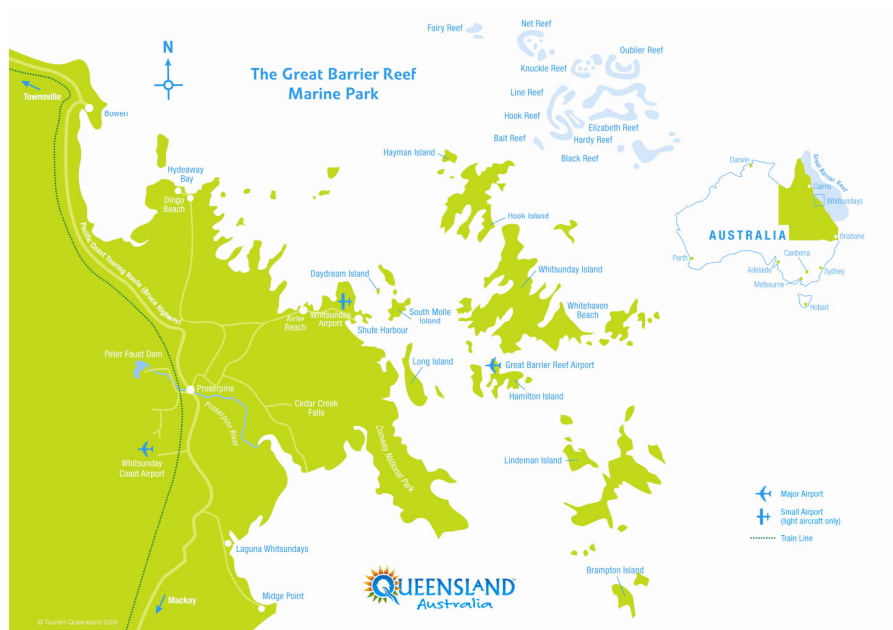


## Whitsundays

In the heart of the Great Barrier Reef lie the Whitsundays – 74 islands floating like jewels in the warm tropical waters of the Coral Sea. Only eight are home to secluded resorts, the rest are untouched hideaways of white sand and lush greenery.

A region of only 100 miles (160km), the Whitsundays lies midway along the Queensland coast. The area is part of a picturesque peninsula that reaches out to

the Whitsunday passage, renowned for its idyllic sailing conditions. The region spans from the beautiful beaches of Bowen in the north to the cane fields and sugar mills of inland Proserpine, south to the gorgeous golf greens of Laguna Whitsundays and east to its tropical islands. Seventy per cent of the Whitsundays is protected as National and Marine Park, making it an ideal destination for visitors looking for nature-based adventure or a romantic tropical island getaway.



## How to get here

**Airport:** Fly into Whitsunday Coast Airport, Proserpine or Great Barrier Reef Airport Hamilton Island (one and a half hours flying time from Brisbane).

**Location:** Proserpine is 30 minutes drive to Airlie Beach, the mainland gateway to the Whitsundays. Shute Harbour, the departure point for the islands and reef, is 10 minutes drive from Airlie Beach.

### Transfer options

- Train – Sunlander and Tilt Train link Proserpine to coastal centres including Brisbane and Cairns
- Whitsundays Transit, Whitsundays Shuttle Service, Airlie Beach Limousines, Whitsundays Taxis and Cruise Whitsundays
- Self drive

## Great Barrier Reef

It's easily accessible by day trip or island stay so take the plunge, it's the only way to be amongst dazzling fish and coral, a true wonder of the world. Choose from a variety of ways to experience the Great Barrier Reef including snorkelling, diving, day or overnight cruises to the outer reef or even semi-submersible boats. One of the best ways to view the reef is from the air. Scenic flights offer a birds' eye view of not only the entire Whitsunday coast and islands, but also one of its most distinctive features, Heart Reef, a popular choice for honeymooners.

## Ideas and inspiration

### Outdoor adventures

The range of adventures in and around Airlie Beach is endless with quad biking, jet skiing, parasailing, sky diving, fishing, horse riding, camel safaris and seasonal whale watching to name a few. The Whitsunday Great Walk through Conway National Park allows walkers to discover the lush rainforest and local wildlife.

### Diving

The Whitsundays offers two types of diving location: inner (fringing) islands or the outer Great Barrier Reef. Inner island diving is ideal for beginner divers because of the sheltered waters. Here visitors will see colourful coral, tropical fish species and quite possibly turtles or reef sharks. Outer reef diving is more varied with both shallow and deeper dive sites.

### Sailing

The Whitsundays offers numerous sailing options, from a sleek maxi racing yacht or an eco-certified tall ship adventure, a "bareboat" where you can chart your own course or a mini cruise liner. Visitors can choose to experience the thrill of a day tour option or perhaps enjoy a longer stay, spending several days onboard a vessel as it sails the picturesque waterways and islands of the Whitsundays.

### Must do!

- Sail around the 74 islands of the Whitsundays
- Sink your feet into the silica sands of Whitehaven Beach
- Enjoy a scenic flight over Heart Reef to a deserted beach for a private picnic
- Relax by Airlie Beach lagoon or dine seaside on the Esplanade
- Head to the beautiful beaches of Bowen or visit the historic town of Proserpine
- Hike through Conway State Forest
- Learn how to scuba dive off an inner island or at the outer Great Barrier Reef
- Indulge in a treatment at a spa
- Island hop in a ferry or on your own charter boat

### Whitehaven Beach

Consistently voted one of the best beaches in the world, Whitehaven is a must see. This expanse of pure white silica sand stretches 7km. This paradise is visited by day tours and longer sailing tours.

### Airlie Beach

Colourful, cosmopolitan and laidback, the gateway to the Whitsundays is the coastal community of Airlie Beach. With palm-fringed beaches and the popular Airlie Beach Lagoon, which allows year round swimming, the lively town offers a diverse range of day tours and cruising options, making it the perfect base for discovering all the Whitsundays has to offer.

Nightlife and dining options cater for all ages and budgets, whether it's a cold beer with the locals at a pub or an intimate seafood feast overlooking the Coral Sea.

### Star spas

Take time out for pampering in a resort day spa where treatment rooms overlook the azure waters of the Coral Sea. Options include yoga classes, couples rooms and natural therapies.

### Events!

- Airlie Beach Food & Wine Festival (May)
- Audi Hamilton Island Race Week (Aug)
- Airlie Beach Outrigger Carnival (Aug)
- Whitsunday Reef Festival (Nov)

### General Information

[www.thewhitsundays.com.au](http://www.thewhitsundays.com.au)