

TOP 10 THINGS TO DO IN CAIRNS

Find rainforest, reef and diving activities, as well as dining and nightlife spots in this Top 10 list of things to do in Cairns.

Visit Cairns for the Great Barrier Reef, but don't miss out on the great things to do around this Far North Queensland town. Stunning beaches, spectacular hinterland, local and organic produce, brilliant cafés and bars, bustling markets and laid-back friendly people make Cairns a favourite destination. Relax by a resort pool or spend your days exploring. A tropical holiday awaits.

GREAT BARRIER REEF

There are many ways to experience the largest reef system in the world – the Great Barrier Reef. Take a day cruise to the outer reef leaving in the morning and returning late in the afternoon, spend the day snorkelling or diving and enjoy a delicious lunch. There are several types of vessels – large and small – each catering to different budgets and experience types. Perhaps take in a scenic helicopter flight, experiencing a bird's eye view of the beautiful reef or spend a night on the reef itself!

DINING AND NIGHTLIFE

Cairns is renowned for its lively and fun nightlife with a good selection of bars, clubs and pubs. The Esplanade is an amazing place to dine alfresco with many restaurants set up to take advantage of the balmy evenings. The café culture in Cairns is also quite well developed with many cool places to call in for breakfast and a caffeine hit dotted around the city, particularly on Grafton and Spence Streets. Palm Cove, a beautiful village only a 30-minute drive to the north, is home to some incredible restaurants with views out to the palm-fringed beach.

ATHERTON TABLELANDS

Find cooler temperatures and a whole different vibe in the stunning Cairns highlands, the Atherton Tableland. Set 1000 metres above sea level, you'll find quaint townships and coffee, honey, fruits, artisan dairy products and macadamia nuts. Don't miss the Platypus Park and the 800-year-old Curtain Fig Tree. Drive the 16-kilometre Waterfall Circuit, taking in Milla Milla, Zillie and Ellinjaa Falls.



WORLD HERITAGE LISTED DAINTREE RAINFOREST

Visit the oldest lowland rainforest on Earth – 135 million years old – to see a huge range of rare animals like tree-living kangaroos and prehistoric birds such as the cassowary. Crocodile-spotting on a Daintree River cruise is suggested, as well as a walk on the beach at beautiful Cape Tribulation – where the rainforest meets the reef. Located two hours drive north, this World Heritage-Listed area is a popular day trip but many stay for a night or two in one of the several eco-lodges found here.



KURANDA TRAIN AND SKYRAIL

A visit to the beautiful rainforest village of Kuranda is recommended. The journey to and from the village is an incredible experience in itself. The Skyrail Rainforest Cableway is a 90-minute gondola journey soaring above the rainforest canopy, taking in spectacular views. On arrival, explore the markets, quirky boutiques and perhaps call into one of the wildlife parks or the butterfly sanctuary. The return to Cairns is just as impressive on the Kuranda Scenic Railway – a historic 2-hour train journey through the lush rainforest taking in dramatic mountainous scenery including teeming waterfalls.

ABORIGINAL CULTURE

The Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park is located just 15 minutes outside of Cairns and offers an opportunity to learn about the traditional owners culture. Experience authentic music, dance and storytelling. Around 90-minutes north is the Mossman Gorge Centre, where you can take a tour and hear about the local Kuku Yalanji culture while exploring the beautiful gorge. There is also The Bama Way, an Aboriginal journey from Cairns to north of Cooktown, where you can learn how to throw a spear, hunt and gather bush tucker in the mangroves of a beautiful beach.

FITZROY ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

A trip to an idyllic island in tropical paradise is a towards the top of most people's must-do lists. Cairns has several islands close by including Fitzroy Island and Green Island. Both islands offer day trip with a range of activities from kayaking, snorkelling, hiking, as well as just relaxing on the beach. Located less than 30 kilometres from Cairns, these are great days out if wanting to have an island experience on the Great Barrier Reef.

CAIRNS MARKETS

Don't miss the Saturday Esplanade market for jewellery, clothing and locally made skincare that celebrities swear by. Swing by the Friday Night Market at Palm Cove, the monthly Holloway Beach Markets or Tanks Market in the gardens for great food and a social vibe. Mingle with locals at Rusty's, where the best regional produce is fresh and cheap.

ADVENTURE SPORTS

Find some of the best white-water rafting rapids in Australia on the Barron River and Tully River. Take a tandem skydive and feel the adrenaline rush with an aerial view of the Great Barrier Reef. Bungy jump at AJ Hackett's or ride their Minjin Jungle Swing. Other activities in the area include quad biking, horse riding and hang-gliding as well.

BARRAMUNDI FISHING

On the edge of the world's largest reef system, go fishing for big game with one of the many experienced operators who are aware of the environmental sensitivities and regulations. There are also world-class catches to be had by beach and estuary fishing from Kings Point and in Lake Tinaroo. However if you're into fishing, try to catch your very own barramundi, the legend of Far North Queensland angling.

USEFUL LINKS

Kuranda Scenic Railway
www.ksr.com.au/Pages/Default.aspx

Skyrail Rainforest Cableway
www.skyrail.com.au

Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park
www.tjapukai.com.au

AJ Hackett
www.ajhackett.com/cairns/

Mossman Gorge Centre
www.mossmangorge.com.au

Green Island
greenisland.com.au

Fitzroy Island
www.fitzroyisland.com

The Bama Way
bamaway.com.au