



Brisbane & the Gold Coast

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Best Places to Eat

- » E'cco (p291)
- » Ortega (p292)
- » Mondo Organics (p294)
- » Oskars (p320)
- » Elephant Rock Café (p320)

Best Places to Stay

- » Treasury (p287)
- » Portal (p287)
- » Limes (p289)
- » Komune (p322)

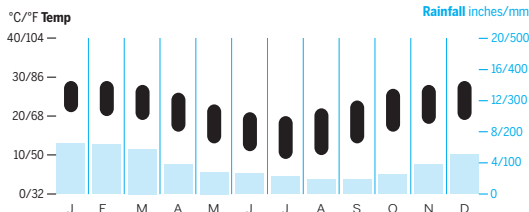
Why Go?

Boasting 35 beaches and 300 sunny days a year, the Gold Coast promises its four million annual visitors a taste of the quintessential Aussie lifestyle of sun, surf and fun. The beaches are spectacular, with excellent surfing at Burleigh Heads, Currumbin, Kirra and Duranbah; and there's never a dull moment, whether you're joining the brash party scene of Surfers Paradise, island exploring on lovely Moreton Bay or simply soaking up the seaside charm of towns strung south along the coast. In the lush, subtropical hinterland, Lamington and Springbrook National Parks have rainforest walks, waterfalls and cosy mountain retreats.

Gateway to the Gold Coast is Brisbane, an easygoing city with a vibrant arts scene, burgeoning nightlife and first-rate dining. Brisbanites make good use of the temperate climate and lovely riverside setting, with weekends spent jogging, cycling, kayaking and rock-climbing, wandering through outdoor markets or dining and drinking at lovely open-air spots all across town.

When to Go

Brisbane



January Summer brings high heat, humidity and sometimes rain.

May Sunny, days during the mild winters attract sun-worshippers from across the globe.

September Springtime brings warm pleasant temperatures and lively festivals.

TOP TIP

Brisbane has great food markets, with delicacies, live music and big crowds (go early). The top two are the bimonthly Jan Power's Farmers Market (p302) and the Saturday West End Market (p302).

Fast Facts

- » Population: 2.3 million
- » Area: 6150 sq km
- » Telephone Code: 07

Planning your Trip

- » Book your accommodation at <http://hotels.lonelyplanet.com> or www.wotif.com.
- » Think about how you'll be getting around the region and hire a car or check bus and train schedules (www.translink.com.au).

Resources

- » Our Brisbane (www.ourbrisbane.com) Great all-round site on Brisbane.
- » Visit Gold Coast (www.visitgoldcoast.com) Attractions, events and destination profiles.
- » Gold Coast (www.goldcoast.com) News, sports, surf reports, gossip and more.

Island Dreaming

Known for big-city allure and great beaches, Brisbane and the Gold Coast also have some fantastic island settings where long lovely shorelines and bushland interiors are ripe for exploring. Moreton Island has sandy tracks but no roads, so you'll need a 4WD to discover this idyllic subtropical island (you can also join a day or overnight tour). North Stradbroke has paved roads and more services, with options for diving, snorkelling, surfing and sea kayaking. You may want your own wheels to visit the island's pristine lakes. South Straddie is car-free, making for a peaceful getaway. All of the islands have bushwalking and magnificent whale-watching in season (June to November), so don't forget your binoculars.

DON'T MISS

The heady Gold Coast has some of the most inviting sun-drenched shores along the East Coast. Party-loving Surfers Paradise has a pretty beach and good surf, but for more relaxing beaches head further south. Burleigh Heads has white-sand beaches backed by photogenic rocky headland and amazing surfing. Coolangatta and neighbouring Tweed Heads are also charming seaside villages, with long beach walks, friendly locals and an easygoing pace. If you're not a surfer, but keen to give it a go, there are plenty of places where you can learn along the Gold Coast, including laid-back Currumbin Alley, an ideal place for beginners.

Outdoor Adventures

- » The 200-sq-km Lamington National Park (p325), with its subtropical rainforests, steep cliffs and wildlife-filled valleys, has superb bushwalking. Serious hikers can tackle the 24km Border Trail, linking two sections of the park. There's also a scenic tree-top canopy walk.
- » Remnant of a vast 23-million-year-old shield volcano, Springbrook National Park (p324) has lush subtropical scenery with deep gorges, awe-inspiring waterfalls and rich flora and fauna. You can lodge in a woodland-surrounded guesthouse or chalet – a fine base to take in the park's beauty.
- » Brisbane has its own share of outdoor adventure, from running or cycling along the riverside paths to kayaking on the river or rock-climbing on the Kangaroo Point Cliffs. Easy day trips from the CBD include Mt Coot-tha Reserve (p282) with its short bush walks and lovely views over town. The trails of D'Aguilar Range National Park (p283) provide more rugged wilderness, just a 30-minute bus ride from town.