



**A DAY IN**

📍 Simpsons Gap

# THE WEST MACDONNELL RANGES



Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park stretches 161km west of Alice Springs and will draw you in with its majestic beauty. Known as Tjoritja (pronounced Choor-it-ja) by the Traditional Owners, the continuation of cultural practices and a connection to the land is highly significant for local Arrernte Aboriginal culture.

## 1 SIMPSONS GAP

Simpsons Gap is one of the most prominent gaps in the West MacDonnell Ranges, just 20 minutes' drive from Alice Springs. At dawn or dusk you may spot a black-footed rock wallaby along the walking track or near the permanent waterhole. Vegetation typical of the MacDonnell Ranges is found in the area, including large stands of mulga and over 40 rare and relict plants. Several dreaming trails and stories cross at this important spiritual site. There are many short walks that pass the native plants of the area, including ancient ghost gums, and to views of the range. The Simpsons Gap Walking/Cycling path is a 17km one way track from Flynn's Grave to Simpsons Gap.

**Access** 24km from Alice Springs. Sealed road. Suitable to all vehicles, including caravans.

**Facilities** Toilets, free gas BBQ's, picnic areas. No camping permitted.

## 2 STANDLEY CHASM

Known traditionally as Angkerle Atwatye, meaning "Gap of Water", Standley Chasm is an icon of Central Australia, proudly owned and operated by the Western Arrernte people. An inspiration, regardless of either the weather or the time of the day, the Chasm is at its most dramatic an hour either side of noon on a sunny day. Then the sheer walls glow from reflected sunlight to create a breathtaking display of stark form and rich colour. An entirely different experience is provided along the walking track that links the carpark to the Chasm, which follows a creek bed that attracts a great variety of wildlife. Although the track is rough in parts, most active visitors will find the 30-minute return walk to be quite easy. *Please note: Entry fees apply to enter Standley Chasm.*

**Access** 50km from Alice Springs. Sealed road. Suitable to all vehicles, including caravans.

**Facilities** Café, toilets, campground (bookings essential), guided tours. Showers available for overnight campers.



📍 Redbank Gorge



📍 Standley Chasm

**Bookings and information:**  
Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre  
41 Todd Mall, Alice Springs | 1800 645 199

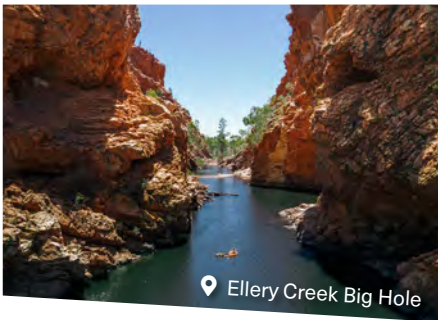


### 3 ELLERY CREEK BIG HOLE

Ellery Creek Big Hole is a spectacular waterhole in the mighty Ellery Creek which cuts through a gorge in the West MacDonnell Ranges. Thousands of years of massive floods have carved out this beautiful waterhole and unlocked some amazing geology. Visitors to Ellery Creek Big Hole will be rewarded with excellent recreational opportunities – walking, swimming, picnicking and camping just to name a few.

**Access** 88km from Alice Springs.  
2km of unsealed road, suitable to all vehicles including caravans.

**Facilities** Toilets, picnic tables, free gas BBQ's, firepits, campground (camping fees apply).



### 4 SERPENTINE GORGE

Serpentine Gorge is yet another stunning natural feature of the West Macs region. The area provides the opportunity for long or short walks through lovely River Red Gums and alongside idyllic semi-permanent waterholes. In dry times the waterholes dry up, leaving Serpentine Gorge waterhole the only water source in the area. This leads to perfect opportunities for bird watching. There are lookouts and well-marked trails offering some fantastic views of the types of landscape and geology that are so evocative of Central Australia.

**Access** 102km from Alice Springs.  
Recommended 4WD or AWD.

**Facilities** Toilets, picnic benches.  
Camping not permitted.

### 5 THE OCHRE PITS

Ochre has been used all over the world for decoration and painting since pre-historic times. At the Ochre Pits you can see the natural ochres in the cliff face have provided a source of materials for Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. And they still provide brilliant colours for modern man too, since their shifting hues make for some excellent photos.

*Please note: The Ochre Pits is a registered sacred site and is protected by Sacred Site and Parks and Wildlife legislation. The site offers the unique opportunity for visitors to view an ochre deposit that is still used by local Arrernte peoples. Please do not touch or interfere with any of the ochre – severe penalties apply and the site is regularly patrolled by Rangers.*

**Access** 110km from Alice Springs.  
Sealed road. Suitable to all vehicles, including caravans.

**Facilities** Toilets, picnic benches, free gas BBQ's. Camping not permitted.

### 6 ORMISTON GORGE

Ormiston Gorge is a great place to see the towering walls of the gorge and pound, local plants and wildlife. The gorge has a waterhole that is there year-round and is great for swimming, especially in warmer months. It is located just 500m from the kiosk and is estimated to be up to 14m deep at its southern end. The 300m Waterhole Walk, which has wheelchair access to the end of the paved path, and the 45-minute return Ghost Gum Lookout Walk are the most popular with visitors. Another way to explore the area is by walking the Ormiston Pound Walk, which is a 8.5km, 3-4 hour circuit that follows the rocky slope into the flat expanse of the pound and back along the gorge by the main waterhole.

**Access** 135km from Alice Springs.  
Sealed road. Suitable to all vehicles, including caravans.

**Facilities** Kiosk, Toilets, picnic benches, free gas BBQ's, campground (camping fees apply).

### 7 GLEN HELEN GORGE

Glen Helen was once part of a cattle station but is now a popular restaurant, resort and caravan park that caters to visitors wanting to truly immerse themselves in the West Macs. Glen Helen provides a perfect base from which to explore the West Macs region. The landscape around Glen Helen is as spectacular as you will find anywhere with a towering sandstone wall greeting you as you arrive. The permanent waterhole at Glen Helen Gorge is home to many species of animals, including a variety of water birds and fish. This also makes swimming possible year-round, however it can be extremely cold even in summer.

**Access** 132km from Alice Springs.  
Sealed road. Suitable to all vehicles including caravans.

**Facilities** Full Facilities: fuel, caravan park, cabins, meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner), licensed bar. Check opening hours.



### 8 REDBANK GORGE

The stunning gorge and chasm are a refuge for many threatened plant and animal species and is a near permanent waterhole, perfect for swimming, located a 1km walk from the carpark. Nestled at the base of Mount Sonder at the west end of the national park, Redbank Gorge also has a few walking options available. Hikers can enjoy the thrill of section 12 of the Larapinta Trail and complete the full Mount Sonder hike (14.2km return), or the Mount Sonder Lookout Walk (5km return). There are two campgrounds available here, for those wanting to enjoy the pristine night skies.

**Access** 157km from Alice Springs.  
5km access road is recommended 4WD or AWD. Check conditions after rain.

**Facilities** Toilets, picnic benches, campgrounds (camping fees apply).



Road conditions and access to parks in the Northern Territory (NT) can change at short notice. Always check the road conditions before you leave. General road conditions can be accessed at [roadreport.nt.gov.au/](http://roadreport.nt.gov.au/). For specific information on national park access, please visit [nt.gov.au/parks](http://nt.gov.au/parks).

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GET OUT THERE IN THE RED CENTRE