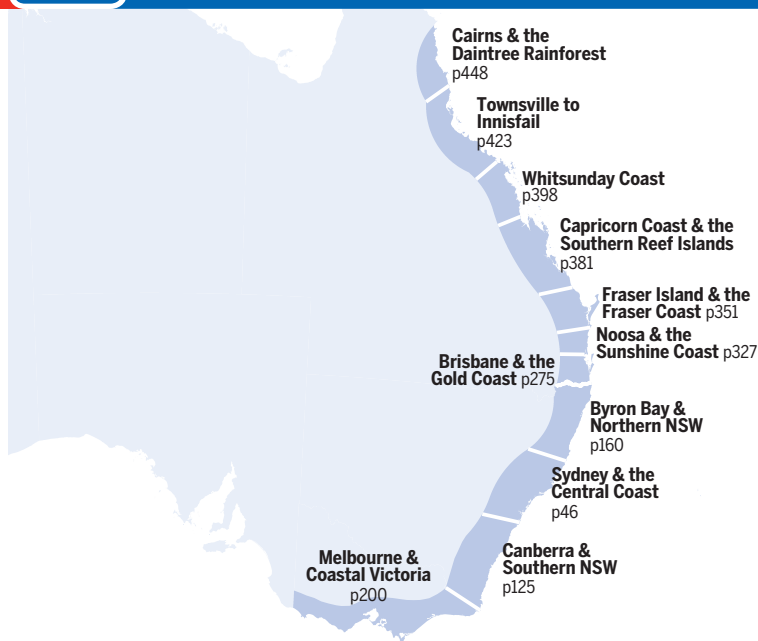


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ON THE ROAD

YOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION GUIDE
In-depth reviews, detailed listings
and insider tips



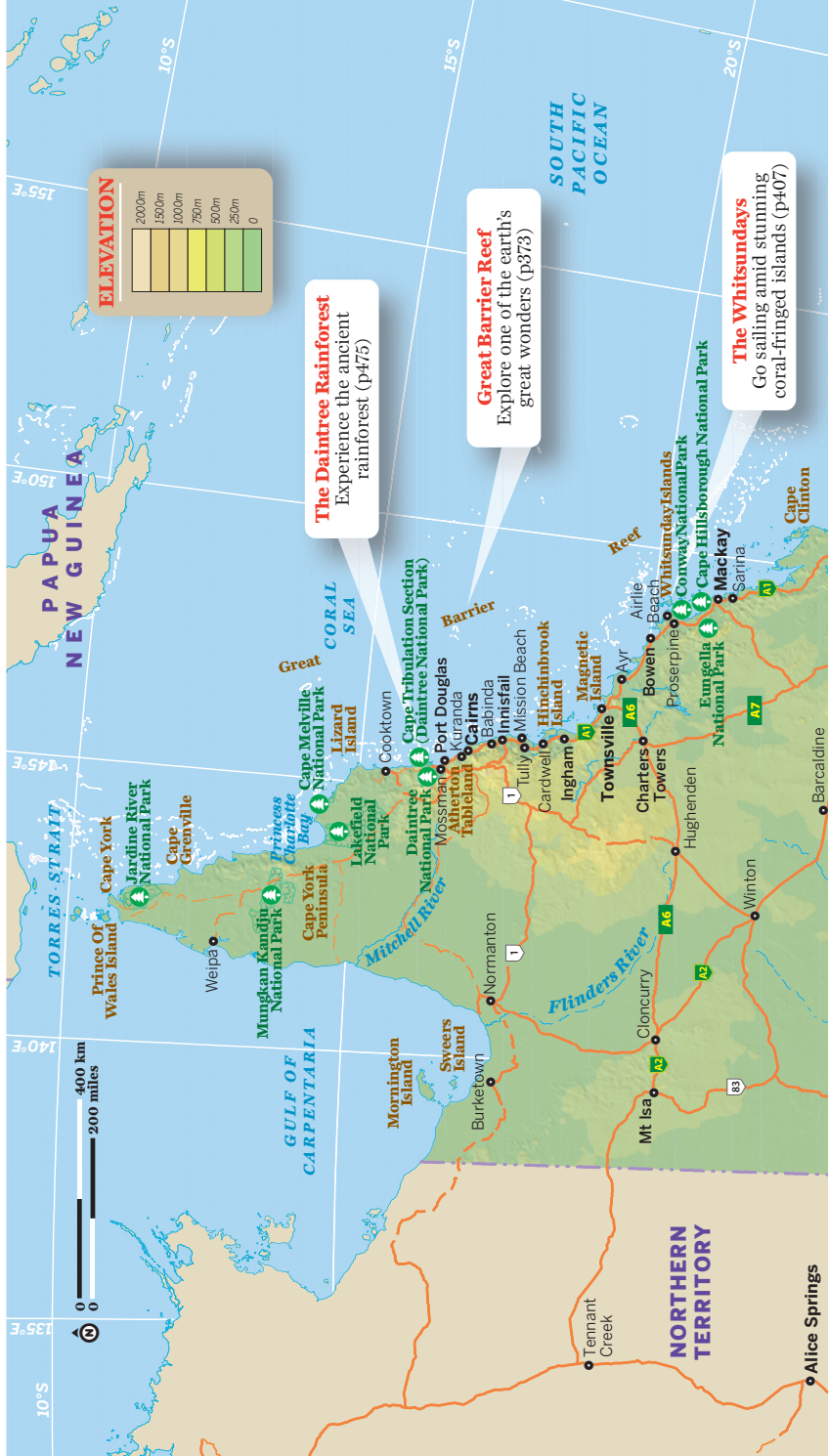
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Discover Australia's great underrated river city (p277)

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Blue Mountains

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Go rugged on a pristine, rainforest-covered isle (p368)

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Drink, dine and explore vineyards (p109)

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Explore history in the nation's capital (p127)

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Get your culture fix in this captivating city (p200)

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Take Australia's most scenic drive (p239)



Look out for these icons:



Our author's
recommendation



A green or
sustainable option



No payment
required

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itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



Two Weeks Sydney to Brisbane

Start in **Sydney**, taking in iconic sights, headland walks and great restaurants, shopping and nightlife. After a few days head north to the arts- and surf-loving city of **Newcastle**, then inland to the idyllic vineyards of **Hunter Valley**. Back on the coast, explore the stunning scenery and pristine beaches of **Myall Lakes National Park**. Northern NSW basks in subtropical glory. Surf excellent breaks at **Crescent Head**, take in the views at **Hat Head**, and frolic in the waves at pretty **South West Rocks** and nearby **Trial Bay**. Further up, you pass some sensational, untouched beaches like those near little wild **Wooli**. **Byron Bay** is inescapable: don't resist this mellow yet groovin' beach town where surfers, hipsters and hippies all share the sands. Meditating in Byron's verdant hinterland is the once-alternative, still-delightful **Nimbin**. Continue inland through lush national parks on the **Rainforest Way**. The Gold Coast is next with stops in laid-back beach **Coolangatta** and party-loving **Surfers Paradise**. End your journey in riverside **Brisbane** with great drinking, dining, nightlife and cultural goings-on. If time allows, tack on a few days exploring the islands of **Moreton Bay**.



Three Weeks Brisbane to Cairns

Brisbane is the starting point for this epic 1800km(!) road trip. After exploring Queensland's river-city capital, head north to the lovely beach towns of **Mooloolaba** and **Maroochydore**. Another half-hour north and you reach **Noosa**, a classy resort town with sublime beaches, a well-preserved national park and first-class cuisine. Next is **Hervey Bay**, a pleasant seaside town famed for its whale-watching. After going eye-to-eye with giants of the deep, set sail for **Fraser Island**, home to massive dunes, beach 'highways' and crystal-clear lakes. Following Fraser, you can watch tiny loggerhead turtles hatching at **Mon Repos** and sample Australia's favourite rum at its distillery in **Bundaberg**.

Chill out at **Town of 1770** and get your board waxed – this is one of the last surf spots you'll visit on this trip. You can get a taste of the coral wonders of the big reef at **Lady Musgrave Island** or overnight on coral-fringed **Lady Elliot Island**. Wear a big hat, watch someone riding a bull or join them devouring a steak at beef city, **Rockhampton**. Explore the trails and sample the beaches of **Great Keppel Island**; it's pure tropical beach bliss. Get even more remote slightly further north at **Byfield National Park**, where streams flow with water so clear you don't even realise it's there. And it may be the official mammal of NSW, but the best place to spot platypuses is at peaceful **Eungella National Park**.

Your next stop is bustling **Airlie Beach**, gateway to the magical **Whitsunday Islands**, where you can sail, dive, snorkel and bask in luxury (or camp on uninhabited islands), all against a backdrop of picture-perfect azure waters and powdery white-sand beaches. Vibrant **Townsville** is next, with a surprising eating and drinking scene, an excellent aquarium and live-a-boards heading out to pristine sections of the **Great Barrier Reef**. Next up, walkers should not miss the Thorsborne Trail on magnificent **Hinchinbrook Island**. More adventure awaits on the rushing white water of the mighty Tully River. Recover on charming **Mission Beach**, where the rainforest meets the sea. End your grand road trip in the tourist town of **Cairns**, and shout yourself a trip to the reef and a seafood feast. You'll find no shortage of fellow travellers here whom you can one-up with your coastal tales of adventure.



One to Two Weeks Rainforest & Reef

➤ Australia's reef-diving capital and gateway to the ancient tropical rainforests to the north, **Cairns** is an obligatory stop on almost any itinerary through Queensland. Spend a few days in the buzzing town, visiting its lush botanic gardens, enjoying good meals and getting a taste of the town's brash nightlife. Take day trips to **Green** and **Fitzroy Islands**, with reef-trimmed shores, verdant vegetation and lovely beaches. Book a snorkelling or dive trip to the **Great Barrier Reef** (ideally the outer reef) or plan a few days on a live-aboard expedition to **Cod Hole**, one of Australia's best dive spots. You can also plan adventure activities like white-water rafting and skydiving.

After a few days in Cairns, head inland via gondola cableway or scenic railway to **Kuranda** for rainforest walks and browsing the popular markets. Spend a few days exploring the region (though you'll need your own wheels), visiting picturesque **Millaa Millaa Falls** and hiking in spectacular **Wooroonooran National Park**.

Head back to the coast and treat yourself to a night in a peaceful resort in lovely **Palm Cove**, just north of Cairns. Continue an hour further north to **Port Douglas**, a peaceful holiday town with a beautiful beach. It's also a base for boat trips to the outer reef with first-rate catamarans heading to **Agincourt Reefs**.

After a few nights eating, drinking and relaxing in Port Douglas, hit the road. The first stop is **Mossman Gorge**, where lush lowland rainforest surrounds the photogenic Mossman River. Sign up for a memorable **Kuku-Yalanji Dreamtime walk**, run by the indigenous Kuku-Yalanji.

Go north to the **Daintree River**. Take a crocodile-spotting cruise and stop for lunch in the **Daintree Village**. Afterwards, continue back to the river, where you'll cross by vehicle ferry to the northern side. From here continue driving north (carefully, as this is cassowary country). Stop at the **Daintree Discovery Centre** to learn about this magnificent area. The lovely beach at nearby **Cow Bay** is also worth a detour. Continue north, taking a bit of refreshment at the **Daintree Ice Cream Company**. The last stop is **Cape Tribulation**, a magnificent meeting of rainforest and reef. Spend a few nights taking in the splendour at one of the fine lodges tucked in the rainforest.



One to Two Weeks Melbourne to Sydney

Begin in **Melbourne**, with some live music, fashion and cafe culture, before heading to **Phillip Island**, where penguins, seals and surfers frolic in the bracing briny. Next stop is **Wilsons Promontory**, where you can hike, spot wildlife and relish beautiful beaches. Head northeast through the forests, farms and the Gippsland Lakes district to Victoria's loveliest seaside town, **Mallacoota**. Entering the warmer climes of south-coast NSW, pay a visit to the sleepy town of **Eden**, which is famed for its whale-watching, and have a wander through picture-perfect **Central Tilba**. Continue on to **Narooma**, with its pretty beaches and good surf. From here, catch a ferry to **Montague Island**, an important Aboriginal site and a stunning nature reserve. Heading north, detour inland at **Bateman's Bay** to **Canberra** and visit some of Australia's best museums. Back on the coast, **Jervis Bay** is a scenic spot with white-sand beaches, frolicking dolphins and national parks. Continue along the coast, taking in the dramatic cliffs and rainforest of **Royal National Park**, before reaching the dazzling lights of **Sydney**. Get your dose of urban exploring, but leave time for the awe-inspiring scenery of the **Blue Mountains**.

One to Two Weeks Great Ocean Road

The Great Ocean Road is one of the most popular touring routes in the country, and it's worth the hype. Start in the surfing mecca of **Torquay** by checking out the waves at **Bells Beach**, then head to family-friendly **Anglesea** to see the kangaroos at its golf course and take a break by its river. **Aireys Inlet** is next; tour the lighthouse before a beach walk at **Fairhaven** and a coffee and overnight stay in the resort town of **Lorne**. The Great Ocean Road is in its element now, but you can break up the sea views with a detour up into the rainforests of the **Otway Ranges**. Back on the Great Ocean Road, head to the fishing village of **Apollo Bay** for a day or two then continue west into the koala and lighthouse zone of **Cape Otway**. It's quite a stretch to **Port Campbell National Park** and its famed **Twelve Apostles**; take the time to count them and spend a night in **Port Campbell** to get a real feel for the area. Look for whales off **Warrnambool's** coast then continue west to quaint, and very Irish, **Port Fairy**. If there's time, head to tiny **Cape Bridgewater**.



Catherine Le Nevez

[Townsville to Innisfail, Cairns & the Daintree Rainforest](#) Catherine's first writing for Lonely Planet was on Queensland while completing her Doctorate of Creative Arts in Writing, during a 65,000km lap-and-a-half of the continent, including driving through two cyclones. Since then, Catherine has authored or co-authored more than two dozen guidebooks worldwide, including *Lonely Planet's Australia* and *Queensland & the Great Barrier Reef* guides. She jumped at the

chance to return to tropical paradise for this assignment.



Virginia Maxwell

[Sydney & the Central Coast, This is Sydney colour section](#) Virginia worked for many years as a publishing manager at Lonely Planet's Melbourne headquarters before deciding that she would be happier writing guidebooks than commissioning them. Since then, she has written about destinations across the world for a host of international guidebooks, magazines and websites. Though based in Melbourne, she has lived in Sydney and refuses to engage in the age-old Melbourne

vs Sydney game of one-upmanship, being equally happy and at home in both.



Olivia Pozzan

[Brisbane & the Gold Coast, Noosa & the Sunshine Coast, Fraser Island & the Fraser Coast, The Whitsundays](#) Raised on the Fraser Coast in the Sunshine State, Olivia had a coastal upbringing that shaped a life-long addiction to gorgeous beaches. Her bikini collection graced every sandy shore from the northern Reef to the Gold Coast. After years of travelling the globe, Olivia had a craving for sand between her toes that drew her back to Queensland, where she lives on the glorious Sunshine Coast. Olivia revisited her favourite coastal hot spots while researching this book.



Penny Watson

[Canberra & Southern NSW, Byron Bay & Northern NSW](#) Penny is a trained journalist and full-time professional travel writer. She grew up in regional NSW and has since become an expert on its varied landscapes, in particular its beachy borders. *East Coast Australia* is Penny's third title covering this beautiful strip of coastline. As a Hong Kong resident, the opportunity to return home and explore some more is always too tempting to ignore.



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Regis St Louis

Coordinating Author, Brisbane & the Gold Coast Regis' love of Australia has taken him all along the coast, through the captivating markets of Melbourne, along Sydney's scenic headlands and through the rainforests and tropical islands of Queensland. On his most recent trip, he watched whales off North Stradbroke Island, introduced his daughters to cuddly koalas at Lone Pine Sanctuary and enjoyed a bit of mayhem during the lively Brisbane Festival.

Regis has contributed to more than 30 Lonely Planet titles, including the latest *Queensland & Great Barrier Reef* guide. When not travelling the world, he splits his time between New York City and Sydney.



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Melbourne & Coastal Victoria Growing up in the Victorian seaside suburb of Frankston had its advantages for Jayne; it motivated her to catch the Met through all three zones to hang out in Prahran's Greville St, Fitzroy's Brunswick St, St Kilda and the Queen Vic market. After a longish spell working in community radio in East Timor, she finally settled with her family in Melbourne's vibrant north. When she's not riding her 1970s folding bike around North Fitzroy or pre-

tending to renovate, Jayne writes for *The Age*. Jayne has contributed to eight Lonely Planet guides.



Sarah Gilbert

Canberra & Southern NSW, Capricorn Coast & the Southern Reef Islands Sarah was born in rural New South Wales, raised in Sydney, studied at the Australian National University in Canberra and has since lived in Amsterdam, New York and Buenos Aires. As a writer, she cut her teeth on the Big Apple's tabloids before moving home to work in TV current affairs. She has contributed to several Lonely Planet guides and is now based in Sydney once more, making her living as a free-

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Paul Harding

Melbourne & Coastal Victoria Melbourne-born but country-raised, Paul spent childhood summers in the Gippsland Lakes, and later plenty of road trips up the East Coast of Australia. He's since seen (and written about) a good part of the world, but still calls this part of Australia home. For this edition, Paul travelled the length and breadth of beautiful Gippsland, occasionally finding time to down the notebook and hit the beach. A freelance writer and photographer, Paul has con-

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OVER MORE PAGE WRITERS

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