

# Australia's most remote region is timeless wonder

**Lynn Gail** discovers unparalleled ancient beauty and customs on a cruise through the rugged Kimberley

"We'll be flying with the doors off - it's much better for photos." Harry, our bearded twenty-something helicopter pilot says as he buckles up my car-type seat belt. My heart-beat races. "We'll be flying at 200kph in strong winds, grip your phones - we don't want them disappearing down the canyons," he warns. Harry flicks several switches as we rise across Australia's far-reaching Kimberley region. At roughly 422,000 sq km, it is more than three times the size of England and stretches across both Western Australia and the Northern Territory. This is about as remote as it gets in Australia. The entire region has a population of less than 40,000.



I am on an adventurous 11-day cruise with Heritage Expeditions, from Broome in Western Australia to Darwin in the Northern Territory. Witnessing billion-year-old red rock monoliths across the Mitchell Plateau with an eagle's view ticks a lifetime wish as we head to Mitchell Falls, one of Australia's most spectacular, and remote, sights. Below, finger-thin inlets flow into blue-green river systems, creating subtle pastel artworks around 80m-high sandstone boulders. "Look to your right!" Harry's voice crackles over the headset. A dramatic four-tiered waterfall comes into view, feeding large and wildly beautiful emerald-green rock pools. We land at pristine Swift Bay - hugged by sandstone cliffs and Indigenous rock

art (*inset*) - to take a Zodiac boat back to our floating home, the *Heritage Adventurer*. Life aboard the 140-guest, seven-deck expedition ship is a blissful retreat. With two fine-dining restaurants, mealtimes are drawn-out affairs where conversations flow between like-minded guests. I choose books from the extensive library, find quiet reading corners by the pool, and join new friends in the hot tub or gym. In the evening, pre-dinner talks introduce us to the Kimberley's extreme tidal ranges, drowned river valleys, cave art, marine life and Aboriginal custodians of the epic landscapes. A dozen Zodiacs takes four groups out on daily excursions at different times of the day. My group slides into one at dusk. Marine scientist Michael "Tropi" Tropiano is at the helm as we head to Montgomery Reef (Yowjab in the local Dambimangari language). At 80km, it is Australia's longest inshore reef. When we arrive, it is submerged beneath a 9m tide, but at twilight Mother Earth turns her taps on, full force. "Each tide is like a heartbeat!" Tropi shouts as the tide rushes out, creating a low-lying waterfall that exposes all life forms. Breakfast for some, as Eastern reef egrets and herons feed on the critters. "It's so spread out, it's hard to show in a single picture," Gunela, a retiree sitting beside me says as we attempt to photograph the far-reaching reef. Tropi drives us in, closer. "It's torrential!" Jeff from the US says. Raging rapids push us back until the tide subsides, exposing a coral-coated reef



More than three times the size of England, it has a population of 40,000



From left: Mitchell Falls; the 'Heritage Adventurer'; guide and elder Gideon Mowaljarlai preparing fire as a cleansing ritual for when people leave his land. LYNN GAIL

6,000 years old - youthful compared to its billion-year-old foundation. On our return, we watch green turtles rise in their dozens, gulping air before disappearing down. Extreme tidal ranges across the Buccaneer Archipelago (also home to the famed Horizontal Falls), can reach up to 10m high. Water accumulates faster on one side of the reef, causing a cascade effect when the tides goes out. Back on the ship, I head to the observation deck as we sail to Freshwater Cove, land of the Arraluli. It is August, season of the humpback whale migration, and a whale and her calf weave in our wake. When we go ashore to meet the Arraluli people in Freshwater Cove (Wiggingarra Butt Butt) - dated by scientists as 55,000 years old - we are daubed

with ceremonial ochre at a Welcome to Country ceremony by guide and elder Gideon Mowaljarlai. Gideon explains his kinship system - Jurnkun and Wadoy. Everything in their culture is split between the two moieties, and people of the same group cannot marry one another. When we hike to caves with Wijingarra Tours owner and elder, Neil Maru, he tells us about cave art dating back 20,000 years. Neil points out drawings of Wadoy and Jurnkun and shows us artwork depicting their ancient beliefs. We hear dreamtime stories about weather patterns, animals, nature. I feel the ancestors' presence, their deep spirituality, uplifted by the oldest culture in the world. When I step through smoke

in a cleansing ritual, the voyage comes full circle. Flying over a vast, untouched landscape and meeting people whose ancestral history is in every nook, who can still live off the land without outside influences, forges a deep respect for Australia's First Nation people. The Kimberley is like nowhere else on Earth.

**HOW TO DO IT**  
Kimberley Explorer - Expedition Cruising Australia's Iconic Kimberley Coast with Heritage Expeditions departs **July 2026**. The 11-day cruise from **Darwin to Broome** starts at £4,870pp in a triple cabin. For more: [heritage-expeditions.com](http://heritage-expeditions.com)

## travel inspired travel authentic travel guided

© **travelsphere**

Join us on a carefully-crafted holiday to discover the iconic sights and hidden gems of Italy. From the secret lakes in the north, through the rolling hills of Tuscany to the captivating highlights of Sicily - with flights, hotels, and unforgettable experiences all included in the price, you can simply relax and soak up la dolce vita.

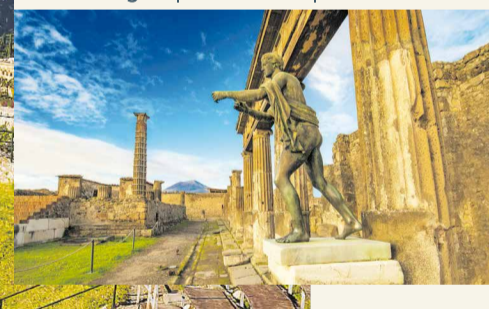
Request a brochure

travelsphere.co.uk

01858 415061

or visit your local travel agent

**Pompeii, Paestum & Herculaneum**  
8 days was £1,599 now £1,499  
Return flights | 4-star hotel | 14 meals



**Amalfi Coast, Pompeii & Capri**  
8 days was £1,749 now £1,649  
Return flights | 4-star hotel | 15 meals



GRAND GREECE, CYPRUS & TURKEY LUXURY VOYAGE

14nts from only **£1,199** per person

Celebrity **X** Cruises Dept Date: **13 Feb 2026**

Fly to Athens for **3nts (Hotel Stay)** then set sail to; Piraeus, Greece; Nauplion, Greece; Katakolon, Greece; Iraklion (Heraklion), Crete; Rhodes, Greece; Limassol, Cyprus; Antalya, Turkey; Ephesus (Kusadasi), Turkey; Athens (Piraeus), Greece; Disembark ship & Fly to UK

UNBELIEVABLE VALUE - LIMITED TO 19 CABINS

---

MAJESTIC AFRICA & INDIAN OCEAN DISCOVERY VOYAGE

31nts from only **£2,299** per person

MSC Dept Date: **31 Oct 2026**

Fly to Venice for **1nt (Hotel Stay)** then set sail to; Split, Croatia; Heraklion (Crete), Greece; Rhodes, Greece; Suez Canal (transit), Egypt; Aqaba (Petra), Jordan; Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt; Port Victoria, Madagascar; Nosy Be, Madagascar; Antsiranana (Diego Suarez), Madagascar; Port Louis, Mauritius; La Possession, Reunion; Durban, South Africa; Disembark ship for **3nts (Hotel Stay)** & Fly to UK

BEST SELLER - UNBELIEVABLE ITINERARY

## CRUISE MONKS

Explore Without Limits

# 0203 994 4184

www.cruisemonks.com

MON - FRI 09:00 - 19:00  
SAT - SUN 09:00 - 18:00

---

MAGICAL JAPAN LUXURY GRAND VOYAGE

17nts from only **£1,899** per person

Celebrity **X** Cruises Dept Date: **07 Sep 2026**

Fly to Tokyo, Japan for **3nts (Hotel Stay)** then set sail to; Kyoto, Osaka (2 days), Japan; Kochi, Japan; Busan, South Korea; Nagasaki, Japan; Kagoshima, Japan; Mt Fuji (Shimizu), Japan; Tokyo; Disembark ship & Fly to UK

EXCLUSIVE - UNBELIEVABLE VALUE

AUSTRALIA, FIJI, AMERICAN SAMOA & HAWAII LUXURY VOYAGE

22nts from only **£2,199** per person

Celebrity **X** Cruises Dept Date: **04 Apr 2026**

Fly to Sydney, Australia for **3nts (Hotel Stay)** then set sail to; Lifou, Loyalty Island; Lautoka, Fiji; Suva, Fiji; Apia, Samoa; Crossing International Date Line; Pago Pago, American Samoa; Honolulu (Oahu), Hawaii (overnight); Disembark ship & Fly to UK

OPTIONAL ADD-ON: 4NTS IN HAWAII FR £499

---

GRAND ANTARCTICA DISCOVERY LUXURY VOYAGE

19nts from only **£3,299** per person

Celebrity **X** Cruises Dept Date: **12 Jan 2027**

Fly to Buenos Aires, Argentina for **3nts (Hotel Stay)** then set sail to; Ushuaia, Argentina; Cape Horn, Chile; Schollaert Channel, Antarctica; Paradise Bay, Antarctica; Gerlache Strait, South America; Elephant Island, Antarctica; Port Stanley, Falkland Islands; Puerto Madryn, Argentina; Montevideo, Uruguay; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Disembark ship & Fly to UK

EXCLUSIVE OFFER - LIMITED TO 14 CABINS