



Gold Coast

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

- » Komune (p134)
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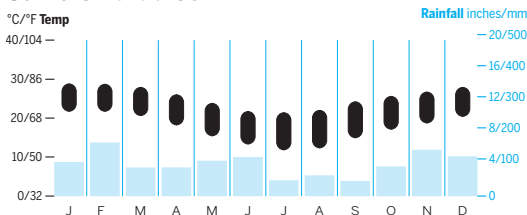
Why Go?

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. Behind a long ribbon of beach stretching from South Stradbroke Island to the New South Wales border is a shimmering strip of high-rises, theme parks and nonstop action. The undisputed capital is Surfers Paradise where the fun sucks you into a relentless spin and spits you back out exhausted. But the brash commercialism and relentless pace won't appeal to everyone. The hype diminishes outside the epicentre, with Broadbeach's beach-chic and Burleigh Heads' seaside charm mellowing into Coolangatta's laid-back surfer ethos.

The beaches are spectacular, with excellent surfing at Burleigh Heads, Currumbin, Kirra and Duranbah. South Stradbroke Island also has some great waves, and a long uncrowded beach. And in the lush, subtropical hinterland, Lamington and Springbrook National Parks have rainforest walks, waterfalls and cosy mountain retreats.

When to Go

Surfers Paradise



January Music buffs will favour the Big Day Out in January.

October Watch and drool as fit bods compete in the Coolangatta Gold Surf Life Saving event.

Mid-November School-leavers head to Surfers Paradise for a month-long party.



Gold Coast Highlights

- ① Overdosing on glitz and good times and partying hard in heady **Surfers Paradise** (p122)
- ② Surfing the breaks and soaking up the famous Gold Coast sunshine at **Coolangatta** (p133)
- ③ Bushwalking through deep gorges and towering rainforests in **Springbrook**

National Park (p138) and **Lamington National Park** (p140)

④ Getting away from the crowds on **South Stradbroke Island's** (p121) looong stretch of golden beach

⑤ Luxuriating in the opulent **Palazzo Versace** (p120) at Main Beach

⑥ Blissing out with a mind-body-soul makeover in a hinterland **spa retreat** (p139)

⑦ Flying on roller coasters, losing yourself in Hollywood and getting wet and wild at the Gold Coast **theme parks** (p123)