“That’s it mate. You can’t go any further, its only Pandanus and small rocky rapids.” We had come as far as you could paddle up Lawn Hill Creek.
Many years ago we stayed at Boodjamulla or Lawn Hill National Park with our family. We absolutely loved it and have always had it on the return list.

Where is Boodjamulla National Park?

It is a large area of sandstone ranges cut by gorges and rivers in the far North West of Queensland and the Northern Territory border.
For the Waanyi, the first peoples of this land and the many visiting scientists there is a rich and diverse variety of connections to the land and its treasures. We only get to see a small sliver of what this country contains. This sliver though is an incredible reward for anyone prepared to make the long journey to the region.

These are the kinds of views you can expect at Boodjamulla National Park. Photo: Bob West

How long should you stay for?

Justice to the area can only really be done by allowing a minimum of 4 days to experience the offerings at hand.

Accessing the park

Access to the area is via unsealed roads which vary from freshly graded, to smooth to rough, and also corrugated with patches of bulldust to add further interest to the journey. Most travellers come from the south via Camooweal, Mt Isa or Cloncurry.

Indarri Falls is one of the many sights to see in Boodjamulla National Park. Photo: Bob West

Access for caravanners

Caravanners, in particular, tend to take the road from Cloncurry to Gregory Downs as it is bitumen. Here many leave their vans at the very popular free camping area by the Gregory River and travel in each day. Others opt to drive the final 100km of dirt.

Campsites and booking requirements

National Parks have limited camping areas that must be booked well ahead and online which you can do so here. The main one is at Lawn Hill Gorge with 20 sites while another 6 are at Miyumba about 55km south on the Riversleigh road near the Riversleigh World Heritage site. The only other option, near at hand is at Adels Grove, a large privately run park 10 km from the Gorge.
We settled at Adels and drove in early each morning to the Park to do the walks and paddle before the heat of the day.

If you follow one of the tracks, you can reach the cascades Photo: Bob West

Kayaking in the area

We were really keen to put our kayaks in and head upstream through the Middle and Upper Gorges. You don't have to bring your own, as canoes are freely available for hire at the launching area. The water is deep and clear, so much so that fish can be easily seen swimming beneath you.

Paddling through Middle Gorge. Photo: Bob West

Indarri Falls

As we paddled between the cliffs of Middle Gorge the changing light caused wonderful displays of colour across the water. Then the cliff line started to drop and we were confronted with a wall of vegetation across the creek and the sound of cascading water.
This is Indarri Falls, a 2-3m high wall formed from Tufa, a type of soft, limestone. We scrambled out onto the landing platforms on the left and slid our kayaks up the ramp. Then we paddled through the wider upper gorge until it narrowed. Then we were forced into a dead end where we were offered the advice about the small unnavigable rocky rapids beyond by another paddler.
We turned and meandered back delighting in the constantly varying scenery and the wildlife we saw. This really is an easy and memorable way to experience the gorges.

The landing platforms at Indarri Falls. Photo: Bob West

Tour boat options

If you prefer there is a tour boat that will take you as far as Indarri Falls. It has an electric motor and glides quietly along without disturbing the nearby wildlife.

What fitness level do you need for the walks?

The walks in this area are well signposted and cater to a wide range of abilities and fitness levels. The longer walks have little shade along the way, I'd recommend that you taken them on in the cool of the morning or late afternoon.

The walks around the area are suitable for lots of different fitness levels. Photo: Bob West

The Island Stack walk

We tackled Island Stack first, as it's a couple of hours walk and involves a steep climb to access the table top circuit. At the northern corner of the Stack, a lookout provided views of the Lower Gorge. From here we could see a large fruit bat colony camped by the water. There were literally thousands of them hanging in the trees. We had extensive panoramic views of

the Gorge as we walked around. This is what made this worth every bit of the effort needed to climb to the top.
At the base of the Island Stack, there are 2 easy walks. As they both are quite shady, we tackled these after the Island Stack. We followed the track along the southern edge of Island Stack until we arrived at the Cascades. There a variety of twisted tufa formations which you can see when the water bubbles through. Walking here gave us a good feel for life by the water in contrast to the dry openness of the Island Stack.

The Island Stack Walk will set you back a couple of hours. Photo: Bob West

Wild Dog Dreaming walking track

The Wild Dog Dreaming track is more exposed than the Cascades and follows the eastern side of the Island Stack. It leads to an area of ancient rock art and engravings which we viewed from platforms on the base of the cliffs.
We then cautiously followed the track alongside the creek past the fruit bat colony before returning to the day use area.

You may see colonies of fruit bats along the track. Photo: Bob West

Constance Range Walk

On the eastern side of the day use areas, a path leads off to the Constance Range Walk. We tackled this in the cool of early morning. After an easy and steady climb, we crested the ridge and found ourselves with fantastic panoramic views across the adjoining plains. The contrast to the Gorges behind us had us sitting soaking in the views for a long time.
Then on the way back, we stopped to take more photos of the freshwater crocodile we had seen sunning itself on the water's edge. On the western side, there are 2 walks that provide views of the ranges and into the Gorges below.

The Constance Range walk offers stunning scenery. Photo: Bob West

The Indarri Falls track

We followed the Indarri Falls track in a clockwise direction across the floor of a dry valley before we crossed a ridge down to the busy Falls area. The return was along the ridge back towards the carpark. A lookout provided a great spot to take in the whole Indarri Falls area. Along the ridge, there were places you could view Middle Gorge and see the heights of the cliffs.
Eventually, we made it to the Duwadarri Lookout above the camping area. We sat for a long time taking in the views, which extended to the north and the Constance Range. From here we took the very steep descent to the carpark.
The Upper Gorge walk also provides great views after leaving from the Indarri Falls track. Walked together or individually, these 2 walks provide not only great views but a nice counterbalance to paddling the Gorge.

The lookout spot along the Indarri Falls track. Photo: Bob West

Riversleigh D Site

After a very satisfying stay, we finally headed south to an area called Riversleigh D Site. This unassuming area is the only publicly accessible area to one of the largest fossil deposits known in the world. It is part of the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Riversleigh/Naracoorte) World Heritage Area.
After a long time in the amazing information shelter, we headed out on the 800m walk. There are information boards along the track which provide details about the amazing fossils that you can see right at your feet. It really was a thought-provoking and enjoyable experience.

Boodjamulla National Park is remote but worth visiting if you love to explore. Photo: Bob West

Is this remote location worth travelling to?

It does take time and effort to get to this remote area. But, Boodjamulla National Park will reward you handsomely if you take a chance on it. Make this a destination for yourself on the way to the Gulf country or as part of the journey along the Savannah Way.
There are so many hidden gems to be discovered in remote Australia. What's the best out of the way place you've found?