



THE COLOURS OF RUDALL

Remote and rugged Rudall River National Park in Western Australia is like Joseph's famous technicolour dreamcoat - a rainbow of nature's hues.

There's the ochre of the harsh desert landscape, the terracotta shadow of ancient hills, the dusty beige fur of feral camels and wild dingos, the scrubby green of native plants, red and gold marbling in the 'jasper' rock and the startling sapphire of an unexpected oasis – all this stretching out endlessly beneath a cloudless, cornflower blue sky.

Rudall is indeed the land of many colours, but most people don't even know it exists. Situated about 800 kms inland from Ningaloo Reef which is famous for its whale sharks and coral, Rudall is 250 tough kms away from the closest 'civilisation' - the mining town of Newman. Originally named Karlamilyi after a local Aboriginal tribe, Rudall is hidden away in the north of Western Australia, the largest and least populated State "Down Under", a place in which less than two million people inhabit an area four times the size of Texas.

Straddling a massive 1.2 million hectares, this rugged area is Australia's second largest national park and one of the world's most remote wilderness areas. Bordered by the Great Sandy and Little Sandy Deserts, Rudall features spinifex grass country, salt lakes, sand dunes, rocky outcrops, and more than 90 species of birds and 37 native mammal species.

Rudall is the ideal destination for travelers who love outback challenge and adventure. Explored in the 1890's and proclaimed in 1977, it has few signs, no reliable water and no facilities. One of the only ways to experience Rudall is to join a personally escorted and fully catered, self drive "tag-along-tour" with safari operator, *Global Gypsies*. Traveling in the safety of a small convoy, clients drive themselves in their own or hired 4WD vehicles, following 'tag-a-long' style behind an experienced convoy leader - independent, but not alone.

Former Tour Guide of the Year Jeremy Perks, leads the safaris. A qualified mechanic, experienced bushman and skilled four-wheel driver, Jeremy has a remote area first aid certificate and carries a wide range of safety, recovery and communications equipment in his specially equipped escort vehicle. And in a place like this, you need all the help and the company you can get; 13 lone travelers have perished in the region in the past decade.

Every other year Jeremy leads a group of intrepid gypsies into the park, and each time the experience is unique. One minute the convoy might be rolling across corrugated roads of red dust lined by spinifex and bare plains. An hour later the road has become a deeply rutted sand track with kangaroos leaping in front of the vehicles, while the evening's campsite might reveal huge gums on a lazy riverbank, with ancient cliffs towering above the rocky ground.

On the next expedition the same giant gums may be lying prone on the ground, ripped out at the roots by a powerful cyclonic flood, and the formerly large and shady natural campsite might be unrecognizable, or have vanished in the vastness of the outback.

The 14-day Global Gypsies expedition to Rudall River National Park begins in Newman and ends in Carnarvon. Highlights include picturesque and craggy Carrawine Gorge with its rock pools and swimming holes, Marble Bar – the hottest town in WA, the Kennedy Ranges, Mt. Augustus – WA's answer to Ayers Rock - and of course, the vast and challenging artist's palette that is Rudall River.

Bring your camera, your lens and your filter, but even with the best equipment, you may never realistically capture the kaleidoscopic hues of Rudall River. As in dreams, the park will only ever show its true colours in your mind.

For more details contact Global Gypsies on (08) 9341 6727
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