8.4 km	3.5 h	medium
Butterfly Gorge	12 km	4.5 h	hard
Lily Ponds	19.8 km	6.5 h	difficult
Smitt Rock	23.6 km	8.5 h	difficult
Eighth Gorge	33.2 km	2 days	difficult
Jawoyn Valley	39 km	2-3 days	difficult

Jatbula Trail

The 66 km Jatbula Trail is a one-way trail that begins at the Gorge and ends at Leliyn. It follows the edge of the Arnhem Land Escarpment and traverses Sandstone Plateau Scrub, Woodlands, Open Forest, Sandstone Monsoon Forest and Riverine landscapes.

Allow at least three days to walk the Jatbula Trail, five days to enjoy it. Designated campsites along the trail have basic toilet and campfire facilities.

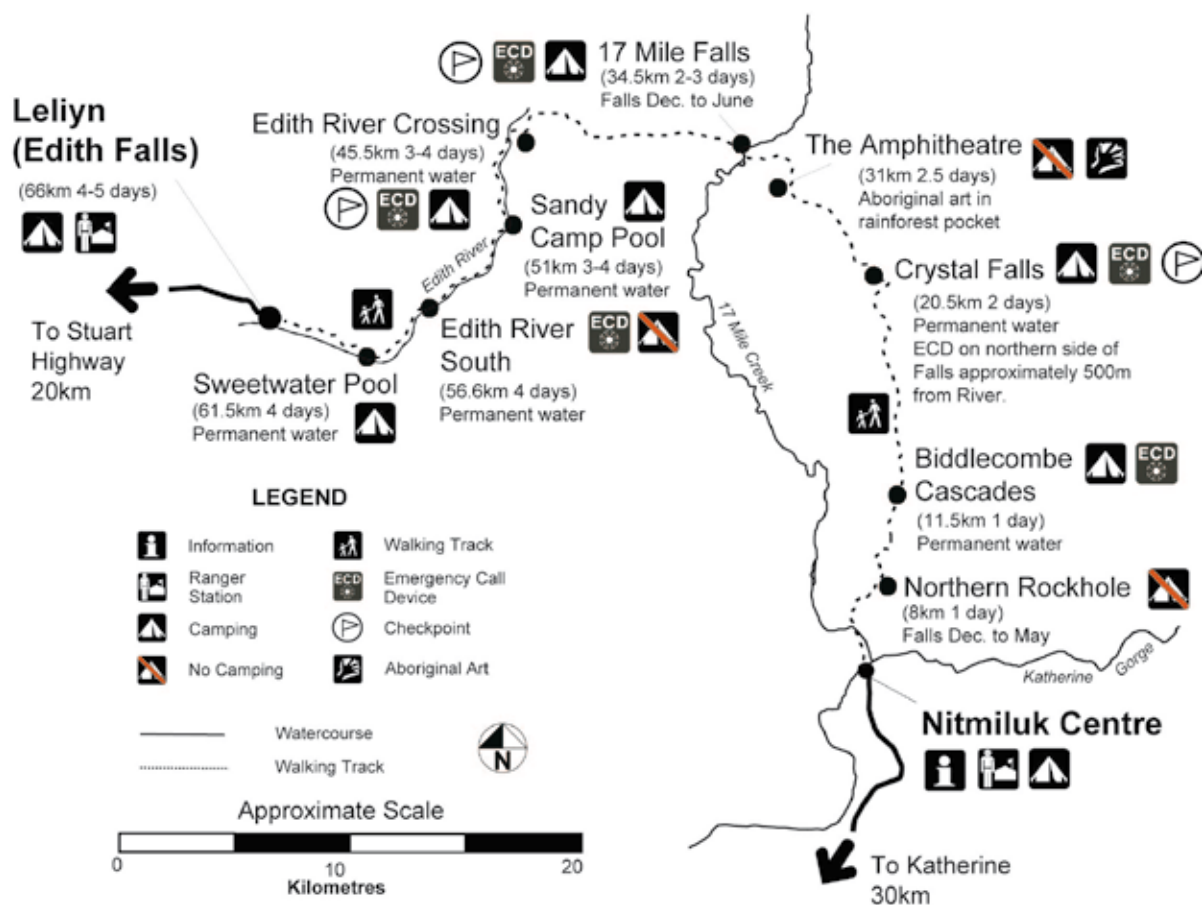
Walkers must register at the Parks and Wildlife information desk in the Nitmiluk Centre and should purchase a copy of the Nitmiluk National Park brochure which describes the walk in detail. The PWSNT Jatbula Trail Information Sheet provides information to help visitors plan and prepare for the walk. Contact Katherine Visitor Centre or Nitmiluk Tours to arrange transport from Leliyn to Katherine.

During the wet season and build up, people may walk the 20.5 km to from the Nitmiluk Centre to Crystal Falls, camp overnight and return.

Bus and tour bookings

Katherine Visitor Centre
(08) 8972 2650
Nitmiluk Tours
(08) 8972 3150

Jatbula Trail



Canoeing

About ten percent of all visitors to the Park go canoeing. Most canoeists enjoy the first three gorges but more are venturing to the upper reaches of the Gorge system to camp overnight in beautiful surrounds away from the crowds.

10 private canoes can be on the water at any one time and five private canoes can camp. A concession operator has a permit for 60 canoes. They can be hired for:

- an hour
- half a day
- a full day
- overnight.

Visitors may purchase a permit from Parks and Wildlife and use their own canoes in the Park. Annual permits are available.

Ranger staff monitor river levels during the wet season and close the river to canoeing when it is deemed unsafe.

Further information about canoeing

PWSNT information desk, Nitmiluk Centre

PWSNT Information Sheets:

- Canoeing
- Canoeing Guide

While canoeing

Canoeists are asked to:

- keep to the right hand side
- give way to tour boats
- keep clear of tour boat mooring points
- keep away from river banks with crocodile nesting signs.

Canoe camping

Permits are required for canoe camping. Fees apply.

Camping is permitted only at designated sites in the 5th, 6th and 9th Gorges. Toilets are located in the 1st, 4th, 5th and 6th Gorges.

Fires

Open fires are prohibited in the Gorge system and canoeists must use fuel stoves.

Safety

Canoeists should be aware that the gorges are separated by rock bars and rapids. They will need to carry their canoe around the edge of them over slippery rocks. Canoeists should not attempt to ride the rapids.

Staff should advise canoeists how to avoid dehydration, protect themselves from the sun and insects and to wear suitable footwear for their needs when carrying their canoes over the slippery, uneven rock bars.



Canoeists should be advised of safety issues.

Tours

Guided tours, launch tours (river cruises) and flights, operate in Nitmiluk National Park. They are operated by concessionaires with permits under By-Law 13 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

Launch (boat) tours

Launch tours enable large numbers of visitors to experience the Park's major attraction, the Gorge, in relative comfort and safety. Almost 40% of visitors to the Park go on a launch tour. There are three launch tours:

- two hour cruises to the end of the second gorge
- a half-day tour that includes the third gorge
- a full-day tour that goes to the top of the fifth gorge.

Power boat tours

Power boat tours are conducted during high river levels in the wet season when regular tour vessels cannot operate.

Power boat tours commence when the river level exceeds 1.91 metres on the markers at the Gorge boat ramp.

Helicopter flights

Scenic helicopter and plane flights are another way for visitors to see the Gorge.

A helipad just off the main access road is used by a concession operator. Other flight operators visit the Park from outside but may not land on the Park without special permission from the Nitmiluk Board.

The current concessionaire (Sky Safari) offers scenic flights and heli tours for up to three passengers at a time (minimum of two).

Scenic flights:

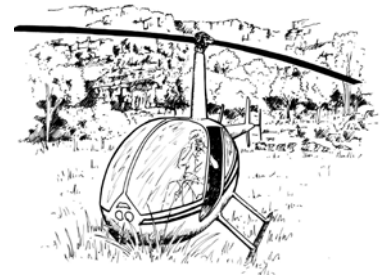
- 3 gorge scenic flight (about 10 minutes)
- 8 gorge scenic flight (about 15 minutes)
- 13 gorge scenic flight (about 15 minutes, with the option of landing for 10 minutes at the 10th gorge for an additional fee).

Heli tours:

- 1.5 hour adventure-swim tour (13 gorges, 1 hour swim)
- 1.5 hour rock art tour (13 gorges, 1 hour art site)
- 2.5 hour Nitmiluk Ultimate tour (13 gorges, swim, art site and light lunch).



There are three launch (boat) tours operating in Nitmiluk National Park.



Three scenic flights and three heli tours operate from the Park.

Further reading

Nitmiluk National Park Plan of Management, October 2002.

Nitmiluk National Park brochure, Maps NT.

Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) National Park Act.

Territory Parks & Wildlife Act.

Fisheries Act and Regulations.

PWSNT Nitmiluk National Park Fact Sheet, 2002.

PWSNT Southern Walk and Jatbula Trail Information Sheets.

PWSNT Canoeing Information Sheets.

Commercial brochures for each concession operation.

Fishing

Recreational fishing is permitted in Park, but not at Leliyn (Edith Falls). Fishing is subject to the *Fisheries Act and Regulations* and relevant sections of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, which includes:

- lures only, the use of bait in the Park is not permitted
- the minimum legal size for Barramundi is 55 cm
- there is a daily bag limit of five fish and you may have a maximum of five fish in your possession at any time
- the possession or use of any type of net (other than landing nets), trap or spear gun within the Park is an offence.

Traditional owners and custodians are allowed to fish on their own lands, including areas where the general public are not allowed to fish.



Fishing is permitted subject to *Fisheries Act and Regulations*.