

Luxury in Queensland

Enjoy fine dining on a deserted island, take a private helicopter flight over the Great Barrier Reef, sleep soundly in plush beds fit for a king and relax with an indigenous-inspired massage by a waterfall. Here's a guide to relishing the finer things in life in Queensland.

Luxury in the Great Outdoors – Wilson Island

This tiny coral cay is part of, and surrounded by, the Great Barrier Reef. Accommodation for a maximum of 12 guests is offered in comfortable, designer-inspired tents, all with reef and ocean outlooks. Relax in a hammock, take a self-guided nature walk, experience the wonder of watching Green and Loggerhead turtles laying their eggs or their baby hatchlings emerging from their nests (in season), and enjoy world class snorkelling directly off the beach. Your island hosts prepare all meals in the Longhouse where everyone joins together at the table set for a dinner party with light music playing and candles lit. This luxury Robinson Crusoe style-resort is accessible via Gladstone and Heron Island in Central Queensland. The resort is not suitable for children under 12 years old and is closed each February for bird nesting season. www.wilsonisland.com

Luxury in the Rainforest – Daintree Eco Lodge

Combining nature, nurture and culture in luxurious surrounds, the Daintree Eco Lodge and Spa is a unique rainforest hideaway. Set in the World Heritage-listed Daintree Rainforest, the property offers boutique accommodation in just 15 individual rainforest villas. Wake to the sounds of nature, enjoy an indigenous massage beside a waterfall, take a guided walk through the oldest rainforest in the world and dine on an exotic selection of traditional and tropical dishes at Julaymba Restaurant. The list of awards for Daintree Eco Lodge and Spa is long, but some of the more notable ones this year include being voted in the world's top 10 best spas by SpaFinder USA, winning Travelling in Australia Magazine's 2009 Best Spa and Health Retreat, and a spot in USA National Geographic's top 50 eco-lodges of the world. www.daintree-ecolodge.com.au

Luxury Accommodation – Palazzo Versace

Encompassing the beauty, luxury and opulence for which the name Versace is famous, Palazzo Versace on the Gold Coast was voted as Australia's most luxurious hotel and is the only one of its kind in the world. Incorporating 205 classically-designed rooms, 72 neighbouring condominiums, three award-winning restaurants, a private marina, designer shopping and the Salus per Aquum day spa, the resort has everything you need under the one roof. Filled with marble, mosaics, and Italian craftsmanship, every room also features Versace furniture, linen and bath products to complete this stylish getaway. www.palazzoversace.com

Luxury on the Great Barrier Reef – Reef Encounter

Feel like a rock-star as you board a helicopter bound for your boat in the middle of the Great Barrier Reef! The luxurious Reef Encounter vessel is based in Cairns and can cater for up to 42 guests on cruises to the reef. The superbly-appointed 35 metre catamaran includes 21 spacious staterooms with private bathroom facilities, teak furniture and air-conditioning as well as an onboard heli-pad. With gourmet meals, complete sets of diving and snorkelling equipment, a personal glass bottom boat and a small fishing vessel, Reef Encounter has everything guests need to enjoy the Great Barrier Reef in style. For that extra bit of indulgence choose Reef Encounter's Top Deck Club, which includes accommodation in a deluxe stateroom, champagne on arrival, tropical breakfast served in your room daily, exclusive use of the Top Deck Club's private sun deck, complimentary sunset cocktails with the Captain, and all meals and snorkelling on the Great Barrier Reef. Visit www.reefencounter.com.au

Luxury Islands

- **qualia**

Offering all-inclusive accommodation on Hamilton Island's northernmost tip, qualia is the most exclusive island resort on the Great Barrier Reef. Sixty luxurious pavilions and a beach house are dispersed across the hillside, each taking in spectacular views from the world-class location while still allowing for privacy. Guests are given a golf buggy for the duration of their stay and are allowed free run of the resort's facilities, including beach activities, multiple pools and restaurants, library and yoga sessions. The spa is at the geographical heart of the establishment and offers guests a luxurious location in which to be pampered. www.qualia.com.au

- **Double Island**

Double Island, off Palm Cove in Tropical North Queensland, is reserved exclusively for one group at a time to enjoy five-star luxury. This stunning island has become a five-star haven for celebrities such as Hollywood star Keanu Reeves seeking exclusive accommodation with guaranteed privacy and seclusion. Located 10 minutes offshore from Palm Cove, Double Island can accommodate up to 40 guests and all facilities and activities are included, ranging from an indoor cinema, beachside gymnasium, catamarans, windsurfers, walking tracks and moonlight outdoor cinema. www.doubleisland.com.au

Luxury in the Country – Peppers Spicers Peak

Surrounded by breathtaking views of the World Heritage-listed Main Range National Park, the luxurious Peppers Spicers Peak Lodge is Queensland's highest mountain lodge retreat. The stunning architect-designed lodge features high ceilings, fireplaces, rich timber fittings and stylish decor and is situated only 90 minutes drive south west of Brisbane, or a short helicopter flight. With 10 suites and two new private lodges, a stay at the lodge offers an intimate and relaxing experience in one of South East Queensland's most beautiful wilderness areas. By day enjoy bushwalking, mountain bikes and four wheel drive tours of the area, have a massage, take a dip in the pool or a hit of tennis. By night sample fine food and wine, relax by the fire or take in the brilliance of stars in clear mountain skies. Peppers Spicers Peak is known for its world-class dining facilities and features a new seven-course degustation menu every evening. www.spicerspeaklodge.com.au

Luxury in the City – The Emporium

Located in the heart of Brisbane's stylish Emporium precinct is the multi-award winning Emporium Hotel. Offering 106 luxurious studio suites, all custom-designed and individually furnished, guests are also offered a unique eight-choice selection of pillows. Emporium's rooftop features a lap pool, sauna and gym while the lobby adjoins a stunning cocktail bar. Emporium Hotel won best five star accommodation at the 2008 Queensland Hotel Association Awards recently and was named as one of the world's best hotels in the 12th Annual International Condé Nast Traveller's Hot List. www.emporiumhotel.com.au

Luxury Spa – Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat

Set in the Gold Coast Hinterland with ocean and valley views, Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat aims to help people live a healthier life through innovative wellness programmes, specialty spa treatments and superb organic cuisine. Boasting the largest spa in the southern hemisphere, Gwinganna's spa sanctuary includes 33 custom-designed and themed treatment rooms which overlook a native spa garden. Gwinganna programmes last from two to seven days and include a choice of accommodation in heritage houses, orchard suites or two new luxurious signature villas. The signature villas are cantilevered over a billabong, were built from reclaimed timbers and feature soaring ceilings, chic black bathrooms and a private steam room. Programmes at Gwinganna include a seven night Detox, three night Women's Discovery, five night Optimum Wellbeing, two night Gwinganna Weekend and a four night Feast of Nutrition. www.gwinganna.com

Luxury in the Outback – Wrotham Park

Located in spectacular setting on a sprawling 600,000 hectare working cattle station, Wrotham Park Lodge encompasses the spirit of the Australian outback combined with a unique, luxury resort experience. Wrotham Park can cater for a maximum of 20 guests in 10 superbly appointed Quarters, situated along a stunning escarpment, overlooking the Mitchell River. In true Australian outback style, the Homestead is the communal heart of the property. Guests at Wrotham Park can experience the lives of Outback stockmen through a range of organised activities including heli-mustering, horse riding, country cooking cuisine classes, gourmet picnics, sunset canapés and drinks. The lodge is closed each year from November through to the end of March. Visit www.wrothampark.com.au

Luxury Cruising – DescaradA

Explore the coral blue waters, sunny beaches and spectacular landscape of the Whitsundays aboard DescaradA Charters' luxury yacht. A beautifully-appointed 70 foot motor cruiser, DescaradA is available for both prescheduled tours and private charters for a maximum of eight guests who sleep in four private cabins. The yacht comes complete with jet skis, kayaks, a nine-seater tender and a minimum crew of three on hand to organise fine food and fun activities. There are two Whitsunday cruise options – either two day/two night or three night/three day itineraries, taking in some of the region's most beautiful areas such as the pure white silica sands of Whitehaven Beach, the majestic landscape and Aboriginal sites of Nara Inlet and spectacular snorkelling waters of Manta Ray Bay and Blue Pearl Bay. The full cruise itinerary includes activities, gourmet meals, non-alcoholic beverages, marine park and island fees, and transfers to and from local area accommodation. www.descarada.com.au

Luxury Touring – Down Under by Appointment

Experience Queensland's tropical north in style with Down Under by Appointment's guided luxury charter and coach tours. Integrating intimate group sizes of like-minded travellers, first class vehicles, specialist guides, and a flexible itinerary, Down Under by Appointment traverses the magnificent contrasts of reef, rainforest and outback Queensland, incorporating the finest accommodation and cuisine available along the way. Choose from a variety of tours to explore the regions of Cairns, Kuranda, the Atherton Tableland, Chillagoe, Cooktown, Daintree, Port Douglas, Cape Tribulation and Cape York. www.downunderbyappointment.com.au