

# Waterhole Hopping

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Pack your swimsuit, towel and picnic basket and head off in the direction of the West MacDonnell Ranges!

After 88kms you'll find your first swimmable waterhole, Ellery Creek Bighole. Entry is via a gravel road suitable for two-wheel drive vehicles.

Ellery Creek Big Hole is one of the most popular and picturesque camping, walking, swimming and picnic spots in the West MacDonnell Ranges National Park.

Thousands of years of massive floods have carved out this waterhole, which is recognised as an internationally significant geological site. The Aboriginal name for Ellery Creek Big Hole is Udepata. The permanent water made it a special meeting place for the Arrernte people on the fish and honey ant dreaming trails.

Jump back on the road and head another 44kms to reach Glen Helen Gorge. Here you can take a dip in the Finke river, enjoy lunch at the Glen Helen Lodge while admiring the scenery and take a walk to explore the area.

Heading back towards Alice Springs, just 3kms from Glen Helen is the majestic Ormiston Gorge. Ormiston Gorge is a great place for a cool dip, to see the towering red walls of the gorge and pound, and local plants and wildlife. The gorge has a permanent waterhole that is ideal for swimming, especially in the warmer months. Just 500 metres from the kiosk, it is estimated to be up to 14 metres deep at its southern end.

Explore the area via the Ormiston Pound Walk - a three to four-hour circuit that leaves from the carpark to cross the rocky slopes and the flat floor of the pound and back along the gorge via the main waterhole.

Each of these stops have designated camping areas so feel free to spend as much time as you like hopping from waterholes.

