

# Karijini National Park



## Visitor guide



Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions



**RECYCLE** Please return unwanted brochures to distribution points

Many toilets in national parks use a composting or biolytic system which is destroyed by chemicals. Please use sullage points provided in the park, nearby towns or at some 24-hour roadside stops.



**WARNING**  
**BLUE ASBESTOS PRESENT IN YAMPIRE GORGE**

Asbestos dust may cause cancer when inhaled.

## More information

National park rangers are always pleased to help make your visit more enjoyable and informative. Do not hesitate to contact them if you require any information or assistance.

### Karijini National Park Visitor Centre

Telephone: (08) 9189 8121  
Fax: (08) 9189 8113  
Karijini National Park  
PO Box 29, Tom Price WA 6751

### Ranger (emergency only)

Telephone: (08) 9189 8147

### Pilbara Regional Office

Mardie Road, Karratha Industrial Estate  
PO Box 835, Karratha WA 6714  
Telephone: (08) 9182 2000  
Fax: (08) 9144 1118

### State Headquarters

17 Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington WA 6151  
Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre  
Bentley WA 6983  
Telephone: (08) 9219 9000

[dbca.wa.gov.au](http://dbca.wa.gov.au)



Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions



Photos - DBCAww, Tourism Western Australia and Samille Mitchell

Information current at March 2017.  
This document is available in alternative formats on request.



Set in the Hamersley Range in the heart of the Pilbara, the expansive Karijini National Park offers spectacular, rugged scenery, ancient geological formations, a variety of arid-land ecosystems and a range of recreational experiences.

This is Western Australia's second largest national park, encompassing some 627,441ha.

Massive mountains and escarpments rise out of the flat valleys. The high plateau is dissected by breathtaking gorges, and stony, tree-lined watercourses wind their way over the dusty plain.

This is an ancient part of the Earth. The slow process of erosion has carved the shape of the land out of rocks that are 2000 million years old, to form this intriguing landscape and complex ecology.

A variety of ecosystems are represented in the park. These range from precipitous gorges that shelter a remarkable range of plants and animals, to hills, ridges and plateaux covered with spinifex hummocks and scattered eucalypts. Low mulga woodlands and blankets of seasonal wildflowers bloom on lower slopes, valley plains and drainage lines.

Much of the southern half of the park is inaccessible. Visitors concentrate on the spectacular gorges in the north, with their rock pools, waterfalls and unique wildlife. Lookouts, walk trails, camping areas and information shelters are provided to make your visit safe, enjoyable and informative.

## Visitor fees

Park visitor fees apply in Karijini National Park. They help maintain and enhance the park. Please pay your entry fees at the entrance stations, or the Karijini Visitor Centre. If staying at Karijini Eco Retreat, visitors are still required to pay a park entry fee. A range of park passes are available at Parks and Wildlife offices, regional visitor centres and the Karijini Visitor Centre or online at [shop.dpaw.wa.gov.au](http://shop.dpaw.wa.gov.au). At Dales camping area, please stop at the entry point and see campground hosts to pay your fees. Otherwise, deposit your camping fees in the collection box provided if the area is unattended.

## Visitor centre

The Karijini Visitor Centre provides information and interpretation on the natural and cultural history of the park. Souvenirs, cool drinks, ice, hot showers, toilets and a public telephone are available. Contact the centre on (08) 9189 8121 for more information.

## Access in the park

Universal access is available to a range of recreation sites and camping facilities in the park. Please enquire at the visitor centre for further information.

## Care for the park

Please drive, walk and camp only on designated roads, tracks and camping areas. Follow the *Leave No Trace* principles at [www.lnt.org.au](http://www.lnt.org.au).



**BE CAUTIOUS** Stay on roads and tracks to protect the park. Wet roads can be hazardous and may be damaged by vehicles. Washouts can occur during heavy rain, resulting in road closures at short notice. Check travel conditions with Parks and Wildlife on (08) 9182 2000 or the Shire of Ashburton on (08) 9188 4444.

**BE KIND** Do not disturb or take any animals, plants or rocks. Pets and firearms are not permitted.

**BE WISE** Do not contaminate pools with soap, detergents or sunscreen, as they can impact aquatic life.

**BE CAREFUL** Avoid the risk of bushfire. Use the gas barbecues provided, or your own portable cooking appliance. Ground fires and solid fuel fires are not permitted in the park.

**BE CLEAN** Go to the toilet before entering the gorges. Carry a rubbish bag and leave nothing but your footprints.



## Traditional owners

The Banyjima, Yinhawangka and Kurrama Aboriginal people know the Hamersley Range as Karijini. The name of the park recognises the historic and continuing significance of the area to the people and their involvement in park management.

Evidence of their ancestors' occupation dates back more than 30,000 years. During that period, Aboriginal land management practices such as 'fire stick farming' resulted in a diversity of vegetation types and states of succession, and have helped determine the range of plants and animals found in the park today.

Fern Pool and Circular Pool are among many special places to Aboriginal people. To protect the heritage, cultural and environmental values of these areas, visitors are encouraged to enter the water quietly and avoid making loud noises. Access to the area above Fern Pool is not permitted. Please do not climb or jump from this waterfall or ledges surrounding Circular Pool. Relax and enjoy these unique areas.

## Climate

The park is situated just north of the Tropic of Capricorn and its climate can best be described as tropical semi-desert. A highly variable, mainly summer rainfall of 250–350mm is often associated with thunderstorms and cyclones producing spectacular water flows in the gorges. During summer, temperatures frequently exceed 40°C – ideal conditions for swimming in the gorge pools. Winter days are warm and clear but nights are cold and sometimes frosty.

## Geology

The banded iron formations exposed in many of the rocks in and around the gorges originated more than 2500 million years ago as iron and silica-rich sediment deposits accumulated on an ancient sea floor. Over millions of years these deposits were transformed by the pressure of further sediments laid down over them, forcing trapped water to be driven out and gradually turning the sediments into tough, well-bedded rock.

Horizontal compression later caused the rocks to buckle, developing numerous vertical cracks, before lifting to the surface to form dry land.

A sharp drop in sea level caused the rivers to cut down rapidly through the land, creating sheer-sided gorges. This, combined with millions of years of erosion, has sculptured the rocks into the present landscape.

## The gorges

In the north of the park, small creek beds, hidden in the rolling hillsides and dry for most of the year, suddenly plunge down 100m chasms. Further downstream the gorges become wider and their sides change from sheer cliffs to steep slopes of loose rock. Finally the drainage systems emerge as alluvial fans into the Fortescue Valley.

The gorges provide a refreshing retreat from the arid plains above. Take one of the many walk trails and experience the spectacular scenery, dramatic waterfalls and clear, fresh pools.



## Wildlife

Wildflowers vary in abundance with the seasons and from year to year but there is always something interesting in bloom. Many plants in the park bloom profusely after rains. In the cooler months the land is covered with numerous yellow flowering sennas (cassias) and acacias, northern bluebells and purple mulla mullas.

There are many birds in the park from a variety of species, especially in fringing vegetation along pools and streams. If you are observant, you may also encounter red kangaroos, euros (kangaroos that are common to the rocky country), Rothschild's rock wallabies, bats and wild dogs.

Many species of native rodents and marsupial carnivores such as the Pilbara ningauai are resident, but nocturnal and shy. Reptiles and amphibians such as frogs, geckoes, goannas, dragons, legless lizards, pythons and other snakes abound within the park. Visit the *Atlas of Living Australia* ([www.ala.org.au](http://www.ala.org.au)) to find out more about the flora and fauna of the area.

Two interesting wildlife homes to look for are the large termite mounds, scattered throughout the hummock grasslands, and the rock piles of the pebble mound mouse. Mounds can be found on stony slopes, but please do not disturb them.

## Facilities

### Karijini Visitor Centre

The Karijini Visitor Centre is located just off Banjima Drive (eastern section). It is open from 9am to 4pm from March to November with reduced hours over the remaining months. Seasonal closures may be in effect December–February.

### Camping

Camp sites are available at designated areas indicated on the map. Caravan, bus, and generator sites are available at Dales camping area and Karijini Eco Retreat. Facilities include toilets, and picnic tables. Generators are permitted in some sites. Please observe generator operation times.

Wild dogs can be seen at Karijini. They may scavenge for food and can become aggressive. Never feed any wildlife, supervise your children at all times, and store your food, rubbish and iceboxes in your vehicle or off the ground. Campground hosts are based at Dales camping area May–September to assist visitors.

### Rubbish

Please take your rubbish with you out of the park, as bins are not provided at Dales Camping area.

### Telephones

Public telephones are located at Karijini Eco Retreat and the Karijini Visitor Centre. Mobile phone reception is possible in elevated areas and close to mining operations. Satellite phones are recommended for use in other areas, although reception may be unreliable in the gorges. There are emergency radios located at Weano day-use area and Fortescue Falls carpark.

### Water

Untreated water is available from tanks located at sites indicated on the map. Boiling or chemical treatment is recommended. Carry plenty of water at all times when undertaking walks and other activities.

### Lookouts

Lookout platforms are provided at various locations indicated on the park map. Supervise children at all times and please stay behind the barriers. Never throw rocks into the gorges, as people may be walking below.

### Walking

Choose an appropriate trail presented in the guide overleaf to help you to explore the park.

- Stay on established trails and stand well back from cliff edges. Karijini's impressive gorges have very high vertical cliffs, and cliff edges can be loose and unstable.
- If hiking overnight, please contact the visitor centre or park rangers. Some activities such as camping in non-designated areas, abseiling and canyoning may require permission from the department before being undertaken.
- Please take care in the gorges. Rocks are smooth and slippery, particularly when wet.
- Alcohol and glass are not permitted in any gorges.



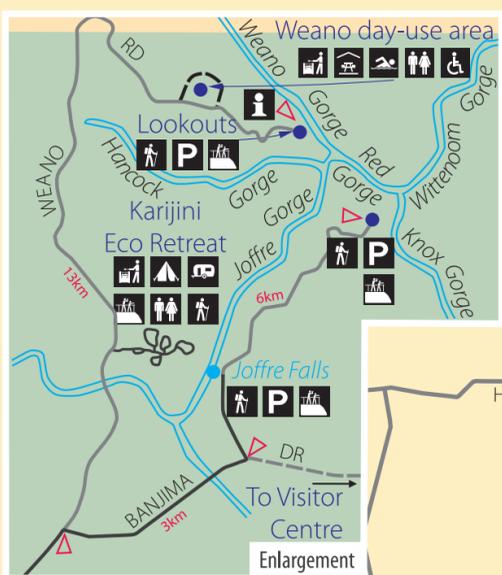
**WARNING!** Flash floods can occur in the gorges. Do not enter the gorges if there is heavy rain in the area. If you are already in the gorges, please leave promptly.

**BE PREPARED:** Wear sturdy walking shoes, use good sun protection, and take plenty of water.

### Swimming

Gorge pools are often deep, shaded and very cold. Others, exposed to the sun, may be pleasant places for a quick dip.

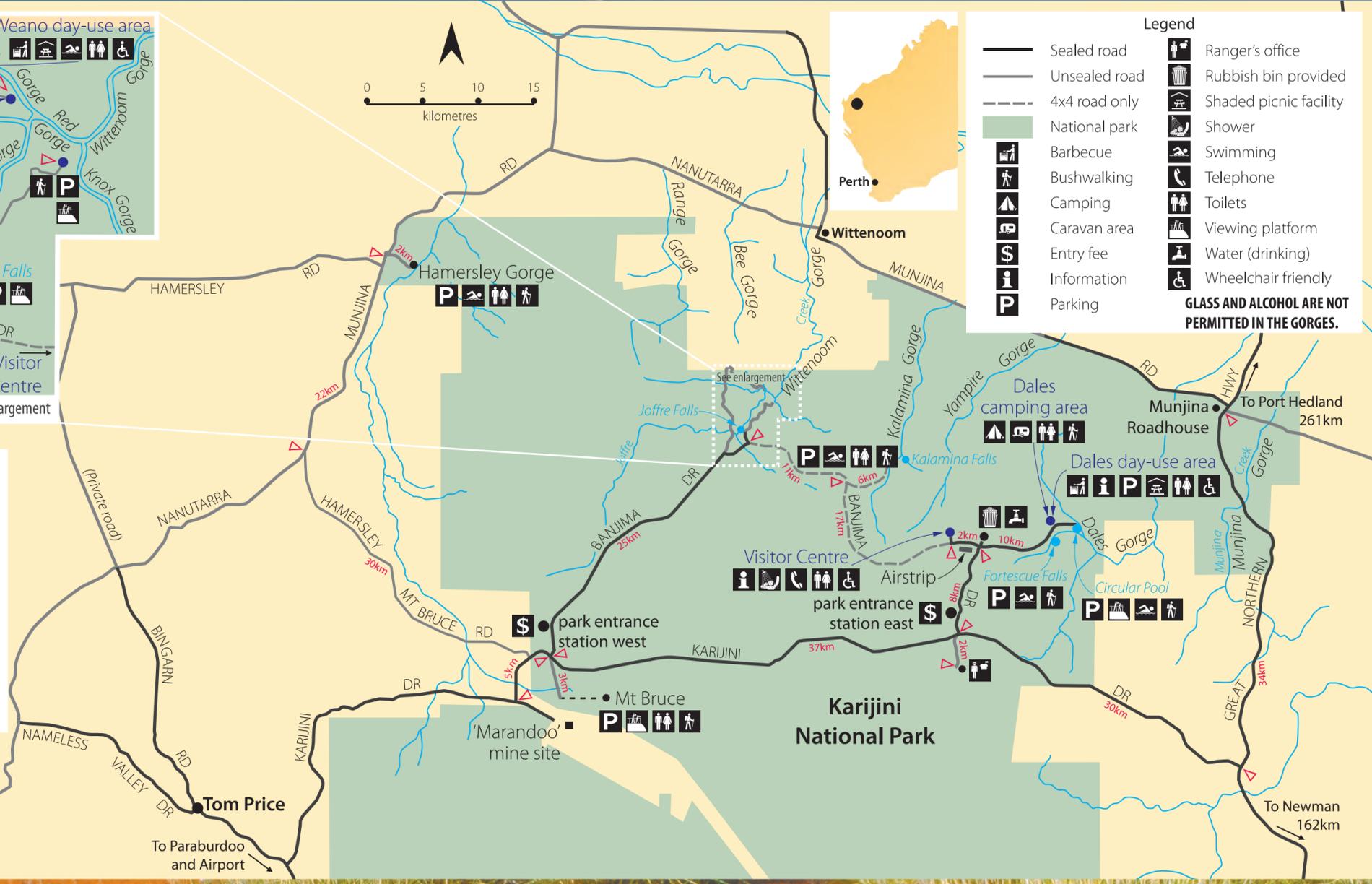
- The water can be very cold, especially between April and September, and hypothermia can occur.
- Do not dive or jump into the water.



- Legend**
- Sealed road
  - Unsealed road
  - 4x4 road only
  - National park
  - Barbecue
  - Bushwalking
  - Camping
  - Caravan area
  - Entry fee
  - Information
  - Parking
  - Ranger's office
  - Rubbish bin provided
  - Shaded picnic facility
  - Shower
  - Swimming
  - Telephone
  - Toilets
  - Viewing platform
  - Water (drinking)
  - Wheelchair friendly
- GLASS AND ALCOHOL ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE GORGES.**

**THE VISITOR CENTRE to**

Dales Gorge	12km
Kalamina Gorge (4x4)	25km
Joffre Gorge (4x4)	29.5km (via Karijini Drive 77.5km)
Weano Gorge (4x4)	43.5km (via Karijini Drive 85km)
Mt Bruce	50km (via Karijini Drive)
Hamersley Gorge	101km (via Karijini Drive)



**TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS**

**Class 2**  
These walks are well defined with some steps and generally gradients are gentle.

**Class 3**  
These trails are defined and may include steps; loose surfaces; uneven ground; and short, steep sections.

**Class 4**  
These trails are moderately difficult and over variable surfaces – they require a good level of fitness. Expect steep gradients and natural obstacles including rocks and shallow pools.

**Class 5**  
These trails are difficult and a high level of fitness and agility is required. Trail markings are minimal, and steep sections with vertical drops are common. Expect to encounter natural hazards including large boulders; pools of water; slippery, wet rocks; and narrow, high ledges.

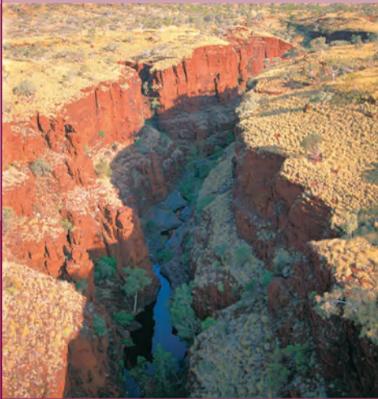
**DANGER Warning!**  
Flash floods can occur at Karijini. If it rains while you are in the gorges, please leave gorges safely and promptly.

**MOUNT BRUCE (Punurrunha)**

The second-tallest peak in WA lies about 36km west of the Rangers office. A great opportunity to view the Marandoo Mine Site.

**Marandoo View**  
500m – 30 minutes return  
Follow the path from the Mount Bruce car park to view the Marandoo Mine Site. Excavation of ore for overseas markets began in July 1994.

**Honey Hakea Track**  
4.6km – 3 hours return  
From the car park at the base of Mount Bruce, take the path to Marandoo View. From here, follow the track to another vantage point further up the mountain. See the vegetation patterns of the mulga on the flats surrounding Mount Bruce.



**Mount Bruce Summit**  
9km – 6 hours return  
Use the early morning hours to take the route that leads up the western face of the mountain, past Marandoo View. This challenging walk will reward you with spectacular views of the landscape.

**DALES GORGE**

See the tranquil sunken gardens, deep sedge-fringed pools, and permanently cascading waterfalls.

**Gorge Rim**  
2km – 1.5 hours return  
Follow the rim of the gorge between Circular Pool Lookout and the beginning of the Fortescue Falls Track. White-barked snappy gums grow in the car park around the edge of the gorge and shady groves of native cypress shelter on the cliff face beneath the track. Enjoy the wonderful views into Dales Gorge.

**Fortescue Falls** 800m – 1 hour return  
Reach the waterfall by following the trail from the car park, negotiating steps and a narrow section of the trail.

**Fern Pool**  
Optional 300m detour from Fortescue Falls.

**Circular Pool**  
800m – 2 hours return  
Follow the path from the car park, descending the steps down a steep slope to the bottom of the gorge. Ramble along the gorge floor to the fern-framed pool. Take a dip before retracing your steps.

**Dales Gorge**  
2km – 3 hours return  
Experience gorge wildlife at close quarters from this creek-side trail between Fortescue Falls and Circular Pool Trail.



**JOFFRE AND KNOX GORGES**

Appreciate the power of water shaping the landscape. There are impressive waterfalls, and deep, cold pools. See for yourself how the gorges were formed.

**Joffre Lookout**  
100m – 10 minutes return  
Rock steps take you down to the lookout to view this spectacular curved waterfall forming a natural amphitheatre, which is especially impressive after rain.

**Knox Lookout**  
300m – 15 minutes return  
As you take the steps down to the lookout, watch the view spread out in the distance. It's spectacular in the early morning or late afternoon light.



**Knox Gorge**  
2km – 3 hours return  
As you climb down and scramble along the gorge, notice the fig trees clinging to the richly coloured walls. Skirt several pools and return from the 'Gorge Risk Area' sign.

**Joffre Falls** 3km – 2 hours return  
Most of the trail is class 4, but the last 150m (descent into the bottom of the gorge) is class 5. Follow the marked route into the bottom of the gorge to the first pool downstream of the waterfall.

**HANCOCK AND WEANO GORGES**

Experience the spectacular views, precipitous cliffs and narrow passages. Banded iron rock formations tower over the valleys far below.

**Oxer and Junction Pool lookouts**  
800m – 30 minutes return  
At Junction Pool Lookout enjoy breathtaking views of Hancock Gorge. If continuing to Oxer Lookout, please see below.

**Oxer Lookout**  
From Junction Pool Lookout to Oxer Lookout the trail is narrow with loose rocks in patches. Please take great care.

**Upper Weano**  
1km – 45 minutes return  
From the information shelter, take the trail north towards the top of Weano Gorge. Follow the trail down the gorge and return when you reach the steps.

**Lower Weano**  
1km – 1 hour return  
From the shelter, take the trail to Weano Gorge, then the steps to the bottom. Turn right to walk down the gorge.

**Hancock Gorge**  
400m – 80 minutes return  
From the trailhead sign, follow the trail to the edge of the gorge then negotiate the ladder to the bottom. Walk downstream to Kermit's Pool. The trail ends here.

**Handrail Pool, Weano Gorge**  
150m – 30 minutes return  
Access to Handrail Pool begins at the end of the lower Weano Gorge Trail. Use the handrail to climb down.

**KALAMINA GORGE**

A great introduction to the gorge system with its delightful trail and picnicking area.

**HAMERSLEY GORGE**

This gorge has dramatic colours, textures and reflections.

**Hamersley Waterfall**  
400m – 1 hour return  
This track begins as steps, allowing access for most visitors. Ever-changing light and astonishing colours and reflections highlight the complex geological forces in this spectacular landscape.

**Kalamina Gorge**  
3km – 3 hours return  
Descend the steps into the gorge to explore the waterfall upstream, or stroll quietly on lemon-scented grass besides the stream; you may see fish in the rock pools. The trail ends at Rock Arch Pool.

