

The Kimberley

AN EXPEDITION CRUISE GUIDE

1ST EDITION





Introducing the Kimberley

Australia's iconic Kimberley is a region often overlooked by UK travellers, but make the journey and you'll be rewarded with dramatic waterfalls, ancient Aboriginal culture and wildlife-rich landscapes. Here huge tidal surges cause coral reefs to immerse from the waters, creating a rich feeding ground for a whole variety of seabirds as marine life is caught in the newly and regularly created shallows. Rich hues of red, oranges, and browns permeate across the landscape and huge gorges are explored where the barren outback meets the water's edge.

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A detailed topographic map of a coastal region, likely in Australia, showing contour lines, elevation, and geographical features. The map is rendered in a light blue and grey color scheme, providing a textured background for the text.

Mundy Adventures

For over 55 years we've been crafting exceptional experiences for guest looking to explore the world.

Our passion for the extraordinary and remote led us to introduce Mundy Adventures back in 2012, the intrepid little brother to our Mundy Cruising brand, offering travellers the chance to journey further afield, away from the touristified regions, and into truly remote, unexplored or wilderness areas, on board a small ship, specifically adapted for this kind of travel.

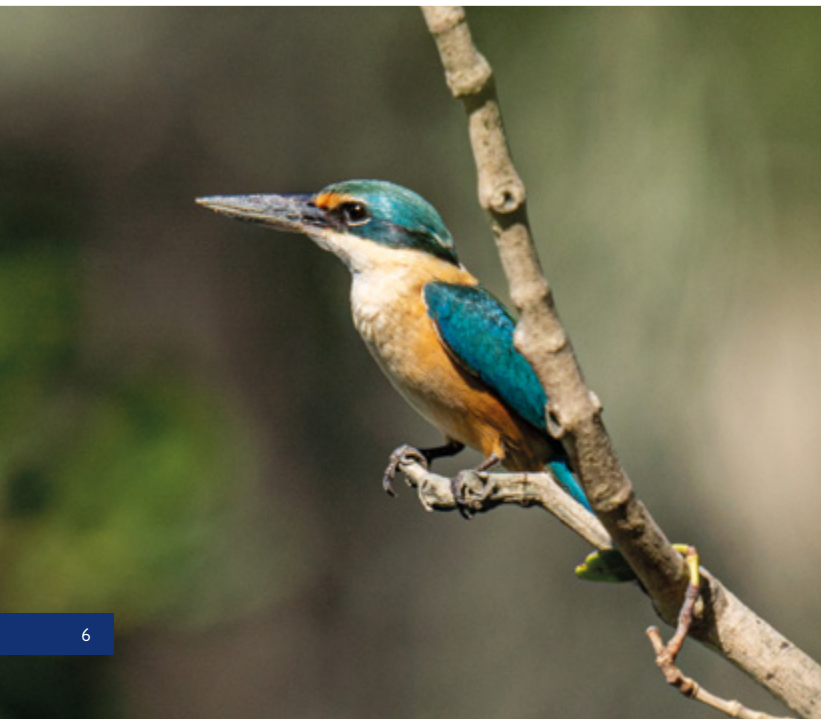
As some of the most breathtaking places on Earth can only be reached by water, we have spent the past few years painstakingly putting together a superb portfolio of products that we trust, to open up the path less travelled to those who prefer it to the road well-trodden. With decades of experience crafting exceptional holidays for discerning travellers, we ensure that once-in-a-lifetime adventures truly deliver the extraordinary.

We don't operate our own expedition ships – we leave that to the experts in each of the areas we visit. What we do is use our first-hand experience of visiting regions such the Arctic and sailing on board the various expedition vessels to help you identify the right expedition cruise line and ship for you, offering the best advice on the subtle yet important differences between the numerous operators. We help guide you through the various room types and their advantages, take care of the logistics of getting to the ship, and enhance your trip by adding on land programmes before and after your expedition.

An expedition, by its very nature, takes place in a remote location. You need to know how best to get there, what flight connections are most suitable, which airline offers the best upgrade costs, when a connection time is feasible, and when it is just risky. We can even talk through what you'll need to pack. Once we have created, in partnership with you, the perfect hand-made holiday to exactly your specifications, you enjoy the protection that comes with our membership of ABTA and our ATOL licence, to give you peace of mind should any unforeseen issues arise.

This brochure is designed to introduce you to expedition cruising in Australia's remote and dramatic Kimberley region, to whet your appetite with information about some of the wonderful experiences that await, to answer some of the questions you may have, and to give an overview of our preferred partners operating in the area. But nothing is as good as a conversation, so why not call us on 020 7399 7630, or even come in and visit our comfortable office in Central London, to start planning one of the most exciting trips of your life.





What You'll See

The Kimberley is an ancient land of thunderous waterfalls tumbling over towering cliffs, where Aboriginal communities date back more than 50,000 years. Here, rivers have moulded the landscape over eons, and the luminous quality of the immensely rich terrain brings the Dreamtime mythology of the Wunambal Gaambera people – and their Wanjina and Wunggurr ancestors – to life as you travel through the region, discovering a fascinating culture, spectacular scenery, and amazing wildlife.

Scenery

The scale of the Kimberley is truly something else. Over millennia, rivers and streams have carved deep gorges, and travelling through these narrow channels beneath towering rock faces is an incredible experience. The colours of the red and orange sandstone shift throughout the day, lending an almost magical quality to the scenery. A journey up the King George River is a highlight, and it is nothing short of breathtaking. The 80-metre-high sides of the gorge display colours and textures that change with the light as you move further up the river, creating a continually evolving landscape that is simply stunning. The journey culminates at the King George twin falls, which, at 80 metres, are the highest single-drop waterfalls in the whole of the Kimberley. Fed by wet season run-off, the volume of water cascading over the falls varies from year to year.

The Hunter River region is another scenic highlight, where mangrove-lined rivers are framed by iconic red sandstone cliffs teeming with life. A stop at the spectacular Mitchell Falls is a must, where waters cascade from one shimmering emerald pool to the next.

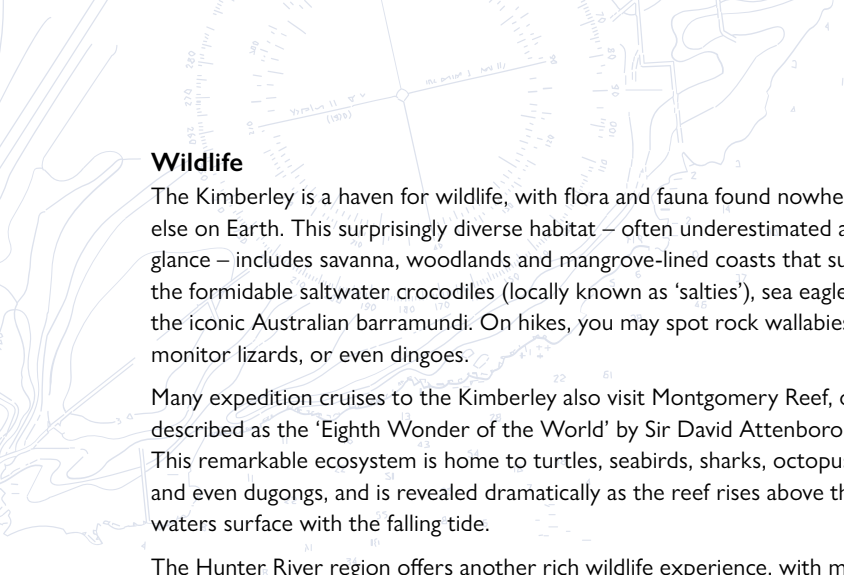
You may also witness one of the world's most unusual natural wonders – the 'Horizontal Falls' at Talbot Bay. This remarkable phenomenon occurs when tidal movements force water through narrow gaps in the ridges on either side of Poulton Creek. As the water builds up faster on one side than it can flow through, it creates a dramatic waterfall effect.

The area is also home to the Bungle Bungles, a stunning range of beehive-shaped towers that stretch across the vast wilderness and can be explored on optional excursions with selected operators.

Culture

There is an inseparable connection between the culture and landscape of the Kimberley. Aboriginal history in the region dates back more than 50,000 years, evidenced by the expressive rock art that can still be seen today. This art varies across the region – from the Wandjina paintings, which depict the ancient spirits at the heart of Dreamtime Creation (thought to be around 3,000 to 4,000 years old), to the much older Gwion Gwion, or Bradshaw art, believed to date back as far as 30,000 years.

Visiting Vansittart Bay – near the northern tip of Western Australia – offers the chance to view fascinating examples of indigenous art, including the world's oldest known detailed depictions of human figures for a deeper insight into the region's First Nations heritage, as well as its more recent history. One such example is the remarkably well-preserved wreckage of a C-53 aircraft that crash-landed here during the Second World War. You'll hear tales of early sailors navigating and mapping the complex coastline, careening their vessels in sheltered sandy bays while in Broome, the gateway to the region, discover its rich past as the epicentre of the 1800s 'pearl rush' – a time that brought together a diverse mix of cultures, including Japanese, Filipino, and Malay influences.



Wildlife

The Kimberley is a haven for wildlife, with flora and fauna found nowhere else on Earth. This surprisingly diverse habitat – often underestimated at first glance – includes savanna, woodlands and mangrove-lined coasts that support the formidable saltwater crocodiles (locally known as ‘salties’), sea eagles, and the iconic Australian barramundi. On hikes, you may spot rock wallabies, monitor lizards, or even dingoes.

Many expedition cruises to the Kimberley also visit Montgomery Reef, once described as the ‘Eighth Wonder of the World’ by Sir David Attenborough. This remarkable ecosystem is home to turtles, seabirds, sharks, octopuses, and even dugongs, and is revealed dramatically as the reef rises above the waters surface with the falling tide.

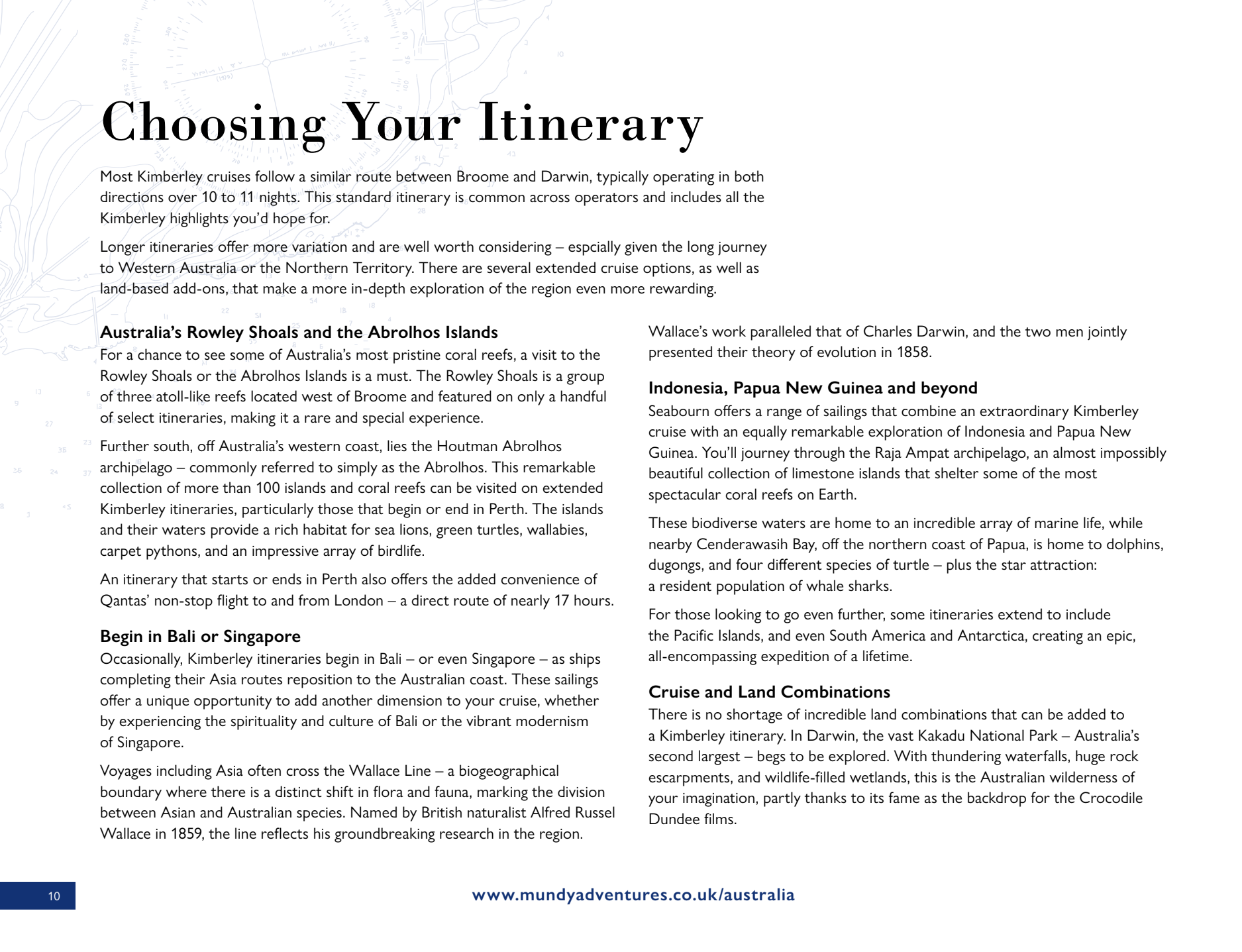
The Hunter River region offers another rich wildlife experience, with mangrove-fringed channels framed by towering red sandstone cliffs. The area teems with mudskippers, fiddler crabs, saltwater crocodiles, and a myriad of bird species.

Bird enthusiasts will also appreciate the Lacepede Islands, located just off the Kimberley coast. These remote islands support over 1% of the world’s population of brown boobies and have recorded up to 20,000 roseate terns. Other bird species found here include masked boobies, Australian pelicans, lesser frigatebirds, eastern reef egrets, silver gulls, and several tern species such as crested, bridled, and lesser crested terns, as well as common noddies, and both pied and sooty oystercatchers. The islands are also an important breeding site for green turtles.

Thanks to the region’s remoteness, the Kimberley’s ecosystems remain some of the most pristine in Australia. With around 65 species of endemic wildlife found nowhere else in the world, it offers a truly exceptional and unforgettable experience for nature lovers.







Choosing Your Itinerary

Most Kimberley cruises follow a similar route between Broome and Darwin, typically operating in both directions over 10 to 11 nights. This standard itinerary is common across operators and includes all the Kimberley highlights you'd hope for.

Longer itineraries offer more variation and are well worth considering – especially given the long journey to Western Australia or the Northern Territory. There are several extended cruise options, as well as land-based add-ons, that make a more in-depth exploration of the region even more rewarding.

Australia's Rowley Shoals and the Abrolhos Islands

For a chance to see some of Australia's most pristine coral reefs, a visit to the Rowley Shoals or the Abrolhos Islands is a must. The Rowley Shoals is a group of three atoll-like reefs located west of Broome and featured on only a handful of select itineraries, making it a rare and special experience.

Further south, off Australia's western coast, lies the Houtman Abrolhos archipelago – commonly referred to simply as the Abrolhos. This remarkable collection of more than 100 islands and coral reefs can be visited on extended Kimberley itineraries, particularly those that begin or end in Perth. The islands and their waters provide a rich habitat for sea lions, green turtles, wallabies, carpet pythons, and an impressive array of birdlife.

An itinerary that starts or ends in Perth also offers the added convenience of Qantas' non-stop flight to and from London – a direct route of nearly 17 hours.

Begin in Bali or Singapore

Occasionally, Kimberley itineraries begin in Bali – or even Singapore – as ships completing their Asia routes reposition to the Australian coast. These sailings offer a unique opportunity to add another dimension to your cruise, whether by experiencing the spirituality and culture of Bali or the vibrant modernism of Singapore.

Voyages including Asia often cross the Wallace Line – a biogeographical boundary where there is a distinct shift in flora and fauna, marking the division between Asian and Australian species. Named by British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace in 1859, the line reflects his groundbreaking research in the region.

Wallace's work paralleled that of Charles Darwin, and the two men jointly presented their theory of evolution in 1858.

Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and beyond

Seabourn offers a range of sailings that combine an extraordinary Kimberley cruise with an equally remarkable exploration of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. You'll journey through the Raja Ampat archipelago, an almost impossibly beautiful collection of limestone islands that shelter some of the most spectacular coral reefs on Earth.

These biodiverse waters are home to an incredible array of marine life, while nearby Cenderawasih Bay, off the northern coast of Papua, is home to dolphins, dugongs, and four different species of turtle – plus the star attraction: a resident population of whale sharks.

For those looking to go even further, some itineraries extend to include the Pacific Islands, and even South America and Antarctica, creating an epic, all-encompassing expedition of a lifetime.

Cruise and Land Combinations

There is no shortage of incredible land combinations that can be added to a Kimberley itinerary. In Darwin, the vast Kakadu National Park – Australia's second largest – begs to be explored. With thundering waterfalls, huge rock escarpments, and wildlife-filled wetlands, this is the Australian wilderness of your imagination, partly thanks to its fame as the backdrop for the Crocodile Dundee films.

For an outback experience like no other, why not travel through the heart of the country's Red Centre on The Ghan, a passenger train that travels from coast to coast between Adelaide and Darwin? The journey takes two nights and three days and can be broken up into two separate trips to offer time to discover Uluru from the midpoint at Alice Springs.

Sydney and Melbourne are well connected with regular flights from Darwin and Broome. Both cities can easily entertain for three or four days, if not longer – though it's worth bearing in mind you'll be travelling during the cooler winter months. Sydney is one of our favourite cities in the world. Known for its excellent beaches, it offers so much more, including a thriving and varied food scene inspired by Asian and European flavours. Walk through the Royal Botanic Gardens and admire the amazing views of the Harbour Bridge and Opera House from Mrs Macquarie's Chair. Enjoy the cafés and bars in The Rocks district, or perhaps even walk across the top of the Harbour Bridge – or enjoy the view from below on a harbour cruise.

Melbourne is culturally sophisticated and fashionably hip, combining edgy street art with gold rush-era architecture, while offering excellent restaurants and top museums.

020 7399 7630







When to Visit

The Kimberley has just two seasons – wet and dry – with cruises operating during the cooler dry season from May to September to avoid the intense heat and heavy rainfall. Despite this simple division, Aboriginal communities recognise six distinct seasons throughout the year:

December to March (Mankala)

The main wet season, when up to 90% of the region's rain falls. This period transforms and replenishes the land, feeding waterfalls. As the water recedes, desert grasses come to life, providing vital habitats and food for wildlife.

April (Marul)

The wet season can extend into April, but this is usually when the rains begin to stop and the region starts to open up.

May (Wirralburu)

May marks the beginning of the cruise season and the first month when humidity drops to more comfortable levels. Drying winds come from inland, and daytime temperatures fall from 30–35°C to a more pleasant 16–18°C at night. This is the ideal time to visit for seeing waterfalls flowing at their most forceful.

June to August (Barrgana)

June to August is the true dry season. Daytime temperatures are comfortably in the high twenties, while nighttime temperatures can drop into the low teens. In June, waterfalls still have some strength, but this dwindles as the dry season progresses. From July to August, humpback whales return from their Antarctic feeding grounds to mate and give birth, with sightings most common in August.

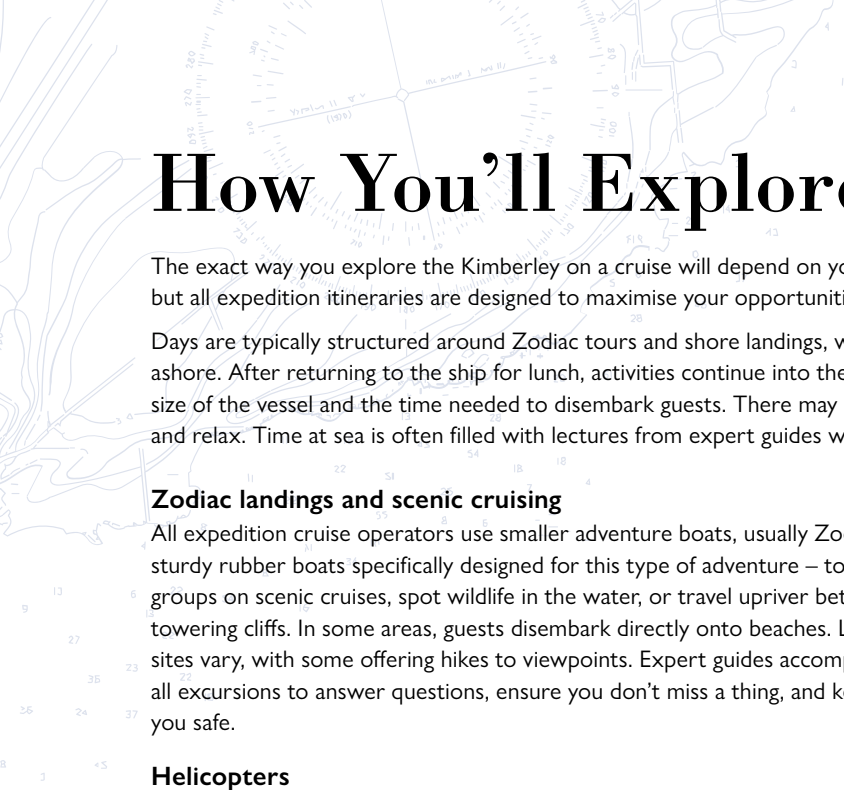
September (Wilburu)

Temperatures rise in September, though they have not yet reached the wet season's peak of 40°C or more, and the rains have not yet arrived.

October to November (Larja)

Temperatures peak and the rains begin, bringing intense showers and thunderstorms that often result in dramatic lightning displays.





How You'll Explore

The exact way you explore the Kimberley on a cruise will depend on your operator and the equipment available on board, but all expedition itineraries are designed to maximise your opportunities for unforgettable moments.

Days are typically structured around Zodiac tours and shore landings, with early starts to ensure everyone has ample time ashore. After returning to the ship for lunch, activities continue into the afternoon, with schedules varying depending on the size of the vessel and the time needed to disembark guests. There may also be longer excursions followed by time to rest and relax. Time at sea is often filled with lectures from expert guides who accompany every sailing.

Zodiac landings and scenic cruising

All expedition cruise operators use smaller adventure boats, usually Zodiacs – sturdy rubber boats specifically designed for this type of adventure – to take groups on scenic cruises, spot wildlife in the water, or travel upriver between towering cliffs. In some areas, guests disembark directly onto beaches. Landing sites vary, with some offering hikes to viewpoints. Expert guides accompany all excursions to answer questions, ensure you don't miss a thing, and keep you safe.

Helicopters

Newer expedition vessels increasingly offer high-spec adventure options, with helicopters being a standout addition. Usually at an extra cost, helicopter excursions provide once-in-a-lifetime views of iconic Kimberley sights like the King George River and Horizontal Falls from the air, or access to the best fishing spots for heli-fishing. Helicopter operations depend on factors including weather, sea conditions, and local regulations.

Submarines

Some newer vessels feature submersibles capable of diving to great depths, typically carrying four-eight guests plus a pilot. These ultra-clear acrylic spheres offer uninhibited views of the underwater world, allowing guests to explore marine life in a unique way.

Hiking

For the active traveller, there are plenty of opportunities to hike, with the steep rock escarpments providing rewarding views from the top for those energetic enough to reach it!

Cultural enrichment

Visits to culturally significant Aboriginal sites are often led by First Nations guides, providing valuable context and deepening your understanding of the area's heritage.

Kayaking, SUP, snorkelling and diving

Spotting crocodiles is a highlight of the Kimberley, which means kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding (SUP), and diving are avoided here! There may be opportunities to swim in safe waterholes while hiking, but it's best to avoid open water.

However, itineraries that include the Rowley Shoals, Abrolhos Islands, or Indonesia's Raja Ampat offer chances to explore some of the world's best coral reefs. Expedition cruise lines typically provide a range of water-based activities such as kayaking and SUP, often accompanied by a Zodiac for safety to let you explore away from the ship. Snorkelling and diving excursions may also be available, with diving usually limited to experienced divers. Some operators recommend bringing your own dive gear – including regulators, BCDs, and wetsuits – though equipment is also available on board. It's best to speak with us if this interests you.

Onboard facilities

As well as the numerous ways of exploring off the ship, there are also a host of onboard facilities that will enhance your experience of the Kimberley. Facilities vary from vessel to vessel and include discovery centres with interactive displays, outdoor areas designed for wildlife viewing, photo studios and more.



Operators

There are a number of expedition operators that explore the Kimberley, with the style and quality varying greatly. The facilities on board, quality of the expedition team, equipment and activities available, along with the inclusions in your fare, all have a significant impact on the experience, so we only work with trusted partners that we know can deliver an exceptional adventure.

The size of the vessel and the speed at which landing craft can be deployed are one of the most important factors. Larger ships offer more stability and tend to have a faster cruising speed – preferable on itineraries that include longer sea transits. However, smaller vessels can navigate the inland waterways themselves, making the exploration a little more comfortable.

All operators include landings ashore and scenic Zodiac/small boat cruising in their fares. Supplementary charges can apply for activities such as kayaking, although taster sessions may be available free of charge depending on the operator. Helicopter flights and submarine excursions come with an additional charge. Diving is only available at select sites outside the Kimberley region and is another chargeable activity for which we recommend you speak to us about the availability of equipment and requirements needed.

When on board, you can expect all meals to be included, along with soft drinks, and some operators additionally include alcoholic drinks, including premium wines and spirits. As the inclusions differ between vessels, it's best to discuss this thoroughly with an expedition expert at Mundy Adventures.

Silversea Expeditions

Pioneers of the luxury expedition concept, Silversea delivers its all-inclusive cruises with the very best in food, service, and comfort while visiting the most remote and exciting places on Earth. A hugely experienced and highly qualified expedition team of expert guides, naturalists and scientists helps you gain a greater understanding of the destination on carefully designed itineraries which provide plenty of opportunities to explore.

Three ships operate expeditions with a fleet of Zodiacs, allowing for multiple landings and scenic cruising. Silver Cloud is the only vessel that operates in the Kimberley and offers an abundance of space on board, including sizeable guest suites, accommodating up to 254 guests. It has a variety of restaurants, and the onboard facilities include a photo editing studio, lecture space, swimming pool and whirlpools, fitness centre, and several bars and lounges.



Silver Cloud

Guests: 254

Adventure opportunities: Zodiac landings, scenic Zodiac cruising, hiking, kayaking

Expedition team ratio: Approx. 1 to 10





Seabourn

Seabourn was one of the pioneers of small ship luxury cruising and has been operating expedition itineraries since 2013, building a wealth of knowledge of polar and warm water regions, with shore experiences and learning led by a highly qualified, world-class expedition team.

Seabourn Venture was the line's first dedicated expedition vessel, launched in 2022. The sister ship Seabourn Pursuit followed in 2023, and when launched, Seabourn made the Kimberley's Wunambal Gaambera Traditional Owners godparents, with local guides coming on board to provide a more in-depth understanding of the land and its importance. The ships combine Seabourn's popular yachting style, all-inclusive offering, and sumptuous balcony accommodation, with expedition touches including high-tech toys like a pair of six-seater submarines. The Discovery Centre hosts daily briefings and lectures, with 10-metre-wide high-definition screens to bring topics to life. The Landing Zone offers changing facilities and storage, with direct access to the fleet of Zodiacs (all activities are subject to weather conditions). A range of dining options includes the more formal main dining room and several more relaxed venues, and amenities include an infinity pool and whirlpool, spa, sauna, and gym.

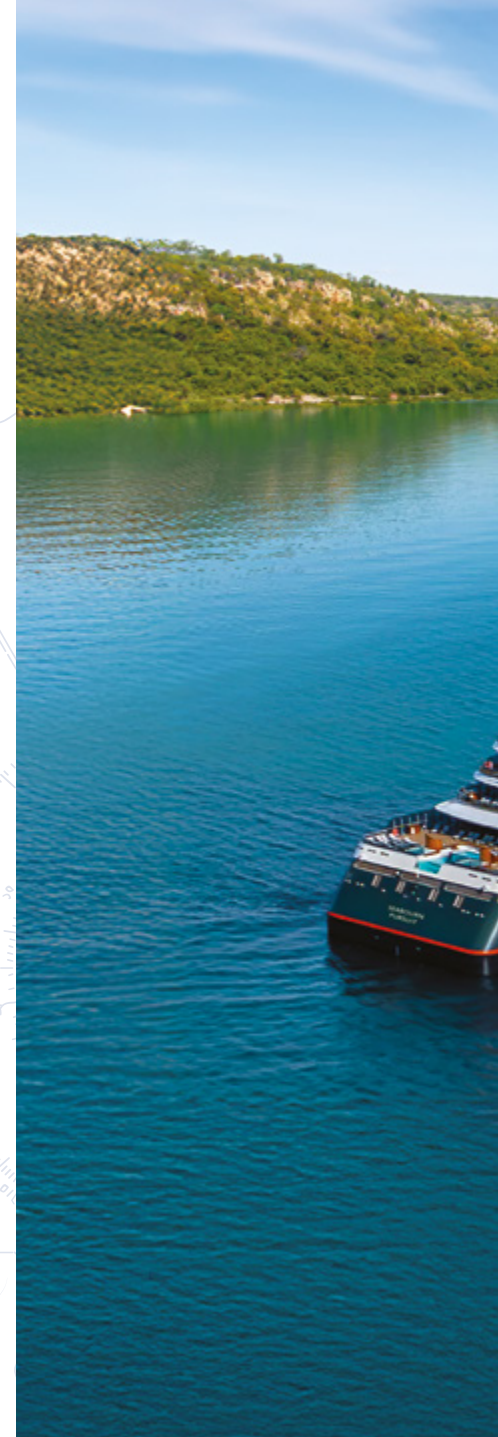


Seabourn Pursuit

Guests: 264

Adventure opportunities: Zodiac landings, scenic Zodiac cruising, hiking, cultural visits, submarine excursions

Expedition team ratio: 1 to 10





Ponant Explorations

For over 35 years, guests have chosen Ponant for its unique exploration itineraries operated with style and elegance. A large fleet of super modern and innovative ships, purpose-built to sail way off the beaten track, operate bilingually, and care is taken to ensure the international clientele is well catered for. Ponant's stylish Sisterships and their smaller Explorers are perfect for warm water cruising, with their light-filled lounges and indoor/outdoor style. Restaurants provide a distinctively French flavour, and drinks are included across the fleet.

On board Le Soléal, one of the 264-guest Sisterships, there is a marina platform designed for the ease of Zodiac embarkation and a large sundeck and swimming pool. Guest rooms are stylish and contemporary, with most enjoying a private balcony. The smaller 184-guest Le Jacques Cartier is one of the Explorers, all named after France's most famous explorers, and the only other Ponant ship that operates in the Kimberley. The same chic styling is found on board, combined with technological advancements, of which the innovative Blue Eye Lounge is the spectacular centrepiece: an underwater lounge with two oversized portholes reinforced with 18 layers of glass, looking out into the deep blue sea. Keep your eyes peeled for passing fish and sea creatures. The eye-catching interiors are fresh and contemporary, with a bright, nautical colour palette, and all staterooms and suites open onto a private balcony. An infinity-style pool sits at the rear of the vessel overlooking the aft marina platform used for guests to embark on the fleet of Zodiacs.

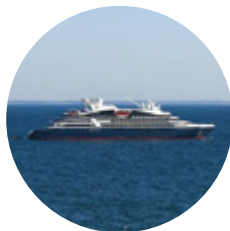


Le Soléal

Guests: 264

Adventure opportunities: Zodiac landings, scenic Zodiac cruising, hiking, cultural experiences

Expedition team ratio: Approx. 1 to 11



Le Jacques Cartier

Guests: 184

Adventure opportunities: Zodiac landings, scenic Zodiac cruising, hiking, cultural experiences

Expedition team ratio: Approx. 1 to 11





True North

Pioneering luxury expedition travel along Australia's dramatic Kimberley coast, True North has been offering exceptional small-ship adventures for almost 40 years. Australian-owned and based in Broome, the company specialises in in-depth cruises across Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. With just two intimate expedition yachts, guests enjoy unmatched opportunities to get off the beaten track and discover some of the most remote and breathtaking parts of the world.

These are yachts in the truest sense – laid-back yet refined, with a distinctively Aussie style best embodied by the barefoot, no-shoes-on-board policy. Hosted by a warm and welcoming Australian crew whose numbers nearly match those of the guests, there's no more authentic way to travel and explore Australia's stunning coastline. Purpose-built for shallow coastal waters and intricate river systems, the ships are perfectly suited to their environment. Each vessel is equipped with its own onboard helicopter and a fleet of small expedition boats for in-depth exploration, and on board guests can enjoy several elegant vantage points including a sundeck, observation lounge, ship's lounge, al fresco bar, and sports deck. Dining is a highlight, with a focus on fresh, locally sourced ingredients served in an inviting, upscale setting.



True North

Guests: 36

Adventure opportunities: Landings, scenic small boat cruising, helicopter flights, heli-fishing, cultural visits

Expedition team ratio: Almost 1 to 1

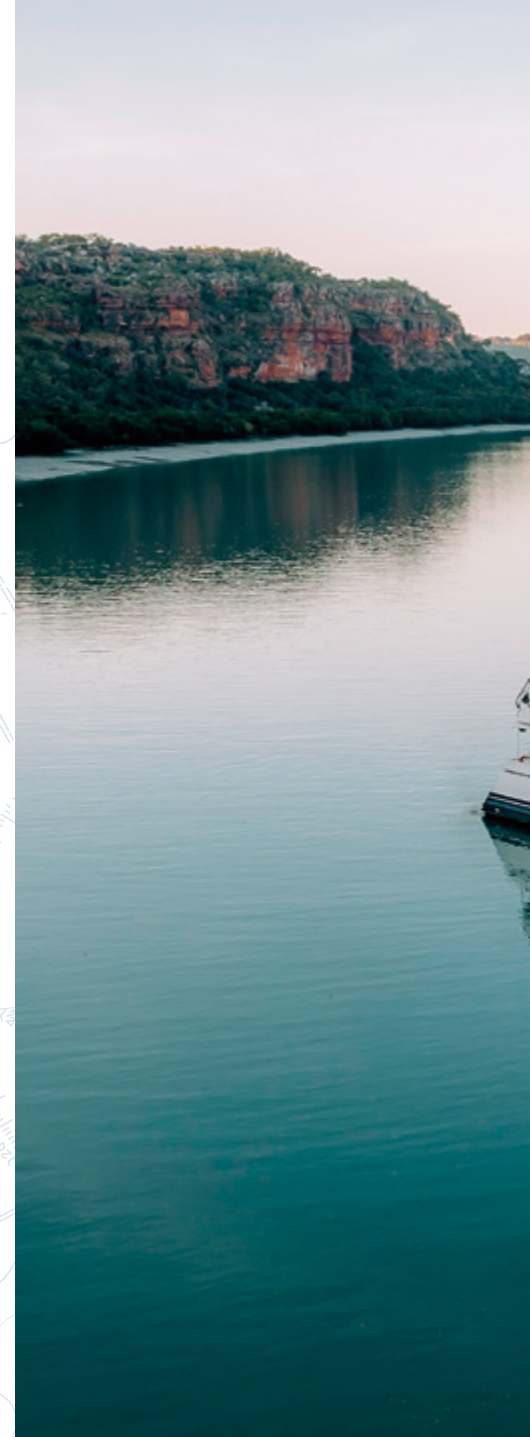


True North II

Guests: 20

Adventure opportunities: Landings, scenic small boat cruising, helicopter flights, heli-fishing, cultural visits

Expedition team ratio: Almost 1 to 1





CONTACT US

If you wish to discuss your holiday plans further, or you have any questions about the information within this brochure, please get in touch.

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Opening hours

Monday to Friday: 9am – 5:30pm | Saturday: 10am – 4pm | Sunday & evenings: By appointment
