



Steep Point is home to some of Western Australia's most remote and pristine beaches. Located at the furthest western point of the Australian mainland, it's frequented by those wanting to escape the crowds and find amazing fishing, beaches, camping and 4WDing. It sounds unbelievable because it is. However, there's a very special island just off Steep Point which is even more remote, with equally as good fishing, 4WD tracks, camping and beaches.

Dirk Hartog Island is a short 15-minute barge ride from the beach at Steep Point and is an island paradise like no other in WA.

The number of people allowed on the island at one time is strictly limited, so you can be guaranteed your own slice of paradise.



You can witness the incredible power of Mother Nature from the cliffs on the island.

Getting to Dirk Hartog Island

The most common way to get to Dirk Hartog Island is to drive your 4WD to Steep Point and put it on the barge across.

Alternatively, you can get there via boat, but you need to pick a day with good conditions and have a vessel suitable for the trip. It's a 36km drive across from Denham by boat. There is a landing strip on the island too, so planes and helicopters are able to fly in too.



The barge is the easiest way to get to the island with your 4WD.

The barge trip

Dirk Hartog Island has a purpose-built aluminium barge, which can fit a 4WD and trailer on in one go. The barge runs every day of the year when required, and must be booked before you arrive.

The barge pulls up onto Sheltered Bay off Steep Point and lowers its ramps down for you to drive onto. The driver will direct your vehicle onto the barge safely and then take you across to the island where you reverse off.

The barge runs in most conditions, but if the weather is very bad your trip will have to be delayed until the next day.



You'll be able to fit your vehicle and trailer on the barge that takes you there.

About the island

Dirk Hartog is the only Island in Western Australia that you can take your own 4WD onto. It's remote, pristine and absolutely massive. The Eastern side is lined with perfect beaches, and the Western side houses some of the biggest cliffs in Western Australia.

I mentioned the island is big, and want to clarify this - people often underestimate its size. At its longest point, Dirk Hartog Island is almost 80km long, and around 9km wide. For Western Australians, Rottnest Island is around 33 times smaller than Dirk Hartog Island! This means that travel time around the island is considerable, which is something to keep in mind.



Pristine Camping, 4WDing & Fishing on Dirk Hartog Island



The picture-perfect beaches are just one of the reasons to visit.

History of Dirk Hartog Island

In 1616, Dirk Hartog Island was discovered by those on a ship working for the Dutch East India Company. Over the following years, the island was visited by a number of different people. In 1867 a leasehold was granted for the island, for the purpose of farming sheep. In 1908, Cape Inscription Lighthouse was started, along with a storehouse, oil store and stables. This was completed in 1910, and then a jetty and tramway were built. The lighthouse is still in operation today.

Since then, the island has undergone a huge ecological correction with a joint effort to bring the island back to its original state. They've removed a number of non-native animals over the years, including sheep, goats and now the majority of the feral cats. The entire northern part of the island is fenced off and has cameras to detect the presence of feral cats. These cats have done a huge amount of damage over the year in reducing the population of small native fauna.

A number of these native animals have been re-introduced onto the island (and continue to be released), and as each day passes the island is slowly changing back to its natural state.



The relics of a previous time on the island.

Camping on the island

Dirk Hartog Island is jointly run by the Wardle family, and the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW).

Camping is the most common way to stay on the island. The DPAW offers several camps spread around the island. All have none or very limited facilities. By this, I mean you might get a table, small shack or fish cleaning board, but there are no toilets, bins and most certainly no running water.

Alternatively, you can camp at the Homestead. This is located on the eastern side of the island, about 20km drive from the barge landing. These sites are located metres from the beach and have access to a camp kitchen with gas BBQ, food preparation area and sink. They also have access to two fresh hot water showers and two flushing toilets.



Camping at the homestead is one of the accommodation options you can choose.

Other accommodation

If camping isn't your thing, you can stay at a lodge near the homestead or the homestead villas. For an extremely remote part of the world, the facilities are unbelievable, with amazing, fresh catered food available if you please!



If you want a fancier option, homestead villas are available.



Things to do on Dirk Hartog Island

Dirk Hartog is the ultimate retreat. You can laze on the picture-perfect beaches all day long, or head out for the day fishing to a remote rock face.

There are some impressive natural creations including massive blowholes, rock pools, the Rose Lake, sand dunes and the giant western cliffs. If you are into history, there is plenty of it, with past relics to look at. A trip around the island is well and truly worth the drive, but you may need to split it into two days!

Perhaps the most impressive of all is the huge array of wildlife. The Island has dugongs and turtles through to sharks, manta rays, birds, whales and everything in between.



The west side of the island features some huge cliffs.

Dirk Hartog Island fishing

People visit Steep Point from all over the world as it's extremely well known for its amazing fishing. Dirk Hartog Island is easily as good, with everything from pink snapper to mackerel and sailfish being caught. If you have access to a boat, you barely have to leave the shores to find beautiful coral reef full of the tastiest fish in the ocean.

For land-based fishing, most people head to the Western side and fish from the rocks. This style of fishing requires a bit of preparation and a lot of common sense. The fish are big, the cliffs are even bigger and if you have an accident, things can go horribly wrong.



A big cobia caught in between Steep Point and Dirk Hartog Island.

When's the best time to visit?

You can visit Dirk Hartog Island all year round, but the more popular season due to weather conditions and fishing is between March and September.

There are a variety of animals that can be seen on Dirk Hartog Island throughout the year. If you want to see the turtles nesting and hatching, you need to visit in between December and January. The Dugongs, on the other hand, are mainly around in July and August.



The spectacular view from Steep Point.

Getting around Dirk Hartog Island

The only way to travel around the Island is by 4WD. There are tracks that go all the way around the island and cut from the major attractions back to the 'main' track.

The tracks are all sand or limestone rock, with the occasional dune or beach section. Most of the tracks are fairly compact, but you will struggle to drive much faster than 50km/h even on the best sections. There are plenty of corrugations and bumpy tracks, so make sure you pack appropriately!

I did a day trip from the homestead almost all the way around the Island by 4WD, and it took easily 10 hours. It's a big island, with slow 4WD tracks and lots to see – take your time and



soak it up!



If you want to be able to travel around, then you will need a 4WD.

What to bring

Visiting Dirk Hartog Island requires a fair bit of thought into logistics. You need to be entirely self-sufficient unless you are staying at the homestead.

This includes drinking water, fuel for your 4WD to get to Steep Point and around Dirk Hartog Island, food, toilets and anything else you may need.

The closest fuel station is 185km away from Steep Point (BP Overlander), with about half of that being gravel/sandy tracks. Consider that driving on 4WD tracks will use substantially more fuel than your average driving so bring jerry cans as required.

Consider taking a second spare tyre with you as well, with the limestone tracks sometimes causing havoc. Adjust your tyre pressures accordingly, and drive slowly over the sharp rocks!



The limestone tracks on the island can cause punctures, so spares are a must.

What does it cost to visit Dirk Hartog Island?

Right off the bat, I'm going to say a visit to Dirk Hartog Island is not on the cheap end of the scale. However, it's incomparable to the rest of camping in Western Australia. The camping fees are pretty reasonable, and they start at \$20 per adult per night. The barge transfer varies from \$365 to \$680 per vehicle depending on what season you visit. There are also additional costs for each passenger.

What you get for your money is a pristine island that is set up for the ultimate adventure with friends and family, and memories to last a lifetime.



Dirk Hartog Island is almost like visiting another world.

Why this island is a world-class destination

Western Australia truly has some world-class destinations. The more I travel, the harder it gets to list them in order of what's most impressive. One thing's for sure though, Dirk Hartog Island is up there with the best that WA has to offer, with no doubt at all.

If you have been thinking about a visit, lock it in...I guarantee that you'll love it!