

# Bloomfield Lodge

BEAUTIFULLY REMOTE

## Jungle River Cruise

**Relaxing on the River (with maybe the odd shiver).**

**By Shayne Marks – Tour Guide**

Most days at Bloomfield Lodge after breakfast or lunch has settled it's time to board one of the Ferryman's for a river cruise.

Gently motoring out while your guide raises the landing gear you gaze north across Weary Bay experiencing a panoramic view virtually as Captain James Cook would have. Although us having none of his tribulations, shallow sandbars, coral reefs and tiring winds to worry about.

The boat skips easily over the shallows into the calm tributaries of the river mouth. Here the soft sand and mud banks are lined with the amazing stilt rooted, saltwater tolerant mangroves trees, sweating, exuding, or sacrificing huge numbers of leaves to rid themselves of excess salt – thus creating a rich food chain from tiny crabs and shrimp up to the prehistoric estuarine crocodile.

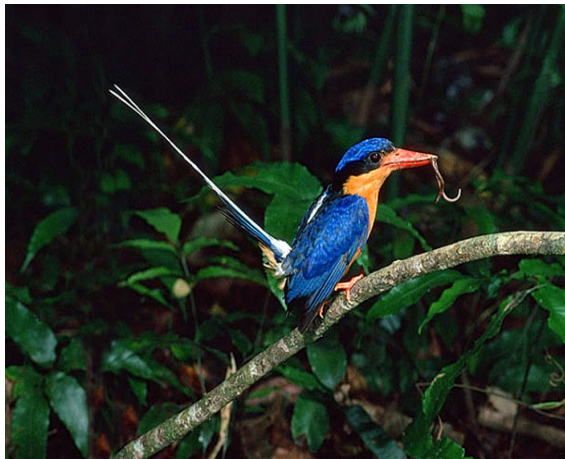
Being only a short distance from the coast to the foothills you quickly leave the mangroves behind with rainforest enveloping the rocky shores.



Not much of the original Port Bloomfield remains visible but your guide will tell a tale or two of 10,000 people in the heyday of avid tin miners, Chinese gardeners, steam locomotives carting sugar, and sweating timber cutters hauling red cedar, only to have most traces of their existence gobbled by the forest when they left.

Rounding the next bend lying on his sandbar is the “shiver maker”, we call him lots of different names, but no matter how many times you’ve seen or drifted close to 7’-15’ saltwater crocodiles, these modern day dinosaurs still give you the jitters. On a good clear winters day you have the best chance of seeing our resident population of 8 or 9 crocs, from little babies to ugly big uns. In summer they are a bit scarcer with breeding season and potential flooding, though one girl successfully nested last year with our guests lucky enough to see the young on hatching day! Cute as, but where was mum.

Croc’s are not the only things to see or smell or hear, how about a colony of 5,000 transient fruit bats squabbling in their roost. Abundant species of birds vary their visit depending on seasons. But a keen eye is needed to spot the tiny azure kingfishers and shining fly catchers while blind Freddy couldn’t miss the 5’ Jabiru or the white bellied sea eagle with his 6’ wing span.



When you reach the Bloomfield causeway, an often under water road crossing the river at the aboriginal community of Wujal Wujal we pause for some cool water, whilst we float around many things are discussed from lives and lifestyles of the locals to levels of flood evident by huge uprooted trees left lying midstream by Cyclone Yasi. Thirsts quenched and nearing food time again its back down river and out to the lodge, often spotting something else exciting, unusual or unique to top of a thoroughly enjoyable few hours!

