Ngaro Track - Walkers Safety, Preparation and Packing Guide

Preparation and Overview

The Ngaro Track is a remote, challenging Grade 4–5 walk (32 km, 3 days / 2 nights) that requires a good level of fitness, planning, and outdoor experience. This is a full-pack hike - you will be required to carry all personal gear, food, and equipment for the entire journey. Most walkers will carry between 12–18 kilograms, depending on the weight of their gear and supplies.

Walkers should complete regular training hikes carrying a loaded pack before attempting the Ngaro Track. You must be able to walk up to 14 km in a day with a pack weighing 12–18 kg in hot, humid, and steep terrain. You must be physically capable and prepared to complete the full walk while carrying this weight over uneven terrain, steep sections, and in tropical conditions.

The track is only occasionally signposted. Walkers must have basic navigational skills and carry at least two reliable forms of navigation, such as a smartphone the downloaded Ngaro app (emailed to you approximately 40 days prior to departure), a GPS device, and/or a printed topographic map and compass. The walk must be completed over three days and in one direction only - from South Whitehaven Beach to Tongue Point - and the daily walker limit must not be exceeded.

We always recommend walking in a group or at least in pairs for safety and support.

Marine Transfers

You must make your own arrangements to get to and from the start and end points of the Ngaro Track. Always confirm your marine transfer times before travelling - access and timing will vary depending on tides and weather conditions.

Arrive early at your departure and pick-up locations, as operators are often unable to wait due to tidal constraints and safety requirements. Missing your scheduled transfer may mean you are required to remain on the island overnight, so plan accordingly and carry extra food and water in case of delay or unexpected conditions.

Confirm your booking details directly with your chosen marine transfer operator before you travel to ensure a smooth connection at both ends of the walk.

Access to water

Rainwater tanks and water access points are available at Camp 1, Camp 2, and along the track on Days 2 and 3. These tanks collect rainwater, so supplies can be limited or run dry during dry periods. You must carefully plan your water use and always carry sufficient capacity to meet your daily needs, including extra in case tanks are empty, conditions are hotter than expected or your pace is slower than planned.

Respect for Ngaro Country

You are walking on the traditional lands of the Ngaro People. Please walk respectfully - move gently, listen deeply, and care for this sacred place and its stories.Do not disturb cultural sites or remove artefacts. Follow the Ngaro People's message to visitors: "Walk with respect and stay on the track."

Biosecurity and Care For The Park

Be pest-free! Introduced pests devastate natural areas. Once established, they spread quickly. Before and during your visit ensure: Your hiking equipment and gear is clean of soil and plant material. Remove seeds and put into rubbish bags - check clothes, shoes, packs and hook and loop fasteners (like Velcro). Avoid letting ants into packs - keep packs off the ground. Clean out your tent before pack-up. Check nothing animals or plant material has gotten into clothes or food containers. Stay on the formed track and use only designated campsites and facilities. Leave no trace - carry out all rubbish. Open fires are prohibited; use fuel stoves only.

Conditions

Check current weather forecasts, tidal information, marine stinger conditions (if you intend to swim), and park alerts before departure and be prepared for rapid changes in tropical conditions.

Seasonality

Bookings for the Ngaro Track are only available from April to October, when conditions are generally cooler and more suitable for multi-day walking. Between November and March, weather conditions in the Whitsundays can be extreme and unpredictable, with high heat and humidity, intense rainstorms, possible cyclones, and an increased risk of marine stingers in surrounding waters. These months present a significantly higher risk of heat-related illness, dehydration, and isolation during severe weather events. For these safety reasons, independent walker bookings are not available during this period.

On the Track

Always stay on the formed track to protect sensitive vegetation and cultural sites. Take care near unfenced cliff edges, ladders, and steep terrain - stay at least 1.5 metres back from all cliff edges, especially when taking photos. Avoid walking in extreme heat, high winds, or during storms. Turn back if conditions deteriorate. Always walk with your group and never alone. Share responsibility for navigation and safety gear so that all walkers have access if separated. Mobile coverage is limited - in an emergency, use your Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or satellite phone, or contact help via marine VHF Channel 16.

Flora and Fauna Awareness

Be alert for snakes, which are active year-round. Most are shy and will move away if given space. Never attempt to touch or handle a snake. Marine stingers and sharks may be present in surrounding waters, particularly between October and May. Check current stinger alerts before departing on your walk. If you intend to swim, you must bring and wear a full stinger suit to protect against stinging marine life and other potential hazards. Avoid contact with stinging trees and nettles, which can cause severe and long-lasting pain. Do not touch unfamiliar plants, even if they appear harmless. Use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants to reduce bites from mosquitoes, ticks, and leeches. Do not feed or approach any wildlife.

Campsites & Hygiene

Camp only at designated Ngaro Track campsites and on the assigned tent platform/area. Use provided toilets. If unavailable, bury waste 25 cm deep and at least 100 m from watercourses. Carry out all rubbish do not bury or burn waste. Secure food and rubbish to avoid attracting animals. Keep soaps and detergents away from creeks, tanks, and wetlands. Never pour wastewater into tanks or creeks, only in the sink provided at camps. Use the pack racks at the camps and do not hang your packs on trees.

Emergencies

In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000) or use Marine VHF Channel 16 (Coast Guard / Marine Rescue) Activate your PLB or satellite phone if you are in a life-threatening situation. The nearest hospital is Proserpine Hospital. We strongly reccomend you download the **EmergencyPlus app** before you depart.

Personal Responsibility

The Ngaro Track is located in a remote, natural environment. Walkers undertake the journey at their own risk. You are responsible for ensuring that you are fit, equipped, and prepared for a multi-day hike involving steep sections, heavy packs, and variable tropical weather. You must follow all QPWS directions, safety signage, and on-site instructions during your visit.

Wheelchair Accessibility

There are no wheelchair accessible facilities or tracks on the Ngaro Track.

WALKER PACKING CHECKLIST

Each walker or pair must have access to all compulsory items at all times. Some items may be shared, provided they are accessible to all group members.

Compulsory Items

- [ ] Each walker must have the minimum capacity to carry 3 litres of water.
- [ ] Water filter or purification tablets - all tank water must be treated before drinking.
- [ ] Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or satellite phone - per group (max 4)
- [ ] Two reliable forms of navigation - per group (max 4)
  (e.g. printed map and compass, GPS, or smartphone with downloaded Ngaro navigation app).
- [ ] Mobile phone min 1 per group (max 4) + backup power source for emergency contact where coverage exists.
- [ ] First aid kit including snake-bite bandages per group (max 4)
- [ ] Your Ngaro Track Independent walker booking (printed or electronic).
- [ ] Waterproof outer shell (rain jacket with hood) + suitable clothing for 3 days.
- [ ] Tent or shelter, sleeping mat, and sleeping bag.
- [ ] Head torch or handheld torch with spare batteries.
- [ ] Food for three days.
- [ ] Sun protection (hat, sunscreen, sunglasses).
- [ ] Appropriate footwear - High cut boots recommended
- [ ] Stinger suit (if you intend to swim) - you must bring and wear it in the water.

Recommended Items

- [ ] Camp stove and fuel (if cooking) - fires are not permitted.
- [ ] Gaiters or high, thick socks for snake protection and comfort.
- [ ] Insect repellent and lightweight, long-sleeved clothing.
- [ ] Extra clothing to keep dry and warm.
- [ ] Walking poles.
- [ ] Spare batteries or power bank for devices.
- [ ] Navigation backup (extra map or second GPS-capable device).
- [ ] Small repair kit (duct tape, cord, multitool, etc.).
- [ ] Hand sanitiser and biodegradable wipes.
- [ ] Personal hygiene items (toothbrush, toilet paper, trowel).
- [ ] Comfortable camp shoes
- [ ] Download the Ngaro Track app (link will be sent via email, approximately 40 days prior to departure)

Optional Items

- [ ] Camera or binoculars.
- [ ] Compact dry bags for clothing and gear protection.
- [ ] Swimwear and microfibre towel.
- [ ] Small amount of cash or ID for transfers or emergencies.
- [ ] Journal or guidebook.

(Use of drones requires a permit; respect quiet hours and other visitors.)

Walker Declaration

All walkers must read and agree to the declaration below before completing a booking. By proceeding with my booking, I confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to all safety requirements and packing conditions outlined in this document. I acknowledge that walking the Ngaro Track requires physical preparation, self-reliance, and respect for cultural and environmental values. I understand that all compulsory items must be carried or immediately accessible within my group, and that failure to comply may result in refusal or cancellation of my booking. I accept personal responsibility for my safety, preparation, and conduct while walking the Ngaro Track.