



TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

10 great things to see and do in Darwin

Darwin

1 MINDIL BEACH SUNSET MARKETS: Are a Darwin institution that no visitor should miss. They run from April until October on Thursday and Sunday nights. Shop for local souvenirs, get a massage, have your palm read, get a Tarot reading, watch the buskers and performing artists, listen to the live bands or just sip a glass of wine on the beach and watch the sunset.

2 MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY: Head to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory for some great Aboriginal art and the terrifying Cyclone Tracy display featuring a small, dark room where you can listen to a tape recording of the cyclone's screeching winds. It's open daily and admission is free.

3 ENJOY A CRUISE: Watching the sun fall into a blood-red sea from the deck of a restored schooner, 1950's pearling lugger, sailing ketch, catamaran or cruiser while sipping champagne is a Darwin moment not to be missed. There are several cruises available on the harbour, with sunset cruises the most spectacular.

4 DARWIN BOTANIC GARDEN: Escape the tropical heat with a stroll through the Botanic Gardens. The 42-hectare garden just two kilometres from the city centre includes a rainforest gully with hundreds of palms, a wetland, a coastal zone and a mangrove boardwalk. Open daily, 7am-7pm.

5 GO BACK IN TIME: Take a wander around Myilly Point Heritage Precinct, a collection of older style homes. It includes the last remaining four pre-WWII houses built in the 1930s. Bullet holes can still be seen in the fence and walls. 4 Burnett Place Myilly Point, Larrakeyah.

6 DECKCHAIR CINEMA: Screening seven nights a week during the dry season in a stunning outdoor setting. You can buy wine, beer and soft drinks at the kiosk, as well as snacks, or bring your own picnic dinner. www.deckchaircinema.com

7 AUSTRALIA PEARLING EXHIBITION: The Australian Pearling Exhibition at the Wharf Precinct will show you everything you've ever wanted to know about pearls. Open daily.

8 CATCH A FISH: The inland billabongs, tidal rivers, mangrove-lined estuaries and pristine coastal waters make the Top End one of the country's best sport fishing destinations. Best time for barramundi is September to December and there are countless fishing charters available. www.fishingtheterritory.com.

9 TIWI ISLANDS: Melville and Bathurst Islands, known collectively as the Tiwi Islands, are just a 20-minute flight from Darwin. Tiwi Tours (in conjunction with Aussie Adventure Tours) run several different day trips to Bathurst and Melville Island and will organise the permits on your behalf. All tours include morning tea and lunch as well as return flights from Darwin. Highlights are visiting Aboriginal art galleries and the morning tea and smoking ceremony with some of the local ladies. www.aussieadventure.com.au

10 GET OUT OF TOWN: Litchfield National Park is 100km south of Darwin via Batchelor. Highlights include the magnetic termite mounds, a large group of two-metre high termite mounds, all aligned north-south to keep the inside of the mound from getting too hot by the sun; Buley Rockhole, a chain of spa-like pools linked by small waterfalls; Florence Falls; the Lost City, an area of bizarre sandstone block and pillar formations, formed by thousands of years of wind and rain erosion; Tolmer Falls and Wangi Falls, the largest in the park.