Welcome to Barron Gorge National Park and surrounds

Escape into a World Heritage-listed paradise—a place truly like no other. Journey through the world’s oldest-surviving tropical rainforests, rising above the city of Cairns. Walk in the footsteps of the Djabugandgi Bama—the area’s Traditional Owners—to discover the rich history that shaped this colourful landscape.

Djabugay country

Barron Gorge National Park is the traditional land of the Djabugay Aboriginal people. The people are known as the Djabugandgi bama. Bama refers to rainforest people. The Djabugandgi bama welcome you to their country—Djirri Nyudu Nyrriumba.

Djirri Nyudu Nyrriumba

Djabugay country is a site valued worldwide for its exceptional diversity, evolutionary history and superb scenic beauty. Covering nearly 900,000ha, this unique place stretches 450km along Queensland’s north-east coast between Townsville and Cooktown.

Wildlife to spot

The diverse forest communities in Barron Gorge National Park are a vital, living habitat for more than 147 animal species. See brilliant blue Ulysses and vivid green Cairns birdwing butterflies flit among the trees. If you’re lucky you may catch a glimpse of a Lumholtz’s tree-kangaroo resting in a tree branch above you, or a musky rat-kangaroo as it bounds along the forest floor. Though seldom spotted, the park is home to many nocturnal mammals, including striped possums, long-tailed pygmy possums and spotted-tailed quolls.

Birdwatchers will delight! Listen for the distinctive ‘wallock-a-woo’ call of the elusive woomoo fruit-dove echoing down from the rainforest canopy. Vibrant rainbow and scaly-breasted lorikeets screech from the trees, while quieter emerald doves and southern cassowaries explore the forest floor. Seasonal visitors, such as the buff-breasted paradise kingfisher, nest in North Queensland’s rainforests and delight those fortunate to spot them with their distinctive long white tail feathers.

I am fortunate to work in such a top place, with so much to see and do, all close-by. From majestic Barron Falls, it is only a stones-throw to some of Queensland’s best walking tracks, such as the Douglas and Smith tracks. Each day I am reminded of the important role national parks play to protect these special places.

Ranger Theo

Djabugay Elder Gilpin Banning explains that Budadjji (also known as Wungul), created the waterways from Yaln.giri (Crystal Cascades) including Di:wunga (Stoney Creek) and Waalara (Surprise Creek) and Din Din (Barron Falls).

Din Din contains important creation stories and is significant in our existence. This is where Gudju Gudju took the form of Budadjji the carpet snake and created the waterways including the falls. Us Djabugay people, we are the owners of that country and we need to manage and look after this. The water, the plants and animals, all of it.

Djirri Nyudu Nyrriumba

Djabugay Aboriginal Corporation Chairman William Duffin

(pers. comm 2018)

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Budadjji, the carpet snake

Artist Martha Brim

(Above) © Tourism and Events Queensland; (above far right) © Qld Govt; (right) © Daryn Storch
Start your journey

Barron Gorge National Park is north-west of Cairns in North Queensland. To reach the lower sections, and the southern access to the extensive walking track network, drive from Cairns 15km along Kamerunga Road to the Stoney Creek Road turn-off, then continue along Stoney Creek Road to the end.

Alternatively, drive along Lake Placid Road to Lake Placid, a popular local spot for family picnics at the base of Barron Gorge.

Take the Barron Gorge Road turn-off and drive a further 3km into the gorge for stunning views of the mid-gorge area near the Barron Gorge Hydro-Power Station.

You can also access the park from Kuranda and Speewah Conservation Park on the Atherton Tableland. From Kuranda village, 27km from Cairns, drive 3.5km along the Barron Falls Road to access Barron Falls lookout and drive a further 1.4km to Wrights lookout. To reach Speewah from Kuranda, drive a further 6km along the Kennedy Highway to Speewah and follow the signs to the conservation park. This road is not suitable for caravans or trailers.

Nestled in Kuranda is Jumrum Creek Conservation Park. This small park protects a pocket of dense rainforest along Jumrum Creek and is part of the Kuranda Village walk. Drop into the Kuranda Visitor Information Centre on Coondoo Street and pick up handy map.

For a taste of Kuranda and Mowbray national parks, take a drive along Black Mountain Road. Stretching 43km, this road connects the Kennedy Highway near Kuranda to Mossman—Mount Molloy Road near Julatten.

Ways to explore

With so much to see and do, from white water rafting to cultural tours, you may want to tick Barron Gorge National Park and surrounds off your bucket list with a commercial tour. Visit queensland.com for more information.

Skyrail

Embark on a fascinating journey of discovery over and through the world’s oldest continually surviving tropical rainforest with Skyrail Rainforest Cableway. Glide just metres above the pristine rainforest canopy in the Barron Gorge National Park before descending to explore the forest floor. For more information visit skyrail.com.au

Historic train

All aboard! Take a trip rich in history onboard the Kuranda Scenic Railway. This unique train journey takes you over 37 bridges and through 15 handmade tunnels forged by Queensland’s early pioneers, more than 125 years ago. Trek past World Heritage-listed rainforest and discover why this is one of the world’s great railway journeys. The train departs from Cairns or Kuranda. For more information visit ksr.com.au
Ways to explore

A Camping
While there’s no camping in Barron Gorge National Park, you can pitch a tent in nearby Speewah Conservation Park. Enveloped by tropical rainforest, the camping area is a convenient base for exploring the nearby long-distance walking track network. There are three individual camp sites and a large communal tent area available. You’ll need to book and pay well in advance, particularly for long weekends and school holidays. Bookings can be made at queensland.gov.au/camping

A Scenic drive
Experience World Heritage rainforest from the seat of your car on a scenic drive along Black Mountain Road. Connecting the Tableland townships of Kuranda and Julatten, this 43km journey gets rougher and becomes four-wheel-drive territory, as it winds north through elevated forest. The road is not recommended for caravans or trailers and watch for logging trucks and trail bikes. Black Mountain Road may be closed during periods of heavy rain. Check qld.gov.au/park-alerts before travelling this road. See overleaf for more details.

A Mountain biking
If you prefer two-wheel pedal power, explore the Bump track and Twin Bridges track. Ride through the pages of history on the Twin Bridges track (the original Black Mountain Road), where old timber bridges from a busier bygone era remain. On the steep Bump track, savour views of Mowbray River Falls. You’ll encounter walkers on both tracks, as well as horse riders (written authorisation required) on the Bump track. For your safety, cyclists should give way to horses and walkers. See overleaf for more details.

A Bushwalking
From short treetop walks to full-day trails, there’s a walk to satisfy every appetite. Experience a bird’s-eye view over the rainforest on the Barron Falls lookout track. Meet Budaji,
the giant carpet snake ancestral spirit who created Barron River and gorge as you wind your way to two lookouts along the track. Witness nature at her most powerful from the lookout platforms, as wet season water thunders and froths down Barron Falls into the gorge, after downpours between December and April.

Wind through secluded rainforest, encountering tranquil rock pools and cascading creeks on both the Surprise Creek track and Stoney Creek Garndal Garndal track. From Kuranda, don't miss a visit to Wrights lookout, with its spectacular panoramic vistas over Barron Gorge, Cairns and the coast.

Walking the Djimburru

Nestled between tableland and coast lie Djimburru—a network of traditional Djabugay walking paths where the Djabugandgi Bama—the Traditional Owners of this area—walked for trade, seasonal food gathering and to visit ceremonial sites. Today, these traditional trails have been linked to form a network of walks throughout the park.

The Douglas track follows one of the first trails linking the Hodgkinson goldfields on the Atherton Tableland with the port of Cairns. Hike through cool, shady rainforest, passing old remnants of stone-pitched walls and railway construction camps. Take in stunning views of the coast, Lake Placid and the Barron River, before climbing the distinctive Red Bluff landmark. A short side-track to Bunda Bulurru (Glacier Rock) reveals a significant traditional meeting place for the local Djabugandgi Bama.

Prepare for a full-day walk on the Smith track, trekking through rainforest, wet eucalypt forest and grasslands. As you walk, look for beautiful staghorn ferns high up in the trees, a stand of cadagi trees, giant kauri pines and a cycad gully. Catch your breath on ridge tops offering scenic views through the trees.

A number of link tracks—Djina-Wu, Yalbogie, Gandal wandun and McDonalds—connect the Djimburru to create long-distance routes. See overleaf for more details about route options. Detailed track information is available at: qld.gov.au/nationalparks
**Explore the park safely**
- Take extreme care at Bunda Bulurru (Glacier Rock) and supervise children at all times.
- Take care at creek crossings. Please don’t attempt crossing when the flow is rapid or during wet conditions.
- Always carry plenty of drinking water and wear sunscreen, a hat, sturdy footwear and insect repellent.
- Try to walk in the cooler part of the day and plan to complete your walk well before dark.
- Stay on the tracks. You may get lost if you leave the roads or walking tracks. Take a map if possible and follow markers and signs carefully.
- Take care on uneven surfaces, especially in wet conditions. Tracks can become slippery when wet.
- Be careful when walking on slippery rocks or at the edge of steep cliffs.
- Consider your ability and track conditions carefully before setting out.
- Be aware that stinging trees are found along many walking tracks. They grow to 4m high and have large, heart-shaped leaves with serrated edges. Do not touch this plant as it may result in a very painful sting.
- Cassowaries are potentially dangerous. If encountered, avoid unnecessary risks and keep your distance.
- Mobile phone coverage is generally not available on the long day walks.
- Notify somebody of the walk you are intending to take and walk with a partner or in a group.

**Caring for our parks**
- Everything in national parks, living or dead, is protected. Please leave everything as you found it.
- Take all your rubbish with you when you leave. There are no bins provided in the park.
- Always stay on marked tracks as shortcutting leads to erosion and instability.
- Avoid the spread of weeds—check your clothing and shoes regularly for seeds.
- Leave your pets at home. Domestic animals are not permitted in national parks. Horses are accepted on the Bump track with written authorisation.

**Ranger’s favourites**

My favourite walking track is the McDonalds track which winds its way through a number of different vegetation types before offering magnificent views over Barron Gorge and the coastal plains below. **Ranger Evan**

This little corner of the world is like a living museum. It’s truly special to be able to see plants that have survived through the millennia—it’s like looking at a dinosaur! All of this is protected and that’s why we love our jobs. **Ranger David**

Barron Gorge National Park stands out to me, with its exceptional natural beauty, home of many rare and endangered species and a strong cultural history. I really enjoy the change of seasons, particularly the wet season with all the new growth and the rain makes the forest come alive. **Ranger Evan**

Everywhere I get to work is just beautiful, being able to see the canopy of tall rainforest trees sharing the light with a diversity of climbing vines—I love seeing visitors’ reactions to that. **Ranger Stephanie**
Walking tracks at a glance

Immerse yourself in the area's history exploring a range of bushwalks. For more adventurous walkers, a network of walking tracks provides long-distance walks between the four main trailheads—Smith, Stoney Creek/Douglas, Wrights lookout and Speewah camping area. You need to be fit, experienced and well-prepared to undertake the longer day walks. You’ll also need transport to and from each end.

Short walks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Walk time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stoney Creek Gandal Gandal track</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>2km</td>
<td>40mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas track</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>1.2km</td>
<td>40mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrights lookout**</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>0.5km</td>
<td>15min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise Creek track</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>2.5km</td>
<td>1.5hrs</td>
</tr>
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Close to Kuranda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Walk time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barron Falls lookout track*</td>
<td>Easy (wheelchair accessible with assistance)</td>
<td>1.2km</td>
<td>40mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrights lookout**</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>0.5km</td>
<td>15min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise Creek track (leaving from Wrights lookout)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>2.5km</td>
<td>1.5hrs</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track route</th>
<th>Track junctions</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Walk time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith trailhead</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>9.8km</td>
<td>8–10hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrights lookout</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>9.8km</td>
<td>8–10hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speewah camping area</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>7.9km</td>
<td>4–6hrs</td>
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</tbody>
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Long walks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track name</th>
<th>Track junctions</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Walk time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Douglas track (Tablelands to Cairns direction). Track can also be walked Cairns to Tablelands direction.</td>
<td>13, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>7.8km</td>
<td>4–6hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith track (Tablelands to Cairns direction). Walking this track in the Cairns to Tablelands direction is not recommended unless you are very fit.</td>
<td>13, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>8.25km</td>
<td>6–7hrs</td>
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</table>

Suggested long-distance routes (incorporating link tracks)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Track route</th>
<th>Track junctions</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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Drives and other trails

<table>
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Mountain Road</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Not recommended for caravans or trailers</td>
<td>43km one way</td>
<td>2–3hrs driving time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin Bridges track</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
<td>18km one way</td>
<td>6–8hrs walking time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bump track</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>*written authorisation is required to horse ride</td>
<td>12km return</td>
<td>8hrs walking time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>