



THE HIDDEN SECRETS HANDBOOK

Tropical North Queensland
Adventurous by nature

WELCOME

TO YOUR GUIDE TO TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND EXPERIENCES.

With two World Heritage areas side by side, the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree rainforest, Tropical North Queensland truly is Adventurous by nature.

More than 600 tours depart daily, matching superior natural encounters with spectacular tropical landscapes.

Dive the depths of the Great Barrier Reef, soar above the world's oldest rainforest, discover the accessible Outback, experience Indigenous culture and embrace the tropical lifestyle.

Test your nerve rafting a rainforest river, explore the flavours of the tropics, lose yourself in an island daydream and follow the footsteps of explorers in the wilderness.





Boutique self-contained apartments, family-friendly resorts, opulent private homes, mid-range motels, quaint B&Bs, luxurious five star resorts and fun backpacker hostels provide the base for your tropical adventure.

The Hidden Secrets Handbook takes you to the heart of what makes Tropical North Queensland so special.

It invites you to engage all of your senses with exhilarating experiences and peaceful escapes where you can discover the adventurer within.

For more information and a great range of accommodation options visit tropicalholidays.com.au

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Cairns & Great Barrier Reef

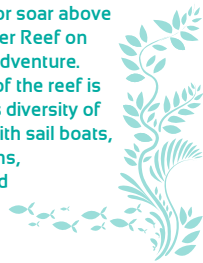


Cairns, where your adventure begins

3. TRY A NEW WAY TO SEE THE REEF

www.cairngreatbarrierreef.org.au

Zoom underwater on a motorised scooter, keep your hair dry on a helmet dive or soar above the Great Barrier Reef on a parasailing adventure. The enormity of the reef is matched by its diversity of experiences with sail boats, fast catamarans, helicopters and seaplanes ready to take you there.



4. CHECK OUT THE ACTION AT THE MARINA

Wander Sailfish Quay admiring super yachts and checking out the game fishing fleet in the Cairns Marlin Marina before enjoying a cocktail on the waterfront. Watch the Great Barrier Reef boats return around 5pm as the sun slowly sinks over the mountains ending another beautiful day in the tropics.

1. TAKE AN ICONIC TOUR OF THE RAINFOREST

www.ksr.com.au; www.skyrail.com.au

Marvel at the engineering genius of the Kuranda Scenic Rail line as you wind through the spectacular Barron Gorge in a 120-year-old rail carriage. Shop in Kuranda for local handicrafts at the markets or follow an arts trail before descending above the rainforest canopy on Skyrail Rainforest Cableway.

2. REFRESH WITH THE LOCALS

www.wettropics.gov.au

Take a tip from the locals for a cool break and head to Crystal Cascades located 30 minutes from Cairns with a picnic for a refreshing dip. Fed by a series of pristine waterfalls, the secluded freshwater swimming hole is hidden in the rainforest among huge granite boulders.



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5. CAIRNS CULTURE ALIVE AT MARKETS

www.rustysmarkets.com.au

Immerse yourself in the vibrant culture of Cairns at Rusty's Markets in the heart of the city. There's fresh local produce, artisan breads, organic meat, ocean-fresh seafood, locally produced cheeses and charcuterie plus an eclectic mix of handicrafts. Stop for a coffee or a samosa and enjoy the entertainment.



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Cairns & Great Barrier Reef

6. PARTY AFTER DARK

www.blueskybrewery.com.au

Listen for the accents as you hit the night scene in Cairns – it's where people from all over the world meet! They're in funky bars, waterfront restaurants, diving into foam or pool parties, relaxing at the brewery, club hopping, enjoying live music and salsa dancing the night away.

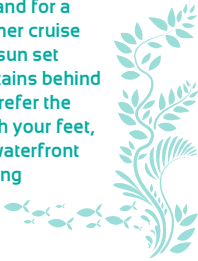
7. GET ON YOUR BIKE AND SIGHTSEE

www.cairnesplanade.com

Burn kilometres and kilojoules while biking and sightseeing the network of cycle paths through Cairns city and its inner suburbs. End the self-propelled tour with a rewarding swim in the Esplanade Lagoon.

8. WATCH EVENING DESCEND ON THE WATER

Settle back on the deck with a drink in your hand for a calm water dinner cruise and watch the sun set over the mountains behind Cairns. If you prefer the ground beneath your feet, try one of the waterfront restaurants along the Cairns Marlin Marina boardwalk.



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9. BE ENTERTAINED AT A UNIQUE VENUE

www.tanksartscentre.com

Tucked within the rainforest near the Flecker Botanic Gardens are three World War 2 fuel storage tanks which have been transformed into the Tanks Arts Centre. Check out the calendar of diverse events at this amazing venue which features top international and national acts, music, art and regular markets.

10. ISLAND HOP ACROSS THE REEF

www.cairnsgreatbarrierreef.org.au

You can island hop for days on end exploring the sand cays and larger islands only a short boat ride from Cairns. Relax at a resort on Green or Fitzroy Island, camp at the Frankland Islands, spend the day on a sandy cay or splurge and hire Double Island for just you and your friends.



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Port Douglas & Daintree



Port Douglas, located 1 hour north of Cairns

11. PEDAL FOR MILES

www.pdbikeworks.com.au

Hire a bicycle and ride the length of Four Mile Beach to watch the kite surfing action. From there visit the historic cemetery, then pedal along the bike path into town to treat the kids to an ice cream before heading to the marina to watch the reef boats return.

12. RELAX IN A TREEHOUSE

www.silkyoakslodge.com.au

Discover how peaceful the rainforest can be in your own treehouse. Eco resorts in the heart of the Daintree rainforest feature private timber treehouses and a hammock on the verandah perfect for two.



13. SET SAIL WITH THE LOCALS

www.portdouglasyachtclub.com.au

The best things in life can be free, especially if you enjoy sailing! Every Wednesday afternoon the Port Douglas Yacht Club invites visitors aboard to sail at no cost with members. Kick back at the club afterwards and enjoy its superb waterfront location.

14. FLY THROUGH THE CANOPY

www.junglesurfing.com.au

Is it a bird? Is it a bat? No, it's a new rainforest species – the jungle surfer. See the rainforest without your feet touching the ground, zooming through the canopy on a flying fox zipline and stopping at five platforms for a bird's-eye view of the Coral Sea.

15. SAMPLE SEAFOOD STRAIGHT FROM THE TRAWLER

www.tpdd.com.au

The seafood doesn't get fresher than straight off the trawler. Each month on the full moon, signs go up around Port Douglas announcing the Santiago will be arriving at the marina with its fresh catch of prawns, scallops, cuttlefish and assorted seafood to sell to the public.

16. VISIT A LIVING MUSEUM

www.downundertours.com

Enter the earth's oldest surviving rainforest where primitive species which existed 150 million years ago still flourish. Take a self-guided tour along a boardwalk, join a guide to discover the secrets of the ancient Daintree rainforest or go spotlighting at night when the rainforest comes to life with animals.



17. UNDERSTAND THE RAINFOREST

www.daintree-rec.com.au

Get all the facts on the Daintree rainforest at the Daintree Discovery Centre, a world-class interpretive centre allowing easy access to the rainforest wilderness via boardwalks, a 23m-high canopy tower, aerial walkway and comprehensive display centre.

18. WALK A FORMER ABORIGINAL TRAIL

www.wettropics.gov.au

Once an Aboriginal trail and later a crucial link between Port Douglas and the hinterland for settlers and miners, the Bump Track is now a popular trail for walking, mountain biking and horse riding. The steep track passes through a range of forests from rainforest to dry eucalypt scrub.

19. TAKE TIME OUT FOR TRIVIA

Ph: (07) 4099 5360

Fancy a bit of trivia to keep the mind active? Catch up with the locals at the Central Hotel at 7.30pm on Wednesdays to test your general knowledge. It's a social night out and a great way to get some insider tips on what to do and see around Port Douglas.

20. SAIL TO A CORAL CAY

www.sailawayportdouglas.com

Picture-perfect Low Isles is the closest Great Barrier Reef destination to Port Douglas where you can snorkel and swim in the calm waters of the coral cay. Relax on the sandy beach under a thatched umbrella or join a snorkelling tour with a marine biologist.

21. SPOT A CELEBRITY

Who's that behind the dark glasses? Some of the big names of the celebrity and political worlds have rubbed shoulders with the Port Douglas locals. Favourite haunts include the live music sessions at the Courthouse Hotel, dining at Salsa Bar and Grill, the Sunday Markets and Four Mile Beach.



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Palm Cove



Palm Cove, located 20 minutes north of Cairns

22. GREAT VIEWS GO WITH GREAT FOOD

With such a stunning waterfront location, it is no wonder the Palm Cove esplanade is lined with great restaurants. Seafood, Italian, Asian, modern Australian... the choices are varied. Or go for the ultimate romantic location, a table for two under the coconut palms right on the beach.

23. KAYAK WITH THE SUNRISE

www.palmcovewatersports.com

Dawn breaks as you push off from the beach on a sunrise kayaking tour to Double Island. Being so close to the water gives you a good chance of seeing fish, a stingray or maybe a turtle for an exhilarating start to the day before breakfast on the island.



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24. CAMP AT THE BEACH

www.ellisbeach.com

Pitch your tent at the most scenic camp ground in Tropical North Queensland, right on the edge of Ellis Beach overlooking Double Island and the Coral Sea. With no roads to cross, you can open your tent each morning to enjoy the ultimate view from your swag.

25. ROMANCE ABOUNDS AT THE BEACH

www.wedinparadise.com.au

Recipes for romance are plentiful at Palm Cove where the gentle curve of its sandy beach and backdrop of rainforest-clad mountains set the scene for proposals, weddings and honeymoons. A choice of wedding chapels, luxurious beachside resorts, award-winning restaurants and day spas provide the ingredients for the ultimate romantic holiday.

26. STAY AND PLAY AT A TOP GOLF COURSE

www.paradisepalms.com.au

Tea off on one of Australia's Top 100 golf courses where there are facilities for the whole family to enjoy. Paradise Palms Resort & Country Club has a restaurant and bar overlooking a large adventure playground and mini-golf course so parents can relax while the kids play.

27. LAND A FISH AT THE JETTY

A hand line is all you need to catch fish off the Palm Cove jetty. Trevally and queen fish are common catches while the occasional barra has been landed. A popular local fishing spot, the jetty is the perfect place to watch the sun rise over the Coral Sea.

28. INDULGE IN AN INDIGENOUS SPA TREATMENT

www.reefhouse.com.au

Enter your personal dreamtime with an Aboriginal-inspired spa treatment at one of the many day spas at Palm Cove. Indigenous hot stone massage and relaxing rain therapy are among the treatments to restore mind, body and soul.

29. HAND FEED THE ANIMALS

www.cairnstropicalzoo.com.au

Feed an adorable ring-tailed lemur, get up close with a wombat or cuddle a koala for a hands-on zoo experience. The more adventurous can fly an owl, meet a superb wedge-tailed eagle or hand feed an iguana his favourite flowers.

30. ENJOY THE VIEW DAY AND NIGHT

www.elandraresorts.com

Soak up the scenery of Mission Beach and its offshore islands from your waterfront resort. Step straight onto the beach from Castaways Resort & Spa or enjoy a commanding view from The Elandra Resort. Perched high in the rainforest, Elandra's magnificent pool seems to disappear into the Coral Sea.



31. HELP THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Ph: 07 4032 0844

Discover community spirit assisting with Cyclone Yasi Environmental restoration programs. Tasks may be cutting up fruit for the cassowary feeding stations or carrying out works in the council nursery to ensure a supply of plants for reforestation.

32. DIVE A SHIPWRECK

www.calypsodive.com

Giant groupers, lion fish and turtles are among the marine life at the Lady Bowen wreck off Dunk Island. The four-masted schooner came to grief on Kennedy Shoal in 1894 and is now coral reef perfect for the experienced diver to explore.

33. JUMP FOR AN ADRENALIN RUSH

www.jumpthebeach.com.au

At 14,000 feet take the leap and spiral down for an adrenalin pumping 60-second, 200km/h free fall. The parachute springs to life and you slow to enjoy the view of rainforest-fringed beaches and a cluster of islands as you skydive on to the long stretch of sand at Mission Beach.

34. SPY A CASSOWARY

Look out for the endangered cassowary, Australia's largest flightless bird which is commonly seen around the rainforest in Mission Beach. The males are the SNAGS of the bird world, incubating the eggs and caring for the young long after the female has gone in search of a new partner.



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35. CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THE RAINFOREST

www.epa.qld.gov.au/mamu

Ascend a 350m elevated walkway for an exhilarating view of the World Heritage landscape high in the rainforest canopy. The Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway consists of 1200m of walking tracks and an observation tower.

36. PICNIC ON A DESERTED ISLAND

www.castaways.com.au

You can keep your feet dry on the Castaways Sealegs Island Picnic. The amphibious marine craft caters for up to seven people, picking you up from the beach to whisk you and a gourmet picnic to a secluded island.

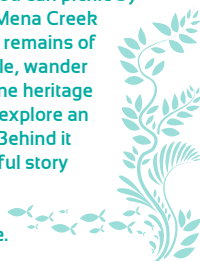


Mission Beach, located 1.5 hours south of Cairns

37. UNCOVER A ROMANTIC TALE

www.paronellapark.com.au

Discover the romance of Paronella Park where you can picnic by picturesque Mena Creek Falls, see the remains of a mossy castle, wander through serene heritage gardens and explore an eerie tunnel. Behind it all is a beautiful story about Jose Paronella's labour of love.



38. CONQUER THE MISTY MOUNTAINS

www.mistymountains.com.au

Walk for days taking in magnificent vistas, spectacular rainforest, waterfalls and mountain streams on more than 130km of walking trails in the Misty Mountains, Australia's first network of long distance walking trails in a high altitude rainforest environment.

Cape York & Gulf Savannah



Cape York & Gulf Savannah, located 4 hours and beyond from Cairns

39. STAR GAZE IN THE OUTBACK

www.coel.com.au

The stars are much brighter at Chillagoe where the clear, dark sky is perfect for star gazing. Stay at the Chillagoe Observatory & Eco Lodge for a guided tour of the heavens at the fully equipped dome and a close-up look at planets, nebulae and star clusters through large telescopes.

40. DISCOVER ABORIGINAL HISTORY

www.guorbitours.com

Explore a dramatic landscape of caves rich with Aboriginal paintings near Cooktown. Elder Willie Gordon takes you to the Rainbow Serpent Cave and an ancestral birth site, telling the stories of his people and their survival techniques.

41. SLOW DOWN FOR ISLAND TIME

www.torresstraitheritage.com

Step back to a quieter time in the Torres Strait where schedules are forgotten and lazy days can be spent fishing or exploring the islands with the hospitable Torres Strait Islanders. See World War 2 memorabilia, the unique art and artifacts of the Torres Strait and discover its pearling history.



43. DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF CAPTAIN COOK

www.cooktownandcapeyork.com

See the anchor from Captain James Cook's vessel, the Endeavour, which has been recovered from the reef where he ran aground near Cooktown. Housed in the James Cook Museum at historic Cooktown, it is part of an enormous collection tracing Cook and the Endeavour's journeys.

44. IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE RAINFOREST

www.bloomfieldlodge.com.au

Make the World Heritage listed Daintree rainforest your home for a few days and go on safari exploring four-wheel drive tracks, waterholes and the magnificent Bloomfield Falls. Retire at night to a secluded eco-lodge for well-earned comfort and fabulous food.



45. ADMIRE AN OCEAN SUNSET

www.karumba.qld.au

Karumba skies are a photographer's dream with the deep orange glow of the sun setting over the ocean in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Between September and November the morning sky puts on a show when the Morning Glory, a tubular cloud formation, rolls out from the Gulf.

46. FLOAT THROUGH A GORGE

www.cobboldgorge.com.au

Discover a hidden Outback oasis at Cobbold Gorge where dramatic 30m-high sandstone cliffs overhang its cool waters. Join a boat tour through the spectacular gorge which narrows to 2m in places and keep a lookout for the abundant wildlife and birds.

47. STAY AT A CATTLE STATION

www.alroomie.com.au

Chopper in to Alkoomie Station, or tackle the 500m steep escarpment in a four-wheel drive, for a breathtaking view across the Endeavour River Valley out to the Great Barrier Reef. Experience a working cattle station where you can help with the muster.

48. SPY RARE WILDLIFE

www.birdingtropicalaustralia.com.au

Hide out at the Hasties Swamp two-storey bird hide at dusk or dawn to see water birds. More than 220 different bird species have been recorded at the large seasonal wetland. Perterson Creek at Yungaburra is the place to see the elusive platypus and the rare Lumholtz tree kangaroo.

49. FLOAT ABOVE THE SCENERY

www.hotair.com.au

Gently rise skyward in a hot air balloon as the sun's first rays reveal the tapestry of farmlands across the Atherton Tablelands. Glide across the ever changing landscape and then head back to the coast in time for breakfast on the beach at Palm Cove.

50. COOL ACTIVITIES TO TRY

www.athertontablelands.com.au

Dive into an extinct volcanic crater lake surrounded by lush tropical rainforest. With walking trails, a pontoon and electric barbecues on the lake front, Lake Eacham guarantees a full day of activities. On the drive back to the coast, stop at Emerald Creek Ice-Creamery and choose from 21 luscious flavours.

51. PICK YOUR OWN STRAWBERRIES

www.tasteparadise.com.au

Taste fresh strawberries as you pick them at Shaylee Strawberry Farm between Atherton Tablelands and Yungaburra. If it's not picking season you can buy gelato, sorbet, jams and honey fresh from the farm.



The Atherton Tablelands, located 1 hour inland from Cairns

52. DISCOVER THE TOP PUB

www.ravenshoevisitorcentre.com.au

Sleep at the top of Queensland. Situated at 914.4m, the Hotel Tully Falls in Ravenshoe declares itself the highest in Ravenshoe, which at 920m above sea level is officially Queensland's highest town. Or warm yourself by the fire at the Royal Hotel in historic Herberton which sits at 913m.

53. TEMPT YOUR SWEET TOOTH

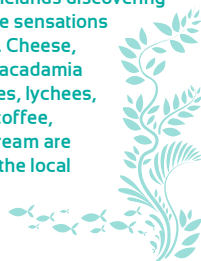
www.kuranda.org

Satisfy sugar cravings at Kuranda where sweets are a speciality. Watch candy being made at the Kuranda Candy Kitchen, try tropical fruit ice cream, sample 20 flavours of honey at the Honey House, indulge in fudge at SugarWorks, then burn it off walking through the rainforest to the Barron Falls.

54. TEMPT YOUR TASTEBUDS

www.tasteparadise.com.au

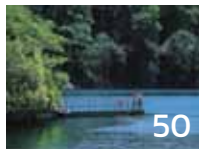
Take a gourmet drive through the Atherton Tablelands discovering different taste sensations at every stop. Cheese, chocolate, macadamia nuts, mangoes, lychees, pineapples, coffee, tea and ice cream are just some of the local products to be sampled.



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Encounter nature



55. DRIFT SNORKEL IN A RIVER

www.backcountryblissadventures.com.au

Discover the magic of the rainforest underwater as you drift snorkel through the upper reaches of the Mossman River. The current gently carries you downstream through waters filtered by the rainforest giants of the Daintree in this eco-immersion adventure.

56. BATTLE A MIGHTY BARRA

www.fishingcooktown.com

Flick a lure into the Annan River near Cooktown on Cape York Peninsula until it's hit by the first barramundi of the season. Battle to pull in a feisty fish as long as your arm and worthy of great fishing yarns for years to come.



57. SWIM WITH WHALES

www.poseidon-cruises.com.au

A friendly flipper, a curious eye – it's a dwarf minke whale approaching you in the water. One of nature's most awesome experiences, swimming with whales at a ribbon reef near Port Douglas occurs each year between May and August during their annual migration through the Great Barrier Reef.

58. TAKE A DIP AT CAPE TRIB

www.masonstours.com.au

Have a refreshing dip with lunch at Cape Tribulation. Mason's Café is popular with visitors and locals alike who take advantage of the safe swimming in a water hole just 60m from the store.

59. SWIM THROUGH RAINBOWS OF FISH

www.reefmagiccruises.com

Meet the Great Barrier Reef's friendliest fish, Wally the Maori wrasse. He welcomes visitors at every reef pontoon into his world of coral gardens and remarkable marine creatures. Get up close to more than 1500 species of colourful fish while diving or snorkelling the largest, most spectacular reef system on earth.



60. GO CROSS COUNTRY IN THE DAINTREE

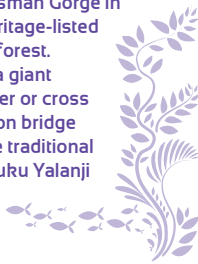
Ph: 0409 627 434

Uncover the secrets of the rainforest the fun way in an Argo eight-wheel ATV in the Daintree Valley. The cross-country ride in the open vehicle takes in sweeping vistas of the World Heritage rainforest, stopping for close-up wildlife encounters and unique treasures like an Aboriginal candlenut stone.

61. CHILL OUT IN THE RAINFOREST

www.tpdd.com.au/daintree

Your skin will tingle with the cold as you plunge into the swimming holes of Mossman Gorge in the World Heritage-listed Daintree rainforest. Warm up on a giant granite boulder or cross the suspension bridge to explore the traditional land of the Kuku Yalanji people on a rainforest loop trail.



62. DISCOVER A CROCODILE

www.crocodileadventures.com.au

Cruise a lagoon to spy crocodiles in their natural habitat, then have your camera ready as a big saltwater crocodile leaps from the water to grab its lunch. Touch a baby crocodile at a working crocodile farm where you learn about the life cycle of the prehistoric beasts.

63. JOIN THE BUTTERFLIES

www.australianbutterflies.com

Here's the insider's tip. Wear white if you want to be a landing pad for the amazing array of butterflies inside Kuranda's sanctuary. Join a kaleidoscope of colour as thousands of the fluttering insects include you in their busy day.



64. KAYAK THROUGH THE RAINFOREST

www.babindakayakhire.com.au

Spotting a turtle may be a little passé for the kids, but they'll love following one downstream as they paddle a kayak to a sandy rainforest beach for a picnic or gather speed over easy rapids. Pretty Babinda Creek is a locals' favourite at the foot of Queensland's highest mountain.

65. KICK UP THE SAND ON HORSEBACK

www.ridethebeach.com.au

Watch the sun sink over the mountains of the Wet Tropics rainforest from a new perspective – horse riding along Wonga Beach, a peaceful stretch of sand nudged by two World Heritage areas. Canter along the water's edge of the Great Barrier Reef and explore a trail in the Daintree rainforest.

66. DISCOVER BUSH TUCKER SECRETS

www.daintree-ecolodge.com.au/culture

Squashed up green ants may not sound appetising, but their fresh vitamin C flavour is quite good going down and helps with a cold. The incredible uses for bush tucker are revealed on an Aboriginal guided tour through the Daintree rainforest leaving you ready for a *Survivor*-style challenge.



Flirt with adventure



67. HOOK A MARLIN AT LIZARD ISLAND

www.lizardislandgfc.asn.au

Join the hunt for the holy grail of the fishing world – a grander – a black marlin weighing more than a tonne. They are most often tagged in the waters around Lizard Island and the Black Marlin Classic in October will see anglers from around the world competing to hook the big one.

69. TOUR WITH THE WIND IN YOUR HAIR

www.triketours.com.au

Discover the freedom of the open road on a trike, the comfortable and fun way to tour Port Douglas, or venture further afield on a personalised tour to keep the feel of the wind in your hair all day. With two of the eye-catching trikes, family and friends can join in the fun too.

68. STIR UP THE DIRT ON AN ATV

www.blazingsaddles.com.au

Hit the throttle and kick up the dirt for an exciting ride on an ATV as you follow a zig-zag trail through the rainforest near Kuranda. No experience is needed for these four-wheel adventures zooming after your guide.

70. DIVE TO NEW DEPTHS

www.mikeball.com

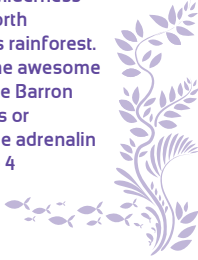
Experience plummeting Coral Sea wall dives, dive alongside giant potato cod, see shark action, get up close to minke whales or time a live-aboard dive trip with the annual coral spawn in November. The outer ribbon reefs of the Great Barrier Reef offer unparalleled adventures for certified divers.



71. RAFT THE RAPIDS

www.ragingthunder.com.au

Thrills and spills are the order of the day white water rafting through the wilderness of Tropical North Queensland's rainforest. Speed past the awesome scenery on the Barron River in Cairns or experience the adrenalin rush of Grade 4 rapids on the mighty Tully River.



72. PADDLE FOR A DUAL WORLD HERITAGE EXPERIENCE

www.capetribpaddletrek.com.au

Kayak around the beautiful Cape Tribulation headland to see where the two World Heritage areas of the Daintree rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef meet. Dugongs, dolphins and even a cassowary may be seen as you paddle alongside the beach.

73. TAKE A DOWNHILL TUMBLE

www.daintreestation.com

Turn your world upside down in a zorb ball. Jump inside a huge transparent ball, add a few buckets of water and it's all downhill from there. Up to three riders at a time can take the challenge reaching speeds of up to 30km/h on the custom-designed track at Daintree Station.



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74. TEST YOUR PEDAL POWER

www.cairnsmountainbiketours.com

Get your pulse racing on an uphill pedal and be ready for the ride of your life as you hang onto the brakes for a downhill race. Mountain biking offers pedal challenges galore with a surprise around every bend in the diverse rainforest tracks around Cairns.

75. DEFY GRAVITY WITH A BUNGY JUMP

www.cairns.ajhackett.com

Laugh in the face of gravity as you plunge 50m from Australia's only bungee tower. With 16 different jump styles you can test your personal limits all day or join your friends on the minjin to swing together through the rainforest.

77. HIT THE WATER WITH A BOARD

www.windswell.com.au

With its long, wide beach and shallow water, Four Mile Beach at Port Douglas is the place to try the latest stand-up paddle boarding craze. Or take the adrenalin up a couple of notches with kite surfing, the fastest way to burn up a sunny day.

76. JOURNEY OFF-ROAD TO BLOOMFIELD

www.thebloomfieldtrack.com

Bump into adventure on an off-road journey on the famous Bloomfield Track winding through the World Heritage-listed Daintree rainforest, crossing picturesque creeks and fast-flowing rivers to the majestic Bloomfield Falls. Join an Aboriginal guide for a local perspective on the Bloomfield area.

Sample tropical lifestyle



78. EAT AND SIGHTSEE ALL DAY

www.tasteparadise.com.au

Take a sensory tour of the Atherton Tablelands with a self-drive Taste of the Tropics Food Trail. Discover local cheeses, chocolate, fruit, vegetables, markets, restaurants, seafood, coffee, ice cream, wines, honey and candy on two different drives through the scenic food bowl of Tropical North Queensland.

79. DINE IN A MAGICAL RAINFOREST

www.flamesoftheforest.com.au

The sounds of a flautist drift down from the rainforest, flaming torches light the way and suddenly you are at a beautiful outdoor dining room draped in black velvet and silk with crystal bud-light chandeliers. Experience the romance of elegant tropical dining in the rainforest, just 10 minutes from Port Douglas.



80. HOP IN FOR A CANE TOAD RACE

Forget the ponies, the cane toad races at the Iron Bar in Port Douglas draw the fun crowds. Hop in for a ticket to join the race, but beware if your number draws a cane toad you have to give it a kiss to wish it luck!

81. ENJOY A CUPPA ON A TEA PLANTATION

www.neradatea.com.au

Devonshire teas are best enjoyed in the heart of a tea plantation where you know the tea is at its freshest. Discover how tea is grown and processed at Nerada Visitor's Centre, Australia's largest tea plantation on the Atherton Tablelands near Malanda.

82. CATCH AND COOK BARRA ABOARD A BOAT

Ph: 07 4099 6277

Take the family out to catch their own dinner and then cook it on board a pontoon boat. The boats can be hired with the addition of a barbecue so you can spend the day exploring Dickson's Inlet at Port Douglas and eating barra as soon as they're caught!

83. LIVE LIKE A CELEBRITY

www.executiveretreats.com.au

Include your friends in a luxurious getaway at an exclusive retreat favoured by celebrities wanting to holiday away from the public eye. Executive Retreats has decadent homes on the beach and in the rainforest near Port Douglas where you can live like a movie star.

84. PAINT YOUR OWN DIDGERIDOO

www.janbalgallery.com.au

Immerse yourself in Aboriginal art and culture with hands-on painting and story-telling by an Aboriginal artist at Janbal Gallery in Mossman. The fully Aboriginal owned and operated gallery conducts workshops where you can paint your own boomerang, didgeridoo or canvas.

85. DRINK COFFEE WHERE IT'S GROWN

www.skybury.com.au

Go straight to the source and experience coffee where it comes from at Skybury, near Mareeba on the Atherton Tablelands. See the coffee production process from planting to tasting and enjoy a cuppa or a gourmet meal at the restaurant.



86. COOL OFF WITH A TROPICAL TREAT

Ph: 07 4098 3446

Tempt your tastebuds with red dragonfruit ice cream or frozen sugar cane juice after a day's touring. Exotic tropical fruit ice creams are a speciality at Scomazzons Fruit & Vegetables north of Mossman where you can top up on fresh locally-grown fruit and vegetables straight from the family farm.

87. WATCH REAL STOCKMEN IN ACTION

www.australianmusterexperience.com

Thundering hooves and cracking whips whistle through the valley as wild brumbies and herds of cattle are mustered in for an action-packed show with real stockmen and women. The Australian Muster Experience near Port Douglas includes working dogs, quad bikes and a bull catcher.



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88. SAMPLE EXOTIC TROPICAL FRUITS

www.capetrib.com.au

Pop miracle fruit in your mouth and suddenly lemons taste sweet. Hankering for chocolate? Try black sapote. These are among the amazing flavours on offer at Cape Trib Exotic Fruit Farm which has received TripAdvisor's top traveller rating.

89. BARBECUE AT THE BEACH

Grab the barbie tongs and some fresh seafood and head to Four Mile Beach at Port Douglas for al fresco dining the Aussie way. The free public barbecues overlook the beach, definitely the best view around.

90. SHOP AND RELAX AT INTIMATE PALM COVE

www.tourismpalmcove.com

Discover ultimate tropical serenity at Palm Cove where everything in the intimate village is within a short walking distance. Wander the esplanade for retail therapy in the morning, stop for lunch at an award-winning restaurant then relax at a day spa in the afternoon before sundowners overlooking the beach.

91. UNCOVER LOCAL CRAFTS AT THE MARKETS

www.tpdd.com.au

Shop for a new tropical look with locally designed clothing and hand-made jewellery at the Sunday Markets in Port Douglas. Find the perfect present for a friend or taste fresh local produce transformed into juices, jams and chutneys at the iconic Cotter's markets on the waterfront.

92. HUNT MUD CRAB THE TRADITIONAL WAY

www.bamaway.com.au

There's more to hunting than a spear and a good aim. Kubirri Warra brothers Linc and Brandon Walker reveal how to track animals at Cooya Beach, north of Port Douglas, and the techniques of throwing a spear to get tucker from the different ecosystems of the beach, mangroves and coastal reef.

93. TRY WINE MADE WITH EXOTIC FRUIT

www.murderingpointwinery.com.au

There are no grapes at this award-winning winery, instead tropical fruits are used to produce an array of uniquely Australian wines at Silkwood's Murdering Point Winery. Lemon aspen and Davidson's plum are popular flavours at the boutique winery where you can experience winemaking and a working cane farm.

94. JOIN FREE WATERFRONT FITNESS CLASSES

www.cairnesesplanade.com/thingstodo

Get fit with a view when you join one of the free classes on the Cairns Esplanade. Shake it up with a zumba class, discover inner serenity with tai chi or take your body to new limits with yoga on the waterfront near the Esplanade lagoon.

Discover Islands & Beaches



96. CAMP ON AN ISLAND

www.daintreecrocodylus.com.au/tropicaleakayaks

Push off from the mainland in a kayak for an overnight camping adventure on beautiful Snapper Island off Cape Tribulation. With two days ashore you can explore the island's rainforest and snorkel over its surrounding reef.

97. FLY TO BREAKFAST ON THE REEF

www.gbrhelicopters.com.au

Imagine champagne and tropical fruit for two with only sand and sea around you. Make it real by indulging in the ultimate start to the day with a scenic helicopter or seaplane flight over the Great Barrier Reef for breakfast on a deserted sand cay or island.

98. SET SAIL FOR A SAND CAY

www.quicksilver-cruises.com

Settle back on a luxurious catamaran and let the wind power you across the Great Barrier Reef to an idyllic sand cay where you can snorkel over colourful coral gardens, dive to see rainbows of fish or bask in the sun on the sand.

99. SEIZE PRIVACY IN THE REMOTE NORTH

www.haggerstoneisland.com

Feel like Robinson Crusoe at an island resort in the remote, wild north. Haggerstone Island near the tip of Cape York features unique tree houses and beach huts offering the ultimate in privacy.

100. LEARN TO DIVE IN PARADISE

www.prodivecairns.com

Classrooms don't get more interesting than the Great Barrier Reef. Professional dive companies operate throughout Tropical North Queensland offering certified diving courses that start in a pool and end with lessons on the reef.

95. DISCOVER WILDERNESS AT ITS BEST

www.porthinchinbrook.com.au/hinchinbrook-island

Did you know stunning Hinchinbrook Island is Australia's largest national park? It is also the site of the Thorsborne Trail, one of the world's most renowned wilderness walks. Take a day trip or camp on Tropical North Queensland's most southern island.



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101. TRY FISHING TORRES STRAIT STYLE

www.tonysislandadventures.com.au

Join a traditional fisherman in the Torres Strait to fish for coral trout and mackerel as his seafaring ancestors have done for more than a thousand years. Learn more about island culture touring Thursday Island, one of 17 island communities in the Torres Strait.

102. TAKE A QUICK ISLAND TRIP

www.greenisland.com.au

Green Island is so close to Cairns you can see it in half a day with two full hours on this beautiful Great Barrier Reef sand cay. Snorkel through shallow waters to see fish and coral, do a glass bottom boat tour or explore the island.



103. THE SAVANNAH WAY

www.savannahway.com.au

From Cairns through the Atherton Tablelands and into the Gulf of Carpentaria, the Savannah Way has diverse tropical landscapes including rainforest, savannah plains, volcanic remnants and old mining towns. Bird watching, gem fossicking, fishing and exploring the world's longest lava tubes are highlights before reaching Karumba by the sea.

104. THE GREAT TROPICAL DRIVE

www.drivenorthqueensland.com.au

Trek Queensland's highest peak, raft mighty rainforest rivers, dive the Great Barrier Reef, share bush tucker with traditional owners or explore historic Cooktown – all on the Great Tropical Drive itineraries. Taking you north, west or south of Cairns, there are 10 different drives exploring Tropical North Queensland's diverse landscapes.



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105. MAREEBA TO CHILLAGOE

www.chillagoehub.com.au

Named the Wheelbarrow Way after the pioneers who wheeled their belongings this way in the 1800s, the trip from Mareeba to Chillagoe takes in the historic towns of Lappa Junction and Almaden. Explore limestone caves at Chillagoe, the remains of a copper smelter, open-cut marble mines and Aboriginal rock art.

106. PALM COVE TO PORT DOUGLAS

www.tpdd.com.au

Wind your way from Palm Cove to Port Douglas on a truly magnificent coastal drive with the mountains of the Wet Tropics rainforest on one side and the Great Barrier Reef on the other. Explore deserted beaches, watch hang gliders on their descent or cool off in the Coral Sea.

107. PORT DOUGLAS TO CAPE TRIBULATION

www.tpdd.com.au

Steep, rainforest-clad mountains part for cane farms on the drive north from Port Douglas. Cross the mighty Daintree River on the car ferry then meander through lush World Heritage rainforest watching for cassowaries and stopping for a view of the Great Barrier Reef before reaching Cape Tribulation.



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How to get there



WHETHER YOU'RE ARRIVING FROM INTERSTATE OR FLYING IN FROM OVERSEAS, GETTING TO TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND IS EASY, WITH THE MAJOR HUB OF CAIRNS SERVICED BY A DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL.

AIR TRAVEL IS THE MOST POPULAR WAY TO GET TO TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND, BUT CAR, COACH, AND RAIL SERVICES ALL PROVIDE COMFORTABLE TRANSPORTATION. THEY WILL ALSO GIVE YOU A TASTE OF THE RICH, CHANGING LANDSCAPE AS YOU ARRIVE.

Air

Most interstate travellers have the choice of flying to Cairns with Qantas, Virgin Australia or Jetstar with scheduled services from most Australian state capitals, as well as regional locations. Cairns also services international flights from Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

Cairns Airport is located 7 kilometres north of the central business district. Rental Cars can be located at the domestic terminal in the arrival lounge. Shuttle buses to Cairns and Port Douglas depart hourly. Taxis are also available 24 hours a day, and the fare to the city centre costs around \$16.

www.virginaustralia.com

www.qantas.com

www.jetstar.com

Car

If you're towing a caravan, driving a motorhome or just love to drive the open highway plan your trip on one of several themed routes including the Pacific Coast Touring Route (from Sydney to Cairns) and the Newell/Matilda Highway (from Melbourne to Cairns via outback and Gulf Savannah) or the Great Tropical Drive (Townsville to Cairns).

www.savannahway.com.au

www.drivenorthqueensland.com.au

Coach

Greyhound is one of the main carriers, though there's a host of smaller charter coach and tour operators based in most destinations.

www.greyhound.com.au

Rail

Queensland Rail offers a business class service between Brisbane and Cairns on the high speed Tilt Train, covering the 1681 kilometre journey in under 24 hours.

www.queenslandrail.com.au

Drive times & distances in Tropical North Queensland

Cairns to Palm Cove
20 mins, 25km

Cairns to Kuranda
30 mins, 38km

Cairns to Port Douglas
1 hour, 60km

Cairns to Daintree
1.5 hours, 80km

Cairns to Cooktown
4 hours, 340km

Cairns to Mission Beach
1.5 hours, 110km

Disclaimer - Tourism Queensland has compiled and produced this booklet in the interest of promoting tourism in Queensland. The material contained within has been researched, assembled and included with all due care. Details are accurate at the time of printing. Published August 2011.

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TORRES STRAIT

CORAL SEA

GULF OF CARPENTARIA

LEGEND

- Train Route
- Domestic & International Airport
- Great Tropical Drive
- Savannah Way



Events

For more events in Tropical North Queensland, visit tropicalholidays.com.au/events

MAY

PORT DOUGLAS CARNIVALE

www.carnivale.com.au

Pace yourself for 10 days of food, wine and fun at Port Douglas Carnivale. A food and wine festival, seafood extravaganza, chef's cook-off and longest lunch will tempt your tastebuds or join the kids for a beach fun day, watch sporting events, film festivals and the street parade.

THE GREAT WHEELBARROW RACE

www.tablelands.org

Follow in the pioneering footsteps of the men and women who made their way to the goldfields west of Cairns in the early 18th century with only a wheelbarrow to carry their possessions. The Great Wheelbarrow Race is a gruelling 149km charity race between Mareeba and Chillagoe.

JUNE

CAIRNS ADVENTURE FESTIVAL

www.challenge-cairns.com.au

Lycra-clad triathletes are part of the scenery when the week-long Cairns Adventure Festival gets underway. Its headline event, Challenge Cairns, draws top international athletes vying for the world's second richest iron distance race on a course hailed as the most picturesque on the world circuit.

JULY

CAIRNS UKULELE FESTIVAL

www.cairnsukulelefestival.net

Get strumming for the annual Cairns Ukulele Festival, where ukulele enthusiasts pop out of the woodwork to celebrate their love of the little instrument made famous by Tiny Tim.

AUGUST

CAIRNS INDIGENOUS ART FAIR

www.ciaf.com.au

Immerse yourself in Indigenous art at Australia's premier Indigenous art fair where Queensland's emerging and established Indigenous artists exhibit.

MAREEBA MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

www.mareebamulticulturalfestival.com

Diversity and harmony are celebrated at the Mareeba Multicultural Festival. The people of this region come from 64 different cultural backgrounds and share their food from around the world on this day of non-stop cultural entertainment.

OCTOBER

TASTE OF THE TABLELANDS

www.trc.qld.gov.au/whats-on/tastes-tablelands

Fine foods, wine, farm produce, cheese and coffee are all part of the culinary delights at Taste of the Tablelands. Make sure you visit the chefs' tent for insider tips on cooking local produce and take time to visit the Hou Wang Chinese Temple where it is held.

GO TROPPO ARTS FESTIVAL

www.go-tropo-arts-festival.com

Discover the artist within building a life-sized portrait in clay or myth making near a rainforest creek during the Go Troppo Arts Festival Port Douglas.

OPERA IN THE OUTBACK

www.undara.com.au

Spine-tingling voices and a magical bush backdrop combine for an enchanted evening with Opera in the Outback in October. The annual event sees guests don evening wear for an amazing Outback performance at Undara Experience, home of the world's longest lava tubes.

NOVEMBER

GREAT BARRIER REEF MARATHON FESTIVAL

www.greatbarrierreefmarathon.com.au

Set yourself a challenge to compete in the inaugural Great Barrier Reef Marathon Festival at Port Douglas. The half marathon is tagged as the Steve Moneghetti Invitational and will become the 2012 Solar Eclipse Adventure Marathon.

PORT DOUGLAS MARLIN CHALLENGE

www.portdouglasmarlinchallenge.com

Big black marlin and even bigger white boats are what the Port Douglas Marlin Challenge is all about. The big boys and their toys head from Port Douglas to see who can tag the first grander, a black marlin weighing more than a tonne.

SOLAR ECLIPSE 2012

www.eclipse2012.org.au

One of the world's most unique phenomena, the Solar Eclipse 2012, crosses between Port Douglas and Cairns on November 14.

how ironic that it's called a plane

The new colours certainly make our aircraft look special. But it's the heights of service and comfort you'll enjoy that make flying the new Virgin Australia anything but plain.

Flying to Cairns from across Australia, we'll get you to the tropical north in style. And with Blue Holidays, the holiday program of Virgin Australia, we'll make sure you have an unforgettable getaway with great deals on flights, accommodation and activities.

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