

What's cooking in Queensland

March 2011

From hot new restaurants and dinner shows, to sampling local kangaroo and crocodile, there's always something new and exciting to experience when dining in Queensland. Read on and discover more than a few reasons to come to Queensland and tantalise your taste buds.

What's new in Queensland food:

Cairns brewing blue skies

The Blue Sky Brewery is a new world-class venue and attraction situated in the heart of the Cairns CBD. Opened in June 2008, Blue Sky Brewery features a bar, restaurant, function rooms and a comprehensive wine cellar. An onsite micro-brewery allows customers to experience beer at its freshest, coming straight to the bar taps from the tanks. Regular brewery tours led by a knowledgeable guide will be conducted throughout the day, giving visitors an insight into the main stages of brewing and an opportunity to sample a selection of the brewery's six premium preservative-free beers. The restaurant's beer-inspired menu is another unique element of the brewery with meals including Spaghetti Beerognaise and pizzas with Blue Sky Ale pizza bases. Visit www.blueskybrewery.com.au

Learn from the master at Absynthe

Learn the art of modern French cooking at a place recently named as Australia's Best Restaurant by British Newspaper The Mail - Absynthe on the Gold Coast. Keen cooks can learn from star chef Meyjitte Boughenout as he leads hands-on cooking classes for people who want to learn the professional art of food preparation and presentation. French-born Meyjitte has won numerous awards in Australia and scored two Michelin stars as head chef at a prestigious Belgian restaurant. Classes are held over four days from 2pm until 7pm on-site in the Absynthe kitchen. Visit www.absynthe.com.au

Market to market cooking classes

Join a free cooking class at the Eumundi Markets on the Sunshine Coast, led by well known chef Peter Wolfe. The classes are held at 10am and 11am every Wednesday in the market's food and produce precinct. Established in 1979, the Eumundi Markets are Australia's largest. With a motto of "make it, bake it, sew it or grow it", the market features more than 500 stalls selling all things locally handmade from delicately constructed craft to organically grown produce. As founder of Cedar Creek Farm Bush Foods in Belli Park, chef Peter Wolfe is renowned for his kitchen wizardry, and for his exciting recipes incorporating bush foods and organic ingredients. Visit www.eumundimarkets.com.au

Nitrogen brewing in Brisbane

In a first for Brisbane, the fine-dining riverside restaurant Alchemy is 'cooking' food in super-cold liquid nitrogen. A mouthful of liquid is snap-frozen on the outside with the nitrogen, turning it into a little bomb 'smoking' with condensation. When placed in the mouth the nitrogen warms up and explodes, releasing the liquid centre as a harmless vapour wafts from the diner's mouth and nose! Alchemy is now serving Liquid Nitrogen bombs on a spoon but, as yet, they aren't on the standard menu. Visit www.alchemyrestaurant.com.au

Bushfire flame grill at Pacific International

Enjoy a Brazilian style barbeque, Spanish-inspired tapas or Australian bush tucker drinks at the Bushfire Flame Grill in the heart of Cairns. Using a selection of regional and Australia wide ingredients, the restaurant features an open kitchen so diners can watch chefs cook their meals on custom-made flame grills for the Flames of the Grill experience. Visit www.bushfirecairns.com

Cairns cooks up The Australian Experience

A new dinner show featuring Australian food, folk music, dancing, didgeridoo performances and Aboriginal entertainment has opened in the heart of Cairns. The Australian Experience includes a three course menu of Aussie favourites like damper and allows guests to cook their own main course on hot volcanic stones. Visitors receive their own souvenir boomerang and experience a live didgeridoo performance complete with traditional costume and body paint and are also invited to play the instruments themselves. Visit www.theaustralianexperiencecairns.com and www.thehotelcairns.com

Mango Hills on the Sunshine Coast

Located in the beautiful Sunshine Coast countryside is a new organic farm attraction, Mango Hill Farm. The farm offers a bounty of treats – experience organic chocolate ginger and dried mango at the produce store; delight your senses and improve your culinary skills in a cooking class; take in the scenic treasures on a farm tour and finish the day by putting your feet up, staying overnight in a gorgeous 'old world charm' cottage or farmhouse. Visit www.mangohillfarm.com.au

Good food and wine in Brisbane

Mouth watering recipes, exquisite wines and celebrity chefs – Brisbane's Good Food and Wine Show has all the ingredients for a great day out. From November 7 – 9, 2008, more than 200 exhibitors will explore new tastes and uncover the latest culinary trends from around the world. Visit www.goodfoodshow.com.au

What's new in Port

The tropical town of Port Douglas, one hours' drive north of Cairns, has welcomed the opening of five new restaurants:

- Headed by proprietor and Michelin star chef Spencer Patrick, the new **Harrison's Restaurant & Bar** is delighting locals and tourists alike with an enticing menu fusing contemporary Australian and classic French cuisine.
- Located on Four Mile Beach, the Port Douglas Surf Lifesaving Club has opened the **Bluewater Bistro**. The venue is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner and features a children's playground and beautiful views from its open deck to the Coral Sea.
- Port Douglas' first French restaurant **Le Sixieme Sens**, has now opened and provides superb dining and an excellent choice of wines to be enjoyed in a tropical setting.
- **Rattle n Hum**, linked with the venue of the same name in Cairns, is located on Macrossan Street, open for lunch and dinner with the bar open till 2am. The venue is food-orientated, targeting a mixture of locals, families and older tourists with its wood themed bar/grill/pizzeria.
- **Finz** restaurant and take-away is located on Macrossan Street and offers an inviting environment to enjoy freshly cooked seafood. Or if you feel like cooking yourself, Finz also offers a selection of fresh fillets of fish, prawns and oysters to take-away and enjoy by the beach or on the balcony of your holiday apartment. www.finzportdouglas.com

Queensland restaurant 'bush tucker' experiences

Tuck into Advance Australian Fare

Ever wanted to try kangaroo, crocodile, possum or emu meat? Then head to Tukka restaurant in the trendy West End precinct of Brisbane to dine on a range of native Australian foods presented in a modern and innovative style. Tukka is led by French Chef Stéphane Brémont, who is focused on quality ingredients and beautifully presented meals and has a passion for flavour. Visit www.tukkarestaurant.com.au

Bush tucker talk and taste

Enjoy the delights of native bush tucker and Australian wine on a Bush Tucker Talk and Taste experience at Fraser Island's Kingfisher Bay Resort. World Heritage-listed Fraser Island is the world's largest sand island and is situated off the coast of Hervey Bay, four hours' drive north of Brisbane. Kingfisher Bay Resort runs a Bush Tucker Talk and Taste experience, where a restaurant chef joins forces with a bush ranger to explore Australian cuisine and bush tucker. Touch, smell and taste edible fruits, berries and leaves, while a Ranger explains the plants botanical background and how it was harvested and used by the Aboriginal people and a Chef whips up some quick dishes. Visit www.kingfisherbay.com

Crocodile Dundee's in Cairns

A tender slice of char grilled buffalo with smoked emu sausage, pan-fried barramundi fillet, skewered kangaroo and crocodile meat is the real Aussie eating adventure at Dundee Restaurant in Cairns. With an extensive menu including pasta, seafood and grills, Dundee also offers a special section on its menu dedicated to Australian Bush Tucker for diners wanting to try something a bit different. Visit www.dundeecom.au

Ochre Restaurant offers taste of the Outback

With a dedication to organic produce and crafting local native ingredients into modern cuisine, Ochre Restaurant in Cairns offers an exciting range of unique dishes. The restaurant is styled to reflect the colours of the Outback, from the violet sunset banquettes to the earth red walls and natural timber, and local paintings that adorn the walls. Ochre is also known for offering sustainable Australian produce with a focus on local and native food such as kangaroo and emu which have no carbon emissions, no damage to the environment and no need for watering.

Head chef Craig Squire, who was a driving force behind the creation of the food trails and links body Australian Tropical Foods, said these meats along with the other bush spices and fruits on the menu are all chemical and hormone free and thus organic. Visit www.ochrerestaurant.com.au and www.australian-tropicalfoods.com

Oliver's twist on Australian cuisine

Experience modern Australian cuisine with an Asian and European twist at Oliver's restaurant in Cairns. Utilising fresh Australian ingredients, including traditional Aboriginal produce, typical signature dishes at Oliver's include the Emu and caramelised shallots rilette served with Yakajirri tomato jelly and bush herbs terrine, the prime beef fillet with a crust of macadamia nuts and rosella jam, and coral trout fillet steamed in seaweed vapour, served on braised lotus. Visit www.australianfinecuisine.com.au

For Dessert

Macadamia ice cream - you just can't drive past!

Nestled amongst the red soil of the cane fields in Childers, a four hour drive north of Brisbane, Mammino's produces some of Queensland's finest gourmet ice cream and macadamia nut products. Choose from a range of delicious macadamia ice cream flavours, spreads, coffee, tea, tarts, cookies and fudge and learn about the family company's humble beginnings from selling nuts on a roadside stall. Visit www.mammino.com.au

More than just a Big Mango in Bowen

Have your photo taken at Bowen's 'Big Mango' in the Whitsundays, taste some of the delicious and locally produced mango ice cream and speak to the locals about their brush with Hollywood fame. Greeting visitors as they drive into town, the Big Mango represents the fruit which carry the town's name sake – Bowen Mangos. Once only known for these delicious fruit, Bowen became known as 'Bowenwood' when it hosted Hollywood A-listers Hugh Jackman and Nicole Kidman for the filming of Baz Luhrmann's epic movie 'Australia' released in November 2008. Visit www.tourismbowen.com.au