



Capricorn Coast & the Southern Reef Islands

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Best Places to Eat

- » Shio Kaze (p393)
- » Ferns Hideaway (p394)
- » Tree Bar (p384)
- » Saigon Saigon (p390)
- » The Deck (p384)

Best Places to Stay

- » Svendsen's Beach (p396)
- » Waterpark Farm (p395)
- » Surfside Motel (p393)
- » Criterion Hotel (p390)
- » Agnes Water Beach Caravan Park (p384)

Why Go?

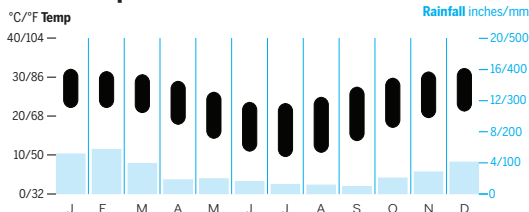
The stretch of coastline that straddles the tropic of Capricorn is one of the quietest and loveliest lengths of the East Coast. While local families flock to the main beaches during school holidays, the scene is uncrowded for most of the year, and even in high season you needn't travel far to find a deserted beach.

The stunning powdery white sand and aqua-blue waters of the Capricorn Coast fit the picture-postcard image superbly. The pristine islands of the southern Great Barrier Reef offer some of the best snorkelling and diving in Queensland, and the opportunities for wildlife spotting – from turtle hatchlings to passing whales – are plentiful. Unspoilt beaches and windswept national parks can be found along the entire coastline.

Inland, you'll find bustling Rockhampton – Capricornia's economic hub and the capital of cattle country, with steak-houses aplenty.

When to Go

Rockhampton



March–May
Carnarvon Gorge is full after the wet season, and wildlife abounds.

September–November
The waters are warming and the weather is relatively mild.

December–February
Temperatures soar and dangerous stingers are out.

Agnes Water & Town of 1770

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Surrounded by national parks and the Pacific Ocean, the twin coastal towns of Agnes Water and Town of 1770 are among Queensland's most appealing seaside destinations. The tiny settlement of Agnes Water has a lovely white-sand beach, the east

coast's most northerly surf beach, while the even tinier Town of 1770 (little more than a marina!) marks Captain Cook's first landing in Queensland. The 'Discovery Coast' is popular for surfing, boating, and fishing away from the crowds. To get here, turn east off the Bruce Hwy at Miriam Vale, 70km south of Gladstone. It's another 57km to Agnes Water and a further 6km to the Town of 1770.



Capricorn Coast & the Southern Reef Islands Highlights

- 1** Diving the spectacular underwater coral gardens of **Heron Island** (p388) and **Lady Elliot Island** (p388)
- 2** Playing castaway on the deserted islands and coral cays of the **Southern Reef Islands** (p387)
- 3** Tucking into a huge steak in Australia's beef capital, **Rockhampton** (p389)
- 4** Crawling through black holes and tight tunnels in the **Capricorn Caves** (p391)
- 5** Canoeing through the forest along Waterpark Creek in **Byfield** (p394)
- 6** Surfing and chilling at Queensland's most northerly surf beach, **Agnes Water** (p382)
- 7** Claiming a tropical beach for the day on **Great Keppel Island** (p395)