The northern part of Western Australia has some of the most beautiful places you’ll see anywhere in the world. Broome is one of the more well-known locations, and for good reason! It is an oasis that triples in population every dry season.

People flock there from all over Australia to soak up the beautiful beaches, balmy weather and amazing atmosphere. However, there are some more ‘off the beaten track’ locations that are equally as beautiful but more untouched.

Not far to the north of Broome lies the Dampier Peninsula, or often referred to as Cape Leveque. This is a truly mesmerising location with beauty like you’ve never seen before. Cape Leveque is the point on the map north of Broome that incorporates a whole range of different places including Middle Lagoon, Kooljaman, Beagle Bay, Willie Creek Pearl Farm, Cygnet Bay, One Arm Point and Hunter Creek.

You can camp at a number of these locations with your own gear, stay in a semi-permanent tent all set up, or in your own little cabin. Regardless of what you stay in, you’ll get to experience some of Australia’s best coastline, amazing wildlife and fantastic scenery.

Why do so many people love the Dampier Peninsula?

There aren’t too many places in the world where you have bright red sand butting up against some of the bluest water you’ll ever see. In parts, the red sand stops and white sand starts
right down to the beach, as if a fence was put up separating the two.

Cape Leveque is one of the most visited places in the Kimberley for its amazing natural beauty, stunning wildlife, fantastic fishing, untouched and relaxing atmosphere and of course the production of some of the best pearls in Australia.

### Getting to Cape Leveque

There are really only two ways to get to Cape Leveque - fly in or drive. Most people opt for the latter, giving you the flexibility to enjoy a few different places and a timeframe that suits your requirements. The Cape Leveque Road starts not far out of Broome, and to get right to the top is 208km from Broome itself.

Google maps will tell you this takes 6 hours and 52 minutes, which like most of the time frames given by Google for gravel/off road tracks is completely off the mark.

From Broome itself to the very top of Cape Leveque the locals will tell you it takes about 2 hours. If you are travelling a bit slower, anywhere from 2.5 to 3.5 hours seems normal. That said, you don’t have to travel the whole road in one go, stop at the various places along the way and enjoy them for a night or more.

We spent a few nights at Middle Lagoon and then a few at Kooljaman before heading home.
What is the road like?

The Cape Leveque Road varies considerably in condition. This depends on the number of vehicles using it, and when it was last graded. A decent portion (including a section in the middle) is bitumen, but the rest of it is a gravel/sandy combination that can get quite corrugated in sections.

You do occasionally see 2WD vehicles in the area. However, most of the cars you’ll see are 4WD and this is because of the corrugations and occasional soft sections.

After the wet, the road can be wet, slippery and muddy, and it is closed from time to time to prevent further deterioration. So, always check with the roads department before heading off.

Caravans are not permitted at Kooljaman and frowned upon in general when towed up there, so leave them in Broome. Camper trailers and general trailers are fine. That being said, we did see quite a few vans around the Quandong Point/James Price Point.

Let your tyres down based on the condition of the road, and sit at a safe and comfortable speed. I bumped into a lovely family at Kooljaman who snapped a leaf spring on their camper trailer. Luckily this was within 30 km of the resort. So, keep in mind that the road will take its toll, especially on things that are worn and tired already!
Where can you stay?

There are camping options at Willie Creek Pearl Farm, Quandong Point, Middle Lagoon, Kooljaman, Cygnet Bay and a few others. Most have toilets and showers, but you need to be self-sufficient beyond that. Kooljaman and Middle Lagoon both have options for powered sites if you need them.
Catching fish in the incredibly clear Hunter Creek.

Fishing at Cape Leveque

There is an impressive variety of fish up and down the coastline of Cape Leveque. From queen fish to pelagics and even plenty of bluebone, the fishing yields great results. There are a couple of fishing charters that head out, and if you have access to a boat your options for fishing are greatly increased. There are places you can fish in the little creeks and rivers too, with a bit more research into getting access!

I camped next to someone at Kooljaman who was out every morning and afternoon, flicking lures from the rocks up and down the coast. To be fair, he put a fair bit of time and effort into it (and lost a few lures in the process), but landed some fantastic fish.
There are thousands of tiny crabs to see along the beaches.

Are there any crocodiles?

Not far south of Broome, the risk of seeing a saltwater crocodile really starts to increase. They are seen occasionally around Cable Beach, and the Cape Leveque area, especially around rivers and creeks. Saltwater crocodiles are extremely dangerous and you should avoid going near water where they reside.

Swimming is an absolute no unless you can clearly see the bottom and have been given the all clear. Saltwater crocodiles are sneaky and will wait underwater for hours for the right moment to take their prey. Be vigilant and don’t take risks! It’s just not worth it.

Swimming around the Cape Leveque area in clear, shallow water off the beach is generally encouraged, and safe to do so. But, there is always the chance of a crocodile coming past, and they do from time to time. There were signs up at Kooljaman, where I stayed, stating one had been seen recently and to swim at your own risk.
Don’t swim unless you’ve been given the all clear to do so.

Take a break at Kooljaman

Kooljaman is located right at the top of Cape Leveque and is the most developed campground/accommodation on the peninsula. There’s a great restaurant, access to beaches on the east and west side, and some fantastic tours that can be done. We spent a few nights at Kooljaman and really enjoyed it – the place is so beautiful and peaceful.

The sites are grassy, reasonably sized and there’s enough shade to go around. The swimming and snorkelling is great too. You can also take your 4WD onto the beach, so you don’t have to lug all your gear down!
Brian Lee fishing/4WD tour

One of the top 5 highlights of our Kimberley trip in 2015 was the tour with Brian Lee, run from Kooljaman. Brian is a Traditional Owner, with some incredible stories to tell and will give you an amazing day out. You will need your own 4WD for this trip. Brian takes you into a restricted, locally owned area along Hunter Creek, where you can fish, swim and hunt for mud crabs.

Sitting around a fire eating mud crabs and fresh fish while the beautiful green water rolled in is a memory I won’t forget any time soon. If you get a chance to do one of his tours, I hugely recommend it.

We caught a number of different species of fish on the tour. We even had a nice swim in the water (trusting Brian’s advice that it was safe to do so!).

Kooljaman has some of the best accommodation in the region.
Cooking up some fresh mud crabs over the fire.

**Free camping**

If you are into staying in a free camps, there are a couple of options. James Price Point and Quandong Point seem to be the more popular options, and both have amazing views. If you want a few more luxuries though, head to Middle Lagoon or Kooljaman.
Middle Lagoon is a spot you can free camp at.

**Take a visit to Cape Leveque**

I really can’t rate Cape Leveque any higher as it is a truly stunning place that the whole family will enjoy. It’s great to include in a [Kimberley/Gibb River Road](#) trip while you’re there. This will give you a bit of perspective and will change it up from the amazing water holes along the Gibb to some fantastic coastline. Take your camera, a sense of adventure and you’ll have an amazing time.
A bad afternoon’s fishing is still better than a good day at work.

Walking up and down the beaches in the area as the sun goes down is an experience that will not be forgotten. The red cliffs change colours and put on a truly mind-blowing show as the waves roll in, lapping at your feet.

If you haven’t been there before, its time to start planning. Maybe we will see you up there!

Have you been to the north-west of Australia? What was the best part of your trip?