

# OUTBACK ADVENTURE

NOWAK TRAVELOGUE | APRIL, MAY | 2012

## The Hot Trek

The alarm rang early on my birthday. 6am - it was still dark as night. We had a quick breakfast and hastened. We needed to start before first light.

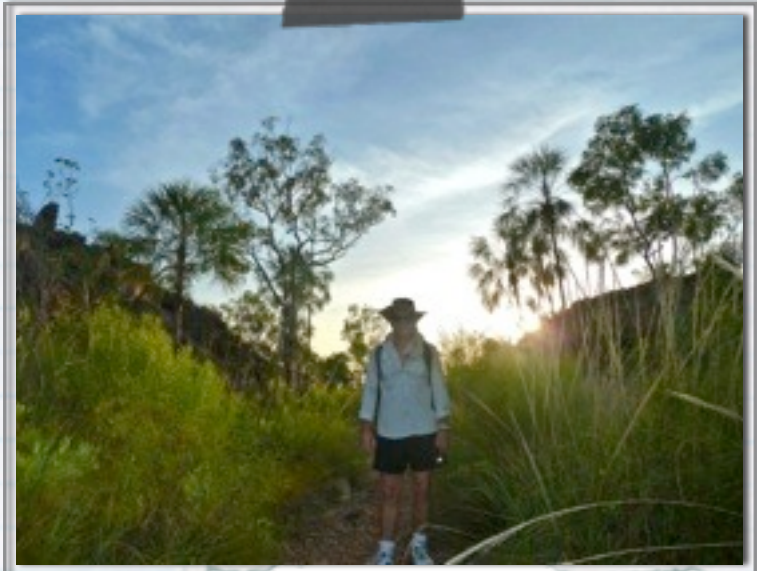
The temperature was cool but pleasant. Hiking shoes, water and sun cream. We needed to get on our way early, in order to enjoy Katherine's chasm and stream.

The book told us the hike was "medium". It was quite pleasant for all the first part. Then in got hotter and hotter. We continued to consult our trekking chart.

The sun kept rising higher. There was sweat on our brows and our back. We finally arrived at our destination. Awe inspiring, magnificent - totally taken aback.

The lookout photos were amazing. We were so gobsmacked by the view. We decided to move to the next one. A waterfall, no crocs, and a cool pond too.

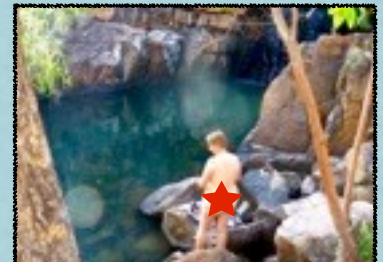
We arrived and swam in the nuddy. Arrhhh just as the tourists would do. Apart from the walk to get there. Katherine Gorge is gorgeous but awfully hot too.



**GREVILLEA** We know these plants from Bendigo where it is also very hot especially in the summer. Striking wispy red flowers all along the path we took to the lookout.



**DREAMTIME STORY?** This is my first glimpse of the "white skinned nomad" in the NT. Not being content to simply cool off in the stream this nymph triumphantly raised up her arms to display all her cheeky charms. I gathered it was a tribal thing.



**MORE DREAMTIME** I got a closer look at the white skinned nomad at the Southern Pool. She was exceedingly agile for a person of her age evidenced by how quickly she got dressed when she heard someone coming.



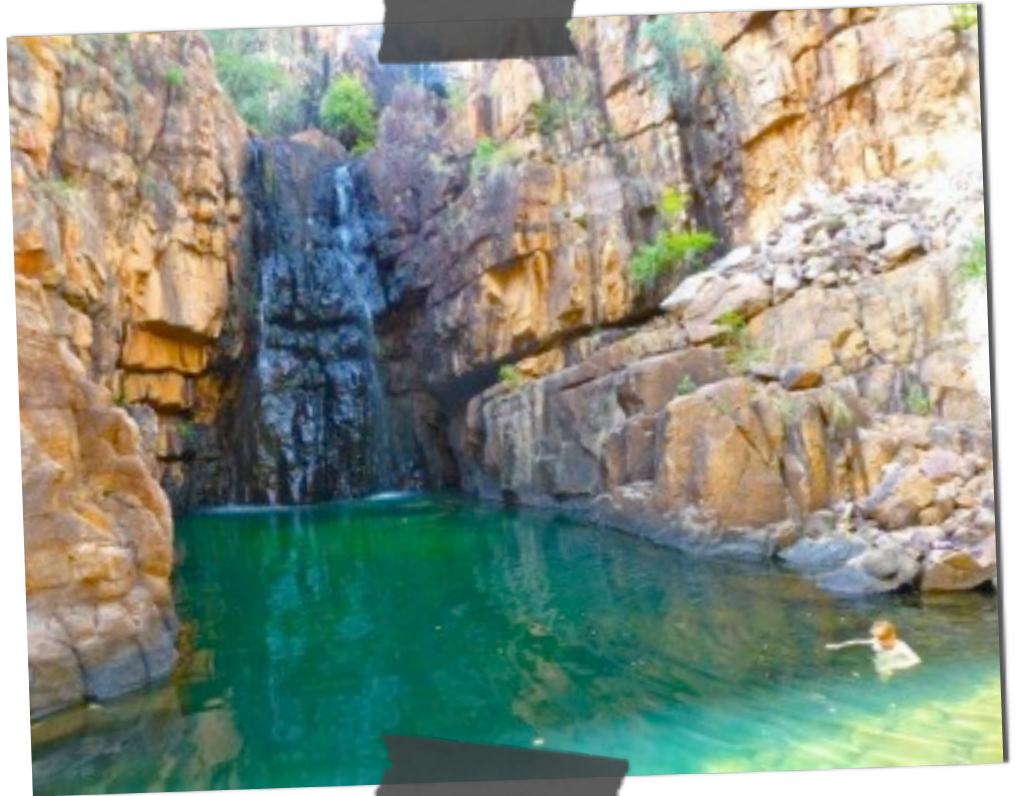
# OUTBACK STORIES

A LAND OF PLENTY



Whilst the early colonial settlers saw the land as harsh and inhospitable the indigenous people viewed it as full of resources. Each season provided a different type of resource which enabled the local Jawoyn tribe to live well. According to dreamtime stories Nitmiluk was named by a dragon-like creation figure called Nabilil, who travelled across the land, arriving at the entrance to Nitmiluk when the cicadas were in full song.

# Survival in the Top End



## NITMILUK

Nitmiluk means “land of the cicada” but we heard no cicadas. We did not see many aboriginals either. Although this country had a rich aboriginal history and is administered by an aboriginal board of management we have come across very few aboriginal staff. With so many aboriginal people unemployed in Katherine we are left to wonder why its own board does not do something to help the unemployment. It’s very poignant when a German tourist tells you that the only aboriginal they come across seem to be unemployed, drunk and living on the street.

Our young boat tour guide was aboriginal and proud of it. He was a mine of information - he told us how the aborigines used the plants for medicine, for food and for utilitarian things like fish traps, canoes, baskets, water carriers, eating utensils/dinnerware and music. He showed us rock paintings and told us the aboriginal names for everything around here. There was also one maintenance man and another tour guide who were aboriginal, but the rest white. A big rethink is needed.

## WHEN TO VISIT

April is the end of the wet season for the NT and for the next couple of months the weather is supposed to be reasonably mild - or so they say. Some of the tours are not operating but it is not at all crowded. A good compromise for us. The ranger warned us that the temperatures up at the top of the escarpment can be 5-10C hotter. Starting out very early on our walk was a great idea. It was beautiful in the early morning light. Water tanks located on the top of the escarpment, allowed us to replenish our water bottles. After our pleasant walk up, and our time at the lookout and the pools, the sun had made its presence felt. The walk back was a bit of a test. However, it was worth it. Last year on this day - Sig’s birthday - we were climbing another hill - Glastonbury Tor in England. The one big difference was that it happened to be freezing cold!!



Birthday boy but not in birthday suit



