

# Ningaloo Reef Kayak Explorer

## Paddling and Snorkelling Adventure





# Australia: Ningaloo Reef Kayak Explorer



## Six day trip-five days kayaking

The Ningaloo Marine Park is located on the north west coastline of Western Australia and designated a World Heritage-listed site due to its incredible biodiversity. Ningaloo is the southern hemisphere's largest fringing reef and many parts can be accessed by a short swim from the beach or by slipping from a kayak into the azure seas inhabited by colourful fish, turtles and incredible coral. On this trip we spend five days paddling between beach camps, exploring the lagoons and reefs by kayak and snorkel along the way. On land, we'll keep an eye out for iconic Australian wildlife such as emus, kangaroos, echidnas and wallabies. This trip is suitable for beginner to experienced paddlers keen for a relaxed-paced trip on and in one of the world's most amazing natural wonders.

## A Quick Itinerary

B = Breakfast • L = Lunch • D = Dinner

**Day 1:** Arrival into Exmouth. Drive to Cape Range National Park. Camping. D

**Days 2-5:** Kayaking Ningaloo Reef. Camping. B • L • D

**Day 6:** Last kayak day. Transfer to Exmouth. End of trip arrangements. B • L

## How to Get There

Learmonth Airport is located 36km from Exmouth town. Qantas is the only commercial airline flying between Perth and Exmouth with a flight time of two hours. Flights can be booked direct with Qantas or through a travel agent. For those that have more time to explore, the driving distance between Perth and Exmouth is around 1200kms.

## Meeting Place and Time

Your guide will meet day one arrivals from the Qantas flight landing into Learmonth Airport at 2.35pm. For those who have arrived prior to day one, you will be picked up from your Exmouth accommodation at around 3.15pm.

## Sea Kayaking

Sea kayaking is an activity that any reasonably fit person can participate in and could be compared to brisk walking or cycling. Some previous paddling experience can be useful. The degree of difficulty of the trip **will depend on the weather** we encounter. An "average" paddling day will range from 3–4 hours and we mix in as much snorkelling and beach breaks as possible. We ask that all participants feel confident in swimming.

The trip is generally run from south to north, to take advantage of the prevailing breeze. However, if the forecast is for predominantly northerly winds, we will reverse the direction of travel. The paddling takes place inside the fringing reef, so conditions are generally quite protected from the effects of swell. Crossing a couple of gaps in the reef make for an exciting change. There is always a possibility of choppy conditions, however the kayakers handle these conditions very well.

The kayakers used are double sit-in expedition sea kayakers (Sea Bear Packhorse) with rudder. The kayakers are stable, easy to paddle and control- ideally suited for this remote trip. They are very forgiving and are suited for beginners to experts. The kayakers are designed as an expedition boat and it is important to keep gear to a minimum as we carry all of our food, water and equipment on board with us. There are limited single kayakers, usually only two are available per trip, to be shared among the group. On day two you will be given a thorough briefing on all aspects of sea kayaking techniques with ample time to practice and familiarise yourself with the kayakers. We generally limit our group size to a maximum of 10 clients, plus two guides.

Paddles used are Sea to Summit, a plastic blade with a fibreglass shaft. You're welcome to bring your own split paddle if you prefer.

In general, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling. It's a good idea to begin some regular exercise like walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics or swimming well before the trip. If you have not paddled a sit in kayak, we highly recommend some tuition before your trip and may be able to suggest a local operator near your home.

## Proposed Itinerary

**The following itinerary and paddling distances should be seen as an approximate guide only. Please note that weather conditions can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary.**

**Day 1:** Your guide will meet arrivals from the Qantas flight landing into Learmonth Airport at 2.35pm. For those that have arrived into Exmouth prior to day one, you'll be picked up from your Exmouth accommodation at around 3.15pm. We transfer to the local base for gear fit out and to size snorkelling and kayaking equipment. We'll then grab any last minute supplies in Exmouth town before the one hour drive to the base camp in Cape Range National Park. The camping site is private and equipped with drop toilets and picnic tables. After a hearty dinner the guides will present a trip briefing and outline the plan for the next five days of kayaking.

Please note, all your luggage can be taken with you to the first night's campsite. During the evening you'll pack what you need for the kayak trip into the supplied dry bags. Your luggage with items you don't need while kayaking will be transferred back into town the next morning for storage at our local

operator's base. On return to Exmouth on day six, the group will collect left luggage before being dropped at their Exmouth accommodation.

#### D / CAMPING

**Day 2:** After an early breakfast, the group travels 5kms by vehicle to Yardie Creek, the starting point for the kayak adventure. Yardie Creek is an ancient gorge surrounded by red cliffs and the only permanent water source in Cape Range National Park. On arrival, explore the area with a quick walk up the gorge to try and spot the endangered black-flanked rock wallabies, fossilised corals and osprey and sea eagles that live in small caves on the cliff face.

We'll then pack the kayaks and after a safety briefing begin our adventure, today's destination is Bungarra, a 9km paddle.

If conditions allow, we may head out to the beautiful fringing reef offshore from Yardie Creek for the first snorkel on Ningaloo Reef. Snorkelling offshore involves anchoring the kayaks in the sand of the shallow lagoon (an average depth of three metres) and sliding over the side to explore the amazing reef. Your guides will show you how to get back in the kayak, not always elegant but do-able! Heading northwards, we'll stop for morning tea and lunch on un-named beaches. Along the way, keep a lookout for turtles popping up for a breath of air, schools of fish, dolphins, shore birds and birds of prey.

A highlight of today will be snorkelling the offshore Osprey Sanctuary Zone sites, adjacent to tonight's campsite. There are two moorings that kayaks can be attached to before exploring these amazing snorkel sites.

After snorkelling, the group will paddle to shore and set up camp in a beautiful beachfront location. Enjoy your second night under the stars, being lulled to sleep by the gentle lapping of the waves.

#### B • L • D / CAMPING

**Day 3:** Today we kayak a beautiful stretch of lagoon and reef, from Bungarra to South Mandu, a distance of 10.5kms. Soon after leaving the campsite, we kayak across Sandy Bay, a stunning stretch of shallow turquoise lagoon. Turtles are common in this area and rays resting in the shallows may be seen. We stop at Pilgramunna point to snorkel the coral bombies, an easy swim straight off the beach. We leave the Osprey Sanctuary Zone and head north towards the Mandu Sanctuary Zone. World-class snorkelling is to be had in the Blue Lagoon, 700 metres from shore and just inside the fringing reef.

Tonight's camp is among the sand dunes, adjacent to the turquoise waters of South Mandu.

#### B • L • D / CAMPING

**Day 4:** We paddle a shorter distance today in order to make time for the multitude of snorkelling opportunities in the Mandu Sanctuary Zone. Our 7km paddle route from South Mandu to Tulki covers numerous shore based snorkels including the coral gardens of South Mandu, Oyster Stacks and the Turquoise Bay drift. The last two sites are the most popular, for good reason, due to an amazing array of corals and fishes, just metres from the beach.

Our campsite tonight at Tulki is a beautiful site nestled in the dunes.

#### B • L • D / CAMPING

**Day 5:** Today we paddle the 10.5 kms from Tulki to Low Point, across broad stretches of lagoon where turtle sightings are common. Snorkelling options include the amazing offshore Tulki hole and further north, Lakeside, a favourite shore-based snorkel where turtles are often spotted.

Our beach camp tonight is not far from Mangrove Bay, one of Ningaloo's nursery areas, sheltering juvenile turtle, rays and baby reef sharks.

**B • L • D / CAMPING**

**Day 6:** Our final day sees us paddling the 12km from Low Point to Tantabiddi. We often sight dolphins and turtles along the broad stretch of turquoise lagoon, dotted with beautiful coral formations. The final snorkel of the trip is among the stunning coral formations of the Tantabiddi Sanctuary Zone. We then paddle to shore, ending our 50km (or so) exploration of the World Heritage-listed Ningaloo reef and coast.

After unpacking the kayaks and loading them on the trailer, we drive 30 minutes back into Exmouth town. Along the way we'll stop at the Vlamingh Head Lighthouse to take in the panoramic views. On return to Exmouth we'll stop to collect left luggage from the base before a drop off at your Exmouth accommodation. The trip ends with a fond farewell from your guides and fellow paddlers.

**B • L / ACCOMMODATION NOT INCLUDED**

## End of Trip

We finish the trip with a transfer to your Exmouth accommodation on the afternoon of day six. Accommodation on this night needs to be booked by you and is not included in the trip cost.

We recommend staying an extra day or two in Exmouth for further exploration pre or post kayak trip. Some suggestions of where to stay and what to do are listed at the end of these notes.

For an airport shuttle service, please contact Exmouth Bus Charter.

<http://exmouthbuscharter.com.au>

## Ningaloo-some background

Ningaloo Marine Park encompasses the southern hemisphere's largest fringing coral reef, a total of 260 kms, from Bundegi Reef near the town of Exmouth to Amherst Point near Coral Point in the south. Within the Ningaloo Marine Park, 36% of the total area are sanctuary zones. Ningaloo Reef boasts an incredible diversity of marine life, from the seasonal visit of Whale sharks and Humpback whales, three species of turtles (Green, Loggerhead and Hawksbill), Dugong (shy but sometimes spotted in the winter months), dolphins, over 300 species of coral and 500 species of fish.

Cape Range National Park borders the northern section of Ningaloo Reef and is jointly managed by the traditional owners, the Jinigudera people, part of the West Thalanyji tribe and the Department of Parks and Wildlife. The word Ningaloo is a Jinigudera word meaning deep water or promontory. Today, Ningaloo is used to refer to the broad area encompassing Ningaloo Reef and the areas adjacent to it.

The Jinigudera are a coastal, or saltwater people, part of an incredibly complex culture which is inextricably tied to place. Materials uncovered from an archaeological dig in a rock shelter in Cape Range National Park indicate that Aboriginal people have been living along the coast for at least 35,000 years, possibly much longer. Southern Sea Ventures and its local operator, Exmouth Adventure Co, recognises the fact that the tour operates on Jinigudera land and

asks all visitors to respect the amazing natural environment, culture and history of Ningaloo.

## **Climate**

Exmouth is situated in the semi-arid climate zone, experiencing mild winters and hot summers. With an average annual rainfall of only 270mm, there is no wet season and an average of 320 days of sunshine each year. Late autumn, through winter to early spring is the peak tourist season. The average high temperature in late April/May is 31 degrees C with the average low of 18 degrees C. In June and July, the average high temperature is 25 degrees C with an average low of 12 degrees C. Temperatures increase in Aug/Sep with an average high of 28 degrees C and a low of 13 degrees C. Summer can be hot and windy, with temperatures often in the high 30s to mid 40s. Cyclones are also a possibility in the summer months. The water temperature ranges from 20-28 degrees C, with an average of 25 degrees C in Apr/May and 22 degrees C in Jul/Aug.

## **Trip Organisation**

Paddling days will generally start early to take advantage of daylight hours and cooler temperatures. It's a good idea to pack your dry bags before breakfast, prepare your personal items for the day and take down your tents so that loading for departure can be organised. On a paddling day we'd like to be on the water before 9:00am. We stop on secluded beaches for morning tea and lunch, arriving into camp by mid afternoon. It's important to realise that the group will kayak at the speed of the slowest members. On arrival in camp you will be expected to unload your own boats, set up tents and perhaps each night a few can help the guides with preparing the evening meal.

## **Snorkelling**

Each day provides fantastic snorkelling opportunities. At some sites we land the kayaks on the beach and swim a short distance from the shore. At other sites we anchor or moor the kayaks and slip over the side. Expect to discover some unnamed snorkel spots that are accessible only by kayak. Snorkelling gear is provided or bring your own for a good fit.

## **Expedition Staff**

The guides' role is to co-ordinate the expedition and ensure the safety of the group. They will answer questions and inform you of the objectives and progress of the trip. They will decide on safety matters and administer the medical kit if required. The guides carry a satellite phone for emergencies. Should you have any inquiries during the trip, feel free to ask your guides.

## **Travel Arrangements**

Should you voluntarily decide to alter your travel arrangements after commencement of your trip, Southern Sea Ventures and local partner, Exmouth Adventure Co are not responsible for any additional charges involved. Our staff will assist you if possible but you are responsible for organising these arrangements yourself. Delays may occur due to weather or transport difficulties and your guides will do their best to rectify the situation. Please understand that

delays and waiting can occur and although we do our best to keep to schedule, it is not always possible.

## **Travel Insurance**

It is highly recommended that participants purchase a personal comprehensive travel insurance policy. Please make sure your insurance policy covers lost monies in the event that you need to cancel your trip or the trip.

Australian residents should note: Under the Federal Government Medicare Act it is prohibited for any domestic travel insurance product to provide any financial reimbursement with regards to ambulance or air ambulance services. We advise clients to take specific cover for ambulance services through the respective State Ambulance Service providers or through your own private health insurance.

## **Time & Communication**

Perth and Exmouth are on Australian Western Standard Time (AWST).

There is very little mobile phone reception in the trip area and no electricity for charging devices. We recommend you join the trip with your devices fully charged and carry spare batteries where applicable and bring along a power bank or compact solar charger if you have one. Once the group leaves Exmouth town, mobiles can be turned off or switched to 'flight mode' so they can still be used to take photos, without running the device battery down due to it constantly searching for a signal.

Your guide carries a satellite phone for emergencies.

## **Accommodation and camping**

Each afternoon we pull up our kayaks at a different remote beach and set up camp for the night. The campsites are undeveloped with little to no established facilities, therefore bush toileting may be required. No fires are permitted in the camp areas. Access to fresh water for washing is limited as we carry all our water with us in the kayaks.

Equipment supplied are three-person tents (with two people sharing) and two-person tents (for single travellers), along with self-inflating mattresses, sleeping bags and liners, camp chairs and inflatable pillows for a comfy sleep.

It is your responsibility to pre-book Exmouth accommodation. Recommended providers are listed at the end of these notes.

## **Meals**

On the kayaking trip, the food is freshly prepared by the guides who are all great camp cooks. Breakfasts usually consist of muesli and other cereals, milk and yogurt, toast and condiments, tea and coffee. Lunches are picnic-style, with a selection of wraps, crackers, cheese, cold meat, salads, avocado, condiments, tea and coffee. Dinners are prepared with fresh ingredients and varied daily. Dinners may be pasta, curry, chicken/tofu stir fries or Mexican style. There's usually a sweet treat to finish the meal. Snacks are also supplied and fresh fruit, biscuits, corn chips with dip, nuts and dried fruit will be enjoyed for morning tea. Once at





camp a cheese platter is shared to watch the sun set. If you'd like a sundowner, then you are welcome to BYO alcohol.

**We are happy to cater for vegetarians and other special dietary requirements. Please write your dietary requirements on your medical form.**

In Exmouth town there are a number of cafes, food trucks and restaurants including two micro-breweries, a sushi bar and a dedicated vegetarian/vegan café. For a remote town of only 2200 in the NW of Australia, the variety and quality of culinary offerings is impressive.

## Conservation

It has always been our motto that "we take only photographs and leave only footprints". We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person takes out everything they bring in including sweet wrappers, batteries, etc.

## Money Matters

### Your tour cost includes:

- Return transport between Exmouth town and Cape Range National Park.
- National Park entry and camping fees.
- Double expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and spray decks.
- Tents, mats, sleeping bags and liners, pillows.
- Camp chairs and shade shelter.
- Dry bags for your personal gear.
- Professional guide.
- All meals and snacks from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 6.
- Water and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Snorkelling gear-snorkel, mask and fins.
- Paddling gloves (fingerless for sun protection and prevention of blisters).
- Long sleeve sun shirts and broad brim hats with a chin strap and neck flap.
- Group first aid kit.

### Your tour cost *does not* include:

- Accommodation and meals in Exmouth.
- Alcoholic beverages (BYO welcome).
- Travel insurance.
- Flights.



- Single kayak supplement-our local partners do not have a fleet of single kayaks available for this trip. There is usually a maximum of two single kayaks available, to be shared among the group. However, if you specifically require a single kayak for your exclusive use throughout the whole trip, please let us know and we will check availability. The supplement for exclusive use of a single kayak is an additional AU\$175.00.

## Medical Matters

Any passenger undertaking this trip is required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately. Please advise us of any side effects of any medication you take and of any dietary requirements related to the medication. Be sure to let your guide know of any drugs to which you are allergic as well as noting this on your medical form. You will be isolated from modern medical facilities, so attention to medical matters is vital.

### Medical Supplies

Your guide carries a comprehensive medical kit and is trained in wilderness first aid. It is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require. Guides do not carry Epipens due to the heat and consequent reduced shelf life. If you are anaphylactic, you will need to supply and carry two Epipens as we are often hours away from medical care.

In addition we suggest that each passenger bring:

- Sun screen (water resistant variety at least SP30). Please consider using reef friendly sunscreens.
- Lip protectant (high SP factor).
- Band-aid strips.
- Insect repellent.
- A mild anti-nausea drug if you are concerned about sea sickness.
- A mild antiseptic soap/liquid hand wash.

## Equipment & Clothing: What You Need to Bring

As we carry everything with us, it's important to keep personal gear to a minimum. In your kayak, all equipment is packed in water proof containers. We recommend you bring your own small 5–10 litre dry bag for items you may need during the day while kayaking. Excess luggage not required for the kayak trip will be taken to the base in Exmouth, to be picked up at the end of the trip. We will carry our own drinking water but it may be several days before we can wash with fresh water instead of salt.

The list below should be used as a guide when packing, but it should all fit into about half a large garbage bag. Contact us if you have any questions.

## Gear List

### Essential Items:

- A broad brimmed hat is supplied, however, if you prefer to bring your own, a wide brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigid in a breeze, e.g. straw hat with a strap to put under your chin is good. A scarf made from a light material like silk to protect your neck can be useful too.

- Sun-glasses with a cord to prevent them from falling into the water. Polarised are great for seeing into the water from your kayak.
- Two long sleeve lightweight shirts. A synthetic shirt is highly recommended for sun protection while paddling and a separate camp shirt for warmth in the evening (one sun shirt is provided for snorkelling).
- Two t-shirts.
- One pair of full length trousers to wear in camp.
- Two pairs of shorts and swimwear.
- Sarong (this can double up as a second sheet).
- Very light-weight fleece jacket (not a heavy jacket), i.e. Polartec 100 is sufficient, or a sweatshirt.
- One pair of running shoes and socks.
- Reef shoes or a good fitting pair of sandals that attach solidly for paddling.
- Small towel (a chamois towel is ideal, or a medium sized hand towel).
- Minimal toiletries.
- A headlamp or small torch with batteries.
- One 1-litre water bottle—the type used by cyclists are fine and inexpensive.
- A small dry bag is good for holding things like sun screen, glasses, water bottle, etc (try and avoid day packs with metal zips as they will corrode).
- Snorkelling gear is provided or you can bring your own for a good fit. Snorkelling fins are the recommended fin. Free diving fins are not suitable as they are too long to store in the kayaks and can damage the reef. Bodyboarding fins/swim training fins (short style) are also not recommended due to their minimal thrust in the water (some snorkel sites are subject to currents).

**Optional items:**

- Camera with waterproof container if the camera is not waterproof.
- Book.
- Binoculars.
- Talcum powder to prevent salt water rash.
- Ear plugs—in case of snorers!!
- You can bring fishing gear, however this is not a focus of the trip (please use lures rather than bait). Any fishing will take place during the day while we are not in a sanctuary zone (your guide will give advice on this).

## Travel Information

Exmouth has a population of approximately 2,200 residents, this number more than quadruples in the peak season (April and July school holidays are particularly busy).

With the influx of tourists and travellers during peak periods, accommodation and tours can be in high demand and are often fully booked; booking well in advance is strongly recommended.

Exmouth town is well serviced for its size, with a good hospital, school, police station, pharmacy, post office, Westpac bank, two IGA supermarkets and numerous other shops and eateries.

Exmouth has a range of accommodation options to suit every budget. Our local operators suggest the following:

Mantarays Ningaloo Resort- waterfront location on Exmouth Gulf, on-site restaurant and bar. Depending on group configuration, room options range from standard rooms, which are a comfortable twin-share option, to one bedroom and two bedroom apartments. Breakfast is available for an extra cost in the in-house restaurant.

<https://mantaraysningalooresort.com.au>

Exmouth Escape Resort is also a good alternative with one bedroom, two bedroom and family chalets on offer. Whalers Restaurant, open for dinner only, is located within the grounds of Exmouth Escape Resort. Breakfast is not available, however chalets have kitchenettes and self-catering is an option.

<https://exmouthescaperesort.com.au>

For a comprehensive accommodation and tour guide, take a look at the following website:

<https://www.waholidayguide.com.au/western-australia-accommodation/western-australia-locations-to-stay/coral-coast-accommodation/exmouth-accommodation>

The magnificent Whale sharks arrive in numbers on the Ningaloo coast after the coral spawn in March and spend the next four to six months feeding in the abundant waters of the Indian Ocean, adjacent to the fringing Ningaloo reef.

Our local operator, Exmouth Adventure Co, recommend Ocean Eco Adventures and Kings Ningaloo Reef Tours for Whale shark swim trips. See their websites for more information and booking details:

<https://www.oceanecoventures.com.au>

<https://www.kingsningalooreeftours.com.au>

## Delays or Problems

In case of last minute delays or problems, either contact Southern Sea Ventures or the Exmouth phone number noted on your final itinerary.

### **SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES**

HEAD OFFICE — SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

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