

Cruising itinerary

Set proudly in the 'Sunshine State' of Queensland, cultured Cairns is the gateway to many of Australia's famous UNESCO sites, including the Great Barrier Reef, the Whitsunday Islands, Fraser Island and Queensland's tropical north.

Day One: Opal Reef

After a few days spent exploring the city of Cairns, start your onward journey by meeting the superyacht at Cairns Marlin Marina. Settle in and enjoy a leisurely lunch aboard while the crew gets the yacht underway to Opal Reef to the northeast, marking the first of many opportunities to see and experience the [Great Barrier Reef](#) (GBR).



Vlassof Cay, Great Barrier Reef

At 348,700sqkm, you could spend forever exploring the 2,900-plus individual reefs, 300 coral cays and 600 continental islands that make up the GBR, but Opal Reef is a great place to start. This large and shallow dive site has ample variety of sites and species to explore. Crescent-shaped, you'll be largely protected from the prevailing wind on the inner side allowing you to spend the day exploring the changing ecosystems of the 12 or more dive sites that make up Opal, before enjoying a peaceful night's rest at anchor with good food and great company.

The Reef is best experienced during the summer months when the winds are low and the visibility is good, but comfortable water temperatures make it accessible all year around. It is the only place in the world where the spectacular coral spawning can be accurately predicted and witnessed. Visit at the right time of year and you'll find this stunning show taking place; here in

the outer reef, it occurs in November and December, while it's slightly earlier in the inner reef during October.

Day Two: Agincourt, Escape and the Ribbon Reefs

Awake to the sounds of the ocean and soak up the scenic cruise north along the inside of the Great Barrier Reef to the Agincourt Reefs where you'll snorkel and kayak at your leisure while enjoying a lazy breakfast buffet.



Watersports on the Reef ©Matt Curnock

Afterward, hop to the next reef to meet your fishing charter and local guide for a day of deep-sea game fishing at Escape Reef before heading on to the Ribbon Reefs to begin a couple more days of spectacular diving. There are more varieties of fish living on the GBR than in any other marine ecosystem on earth, so you are likely to see, meet and catch bigger and more diverse varieties of fish than anywhere else on earth.

When the heat gets too much, take a plunge into the waters at 'Steve's Bommie'; a legendary dive site and isolated pinnacle southwest of Ribbon Reef No.3. Here you'll be surrounded by large schools of pelagic fish and gardens of hard and soft coral. Seek out Steve Bommie's memorial plaque at 25m and look out for cruising Barracuda and White Tip Reef Shark; you'll enjoy views of numerous large coral heads within the lagoon, and a tremendous variety of colourful tropical fish.

If visiting in June or July, it's worthwhile taking a visit to Ribbon Reef No.5, known as 'Andy's Postcard'. Here guests may be lucky enough to see dozens of migrating Minke Whales who

often swim up to the yacht's stern, allowing you to join them in the water for the firsthand experience of a lifetime.

Enjoy the sunset on the deck while the crew prepares a feast of your freshly caught fish from the day, to eat while appreciating the changing southern sky, which provides a great opportunity for stargazing from the deck.



Aerial view of the Great Barrier Reef corals

Day Three: Pixie's Reef and Lizard Island

Schedule the crew to move the boat overnight for an early arrival at Pixie's Reef between Ribbon Reefs 9 and 10 - renowned for its exceptional underwater photography. There are a number of different dive sites here for those of varying diving abilities, including Pixie's Cave, Pixie Gardens and Pixie Pinnacle.

Lunch today will be enjoyed at anchor at Dynamite Pass, with the afternoon spent snorkeling another world-class dive at Cod Hole alongside Australia's infamous Giant Potato Cod who are well used to friendly divers and can be handfed.

A sunset cruise to Lizard Island will follow, allowing you to feel the heat of the Australian sunshine. Arrive at Lizard Island, the largest of six islands making up the Lizard Island National Park, and anchor in the picturesque Watson's Bay for the night. Entertainment for the evening will be provided by the yacht's underwater lights, which should attract huge Grouper and schools of Trevally off the stern all night long.



Giant Potato Cod

Day Four: Cooktown

An early start will afford you the best morning swim from your anchor at Watson's Bay, and a view of the enchanting Clam Garden with its sea of 'giant' clams. Climb aboard to get underway to the mainland for an excursion to Cooktown – a quaint town and the site of Australia's first indigenous settlement.

Tender ashore to climb the 162m up Grassy Hill - Captain Cook's Lookout, for 360-degree scenic views out across the Southwest Rocks. Between May and July and August and October you might catch sight of Humpback Whales and dolphin as they swim past the headland, and many species of birdlife and wild flower can also be spotted.

There are plenty of cultural sites to indulge in in Cooktown, including the Cooktown Light active lighthouse, the James Cook Historical Museum, Natures Powerhouse and the Botanical Gardens to name but a few.

Alternatively, take a walk along one of the many walking trails to Walkers Bay – a beautiful setting for a picnic lunch. There's opportunity for windsurfing or beach volleyball here, but finish in good time to make the most of the daylight with a short scenic helicopter ride before sunset to really appreciate the panoramic colours of the reef from above the waterline.



Cooktown Lighthouse

In the evening enjoy music and cocktails on the fly bridge deck as the sun sets before heading south on the yacht overnight.

Day Five: Mackay Sand Cay and Daintree National Park

Start the day with a relaxing swim in the turquoise shallows of the Mackay Reef and then refuel with a solitary breakfast ashore the picturesque Mackay Sand Cay. Take a little time to relax and appreciate what may be the last of the Great Barrier Reef as the afternoon will be a busy one on the mainland.

Heading west to the coast, you'll want to take a private tour of the rainforest scenery of the [Daintree National Park](#) and [Cape Tribulation](#). The [Daintree Rainforest](#) contains the oldest surviving rainforest in the world, littered with mountainous scenery and breathtaking sights and experiences. The best time to take a rainforest tour is in Australia's summer, between December and February when it's at its most luxurious with the rivers and waterfalls flowing.

Day Six: Port Douglas and Kuranda

Spend the morning exploring Port Douglas eating, shopping at the boutiques or relaxing at one of the town's fantastic day spas. Further south at Kuranda you'll be able to take a ride of the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway or Kuranda Railway, and white water raft along the Tully River.



Kuranda Railway

Day Seven: Onward...

Your final days in Queensland offer a range of further places to explore and sights to see. Enjoy outstanding service standards at the private Double Island retreat, which, accessible by launch or helicopter, allows you to spend time relaxing in oversized hammocks hung in the trees, or relaxing in the meditative Zen Garden; visit the remote and obscure region of Kimberley, which, practically undiscovered is home to the famous Horizontal Waterfalls, Kings Cascades, the Mitchell Plateau and 40,000-year-old hidden Bradshaw Art; or travel by land to Milla Milla Falls or the Undara Lava Tubes, which span 1,300km.

Heading south aboard, you'll arrive at Airlie Beach - the gateway to the Whitsunday Islands, or further afield, Fraser Island; the world's largest sand island.