

Destination Queensland

For many Australian and overseas visitors, Queensland is an enormous slab of Australia put aside for their pleasure-seeking pursuits. If basking in the sun's constant rays puts you in a languid state of bliss, stretch out under the many days of endless sunshine along the miles and miles of powder-white beaches that blend into crystal-clear, azure waters along the coastline. And if you need a bit more stimulation try white-water rafting, scuba diving, snorkelling, bushwalking, surfing, bungee jumping, skydiving, paragliding or rock climbing...just to start with.

In this seemingly endless playground is a natural feature that surpasses all others in Queensland, Australia and, many would argue, on the planet. The Great Barrier Reef stretches for 2000km off the coast and is the most extensive, best protected and least affected reef system in the world. It is the only living thing visible from space – astronauts call it the 'white scar on the face of the Pacific Ocean'. This tapestry of corals fanning out into indigo waters appears to be Mother Nature's finest achievement – a place where she has summoned all the colours of her vast palette and applied them in exquisite detail. Opportunities to immerse yourself in all its glory abound. Pull on the flippers, air tanks or snorkel and open your eyes to what is quite simply the closest you'll ever get to seeing another world.

Back on land, the natural environment is also one of the state's enticing draws. Bewitching national parks dot the landscape, featuring thriving rainforests, soaring mountains, twinkling lakes and a diversity of wildlife that rates from cute and cuddly (koalas) to downright fearsome (crocs and stingrays). Bushwalking is an excellent way to spend time in these wilderness areas, and the creation of six Great Walks throughout the state allows walkers to experience rainforests and bushlands without disturbing ecosystems.

Many visitors (especially those travelling with kids) end up at some point along the Gold Coast – where sunny days are as Australian as Vegemite and the virtually unbroken ribbon of golden beach induces the quintessential Aussie lifestyle of surf, sun and fun. If the ebb and flow of its relentless energy doesn't appeal, the Sunshine Coast offers an easy-going chic culture and seaside charm with a low-key vibe. In between is Brisbane, arguably Australia's most livable city, with its wonderful climate, a healthy platter of cultural offerings and a dining scene reflecting its ethnic make-up. This river city's gleaming towers share space with abundant greenery, apparent in a profusion of gardens and parks, especially along the length of its waterways.

When you need a break from urban trappings, head further up the coast to World Heritage-listed Fraser Island, the world's largest sand island, where primal inland forest reveals a land shaped by elemental forces. It's the perfect place to pitch a tent and settle in for some serious and contemplative stargazing.

Further north the powdery white sands and aqua-blue waters of the tropical islands and coral cays become abundant as you start moving into 'reef' territory. Cairns, with its infectious holiday energy and tropical aura, is the reef-diving and snorkelling capital, and the gateway to the far north of the state. You can organise just about any activity under the sun (literally) in Cairns, and its popularity as a diving destination is legendary, with a flotilla of cruise boats, catamarans and yachts heading out to the Great Barrier Reef each day.

But if it's real adventure you seek then Far North Queensland is where it all begins. This is the state's most captivating coastal corner, packed with natural marvels, including the verdant Daintree National Park, where you can spot a wealth of wildlife dwelling beneath a lush forest canopy that tumbles down to pristine beaches. And of course it is here that you'll find the 4WD Bloomfield Track from Cape Tribulation to Cooktown, followed by the epic pilgrimage to the far-flung northernmost tip of Australia – one of the great 4WD trips of the continent. It is right up here, at Cape York, where you'll find frontier country and a wilderness of climatic extremes, with harsh but stunning scenery. And if adventure is still not out of your system, head into the stark Gulf Savannah, hook up with the Savannah Way and head across the continent from Cairns to Broome.

But the coast and its hinterland are only one story. Queensland's colossal outback will give you an entirely different sense of the continent. This is the place to peel back the postcard and find corners virtually untouched by other visitors. Wide, shimmering, blue horizons, fiery sunsets, star-filled night skies and laconic characters in country pubs will truly give you an appreciation of the state few visitors ever understand.

Queensland is also one of the best places in the country to access indigenous culture. If you're going no further than Brisbane you still have wonderful opportunities to engage with the first Australians through galleries, workshops and indigenous performing-arts groups. It is viewing Aboriginal rock art painted and stencilled in places such as Cape York over thousands of years, however, that will provide unforgettable memories and allow a deeper appreciation of Australia's 'forgotten people'.

The plight of Australia's indigenous people was in the minds and on the tongues of Queenslanders in 2008, when the Australian parliament issued an official apology to the stolen generations (Aboriginal children taken from their parents and placed with white families during the 19th and 20th centuries). Nowhere is it more apparent than Queensland, which is home to more than one-quarter of the nation's indigenous people, that this symbolic gesture must be followed by real change.

Water is another subject never far from conversation – either the lack of it (southeast Queensland, along with many other parts of Australia, has been in a long drought period) or catastrophic rains that have led to widespread flooding. In early 2008 floods were responsible for extensive damage across Far North, northern and central Queensland. Mackay, Rockhampton, Emerald and Charleville were just some of the towns badly affected.

In urban areas such as Brisbane, traffic congestion and public transport is never far away from exasperated dinner banter, as an inadequate road infrastructure struggles to cope with the booming population of the southeast corner of the state.

When faced with natural disasters and urban frustrations, the laconic, easy-going nature of Australians from the Sunshine State is most apparent. It reflects their unshakeable resilience and sense of optimism, which feeds into a genuine hospitality from Queenslanders that will leave a lasting impression on most visitors.

FAST FACTS

Population: 4.2 million

Percentage of people who claim no religion: 19%

Population growth rate: 2.2%

Annual interstate/overseas migration into Queensland: around 27,000/33,500

Average weekly family income: \$1154

Unemployment rate: 4% to 5%

Percentage of homes with at least one bicycle in good working order: 47%

Inflation rate: 3.9%

State flower: Cooktown Orchid

Size of Great Barrier Reef: 348,000 sq m; longer than the Great Wall of China; made up of 2900 separate reefs

Getting Started

An important part of travel in Queensland is remembering the colossal size of this state. An itinerary of some sort, even if it is vague, is highly recommended; you'll benefit most from focusing on one area for short trips. Well-developed infrastructure and tourism services mean that the state is relatively easy to get around (at least until you hit the harsh conditions of the outback and the remote north) and popular with backpackers, families, couples and retirees seeking the northern sun. In the southeast region, in particular, transport, accommodation and attractions are served up on a platter. For the majority of the year, they can be booked at the last minute.

Given the distance between attractions, any serious foray into the state should take car hire into serious consideration as it will make life immeasurably easier, and is very financially viable for groups.

WHEN TO GO

Australia's winter months are typically Queensland's busiest time for tourism – it's the place the Mexicans (the Queensland term for anyone from south of the border) head to escape the colder southern winters. The main tourist season stretches from April to November (to September in the outback), and the official high season is from June to September. As with elsewhere in the country, the Easter (March or April), winter (June and July) and Christmas (December and January) breaks are also considered to be high season. Australian families swarm into the Sunshine State on school holidays and *everything* is booked out.

Now you know when everyone else goes, but when should *you* go? Queensland's climate isn't really broken up into summer and winter; it's a tropical state so it has wet and dry seasons. Loosely, the dry season runs from April to December. In the far north (anything north of Cairns) and outback Queensland, however, January to March (December to April in Cape York) is the wet season and the heat and humidity can make life pretty uncomfortable. Once the monsoonal rains of the Wet arrive, which usually occurs in January and February, most parts of the Cape York Peninsula and the Gulf of Carpentaria, and much of the outback, are often inaccessible except by light aircraft. The Daintree region virtually shuts down and the Bloomfield Track is often impassable. Cooktown too only has limited services between November and May. Deadly 'stingers' (box jellyfish) also frequent the waters at this time (see the boxed text, p251).

The further south you head the less are the effects of the wet season. For the vast majority of the state, any time between June and October is the perfect time to visit – the extreme heat and stifling humidity of summer have been replaced by warm, sunny days and refreshingly cool nights.

COSTS & MONEY

Despite the Australian dollar's increasing value against the US dollar, British pound and Euro at the time of writing, Australia remains an inexpensive destination. Generally the cost of living is cheaper than in the USA, Canada and European countries. An exception is manufactured goods, which are often marked up to cover the cost of import.

Budget travellers and backpackers who plan to stay at hostels or camp, travel by bus, cook their own meals (with the odd splurge) and take in the sights can get by on a budget of around \$70 per day. A traveller who plans to

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Plenty of light summer gear such as shorts, cotton dresses and flip-flops
- An umbrella or lightweight raincoat for tropical downpours
- Sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat to deflect fierce UV radiation (see p480)
- Travel insurance (p456) for any adrenaline-charged activities, such as bungee jumping, white-water rafting or rock climbing
- Your favourite hangover, seasickness and motion-sickness cures (if you need them)
- Heavy-duty insect repellent (for flies, mosquitoes, sandflies and mysterious little bugs that swarm around light sources)

hire a car, see the sights, stay in midrange hotels, motels and B&Bs and eat out should budget for around \$160 per day; two people travelling together could do it for \$220 to \$250 per day.

Many accommodation options increase their tariffs only slightly for family rooms as opposed to doubles, and Queensland is littered with museums and galleries that offer free or very cheap entry for kids. Even the expensive child magnets, such as theme parks, often discount their entry fees for children by up to 50%, but virtually anywhere that has an admission charge offers a family ticket covering two adults and at least two children. Queensland's biggest benefit for families is its climate, which is perfectly suited to outdoor activities. The beach and playgrounds are free, and a day's bike ride in any of the cities is relatively cheap.

The biggest cost in any trip to Queensland will be transport, simply because the state is so big. Car rental is relatively cheap, but fuel costs (which have increased enormously in recent years) can quickly chew through your wallet, particularly if you're travelling long distances.

TRAVELLING RESPONSIBLY

Since our inception in 1973, Lonely Planet has encouraged our readers to tread lightly, travel responsibly and enjoy the magic that independent travel affords. International travel is growing at a jaw-dropping rate, and we still firmly believe in the benefits it can bring – but, as always, we encourage you to consider the impact your visit will have on both the global environment and the local economies, cultures and ecosystems.

In Queensland, much of the usual advice about protecting the local environment applies as anywhere in Australia. See p345 for advice on minimising your impact on the Great Barrier Reef, and keep in mind the following:

- Limit your use of plastic bags and use refillable water bottles rather than buying a new one every time.
- Don't use soaps or detergents in rivers, streams or swimming holes.
- If camping in national parks or forest, respect fire restrictions and take care with campfires (if they're allowed).
- If buying indigenous art or crafts, look for shops or cooperatives where the money goes directly to the artists or the community.
- Be very careful when driving on outback roads – look out for kangaroos and road trains – and avoid driving in the evening and at night if possible.
- When driving around Mission Beach keep an eye out for of cassowaries. Since Cyclone Larry, 15 cassowaries have been killed by cars and there are only 40 or so left in the area.

HOW MUCH?

- Internet access per hour \$4-5
- Night in a midrange hotel \$100
- Great Barrier Reef day/3-night cruise \$175/1400
- Gourmet pie \$5
- Car hire per day from \$30

See Climate Charts (p451) for more information.

TOP PICKS



MUST-SEE MOVIES

One of the best predeparture and planning aids is a dose of visual stimulation, which is best done on a comfy couch with a bowl of popcorn in one hand and a remote in the other. The following flicks provide sumptuous insights into Aussie culture. See p37 for full reviews.

- *Muriel's Wedding* (1994) Director: PJ Hogan
- *Australia* (2008) Director: Baz Luhrmann
- *Gettin' Square* (2003) Director: Jonathan Teplitzky
- *Ocean's Deadliest* (2007) Director: John Stainton (Steve Irwin's final documentary)
- *Cunnamulla* (2000) Director: Dennis O'Rourke

TOP READS

If you want to digest a sense of Queensland's culture, history, contemporary issues and people on a much deeper level, then the following top reads will fill your head with a genuine depiction. Many have won critical acclaim. See p38 for reviews of some of these and other local books.

- *On Our Selection* (1899) Steele Rudd
- *Praise* (1992) Andrew McGahan
- *The Mango Tree* (1974) Ronald McKie
- *Heart Country* (2001) Kerry McGinnis
- *Drylands* (1987) Thea Astley

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Australians certainly know how to celebrate, and Queenslanders are no exception. There's almost always something interesting going on around the state. The following is our top five, but for a comprehensive list flick to p454 and see the Festivals & Events sections in individual chapters.

- Ten Days in the Towers, Charters Towers (p316) Late April to early May
- Whitsunday Reef Festival, Whitsundays (p281) Late October to early November
- Cairns Festival, Cairns (p346) September
- Woodford Folk Festival, near Woodford (see the boxed text, p185) Late December
- Brisbane Riverfestival, Brisbane (see the boxed text, p89) Late August to early September

- When driving on Fraser Island, watch out for sunbathers on the 'beach highway'.
- Don't feed the dingoes on Fraser Island – these are wild animals and dingo attacks can maim or kill small children (see the boxed text, p208).
- Know and adhere to alcohol restrictions in Cape York (see the boxed text, p406).
- Patronise accommodation and tour operators that are ecofriendly. Tourism Tropical North Queensland has a 'Planet Safe Partnership' that recognises such businesses. Also look for the Eco Certified logo – businesses that display the 'tick logo' have been assessed by Eco Tourism, Australia's world-leading certification program.

TRAVEL LITERATURE

For a taste of things to come amid Queensland's varied flavours, pick up some predeparture reading to imbue a sense of place.

Thea Astley's *It's Raining in Mango* (1987) is an almost tangible taste of Queensland's history. It follows a Sydney family's relocation to Cooktown, and their exposure to the tragic and murderous clash of indigenous and European cultures.

The White Earth (2004) by Andrew McGahan is a cross-generational saga encompassing the 150-year history of white settlement of the Darling Downs, with an insight into native title and the growing alienation of rural white Australia.

Zigzag Street (2000) by Nick Earls is the humorous, engaging story of a 20-something bachelor coming to terms with social pressure, life and love in contemporary Brisbane.

Discovery Guide to Outback Queensland (2003), published by Queensland Museum Publishing, is a vivid travel book about life, history and culture in the Queensland outback, with useful travel information as well.

Rae Wear's *Johannes Bjelke-Petersen: The Lord's Premier* (2002) provides readers with an understanding of the conservative side of Queensland's culture, and the prevalence of the Aussie battler ethos in this state.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Courier Mail (www.couriermail.news.com.au) Website for Brisbane's daily newspaper, with current affairs, weather information and features.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) Great destination summaries, links to related sites and the Thorn Tree.

Queensland Holidays (www.queenslandholidays.com.au) Official tourism site, providing comprehensive information on destinations, accommodation, attractions, tours and more.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (www.epa.qld.gov.au) Official site with extensive information about Queensland's national parks and conservation areas.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland (www.tropicalaustralia.com.au) Official tourism site of the far north, with excellent information on the Great Barrier Reef and destinations from Cairns north.

'The White Earth (2004) by Andrew McGahan is a cross-generational saga encompassing the 150-year history of white settlement of the Darling Downs'

Itineraries

CLASSIC ROUTES

THE SENSATIONAL SOUTH

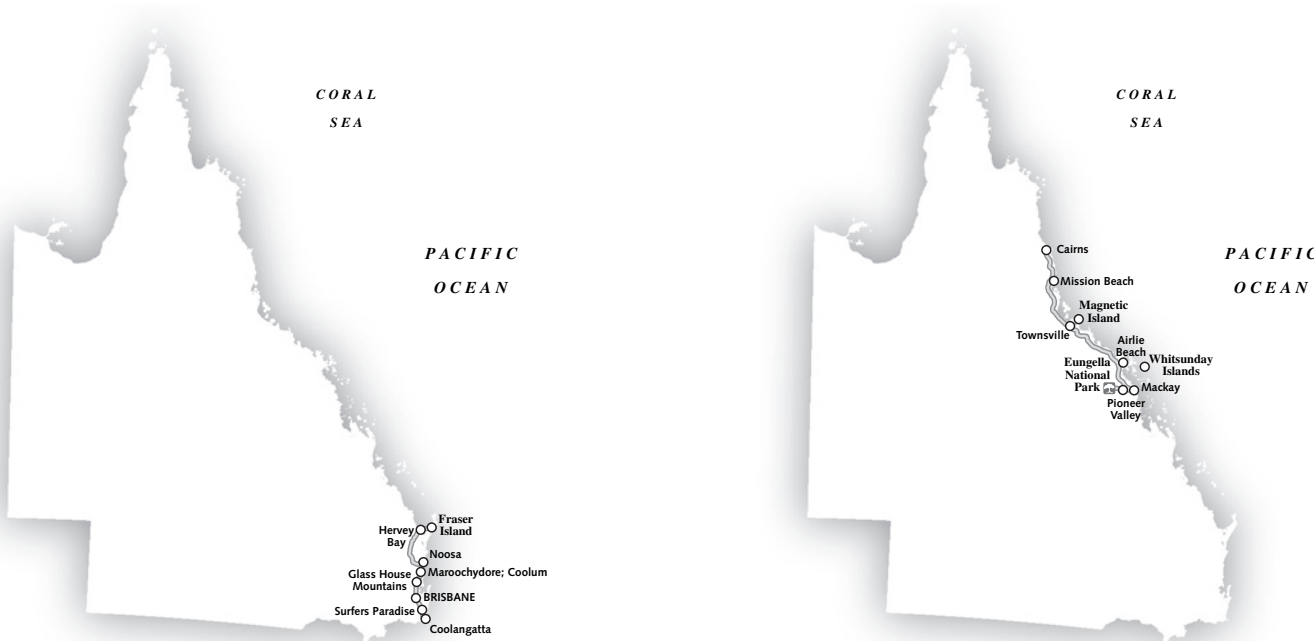
Two Weeks/Gold Coast to Sunshine Coast & Fraser Island

Start in **Coolangatta** (p152) and warm your toes in the sea lapping the fine beaches. Try your hand at surfing, but save some energy for further north. Head up the Gold Coast Hwy through the meandering resort towns and plant yourself in the eternal party that is **Surfers Paradise** (p141). Let loose your inhibitions (and your stomach) at the **Gold Coast Theme Parks** (p148).

When you've thoroughly exhausted yourself, hit the Pacific Hwy and head north to **Brisbane** (p76). Take in the sights before continuing your trek north. On the way, veer onto Glass House Mountains Rd and snake your way through the **Glass House Mountains** (p182). Soak up the languid Sunshine Coast with its wide beaches at **Maroochydoore** (p186) or **Coolum** (p190). Another half-hour north and you can slip into **Noosa's** (p192) classy milieu and take in the sublime beaches and first-class cuisine.

Then journey north to **Hervey Bay** (p219). If you're here in season, go whale-watching, then head to enigmatic **Fraser Island** (p207) and bask in its endless beach, ethereal lakes and dense rainforest.

You can cover this 390km road trip in two weeks, but a month or more is best. Three days on Fraser Island, four days in Noosa; then you'll need a few days to recover from Gold Coast's fun with a good stretch on the Sunshine Coast.



RAINFORESTS, ISLANDS & REEF

Two Weeks/Mackay to Whitsunday Islands & Cairns

Begin your rainforest and reef adventure in **Mackay** (p262), where you can mill about the Art Deco downtown. Then head west on the Peak Downs Hwy and Mackay-Eungella Rd to course through the lush **Pioneer Valley** (p270). An hour's drive will place you in mountainous and magnificent **Eungella National Park** (p271), where you can go platypus-spotting or paddle in the swimming pools beneath the tumbling Araluen Falls at **Finch Hatton Gorge** (p272).

Head back east to the Bruce Hwy and then trek north for two hours to sizzling **Airlie Beach** (p279). Immerse yourself in the heady haze before choosing which way to see the **Whitsunday Islands** (p274). Spend a couple of days drifting around verdant islands, snorkelling in azure waters and sunbaking on heavenly Whitehaven Beach.

Pack yourself up and continue the northern adventure along the Bruce Hwy, journeying for around three hours before hitting **Townsville** (p298). Mingle with the locals, scale Castle Hill and head out to **Magnetic Island** (p308) for a two-day retreat.

From Townsville, continue north on the Bruce Hwy for two or three hours and detour east from Tully to **Mission Beach** (p326). Chill out in the isolated settlements and revel in the tropical surrounds. Another two hours north takes you to **Cairns** (p336) with its global-village ambience, multicultural cuisine and access to the **Great Barrier Reef** (p109). Snorkel, dive, sail or fly over the biggest reef system in the world, and marvel at its colours and the myriad marine life.

With two weeks you can cover the highlights of this 880km journey, but why not indulge in a three- to five-week experience, with a long Whitsundays sail, a couple of days on the Reef and a full exploration of Townsville, Mackay, Magnetic Island and Mission Beach?

ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

SAVANNAH WAY

One to Two Weeks/Innot Springs to Mt Isa

This route crosses a remote part of northern Queensland to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Apart from a couple of detours, it's a sealed road, accessible to all vehicles.

After you leave the Atherton Tableland on the Kennedy Hwy, first stop is a therapeutic soak in the thermal waters of **Innot Hot Springs** (p368). About 90km on is the turn-off to the fascinating **Undara Lava Tubes** (p418), where you can walk through ancient volcanic formations. Continue west through the old mining towns of **Mt Surprise** (p418), **Georgetown** (p419) and **Croydon** (p419), but don't miss the detour to dramatic **Cobbold Gorge** (p419). Back on the highway, **Normanton** (p420) is a good barra fishing town on the Normanton River, but continue another 70km to remote **Karumba** (p421) on the Gulf of Carpentaria for unparalleled angling and super sunsets. If you have a 2WD, from here you can head south on the sealed Matilda Hwy to Cloncurry and then west to Mt Isa. Otherwise, hit the dirt on the Savannah Way west to **Burketown** (p422) for the morning glory, then make your way southwest to **Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park** (p423) where you can canoe in the stunning gorge, camp and explore fossil sites. Continue south on 4WD tracks to the Barkly Hwy and southeast to civilisation at **Mt Isa** (p430), the outback's biggest town.

The Savannah Way is an epic journey from Cairns to Broome; this 1300km section takes you through some of Queensland's best remote outback and Gulf regions. Allow at least a week for the ancient volcanic sites, historic mining towns, awesome fishing country and remote roadhouses.



THE NORTHERN TREK

Two Weeks/Cooktown to Cape York

To cover the magnificent, pristine ground from Cooktown to Cape York you'll need a 4WD to get you off the beaten track, and then back on it again.

Begin your northern adventure in **Cooktown** (p396), where you can peek into the town's history and culture at Nature's Powerhouse and the James Cook Historical Museum. Then head northwest on McIver Rd into Queensland's second-largest national park: isolated, wild **Lakefield National Park** (p423). Camp a while and explore the diverse environments and wildlife – the barra-mundi fishing and croc-spotting here are unparalleled.

From the north end of the park, head west to hook up with the Peninsula Development Rd. A drive of 100km north will put you in **Coen** (p409), the Cape's 'capital' and gateway to the Rokeby section of **Mungkan Kandju National Park** (p409). Push on for another 100km or so and turn east onto Archer River Rd to delve into **Iron Range National Park** (p410), Australia's largest conservation area of lowland tropical forest, with spectacular bird life and flora.

From here you can backtrack to the Peninsula Development Rd and head north for around 120km to enjoy some creature comforts in the mining town of **Weipa** (p411), on the Cape's western coast. But to reach the top of the Cape you need to drive the extent of Telegraph Rd (about 200km), which skirts Jardine River National Park. Here you can swim in the gorgeous natural pools at Twin Falls. Once you cross the **Jardine River** (p412) you're only 70km or so from a smattering of communities and the tip of Oz.



Take at least two weeks to cover the ground of this rugged 900km trek. Your efforts will be rewarded with scenery and landscapes few travellers witness. If getting away from it all is your idea of paradise, go nuts and take anywhere from three to five weeks.

TAILORED TRIPS

QUEENSLAND FOR KIDS

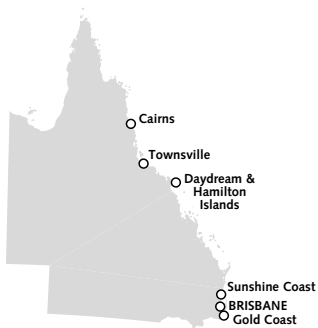
Queensland is a playground for kids of all ages, offering a host of treats to keep inquisitive minds and inexhaustible stamens entertained. The **Gold Coast theme parks** (p148) provide days of fun with immense water slides, Hollywood heroes and heart-stopping rides. In Brisbane the bends and turns of **Streets Beach** (p80) take on the form of an outdoor beach, surrounded by parkland and playgrounds. Barbecues and picnic spots make it an all-day affair. Nearby, the **Sciencentre** (p79) inside the Queensland Museum keeps curious young minds in a suspended state of fascination with interactive displays that make physics and chemistry downright fun.

Get the kids in touch with nature at **Australia Zoo** (p182) on the Sunshine

Coast, where crocodile shows and koala cuddles will have them oohing and ahing for more. In Townsville they can spot Nemo and touch sea cucumbers and starfish at the giant **Reef HQ** (p301) aquarium. In Cairns, kids love a good splash in the saltwater **lagoon** (p339).

Sea kayaking (p144) in the gentle waters of the Gold Coast Broadwater is good fun for water babies, while bush babies will love **horse rides** (p144) through the Gold Coast hinterland.

Do some island-hopping and head to tropical **Daydream** (p288) or **Hamilton Islands** (p289) in the Whitsundays, where the kiddies clubs cater to energetic youngsters with all sorts of outdoor and indoor activities.



BUSHWALKING BLISS

With a bevy of national parks and bushland, Queensland is ideal for hikers who like to go bush. Down on the Gold Coast, delve into the subtropical rainforests and deep valleys of **Lamington National Park** (p158) or explore the rugged and untouched wilderness of **Mt Barney National Park** (p159). Further west, **Girraween National Park** (p173) has 17km of walking tracks and teems with wildlife. Around Brisbane you can escape the urban spread in **D'Aguiar Range National Park** (p82) or **Mt Coot-tha Reserve** (p81).

Heading north along the coast, you can trek for a few hours or a couple of days on the **Fraser Island Great Walk** (p210) or wander through coastal rainforest in **Conway National Park** (p286). Two spectacular walks provide panoramic views on **Brampton Island** (p272), and just off the coast of Townsville, **Magnetic Island** (p308) is like one big bushwalk, with myriad tracks running through its interior. It's nearby **Hinchinbrook Island** (p323), however, that lures avid walkers with the mighty Thorsborne Trail. On this walk you'll traverse unspoilt wilderness, granite mountains and deserted beaches.

North of Cairns is the exquisite Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, where you can take guided walks into the magnificent, lush **Daintree Rainforest** (p384).



On the Road



ALAN MURPHY Coordinating Author

Mt Coot-tha (p81) is one of Brisbane's wilderness gems. Washing away urban grit is as easy as a short drive from the CBD, and on a clear day the lookout here has sweeping, panoramic views of the city, highlighting its thick green tangles of growth and winding river. Stradbroke (p129) and Moreton Islands (p133) are even visible way out in the bay.



JUSTIN FLYNN The clouds were coloured like asphalt and the wind and tropical rain strong enough to rip two big branches off the tree next to my room in Mission Beach (p326). 'Just drizzle' the lodge owner said to me as she busily went about removing the branches. I'd hate to see a downpour!



PAUL HARDING Cassowaries, crocs, koalas, stingers... lots of yellow diamond signs warn you of things to look out for in Far North Queensland (p373). At the entry to Cow Bay (p389) on the beautiful rainforest road to Cape Tribulation (p390), this sign warns of cassowaries crossing. It wasn't long after that I spotted a real one, fortunately not crossing the road.



OLIVIA POZZAN Noosa's (p192) deeply ingrained surfing culture lured me onto a board and into the surf. There were no hang-tens or smooth moves, but in the warm sunshine and natural beauty of Little Cove, I found my inner surfer-chick.

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