



Drive tourism and Aboriginal cultural tourism





Image credit:
Road Trip in the NT - Tourism NT/Sean Scott

Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge and honour the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory and recognise the continuation of culture, connection to lands, water and country. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

About this guide

Self-drive visitors love the freedom and flexibility of exploring at their own pace. For the Northern Territory, 40% of all visitors use a vehicle during their visit. This is especially important for the Northern Territory as drive visitors stay longer, travel further and spend more during their visit.

You may see visitors drive past your home, community and special places and wonder who they are and what they are doing. This guide provides an overview of the different types of drive visitors in the Northern Territory and the opportunities for Aboriginal people and communities to connect with them during their travels by offering tourism product and services.

More information

For more information and access to other Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Framework resources visit www.tourismnt.com.au/aboriginal-culture-tourism or contact Tourism NT's Aboriginal tourism team today.

PH: 08 8999 7420 **E:** Aboriginal.TourismNT@nt.gov.au

Image credits

Cover: Friends posing for a photo at the entrance to the Judbarra / Gregory National Park - Tourism NT

Tools to help you



What is drive tourism?

Drive tourism is visitors exploring the Northern Territory by cars, caravans and other road vehicles. Drive tourism in the Northern Territory encourages visitors to explore our regions by vehicle, which supports more travel into regions, increases visitor numbers, and extends their length of stay*.

Types of driving



Four wheel drives (4WD)

Off road vehicles which may include 4WD camper trucks and offroad trailers that can access remote locations on long trips. Often camping, self-sufficient and seeking adventure.



Campers and caravans

A campervan or caravan that has everything travellers need for weekends away or long trips. Accommodation on wheels.



Fly-drive

Visitors that fly to the NT and hire a car. Often 2WD cars that require sealed roads. These visitors spend the most on accommodation and experiences.

Demand and trends

40% of all visitors to the Northern Territory are drive visitors.*



Popularity of Electric Vehicles (EV) is growing with estimates that by 2035, 50% of all vehicles in Australia will be electric. The NT's Electric Vehicle Strategy will work with communities to ensure future EV charging stations are available for visitors and local people.

Why do visitors drive?



See our unique and beautiful places



Learn about Aboriginal culture and history



Have adventures - hiking and fishing are most popular



Make their own itinerary and have flexible options

* Northern Territory Drive Tourism Strategy 2021-2030

What opportunities does drive tourism create for Aboriginal cultural tourism?

All of the Northern Territory's drive tourism routes travel through Aboriginal land which creates an opportunity for visitors to learn about Aboriginal culture.

Research shows that a key reason for visitors coming to the Northern Territory is to engage with Aboriginal cultural experiences and 80% of visitors believe the Northern Territory is a place to connect with Aboriginal cultures. (Source: Autumn 23 Monthly Tracking Report, Tourism NT).

The [Northern Territory Drive Tourism Strategy \(2021-2030\)](#) and [Aboriginal Tourism Strategy \(2020-2030\)](#) create many new opportunities for Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences and tourism product including:

Support for Aboriginal businesses and organisations

Supporting Aboriginal businesses and organisations by connecting them with visitors who are exploring the NT by road. This means helping Aboriginal people and communities to offer unique Aboriginal cultural experiences and product.



Working together with Traditional Owners

It's important to talk with Aboriginal landowners about how visitors can visit their Country respectfully. This includes understanding permit systems (when required) and respecting cultural protocols including Sorry Business.



Better experiences for drive visitors

Developing and marketing Aboriginal cultural experiences and tours that share stories, traditions and somewhere to stay on Country makes a visitor's journey memorable.



Improving roads and facilities

Better roads and places to visit can make it easier and safer for visitors and benefit local Aboriginal communities. This includes better signs, camping and rest spots and places to learn and be immersed in the unique Aboriginal cultures of the Northern Territory.



More jobs on Country

By developing new Aboriginal cultural tourism product, drive visitors will be encouraged to travel further, stay longer and spend more, creating the ability for Aboriginal people to live and work on Country.



Who are the Northern Territory's drive visitors?

NT drive visitor profiles



People from other states in Australia who fly here then rent a car for short trips.



People from other states in Australia who drive a long way to visit the NT.



People from overseas who fly and hire a vehicle, looking for special experiences.



Local Territorians exploring their own backyard, driving from home.

How many drive visitors does the NT welcome each year?



834,000
visitors

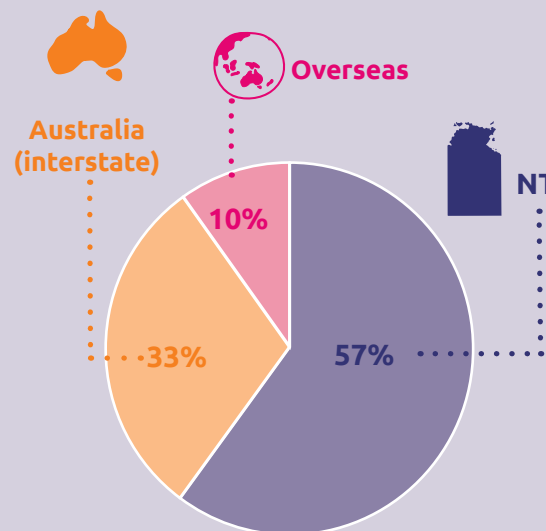


Staying
4.5 million
nights

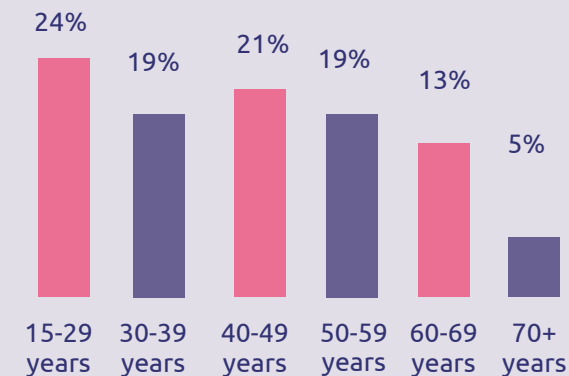


Spending
\$3 billion

Where are they from?



How old are they?



For the latest visitor and drive tourism statistics visit: <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/research-strategies/research/latest-visitor-data>

What do drive visitors need?

Visitor market



Fly-drive domestic

Flying to the Northern Territory from another Australian state then hiring a vehicle



Fly-drive international

Flying to the Northern Territory from overseas then hiring a vehicle



Drive domestic (long-haul)

Driving long distances to the Northern Territory from another Australian state



Local Territorians

Travelling in own vehicles or hiring a vehicle for a weekend away or work-related trips

Preferences and sought experiences

- Inclusive travel packages and deals
- 4 to 7 days with flexible itineraries
- Loop routes (same start and end location)
- Regular stops (every 3 to 4 hours)
- Mobile phone reception
- Sealed and well signed roads (2WD or AWD vehicles).

- Packaged drive experiences booked through travel agents
- 7 to 10 day itineraries planned well in advance
- Drives that link to other Australian states
- Maps and safety information in multiple languages
- Sealed and well signed roads (2WD or AWD vehicles).

- Long stays in locations
- Good road surfaces and secure parking
- Extensive use of visitor information centres
- Camping sites and facilities for self-contained vehicles
- Will plan destinations to visit well in advance however will allow flexible itineraries to make changes on the road.

- Will be travelling for short weekends away with family and friends (including camping trips)
- Travel for work in other Northern Territory locations
- A mix of longer term planning (e.g. upcoming school holidays) and last minute

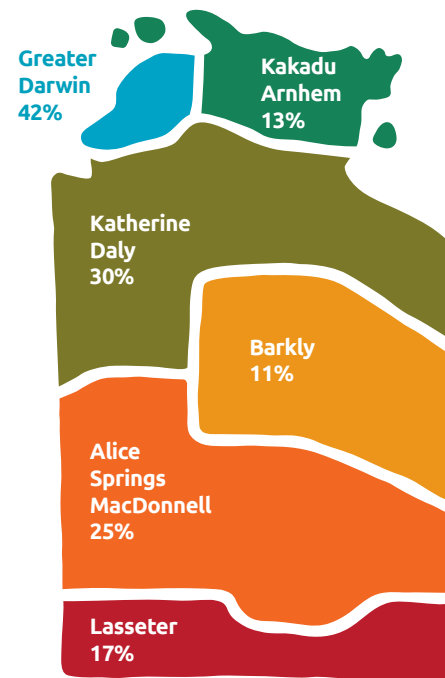
Where do drive visitors travel in the NT?

There are many drive routes in the Northern Territory with connections through Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland.

The most popular routes include:

- Nature's Way (Darwin to Kakadu, East Arnhem and Katherine)
- Red Centre Way (around Alice Springs to Uluru)
- Explorers Way (from Adelaide through Alice Springs and Darwin).

Drive visitors are often on a journey to visit family and friends and to see cultural, natural and historical sites such as national parks along these routes.



Average drive visitor percentages to destinations across the NT. Northern Territory Drive Tourism Strategy 2021-2030

Image credit:
Dirt Road in the Red Centre - Tourism NT

What can each region offer to drive visitors?



Greater Darwin region

- Aboriginal cultures within the region including the lands of the Larrakia, Tiwi, Wulna, Limilngan, Uwnmil, Kungarrakan and Awarai (Warai) people
- The region's far north geography and proximity to Asia
- Territorians reputation for being relaxed and welcoming, offering warm hospitality
- Tourism sector in Darwin is mature with established visitor markets, tourism experience and amenities
- Tropical environment and relaxed lifestyle
- High quality and accessible nature experiences
- Famously multicultural population and cuisine
- Distinct festivals and event experiences.



Kakadu Arnhem region

- Rich Yolngu and Anindilyakwa culture, offering a unique opportunity for cultural immersion and learning experiences
- Unique natural environment of East Arnhem Land and its pristine coastline
- Diverse history: East Arnhem Land has a diverse and multifaceted history that lives on through its residents
- Adventure drives: the Central Arnhem Road drive and the tracks to access the more remote campgrounds in the region offer visitors the opportunity to journey through ancient landscapes, scenery and wildlife.



Katherine Daly region

- Central location and road connections between Queensland, Western Australia and the north and south of the Territory
- The quality, quantity and diversity of the natural attractions in the region, including eight national parks or reserves and five main river systems
- Aboriginal cultural attractions and experiences, including Aboriginal cultural festivals
- Historical and heritage experiences
- The warmth and hospitality of the people within the region.



Barkly region

- Aboriginal cultural attractions
- Timely and convenient stopover between the north and south of the Territory
- Unique quality historical and heritage experiences such as the Battery Hill Mining Centre.



Alice Springs and MacDonnell region

- Aboriginal cultural attractions
- Diverse and unique natural attractions, including deserts, mountain ranges and swimming experiences
- Quality soft adventure tourism experiences, including hiking and mountain biking
- Wide range of unique events.



Lasseter region MacDonnell Ranges

- Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Watarrka National Park, both domestically and internationally renowned
- High quality Aboriginal cultural attractions
- Pioneering heritage of the region
- Sense of outback adventure it provides.

Do you know your drive visitors?

Questions to consider

- 1 What type of drive visitors do you have in your region – 4WD, caravans, hire cars (p. 2)?

- 2 Why do drive visitors come to your region – nature, culture, history, other reasons (p. 2)?

- 3 Why is drive tourism important for your region (p. 3)?

- 5 Are the needs of drive visitors being met in your region? What product and experiences are currently offered and what new product and experiences could be offered (p. 5)?

- 6 Is your Aboriginal cultural tourism business along a key drive tourism route? (p. 7)

- 6 What opportunities are in your region to attract more drive visitors and how can your tourism business work together with these (p. 8)?

To discuss your tourism product or experience idea further, get in touch with Tourism NT's Aboriginal tourism team:
Ph: 08 8999 7420 or Email: Aboriginal.TourismNT@nt.gov.au

Learn more about other tourism sectors and markets and access the range of tools within our Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Framework

www.tourismnt.com.au/aboriginal-culture-tourism

References

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Page 7 - Bottom right - Couple at Maruku Arts - Tourism NT/Helen Orr

Back cover - Art collection at Djilpin Art Gallery - Tourism NT/Elise Derwin



Image credit:
Seven Emu Station - Tourism NT/Shanaa McNaught



“Visiting an Aboriginal community is a unique experience and we hope you will relax into the local atmosphere and take the time to enjoy the Beswick lifestyle. In a remote Northern Territory community, Djilpin Arts has, for nearly two decades, developed a vibrant and thriving cultural enterprise.”

Djilpin Art Gallery
Beswick Community

