

Karijini National Park is located in the spectacular Pilbara region in the North West of Western Australia, approximately 1055 kilometres north of the State's capital city, Perth. At an amazing 6274 kilometres² (square) it is the second largest national park in Western Australia (the largest being Rudall River National Park) and is truly unforgettable for its incredible rugged beauty.

Karijini National Park is most famous for its amazing wildflowers, waterfalls, serene natural pools, magnificent gorges and breathtaking colours. It is definitely a must-see National park when visiting Western Australia! Karijini is almost a secret in Australia and is arguably one of the most amazing, spectacular, outback national parks in the country, so visit here soon for a chance to see a beautiful national park, before commercial tourism takes over.

A sealed road does provide access to the park, however many of the roads to the gorges are not, being the corrugated version instead. This means that if you're taking a hire car or camper you're legally allowed to use a 4 wheel drive only (as most hire companies rules state.) If you have your own vehicle, 2 wheel drive is fine, just make sure your suspension is in good condition and be prepared to bounce around a bit!

There are excellent picnic areas as well as allocated camping sites within the park (visitor and camping fees apply). Karijini National Park also has an eco lodge should you wish to stay in more comfort. At Travel Forever we can offer invaluable advice on travelling this remote region, whether by campervan, car or tour. Please send us any questions you may have and we will be only too pleased to help.

Attractions & Sights

Karijini National Park is famous for its brilliant wildflower displays and the spectacular gorges of the Hamersley Range. One of the most remarkable features of Karijini National Park is its geology which includes some of the world's oldest rock formations.

Meandering through Karijini National Park are the iron-ore rich Hamersley Ranges, which stretch for more than 400 kilometres. A series of deep sheer-sided chasms have formed in the Hamersley Ranges, known as the Hamersley Gorges. The famous gorges, up to 100 metres deep and sometimes with a water flow at the base of just 1 metre wide, have been carved by the waters of the Fortescue and other rivers running between the ranges. These rugged gorges with sheer walls of rock, layered in beautiful colours from red to green and blue to pink in the changing sunlight, and filled with cool flowing pools, provide the perfect oasis to escape from the harsh Australian sun. Adventurous visitors will discover stunning scenery, hiking through canyons and the opportunity to swim in crystal clear pools of water surrounded by leafy green vegetation. They are spectacular but please keep in mind to be careful as some of the steeper and more inaccessible gorges can be dangerous.

Some of the most well known gorges include Dales Gorge and Hancock Gorge. Dales Gorge, dating back an astonishing 2000 million years, is

breathtaking for its multicolored hues of blue, mauve, red and brown. The pools, waterfalls, and lush green ferns of Dales Gorge contrast vividly with red, terraced cliffs and an occasional snappy gum seen perched on a rocky ledge. Dales Gorge is where you'll find the beautiful aptly named Circular Pool, Fortescue Falls and Fern Pool. Possibly the most breath taking of the gorges is Hancock, with its winding walk between amazingly coloured rock walls until it connects with Weano gorge. Weano Gorge is home to Handrail Pool, another oasis in this beautiful park.

Karijini has a system of excellent walk trails of varying levels, for the beginner to the adventurous. Most of the walking tracks and facilities are concentrated along the north eastern escarpments where the most scenic gorges lie, each gorge being remarkably different to the next and worth a visit. There are several short walks along cliff tops; the loveliest walk culminating at Oxer lookout which overlooks the junction of four exquisite chasms Hancock, Joffre, Red and Weano gorges. Should you wish to fully explore the gorges fully visitors must be fit, prepared to dip into ice-cold waters, cling to rock ledges, and all while following very narrow paths. However the hiking effort is well worth it!

Karijini National Park protects many different wildlife habitats, landscapes, plants and animals of the Pilbara. Glorious wildflowers vary with the seasons and in the cooler months the land is covered with yellow-flowering cassias and wattles, northern bluebells, and purple mulla-mulla.

Karijini National Park is home to a wide variety of birds, kangaroos, rock-wallabies, echidnas, and several bat species. There is also an abundance of geckos, goannas, dragons, legless lizards, pythons and other snakes to be seen. Strikingly big termite mounds feature prominently in the landscape, while you may discover in the spinifex country rock piles of the very rare pebble mound mouse.

History

Karijini National Park is the traditional home of the Banyjima, Kurrama and Innawonga Aboriginal people. Formerly known as Hamersley Range National Park, Karijini is an Aboriginal name for the region used by the Banyjima Aboriginal tribe that has inhabited the region for thousands of years. A diversity of vegetation has resulted from Aboriginal land management practices such as 'fire stick farming' during this period, having a direct impact on the incredible variety and nature of the plants and animals found in the park today.

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Climate

Karijini has a semi-arid climate. In summer (December till the end of February) thunderstorms are very common with the occasional cyclone coming in over the coast dumping huge amounts of water into the gorges. It can get extremely hot during this period. Tours still operate at these times however the itinerary may have to be changed to allow for seasonal changes.

The best times to visit the Karijini are during winter and early spring of the southern hemisphere after rainfalls have induced an abundance of wildflowers to blanket the landscape. During this period flowers create gorgeous displays that cover vast areas of land as far as the eye can see.