

THE RAINFOREST WAY

Queensland and New South Wales – Gold Coast

*Great Dividing Range – Lamington National Park – Tamborine Mountain
– Mount Warning – Border Ranges National Park*

Explore World Heritage-listed rainforests, national parks, mountains and relaxed towns on short, scenic drives around the hinterland of the Gold Coast and Byron Bay. Travel through the foothills of the Great Dividing Range or watch the corkscrew progression of the Border Loop Spiral Train. Walk through the lush rainforest of Lamington National Park on your way to Tamborine Mountain. Fly the mountains and green farmland of the Scenic Rim on a glider or walk around the base of towering Mount Warning (Wollumbin). Drive from Lismore to spectacular Minyon Falls and climb to the rim of an ancient caldera in Border Ranges National Park.



DAY ONE

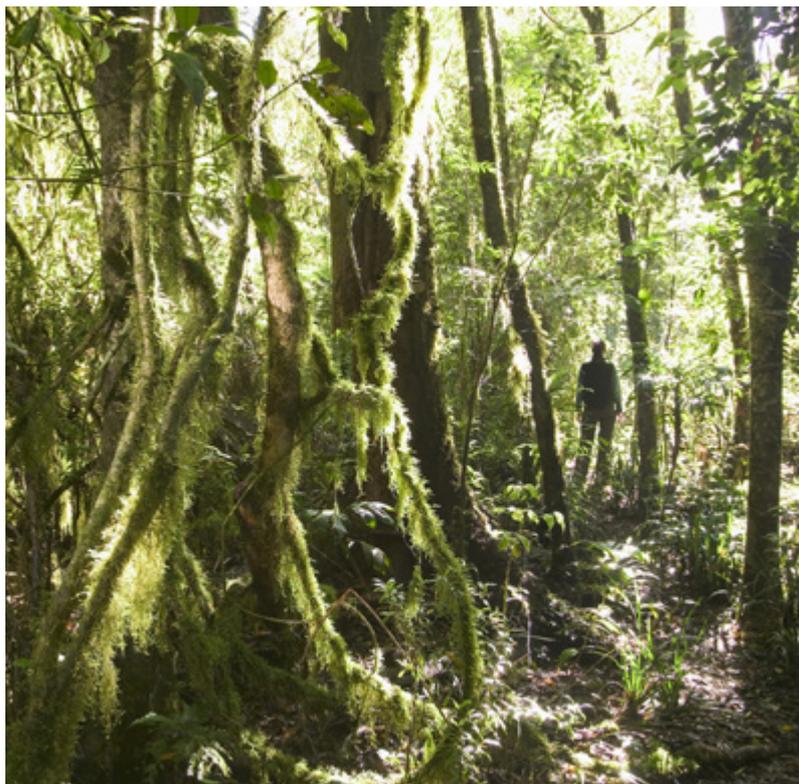
MALLANGANEE AND RICHMOND RANGE

From Casino, drive west to Mallangane, stopping at the lookout for spectacular views over the Richmond Range. On a clear day, you can see to the distant volcanic plug of Mt Warning (Wollumbin). Travel into Tabulam and cross the Clarence River on a timber truss bridge reputed to be the longest in the southern hemisphere. Drive north through the historic village of Bonalbo, a good access point for the World Heritage rainforest and old-growth rainforest of Richmond Range National Park. Hike past rare spotted gums in at the Cambridge Plateau Picnic Area. Back on the road, continue north through the Yabba State Forest, a popular place to fish and four wheel drive. From Urbenville, you can do a loop through the village of Woodenbong to Tooloom Falls and Tooloom National Park, home to ancient Aboriginal sites and Australia's greatest diversity of kangaroo species.

AT A GLANCE



- › Mallangane and Richmond Range
- › Kyogle – Mount Barney National Park
- › Tamborine Circuit
- › Main Range
- › Mount Warning View Circuit
- › Minyon Falls
- › Tweed Range Scenic Drive



DAYS TWO TO FOUR

LIONS ROAD

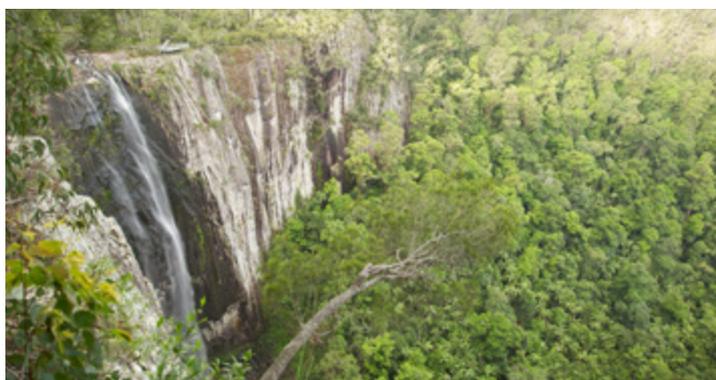
Zigzag across two states and the McPherson Ranges on this road, built by the town's Lions Clubs in 1971. Start from pretty Kyogle in New South Wales, which sits on the Richmond River encircled by rainforest. Turn onto the Lions Rd just north of Wiangaree and curve around Border Ranges National Park, home to World Heritage-listed Gondwanan rainforest. Do the short climb to Pinnacle Lookout for views to Mt Warning (Wollumbin) and the Tweed Coast. Weave through ancient Antarctic beech trees around the Bar Mountain Picnic Area. From the Border Loop Lookout, close to the Queensland border, you can see the Border Loop Railway wind up on the mountain on an ingenious spiral loop. Hike to deep gorges with plunging waterfalls and spot native fauna such as the pouched frog and rare Alberts lyrebird. On the other side of the Mt Lindesay Highway lie the rugged peaks of Mount Barney National Park.

TAMBORINE CIRCUIT

Start from Nerang on Queensland's Gold Coast and head south-west into Lamington National Park. After Beechmont, follow a rainforest drive through the Binna Burra section, home to hundreds of waterfalls and walking trails. Or continue on to Canungra, where you can turn off for the O'Reilly's Green Mountains section. Do the 16-metre high Tree Top Walk, see glow worm caves and swing across the rainforest on a flying fox. Do short sections of the Gold Coast Hinterland Great Walk, or spend four days hiking the entire 54km trail. Back on the scenic, winding road, drive to Tamborine Mountain, where you can visit vineyards, hang glide off the mountain or browse art and antique shops on the Gallery Walk. Nearby Mount Tamborine National Park is the place to picnic, spot platypus and walk to Curtis Falls through a stand of piccabeen palms.

MAIN RANGE

Begin in the hinterland town of Beaudesert, less than an hour from both Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Drive west to Boonah, in the centre of the Scenic Rim. Soar over the mountains and lakes on a glider or take a scenic bike ride around the area. Browse the galleries and craft shops, buy fresh produce from the roadside stalls and check out the distinctive heritage buildings. Go rock climbing on Mt French and fish, sail, water ski and canoe on Lake Moogerah, both to the town's west. Drive south through farmland and rainforest, stopping to bushwalk around Mt Toowoona, take in river views from Carrs Lookout and visit Teviot and Queen Mary Falls. Continue past Daggs and Browns Falls through Killarney and Legume, then head east to Woodenbong. Take a scenic detour south to Tooloom Falls and Urbenville. Then continue back to Beaudesert, stopping to hike to the Lower Portals in Mt Barney National Park.



DAYS FIVE TO SEVEN

MOUNT WARNING VIEW CIRCUIT

Drive from the art-deco town of Murwillumbah to Mt Warning National Park, where you can walk the Lyrebird Track around the base of Mt Warning (Wollumbin). Learn about the mountain's ancient volcanic past and the more recent fight to conserve its rainforests in the information centre. Lunch in quaint café and browse art and craft stores in the historic village of Uki. Drive past Mebbin National Park, where the Byrill Creek walk leads you to a stand of fig trees. Stop in Tyalgum or climb to the rim of Wollumbin Crater in Border Ranges National Park, further west. At Chillingham bridge, head north for the waterfalls, lush rainforest and spectacular lookouts of Springbrook National Park. Visit Natural Bridge, where you can see water fall through the roof of a basalt cave during the day and a twinkling colony of glow worms at night. Head back through Chillingham to Murwillumbah.

MINYON FALLS

Explore the galleries, theaters and performing arts space in and around Lismore. Then drive through Bexhill and north through a patchwork of farmland and forest to the small village of Rosebank. Drive through Nightcap National Park to Minyon Falls, which plunge more than a hundred metres into a deep, palm-fringed gorge. Watch the eucalyptus trees morph into subtropical rainforest as you descend into the gully. Do the 30km Whian Whian Scenic Drive, spotting koalas in the giant tree ferns and blackbean trees. Stop to camp in Rummery Park or head south for Dorrughby and Dunoon, near the platypus hangout of Rocky Creek. Stop in the artistic village The Channon and travel through Nimbin, the cradle of Australia's counter-culture since the 1970s. See remnants of the area's volcanic activity at Nimbin Rocks and walk to Protestors Falls, which tumbles beneath a canopy of Bangalow palms to Terania Creek.

TWEED RANGE SCENIC DRIVE

From Kyogle, head north through Wiangaree to the World Heritage-listed rainforest of Border Ranges National Park. The road is unsealed but suitable for a conventional vehicle when dry. Follow one of the many walks radiating from the Sheep Station Creek Camping Area or trek through primeval rainforest on one of three trails to Brindle Creek. Look out for the red cedar tree believed to be 1,000 years old on the short Red Cedar Loop. Or hike to the Bar Mountain Picnic Area, the highest point on the caldera. Stop at the Antarctic Beech picnic area, which overlooks the Lost World Wilderness. Don't miss the short climb to Pinnacle Lookout, which sits 919 metres above sea level, on the caldera's rim. You'll need more than a few moments to absorb the heart-stopping views over Mt Warning (Wollumbin), the caldera and emerald mosaic of farmlands and rainforest. Drive out of the park's southern entrance onto Murwillumbah-Kyogle Road.