



FOOD MOMENTS

## Darwin Gourmet Tours

Flavours from South-East Asia, the Aussie bush and beyond collide in Darwin. Taste them all on these indulgent excursions.  
By Sarah Reid

“Darwin’s food scene has matured in terms of fine dining and creative use of native ingredients,” says long-time local Darrel Trueman. In a classic COVID-19 pivot, the Kiwi-born, Canadian-raised communications professional launched Darwin Gourmet Tours ([darwingourmettours.com](http://darwingourmettours.com)) in January after losing his job during the pandemic.

“My wife and I had an incredible food tour in Cambodia three or four years ago and I thought the concept could work really well in Darwin,” says Trueman, who takes guests on a three-hour jaunt to his favourite spots in the city, from big-night-out restaurants to an Aboriginal bush-food-inspired café.

Each of the three stops on the dégustation-style tours has a touch of exclusivity: an audience with a chef such as Martin Bouchier, who celebrates NT produce in dishes like braised Eva Valley beef cheek with bush tomato ratatouille at hot new spot **Phat Mango** ([phatmango.com.au](http://phatmango.com.au)); the chance to sample a restaurant’s most popular plates; or an opportunity to try a dish that hasn’t made it to the menu yet.

The tours make several stops at historic and cultural sites along the way, with Trueman offering insights into Darwin’s unique culinary story. Covering just over a kilometre of walking all up, it’s an accessible urban adventure (with brollies supplied on rainy days) and itineraries can be tailored to your preferred time frame and interests.

“Whether you’re a local or visiting Darwin for the first time, you’ll learn something new,” says Trueman. ●

### Check in

The **Hilton Darwin**’s ([hilton.com](http://hilton.com)) reimagined flagship restaurant, PepperBerry, opened in late 2020 and is already among the city’s top eateries. Showcasing modern Australian cuisine amped up with bush spices, such as salt and pepper crocodile with lemon myrtle aioli, it’s a popular stop on Darwin Gourmet Tours itineraries (see right). Overlooking Darwin Harbour, the downtown hotel has

an enviable location, giving visitors ready access to whichever side of the city they’re in the mood for. Crocodiles? The cheesy-but-oh-so-fun **Crococaurus Cove** ([crococauruscove.com](http://crococauruscove.com)) is a five-minute walk away. Night-life? Make a left or right turn on Mitchell Street for rowdy outdoor bars. The famous waterfront? A short stroll – or grab a Neuron e-scooter to beat the heat. When you return, the outdoor pool on level 10 is a delightful cool down.