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Australia, 11 Nights, \$1,775

Explore the Great Barrier Reef, camp in the Outback, and experience city life, Aussie-style, during this journey along the eastern coast of Australia from Brisbane to Cairns.

Friday, October 5, 2007;



The Real Deal Eleven nights' accommodations, local transportation, guided tours, and some meals from \$1,775 per person—including taxes and fees.

When Tour groups congregate in Brisbane on Nov. 29 and Dec. 20, 2007; additional departures available in 2008.

The Fine Print The package price of \$1,775 divides into \$1,610 paid in advance and AUD\$200 (about US\$165) paid in cash upon arrival to ease payments to local suppliers. Local transportation by minibus, 4WD vehicle, ferry, and sailboat is included, as are three breakfasts, three lunches, and three dinners. All taxes and fuel surcharges are included. Mandatory travel insurance is additional; the average

insurance cost is \$60-\$80 per person. Group size is limited to 12 persons. A tourist visa is required for entry to Australia; one quick and simple method is to apply online for an [Electronic Travel Authority](#), a stampless visa that takes about five minutes to process and costs \$17. You can also apply for an ETA in person at the embassy for free. Trips are designed for shared accommodation; no single supplement. Read [these guidelines](#) before you book any Real Deal.

Book By No deadline; based on availability. The company recommends booking at least one month in advance of tour departure date.

Contact Intrepid Travel, 866/847-8192, intrepidtravel.com.

Why It's a Deal Following this tour's itinerary on your own would mean making many separate arrangements and reservations for accommodations, camping, vehicle permits on Fraser Island, sailing and diving excursions, and car or bus transportation north along Australia's eastern coast. This Intrepid package, the cost of which breaks down to about \$160 per person per night, covers 11 nights' lodging and transportation, plus the cost of all the activities you would otherwise have to pay for individually, and provides hassle-free trip planning.

Trip Details The [Queensland Adventure Northbound](#) guided tour includes local transportation along Australia's eastern shore from Brisbane to Cairns, plus eleven nights' accommodations of varying types. Nights are spent in local hotels, motels, and permanent twin-share tents, as well as a traditional bush camp, a multi-share bunkhouse, and a rain-forest hut.

The trip begins in Brisbane, Queensland's capital, with a one-night stay at the Best Western-affiliated [Astor Metropole](#), which faces Central Station. Rise early the next day for the drive north, stopping at Noosa Heads, a spectacular lagoon along Australia's Sunshine Coast. By late afternoon, you'll reach Hervey Bay, gateway to World Heritage site Fraser Island. Days three and four will be spent exploring in this nature lover's paradise, where you'll camp in a permanent tent and have plenty of time to discover the island's lush rainforests, freshwater lakes, and sun-drenched beaches teeming with birds and wildlife.

On days five and six, the group heads inland for a taste of Aussie life on a working cattle station, where you'll join in on daily farm activities and even learn how to lasso a calf! At night, curl up beside the roaring campfire inside your cozy swag—an Aussie bedroll—camping out in the bush under the stars.

Board a sailboat for two days of island-hopping among the Whitsundays, a collection of 74 islands surrounded by the Great Barrier Reef. Swim, snorkel, and dive in crystal-clear waters by day, and bed down at night in bungalows at the seaside resort town of Airlie Beach.

Heading north for the tropical coves of Mission Beach on days 9 and 10, you'll camp in huts surrounded by rain-forest and have time to explore this small, relaxed community at your leisure. Activities abound for the adventure inclined, including white-water rafting on the Tully River, horseback rides, half-day coastal paddles, and tandem skydives.

Your trip concludes with a night in Cairns, the gateway to

northern Queensland, Daintree National Park, and the pristine sandy beaches of Cape Tribulation. You can set off to explore on your own after the tour ends, or you can extend your stay at the [Hotel Cairns](#) for \$52 per person per night, based on double occupancy. If you choose, you can also tack on extra nights in Brisbane at the beginning of your trip for \$45 per person per night, based on double occupancy, or \$90 per night for a room to yourself.

For more information on what to see and do in these cities, check the official tourism board websites for [Brisbane](#) and [Cairns](#).

Remember that the seasons in Australia are the opposite of ours, so the valid travel dates for this package are during Queensland's late spring and early summer. From December through February, local temperatures can climb from 70 degrees in points south to as high as 95 degrees during the day in Cairns, and it can be humid. Before you go, check the [weather forecast](#), the [local time](#), and the [exchange rate](#) on [BudgetTravel.com](#).

More on Australia:

- [Animal Encounters: Cuddle a Koala in Queensland](#)
- [Australia: The Great Ocean Walk](#)
- [Three Cutting-Edge Sydney Neighborhoods](#)