

FREE GUIDE · WANDERLUST

The East Coast **Route**

Sydney to Cairns: the stops, how long, the three big bookings, when to go and what it really costs.



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1 · THE ROUTE

Sydney to Cairns, stop by stop

1

Sydney 3 to 4 nights

Land, sleep off the flight and do the admin (SIM, Opal card, bank, tax file number) in the first two days. Then the free stuff is the best stuff: the Harbour Bridge footpath, the Bondi to Coogee coastal walk and the Manly ferry on your Opal card, which is the best harbour view in the city for a public transport fare. A Blue Mountains day is the one trip almost everyone does in week one. Dorms run roughly A\$45 to A\$60 a night in Bondi or the city.

2

Byron Bay 3 to 5 nights

The stop where everyone planned three nights and stayed a week. Learn to surf at The Pass or Clarkes Beach, do the 3.7 kilometre Cape Byron lighthouse loop at sunrise (free, and the first place on the mainland to catch the sun), kayak around the cape looking for the resident pod of dolphins, and watch whales from the headland between roughly June and November. It is one of the pricier stops, with dorms roughly A\$40 to A\$55, so cook at the hostel and spend on one or two things you really want. Ballina airport is about 30 minutes south if you'd rather fly this leg.

[3-Hour Small Group Surf Lesson in Byron Bay](#) · from \$89

[Byron Bay Surf & Stay \(3D/2N\)](#) · from \$279 [Byron Bay Whale Watching Safari](#) · from \$139

3

Gold Coast and Brisbane 1 to 2 nights

Plenty of people spend a night in Brisbane or skip it altogether. If you stop, South Bank has a free lagoon pool and the CityCat ferry is the best value sightseeing in the city, and one night is plenty. The Gold Coast sits between Byron and Brisbane, with surf lessons and jet boating on the guided tours that pass through. If you only have two weeks, Brisbane is where to fly in: Sydney to Brisbane is roughly 900 kilometres before you've touched a single Queensland headline stop.

[Oz Adventure, 10 Days Sydney to Brisbane](#) · from \$1,299

4

Noosa 2 to 3 nights

Behind the boutiques on Hastings Street is a national park coastal walk where koalas live in the gums near the entrance, a north-facing main beach with a slow, gentle wave for first-time surfers, and the Noosa Everglades, a full day paddling tannin-dark river water so still it mirrors the sky. The bus from Brisbane takes roughly two to two and a half hours. Several K'gari tag-along tours leave from Noosa and pick up at Rainbow Beach, so you can roll straight onto the island without an extra bus leg.

[Noosa Everglades Guided Kayak Day Trip](#) · from \$189

[K'gari 3-Day Tag-Along Safari from Noosa or Rainbow Beach](#) · from \$599

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Rainbow Beach or Hervey Bay, for K'gari 1 night, then 2 or 3 days on the island

K'gari (Fraser Island) is the world's largest sand island and the first of the big three. Rainbow Beach, two hours north of Noosa, is the backpacker default: the widest choice of tours, camping tag-alongs where you drive the 4WD in convoy behind a lead guide, and the island's eastern side, with 75 Mile Beach, the Maheno wreck, Eli Creek and Lake McKenzie. Sleep there the night before, because briefings start early. Hervey Bay is the northern gateway and the comfort option: beach houses with hot showers instead of tents, a resort tour with private rooms, and humpback whales resting in Platypus Bay from roughly July to October.

[K'gari 3-Day 4WD Tag-Along from Rainbow Beach](#) · from \$579

[K'gari 2-Day 4WD Tag-Along from Rainbow Beach](#) · from \$499

[K'gari 3-Day 4WD Escape Ex Hervey Bay](#) · from \$719

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Agnes Water and 1770 1 to 2 nights, optional

Rainbow Beach to Airlie Beach is around 1,000 kilometres, which means an overnight bus and the best part of a day on the road. Agnes Water is the surf town that breaks that leg, with beginner lessons and a surf camp. If you're short on time, skip it and treat the overnight bus as a dorm with a view: it also saves you a hostel night.

7

Airlie Beach and the Whitsundays

1 night before the boat, 2 nights on board, often 1 after

Airlie is the port for the Whitsundays and the second of the big three. The free lagoon and the marina at sunset make the night before the boat a good one. Two-night boats generally leave in the afternoon and are back mid-afternoon two days later, so a 2 day, 2 night trip needs three calendar days. Pack a small soft bag only: the boats won't take hard suitcases, and your main pack stays in hostel storage. If you only have a day, a day sail still gets you Whitehaven Beach, the Hill Inlet lookout and a snorkel.

[Hammer Maxi Sailing, 2 Days, 2 Nights in the Whitsundays](#) · from \$689

[Habibi 2 Day 1 Night Whitsunday Sailing](#) · from \$449

[Whitsundays Day Sail, Langford Sandbar & Snorkel](#) · from \$199

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Magnetic Island and Townsville **2 nights**

A ferry from Townsville and a slower couple of days: koalas, the forts walk and snorkelling bays. The semi-guided 28-day gives it two nights and the 17, 21 and 33-day trips stop here too. It sits between the Whitsundays and Cairns on the way north. Car hire on the island is extra on the semi-guided trips.

[East Coast Australia: 28-Day Semi-Guided Adventure](#) · from \$4,329

9

Mission Beach **1 night, optional**

Rainforest meets reef, and the other place people choose for their one skydive on the coast (Byron is the first). The 21-day and 33-day semi-guided trips stop here; on a bus pass it's an easy extra night before Cairns.

[East Coast Semi-Guided: 21 Days, Sydney to Cairns](#) · from \$3,099

[The East Coast Classic: 33 Days, Sydney to Cairns, Every Icon](#) · from \$4,909

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Cairns 3 to 5 nights

The finish line and the third of the big three. Book a full day on the outer reef, not a half day: the outer sites are where the coral and the visibility are, and getting there takes time. The Esplanade lagoon is free and the night markets are cheap, and dorms run roughly A\$35 to A\$50 a night. Keep a loose day at the end: flights slip and boats occasionally run late or cancel for weather, and the reef day is the one you can't afford to lose. The scenic railway to Kuranda, a waterfall run on the Tablelands or white-water rafting on the Tully fill a spare day.

[Full Day Outer Great Barrier Reef Tour](#) · from \$269 [Dreamtime Snorkel](#) · from \$249

[All-Inclusive Outer Reef Day Trip from Cairns](#) · from \$279

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Daintree and Cape Tribulation 1 day, optional

A day trip north from Cairns into the rainforest, done as an add-on from your Cairns base rather than a stop in its own right. It's extra on every tour and package, so leave it for the spare day if the budget stretches.

[Cape Tribulation Day Tour](#) · from \$209

2 · WHICH WAY

North or south?

Sydney to Cairns is the classic

Sydney, Byron Bay, Brisbane, Rainbow Beach for K'gari, Airlie Beach for the Whitsundays, then Cairns for the reef. You start in the big city, do the admin while you shake off the flight, and finish in the tropics with the three headline trips in the second half.

The other way round works just as well

Tours and buses run both ways and the semi-guided trips run in either direction for the same price. Pick whichever direction gives you cheaper flights. A Cairns start puts the reef first and the K'gari tag-along last.

[East Coast Semi-Guided: 21 Days, Sydney to Cairns](#) · from \$3,099

Think of the coast as two climates

The north splits into a dry season (roughly May to October) and a wet season (roughly November or December to March or April). Sydney and Byron are a different story: in June, July and August the nights drop to single digits while Cairns sits in the mid-20s. Doing the full run in winter means packing for both.

Stingers set your wardrobe, not your dates

Marine stingers are around in the tropical north from roughly October or November to May. Reef and sailing boats supply full-body stinger suits in that window and you wear one for every snorkel. It's a wardrobe note, not a reason to stay home.

Only two weeks? Start in Brisbane

The full Sydney to Cairns run needs three weeks minimum. With a fortnight, fly into Brisbane, fly out of Cairns and keep all four Queensland headline stops: Noosa, K'gari, the Whitsundays and the reef. Byron and Sydney are brilliant, but they're a different trip.

[East Coast Australia: 14-Day Semi-Guided Adventure](#) · from \$2,599

3 · HOW LONG

What fits in 2, 3, 4 or 5+ weeks

2 weeks: Brisbane to Cairns

Fourteen days fits Noosa, three days on K'gari, two nights on a Whitsundays boat and a full reef day, with three days mostly in transit (Brisbane to Cairns is roughly 1,700 kilometres by road, so two of them are overnight buses). Anything under 12 days means dropping one of the four. If you need a spare day, take it from Brisbane, never from Cairns.

[East Coast Australia: 14-Day Semi-Guided Adventure](#) · from \$2,599

[Oz East Coast Adventure, 20 Days Brisbane to Cairns](#) · from \$4,189

3 weeks: the full run at minimum pace

Three weeks is the minimum for Sydney to Cairns and the sweet spot for most people: four days in Sydney, three in Byron, K'gari, the Whitsundays and four or five days in Cairns, with two overnight buses and a travel day via Brisbane. You can squeeze it into 14 days if you're rushing, and it turns into a forced march.

[East Coast Semi-Guided: 21 Days, Sydney to Cairns](#) · from \$3,099

[Sydney to Cairns: 17-Day Semi-Guided Adventure](#) · from \$2,999

4 weeks: the comfortable version

A month removes the rush. The 28-day semi-guided split is two nights in Sydney, two at a beachfront surf camp, four in Byron, two in Noosa, one in Rainbow Beach, two camping on K'gari, three in Airlie, two aboard the boat, two on Magnetic Island and five in Cairns, with two overnight coaches in between. That's every big stop without skipping anything.

[East Coast Australia: 28-Day Semi-Guided Adventure](#) · from \$4,329

[Oz East Coast Adventure, 28 Days Sydney to Cairns](#) · from \$5,199

5 weeks or more: every stop, or Melbourne on the front

Five weeks adds the Gold Coast, Brisbane and Mission Beach nights the shorter runs skip, and leaves spare days for weather. Six weeks adds a Sydney week in front; seven starts in Melbourne with the Great Ocean Road. The longer the trip, the lower the cost per day, because the fixed-price adventures are spread over more nights of cheaper beds.

[The East Coast Classic: 33 Days, Sydney to Cairns, Every Icon](#) · from \$4,909

[East Coast Explorer Sydney to Cairns \(5 Weeks\)](#) · from \$5,789

[East Coast Explorer 7 Week Tour from Melbourne](#) · from \$7,989

What to cut when the days run out

Cut city nights before island nights. Brisbane first, then a Sydney day, then the optional stops (Agnes Water, Mission Beach, the Daintree). Cut those before you shorten the boat or K'gari, and don't skip a headline stop to save a bus leg; that's the wrong trade, because the big three are what the trip is for.

4 · HOW TO GET AROUND

Bus pass, tour, semi-guided or campervan

A hop-on hop-off bus pass

One ticket for the length you pick, 7 to 45 days, any route, any direction, and you reserve each leg online as you go. Buses stop outside or near the main hostels and overnight services run the long legs. It's transport only: every bed, ferry and tour is yours to book. The lowest upfront spend and the only model where you can change route halfway. In December to February and school holidays, book legs a few days ahead rather than the night before.

[Greyhound East Coast Pass \(Create Your Own\), 7 to 45 Days](#) · from \$319

[Greyhound National Pass \(Create Your Own\), 15 to 45 Days](#) · from \$389

A fully guided group tour

One booking, one group, one leader, first hostel to last, on set departure dates. The 28-day Sydney to Cairns version runs with 22 to 28 people, 27 nights of hostels, 24 meals and all the transport, with K'gari, a 2-night sail, Magnetic Island and an outer reef day included. The most automatic way to meet people and the lowest freedom: the dates and route are the point.

[Oz East Coast Adventure, 28 Days Sydney to Cairns](#) · from \$5,199

[Oz East Coast Adventure, 20 Days Brisbane to Cairns](#) · from \$4,189

[Oz Adventure, 10 Days Sydney to Brisbane](#) · from \$1,299

Travel Mates, our semi-guided trips

The middle path, and our own line. One booking covers the bus pass, every night's bed and the big adventures, pre-booked in a set itinerary. Guides run the big days (K'gari, the sail, the reef, surf lessons); the days between are yours in each town. It's open-dated for 12 months, you pick the start date, it runs even if you're the only booking, and the itinerary never changes once it's set. Priced by the month you start, and bookings are usually confirmed within 24 hours.

[East Coast Semi-Guided: 21 Days, Sydney to Cairns](#) · from \$3,099

[East Coast Australia: 14-Day Semi-Guided Adventure](#) · from \$2,599

[K'gari + Whitsundays Combo](#) · from \$1,499

An activities-only package

If you already have a bus pass, a campervan or flights, you only need the adventures. The East Coast Starter Package is a 2-day K'gari 4WD tag-along plus a full Whitsundays day sail; the Big Three adds a reef day from Cairns. Each is priced as its parts added together at today's prices and rounded down, so you never pay more than booking them one by one, and you choose a date for each or leave it open.

[East Coast Starter Package: K'gari 2-Day 4WD + Whitsundays Day Sail](#) · from \$689

[East Coast Big Three Package: K'gari 4WD, Whitsundays Sail & Great Barrier Reef](#) · from \$879

A campervan

Your transport and your bed in one vehicle, picked up in one city and dropped in another. Total freedom and a fuel bill: budget for a 2,500 kilometre drive, caravan park fees most nights and a bond on your card. Split between two or three people it comes close to a hostel bed plus a bus fare. For a solo traveller it is the most expensive option by a long way, and you need a licence you trust. Priced by quote, because season, van size and one-way fees move it so much.

Which one, then

Tightest budget and six weeks spare: the pass, and book the big three early. Three to five weeks, first time in Australia, solo: semi-guided. Fixed dates and you want a leader and a locked-in crew: the guided tour. A couple with a licence and time: the van. Whichever you pick, the stops are the same and so is the water.

K'gari, the Whitsundays and the reef

K'gari: how to choose

Every K'gari tour is four decisions: where you leave from (Rainbow Beach, Noosa, Hervey Bay or Brisbane), whether you drive or get driven, where you sleep (twin-share tents at an enclosed beach camp, or a beach house with hot showers from Hervey Bay) and how many days. On a tag-along you share the driving behind a lead guide, no 4WD experience needed, but you need a licence to take the wheel and passengers are welcome. Some tours are 18 to 35 only; the day tours and Hervey Bay tours take all ages.

[K'gari 3-Day 4WD Tag-Along from Rainbow Beach](#) · from \$579

[K'gari \(Fraser Island\) 3-Day Adventure from Rainbow Beach](#) · from \$599

[K'gari 3-Day 4WD Escape Ex Hervey Bay](#) · from \$719

K'gari: two days or three

Two days (one night) covers Lake McKenzie, Eli Creek and the Maheno wreck and suits a tight bus-pass schedule. The third day adds Lake Wabby, Champagne Pools and Indian Head, a second night at camp (where the crew tends to form) and a calmer pace. If you can spare the night, spare it. Tag-alongs list a driver liability excess with optional paid reductions (for example A\$25 or A\$50 on the day), and some camping tours ask for a refundable sleeping-bag hire deposit.

[K'gari 2-Day 4WD Tag-Along from Rainbow Beach](#) · from \$499

[K'gari 3-Day 4WD Tag-Along from Rainbow Beach](#) · from \$579

[K'gari Day Tour from Rainbow Beach or Noosa](#) · from \$279

The Whitsundays: pick the vibe, then the length

Every overnight boat out of Airlie visits roughly the same places: Whitehaven Beach, the Hill Inlet lookout and a couple of fringing-reef snorkel stops. What changes is the boat. Ex-racing maxis and racing yachts are fast, social and basic, 20-plus people in shared bunks, and you'll be invited to help with the sails. Catamarans are stable, roomy and air-conditioned, the pick if you get seasick or want a real cabin. Ketches and small-crew yachts are slower and quieter with more time with the skipper.

[Hammer Maxi Sailing, 2 Days, 2 Nights in the Whitsundays](#) · from \$689

[Apollo Whitsundays Sailing, 3 Days 2 Nights](#) · from \$689

[British Defender Whitsundays Sailing, 3 Days 2 Nights](#) · from \$699

The Whitsundays: day sail, 2D/1N, 2D/2N or 3D/2N

A day sail gets you Whitehaven, Hill Inlet and a snorkel and has you back by evening. 2 days, 1 night is the budget overnight. 2 days, 2 nights is the format most people mean when they say they did the Whitsundays: two nights, one full day, two half days. 3 days, 2 nights boards in the morning instead of the afternoon, so you get an extra half day on the water; if the price is close, take it. Bring earplugs, seasickness tablets taken before you leave the marina, a soft bag, and cans only if you're drinking.

[Habibi 2 Day 1 Night Whitsunday Sailing](#) · from \$449

[Whitsundays Day Sail, Langford Sandbar & Snorkel](#) · from \$199

[British Defender Whitsundays Sailing, 3 Days 2 Nights](#) · from \$699

The Great Barrier Reef: the price ladder

From the bottom up: an island or coral cay day (Green Island, calm inner-reef water, time on land), an outer reef boat that moves between two or three sites with lunch and snorkel gear included (the day most backpackers book), a pontoon day on a platform moored to the outer reef with a semi-sub and glass-bottom boat (suits weak swimmers and anyone who gets seasick), scenic flights, and multi-day dive liveaboards. Most backpackers do one outer reef day from Cairns and call it done. Some boats add a A\$10 fuel levy per adult on the day, and an intro dive is extra on most.

[Full Day Outer Great Barrier Reef Tour](#) · from \$269

[Dreamtime Snorkel](#) · from \$249

[All-Inclusive Outer Reef Day Trip from Cairns](#) · from \$279

Book in this order

The Whitsundays boat first: boats sail on fixed departure days with a fixed number of berths, and the social ones sell out in peak season. The K'gari tag-along second: specific departure days and limited vehicles per convoy, with the January school holidays the busiest window on the island. Then the bus pass, because once the two tours are fixed the legs between them are obvious. The reef day last: it runs daily and is the easiest to leave late, but book it before you arrive in peak season anyway. A bus pass does not hold you a seat on a boat.

[East Coast Big Three Package: K'gari 4WD, Whitsundays Sail & Great Barrier Reef](#) · from \$879

[K'gari + Whitsundays Combo](#) · from \$1,499

The East Coast, month by month

April to May and September to October: the sweet spots

Warm, mostly dry and less crowded than the school holiday peaks. April and May are drying out after the wet, with K'gari calmer than summer and the lakes still warm. September and October are the all-rounder: dry, warming, lighter winds, whales still around Byron and Hervey Bay, and before stinger season properly starts.

June to August: dry up north, cold down south

The driest, clearest weather in the tropics and humpbacks on the move along the whole coast. Sydney and Byron have single-digit nights, and tent nights on K'gari are cold, so a beach-house tour earns its keep. July is peak dry season and a school holiday month, so book the big tours early. August is quieter.

November to March: the wet season

Hot, humid, afternoon storms, the heaviest rain in the later months and cyclone season, so boats occasionally cancel for weather. Build in a spare day before any flight. The upside is warm water, green islands and, outside the Christmas rush, far fewer travellers. February and March are the quiet, standard-price months after the school holidays end.

Stinger season

Roughly October or November through to May in the tropical north. Reef and sailing boats supply stinger suits in that window and you wear one for every snorkel; outside it they're optional, but they stop sunburn on your back while you float over coral.

School holidays and Christmas

Australian school holidays fill hostels and sell out boats weeks ahead: Easter, the late June to July break, late September to early October, and the long December to January summer break.

Christmas and New Year land in the hot, wet, stinger half of the year and are still the busiest time of the whole year. Christmas Day is the one day the coast mostly closes. May, early June, August and November are the quiet months.

What your start month does to the price

Our semi-guided trips are priced by the month you start, not the months you travel through.

December and January are peak (and July on some trips), April, September and November are high season, and the rest of the year is standard. A start on 31 January is peak; a start on 1 February is not. You see the exact price for your dates before you pay.

[East Coast Semi-Guided: 21 Days, Sydney to Cairns](#) · from \$3,099

[East Coast Australia: 28-Day Semi-Guided Adventure](#) · from \$4,329

7 · WHAT IT COSTS

What the East Coast really costs

Most backpackers spend around A\$4,000 to A\$6,000 for three weeks from Sydney to Cairns, depending on how often they say yes to a big night or an extra tour, and not counting flights to Australia. These are the lines that make up that number, per person in AUD. The big tours are the largest single block and the one that doesn't flex; drinks are where budgets leak.

ITEM	TYPICAL COST (AUD)
Dorm bed Sydney about A\$45–60, Byron A\$40–55, Cairns A\$35–50. Private rooms cost noticeably more.	A\$35–60 a night
Beds for 3 weeks (dorms) Overnight bus legs save a hostel night. Four weeks runs roughly A\$950–1,600.	A\$900–1,200
Transport (bus pass, a flight or two) The bus pass is priced by length, 7 to 45 days; the per-day cost falls steeply the longer it is. Flying the long legs saves a day each way but adds cost.	A\$400–700
The big three: K'gari, the Whitsundays sail, an outer reef day Priced on their own listings and the largest line on any DIY budget.	A\$1,600–1,800
Food If you cook some of it. Hostels have kitchens. Roughly A\$400–700 over three weeks.	A\$30–50 a day
Drinks and nights out A night out in Airlie before or after the boat is about A\$50–80. Hostel bars add up fast.	A\$200–500 for 3 weeks
Other activities (surf lesson, rainforest, rafting) A skydive, extra dives, a scenic flight or the Daintree day are extra on every option.	A\$350–600
Buffer: insurance and yes moments Travel insurance is never included in a tour price and is compulsory on the semi-guided trips. Don't skip it.	A\$250–500
Spending money on a semi-guided or guided trip Meals on free days, drinks and small extras, on top of the trip price.	A\$50–70 a day
Small extras on the day A fuel levy of A\$10 per adult on some reef boats; an optional A\$25 or A\$50 driver excess reduction on K'gari tag-alongs.	A\$10–50

Add it up and a budget three weeks lands around A\$4,100, a comfortable one around A\$6,000. Doing it yourself with a pass often lands close to a semi-guided bundle once you've paid for the same beds and the same three tours, and in peak season the bundle also removes the sell-out risk. Every tour we sell shows its live price on its page, and the free budget calculator on our site totals your weeks, route, transport and tours from today's prices.

Prices checked October 2026. Live prices for every trip we sell are on [our tours page](#).

Your first days in Australia

The working holiday visa

The Working Holiday visa (subclass 417) is set by the Department of Home Affairs, the rules change, and we're a travel company, not migration agents, so check the official pages before you decide anything. As at October 2026, UK passport holders don't need to do specified work (the famous 88 days) for a second or third visa, since 1 July 2024, and the UK upper age limit is 35. Most other nationalities still need three months of eligible regional work for a second visa and six for a third. A ballot for second and third year visas was announced in September 2026 but isn't law yet and has no start date.

Your first two days: do the admin

You'll be jet-lagged, so do the boring stuff now. Buy a prepaid SIM or eSIM first (bring an unlocked phone): you need an Australian number before you open a bank account or apply for a tax file number. Then pick up an Opal card for Sydney's trains, buses, ferries and light rail, or tap on with a contactless bank card for the same adult fare; fares are capped per day and per week.

Bank account and tax file number

If you plan to work, start the bank account online in the first few days and verify your identity in a branch with your passport; the card is posted to an Australian address, and hostels are used to this. Apply for a tax file number online through the Australian Taxation Office once you're physically in Australia. It's free, arrives by post in a few weeks, and without one an employer withholds tax at the highest rate. When you start work you'll be asked for superannuation details too.

Doing your 88 days without getting burnt

Be wary of paying anyone to find you farm work; some placement schemes charge upfront for a bed and transport and deliver patchy work. Start with the government's free Harvest Trail service, keep payslips, your employer's ABN, dates and hours, and know your rights: late pay, sign-on fees or pay below minimum rates are red flags, and the Fair Work Ombudsman (13 13 94) helps visa holders. Our free 88-day counter checks every postcode against the Home Affairs lists.

Getting around once you leave Sydney

The coast was built around the bus route: coaches stop in the centre of each town or near the hostels, overnight services run the long legs, and every stop that matters is on it, so you don't need a licence. Buses have Wi-Fi, USB power and a toilet on board. Domestic sale fares can be cheap if you'd rather fly the two long legs (Sydney to Ballina for Byron, or Proserpine to Cairns after the boat). Tap water is drinkable the whole way up.

Book your first few nights before you fly

The hostel is the biggest first-week spend, and the best things in Sydney (the bridge walk, Bondi to Coogee, the Manly ferry) cost next to nothing. Central and Haymarket have the most hostels and the most people in the same boat as you; Bondi is beach life and early mornings. Buy sunscreen and a hat on day one: the sun here is stronger than you think, even when it's cloudy.

Visa and entry rules can change. Check the Department of Home Affairs before you fly. Guide updated October 2026.

9 · PACKING LIST

What goes in the bag

- ☐ A 50 to 65 litre backpack with no wheels, plus a foldable 15 to 20 litre daypack (it doubles as your soft overnight bag on the Whitsundays boat)
- ☐ Swimmers, two pairs: one is always wet
- ☐ A rashie or long-sleeve swim top: the UV on this coast is extreme most of the year
- ☐ Reef-safe sunscreen, SPF 50+, hat, sunglasses with a strap
- ☐ Thongs and one pair of closed shoes you can walk in (the sand on the walk to Lake Wabby gets hot enough to hurt)
- ☐ Microfibre towel: dries in an hour, packs to nothing
- ☐ Head torch: essential on K'gari, handy on boats, and the only polite way to find your bunk after midnight
- ☐ Dry bag, 10 to 20 litres, for phone, wallet and passport on boats and 4WD beach runs
- ☐ Padlock: hostel lockers rarely come with one
- ☐ Type I power adapter (angled flat pins, 230V) and a small power board with USB ports
- ☐ Reusable water bottle, earplugs for the boat, seasickness tablets and a basic first-aid kit
- ☐ A light hoodie for cold bus and boat air-con, and in winter a proper jacket, jeans, socks and a beanie for Sydney and Byron

- ☐ Leave at home: a hard suitcase (won't go on the boat), a sleeping bag for hostels (linen is included and many dorms ban them; hire one on K'gari if the tour needs it), and full-size toiletries

Want it planned for you?

Tell us your dates and the big things you want to do. We put the route, the tours and your beds together and send you one price.

[Plan my East Coast trip](#)

wanderlusttravel.com.au/plan-my-trip · hello@wanderlusttravel.com.au