



Townsville to Innisfail

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Best Places to Stay

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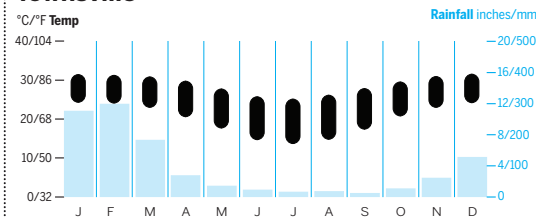
Why Go?

In between the tourist magnets of Cairns to the north and Airlie Beach to the south, Townsville is a real, living, breathing city with a pulse. Yet although North Queensland's largest urban centre is often bypassed by visitors, it has a surprising number of attractions of its own: a palm-lined beachfront promenade, gracious 19th-century architecture and a host of cultural and sporting venues and events. And Magnetic Island's national park, walking trails and wildlife are just offshore.

To the north of Townsville, through cane fields and laid-back tropical coastline known as the Cassowary Coast, Cyclone Yasi carved a path of destruction in February 2011, mainly around Mission Beach, Tully and Cardwell. However, most services, attractions and national parks should be open by the time you read this. Charters Towers and Ravenswood, inland to the southwest, offer an accessible slice of the dusty outback, while boats make the short crossing to forested Hinchinbrook and Dunk Islands.

When to Go

Townsville



May Pasta flies and music plays during Ingham's Australian-Italian Festival.

July Venus Gold Battery, Charters Towers, cranks into action during the town's Gold Fever Festival.

August Townsville shows off its cultural side during the Australian Festival of Chamber Music.



Townsville to Innisfail Highlights

- 1** Hearing the story behind the ruined castles of **Paronella Park** (p445) on an atmospheric day or night tour
- 2** Cheering on the Cowboys, North Queensland's revered National Rugby League team or National Basketball League team, the Crocodiles, in **Townsville** (p427)
- 3** Tackling the 32km-long Thorsborne Trail on pristine **Hinchinbrook Island** (p439)
- 4** Skydiving onto a reassuringly soft, sandy landing at **Mission Beach** (p440)
- 5** Searching out a secluded beach to yourself on idyllic **Dunk Island** (p445)
- 6** Watching a *Ghosts After Dark* outdoor film screening in the outback gold-rush town of **Charters Towers** (p437)
- 7** Photographing Australia's highest single-drop waterfall, **Wallaman Falls** (p436)
- 8** Watching wild cassowaries wander along the beach at picturesque **Etty Bay** (p445)