

PALM VALLEY

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Palm Valley, located within Finke Gorge National Park is one of the most impressive places in central Australia.

Finke Gorge National Park covers an area of 46,000 hectares.

Apart from the adventure of driving along the oldest river in the world, Palm Valley is a maze of sandstone amphitheatres, pinnacles and gorges and is home to the Red Cabbage Palm after which the valley is named.



This particular species of palm is only found in this area. There are only about 3,000 adult plants.

The entire park contains a diverse range of other plant species many of which are rare and unique to the area.

Finke Gorge National Park and surrounding areas are of great cultural significance to the Western Arrernte Aboriginal people. The Park also has several places of historical significance where early European settlement took place.

How to get there

Palm Valley – Finke Gorge National Park is located 138km west of [Alice Springs](#). It takes about 2 hours to drive there.

Take Larapinta Drive from Alice and then just west of Hermannsburg, across the Finke River, turn left.

View [Palm Valley – Finke Gorge National Park](#) in a larger map

The last 16km of road, more like track, follows the sandy bed of the Finke River and is limited to 4WD vehicles only.

Heavy rains like we have had in 2010-11 have caused this section of the road to be impassable so [check road conditions](#) if there is rain around.



If you don't have your own 4WD to get there then many commercial tour operators regularly visit the Park from Alice Springs or on extended tours around the Centre.

When to Visit

Palm Valley is accessible all year round except when the Finke River is in flood.



The cooler months from April to September are the best time of the year to visit and camp but if you visit in summer it can be very hot. You can visit **Finke Gorge National Park** in one day and not have to camp but to get the most out of this great place stay the night and experience what the entire park has to offer.

What to See and Do

Palm Valley has a great little camping area with shady sites, showers, toilets and communal bbqs and there are several bushwalking and four-wheel driving opportunities in the area.

However, the campground is very popular in the winter months. Get there in the morning to make sure you get a camp site. No booking is necessary, and there is a \$6.60 per person fee to camp.

If you enjoy going for a walk there a number of **hiking tracks** within the park.

The Kalaranga Lookout is an easy 20 minute climb (1.5km, 45 minute return) with spectacular views of the sandstone amphitheatre I mentioned above, surrounded by many other outcrops of ruggedly spectacular scenery.



The Mpaara Walk (5km, 2 hours return) is the longest walk in the Park, and takes you through some gorgeous sandstone country whilst introducing you to Western Arrernte Aboriginal people's culture.

In Palm Valley itself, the must do walk is the Arankaia Walk (2km, 1 hr). This easy walk takes you into the heart of the palm groves.

The longer **Mpulungkinya Walk** (5km, 2hrs return) wander among the groves of slender palms and ultimately brings you back across to the the plateau to the carpark below.

In May-October rangers provide a couple of interactive activities that visitors can participate in so join in as these can be great for a chat and to find out valuable info about the park and surrounding areas.



A few points to remember:

- Young palms can be destroyed by visitors unaware that they are walking on seedlings. To ensure the survival of this population of palms you should be aware of where you are walking and follow the marked tracks to avoid trampling small seedlings
- Camping is only permitted in marked camping areas and if full there is a small overflow area to cater for a few more vehicles
- Please collect firewood along the river prior to entering the Park
- Pets are not permitted in this National Park
- Rubbish bins, as in most of Territory Parks, are not provided so please take your rubbish away with you.

More Adventure?

If you're really looking for something different and where you can take your 4WD then look into the **Finke River 4WD route via Boggy Hole** and through to **Illamurta Springs** and the **Ernest Giles Road**.

This is an alternate route to or from Watarrka National Park which begins at Hermannsburg or on the Ernest Giles Road.

This trip requires careful planning and preparation and don't do what many visitors do and think that this is a short cut, it's not and will take you a full day, sometimes in demanding conditions, to get through.

Please talk to Rangers to obtain guidance and directions before heading down the Finke River.

An additional Finke River 4WD Route information sheet is available from the Parks and Wildlife Services office in Alice Springs or from the Tourism Central Australia visitor centre.