

Whether your journey is a few days or an epic adventure, Queensland is bursting with opportunities to set off on an unforgettable trip by rail, air, self driving or on foot. Here's a taste of Queensland journeys guaranteed to inspire even the most jaded traveller.

AIR JOURNEYS

Air safari to the Birdsville Races

For the ultimate Outback air adventure why not make a flying trip to the famous Birdsville Races? Held annually in September, the Birdsville Races attract between five and six thousands visitors from all over the world. The most amazing way to experience the races is by a three day air safari. Choose from operators departing Sydney, Melbourne or charter from anywhere in Australia and fly to far western Queensland for the event. You'll camp out under the wing of your aircraft and soak up the atmosphere of this Outback race meeting. Situated 3km south east of Birdsville, the track itself is on a clay pan alongside the sand dunes. Visit www.birdsvillerraces.com

Thursday Island

Located just north of Cape York Peninsula, Australia's most northern point, Thursday Island offers tourists a culturally diverse island experience where getting there is a major part of the experience. With an area of about three square kilometres and an estimated population of 3,500, Thursday Island is situated just south of Papua New Guinea and only 39km north of Queensland and its culture is a fusion of both regions. Visit

www.queenslandholidays.com.au/destinations/tropical-north-queensland/places-to-visit/thursday-island/
<http://www.peddellsferry.com.au/thursday.htm>

Cape York air safari

Air Adventure Australia's 14-day Cape York Outback Paradise tour takes you to the tip of Queensland and beyond. Tours depart Melbourne via Broken Hill, then onto Queensland taking in Birdsville, Longreach, Mount Isa and the Outback oasis of Adels Grove. From there, the tour heads to the tiny gulf towns of Normanton, Weipa and onto remote Horn and Thursday Islands before heading south again to Cooktown, Townsville, historic Charters Towers, Bundaberg, Lady Elliot Island and Carnarvon Gorge, home of spectacular indigenous rock art. www.airadventure.com.au/tour_capeyork.htm

RAIL JOURNEYS

Experience the Spirit of the Outback

A rail adventure to Queensland's captivating Outback - enjoyed in the comfort of air-conditioned, authentically-themed surrounds. On its journey west, the 'Spirit of the Outback' ventures through the heritage towns of Blackwater, Emerald and Barcaldine before arriving in Longreach, home to the famous Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Qantas Founders Outback Museum. www.traveltrain.com.au

Cruise with Coast on the Sunlander (Queenslander Class)

The Sunlander train journeys 1,681km from the Queensland capital of Brisbane to the Great Barrier Reef gateway city of Cairns. The journey also passes through the gateway towns to World Heritage-listed Fraser Island and the Whitsunday Islands. The Queenslander Class is a premium, all-inclusive style of travel featuring comfortable, twin-berth accommodation, fine dining in an exclusive restaurant car, and a host of special touches for a memorable experience. www.traveltrain.com.au

Head Outback with the Savannahlander

Sip freshly-brewed billy tea aboard this historic rail motor as it trundles through World Heritage rainforests to the vast open spaces of the savannah and Outback. Your train driver come guide stops along the way so you can meet the locals. www.savannahlander.com.au

A tropical train ride with Kuranda Scenic Rail

The air is cool with the scents of the rainforest, as the Kuranda Scenic Rail train climbs upwards through dense tropical rainforest in Tropical North Queensland. Winding its way past deep gorges and spectacular waterfalls, to the charming Kuranda Village. www.ksr.com.au

CRUISE

Whitsundays sailing

You don't need to be a world-class sailor or an experienced yachtie to enjoy time out on a boat deck in Queensland's premier sailing destination, the Whitsundays. Skipper yourself yachts, catamarans and launches; crewed charters where guests hand over the responsibility but still get to be part of the action on an ocean racer or a tallship; luxury launches or premium yachts; and learn to sail holidays are easily arranged. Visit www.whitsundaytourism.com

Cruise Fraser Island in comfort

Explore the protected waters around the world's largest sand island on a houseboat with all the comforts of home. Drift in the sheltered waterways; spot dolphins, whales, and dugongs; enjoy a spot of fishing; or just sit back and relax in absolute serenity. www.frasercoastholidays.info

Luxury cruising with Fantasea Ammari

Enjoy an all inclusive luxury boutique cruise around some of the stunning 74 islands that make up the Whitsundays. Fantasea Ammari gives passengers exclusive access to the Whitsundays' famous icons including Whitehaven Beach, Blue Pearl Bay and Reefworld. With only 32 cabins, Ammari is large enough to provide privacy and small enough to ensure attentive and personal service. Combine the adventure and excitement of a cruise with pure relaxation and pampering on Ammari's top deck. Visit www.mvfantaseaammari.com/ammari.htm

Sleep on the reef

The most unique place you'll ever sleep. With just a handful of fellow guests for company, you'll spend the night in the middle of the Great Barrier Reef. Stars sparkle brilliantly above, while fish leap from the waters all around. www.fantasea.com.au/reefsleep.htm

The Ultimate Island and reef escape

A leisurely three day cruise combined with a two night stay on exclusive Orpheus Island is being billed as the "ultimate reef escape." Coral Princess Cruises and Orpheus Island Resort's package can be taken from either Cairns or Townsville. The Coral Princess carries just 54 guests and aims to create intimate environmental experiences. The privately-owned Orpheus Island Resort is an exclusive sophisticated hideaway nestled amidst the coral-fringed Orpheus Island Marine National Park. Visit www.orpheus.com.au and www.coralprincess.com.au

Great Barrier Reef Journey - Reef Encounter

Base yourself on this 'moving island' as you discover the Great Barrier Reef on a 35 metre luxury catamaran. Onboard the Reef Encounter you won't miss any of it, snorkel along 13km of reef edge at Hastings Reef or get an up close view of the giant clams and investigate the caves at Norman Reef. The Reef Encounter offers day, overnight or extended charters, spend your time snorkelling, scuba diving, sunbaking on the deck, there's even a spa onboard which is a perfect spot to catch the sun setting over the reef, or go on a night scuba dive. The only vessel on the Great Barrier Reef with an onboard helipad, heli transfers are a wonderful way to see the Great Barrier Reef and arriving in style. www.reeftrip.com

GREAT DRIVES

Great Sunshine Way Touring Route

Driving the Great Sunshine Way is a new and adventurous way of experiencing the best of southern Queensland. Along it you'll discover some of the earth's most treasured natural wonders like World Heritage-listed Fraser Island, and the ancient rainforests of the Gold Coast hinterland. You'll also indulge in cosmopolitan culture, dining and shopping and of course meet the friendly locals. Play golf at internationally-rated courses, chill out at a day spa, ride a roller coaster or even cuddle a koala. Ten days is recommended to explore this diverse destination, but you can also design your own adventure. www.thegreatsunshineway.com

4WD Fraser Island

Cruise along a 70 mile stretch of pristine sand highway or head inland past coastal sand blows, lush rainforests to crystal clear lakes. The feeling is pure freedom as you drive with the rush of an ocean breeze in your face. You might even spot a dingo in the wild. www.queenslandholidays.com.au/fraser_coast/fraser_island.cfm

Reef to Outback

The new Reef to Outback drive route explores two Queensland regions that are relatively undiscovered by international visitors – Central Queensland and the Outback. It also offers the freedom to choose either a fly-in trip or a longer self-drive adventure where you can experience the wonders of the southern Great Barrier Reef and wide open spaces of the Outback. The Reef to Outback region covers from Bundaberg in the south, north to Yeppoon and west to Winton, including the coral islands of the southern Great Barrier Reef off the Central Queensland coast. www.southerngreatbarrierreef.com.au

Matilda Highway

The Matilda passes through an ever-changing landscape - from undulating Mulga plains in the south to open Mitchell grass plains and desert uplands in the central west and gulf plains in the north. There are picturesque billabongs and vast inland river systems, rugged gorges and escarpments and many scenic national parks. The driver also passes Carnarvon National Park, historic pubs, and Winton, where Australia's anthem "Waltzing Matilda" was first performed. www.matildahighway.com.au

Queensland's Dinosaur Trail

The Dinosaur Trail links Winton, Hughenden and Richmond where some of the world's most amazing fossils are still being found. Step back into the land of the lost giants and learn about the different species that used to inhabit these three areas long, long ago. Fascinating displays and fossil collections - including some of the best-preserved fossils in Australia - will take your imagination on a journey back to a prehistoric age. You can also visit the site of the world's only preserved dinosaur stampede. www.australiasdinosaurtrail.com

The Savannah Way

The Savannah Way is one of Australia's ultimate adventure drives, linking Cairns in Tropical North Queensland with the historic pearling town of Broome in Western Australia, via the natural wonders of Katherine in the Northern Territory. You'll pass through an amazingly diverse and spectacular landscape of wide horizons, ancient gorges, rock pools, salt pans, hot springs and abundant wildlife. www.savannahway.com.au

Great Tropical Drive

This drive takes in two World Heritage areas – the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest, as well as historic mining towns, waterfalls and wildlife. You'll discover one of the most beautiful ocean drives in the world as you cruise the highway between Cairns and Port Douglas, where reef and rainforest lie side by side. The Reef to Rainforest Discovery Trail is a 260km loop linking Cairns with Port Douglas which can be easily experienced over a relaxed three day drive. The second part of the route takes you inland from the coast to the Cairns Highlands, including the natural paradise of the 5,000 acre Mareeba Wetlands. Visit www.greattropicaldrive.com.au

4WD safari to the Cape

Peregrine has launched its first solely Queensland adventure, the new Cape York - Top of Australia tour. This 12-day adventure is a classic 4WD overland journey from Cairns up the Cape York Peninsula to the tip of Australia. The itinerary is packed with unforgettable experiences in this remote and beautiful part of Queensland. Some of the highlights include spotting huge saltwater crocodiles in the wild, staying on a working cattle station, learning about Aboriginal culture and rock art. Guests will also spend two days camping on the beach at Mapoon, helping measure and tag endangered turtles as part of the Cape York Turtle Rescue program. Tours depart July to October. www.peregrineadventures.com/trips/pdcr

BAMA Way, Tropical North Queensland

Travel The Bama Way and experience Tropical North Queensland through the eyes of the people who have been its custodians for tens of thousands of years. The word 'Bama' (pronounced bumma) means person, and the BAMA Way is an Aboriginal journey of discovery through the south east Cape York, from Cairns to north of Cooktown, following story-lines through the two Aboriginal nations of the Kuky Yalanji and Guugu Yimithirr peoples. The Bama Way links three Aboriginal-owned tours operated by the traditional custodians of the local area. Each tour provides a unique experience which will teach you about different facets of Aboriginal culture. Explore the BAMA Way on a self drive, flying or guided tour and learn how to throw a spear, visit ancestral rock art sites and the spectacular Bloomfield Falls. www.bamaway.com.au

WALKS

Queensland – Great Walks!

Where else but Queensland - Nearly five percent of the huge landmass of Queensland is now protected as national park. So where will your favourite Queensland national park walk turn out to be? This website is designed to help you choose from the myriad of locations throughout the state. Options include world-class short, half day, full day and multi-day walks, including Queensland's fabulous Great! Walks in one of Queensland's outstanding World Heritage listed sites such as Fraser Island, the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia (formerly known as the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves) in the Gold Coast hinterland or the vast Wet Tropics Reserve in Tropical North Queensland.

www.queenslandholidays.com.au/destinations/natural-wonders/queenslandwalks/queensland-walks_home.cfm

Gold Coast Great Walk

Spectacular views, ancient forests and thundering waterfalls are a few of the highlights of the new Gold Coast Hinterland Great Walk. The 54km track connects existing walking trails to create a continuous link through the World Heritage-listed area incorporating Lamington and Springbrook National Parks. Catering for walkers of all ages, fitness levels and experiences, there are a variety of options from half and full-day treks through to three-day hikes. Nearby accommodation options include O'Reilly's Rainforest Guesthouse and Binna Burra Mountain Lodge. Visit www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/great_walks/gold_coast_hinterland/

Explore World Heritage wonders on foot

You'll experience absolute peace and quiet on this challenging walk linking the most spectacular sights of Fraser Island, the world's largest sand island. Explore towering rainforests, vast sand blows and spectacular perched lakes, tinted aqua blue or deepest green. Stop for a swim in crystal-clear lakes and camp under millions of stars at night. www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/great_walks/fraser_island/ or www.footprintsonfraser.com.au

Kuku-Yalanji's Dreamtime walks

The indigenous inhabitants of land which stretches from around Cooktown in north Queensland and Port Douglas in the south, the Kuku-Yalanji people take walking tours into the heart of the beautiful Mossman Gorge. Visitors on the guided rainforest walks are treated to a 1½ hour walk along private, easy graded tracks, visiting special places and culturally significant sites, past traditional bark shelters and over cool rainforest streams. The experienced interpretive guides demonstrate traditional plant use, identify bush tucker sources, share their dreamtime legends, explain the history of cave paintings and provide an enchanting narrative of the rainforest and their special relationships within this unique tropical environment. www.yalanji.com.au

For more information, visit www.queenslandholidays.com.au