

## Highlights from along the length of the Larapinta Trail.

Starting in Alice Springs and ending on Mt Sonder, this tour is a selection of highlights on the Trail, allowing you to take in some of the most scenic views from ridges, gorges, mountain peaks and within Ormiston pound.

**Our style of walking** is to take plenty of time to enjoy the birds, plants, animals, scenery and the fact of just being in the bush. We don't race from A to B. That way, you can enjoy both the challenge *and* the beauty of the trail and surrounds: take a few photographs, sit down occasionally for a cup of tea, ask questions about what you've seen, or just be.

**The Larapinta Trail** is part of a strong, ancient and fascinating landscape. "For us, the trail provides an avenue to be here in the land and feel enriched by this experience. We want to walk so that we stay open to the wider experience of being here."

**Fitness:** All our tours require a medium to high level of bushwalking/walking fitness. As the trail becomes more popular the perception of its difficulty decreases. This however is not the case. The trail remains unrelentingly rocky and hard underfoot and weather extremes can be experienced at any time of year so the more prepared you are the more you will enjoy the experience. More information on preparation is included in the following pages.

**In the following pages** there will also be information on the itinerary and what equipment you need to bring, what we supply and general information to consider for your 9 Day trek.

Please read through the information carefully and don't hesitate to contact us at [info@treklarapinta.com.au](mailto:info@treklarapinta.com.au) with any questions you may have. We also recommend reading the Information NT Parks and Wildlife provide on the Larapinta Trail at: <http://www.nretas.nt.gov.au/national-parks-and-reserves/parks/walks/larapinta>

**Group size:** We have a maximum group size of 8 on all our Larapinta Trail Tours (minimum 4)

- **9 Day Trek Cost in 2012: \$ 2,190 per person** (exclusive and non exclusive group rates apply - ask for details)

See the Booking Form for conditions and payment details.

## 9 Day Trek Itinerary 2012

**Pick up:** on day 1 from your accommodation in Alice Springs between 7.30 am 8am.

**Drop Off:** on day 9 around 4pm at your accommodation in Alice Springs.

**Day 1. Section 1.** Pick up at your accommodation between 7.30 and 8 am. We transfer to Wallaby Gap on Section 1 and walk to Charles Creek. It's a shorter day to start on and gives us plenty of time to transfer to camp at Jay Creek / Fish Hole. *10km 4 hr walk.*

**Day 2. Section 3.** An early start walking along the cool river bed of Jay Creek sees us setting off on Section 3, one of the trails most scenic sections and one of our favourites! We finish up at Standley Chasm and move on to Hugh River bush camp site. *13km 8hr walk*

**Day 3. Section 7.** You're driven through the West MacDonnell Ranges to Ellery Creek and the start of section 7 of the Larapinta Trail. We head off along the low hills through this beautiful piece of country below the Heavitree Range. We then transfer to our private camp on the Ormiston Creek where we base ourselves for the rest of the trip and settle down by the fire with a nice cup of tea! *14km 6hr walk.*

**Day 4. Section 8.** Today we are high on the ridge on section 8 with rewarding views of the surrounding landscape walking from Serpentine Gorge through to Old Serpentine Bush Camp. After the walk we transfer back to our private camp site on Ormiston Creek. *15km 8hr walk*

**Day 5. Section 10.** A great day, the walk wanders along the low limestone hills and valleys from Ormiston Gorge to The Finke River one of the oldest water courses on the planet. Wildflowers have been blooming through this section over the past year along with birdlife. 2012 should be another amazing time on this section. Return to camp. *11km 5-6hr walk*

**Day 6. Pound Walk.** An easy day, with a walk and explore in Ormiston Pound, and the chance to relax a bit. *8km 5hr journey*

**Day 7. Section 11.** This delightful walk meanders along the base of Mount Sonder and goes through some of the best examples of arid-land plant life that you'll see along the trail. Today, we also get to visit Redbank Gorge, and the brave can have a plunge in the icy waterhole there! Return to camp. *14km 4-5hr walk*

**Day 8. Mt Sonder Section 12.** You're delivered in the vehicle to Redbank, where the ascent of Sonder begins. A challenging (but rewarding!) 16km round trip that's well worth the enjoyment and beauty of the view. Return to camp with time in the afternoon to rest in the surrounds, visit Glen Helen Gorge or peruse the Trek Larapinta library. *16km 7hr walk*

**Day 9.** A last, leisurely morning in camp, with time to drink a good cuppa tea or coffee, pack your bags and roll the swags, then head off on an exploratory walk through the valley and hills that surround camp. It's a chance for us to share the area and our life within it a little bit more closely with you before heading off back to Alice Springs (130km), where we should arrive by about 4pm. *4-km 2-3hrs walk*

*Although we endeavour to run the trip as per the itinerary, changes may occur due to weather conditions or other factors outside our control. Please use the above itinerary as a guide only. For fundamental safety, the group members need to be aware of each others location whilst walking, remembering the old bush walking rule of 'keeping an eye on the person behind*

# 9 Day Trek Itinerary & Information



*you', this may require walkers to adjust their pace to the group. Faster walkers soon adjust to the joys of pausing in the shade, taking time to listen to the interpretative guide and absorbing the wonders of the trail.*

## Things to know:

### Flights

Please arrange your flights into Alice Springs at least one day before the trek starts and arrange your departure flights from Alice Springs at least one day after the trek finishes.

### 9 Days in the Bush

9 Days out here in the bush and on the trail is a great experience. Be sure that your boots are broken in and your personal equipment is in good shape.

Although we come together as individuals, we share the experience as a group. There is always time for personal space, but by helping each other out and showing consideration for your fellow walkers, we can ensure a rewarding experience for all. Your guides are always available to talk to whilst on tour to help manage the wellbeing of you and the group.

### What you carry

**Minimal weight:** Because you have two guides—one on the trail to carry safety equipment and one back at camp organising the logistics of the tour—you only carry a day pack for your walk.

**In your pack:** Most of the weight will be water to sustain you while walking in the Central Australian climate, which (apart from the very rare splashes of rain) is sunny and dry even on cold days. We recommend you carry at least 3 litres of water each day. In addition to water, you carry your lunch, whatever snacks you'd like for the day, a windproof/ rainproof jacket, warm layer and whatever personal items (such as camera and binoculars) you'd like with you on the trail.

### Health and Fitness

You need to have a moderate to high level of health and fitness for the 9 day trek. The more physically ready you are the less likely you are to sustain an injury. Please talk to us if you have any health issues or other injuries which may affect your time with us, and don't be afraid to see your GP for advice on participating on this trip before you confirm your booking.

The Larapinta Trail is physically hard and just because you are on a guided trek doesn't mean it gets any easier. So be as ready as you can be. Engage in aerobic activity 3-4 times a week for at least 1 hour each session during the 3 months prior to your trip; this might include walking, cycling, swimming etc.

Start to do some long bush walks as regularly as you can and do some full day bush walks with your pack weighing around 5-6kg to get your body used to walking with a load, starting at least 2 months in advance of the trek.

The Larapinta Trail is known for its unevenness and hardness under foot so make sure you do some walking over rough terrain (if you can find it!)

Feel free to talk to the Trek Larapinta Staff about being prepared.

### Good meals all day

With sustaining food for breakfast, fresh & tasty meals for lunches, quality camp-cooked food for dinners and plenty of snacks for the trail, you are bound to enjoy your eating with Trek Larapinta. We provide plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, real coffee and billy tea. We pride ourselves on our fresh and healthy food.

### Catering for dietary requirements

With notice, we can cater for vegetarians and meet medical dietary requirements.

For non-medical dietary preferences, please get in touch with us. We like to do what we can to cater for your needs, but because we're in a remote area and aren't able to restock while on tour, we do need notice and appreciate your consideration and understanding of these limits.

We pride ourselves on our fresh and healthy food.

### Footwear

The surface on much of the trail is hard and rocky, with sharp quartzite. It is very tough on boots and feet and sometimes older footwear can crack, break or fall apart. It's good to get the balance of boots that are worn-in but not worn-out. If the boots are "worn-in", it will reduce the chances that you'll get blisters. But if the boots are "worn-out", they are likely to fall apart on the tough surfaces of the trail.

So it helps if you check your shoes well in advance of the walk. If they don't look certain to make the distance, it's helpful to buy a new pair at least a few months in advance and break them in properly prior to the trip. Retailers in quality outdoor-gear should also be able to give you good advice on buying new shoes. Your feet are likely to get hot rather than cold. Simple, good-quality leather or synthetic trekking boots or good-quality, low-cut walking shoes are fine. It also helps to have good quality socks to fit your footwear. We wear well-padded thinner style of Merino wool sock or a synthetic moisture-wicking sock.

Comfortable footwear for around camp such as sneakers or sandals are great. We like to wear Ugg boots during the cool evenings!

### Clothing

Temperatures do vary during the year (see temp chart). You will know your preferred walking attire, but, as a guide, always bring clothing that can protect you from the sun during your day's walk, like a long sleeve shirt with a collar, a hat and some sunglasses. Long pants are good to have on cooler days, but shorts are very handy for most of the year. Warm, lightweight



jumpers for walking and a lightweight rain coat are essential items. Ankle gaiters can help keep grass seeds and sand out of your shoes but are not essential (we wear the cotton ankle/sock protectors). Thermal layers are also very handy as they are light and warm. Think about the layering system when choosing your clothes.

For after the day's walk, casual clothing is all you need, plus some warm layers—including a beanie and gloves—for the chilly drop-off in temperature at night.

## Feet

The temperature within the boots and also the hard and uneven terrain can quickly cause blisters or exacerbate other foot problems. Before a walk like this, get any corns, calluses etc. seen to, and make sure problem nails are trimmed and all nails cut. Come prepared with some form of blister prevention and, if you are prone to blisters, always tape up before the days walk **“prevention is the cure”**. Your feet will be very valuable to you during this tour, and a little preparation can go a long way.

## What to know about water

Keeping yourself hydrated is even more important than keeping your feet blister free. Drinking enough water while walking will help you with the stamina and clear thinking you need to walk the trail. Please bring water bottles or a bladder such as a Camelbak to carry a **minimum of 3 litres** for the day walks. Even in the cooler months, the dry air can cause you to drink more than you realise. We can't stress enough the importance of keeping your fluid intake up.

## Our camp sites

**On the 9 day Trek** we have 3 different bush camping sites. Once we reach Ormiston Creek camp site on day 3 we will then base ourselves here and transfer to the trail heads.

A lot of changes are happening to the way the park is being managed as far as campsite locations for commercial operators are concerned. We have been granted private use of a section of the beautiful Ormiston Creek. It is a bush camp and we adhere to Parks and Wildlife's and our own strict minimal impact policies, which we have learnt through experience and observation of our interaction with these areas. It's a privilege to be in these areas so we want to look after them. There is also a Total Fire Ban on the Larapinta Trail, so we use camp sites away from the trail where, by permit, we are able to enjoy the delights of a camp fire.

## Ormiston camp facilities

The camp site on Ormiston Creek is a pristine natural area with no permanent structures, so anything we take in is taken out, either at the end of each trip, or the end of the season.

## Toilets

**At Ormiston camp**, we set up a composting toilet at the start of the season. We then remove it and all the composted waste at

the end of each Larapinta Trail season. Our composting toilet is simple yet comfortable, clean and private, with no smell!

**On the trail**, responsible and minimal impact bush toilet protocol is to ensure that you toilet at least 100m from any trail or watercourse (including the sandy banks of ephemeral rivers in these regions) and dig at least 15cm down to make sure that it can be covered in such a way to avoid visual pollution or its discovery by fossicking animals.

## Showering

The trail is arid and somewhat remote, so whatever water we wish to use we need to bring in ourselves. We have a simple bush showering area where you can strip off and pour some water over you at the end of each day Balinese style! Hot water is provided. Make sure you bring a towel and natural biodegradable soaps if used.

## Other campsite information

There are no shower facilities at the other 2 camps, but you can have a “bird bath”, which is to wash down from water in a small basin, from which you can feel surprisingly fresh and clean, so bring along a towel. **‘Baby Wipes’** are also handy items for keeping clean when water is at a minimum

The toilet, for the most part, is a shovel and a patch of scrub. Responsible and minimal impact bush toilet protocol is to ensure that you toilet at least 100m from any trail or watercourse (even the sandy banks of ephemeral rivers in these regions) and dig at least 15cm down to make sure that it can be covered in such a way to avoid visual pollution or its discovery by fossicking animals.

## Sleeping:

**Swags and the sky:** Whether you've slept in a swag hundreds of times or never before, we think you'll enjoy this part of being out on the trail. A swag is a foam mattress protected by canvas and, in it, we put bedding that's clean and cosy and warm. We also provide you with a tent if you wish, so you can sleep inside or out under a ceiling of stars. Sleeping bags rated to minus 5 are provided.

## What to know about swimming in waterholes

We can swim in some of the waterholes we come to. As part of responsible and minimal impact travel, we can't wash in them, and it's good to have a bit of a “bird bath” or “wipe off” beforehand, to remove sunscreens so we can avoid polluting these valuable drinking sources for animals in this desert land. The water can be a bit chilly, but it can be refreshing to take a plunge after walking for a day, so bring along some bathers as well as your towel.

## Staying in touch

Apart from some of the high ridgelines there is no mobile phone reception for the duration of your trip. There is a pay phone at

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Glen Helen which we can access at certain times during the tour. We carry a satellite telephone on all of our tours for use in emergencies.

## Cameras

We are able to charge most re-chargeable camera batteries through a universal charging device or you can bring your own charger (24 V or 12 V) and plug it into our sine wave inverter. Don't forget spare film or memory cards and other camera accessories you may need.

## Bags

You'll need a good quality day-pack with a comfortable harness for walking and another, larger bag to hold all your other things back at camp. Large backpacks or other soft bags are easier for us to fit in the trailer than suitcases and also tend to be better suited to camping. We have limited space so the smaller your luggage bag the better. Enquire about leaving excess luggage at your hotel (*preferred*) or at our work shed.

## Vehicle Storage

We don't have any facilities for vehicle storage. If driving to Alice Springs please arrange to leave your car at your hotel or other storage facility such as the airport. Contact us if you are having any difficulties with finding suitable storage.

## What to know about weather

Winter weather in Central Australia is near-perfect for walking. You predominantly enjoy sunny blue skies, but with the moderate temperatures of winter rather than the baking heat of summer. But when night falls, the temperature drops fast! So come prepared for warm days and chilly nights. In 2010 we

## Quick list for some of the essential items.

Day pack	Toiletries -biodegradable soap	✓
Water bottles/ bladder (minimum 3L)	Baby wipes <i>optional</i>	
Walking shoes or boots	Beanie	
Sunscreen	Warm gloves	
Sun hat	A good book or two!	
Sunglasses	Gaiters <i>optional</i>	
Lightweight raincoat / windproof jacket	Camera <i>optional</i>	
Personal first aid kit - blister protection	Binoculars <i>optional</i>	
Head torch and spare batteries	Walking poles <i>optional, may be hired</i>	
Comfortable walking attire		
Spare comfortable shoes or sandals		

Table to be used as a guide only. Please call us with any questions

experienced much rain so make sure you have a good working raincoat with you.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Av. Max	28	23	20	20	22	26
Av. Min	12	8	5	4	6	10
Rainy Days	2	3	3	3	2	2

## Tour inclusions:

All meals and snacks from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 9 and all catering equipment.

All camping equipment including sleeping bag, swag, pillow, linen and tent etc.

Small groups with max of 8 participants.

4x4 transport with hotel pick up and drop off.

2 Trek Larapinta guides.

Group first aid kit and satellite phone in the event of an emergency.

All camping and access fees.

Private campsite location.

Travelling with a locally owned, culturally and environmentally responsible business.

- **Tours do not include pre or post trip airfares or accommodation**

**Trek Larapinta uses and recommends the Aurora Hotel in Alice Springs - to get the best rate and priority rooms mention you are a Trek Larapinta client when booking online at [www.auroraresorts.com.au](http://www.auroraresorts.com.au)**

