

East Coast Islands & Rainforest

Highlights

✂ Flexible Holidays

Choose your own adventure on the Gold Coast, where surf and sand meet rainforest hinterland. Hike, swim, refuel, repeat.

📍 Iconic Sites

How many people get to say they visited three World Heritage Sites on a single holiday? You can: K'gari (Fraser Island), the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics of Queensland.

📷 Time For You

It's easy to drift away in the Whitsundays. And you get to do just that, whether on a catamaran, with a snorkel strapped on or from the air.

♻ Sustainable Travel

MAKE TRAVEL MATTER EXPERIENCE Our '10 Pieces' program encourages guests to pick up 10 pieces of rubbish during their travels. Every little bit helps to protect this fragile part of the world.

🌿 Natural Wonders

Some of the world's oldest tropical rainforest envelops Cairns, this verdant tangle of ferns and palms a natural magnet for native wildlife.



As this holiday departs at 7.30am from Rydges Sydney Central, accommodation will need to be pre-booked for the previous night.

1 Sydney – Coffs Harbour

As much as you'll want to linger in Sydney, Coffs Harbour is calling. On the mid-North Coast of New South Wales, this pocket of paradise has some of the state's most impressive beaches, not to mention the glorious national parkland that surrounds. Follow the breeze (and lead of locals) to the beach for a dazzling end of day, before meeting your fellow adventure-seekers. **Hotel: BreakFree Aanuka Beach Resort. D**

2 Coffs Harbour – Gold Coast

Australia's most easterly point is the stuff that postcards were made for, as you'll discover when you reach the Cape Byron Lighthouse, standing proud over the Pacific Ocean. Dolphins are a common sight year round, and they're joined by whales during migration. For lunch, we can point you in the direction of a tasty Byron Bay fish-and-chip shop – order a haul to eat with your feet in the sand. Which you're going to see plenty of at your next destination. **Hotel: Novotel Surfers Paradise, 2 nights. B**

3 Gold Coast Free Time

Your base in Surfers Paradise is the heart of the Gold Coast, a city that really does sparkle. Today you might choose to explore beaches (there are too many to count), lingering in light-filled cafés and restaurants. Or enlist to see another side of the 'Goldie' in the Mt. Tamborine hinterland – a hub for creatives and foodies. The city also breaks records for its extensive network of canals, which you might opt to explore on a leisurely cruise. **B**

Ask us about starting this holiday on the Gold Coast the morning of Day 4 (Code: QGC).

4 Gold Coast – K'gari (Fraser Island)

Follow the waves north to Hervey Bay, the gateway to K'gari (Fraser Island). The ferry ride across the strait is a highlight, particularly during whale migration when these gentle giants come to the calm, protected waters to calve. Landing on K'gari, expect to see a lot of sand. This is, after all, the world's largest sand island, and the only place in the world where rainforest grows from the sand. **Hotel: Kingfisher Bay Resort, 2 nights. B**

5 K'gari (Fraser Island)

The island also has a really long sand highway, which you'll get to zip along on a 4WD tour across 75 Mile Beach, all the way up the east coast to the Pinnacles Coloured Sands, calm Eli Creek and the Maheno shipwreck, which offers quite the photo opportunity. Just when you thought the island couldn't get any prettier, Lake McKenzie appears on the horizon, this dazzling patch of blue formed only with rainwater. It's a hard act to follow, but the ancient rainforest at Central Station and Wanggoolba Creek lives up to the challenge with its huge satiny, scribbly gum and kauri trees. **B L**

6 K'gari (Fraser Island) – Rockhampton

Back on the mainland you're in Queensland's cattle country. Case in point Langmorn Station, where the Creed family will welcome you with afternoon tea and a tour of the immense (and historic) cattle property – the original family homestead was built in 1873. The Creeds will regale you with stories about life on the land. The theme continues as you cross the Tropic of Capricorn to arrive in Rockhampton, the beef capital of Australia. See if it deserves its title sampling some of the town's restaurants. Ask us for tips. **Hotel: Quality Regent. B**

7 Rockhampton – Airlie Beach

Another town with an impressive title is Sarina, Australia's sugar capital. If you've ever wanted to know how sugar cane is processed and distilled, you'll find the guided tour at the Sarina Sugar Shed a sweet addition to the itinerary. And yes, you get to sample the wares. Continue, on a high, to Airlie Beach, the gateway to the Whitsundays. Life moves at a leisurely pace here. Fall into step and take things slow tonight. **Hotel: Mantra, 2 nights. B L**

8 Airlie Beach Free Time

The Whitsunday Islands need little introduction, the 74 tropical drops of land a beguiling union of powdery beaches and rainforest, all ringed by the Coral Sea. There are endless ways to explore this part of the Great Barrier Reef – today, we're letting you choose. Perhaps rise early for an optional helicopter ride over Heart Reef. Or catch a catamaran to Whitehaven Beach, with sand so high in silica it squeaks underfoot. **B**



Great Barrier Reef

9 Airlie Beach – Cairns

After all the excitement of yesterday, today it's time to relax and enjoy the scenery – more sugar cane fields and rolling green paddocks, all framed by the ocean and rainforest-clad mountains. Stretch your legs en route to Cairns and soak up this steamy part of the state. **Hotel: DoubleTree by Hilton, 3 nights. B**

10 Cairns

The Cairns Esplanade is a hive of activity in the morning, with active locals out before the humidity of the day sets in. Keep pace, before cooling off in the Atherton Tablelands, a high tropical plateau of rainforest, including the heritage listed Curtain Fig Tree. And waterfalls, like Millaa Millaa Falls, where enormous iridescent Ulysses butterflies like to dance. Explore Kuranda before getting some perspective on the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway, high above the canopy of the Barron Gorge National Park. **B**

11 Great Barrier Reef

Just when you thought your outlook couldn't get any better, you're zipping over the Great Barrier Reef on a high-speed catamaran. Snorkel with six of the world's sea turtles bobbing over fans of coral, as well as so many fish you won't know where to look. If you prefer to keep your head above water, the marine world can also be glimpsed from an underwater observatory and glass-bottom boat. **B L FD**

12 Farewell from Cairns

A ridiculous number of beaches, world-record breaking rainforest, dreamy islands and even dreamier ocean... it's going to be hard to say goodbye to this backdrop. Not to mention your fellow travellers. **B**

10 Included Experiences

Departure Dates

QSC: Sydney to Cairns

2022	2023 continued	2024
Oct 10	Mar 06	Jan 08
Nov 07	Apr 03	Feb 05
Dec 05	Jun 05	Mar 04
	Jul 10	
2023	Sep 11	
Jan 09	Oct 09	
Feb 06	Nov 06	
	Dec 04	

QCS: Cairns to Sydney

2022	2023	2024
Nov 18	Jan 20	Jan 19
	Feb 17	Feb 16
	Mar 17	Mar 15
	Nov 17	

A limited number of single rooms are available.
Ask your travel agent at time of booking.

See available prices, reverse itinerary from Cairns to Sydney (QCS), and departure dates from 01 Apr 2024 at aatkings.com. Or contact your travel agent.

Dining

11 Full breakfasts B 1 Dinner D
3 Lunches L 1 Farewell Dinner FD

Flight Information

QSC: Sydney to Cairns

Day prior – flights to arrive anytime into Sydney Airport

Day 12 – flights to depart anytime from Cairns Airport

QCS: Cairns to Sydney

Day 1 – flights to arrive prior to 2.00pm into Cairns Airport

Day 12 – flights to depart after 9.00pm from Sydney Airport

Flights are not included in the holiday price

