

Ord River Houseboats

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are a set of questions that are often asked of us. Hopefully these will be of help in planning your houseboat holiday on the upper Ord River.

Please give us a call if you have any other questions and we will try and help you out with as much information and assistance as we can.

Do I need a Skipper's Ticket to drive a houseboat?

No, all you need is a valid drivers licence, and be a responsible person over the age of 18 years of age. We will give you a full induction to familiarize yourself with the vessel, the local boating environment and to make sure you are comfortable with the operation of the houseboat. Usually this will take an hour or so.

Is the houseboat suitable for families with small children?

Love at First Sight has barrier fencing on all decks but these should not be relied on to keep children safe. We have child lifejackets available on request and suggest they be worn when children are on deck. Alternatively you can bring your own lifejackets. We suggest that a houseboat holiday is best suited to those families with older children who are confident in swimming.

How many people does the boat sleep?

Love at First Sight sleeps 6 and features a queen bed and a double/single bunk combination in the two cabins and a sofa bed in the spacious lounge.

Where can I leave my car? Will it be secure?

There is some parking available at the place of departure. Clients are welcome to leave their cars at our private residence just out of Kununurra. We can arrange a shuttle service on request. This pick-up service is also available to those clients flying into Kununurra.

How much is the bond?

The houseboat bond is \$750 to be paid with the balance of hire fees prior to your holiday commencing. The bond is returned within 10 working days after your holiday is finished. If the boat has been returned on time, is clean and undamaged, then the bond refund will only require a deduction of the cost of fuel that you used during your holiday.

How much will the fuel costs be?

The fuel usage is calculated at a consumption rate of 10 litres/hour of driving at 3000 rpm. Fuel costs in Kununurra vary but at an average of \$1.90/litre, 10 hours of driving will cost you \$190. The generator (particularly for the air conditioning) is an additional fuel cost. Each hire varies considerably in fuel usage.

What if I have to cancel?

If more than 14 days notice is given, our chance of re-booking is higher. You'll get a refund on your deposit less a \$100 cancellation fee (fully refunded if the houseboat is re-hired). If you cancel less than 14 days before your hire is supposed to commence, and the boat cannot be rebooked, any deposit paid to Ord River Houseboats will be forfeited.

What is the power source on the boat? Can I bring other electrical appliances?

Love at First Sight runs on a 12V power system. We run an inverter to enable power for small appliances such as mobile phone chargers, camera chargers and laptops/tablets. Our system is not geared to run devices that have a significant power draw such as hairdryers or Engel fridges.

How far can I travel in the houseboat?

Depending on seasonal conditions, Love at First Sight can go as far upstream as Coolimon Creek about 30km upstream of Kununurra. There may be time when the river conditions restrict the area of operation (e.g. times of low or high water or other river hazards). We'll provide all the necessary information (including maps and suggested itineraries) to you at the commencement of your holiday.

Are there shops/restaurants along the way?

The Pumphouse Restaurant is definitely worth a visit. It has great views over the river and offers contemporary Australian cuisine and a great atmosphere. Sunday evenings feature wood fired pizzas. The Zebra Rock Gallery features sculptured works made from locally mined zebra rock. It also has a cafe and coffee bar, featuring homemade cakes including and mango cheesecake and smoothies. Please note that you are not allowed to pull the houseboat up to these (unlicensed) jetties, but we are happy to explain shore mooring closeby to these destinations during induction.

What fish might I catch?

Please be aware that if you are fishing from the houseboat at least one member of the party needs to have a recreational boat fishing license from the Department of Fisheries. Lake Kununurra has some enormous catfish to 10 kg, as well as sooty grunthers (also called black bream). These are great sporting fish that readily take lures or flies. The introduced red claw are also abundant in the lake and can be caught using opera house nets. No licence is required but restrictions on the type of net apply. We can supply opera house nets on request.

Lake Kununurra has also been stocked with 100,000 barramundi fingerlings in 2013, with up 300,000 fingerlings to be released over the next few years. The premier sport fish in northern Australia, who wouldn't want to hook on to a metre long monster?! Our hirers have already reported catching 20cm barra during their hire, so watch this space...

Is it safe to swim?

Whilst the lower Ord River offers magnificent wildlife viewing in the form of enormous salt water crocodiles, the upper Ord River (between the two dam walls) is a managed crocodile control zone and there are generally only freshwater crocodiles present. Regular patrols occur within Lake Kununurra, however on rare occasions a saltwater crocodile wanders upstream into the Lake. Many locals swim in Lake Kununurra, but many choose not to! Further information provided during induction regarding crocodiles and common sense when swimming in the Lake.

Are pets allowed on the boat?

Unless it's an assistance dog (e.g a seeing eye dog), pets aren't allowed on the houseboat.