



# Jatbula Challenge Supporting Mental Health Research



## Trip Highlights

Support the vital work of Australian Rotary Health in funding life-changing mental health research for young Australians and children

Wilderness walking in one of the Top End's best-kept secrets

Gain a deeper understanding of the local Indigenous culture with visits to ancient rock art sites

Explore the exceptional Arnhem Land Escarpment and Stone Country

View magnificent waterfalls tumbling from the high sandstone escarpment

Spend evenings under the stars at wilderness campsites

Take refreshing dips in the many fresh waterholes along the trail

Experience an unforgettable cultural cruise that immerses you in breathtaking scenery, rich Dreamtime stories, and authentic cultural experiences



<b>Trip Duration</b>	7 days	<b>Trip Code:</b> ARH
<b>Grade</b>	Moderate	
<b>Activities</b>	Trekking with a Full Pack	
<b>Summary</b>	7 day trip, 5 days trekking with a full pack, 4 nights wilderness camping, 1 nights Safari tent camping, 1 night hotel Darwin	

## Supporting Your Cause

Australian Rotary Health (ARH) is one of the largest independent funders of mental health research in Australia. As a not-for-profit charity, the mission is to fund high-quality, innovative research that improves the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and understanding of mental illness.

Over the years, ARH has proudly supported groundbreaking programs—none more globally impactful than Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). We funded the original research that laid the foundation for MHFA, enabling its development and expansion. Today, this program has reached over 8 million people worldwide.

Our current research focus is on the early years—ages 0 to 12—because we know that half of all mental health disorders begin before the age of 14. By investing in early intervention, we can change the trajectory of young lives before problems become crises.

Even international figures have taken notice. Lady Gaga incorporated Teen Mental Health First Aid into her youth advocacy programs, recognising the importance of teaching young people how to support one another.

Join us on this iconic trek through the Top End and help fund life-changing mental health research!

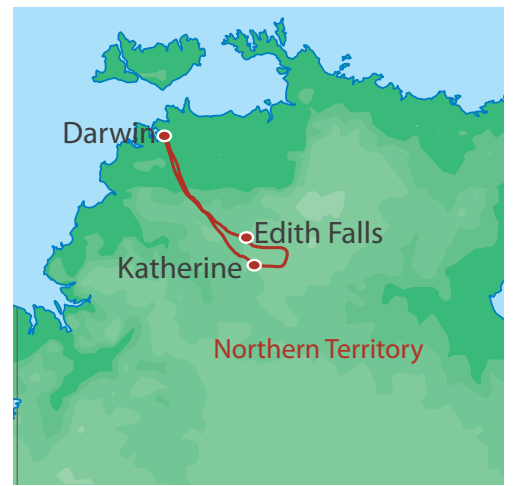
## Your Huma Challenge

Thank you for your interest in our Jatbula Challenge Supporting Mental Health Research. Huma Charity Challenge is a division of the worldwide adventure travel company World Expeditions. When joining a Huma Charity Challenge you embark on a remarkable journey to discover your inner philanthropist as you raise money for a Charity that is important to you. At the same time you take on the challenge of fundraising and partake in an adventure to discover new worlds, new landscapes and new cultures ... perhaps you'll even discover how far your personal boundaries stretch as you take on a physical challenge like a cycling, trekking or a mountaineering adventure. We are passionate about off-the-beaten track travel experiences as they provide travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. Our itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups. Our itineraries provide the very best travel experience, designed by people with vast local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible travel approach at the core.



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*Trekking between waterfalls and swimming holes along the edge of the Arnhem Land escarpment in support of vital mental health research*



## Trip Dates

**2026** 08 Aug - 14 Aug

## Important notes

**RF** - Registration Fee

**DO** - Donation, Fundraising target

## What Impact Will My Fundraising Have?

Australian Rotary Health (ARH) is one of Australia's largest independent funders of mental health research. As a not-for-profit charity, ARH is dedicated to supporting innovative research that improves the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness.

ARH proudly funded the original research behind Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), enabling its global expansion. Today, MHFA has reached over 8 million people worldwide.

Our current focus is on early intervention in children aged 0–12, as half of all mental health conditions begin before age 14. By investing early, we aim to change the trajectory of young lives before challenges escalate.

Even global advocates have taken notice—Lady Gaga incorporated Teen MHFA into her youth programs, highlighting the power of peer support in mental health.

## Your Adventure

The Arnhem Land escarpment is an exceptional wilderness area that winds its way along the edge of Katherine Gorge (Nitmiluk) to Edith Falls (Leliyn), creating a truly extraordinary hiking experience. The Jatbula Trail in Nitmiluk National Park features magnificent waterfalls tumbling from high quartzite cliffs, shady monsoon forests lining the creeks, and stunning Jawoyn Aboriginal rock art adorning caves and overhangs.

Often described as the tropical equivalent of Tasmania's Overland Track, this full pack-carrying bushwalk traverses the heart of one of Australia's most unique and spiritual landscapes. You'll trek during the cooler months for the best conditions and enjoy abundant opportunities for swimming and relaxing in crystal-clear, croc-free waters along the way.

By taking part in this unforgettable journey, you'll also be walking in support of Australian Rotary Health and their life-changing work funding mental health research — particularly for children and young people across Australia.

## Fundraising Options

There are a few different ways you can approach your fundraising:

1. You can fundraise the charity donation by asking friends, family and work mates to support the cause.
2. You may choose to personally donate the \$1000 (any donation over \$2 is tax deductible).
3. You can fundraise as much as you can and if you don't make it, personally fund the gap to hit your target.

Once you register via Huma Charity Challenge, the team at Australian Rotary Health will be in touch to help you kick-start your fundraising journey. You'll also receive a comprehensive Confirmation Kit from Huma Charity Challenge, including a Fundraiser's Guidebook—a fantastic resource filled with fundraising ideas, tips, and support to help you succeed.

We're here to make your charity trek as rewarding as possible—both on and off the trail!

## Online Fundraising Portal

<https://australian-rotary-health.mygiveeasy.com/jatbula-challenge-2026>



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## Fast Facts

**Group Size Min:**

4

**Group Size Max:**

7

**Leader:**

Expert local leader

### Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

\*Ask our staff for more information.

## Itinerary at a Glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE DARWIN
DAY 2	PICK UP DARWIN, DRIVE TO NITMILUK GORGE, AFTERNOON NITMILUK GORGE CRUISE, OVERNIGHT KATHERINE
DAY 3	TREK TO BIDDLECOMBE CASCADES
DAY 4	TREK TO CRYSTAL FALLS
DAY 5	TREK TO THE AMPHITHEATRE THEN ON TO 17 MILE FALLS
DAY 6	TREK TO SANDY CAMP POOL
DAY 7	TREK TO LELIYN (EDITH FALLS) VIA SWEETWATER POOL, TRANSFER TO DARWIN

## What's Included

- 6 breakfasts, 6 lunches and 5 dinners
- 1 night Darwin hotel
- Professional wilderness guides (2 guides)
- All National Park and camping fees
- All group camping equipment including mozzie dome tent, stoves, cooking and eating utensils
- Emergency communications and group first aid kit
- Transport from Darwin
- Nitmiluk Gorge Cruise

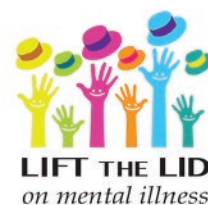
## What's Not Included

- Airfares
- Accommodation in Darwin after the trip
- Items of a personal nature, such as laundry and postage
- Backpacks
- Sleeping Bag
- Alcoholic beverages
- Travel insurance



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## Responsible Travel

The natural environments that you'll travel through are fragile; the cultures and traditions precious and often the communities we pass through are reliant on tourism. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence, protect what is precious and where we can leave a positive impact. Learn how you can do this by downloading the Thoughtful Traveller booklet from our website.

## Trip grading Moderate

This adventure involves trekking for up to 6 or 7 hours a day at a steady pace in remote locations. You will need a good level of fitness and must be in good health. You must be capable of walking over rough ground while carrying a full pack (approx 15-17kg). You need to be prepared for walking in hot daytime temperatures (in winter temperatures can reach 30 degrees Celsius). Each day will also present to you a new set of challenges, from river crossings to hill climbs, there will be flat open country on the top of the escarpment and boggy wet country along the creeks that we follow. Previous multi day walking experience is preferred.

Suggested preparation: 45 minutes of aerobic type exercise, three to four times a week (this can be cycling, jogging or walking) interspersed with relatively demanding bushwalks carrying a full pack weight (up to 17kg). You should walk regularly with a weighted day pack (5-7kg) for several hours for leg strengthening and aerobic fitness. The best preparation for your trek is multi day bushwalking involving relatively steep ascents and descents and in variable weather conditions.

## Detailed Itinerary

A compulsory pre-trip briefing will take place on the afternoon of your arrival day.

**Meeting Point: 3:00pm outside the DoubleTree by Hilton at 116 The Esplanade, Darwin.** (Please note: There are two Hilton hotels on The Esplanade — be sure to meet outside 116 The Esplanade.)

Once everyone has arrived, we'll walk together to the Esplanade Park next door to conduct the session.

Please bring all the gear you plan to carry on the trek, including any hire gear you've arranged.

The briefing will take approx 2 hours and will cover:

- \* Overview of the itinerary and trip objectives
- \* Cross-check of required gear and clothing
- \* Distribution and packing of any hire gear (if applicable)
- \* Group expectations and individual responsibilities
- \* Emergency procedures and inherent risks
- \* Conservation strategies and Leave No Trace principles
- \* Weather forecast and trail conditions
- \* Final confirmation of pick-up time and location for departure (Day 2)

If you have any questions before arrival, don't hesitate to get in touch. We're looking forward to welcoming you and getting your adventure underway!

### DAY 1 Arrive Darwin

Welcome to the Top End! After all the preparation and fundraising, your adventure begins. Make your way to the Argus Hotel in Darwin for your overnight twin-share accommodation (breakfast included).

At 3pm this afternoon, you'll attend a compulsory pre-trip briefing with your guides. They'll run through the itinerary, check your gear, distribute any hire equipment, and go over safety, environmental guidelines, and what to expect on the trail.

This is also when you'll do final bag packing and confirm pickup details for the following morning.

Dinner is at your own expense.

**meals: NIL**

### DAY 2 Pick up Darwin, drive to Nitmiluk Gorge, afternoon Nitmiluk Gorge cruise, overnight Katherine

We will pick you up from your Darwin accommodation between 8:00 and 8:30 am, before heading south on the Stuart Highway to Katherine. Upon arriving in Katherine, an iconic top-end town, we will enjoy lunch before transferring to Nitmiluk Gorge. Here, the Jawoyn people will welcome us, and we'll embark on an afternoon cruise through the gorge, guided by cultural experts who will share insights into local flora, fauna, dreamtime stories, and Jawoyn culture. Afterward, we'll head to our nearby accommodation for a hearty welcome dinner.

Driving time: approx 4 hours.

**meals: B,L,D**

### DAY 3 Trek to Biddlecombe Cascades

The starting point of our walk is at Katherine Gorge. We cross the Katherine River in the morning and begin our trek into the stone country. The Northern Rockhole offers a fantastic swimming spot. We then trek to our evening campsite beside the clear, flowing stream of Biddlecombe Cascades. Meanwhile, your professional wilderness guides will be preparing a nutritious and delicious dinner.

Walking distance: 8km (approx 4hrs)

**meals: B,L,D**



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## Adventure Travel

By its very nature Charity Challenges involve an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are suitably fit, flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your charity representative or one of our team.

## Important Note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any other supplied information, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

### DAY 4 Trek to Crystal Falls

Today's trek takes us further into the rugged stone country. We are now deep in the wilderness of the Arnhemland Escarpment and Stone Country which extends almost 1000 kilometres through the heart of the Top End. The trail today includes some interesting Jawoyn Aboriginal rock art sites hidden in the many rocky outcrops and overhangs. The cascades of Crystal Falls are an inviting backdrop to our campsite.

Walking distance: 10.5km (approx 4hrs)

meals: **B,L,D**

### DAY 5 Trek to the Amphitheatre then on to 17 Mile Falls

A good morning trek brings us to the Amphitheatre, an aptly named natural pocket in the escarpment. The shade of the cliffs encourages a rich monsoonal rain forest and the rock shelters exhibit the art of the Jawoyn Traditional Owners. Trekking along the edge of the escarpment with its stunning views, we reach our camp and the spectacular 17 Mile Falls. The rock pools above the falls offer great swimming in the spring fed clear streams.

Walking distance: 10kms (approx 4hrs)

meals: **B,L,D**

### DAY 6 Trek to Sandy Camp Pool

A bigger day of trekking takes us to the Edith River Crossing as it flows across the stone country. The permanent waterholes here attract abundant birdlife and are a wonderful place to enjoy another delicious picnic lunch. We will follow the course of the river with its gentle gradients to our evening campsite at Sandy Camp Pool.

Walking distance: 16.5km (approx 6hrs)

meals: **B,L,D**

### DAY 7 Trek to Leliyn (Edith Falls) via Sweetwater Pool, transfer to Darwin

We start the day with an invigorating swim, setting the stage for our trek to Sweetwater Pool for lunch. Walking beside the Edith River, with its billabongs and waterholes, offers a chance to spot elusive wildlife like turtles, Brolgas, and Water Monitors. After a refreshing swim and a delicious lunch prepared by your guides, we continue our trek along the river to Leliyn (Edith Falls), where we can enjoy one last swim before we board the awaiting bus and transfer back to Darwin. We aim to drop you back at your accommodation between 5-6pm. This evening your group may like to meet at one of Darwin's great eateries for a celebratory dinner!

Walking distance: 15.5km (approx 6hrs) | Driving time: approx 4hrs

meals: **B,L**

This itinerary is subject to change with any modifications in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

## Country Information

You will be travelling through Aboriginal land with a living culture and rich heritage. When on Aboriginal land it is necessary to accept that there may be some conditions of travel (your guide will explain) and that local and traditional obligations take precedence over permission to travel. Consider that Aboriginal land is essentially private land and that permission is to enter is a privilege.

There is incredible diversity in Aboriginal culture and each local clan may have their own language and culture. Your guide will keep you informed of local culture, issues, and any considerations for dealing with local people.



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## Climate

Generally speaking, it is fine, rain-free and there is plenty of sun between May and October. The Jatbula Trail operates in the coolest months from June to August. The days are quite warm (tops of around 30C to 35C) and evenings can be cooler (down to around 15C). On occasion it can be cold at night down to around 5°C in June and July. From September onwards the “Build-up” to the wet season leads to oppressive heat and humidity and is unsuitable conditions for trekking. Throughout the year we can swim in crystal clear, spring fed pools.

It is essential in this climate to keep up a high fluid intake (plain water is best) to avoid dehydration. The first sign of mild dehydration is headache, which can make your holiday uncomfortable. More severe dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion, a most uncomfortable experience, and there is no ‘quick fix’ for this condition. Please ensure that you drink 4 litres per day. Your guide will point this out again when you start the trip, as mild dehydration can be easily avoided.

## A Typical Day

Mental preparation for your 5-day trek in the Top End cannot be highlighted enough. Come open minded and ready for a wonderful experience whatever the weather, whoever the group, whatever your preconceived ideas. Your guides will be working to enhance your trek and maximise your safety. Each day, each group, each guide will influence itinerary details but the following will give you an idea of daily timing.

Each day will start with a hot drink call from your guides. They will then prepare breakfast, whilst you prepare for the day and pack up all your equipment. After breakfast the guides finish their last minute packing and you set off for the day’s walk. Each day is different but usually the morning walk is 3-4 hours with numerous snack, photo and water breaks along the way.

A leisurely lunch is served with a chance to put your feet up, have a swim in a rock pool, read or simply take it easy. The afternoon walk is usually shorter than the morning walk getting us to camp with plenty of daylight and time for another swim, relaxing or just enjoying a welcome hot drink and a chat. A hot dinner and dessert is served around 7pm with time to tell a few stories and hear a briefing on the following day’s activities.

## Dietary Requirements

If advised in advance, we can cater for vegetarian diets and some medically required diets (allergies or intolerances), but not personal preferences. Please discuss any dietary requirements with us at least one month before departure so we can confirm what is possible. Options may be limited in remote locations, and in some cases travellers may need to bring their own specialised foods. We cannot guarantee peanut-free or allergen-free trips, so those with severe allergies should take appropriate precautions, carry necessary medications, and be able to self-administer them if required.

## Accommodation on the Trip

When trekking in the Top End dry season our camping arrangements are delightfully lightweight. As we don’t have to worry about bad weather we can make the most of the clear skies and sleep under the stars. Each trekker will carry a mozzie dome tent (a lightweight, netted tent). These can fit two people or we have enough for individual use.

On this trip we camp in the Jatbula’s designated campsites. Each camp has composting toilets. The guides carry lightweight group tarps that act as shade or shelter in the unlikely event of unseasonal rain.



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On our first night, we stay between Katherine and Nitmiluk, enjoying authentic Top End accommodation in comfortable safari tents. This nights accommodation is on a twin-share basis so if you are an individual traveller we will accommodate you with another traveller of the same sex. If you would prefer to guarantee a single room a single supplement is available pending availability.

## Pre and Post Tour Accommodation

Pre trek accommodation has been arranged in Darwin, but you will need to book post tour accommodation in Darwin if necessary. For advice or assistance, please contact your Huma reservations consultant.

## What You Carry

The Jatbula Trail is a full pack unsupported trek. You will need to carry all your own personal equipment. This includes your sleeping bag, sleeping mat, tent, plus a small proportion of the group food. On average this works out to be 15-17kgs. Your guides will conduct a gear check to ensure you are not carrying too little or too much!

## Equipment Required

Specialist gear required including walking boots and pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

## How To Book

To register for this Challenge visit the Huma Charity Challenge website and click REGISTER NOW. A \$200 non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of booking. Or you can contact Huma Charity Challenge by email for more information: [megan@humacharitychallenge.com.au](mailto:megan@humacharitychallenge.com.au)

## FAQs

### Q. How heavy is the backpack?

A. You can expect to carry between 15-17kg in this full pack expedition.

### Q. What foods can I expect on the Jatbula trek?

A. The food on the Jatbula Trail trip varies from day to day, but generally, you may start the day with a fresh coffee or tea, some cereals or muesli and fruits. Lunch could be a variety of sandwich rolls, wraps, salads and soups. Snacks/entree may include fruits, cheese, dips and crackers, and trail mix. Sometimes we mix it up with seasoned popcorn, papadama, tom yum soup etc. Dinners are yummy filling dishes like pasta, dahl and rice, stroganoff or maybe even a laksa. For dessert, you could enjoy things like an apple crumble, cake slice or fruit and chocolate. This is just a sample menu idea.

### Q. Can I drink alcohol on the trip?

A. Alcoholic and aerated drinks are not included in the tour cost. As you are required to carry all extra weight please keep any extra food or drinks on this trip to a minimum. Alcoholic drinks are currently banned in the Nitmiluk National Park, except for campers at the Leliyn campground.

### Q. When is the best time to walk the Jatbula Trail?

A. We operate the trip from June to August when walking conditions are at their best. During the cooler months, from June to August, the temperatures range from 30 degrees Celsius during the day dropping to 10 degrees Celsius at night. Conditions on the trail start to heat up in mid-August with temperatures rising to over 40 degrees Celsius from October to late November.



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## **Q. What is the terrain like?**

A. The terrain is varied throughout the track. On the jatbula Trail you can expect to experience river crossings and hill climbs, there will be flat open country on the top of the escarpment and boggy wet country along the creeks that we follow. The hike follows the western edge of the Arnhem Land escarpment over sandstone plateau and through woodlands, open forest, monsoon forest and riverine landscapes.

## **Q. When should I arrive in Darwin?**

A. You must arrive in Darwin the day before your trek begins. The trip commences with a **COMPULSORY** pre-departure briefing in the afternoon on the day before departure. It is **ESSENTIAL** that you make your travel arrangements to enable you to attend this briefing.

## **Q. Do we have to carry any of the groups food?**

A. Yes, you should expect to carry about 3kg of the group food along with your snacks for the week.

## **Q. Will there be crocodiles where we go swimming?**

A. On the Jatbula Trail, there are no saltwater crocodiles in the designated swimming areas, making them safe for swimming. While freshwater crocodiles may be present, they are shy and generally avoid humans. Always follow park guidelines and swim only in designated areas to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.

