

24°

Winter in Queensland



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THEIR SECRETS**

ISLAND ESCAPES

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TO RELAXATION

**WINTER
GETAWAYS**

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WELCOME TO 24°

Winter in Queensland

THE MAGAZINE THAT CELEBRATES EVERYTHING GOOD ABOUT WINTER IN QUEENSLAND

WHY 24 DEGREES? Well, that's the average winter high temperature in Townsville North Queensland – one of the many access points to the greatest aquatic show on earth, the Great Barrier Reef. Our gorgeous cover image was shot underwater at Lodestone Reef which is located 42 nautical miles north east off the coast of Townsville.

Lodestone Reef, with its white sandy bottom, plentiful marine life and large bommies, is one of the many amazing dive sites in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

In this magazine we will take you on a journey around the state and give you suggestions on more than 100 things to do in Queensland this winter.

We will inspire you to perhaps nest out in tree houses on Mount Tamborine, explore laneways in Brisbane, watch whales in Hervey Bay, or sample the iconic red dust that permeates life in Queensland's outback.

There's never been a better time to discover new things in Queensland.



12

16



10



8

Queensland
Where Australia Shines

5 11 QUEENSLAND GETAWAYS

Queensland features a host of destination options, both inland and coastal, for a mid-winter getaway. With fine and sunny days and cooler nights, it's a great time of year to explore the state.

8 SLEEPING AMONG THE TREES

Escape a hectic life and rejuvenate in a private rainforest paradise.

10 SADDLE UP FOR THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE

Climb aboard Outback Queensland's Harry Redford Cattle Drive for a real life cowboy experience.

12 WINTER WONDERLAND: WELCOME TO THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Take a step back and smile as the Great Barrier Reef takes your breath away. With stunning coral reefs, colourful marine life and a rainbow of blue water as far as the eye can see.

16 ISLAND ESCAPES

From adventure to relaxation, there is something for all on the islands off Queensland's coast.

20 WINNING ENTRIES

Reader's share their top spots in Queensland.

21 PICTURED BY YOU

Spectacular photos snapped on Instagram #thisisqueensland.

22 EVENTS

Festivals, concerts, culinary events and cultural celebrations – find out more and start marking your diary!

The team: Editor Brian Crisp Sub-editor Stephen Nadin
Designer Barbara la Grange. 24° magazine has been produced by News Corp Studios for Tourism and Events Queensland.

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BY LANCEMORE

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WINTER GETAWAYS QLD 24°



11 QUEENSLAND WINTER GETAWAYS

QUEENSLAND FEATURES A HOST OF DESTINATION OPTIONS, BOTH INLAND AND COASTAL, FOR A MID-WINTER GETAWAY. WITH FINE AND SUNNY DAYS AND COOLER NIGHTS, IT'S A GREAT TIME OF YEAR TO EXPLORE THE STATE. BY ANGELA SAURINE

1 ENJOY A FOODIE FEAST ON THE SUNSHINE COAST

It's long been known for its gorgeous beaches, rivers and rainforests; now the Sunshine Coast is increasingly becoming a foodie destination, thanks largely to its high quality local produce that is now recognised by chefs nationwide. Noosa Reds organic tomatoes are so flavoursome you'd think they'd come straight from your grandma's veggie patch, while you can get tasty prawns as soon as they've hit the wharf at Mooloolaba Fish Market.

Love cheese? Then head to the hinterland where lush rolling green hills make excellent dairy territory. Visit Maleny Cheese in the historic town, which has a range of European-style handmade cheeses made of local cow and buffalo milk, including cheddar and feta. Further inland, Kenilworth Cheese also offers award-winning cheese made with love by a Danish immigrant. To taste it all, make a beeline for Eumundi Markets, held twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays, where you can sample produce from nearby

farms, including olives, cheese and sauces, jams and chutneys made with locally-grown fruits, herbs and spices. Did someone say instant smorgasboard? queensland.com/sunshinecoast

2 BEACH AND BEER IN THE BURLEIGH BOROUGH

With giant Norfolk Pines, gnarly surf breaks, cool cafes and some of the best restaurants on the Gold Coast, you can't go wrong in Burleigh Heads. Learn to surf or stand-up paddle board at the beach, grab a locally-designed outfit at The Village Markets, enjoy lunch at Burleigh Social in Miami or take a Brewmaster's tour of Burleigh Brewery.

Send your taste buds around the world with a visit to Miami Marketta, which packs 30 food stalls into its Miami home each week. Also, listen to some of the hottest music artists around. The Waifs, Xavier Rudd and The Cat Empire are among the artists who have performed here. For delicious fresh seafood, The Fish House Restaurant on Goodwin Terrace has a relaxed, casual vibe with spectacular views up the coast. queensland.com/goldcoast

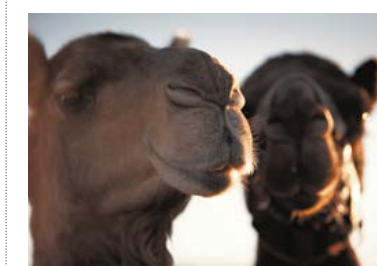
3 HEAD TO OUTBACK QUEENSLAND FOR THE BOULIA CAMEL RACES

Known as "the Melbourne Cup of camel racing", a visit to the Boulia

Above: Giant Norfolk Pines and surf breaks at Burleigh Heads, Gold Coast.

Bottom left: Flavoursome tomatoes and figs from the Sunshine Coast. Photos: Tourism Noosa.

Below: Boulia Camel Races, Outback Queensland.



Camel Races in Outback Queensland is truly a unique experience. Cheer on your favourite camel as it races through the red dust in the 1500m final - the longest camel race in Australia. Held on the third weekend of July each year, the four-day event also includes several heats, donkey races, yabby races, fireworks and children's entertainment. queensland.com/outback

4 ENJOY A LONG WEEKEND IN TOOWOOMBA

Nicknamed "The Garden City", Toowoomba has peaceful parklands, historic walks, art galleries, museums and an emerging coffee scene. The Japanese Garden is Australia's largest and most





Above: Soak up the sunshine in Brisbane.
Below: Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers festival, which celebrates gardens, food and wine, will be held September 16-25.

traditional, with a central lake, stream, waterfall and 3km of pathways.

More than a city of camfolaurels and camelias, the Garden City has taken coffee culture to the next level packing numerous coffee shops into its city blocks.

The long-running Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers festival, which celebrates gardens, food and wine, will be held September 16-25



and is a great time to visit. Best of all, Qantas has direct flights to Toowoomba (Brisbane West Airport) from Sydney.
queensland.com/southernqueenslandcountry

5 DISCOVER BRISBANE'S HIDDEN SECRETS

The destination that's just right - not too hot, not too cold, Brisbane is a fabulous city to visit year-round. As well as its vibrant city, the Queensland capital has become known for its hip 'hoods, including James Street, West End and Woolloongabba. Known for outdoor living, you can check out its markets and rooftop bars, hire a bike and ride along the river. Be sure to catch the exclusive to Brisbane exhibition of Cindy Sherman at the Gallery of Modern Art and Snow White by Ballet Preljocaj at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. Feast the senses at foodie favourite Regional Flavours and the vibrant Brisbane Festival. Just a short ferry ride away, you will find beautiful islands with pristine beaches, including Moreton Island and North Stradbroke Island.
queensland.com/Brisbane

6 DIVE INTO TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

With just the right dose of action and just the right amount of relaxation, there's a holiday to suit every kind of traveller in

Tropical North Queensland. From rainforest to the reef, you are spoilt for World Heritage-listed choice. A 45-minute ferry ride from Cairns, magical Fitzroy Island is a stunning destination for hiking, swimming, snorkelling, sea kayaking and viewing the Great Barrier Reef by glass bottom boat. Back on the mainland, wind your way along the scenic Great Barrier Reef Drive from Cairns, through to Port Douglas, dropping into the Mossman Gorge for a refreshing dip. End the day with a seafood dinner at the marina while admiring the vista.
queensland.com/tropicalnorthqueensland

7 DISCOVER A RAINFOREST WONDERLAND IN MACKAY

If you want to get back to nature, the Mackay region is the place to go for some of the best bush walks in the state. Drive 80km west of the city to Eungella National Park, which is the longest stretch of sub-tropical rainforest in Australia. The park has more than 20km of walking tracks and is the starting point for the 56km-long Mackay Highlands Great Walk. Spot platypus at Broken River, waterfalls and volcanic rock formations at Finch Hatton Gorge and admire the view over Pioneer Valley from Sky Window picnic area.

Just 45 minutes north of Mackay is Cape Hillsborough Beach where wallabies and kangaroos scour



Above: Sunrise with the Kangaroos at Cape Hillsborough, Mackay Region.
Right: Sailing in The Whitsundays.

the morning tide for mangrove seed pods and seaweed. Enjoy the sunrise as the wild marsupials bound up and down the beach.
queensland.com/mackay

8 EXPERIENCE THE WHITSUNDAYS YOUR WAY

Welcome to a paradise where your 9-5 looks like this: kicking back in a hammock on a tropical island, snorkelling the Great Barrier Reef, kayaking the National Park headlands or plummeting 430 metres to the ground to arrive on



Above: Snorkelling with turtles at Lady Elliot Island on the Southern Great Barrier Reef.
Right: Magnetic Island, Townsville North Queensland.

the foreshore of Airlie Beach. But that's only if you want to... the less adventurous can sit back and enjoy a glass bottom boat tour. Grab some mates and rent a yacht so you can explore the islands at your own pace, or fly over the famous heart-shaped coral reef in a helicopter. You can even spend the night sleeping under the stars at Cruise Whitsundays' permanently-moored pontoon for their Reefsleeper experience at Hardy Reef - and even opt for a night dive if you're certified.
queensland.com/Whitsundays

9 FEEL THE PULL OF MAGNETIC ISLAND

It's not hard to see why this 50sqkm Great Barrier Reef Island off Townsville in North Queensland was named Magnetic Island. Perhaps it's the combination of pristine, secluded beaches, untouched forests and big nature experiences that keep you returning. Or perhaps there's something more scientific to it? Captain James Cook said his compass went haywire when passing the shores of this secluded



island and it's been a popular spot for holidaymakers ever since, with its 23 bays and beaches to enjoy 320 days of sunshine a year. Simple tourist town, this island is not - Magnetic Island is home to a permanent population of around 2500, which support the accommodation offerings from backpackers through to high end resorts. Beyond bushwalks (and there's lots of them, the island is 75 per cent national park), there are plenty of activities to pass time between hammock hangs. Saddle up at Horseshoe Bay Ranch for a horse ride along the beach, tour like a rock star in a stretch yellow jeep with Tropicana Tours, or go all Robinson Crusoe on the island with a self-guided snorkelling

adventure. It doesn't matter if you don't see everything on your first trip. The law of magnetism means you'll find your way back to Maggie.
queensland.com/townsville

10 EXPLORE THE SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF

It's the reef within reach - fly into Bundaberg, Gladstone or Rockhampton and have your fins in the water in no time. Snorkel right off the beach with a private meet and greet with the cast of *Finding Nemo* and *Finding Dory*. Witness turtles nesting and hatching at Mon Repos National Park on the coast near Bundaberg and also snorkel with them off Lady Elliot, Lady Musgrave, Heron or Great Keppel Islands.

Once back on dry land again, tour through the quaint coastal towns to taste fresh local produce, craft local brews and relax on quiet beaches. Meet the marine creatures on one of the region's coral cays, go stand-up paddle-boarding or take a cruise from the Town of 1770 on a pink amphibious vessel on a unique LARC (Lighter Amphibious Resupply Cargo) tour.
queensland.com/southerngreatbarrierreef

11 SEE WHALES FROLICKING AT THEIR ONLY STOPOVER DESTINATION

Breach, slap, skyhop - if these words don't make much sense to you - it's time to join the humpback migration to Hervey Bay. It is the only spot humpback whales deviate to rest and socialise during their annual journey from the warm waters of the Coral Sea, where they mate and give birth before returning to Antarctica to feed. Up to 10,000 of the migrating population) stop in the bay, making it a much better place to see them than the open ocean. The whales here are often quite curious, leading to more prolonged encounters than in other parts of Australia. There are a range of half and full-day tour experiences available. And the fun doesn't end with whales - the Fraser Coast offers diverse fishing experiences, boating on the Great Sandy Strait, hinterland adventures and World Heritage-listed Fraser Island ... just to name a few things. The Hervey Bay Ocean Festival from August 13 -27 includes a parade and concert on August 20 as well as the annual Paddle Out for Whales on August 21.
queensland.com/frasercoast



Above: Join the Humpback migration to Hervey Bay, Fraser Coast.

SLEEPING AMONG THE TREES

ESCAPE A HECTIC LIFE AND ENTER A PRIVATE RAINFOREST PARADISE WITH THESE CHOICES.
BY KERRY HEANEY

Want to be where the only sounds you'll hear come from the gentle rhythm of a subtropical rainforest?

Relax and unwind treehouse style in South East Queensland. Here there's nothing more enjoyable than listening to birds, watching leaves drift from the trees and spotting wallabies breakfasting on tender green shoots. Surrounded by your private rainforest paradise, you can be delightfully idle.

Doze in front of a cosy fireplace or luxuriate in a spa bath, then venture out to explore the pleasures of rainforest living. You'll find walking tracks and food trails, waterfalls and lookouts, farm stalls and restaurants, all waiting outside your treehouse.

Forget long journeys and endless queues; these are easy escapes from a hectic life to the warmth of a Queensland winter just an hour or so out of Brisbane. Try a weekend or a week away. Chances are it will feel much longer.

CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET? SECRETS ON THE LAKE

SUNSHINE COAST

It's not all sun, surf and sand on the Sunshine Coast. Hidden in a deep valley around the lush shoreline of Lake Baroon in the Sunshine Coast hinterland are secluded penthouse-sized tree houses at Secrets on the Lake. Here the biggest problem will be deciding whether to take a peek at the on-site art gallery, dine at the cafe overlooking the lake, or relax in the spa bath. While the delights of cafes, country chic crafts and coastline views at Montville, Maleny and Flaxton are tempting, you can also venture back down through the rolling green hills to the coast and explore Noosa's extensive selection of top restaurants with a stop at the Eumundi Markets, just a 45-minute drive away.

queensland.com/sunshinecoast

WHERE BIRD CALLS REPLACE PHONE CALLS O'REILLY'S RAINFOREST RETREAT

GOLD COAST

Discover a world filled with ancient forests, fresh mountain air, crystal clear creeks and breathtaking sunsets all only a short drive from the Gold Coast at O'Reilly's Rainforest

Retreat and Villas in the Gold Coast hinterland. There's plenty of time to explore the 160km of walking trails, over 500 waterfalls and the 250 species of unique Australian wildlife that live in the subtropical rainforest right outside your door. Choose a two or three-bedroom villa or stay in the Rainforest Retreat where there are no phones or televisions in the rooms to distract you from the beauty outside. The O'Reilly family has been walking the mountains in World Heritage-listed Lamington National Park for over 100 years. Their experienced guides will help you discover this 20,000ha of breathtaking rainforest.

queensland.com/goldcoast



RETREAT TO THE RAINFOREST SONGBIRDS RAINFOREST RETREAT

GOLD COAST

An hour from Brisbane and just a skip away from Tamborine National Park, Queensland's first national park, Songbirds Rainforest Retreat has six luxury villas where you'll wake to the chatter of lorikeets and the long, sharp notes of the whipbirds. With the award-winning Songbirds restaurant on your doorstep, you may be diverted from the yoga classes and massage treatments on offer. Reconnect with nature and relax by walking through the rainforest pathways and national parks for an easy hour or a full day.

Drive around the mountain to discover locally made cheese at Witches Chase, freshly brewed beer at Mt Tamborine Brewery or smooth spirits at Tamborine Mountain Distillery. Indulge with a round of golf



Above: O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat and Villas.
Below left: Lamington National Park.

or pop down to the Gold Coast for an ocean swim.

queensland.com/goldcoast

LIFE IS EASY BEING GREEN SPRINGBROOK LYREBIRD RETREAT

GOLD COAST

Deep in the Gold Coast hinterland rainforest at Springbrook Lyrebird Retreat, all you'll want to do is sit on the expansive treehouse deck, enjoy the silence and watch the many small marsupials that share

this forest. Chill out in the double massage spa, gaze at the fireplace or just contemplate the grandeur of the rainforest through the large windows that seamlessly blend luxury living with the landscape.

Springbrook National Park is a Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area known for its unique animals and plants including ancient Antarctic Beeches and the world's oldest songbirds. There are 25km of walking trails through cathedral forests, splendid long-drop waterfalls, and awe-inspiring lookouts, plus cafes and restaurants for dining. It's also just 40 minutes

from Gold Coast beaches and 90 minutes from Brisbane.

queensland.com/goldcoast

HIDEAWAY IN THE FOREST LYOLA PAVILIONS IN THE FOREST

SUNSHINE COAST

Peel the walls back to reveal a breathtaking treetop outlook at Lyola Pavilions in the Forest. Located in the Sunshine Coast's eclectic hinterland on the outskirts of country village Maleny, Lyola offers every creature comfort with an eco-consciousness. There are two secluded pavilions, Hide and Seek, designed by award winning

GOMANGO Architects. The energy efficient buildings are self-sufficient in power and rainwater and stocked with locally sourced foods, fruits from the orchard and homemade aromatherapy products. Listen to water tumbling over mossy boulders while watching a magnificent sunset across the valley below, all within the depths of a rainforest. Share the rainforest with the endangered Richmond Birdwing butterfly, local nesting parrots and possums.

The area is renowned for its environment and numerous scenic spots. All around Maleny arts and craft galleries abound. There is a wide



Above and below: Enjoy the fresh produce on offer in Southern Queensland Country.



choice of cafes and restaurants in the main Maple Street, as well as at Cairncross Corner and along Mountain View Drive.

There's a myriad of sightseeing opportunities in the area, including panoramic views of the Glass House Mountains. Bushwalking and bird-spotting are popular pastimes and you can also explore the walking trails through the lush rainforests of the Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve. The Sunshine Coast Hinterland Great Walk is a fulfilling eco-friendly journey into the beauty of nature. The 58km walk winds through the Blackall Range.

queensland.com/sunshinecoast

TURN OFF YOUR MIND CLOUDLAKE MOUNTAIN RETREAT

TOOWOOMBA

Put your head in the clouds in a hidden valley near Ravensbourne National Park sheltered by the Great Dividing Range. Only one and a half hour's drive from Brisbane and part of Southern Queensland Country, Cloudlake Mountain Retreat is a guest organic and biodynamic farm where olive grove, vineyard, and seasonal produce thrives on the rich volcanic basalt soils. Stay in cottage-style accommodation at the 100-year-old Mother of Ducks or open up the bi-fold doors on the contemporary pole house Boathouse overlooking the lake, landscaped gardens, orchards, and cool, lush forest. There's also a sculpture trail, potage garden, and chicken hotel to discover and explore.

Throughout Southern Queensland Country, there are artisans carefully preparing mouth-watering delights and hand-crafted goods for you to savour.

Delis and markets are stocked with freshly made jams and relishes, vine ripened stone fruit, hand-made chocolates, farmhouse cheeses and locally-cured meats. Winery cellar doors feature award-winning verdelhos, semillons, chardonnays, sauvignon blancs, merlots, shirazes and cabernet sauvignons.


queensland.com/southernqueenslandcountry ■

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SADDLE UP FOR THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE

CLIMB ABOARD OUTBACK QUEENSLAND'S HARRY REDFORD CATTLE DRIVE FOR A REAL LIFE COWBOY EXPERIENCE...

BY CRAIG TANSLEY

It's the dawn that'll test you. You'll be woken well before the sun rises. Not to any alarm either - you'd lose your fancy iPhone in all this red dust.

No, head drover David 'Chook' Hay will holler at you in the dark, he'll tell you to open your sorry eyes and to chow down while the bacon's still hot because there's droving to be done.

And you'll rub those sorry eyes and you'll wonder how the stars got so damn close and so damn bright, and you'll count them shooting right across the whole universe (there's no better place to see shooting stars on this planet than Outback Queensland).

For anyone who wants to really see the Outback, this is the only way to do it: on horseback, sleeping in swags and taking the occasional dip in a muddy dam to clean up. You've got to have the mettle for it. The Harry Redford Cattle Drive is the last muster of its kind left in the Outback. Out here the cattle take priority; guests come second. It's all about making sure the cattle are well fed.

You'll be helping guide hundreds of cattle through some of the most rugged pastures in Queensland, aboard ex-racehorses that aren't anywhere near as co-operative as the trail horses you've ridden over the years.

Now in its 15th year and run entirely by local volunteers who go out of their way to deliver an authentic friendly outback experience, the Harry Redford Cattle Drive is how the tiny western Queensland community of Aramac

worked out how to survive in those days of droughts and dwindling stock prices.

The whole community pitches in to offer visitors the chance to muster cattle the way it's always been done round here. There are few niceties - there's plenty of other fancy trail rides around Australia if you want all that - but the Harry Redford Cattle Drive offers a unique opportunity to see how life really is out here in the Outback.

You don't have to be a great horse rider, the drive caters for every kind of rider. I arrive in the Outback with limited horsemanship, a straw hat from a \$2 shop, far-too-fancy Country Road boots and a pair of tights I'm told to wear under my jeans to help the chafing.

There'll be plenty of riding too: in this part of the country laws dictate we must travel at least 10km a day or the cattle will strip too much grass. Over 19 days the cattle drive will cover 200km - but few visitors complete the entire circuit; instead visitors can choose how far they'd like to ride. We'll be following in the footsteps of outlaw Captain Starlight (a.k.a Harry Redford) who drove a thousand head of stolen cattle 1400 km across the most inhospitable country in Australia back in 1870.

We start the drive with a party that's attended by every person in the region. As I'm introduced to the locals I regret my decision to list my favourite pastime as snowboarding. And when I tell those around me I'm here to learn how to trot and canter much better, they shake their



Top: Making camp on the Harry Redford Cattle Drive.

Above: The mustering doesn't get any more authentic than on the Harry Redford Cattle Drive.

heads. "Bloody city slicker," one older local says with a chuckle. "You won't be snowboarding or cantering round here, mate."

It turns out the Harry Redford Cattle Drive is far from a trail ride. We march out next morning at first light. It's a slow amble, my horse rarely clicks out of a steady walk, and at first I can't hide my disappointment: I want to go fast.

But over the next three days I'll begin to understand the fine art that is droving: I'll see cattle swing out of line and trot from the pack,

earth, or on a log, while volunteers from the community bring us lunch. My initial frustration is replaced by a sense of anticipation as I try to turn myself into a contributing member of the team. There's no pressure on the rider to be a true-blue musterer overnight, but when three head of cattle leave the formation and I bring them back in entirely by myself, I feel a sense of achievement I've never felt on a trail ride.

There's a rugged beauty to the bush in these parts. In the dusk, after we corral our horses for the night, I like to sit in the makeshift camps with an icy-cold beer and



Above: The Harry Redford Cattle Drive is one of the last musters of its kind left in Australia.

Below: It's a dry, dusty job droving cattle but there's rewards aplenty in the Outback.

stare out to the horizon: it's as flat as a tack, and the sky is endless, but nowhere in Australia looks prettier in these burnt-orange-tinted moments.

But it's the cowboys that make the Harry Redford Cattle Drive. They're part of an Australia I never knew existed, or at the very least, one I'd figured had long ago lapsed. But these blokes with their hats permanently on their heads no matter what time of the day or night, ought to be a bona-fide tourist attraction in themselves. They're few and far between these days, these mustering types, but for three days I'm able to not only observe them, but become one of them (albeit of the city slicker variety), earning my keep on one of the last true community cattle musters left on the face of this dry, dusty earth. ■

For more Outback Queensland holiday ideas visit queensland.com/outback



Above: Your job on the Harry Redford Cattle Drive is to keep hundreds of cattle in formation as you cross the Outback.

OTHER THINGS NOT TO MISS IN OUTBACK QUEENSLAND

DINOSAURS EXPERIENCE: Chat to the man who discovered Australia's first dinosaur, David Elliot, at the **Australian Age of Dinosaurs** before getting your palaeontologist on by working with real dinosaur bones on their Prep-A-Dino experience.

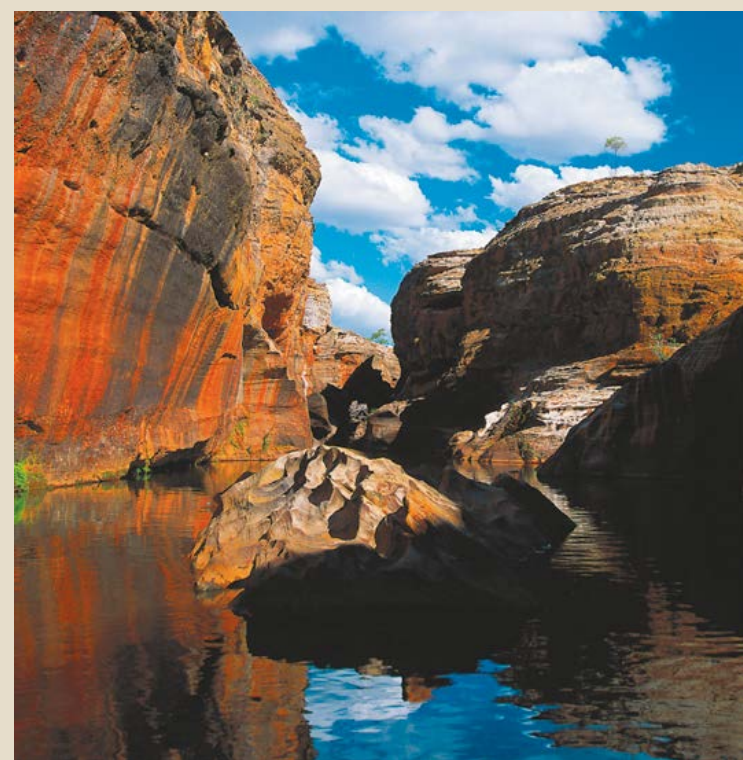
HISTORY: Stand in the very spot where the Australian Labor Party first formed after the Shearing Strike of 1891 - **The Tree of Knowledge**, Barcaldine. Sure, there are rumours the real tree met a poisonous demise, but the memorial replacement is well worth the Barcaldine detour.

LANDSCAPES AND SUNSETS: Put some red sand between your tyre treads and conquer **Big Red**, the first sand dune in the Simpson Desert, 40 clicks out of Birdsville. It's incidentally one of the best spots for sunsets out west.

ADVENTURE: Fancy yourself a bit of a cowboy? Saddle up for the ride of your life at the **Mount Isa Rotary Rodeo School** where cowboys and girls come from all around Australia to learn the basics of bronco and bull riding.

UNIQUE EXPERIENCE: Stop, revive and relax in **Eulo's Mud Baths** - you're guaranteed to come away with soft skin and eased tension.

ADVENTURE: Check out Queensland's youngest gorge, **Cobbold Gorge** (pictured below). This majestic sandstone wilderness is the very definition of beautiful, with cliff walls that stretch 30m above the narrow creek running below. The best way to soak up the scenery is to join **Cobbold Gorge Tours** for a boat tour through the gorge.



WINTER WONDERLAND: WELCOME TO THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

MEET THE REEF

1. The Wild North

When we say wild, we mean wild. North of Port Douglas lies a marine wilderness that is unspoilt and remote, offering intrepid adventures from bountiful fishing, to diving untouched coral cays and meeting Indigenous locals.

2. Cairns and Port Douglas Precinct

Tropical North Queensland has the boast factor – it's where World Heritage-listed rainforest and reef meet. Take an adventure in nature and snorkel with minke whales, go helmet diving or game fishing.

3. Townsville Precinct

Surround yourself in history and learning with historic shipwrecks and unspoilt islands.

4. Whitsundays and Mackay Precinct

Explore stylish and beautiful islands and go on a windswept adventure in the area known as the sailing mecca.

5. Southern Great Barrier Reef Precinct

Experience the beauty of an uncrowded getaway, explore quiet coastal towns, meet local characters and watch turtles hatch.

Brisbane ●

TAKE A STEP BACK AND SMILE AS THE GREAT BARRIER REEF TAKES YOUR BREATH AWAY. WITH STUNNING CORAL REEFS, COLOURFUL MARINE LIFE AND A RAINBOW OF BLUE WATER AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE. IT'S AN EXPERIENCE NOT TO BE MISSED.

BY SHELLEY THOMAS

The Great Barrier Reef is like nothing else on the planet. Bigger than 70 million football fields and jam-packed with more life per square metre than... well, anywhere. Period.

In winter, it's where the wild things truly come out to play in a World Heritage-listed wonder that has to be seen to be believed; the largest structure ever built by living things (stretching 2300km along Queensland's coast) and the only one visible from outer space.

Navigating wonderland is an adventure in itself, with 101 ways and more to experience an icon

described by Sir David Attenborough as 'the most magical thing you ever saw in your life'... above or below the surface of the world's best managed reef (with or without getting wet).

MEET THE REEF

Like Nemo's best mate, the loveable but forgetful Dory, it's understandable to feel confused by the big picture of just how 'to do' the Great Barrier Reef, where to start, what to see and how to keep track of all the hidden gems in store.

First up, be sure to identify the best season for 'bucket list' wildlife/nature encounters, whether



Main image: Roughly the same size as Japan or Germany the Great Barrier reef stretches over 2300km.
Left: Clownfish, Great Barrier Reef.

hanging out with dwarf minke whales in winter or witnessing coral spawning (the Mount Everest of reproduction in nature) in late spring to early summer. See *Where The Wild Things Are*, page 14.

The next big question – and arguably the most telling, when navigating an aquatic wonderland the size of the United Kingdom, Holland and Switzerland combined

– is simple: Which of the reef's five distinct precincts are you? *Tip: there's no right or wrong answer and, more likely than not, you'll tick them all... returning time and time again.

1 THE WILD NORTH: Unleash your Attenborough-meets-Bear Grylls because this precinct offers awesome adventure, easily accessible from Cairns and Port Douglas in Tropical North Queensland.

Must-dos: Swim with dwarf minke whales; dive with giant potato cod at the world-famous Cod Hole near

Lizard Island; witness a live shark feed on Osprey Reef; join a game fishing charter from Cooktown, Weipa or Seisia; discover your inner Robinson Crusoe without skimping on luxury at Haggerstone Island Resort; explore rugged beaches and ancient Indigenous rock art on the seven islands of Flinders Group National Park.

Nearest airport: Cairns.

2 CAIRNS AND PORT DOUGLAS – TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND: The perfect launch pad for any reef adventure in a hub where two World Heritage-listed



Top: Fitzroy Island Tropical North Queensland.

Middle: Snorkelling in the beautiful Great Barrier Reef.

Above: Diving the SS Yongala wreck, Townsville North Queensland.

icons meet, the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics rainforest.

Must-dos: Skydive over the reef and land on Mission Beach or hit the sand on a 'blokarting' adventure; sail to snorkelling idylls of Low Isles or Fitzroy Island; take a walk on the wild side (without getting your hair wet) helmet diving on Moore Reef and Green Island; learn spear fishing from Kuku Yalanji people; camp like a castaway on Dunk Island; channel your inner rock star and charter a private helicopter (following the lead of Aerosmith's Steven Tyler, fast-tracking a dive trip to the outer Agincourt Reef); marvel at crocs and

'green dinosaurs' (the only surviving plants once eaten by dinosaurs) on a boat cruise down the Daintree River (an experience that recently made the bucket list of UK crooner Ed Sheeran) surrounded by the world's oldest rainforest.

Nearest airport: Cairns.

3 TOWNSVILLE NORTH QUEENSLAND:

Townsville has been keeping a few cards close to its chest, known only by the savvy locals who have been savouring the lack of crowds, 320 days of sunshine, and pristine conditions found in the central Great Barrier Reef. From Townsville you can reach spectacular snorkelling and diving sites and there's no better destination to get schooled on the wonderland of the reef. Townsville is the headquarters of the Great Barrier Reef Marine

Did you know? The Great Barrier Reef is also a playground and nursery for humpback whales making an annual appearance from May until September to calve and build up strength before returning to the Antarctic in summer. Winter is the best time to see them off the northern reefs (calving takes place from June to August).

Park Authority (GBRMPA), James Cook University and the Australian Institute of Marine Science.

Must-dos: Dive the *SS Yongala* wreck, ranked in the world's Top 10 dive sites; visit GBRMPA's Reef HQ Great Barrier Reef Aquarium, the world's largest living coral reef aquarium; experience a weekend unlimited dive safari where you'll camp under the stars on Pelorus Island, sail to Magnetic Island, the Palm Island group and Orpheus Island; lace-up for an overnight hiking adventure around Hinchinbrook Island; snorkel/dive

Lodestone Reef, one of the Great Barrier Reef's best-kept secrets.

Nearest airport: Townsville.

4 THE WHITSUNDAYS: Hands-down, Australia's #1 sailing mecca, with no less than 74 islands to explore, surrounded by breathtaking fringing reef and home to a line-up of ultra-luxury resorts of the ilk of One&Only Hayman Island (the set of *Modern Family*'s 2014 'Australian vacation' episode) or qualia on Hamilton Island (where pop superstar Taylor Swift chillaxed on her 26th birthday).



Left: Heart Reef in The Whitsundays, **Right:** Lady Musgrave Island, Southern Great Barrier Reef **Far right:** Scuba diving, Southern Great Barrier Reef.

Must-dos: Charter a yacht and set sail from Airlie Beach; take a scenic flight over Heart Reef; join a deep sea fishing charter; snorkel colourful fringing reef; sleep on a floating pontoon over Hardy Reef; swing into action on Dent Island, Australia's only 18-hole championship golf course that occupies its own island. **Nearest airports:** Whitsunday Coast (Proserpine), Hamilton Island and Mackay

5 SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF: Just four hours' drive from Brisbane or a quick scenic flight – and stretching from



Bundaberg to Rockhampton, this precinct oozes laid-back beauty, super-friendly locals, world-class diving, snorkelling and megafauna galore. **Must-dos:** Check into three true island cays – resorts on Lady Elliot

Island (aka 'Manta Heaven') and Heron Island (dive 20 spectacular sites, including one of Jacques Cousteau's favourites, 'Heron Bommie') or camping on Lady Musgrave (complete with a massive, protected lagoon, perfect for



families and learner divers); watch turtle hatchlings burst out of their nests at Bundaberg's Mon Repos Regional Park; visit the twin coastal villages of Agnes Waters and Town of 1770, the first place in Australia where Captain Cook came ashore.

Nearest airports: Rockhampton, Gladstone, Bundaberg, Gold Coast and Brisbane (you can also drive from Brisbane).

For more tips on how to experience the Great Barrier Reef: queensland.com/greatbarrierreef



WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

From North to South (Cape York to Bundaberg), the wild things are impossible to miss (or count) on the reef – home to one of the world's most uniquely diverse ecosystems, boasting more than 1600 fish species and countless other creatures more colourful than the fictional world of Dr Seuss.

On the Great Barrier Reef, the 'Great 8' marine encounters (whales, turtles, sharks, Nemo-like clown fish, potato cod, giant clams, manta rays and Maori wrasse) are hailed as the underwater equivalent to an African safari.

WILD-BUT-NOT-WOOLY: IN WINTER, DON'T MISS THESE FAMOUS FOUR ENCOUNTERS:

#1 TURTLE POWER

No bucket list is complete without a turtle encounter, with the reef home to six of the world's seven species

of marine turtles. While Raine Island – the largest green turtle rookery on Earth, located on the reef's remote northern tip – is not accessible to the public, other popular mating and nesting sites can be found on Lady Elliot Island, Lady Musgrave Island, Heron Island, Green Island (the only one with a rainforest), Fitzroy Island and Bundaberg's Mon Repos Regional Park.

If you're visiting during November–March, turtle nesting and hatching season, a visit to Mon Repos beach for a ranger-led turtle experience is a must (don't miss a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service ranger-guided turtle encounter at Mon Repos Turtle Centre).

#2 WHALE OF A TIME

Between June and July, Tropical North Queensland's wildlife actively seek out human contact... purely



for enjoyment. In this case, a gregarious species of whale – the dwarf minke whale (pictured above); an endearingly inquisitive creature that emits what scientists label the 'Star Wars sound', akin to Luke Skywalker firing up his lightsaber.

"There's nothing like it on the planet," says Port Douglas-based marine biologist and film maker Dr Dean Miller, arguably as excitable as the whales, particularly after nine minutes of his documentary footage made the cut on Attenborough's latest three-part epic.

"It really is the most powerful connection to nature you can have, to experience a seven to eight tonne, seven metre, size-of-a-mini-bus animal coming in and checking you out within a metre and being so gentle and purposeful in its approach. If everyone could experience a minke whale encounter, the world would definitely be a better place."

Thankfully, everyone can. In 2003, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) joined forces with researchers and tourism operators to better understand the biology and

behaviour of visiting dwarf minke whales. In an experience like no other, tourists who join operators endorsed to conduct swim-with-whales encounters on the pristine outer Ribbon Reefs automatically moonlight as citizen scientists, with each tourism operator required to provide data to the Minke Whale Project at James Cook University.

Dr Miller, as part of this ground-breaking research, has filmed the whales over the past 15 years. Not in isolation, but alongside tourists aboard Eye to Eye Marine Encounters' live-aboard charters; a tourism experience that made *National Geographic Traveler* magazine's 50 Trips of a Lifetime. The life-changing activity involves donning a mask and snorkel and hanging on a safety line, with the average encounter lasting more than two hours; sometimes stretching to a marathon 10 hours with more than 20 whales. And always on the whales' terms. What's

more, as Dr Miller sees it tourism on the Great Barrier Reef is the best example of wildlife tourism anywhere on Earth: "It's a very positive thing for the reef – people can make a positive difference just by going."

#3 MANTA MAGIC The Southern Great Barrier Reef's Lady Elliot Island is listed among PADI's Top 5 locations on the planet to encounter manta rays (pictured right) (alongside Hawaii, Galapagos Islands and the Maldives). Renowned as being interactive with divers, these gentle giants perform a "courtship train" – an underwater conga line, when males follow and mirror a female's every move, sometimes for days. While mantas feed around Lady Elliot Island throughout the year, they gather in their hundreds during winter. For the eco-conscious, Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort is also as close as you'll get to a carbon-neutral vacation.

#4 SHARK TALES If you've always wanted to swim with sharks, there's no better place to take the plunge. Incredibly, during winter, it's possible to eyeball lemon sharks in just 30cm of water! Follow their lead and take a day-trip to postcard-perfect Low Isles, a stone's throw from Port Douglas.

Between May and September, the area is a snorkelling goldmine as massive groups of around 100,000 hardyheads (baitfish) aggregate just off the beach

of Low Island, a tiny coral cay boasting its own historic lighthouse. The baitfish action attracts the lemon sharks – a gentle member of the whaler family that can grow up to three metres. For the ultimate shark encounter, jump on a live-aboard dive boat to the Wild North and witness a live shark feed on Osprey Reef; a beacon for schools of barracuda, dogtooth tuna and mackerel, alongside a stunning shiver of sharks, from white-tips to hammerheads and grey and silver tip whalers. ■



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ISLANDS ESCAPES

FROM ADVENTURE TO RELAXATION, THERE IS SOMETHING FOR ALL ON THE ISLANDS OFF QUEENSLAND'S COAST.
BY TIANA TEMPLEMAN

Looking down on the Queensland coast from 600 metres is a sight to behold. Shimmering turquoise water, emerald green islands and white sandy atolls beckon onlookers to slip on a snorkel and hit the beach. On a holiday in Queensland, the mundane of the everyday is replaced with romantic strolls on deserted beaches, amazing aquatic adventures, lavish seafood feasts, and more turtles than you can poke an underwater camera at. You might also come across a wombat who loves cuddles or an open bar with unlimited French champagne, depending on where you stay. Queensland's islands offer all these things and more, as well as a few surprises.

1. IT'S EASY BEING GREEN LADY ELLIOT ISLAND

SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF
Located on the southern tip of the Great Barrier Reef, Lady Elliot Island is the closest Great Barrier

Reef island to Brisbane. Even in the middle of winter, you will see guests at Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort with masks and fins swinging from their fingers, eager to get into the water which remains surprisingly warm throughout the year. Grab a couple of snorkels and dive into the coral reef offering a 'pick-n-mix' of the Great Barrier Reef's underwater wonders.

Huge manta rays glide majestically around coral-covered bommies, while turtles or double-headed Maori wrasse overtake. Spotted eagle rays cruise above the ocean floor together with yellow angel fish the size of dinner plates. From July to October you can also see humpback whales frolicking in the calm waters surrounding the resort. With just 41 rooms, guests at Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort are outnumbered by the wildlife, especially during the summer nesting seasons when thousands of seabirds and turtles grace the shores and trees of the humble coral cay. Accommodation packages include return flights from Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Brisbane or the Gold Coast offering enviable views of the island and surrounding reef as you come into land.

HERON ISLAND

SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF
Sir David Attenborough visited Heron Island when filming his latest Great Barrier Reef documentary and Jacques Cousteau listed the Heron Bommie as one of his top 10 favourite dive sites in the world. Heron Island, which celebrates its 80th anniversary as a tourist resort this year, really is impressive. Nature lovers can hold a dazzling variety of sea creatures on a (free) tour of the University of Queensland's Research Station or take to the waters just offshore to hang out with turtles that let swimmers cruise alongside them, close enough to touch. Heron Island is a significant breeding area for these gentle creatures which nest on the island each year, much to the delight of guests who can watch this natural wonder unfold from November to February.

2. LIVING THE LUXE LIFE LIZARD ISLAND

TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND
When Kate Hudson called Lizard Island Resort "just ridiculously luxurious", she wasn't kidding. Lizard Island's luxe resort is world-renowned and rivalled only by the island's stunning natural beauty. Rainforest tumbles down rugged hillsides, idyllic rocky bays beckon and shimmering, crystalline blue waters beg to be explored. But it's



Above: One&Only Hayman Island Resort, The Whitsundays.
Left: Heron Island, Southern Great Barrier Reef.

the resort itself which takes most people's breath away. Boardwalks meander through thickets of eucalypt and acacia, revealing tantalising glimpses of sparkling ocean while simultaneously hiding the chic individual beachside pavilions. Here you can inhale the soft scent of the sea while sipping champagne on your private daybed, watching colours dance across the water as the sunset bathes the sky in soft pinks and lavender blues.

Lizard Island offers excellent walking tracks and some of the world's best snorkelling and diving. Wade into Watson's Bay where giant clams over a metre wide cluster just off-shore, their jewel-like colours shimmering like the contents of an underwater treasure chest. With scheduled activities such as snorkel trips to the outer reef, sunset cruises, guided walks and reef discovery talks, there's plenty in and out of the water to keep you entertained. Unlike Captain Cook, who stood atop the hill known as Cook's Look seeking a way through the surrounding island maze, you'll be in no hurry to leave this beautiful place.

BEDARRA ISLAND

TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND
Approximately 140km south of Cairns you'll find Bedarra Island, a boutique island getaway which can be reached via a 30-minute launch transfer from Mission Beach. The eight-villa Bedarra Island Resort is the ideal spot to play Robinson Crusoe, albeit it in the lap of luxury. Cosy candlelit dinners, an impressive drinks list and gourmet picnics (with French champagne, of course), are all included in the daily rate. Stand-up paddle boarding, snorkelling, tennis and fishing are also included but this idyllic island is more about romance and relaxation than adventurous pursuits.

ONE&ONLY HAYMAN ISLAND

THE WHITSUNDAYS

Don't be surprised if the turtle you are snorkelling with gives you a sidelong glance. It's probably wondering how famous you are. One&Only Hayman Island, a stunning five-star resort which can be accessed by launch, sea plane or helicopter from Hamilton Island, is a favourite with celebrities such as Katy Perry, Elton John, Anthony Hopkins and Mariah Carey. Along with accommodating movie stars, One&One Hayman Island also welcomes families with a first-rate kids club and sophisticated teens' activities program.

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L-R: Cindy Sherman / Untitled #462 (detail) 2007-08 / Purchased 2011 with funds from Tim Fairfax, via the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation / Collection: Queensland Art Gallery / Untitled #468 2008 and Untitled #354 2000 (details) / Images courtesy: The artist and Metro Pictures, New York / © The artist

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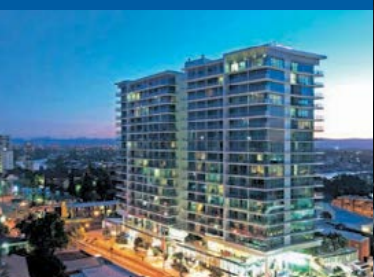


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3. READY FOR ACTION HINCHINBROOK ISLAND

TOWNSVILLE NORTH QUEENSLAND
The largest island on the Great Barrier Reef, Hinchinbrook Island National Park is completely uninhabited. Just 40 people are permitted to stay at any one time to protect the island's biodiversity. Pack your camping gear, strap on your hiking boots to tackle the famous 32km Thorsborne Trail, internationally rated one of the top 10 walks on the planet. Bring a sense of adventure to enjoy the stunning scenery.

MORETON ISLAND

BRISBANE REGION

Your legs might be begging for mercy but nothing will stop you climbing the towering sand dune one last time, letting out a triumphant cry as you zoom down it on a waxed masonite board at 80km/h. Once your heart has stopped racing, wade into the shallow waters of Moreton Bay to hand feed wild bottlenose dolphins which have been visiting Tangalooma Island Resort since the 70s. Or join a boat trip for a guided snorkelling tour of the Tangalooma Wrecks, with all gear included. The Wrecks are home to a myriad of different species of reef fish, coral formations and marine life. Conveniently for interstate visitors, Moreton Island can be accessed via a



short ferry trip from a jetty located just 10 minutes away from Brisbane Airport by taxi.

FRASER ISLAND

FRASER COAST

Fraser Island is the Lara Croft of Queensland islands: easy on the eye and always ready for adventure. Fraser isn't just the biggest sand island in Queensland, it's the largest one in the world and has a World Heritage listing equivalent to that of Uluru. You don't need to be an action hero to enjoy Fraser as it is doable on any level but you will need a 4WD. Hire one on the island or join an organised tour and bounce along sandy 'roads' surrounded by swathes of wild Australian bush echoing with native birdsong.

Fraser Island is a World Heritage-listed unspoilt paradise. Soon you will be kicking off your shoes, racing



Above: Moreton Island, Brisbane Region.

Above left: Hinchinbrook Island Townsville North Queensland.

Right: 4WD track, Fraser Island, Fraser Coast.

down pure white sand and diving into the soft-as-silk waters of an ancient lake fed by underground aquifers. Or perhaps you'd rather hitch a ride down Eli Creek, a fast flowing watercourse that's a bit like a flume ride, pouring up to four million litres of water into the ocean every hour. Floating down this creek is as much fun for adults as it is for kids, with or without a blow up croc to ride on.



4. FUN IN THE SUN HAMILTON ISLAND

THE WHITSUNDAYS

Sailing, flying, snorkelling, diving: Hamilton Island is your one-stop-shop for fun in the sun, with more than 60 ways to enjoy the surrounding waters of the Great Barrier Reef and Whitsunday Islands. Couples, families and groups of friends are equally well catered for, with a dazzling array of activities to choose from. Hold hands with someone special on a scenic flight over Heart Reef, channel your inner Jack Sparrow on a sailing adventure or play a round at Hamilton Island Golf Club. If you miss a shot, blame it on the turtles swimming below the fairway for distracting you from the game.

From budget to lux, 'Hammo' offers accommodation for all. Luxury lovers can rub shoulders with Hollywood A-listers at qualia, a hideaway on the northern-most tip of the island which spells its name with a lower case 'q'. Understated and unique, get it? Here you'll find chic stand-alone pavilions which have been placed to make the most of the amazing views but also with complete privacy in mind, something which holds undeniable appeal for visitors.

If your budget won't stretch to qualia, there is the chic Beach Club, which offers sweeping views of the Coral Sea, or the family-friendly high-

rise Whitsunday Holiday Apartments and Reef View Hotel. Independent holiday homes are also available for rent. Parents will never hear the dreaded words 'I'm bored!' here as all non-motorised water sports are free. Grab a kayak and go for a paddle, hit the beach or kick back at one of the bars at the marina. With multiple daily flights departing Sydney, you can be sipping a cocktail here in two and a half hours.

FITZROY ISLAND

TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

Fitzroy Island's main claim to fame was once Nudey Beach, a secluded clothing optional stretch of sand. These days Nudey Beach is no longer 'clothing optional' but the beauty of this diverse tropical island paradise remains. Calm sheltered waters and easily-accessible coral fringing reef make this tropical paradise a family favourite. Sunlight dances across the water at Welcome Bay, revealing the colourful reef fish and coral below, and dozens of butterflies patrol the Secret Garden walking trail. If you're in Queensland for a good time, not a long time, it's easy to visit this island for a day.

5. PARADISE FOR FAMILIES DAYDREAM ISLAND

THE WHITSUNDAYS

Watch a movie at the outdoor cinema, play a round on one of Australia's most unique mini-golf



Above: Daydream Island, The Whitsundays.

courses, go for a swim, snorkel or paddle or challenge each other to a laughter-filled game of coconut bowls at Daydream Island Resort and Spa, a family-friendly resort where too much fun is never enough. This island has a stunning fringing reef but if snorkelling isn't your thing, ask a staff member to throw fish pellets in the water and simply sit in the shallows and wait for the fish to come to you. It's a great way for littlies who are still too young for snorkelling to experience the Great Barrier Reef first hand.

You and the kids can see more fish in every colour of the rainbow and feel a stingray's velvet-soft kiss at the island's famous Living Reef, one of the world's largest man-made coral lagoons. Don't miss the entertaining fish-feeding

demonstration where Brutus, a rather macho barramundi, goes after his pilchards with the enthusiasm of a visitor at the resort's all-you-can-eat seafood buffet. You can also say hello to Nemo and his friend Bruce here. The Living Reef offers a highly educational learning experience - but don't tell the kids. Everything about it is so much fun they will never know. Each day a timetable lists all the activities on offer so you can choose what you want to do, or venture down to the beach and see what's happening. In addition to the daily fish feeding demonstrations, there are more than 20 free things to choose from, including archery, catamarans, kayaks and guided rainforest walks. There is little chance the kids (or

you) will get bored at Daydream Island. With so much free fun to be had, you can spend as much - or as little - as you like and still have 'the best holiday ever'!

MAGNETIC ISLAND

TOWNSVILLE NORTH QUEENSLAND

Wildlife selfie alert! More than 70 per cent of Magnetic Island is national park and it's filled with friendly furry residents, including more than 800 chilled-out koalas and a posse of rock wallabies which live amongst the granite boulders overlooking Geoffrey Bay. They're fond of veggie snacks so keep some carrots handy. You can't go three steps without spying some sort of animal here, but if you want to meet a bunch of critters in the one spot (and take some super selfies), don't miss Bungalow Bay Koala Village where you can cuddle a wombat, cradle a crocodile and drape a (friendly) snake around your neck.

In the water, *The Moltke* is a wreck dive accessible from the shore on Magnetic Island. The old cargo boat has been here for more than 70 years. The structure is fairly broken up providing many corners and holes for marine life to hide in. Batfish, grouper, squirrelfish, butterflyfish and damselfish make this home. Crayfish and nudibranchs can often also be found. ■

For more Queensland island holiday ideas visit: queensland.com/islands

IT'S LIVE IN QUEENSLAND THIS WINTER

Winter in Queensland shines like nowhere else in the world, with weather that's never cool enough to curb the constant stream of events and festivals that the state has to offer. From Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Outback Queensland and the regions, our roster of Australia's best events are made even better by Australia's best destinations.

See the full event calendar at queensland.com/events



**AIRLIE BEACH RACE WEEK
THE WHITSUNDAYS | 11 – 18 August 2016**

IT'S LIVE!
in Queensland



Just 45 minutes from Cairns by Fast Cat, Fitzroy Island is nestled on a slice of tropical island paradise, positioned where the reef and rainforest collide. The 4 1/2 star resort is the ideal location for discovering the Great Barrier Reef, come for the day or stay overnight.

Ph: + 61 (07) 4044 6700
E: stay@fitzroyisland.com
W: www.fitzroyisland.com



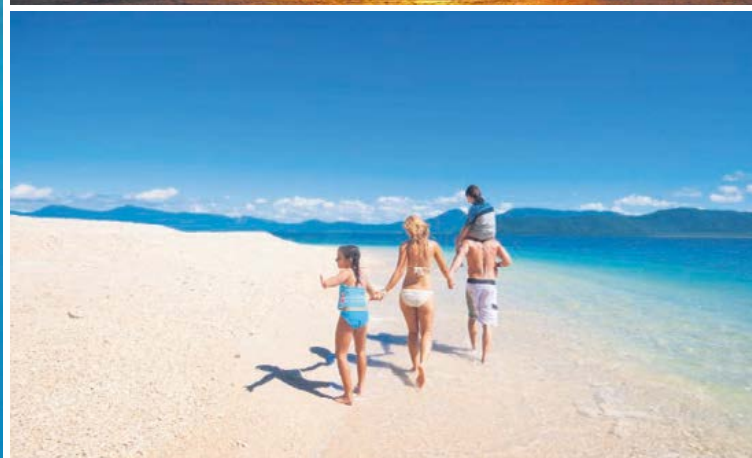
TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND
TOURISM AWARDS
Adventurous by nature
2013 WINNER + 2014 WINNER

“Winter is Coming”

The longer you stay the more you save! Stay from 2 to 5 nights & save from 20% up to 50%. Contact us to book and quote ‘Winter 2016’.

Applies to the One Bedroom Ocean Suite and Resort Studio. Discount off BAR rate. Subject to availability. Based on 2 Adults. Valid until 20th Dec 2016. Excludes all Public Holidays, School Holidays and Long Weekends.

**Save
up to
50%**



COMPETITION WINNERS

ENTRANTS FROM A TOURISM AND EVENTS QUEENSLAND CONTEST WERE ASKED TO SHARE THEIR FAVOURITE PARTS OF THE STATE. HERE, THE FOUR WINNERS, REVEAL THEIR TOP SPOTS.

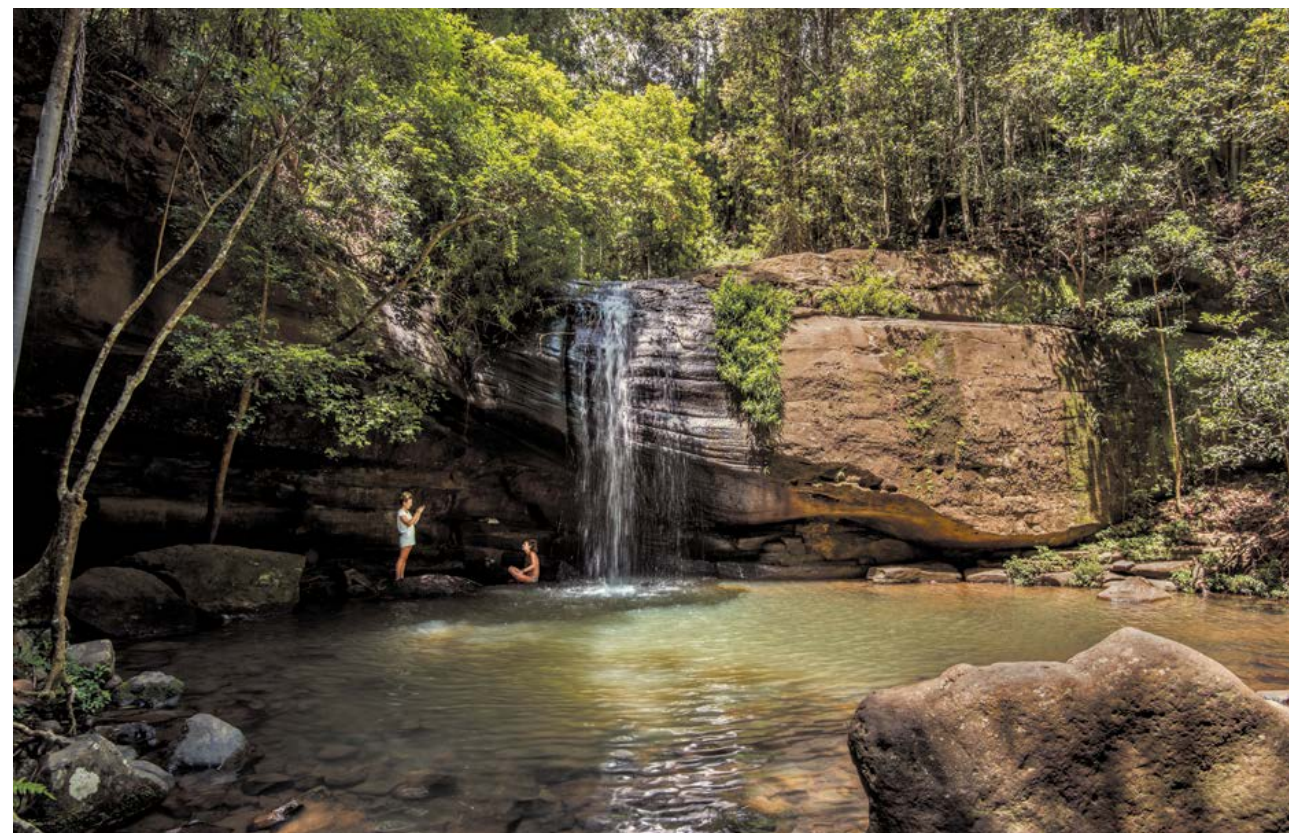
TIMOTHY FRITH

Surfing the break at Snapper Rocks is definitely one of the must-do Queensland experiences. Best break in the world! When the super break is on, you can ride it all the way to Greenmount. If you look closely you might just drop in on Mick Fanning or Kelly Slater. All of that and it won't cost you a cent!



SUZANNE MARSH

Which Queensland experience do I love the most? It's enjoying the Great Barrier Reef, just off our coast. So many islands and cays to explore. Fish in the water and birds on the shore. Coral gardens aplenty where fish feed and play. You can come for a day trip or a much longer stay. Don a face mask and flippers and go for a look. You'll see fish of all kinds in every cranny and nook. The reef's always changing from season to season. Migrating creatures come here for a reason. Mother turtles lay eggs on the beach they were born. And return to the sea just before the new dawn. Giant humpbacks make the very long journey here yearly. Giving birth to their calves (I love baby whales dearly!). From all over the world the seabirds come here. To lay eggs and nurture their chicks without fear. The reef water here is so clear and so warm. You'll see sea stars and coral, sea-life of all forms. Relax with a cocktail overlooking the sea. Queensland's Great Barrier Reef is THE place to be. So much to enjoy in this natural World Wonder. Off our Queensland coast in the Land Down Under.



DIANE FOLEY Just off the Bruce Highway at Buderim, I have discovered the beautiful Buderim Falls or known by another name, Serenity Falls, in Buderim Forest Park. After a beautiful short trail walk, the falls are a lovely place to visit with many people taking a refreshing dip. For myself, I just love to visit to take in the scenery and capture a photo or two.



SHELAGH CHAMBERLAIN

To sink your toes into the pristine, ultra white silica sand of Whitehaven Beach. Paddle in the crystal clear waters of Hill Inlet. Marvel at the magnificent colours of the water. The ripples of azure, aquamarine and turquoise mesmerize the senses. The day trip to Whitehaven Beach and Hill Inlet was the highlight from our week's holiday at Hamilton Island; closely followed by magical, romantic sunsets viewed from One Tree Hill, sipping on cool cocktails. Hiking up Passage Peak to reveal what must be the best view in the world and savouring a glass of wine from the Bommie Deck watching the world go by at the Marina. Love the Whitsundays and so want to go back.



Inskip Point, Fraser Coast, @mycolourfulworld_



Nucifora Tea Fields, Atherton Tablelands, Tropical North Queensland, @gypsea_lust



Seaplane, The Whitsundays, @jarradseng



Palm Cove, Tropical North Queensland, @taylahnilsson



The Mackay Region, @melissafindley



Cape Hillsborough, The Mackay Region, @gypsea_lust

INSTAGRAM SHOUTOUTS

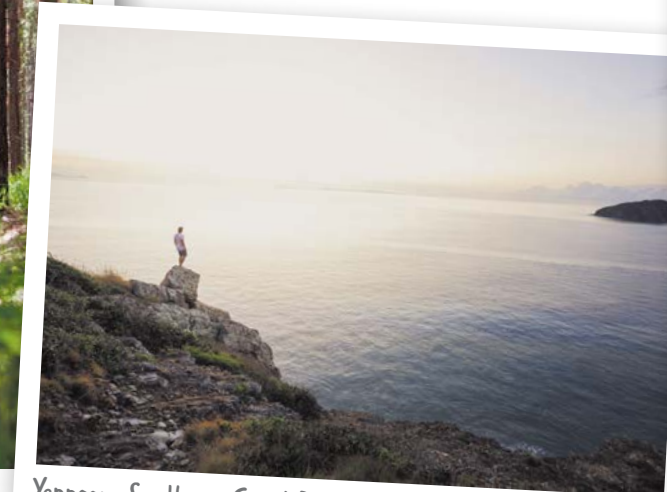
There's plenty of spectacular photos snapped around Queensland each and every day, it's not tricky to capture the state's best angles! Be sure to follow @queensland and tag your Queensland holiday photos with #thisisqueensland



Fairy Pools Noosa National Park, Sunshine Coast, @jarradseng



Fraser Coast, @mycolourfulworld_



Yeppoon, Southern Great Barrier Reef, @mcquigan_visuals



Wallaman Falls, Townsville North Queensland, @melissafindley

SEE AUSTRALIA'S BEST LIVE EVENTS IN AUSTRALIA'S BEST DESTINATIONS

JUN	 BRISBANE State Of Origin Game 2 22 Jun	 BRISBANE Scenic Rim Eat Local Week 25 Jun – 3 Jul	TOWNSVILLE NORTH QUEENSLAND Australian Festival of Chamber Music 29 Jul – 6 Aug 			
JUL	GOLD COAST Gold Coast Airport Marathon 2-3 Jul		TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 14-17 Jul			
AUG	BRISBANE Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) 5-14 Aug		THE WHITSUNDAYS Airlie Beach Race Week Festival of Sailing 11 – 18 Aug	OUTBACK QUEENSLAND Mount Isa Mines Rotary Rodeo 12-14 Aug	FRASER COAST Hervey Bay Seafood Festival 14 Aug	SUNSHINE COAST Gympie Music Muster 25-28 Aug
SEP		OUTBACK QUEENSLAND Birdsville Races 2-3 Sep		SUNSHINE COAST Ironman 70.3 World Championship 4 Sep		SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND COUNTRY Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers 16-25 Sep
OCT	GOLD COAST V8 Supercars Castrol Gold Coast 600 21-23 Oct		SUNSHINE COAST Noosa Triathlon Multi Sport Festival 26-30 Oct	NOV		
				GOLD COAST Pan Pacific Masters Games 5-13 Nov	BRISBANE Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival 23 Nov – 4 Dec	
DEC		GOLD COAST Australian PGA Championship 1-4 Dec	BRISBANE Commonwealth Bank Test Series, Australia v Pakistan 15-19 Dec	 BRISBANE Woodford Folk Festival 27 Dec-1 Jan		



IRONMAN 70.3 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
4 SEPTEMBER, SUNSHINE COAST

Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast will host the 2016 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship. The event is the pinnacle of the global IRONMAN 70.3 calendar. Mooloolaba Beach offers the perfect year-round climate and is an ideal location for a sporting event, a relaxing family vacation or just a great place to escape to. The relaxing atmosphere of the Sunshine Coast, the friendly people and the endless scenic beauty of Mooloolaba Beach make it a hugely popular destination to visit. Competitors will take in the best that Mooloolaba has to offer, starting with a swim off the surf beach followed by a flat and fast bike course. The run will tie up the day's exciting events with a two lap course around Mooloolaba's Esplanade lined with spectators.

MOUNT ISA MINES ROTARY RODEO
12-14 AUGUST, OUTBACK QUEENSLAND

The legendary Mount Isa Mines Rotary Rodeo will bring world-class rodeo competition plus a festival of entertainment to the north-west Queensland Outback in August. The 58th annual Isa Rodeo is the largest rodeo in the southern hemisphere, attracting the pinnacle of cowboys and cowgirls from around Australia and overseas competing for prize money worth more than \$200,000. Outside the famous Buchanan Park arena, a rodeo festival gets underway, including live concerts, a free family mardi-gras, street party, Fred Brophy's Outback boxing troupe, bush poets breakfast and much more. Mount Isa Mines Rotary Rodeo manager Natalie Flecher said planning for the 2016 rodeo started almost as soon as the dust settled on last year's event. "Our focus is always on how can we make the rodeo even better for our competitors and our audience," she said.





MARJ OSBORNE GOOD FOOD GOLD COAST
The Gold Coast is increasingly becoming known as a vibrant food destination. From casual eateries to five-star restaurants, the Coast's eclectic dining scene holds something for everyone. Here, writer and food blogger, Marj Osborne, shares her top ten places to experience the bold new flavours of this beautiful region.



Rick Shores
Poised at the ocean's edge in one of the Coast's most revered spots, Rick Shores offers diners interesting combinations and the element of surprise give the flavours of Asia new life. Grab a group of friends and share some extraordinary flavours.
www.rickshores.com.au



Ten Japanese
Ten Japanese embodies the essence of timeless simplicity in a most sophisticated way. Each dish is prepared in front of us, exquisitely presented. Ten Japanese is an essential stop for the serious diner or wine connoisseur; a 'taste of heaven' on the Gold Coast.
www.teppanten.com.au



Etsu
Wildly popular, Etsu is a modern take on a timeless Oriental story. Diners embark on an experience for all the senses, swept away by classic izakaya delights. Order a selection of small dishes or Omakase, a Japanese phrase that means 'I'll leave it up to you', the chef's choice.
www.etsu.com.au

Salt Grill
Salt Grill is Luke Mangan on display, from his signature plates and olive oil, to the menu of modern Australian classics. Mangan's unique dishes fill the menu, many with a Pan-Asian flair, while other larger dishes are more substantial rustic fare.
www.hiltonsurfersparadise.com.au

Kiyomi
Kiyomi showcases Executive Chef Chase Kojima's (ex-Nobu) incredible talent. While keeping the traditionalists at bay with a sushi bar and charcoal grilled meat, the main intent of Kiyomi is its modern Japanese-inspired creations. Kiyomi's food is exquisitely plated, with flavours and textures that surprise and delight adventurous diners.
www.jupitersgoldcoast.com.au

The Fish House
With stunning views over the iconic Burleigh Beach and coastline beyond, The Fish House is Simon Gloffis' specialty fish restaurant. The daily menu pays homage to the freshest seafood, flown in from around Australia daily, prepared simply to celebrate the flavour of the fish. Not surprisingly, it is one of our most awarded restaurants.
www.thefishhouse.com.au

Mamasan Kitchen & Bar
Our best chefs are the ones who not only understand the origins of each dish but coax us out of familiar territory, luring us into unexpected flavours and textures using invention and surprise. So it is at Mamasan, with traditional dishes turned on their head, given unexpected twists of flavour. Chef Ray Choi's food (ex-China Doll) is superb.
www.mamasanbroadbeach.com

Hank Dining & Bar
Hank is a serious step into innovative classic cuisine, with modern international fusion dishes using quality ingredients in interesting combinations. Without the distraction of a passing parade, all eyes are on the food. Expect modern Australian dishes to share. Leave room for the salted caramel panna cotta. It's divine!
www.hankbroadbeach.com

Moo Moo The Wine Bar + Grill
Even though Australia is a coastal nation, we love our steak. This is 'steak with swank', the best of the best! The restaurant's spectacular zinc-topped Moobar has become one of the Gold Coast's hottest venues to enjoy cocktails or wine from an award-winning list.
www.moomoorrestaurant.com

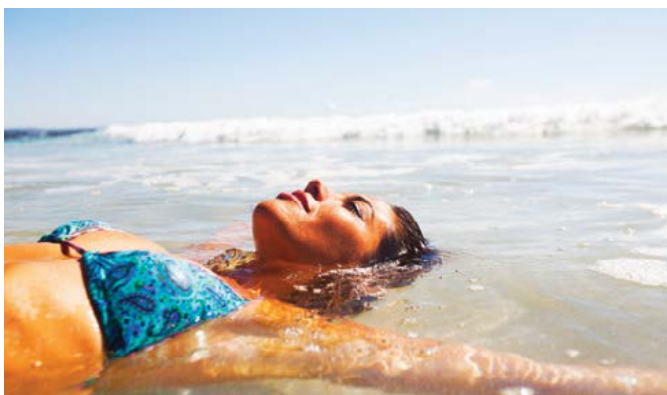
House of Brews
The Gold Coast, together with its surrounding Scenic Rim, is home to seven breweries, several wineries and a couple of distilleries. Many of them are open for tours and tastings, however, if your time is short, our recommendation for a local taste test is House of Brews. This taphouse boasts the largest number of beers on tap on the Gold Coast.
www.houseofbrews.com.au

Queensland Shines

Queensland has so many beauty spots that blend lush forests and alluring sands that it's hard to know where to begin. Add in a great personality in the form of a vibrant food scene, magnetic night spots and daytime adventures by the score, and you won't believe your luck.

Take the Gold Coast – the glittering city just south of the capital, Brisbane – with its glitzy nightlife, designer shops, golden sands, heart-pounding surf, and a green, rolling hinterland studded with wineries and artisan produce. Or head further up the coast to the Whitsunday belle of Hamilton Island, where if you don't find a sunrise or sunset for the ages, you must have your eyes closed. Hop over to the squeaky white sands of the world's best Whitehaven Beach, or tee off at the Hamilton Island Golf Course. With top-quality accommodation, dining and Great Barrier Reef excursions, it's beautiful and stylish.

Venture further north still and the Tropical North Queensland city of Cairns will charm you. The rainforest meets the reef (both Heritage-listed) in this part of the world, and you can divide your time between pristine coral or pristine jungle, with city excitement to keep you on your toes. From beach to forest, city to top-class comforts, Queensland outshines all comers.



Cairns
Airfare + 3 nights 3½-star

\$519*

from

Pay for 2 nights & 1 night **FREE** at the Ibis Styles Cairns with return transfers & **FREE** WiFi*. Add a Kuranda Rail & Skyrail Tour from an extra \$159*.

Travel 12 Oct – 8 Dec 16. Deal 4135816

Gold Coast
Airfare + 3 nights 4½-star

\$419*

from

Pay for 2 nights & get 1 night **FREE** at the Crowne Plaza Surfers Paradise with return transfers. Add a Mt Tamborine Tour from an extra \$88*.

Travel 1 Aug – 29 Sep 16. Deal 4135815

Hamilton Island
Airfare + 5 nights 3½-star

\$979*

from

Pay for 4 nights & get 1 night **FREE** at the Whitsunday Apartments in a 1 Bedroom Apartment with return transfers. Add a Great Barrier Reef Adventure from an extra \$235*.

Travel 18 Aug – 15 Sep 16. Deal 4135817



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