

Every now and again you come across a place in Australia that takes adventure to a whole new level, and Lorella Springs is the ultimate example of this.

On our 3 month trip through the Northern Territory, Kimberley, Pilbara and Coral Coast, we spent 7 days at Lorella Springs Station and didn't want to leave.

Located in the northern part of the Northern Territory, Lorella Springs is a one-million-acre property that backs onto the coast and is full of hot springs, amazing water holes, waterfalls, gorges and pristine beauty like you've never seen before.



*The pristine waters at Snapping Billabong in Lorella Springs.*

The best part? You can visit, stay and access the entire property. No matter how young or old you are, if you love adventure this place takes the cake any day of the week.

With over 1000km of 4WD tracks, the most pristine water holes for swimming and the most ridiculous fishing you'll do in the country it's impossible to have a bad time.



*Camp out at Lorella, and enjoy all that it has to offer.*

## How big is Lorella?

If you are like me, a million acres doesn't really mean much. Let's put it into perspective - its 4046km<sup>2</sup>, or more than 5 times bigger than Singapore. Lorella takes you hours to drive from one side to the other, and even the owners haven't seen it all. Seriously - they had just found a new spot in the weeks leading up to our visit!



*The vastness of the station means there is so much to explore.*

## Getting there

Lorella Springs is located 30km off the Savannah way, in between Borraloola and Roper Bar. The driveway is 30km long and consists of gravel, bulldust, sand and a few little water crossings.

You can get a 2WD or AWD vehicle into the station if it has a reasonable amount of clearance, but it's much safer to go in a 4WD.

We went to Lorella from Mataranka via Daly Waters and left via the Savannah way into Roper Bar. It's primarily single lane bitumen the way we went in, and relatively rough gravel roads out to Roper Bar (depending on current road conditions of course).



*Exploring the property.*

## Where can you camp?

Camping is permitted anywhere on the property, with a number of spots that are popular to stay at. The main campground is located near the homestead and has a huge amount of room to camp wherever you want. Pick a spot near the rivers, in the middle or close to the toilets and showers.

There are no lines marked out for where you need to camp, no designated fire pits and best of all, no neighbours within a few metres of you!

✘  
*There's the main campground, but you can also camp all over the station.*

## Facilities and amenities

On the way into Lorella, you'll see a huge number of signs detailing some of the amenities that they have. It really does cater for every type of person.

There's a bar and a restaurant, rooms you can hire and some very basic supplies can be bought from the store. Flushing toilets and gas hot water showers had just been completed when we had arrived in the main campground, and there is a donkey hot water system on the other side of the campground.

All of your expenses are put on a tab, and you pay it on the day of departure. This makes life much easier and quicker.

✘  
*Lorella provides many opportunity to swim.*

## Sign in, sign out

One of the safety precautions Lorella Springs has introduced is a sign in and sign out book. This is done purely because of the size of the property, and the logistics involved with ensuring everyone stays accounted for and safe.

Each morning, you head to the reception area and have a chat with the volunteers and staff. They will give you any information you require about places to go, water levels, track difficulty and travel times and then you put your name down in the book.

When you get home, you sign out. If for some reason you don't make it back, they come looking for you.

Given a lot of people camp away from the main homestead, there's another book to write in saying how many days you are going to be staying away for, and where you are going. It's a great system that provides a bit of a safety net should you break down or have any trouble.

✘  
*Every morning you check in with the staff at the station.*

## 4WDing at Lorella Springs

One of the things that was so attractive to me about Lorella was the 4WD tracks. You could spend months driving around and not see it all; every amazing location is visited by using the myriad of 4WD tracks.

Many of them are gravel or sand and are quite easy, but there are a couple that you need high clearance, a bit of skill and are much more challenging than the rest. The staff will adequately prepare you for the varying conditions.

✘  
*If you love fishing, Lorella Springs is the place to go!*

## Fishing

I have fished at some pretty incredible places around Australia. Lorella Springs blew them all out of the water by a country mile. Never in my life have I seen so many fish going nuts over a basic silver slice.

You can fish fresh water in many of the water holes and creeks, or salt water along the coastline and creeks. We spent half a day out at Rosie's campground having an absolute ball catching queenfish.

They have a policy where you can take what you are going to eat that day, and throw the rest back. This keeps the fishing sustainable and fun for everyone.

Of course, pay careful attention to what you are told about crocodiles. The salt water ones are extremely dangerous and are found at a few select sites on the property.



*You can keep what you intend to eat that day, and throw the rest back.*

## Hot springs

If you've never experienced the magic of a natural flowing hot spring, Lorella is going to blow you away. Just metres away from the bar and decked area lies the Magic Hot Springs, where you can grab a drink and pool noodle, and float the afternoon away. The water is clean, warm and incredibly relaxing and a lot of people make good use of this.

Throughout the property, there are a couple of other hot springs, including Nudie (it's just a name - you can leave your clothes on!) which has water bubbling out of the rocks at a very high temperature.



*The incredible Nudie Springs at Lorella Station.*

## Exploring the water holes and gorges

Through the week of our visit, we saw a huge number of water holes. Most of them left us absolutely speechless. The water is super clear, cold and refreshing.

You can take canoes or boats left at some of the water holes out for a paddle and explore; it truly is spectacular. One or two water holes a day makes for an enjoyable stay.

Being such a big property with decent drives between you see hardly anyone else, which makes things very special.



*The Helicopter pool is just one the many water holes to dip in.*

## Can you tow trailers in?

A lot of people tow camper trailers, toy haulers, boats and even caravans in. As long as they have some decent clearance, a quality construction and you drive appropriately you won't have an issue. I would probably not bring an on-road caravan in though.

## Bring a portable camping setup

It's worth having a small camping setup that you can duck away with for a couple of nights due to the size of the property. Leave your main setup and head away for a few nights; it makes exploring much easier and more comfortable with a lot less driving. We met a lot of people who didn't have this and found it limiting.

✘  
*To get the most of your stay, have a smaller set up for quick overnights.*

## Firewood and fires

Lorella adopts the best policy I've seen regarding campfires. It's really simple - use common sense. You can take firewood from wherever you want, but the further you go away from the homestead the better.

You can have fires wherever you want too, but again, clean up after yourself, keep it relatively contained and you'll be just fine.

✘  
*You can have a nice campfire when staying at Lorella Springs.*

## When's the best time to visit?

Lorella Springs is shut during the wet season and re-opens when the track conditions are suitable. This is usually May/June, but it varies from year to year. The earlier in the dry season you go the better it is; temperatures are milder, water levels are much higher and any flowing water is still flowing.

Once the water levels start to drop it becomes stagnant, and a place you'd rather not visit.

✘  
*Head to the springs early in the dry season to get the best out of your visit.*

## What does it cost?

A night at Lorella will cost you \$20 per person, with kids under 5 free and between 5 - 15 years old \$5 per night. There are some discounts for longer stays.

## Be 100% self-sufficient

My recommendation is to bring absolutely everything in with you. There's no shortage of water and their toilet systems around the main camp are great, but you want everything else with you. This includes a good selection of food, lots of fuel and anything you need for remote camping.

You can get Fuel at Cape Crawford, but other than that there isn't much else around, and with the distances you drive around the station bring as much in as you can. You can purchase more diesel for \$3 per litre on the station as required.

✘  
*The beautiful Lorella spring caters to all campers.*



## **Relax, explore or have a huge adventure**

Whether you want to wind your days away with a drink in your hand floating around a hot spring, see every corner of the property or have a big adventure - Lorella Springs caters for everyone.

In terms of station stays, I can safely say Lorella Springs is the best I've been to for adventure. What are you waiting for? See you up there!

**Where's the best station you've camped at?**