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Walkabout Activities

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Journals from James Cook University

2009-12-13 Walkabout Activities



Croc Feeding

I have been staying very busy these last couple weeks with school and weekend (and sometimes weekday) excursions. As an international student, I am automatically enrolled in a club on campus called The Walkabout Club which organizes fieldtrips to different areas around Cairns. This past weekend, 8 other students and I went on a day trip to Millaa Millaa Waterfalls, Lake Eachem, Lake Barrine, Johnstone Crocodile Farm, and the famous Curtain Fig Tree. It was such a wonderfully busy day. Although the weather was not ideal, it was still a lot of fun. First, we went to the two lakes, which were actually formed from volcanic craters. The tour guide bought us scones and locally grown coffee and tea from the tea house that overlooks Lake Barrine. It was absolutely delicious! Then we went to the famous Curtain Fig tree. All I can say is that pictures cannot do it justice. For those who are planning a trip to North Queensland, I highly recommend stopping in the tablelands and visiting this wonder. Next, we drove to Millaa Millaa Falls to have a catered lunch. Some people were brave enough to swim underneath the fall, but it was about as cold as the Oregon coast waters get, so I decided to pass. Finally, our last destination was to Johnstone Crocodile Farm. In typical Australian style, we were about 15 minutes late. However, we still were in time for the crocodile feedings. I have only been exposed to American alligators, so I was not prepared when I saw the first crocodile. I literally thought that it was a fake crocodile until I saw it breathing. The largest crocodile in the farm was 6 meters! I'll do the calculation for you: 6 meters is about 20 feet! At the farm we saw male cassowaries, pet dingoes, hand-fed kangaroos (I petted a joey inside the mother's pouch), and held a baby crocodile. As I said, it was a wonderfully busy day.

School is now in full swing and at the end of September it will be time for lecture recess (equivalent to Spring Break). My friends and I are starting to plan for our trips and the possibilities seem endless (although time and money are not). It is really popular to rent camper vans which are equipped with full kitchens and beds, so we might do that for the 10 days that we have off. But until that time, I have many fieldtrips planned through my classes, which I am looking forward to. This weekend our class is traveling north to Cooya Beach to hunt with the indigenous peoples who live and own the land. Depending on our luck, we will be eating what we catch!

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