

ELLERY CREEK BIG HOLE

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Ellery Creek Big Hole, West MacDonnell National Park

Ellery Creek Big Hole is a spectacular outback waterhole.



It's where the Ellery Creek cuts through the West MacDonnell Ranges leaving a spectacular gorge.

Thousands of years of massive floods have carved out this beautiful waterhole and unlocked some amazing geology for everyone to see.

It's a popular place for [outback](#) swimming, camping, hiking and relaxing, located an easy hour's drive west of [Alice Springs](#).

Ellery is also a **sacred site** for the Central and Western Arrernte people. It's name in **Western Arrernte is Udepata** (oo-DEP-pa-tuh).

The main Dreaming story here is Honey Ant Dreaming, although there's a Fish Dreaming story that travels through the waterhole as well.

Ellery waterhole is a must-see if you're travelling through the [West MacDonnell National Park](#). Like everything else in the Park, entry is free.

This page tells you more about how to get there, what facilities are available, what to do and when to go.

How to Get There:

Ellery Creek Big Hole is located 90 km west of Alice Springs, via Larapinta and Namatjira Drives. Access is by conventional vehicle or 2WD, however the last 2km is unsealed.

View [Ellery Creek Big Hole](#) in a larger map

From Alice Springs, travel west along Larapinta Drive for 50 km, until you reach the intersection with Namatjira Drive. Turn right onto Namatjira Drive and keep heading west for 65 km.

You'll find the signs to Ellery Creek Big Hole after about 30 minutes drive on a good sealed road.

The last 2 km into the waterhole itself are gravel, but you can drive a normal car in here easily.

Facilities:

Ellery has free gas BBQs, a camping area, shade shelters, picnic tables and a new shower and toilet block.



There is wheelchair access down to the waterhole along a paved path.

An emergency telephone is also available in case of accidents.

What to Do:

Ellery Creek Big Hole is best known as a place where Alice locals go swimming on hot summer days. However, it's also a great place for a picnic and you can camp here.

Swimming in the waterhole is why most people come to Ellery. The waterhole is deep, quite large, and can be very cold.



We better warn you about the cold. Some people have ended up with hypothermia from the cold water here, so be careful if you're swimming in the winter months.

Also take care not to dive into the water. There are boulders and submerged trees, and you could bump your head and get injured or worse.

The BBQ area is great for picnics if you're visiting on a day trip through the West Macs. There's plenty of shade shelters and tables.

There's a couple of walks around Ellery.

The **Dolomite Walk** leaves from the shade shelter in the carpark, and is a 3km loop which takes about 1.5 hours.

If you look carefully on this walk, you'll find lots of **Pitchuri** or Native Tobacco growing on the ridges. Ellery is a favourite place for Western Arrernte women to come and collect pitchuri (called *ingwulpa* in Western Arrernte).



Ellery also is the junction between Sections 6 and 7 of the Larapinta Trail. You can take shorter (or longer) walks along these sections of the Trail.

Just look for the Larapinta Trail markers around the parking area.

You can camp here, and there are hot showers and toilets. A new shower block was put in only a couple of years ago by the Parks and Wildlife Service.

The campground isn't very big and there isn't a lot of shade. It gets very busy in the winter time (peak season), and is very hot and exposed in the summer.

Our advice: get here early in the peak winter (May-August) season.

Camping costs: \$6.60/adult, \$3.30/child (5-15 years), \$15.40/family (2 adults and 4 children).

When to Go

Ellery Big Hole is a place that you can go most of the year, especially if you want to swim.

As we've said above, there isn't a lot of shade here, so if you're visiting in the summer, you'll have to put up with a hot car after your swim.

For camping and walking, it's best to visit from April-October, when it's a bit cooler.

One of the best things about Ellery Creek is its location.

It's an easy day trip from Alice Springs, so if you're planning a West Macs day trip, make sure you stop here.

However, you can even travel this way via the inner loop of the Red Centre Way to get to [Kings Canyon](#) or [Ayers Rock](#).

And if you bump into any of the rangers during your visit, make sure you stop and say hi. You never know. One of them might even be Gary!