

Wilpena Pound is pretty cool, right?

What looks like the aftermath of a massive asteroid hitting the Flinders Ranges is actually a 500-plus million-year-old ruin of an ancient mountain range. Shaped like a Pringle, there are a plethora of walks and trails that skirt the rim, go up to the edge, and even tickle the middle – all accessed from various points within the Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park.

Being bowl-shaped... have you ever wondered why there's no lake or billabong in the middle? All the water that lands inside – where does it all go? Well, friends – it flows right through the middle and out, in a North-West/South-East running gorge.

Edeowie Gorge.



*Appreciating the tight squeeze...*

Evolving from years of monsoonal downpours dropping their load over the Pound, Edeowie Gorge is the hidden gem of the Flinders Ranges. Towering, 100-metre high cliffs, waterfalls with 50 metre-plus drops, and flood debris piled up to 10 metres in the trees – this gorge, if it were ever in full-flood, would make the River Torrens in downtown Adelaide look like a stream. You may not have heard of it because it's so epic to traverse. It's a serious day's walk, but well worth it.

## Malloga Falls Track

The Malloga Falls track (21 kilometres return) that departs from the Visitor Centre at Ikara-Flinders Ranges takes you into the Pound for 8 flat-ish kilometres first. The trail then turns to a sandy singletrack, before dropping into the early headwaters of the Gorge. Even this part is pretty cool, and probably satisfies most day walkers. Watch your step on the boulders, or frolic along them – your choice, but any rolled ankles here could spell *disaster*, as it's not an easy extraction point for emergency services.



*The Malloga Falls track takes you into the Pound for 8 flat-ish kilometres.*



*The Malloga Falls track takes you into the Pound for 8 flat-ish kilometres.*



*The trail turns to a singletrack just after the junction.*



*The bottom of Malloga Falls*

After reaching Malloga Falls, most day walkers will turn around and head for home, achieving a solid 4-5 hours of walking. Choosing to continue means appreciating your inner Indiana Jones, and going deep into the heart of the Pound.

## Glenora Falls

As you wander down the Gorge, the walls start to get higher and your choice of escape becomes limited. At about the 13.5-kilometre mark, you'll meet your next waterfall: Glenora Falls. There's an exposed traverse to negotiate here where if you fall, you will die. Trying to imagine this waterfall in full flood is a belittling experience, and one not to dwell on too much while you tiptoe around. The deeper you go into the Gorge the quieter it becomes, with the wind keeping out (unless it's a Nor'wester, and funnelling along).



*The bottom of Glenora Falls*



*...The bottom of the top!*



*Surrounded by rock at the top of Glenora Falls!*

## **Kanalla Falls**

Only one or two kilometres down the Gorge, Kanalla Falls appears – and this one has even more of a doozy obstacle to negotiate. Option A is another traverse, and Option B is a tricky downclimb following painted arrows.

Who comes this far with a little paintbrush?

My guess is it would either be the Park Rangers from many years ago, or the owners of Edeowie Station where, almost mysteriously, the Gorge trickles out into obscurity. One minute you've got cliffs and hillsides hundreds of metres high, and the next you're out in a floodplain that looks like nothing special.



*Looking down at the sketchy traverse of Kanalla Falls!*



*The Kanalla Falls traverse*



*The spring at the bottom of Kanalla Falls*



*The tricky climb up Kanalla Falls!*



*Looking back along the traverse...*



*If you squint, you'll spot me tackling the traverse!*



*The top of Kanalla Falls*

## **The Beauty of Edeowie Gorge**

The Gorge's disappearing act is like a superhero vanishing when you no longer require their presence. Where a Superhero saves you from impending doom, Edeowie Gorge provides you with either an exhilarating day's walk to improve your fitness, or a greater appreciation of the Flinders Ranges' geological make-up. Maybe too, an acknowledgement of the power of water and its effect on the landscape, or even just the experience of several hours of walking through jaw-dropping scenery, without any distractions to allow for mental clarity.

Whatever it is, a day trip along a section of Edeowie Gorge is an awesome experience, and one to add to the bucket list of things to do in the Flinders Ranges.



*The view from the top!*



*So many cliffs!*



*Occasional cairns indicate the better paths through the gorge*

## Logistics

1. One entry point is off the Malloga Falls Track in the Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park, where a park pass is required for entry. Otherwise, you can contact Edeowie Station and pay a small fee for a day-visit to access the Gorge from the bottom end.
2. Glenora Falls and Kanalla Falls are not for the faint-hearted! Bushwalking instructors use ropes to protect students as they walk through. Know your own limitations, and do not commit to traveling through the Gorge if you are not familiar with low-grade rock climbing. For those who want the full experience of the Gorge, but lack the skills to negotiate the waterfalls, you are welcome to get in contact with me and we can work out a plan of attack! Attempting the full length of the Gorge without someone who has been there before is a recipe for disaster.
3. The walk will take the best part of a day (17 kilometres long, one way) and there are a few ways to arrive back where you started.
  - Organise a car shuttle or exchange with mates (i.e. leave one car at either end), or find some friendly campers at Wilpena willing to pick you up in a form of 'pre-arranged hitchhiking'. This is only suitable if you are committed to completing the whole 17 kilometres of the Gorge.
  - Pack a trail-running vest with supplies for the day, and run the flat sections to save time. This should allow you to complete the Gorge, turn around, and make it back to wherever you started your day (34 kilometres return).
  - Bring overnight camping gear, and stay at either end (Edeowie Station or the National Park, where extra fees apply)

I can't stress enough that this walk is not easy! However, it is a destination I think is worth visiting and sharing with others – hence this blog! This is my attempt to spread the word on how good the Flinders Ranges really are.



*To save time, pack a trail-running vest with supplies and run the flat sections.*



*The cliffs in Edeowie Gorge really tower over you!*

## My Run



*A GPS overview*

**What's the most challenging trek, hike, or bushwalk you've ever traversed?**