



## 9 DAY LARAPINTA TRAIL TREK : A JOURNEY TOWARDS MT SONDER | 9 DAYS | 120 KM

THE LARAPINTA TRAIL IS PART OF A STRONG, ANCIENT AND FASCINATING LANDSCAPE. FOR US THE TRAIL PROVIDES AN AVENUE TO BE PART OF THE LAND AND FEEL ENRICHED BY THIS EXPERIENCE. WALKING THROUGH COUNTRY CONNECTS YOU TO THE HISTORY OF THIS PLACE.

The Larapinta Trail is an extended bushwalking track running west from Alice Springs to Mount Sonder (Rwetyepme); its 223 kilometres are fast gaining a reputation for offering one of the finest walking experiences in the world through the steep red slopes of the West MacDonnell Ranges/National Park (Tjoritja). The ranges rise dramatically from the Central Australian desert typifying the rugged landscapes of the Red Centre with the changing hues of the mountain peaks, rolling hills and dry river valleys made famous in the paintings of Albert Namatjira.

Beginning our trek near the eastern end of the trail and ending on the summit of Mt Sonder, the 9 day trek is a selection of highlights along the trail, allowing you to enjoy some of the most spectacular views from ridges, gorges, mountain peaks and within Ormiston Pound. The trail around Standley Chasm offers stunning rugged landscapes that only a privileged few are able to explore.

Accommodation is at two of Trek Larapinta's private semi-permanent eco-camps, with short transfers to the start and end of each day's hike. This is a day pack hiking adventure.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 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, bed linen and top of the range spacious tent.
- Transportation provided in commercially registered, expertly maintained tour vehicles, with hotel pick up and drop off.
- 2 Trek Larapinta professional wilderness guides.
- Group first aid kit and satellite phone in the event of an emergency.
- All camping and National Park fees.
- Private campsite locations.
- Travelling with a culturally and environmentally responsible business.
- Small group with a maximum of 10 participants.
- **Tours do not include pre or post trip airfares or accommodation.**

## IMPORTANT NOTES

The 9 day trek requires a moderate to high level of bushwalking/walking and general fitness. As the Larapinta 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.

Days vary between 5 and 8 hours of easy to moderate to challenging walking, depending on the section. The climb up and down Mt Sonder is a challenging 16km return with a 750m rise in elevation.

More information on preparation is included in the following pages, along with information on the itinerary, what equipment you need to bring, what we supply and general information to consider for your 9 day trek.

## TREK GRADING : MODERATE TREK

See: [www.treklarapinta.com.au/faq/trek-gradings/](http://www.treklarapinta.com.au/faq/trek-gradings/) for more information about gradings.

Note: This itinerary is subject to change due to community regulations as well as governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

Please use this itinerary as a guide only.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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 cold drink, ask questions about what you've seen, or just be.

Please read through the following information and please contact us at [info@treklarapinta.com.au](mailto:info@treklarapinta.com.au) with any questions. We also recommend reading the information that the NT Parks and wildlife service provide at <https://nt.gov.au/leisure/recreation/bushwalking-hiking/larapinta-trail>.

See the <https://www.treklarapinta.com.au/bookings/booking-conditions/> for booking conditions and payment details.

## DAY 1: SECTION 3

After collecting you from your hotel in Alice Springs at 7.30am, we transfer to Standley Chasm for a comprehensive trek briefing from your guides. Section 3 is one of the trails most spectacular sections and one of our favourites! Today's walk is one of the most challenging yet scenically rewarding sections of the Larapinta Trail. Made up of deep sheltered gorges, exposed saddles and steep climbs, we are dwarfed by massive quartzite ridges and treated to magnificent views of the surrounding Chewings Range. Our walk finishes with us exploring the iconic Standley Chasm. We stay tonight at our private eco-friendly bush camp at Standley Chasm.

**6-8km/4-5 hr walk**  
**Meals: Lunch, Dinner**

## DAY 2: SECTION 4

Climbing up an open valley in the cool morning air, surrounded by giant orange quartzite peaks, is a sign of things to come on this very scenic section of the Larapinta Trail. As we rise above the landscape along the high ridge of Brinkley Bluff, we become some of the privileged few to behold this truly stunning view. The views from the summit of Brinkley Bluff confirm again why the Larapinta Trail is considered one of the most spectacular walking experiences in the world. We return to our private bush camp at Standley Chasm where we enjoy another delicious meal around the campfire.

**20km/8-10hr walk**  
**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

## DAY 3: SECTION 7

Our walk today begins from the iconic Ellery Creek Big Hole - historically a vital water source for the Arrernte people. Scenically section 7 has some impressive views of diverse geological formations, combined with a rich array of typical Central Australian colours. Keep a look out for Mistletoebirds, especially the distinctive males with their red and white breasts, Spinifex Pigeons and the playful Zebra Finches. Completing section 7 at Serpentine Gorge we transfer to our private eco-camp near Ormiston Gorge.

**14km/6hr walk**  
**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

## DAY 4: SECTION 8

Today we are high on the ridge of the Heavitree Range hiking to one of the most iconic views of the trail - Counts Point. A challenging hike rewards us with sweeping panoramic vistas of high quartzite ridge lines, including Haast Bluff and Mt Zeil to the west. An exhilarating descent is followed by some easier walking through the beautiful Serpentine Gorge and the old Serpentine Chalet. After the walk we transfer back to our private camp in the Ormiston Gorge region. We enjoy another delicious camp fire meal in gorgeous surroundings before a very deep and relaxing sleep under the stars.

**15km/8hr walk**  
**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

## DAY 5: SECTION 9

Our morning starts at the Ochre Pits, an ochre deposit that is still used by the local Arrernte people for decoration and painting. The Ochre Pits area is a convergence of a variety of plant habitats so it is a beautiful place to see a wide variety of the plants of the West Macs. Exploring further along section 9 we take in what many believe are some of the most spectacular views of the Larapinta Trail. Returning to Inarlanga Pass we have lunch and rest amongst the shade of a lush cycad garden. Our trek today concludes at Serpentine Chalet. Return to our private eco-camp near Ormiston Gorge.

12-14km/6-7hr walk  
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 7: SECTION 10

Today we walk section 10 of the Larapinta Trail, taking us from Ormiston Gorge to the historic Glen Helen homestead, situated on the mighty Finke River. The Finke is one of the oldest watercourses on our planet and is dotted with massive River Red Gums and is home to a splendid array of birdlife. Wildflowers often bloom through this section, and keep an eye out for the birdlife. At the end of the day we have the chance to go for a swim in Glen Helen Gorge or the Finke River. We sleep tonight at our Ormiston region eco-camp.

11km/4-5hr walk  
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 9: ORMISTON POUND WALK

The Ormiston Pound loop walk, is a must do for anyone that comes to Central Australia. It takes us up to the high escarpment overlooking this natural impoundment, before descending into the pound itself. We finish the loop by walking down the gorgeous Ormiston Gorge. Heading back to Alice Springs, our final stop is Simpsons Gap. We usually arrive in town between 4-5pm.

8km/4hr walk  
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 6: SECTION 11A

Leaving from the Finke River we set off towards Mt Sonder, with every kilometre walked revealing closer views of this elegant desert peak. A challenging climb brings us to Hill Top Lookout. From here we can fully appreciate our final challenge that awaits in just a couple of days.

After descending we make our way to Rocky Bar Gap. We return to our eco camp after another spectacular days' walking.

15km/7hr walk  
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 8: SECTION 12

A short transfer from our camp to Redbank, where our challenging ascent of Mt Sonder begins. At 1,380 metres, it is the fourth highest peak in the Northern Territory. The hike to the summit this morning for an unforgettable sunrise (weather/group dependent) takes about 3 hours with numerous stops along the way. A challenging (but rewarding!) 16km round trip delivers world class views of this stunning Central Australian range and memories that will last a lifetime. As we approach the top of our climb the sense of achievement hits home, a vast 360 degree panorama of Central Australia surrounds us, rugged and yet from up here so very peaceful. Remote desert peaks stretch as far as the eye can see. The view north looks 100km into the Tanami Desert, and to the east we see the majority of the Western MacDonnell Ranges. To the south is the meteor crater of Gosse Bluff and to the west Mount Zeil, the Northern Territory's highest mountain. Return to camp with time in the afternoon to rest in surrounds, visit Glen Helen Gorge or peruse the Trek Larapinta library.

16km/7hr walk  
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## THINGS TO KNOW:

### 9 DAYS IN THE BUSH

9 days out 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.

For fundamental safety, group members need to be aware of each other's location whilst walking, remembering the old bush walking rule of 'keeping an eye on the person behind 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 interpretive guide and absorbing the wonders of the trail.

### 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 rare splashes of rain) is generally 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 whatever snacks you'd like for the day, a windproof/rainproof jacket, warm layer and any personal items (such as camera and binoculars) you'd like with you on the trail.

### 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 reusable 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.

### 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 in 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 lunch, quality camp-cooked food for dinner and plenty of snacks for the trail, you are bound to enjoy your meals with Trek Larapinta. We provide plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, real coffee and tea. We pride ourselves on our fresh and healthy food.

### CATERING FOR DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

With notice, we can cater for vegetarians and meet most **medical/allergy** 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 remote areas this may not always be possible. We appreciate your consideration and understanding of these limits.

## ALCOHOL

Our insurance restricts us from supplying or selling alcohol, so please purchase your requirements in Alice Springs the day prior to your departure. If you are purchasing beer try to find cans as they travel better and cool down quicker. Fresh food takes priority in our fridges, however we can keep some of your beverages cold each day.

## FOOTWEAR

The surface on much of the trail is hard and rocky, with sharp quartzite rock. 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 to 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 breathable 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. Another thing to consider is packing a spare pair of alternative lightweight shoes or boots which you would be able to use in case of damage or blisters.

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 temperature 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 (we don't recommend cotton or denim). Warm, lightweight jumpers for walking and a good rain coat are essential items. Ankle gaiters can help keep grass seeds and sand out off 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 your boots and also the hard and uneven terrain can quickly cause blisters or exacerbate other foot problems. Before a walk like this, have 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.

## OUR CAMP SITES

On the 9 day trek we have two different camping sites. The first two nights are spent at our private eco-camp at Standley Chasm. On day 3 we move to our private eco-camp in the Ormiston Gorge region from where you will be based for the remainder of the trek and transfer to the trail heads each day.

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 sections in the beautiful Ormiston Gorge area. We have bush camps and 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.

Our eco-camps are set in pristine natural areas 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. The

camps include erected spacious tents, covered kitchen/communal area and toilet/washing areas.

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.

## TOILETS

At 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 warm water over you at the end of each day. Hot water is provided. Make sure you bring a towel and natural biodegradable soaps, if used.

## 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 (sleeping bag, linen and pillow) that's clean, cosy and warm. We also provide you with a tent, so you can sleep inside or out under a ceiling of stars. Sleeping bags rated to minus 5 degrees 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 (with Telstra) there is no mobile phone reception for the duration of your trip. There is a pay phone at 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 AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We are able to charge most camera batteries via your own charger plugged into our sine wave inverter. We are also able to charge electronic devices via USB connections. Don't forget spare 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## PRE/POST TREK ACCOMMODATION

Trek Larapinta has secured discounted accommodation at a number of Alice Springs hotels.

For further information about the hotels and to book please check out our website at : <https://www.treklarapinta.com.au/shop/accommodation/>.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Trek Larapinta recommends all travellers have adequate insurance/cover for their trip. We highly recommend insurance cover that covers any loss which may be suffered due to cancellation.

## 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. The Larapinta can experience heavy rainfall periods 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

## WHAT EQUIPMENT TO BRING ON YOUR 9 DAY TREK

The following list sets out all the clothing and equipment you are required to bring for you to participate in the Larapinta Trail Trek.

Day pack with waist harness (minimum 25L - 30L) and waterproof cover	Beanie	
Good quality reusable water bottles/ bladder (minimum 4L)	Swimmers and travel towel	
Walking shoes or boots	Head torch and spare batteries	
Sunscreen	Prescription medicine	
Sun hat (preferably broad rimmed)	Insect repellent cream	
Sunglasses	Toiletries - biodegradable soap and waterless hand sanitiser gel	
Rain / windproof jacket with storm hood attached. We recommend waterproof breathable fabric (Gortex, Millair, Hydronaught)	Personal first aid kit - incl. blister protection & hydralytes	
Fly head net	Face washer	
Warm jacket (down, polar fleece, synthetic)	A good book or two!	
Warm jumper - woolen or polar fleece /synthetic fibre	Waterproof overpants (Gortex, Millair, PVC coated nylon) - not essential but can be useful if wet <b>optional</b>	
Comfortable walking attire (not jeans or cotton). We recommend light weight, quick drying materials	Gaiters <b>optional</b>	
Thermals - top and bottom (polypropelene, wool, polyester powder dry, Daymart)	Camera <b>optional</b>	
Warm trousers to wear around camp	Binoculars <b>optional</b>	
Spare comfortable shoes or sandals to wear around camp	Walking poles <b>optional</b>	
Warm gloves	Biodegradable baby wipes <b>optional</b>	
<b>Table to be used as a guide only. Please contact us with any questions.</b>	Power bank for electronics <b>optional</b>	