



Gibb River Road - A Traveller's Guide

Welcome! This Gibb River Road Traveller's Guide will point you to useful resources so you can plan your journey - what to see, road conditions, fuel and much more. Simply click on the links for more information.

When Should We Go?

May to November is the ideal time of year.

But be careful. We were there in May and were [caught in late monsoonal rain](#). Personally I would prefer to go soon after the wet season has finished, as there will be plenty of water around - great for swimming and the waterfalls will look so much better.

Always check conditions before leaving Derby or Kununurra. Derby Visitor Centre website has an excellent page listing all the sites for the [latest road, weather and fire conditions](#).

What's The Road Like?

It depends. Some sections have sharp rocks, massive corrugations, washouts or all of the above. Other sections are smooth and trouble-free. You might encounter dry, stony creek beds or deep water crossings.

It really does depend... on when the grader was last through, the time of year, whether it has rained since the grader last went through, how much traffic has been on the road and so on.

I suggest you prepare for the worst case. You'll need good quality all-terrain tyres and take two spares. Drop your tyre pressures and **slow down**.

Tyre Pressures:

To give you an indication of tyre pressures, both our 4WD and camper trailer were heavily loaded.

- On *tarred roads* we were running our 4WD tyres at 40psi and the camper trailer tyres at 35psi.
- On *dirt roads* like the Gibb River Road, we were running our 4WD tyres at 28psi and the camper trailer tyres at 25psi.

This worked for us. In fact in twelve months of continuous travelling (over 60,000km), we never had a single puncture, let alone a blowout.

Remember, this is only an indication. Play around with your tyre pressures to find the best match for you.

Corrugations:

Make sure your vehicle is in excellent mechanical condition. [The corrugations can be brutal](#), they'll shake your vehicle apart if you're not careful.

It's difficult to give you an idea of what speed to travel on corrugations. It depends on lots of factors, like how big the corrugations are, whether there are washouts and pot holes and so on.

As a really rough rule of thumb, the effect of corrugations on an otherwise "good" dirt road can be minimised by travelling at around 80km/h. Your vehicle will get on top of the corrugations and you'll have a smoother ride.

But again it depends on road conditions. For example, [Kalumburu Road](#) had enormous corrugations and regular dips or washouts in some sections of the road. So there was no way we'd ever get up to 80km/h. Sometimes you just have to slow right down and be patient.

Keep in mind what's happening under your vehicle. If the corrugations are shaking your teeth loose, then imagine what they're doing to your vehicle's suspension!

Be kind to your vehicle... think about what's happening to it as you pound it over rough roads. After all, if you break it then you're in all sorts of trouble. We've seen some horrendous damage to 4WDs - mainly shock absorbers and other suspension components - because they were not nursed on bad roads.

Other Tips:

Always move over to give trucks and roadtrains right of way. On some sections, if they stop they'll lose traction and not be able to get going again.

Slow down for on-coming traffic. If you don't, you'll shower them with rocks and maybe even break their windscreen or a headlight. You wouldn't want this to happen to you, so be considerate of others.

Besides, you'll likely be driving into a wall of dust and have zero visibility. Many head-on crashes have occurred in these conditions.

Be alert at all times. You'll likely encounter cattle and wildlife, you'll certainly meet quite a bit of on-coming traffic and you might even see crazy people riding pushbikes - we did!

Do We Need A 4WD?

You don't actually need a 4WD to travel the Gibb River Road. We saw an elderly couple in a Wicked Camper, an old Mitsubishi Express van. Not what I'd choose, but they were just pottering along and driving to the limitations of their vehicle.

However, you'll be somewhat restricted without a 4WD. Lack of ground clearance will limit your choices.

You need a 4WD to get into some of the side trips off GRR. You just don't need a 4WD bristling with every conceivable accessory from your favourite 4WD store.

A set of quality all-terrain tyres, quality shock absorbers, a trusty shovel, a few essential spares (filters, belts and so on), two spare tyres and a basic toolkit are really the only things I'd recommend. Oh, and a gentle right foot...

Can We Take Our Caravan?

If you have a *properly built genuine* off-road caravan (as opposed to a caravan deemed to be "off road" by the company's marketing department), then you should be okay. Again, drop your tyre pressures and slow down.

You will know pretty quickly whether it's truly built for off roading - if it falls apart then you've been conned.

The same goes for camper trailers. Don't even think about taking a camper trailer that's not truly an off road unit. Broken trailers by the side of the road are testament to this.

Are There Crocodiles?

It depends where you go. [Windjana Gorge and Tunnel Creek](#) have a large population of freshwater crocodiles. However, they are harmless unless cornered.

Of course, places like Kalumburu and Honeymoon Bay will have [saltwater crocodiles](#). Use your commonsense. Ask the locals. If you have **any doubts**, don't swim or go near the water.

What Gorges Can We See?

We covered off many of the gorges directly accessible from the Gibb River Road (GRR) [in several articles](#). Here they are again (we've also added the ones we didn't visit):

- [Windjana Gorge and Tunnel Creek](#).
- Lennard Gorge.
- [Bell Gorge](#).
- Adcock Gorge.
- [Galvan's Gorge](#).
- [Manning Gorge](#).
- Mt Barnett Gorge.

Numerous gorges are on private property. The ones most accessible to travellers (provided you use the camping facilities) are:

- [Dimond](#) & Sir John Gorges at [Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary](#).
- [Moonshine](#), Emma & [Chamberlain](#) Gorges at [El Questro Station](#).
- Grivillea Gorge, Dillie Gorge and Donkey Hole at [Charnley River Station](#).
- Warla & Wunnumurra Gorges at [Mt Elizabeth Station](#).

Are There Any Side Trips?

Yes. Here's a few for you to think about:

- [Windjana Gorge and Tunnel Creek](#).
- [Mt Hart Wilderness Lodge](#).
- [Bell Gorge and Silent Grove](#).
- [Charnley River Station](#).
- [Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary](#).
- [Drysdale River Station](#), [King Edward River Campground](#), Mitchell Falls and Kalumburu - all accessible from [Kalumburu Road](#).
- [El Questro Station](#).

Where Can We Camp Along The GRR?

There are plenty of places to camp along the Gibb River Road:

- [Birdwood Downs Station](#).
- [Windjana Gorge](#).
- [Mt Hart Wilderness Lodge](#).
- [Silent Grove](#).
- [Imintji Campground](#).
- [Charnley River Station](#).
- [Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary](#).
- [Mt Barnett Campground](#).
- [Mt Elizabeth Station](#).
- [Ellenbrae Station](#).
- [Home Valley Station](#).
- [El Questro Station](#).

Where Can We Camp Along Kalumburu Road?

You have these choices:

- [Drysdale River Station](#).
- [King Edward River Campground](#).
- [Mitchell Falls Campground](#).
- [Kalumburu](#).

What Are The “Must See” Places?

Short answer - everything! However you need a starting point, so here are a few:

- [Windjana Gorge](#).
- [Tunnel Creek](#).
- [Bell Gorge](#).
- [Galvans Gorge](#).
- [King Edward River Campground](#).
- [Zebedee Thermal Springs](#) along the road into [El Questro Station](#).

Where Can We Get Fuel?

These are the places where you can get fuel.

Diesel:

- Derby.
- [Imintji Roadhouse](#).
- [Mt Barnett Roadhouse](#).
- [Drysdale River Station](#).
- Kalumburu.
- [El Questro Station](#).
- [Wyndham](#) or [Kununurra](#).

Petrol:

- As per above, except [Imintji Roadhouse](#) which only has diesel.

LPG:

- Not available.

Now, remember this is a remote area. Whilst the distances between fuel outlets are not great, [they might not always have fuel](#). They are dependent upon trucks delivering along poorly maintained roads. Breakdowns and rain can delay fuel deliveries.

Always carry spare fuel, especially if you are planning to deviate along the way. *Do not rely on the fuel outlets alone*. If you're still concerned about not having enough fuel, be flexible when you do your trip itinerary. Allow a few spare days just in case you have to wait for the fuel truck to arrive.

Where Can We Buy Food?

If you're travelling west to east, stock up at Derby. If you're travelling east to west, stock up at [Kununurra](#). These two towns have all the supplies you'll ever need.

You can buy basic supplies at:

- [Imintji Roadhouse](#).
- [Mt Barnett Roadhouse](#).
- [Drysdale River Station](#).
- Kalumburu.
- [El Questro Station](#).

Again, don't rely on these places to always carry full stock. As with the fuel, supplies are dependent on the state of the roads and whether the supply truck can get through.

Always carry extra food, just in case.

Do We Need To Take Drinking Water?

Yes. Whilst drinking water is available at many places along the way, always carry plenty of your own. To give you an idea, we could carry about 120 litres. With four of us onboard, we always topped up wherever we could.

You may not need to carry this much, but be prepared. Consider what you would need if you were stranded somewhere alone for a few days. This is unlikely, but you could be stranded somewhere due to mechanical breakdown or bad weather.

In Summary

Like any remote travel, if you prepare thoroughly you'll be fine. The Gibb River Road is a must-see destination. The scenery is ever-changing and simply magnificent.

Make a rough itinerary and take your time. You'll never forget your journey along the Gibb River Road. The red dirt gets in your blood and you'll want to go back time and again.

Have a great time and we might see you on the road!

Andrew Murray,
Top Wire Traveller.
www.topwiretraveller.com

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