



The Gold Coast

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Best Places to Eat

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- ➔ BSKT Cafe (p326)
- ➔ Manolas Brothers Deli (p326)
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Best Places to Stay

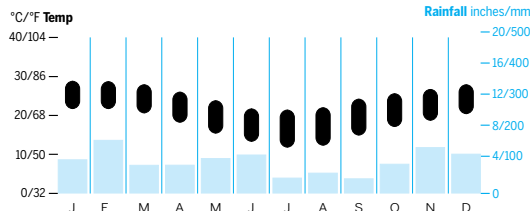
- ➔ Komune (p329)
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Why Go?

Boasting 35 beaches, 300 sunny days and four million visitors a year, the Gold Coast serves up a sexy Aussie cocktail of sun, surf and sand. It's no cliché to say that the beaches here are spectacular, with outstanding waves at Burleigh Heads, Currumbin and Kirra: it's one of the best places to learn to surf in Australia. Behind the beach is a shimmering strip of high-rise apartments, eateries, bars, clubs and theme parks. The party capital is Surfers Paradise, where the fun sucks you into a dizzying vortex and spits you back out exhausted. The hype diminishes drastically as you head south, with Broadbeach's sandy chic, Burleigh Heads' seaside charm and Coolangatta's laid-back surfer ethos. In the lush, subtropical hinterland, Lamington and Springbrook National Parks offer rainforest walks, waterfalls, sweeping views and cosy mountain retreats.

When to Go

Surfers Paradise



Jan Summer means sun, heat, busy beaches and the Big Day Out festival.

Jun–Aug Winter brings tourists from the chilly south chasing the sun.

Nov School-leavers ('school-ies') swarm into Surfers Paradise to party (avoid unless you're 18).



The Gold Coast Highlights

1 Drinking, dancing and watching the sun come up over the beach at **Surfers Paradise** (p317).

2 Getting up early to surf the point break at **Burleigh Heads** (p326).

3 Bushwalking through craggy gorges and rainforests

in **Lamington National Park** (p332).

4 Beating a retreat from the crowds to a *loooong* stretch of golden sand on **South Stradbroke Island** (p322).

5 Confirming the validity of the Best Of All Lookout's name in **Springbrook National Park** (p333).

6 Testing your nerve (and how long it's been since you had lunch) on the rollercoasters at the **Gold Coast theme parks** (p323).