



Cairns & the Daintree Rainforest

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

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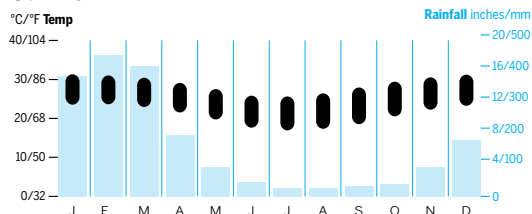
Why Go?

Tropical, touristy Cairns is an unmissable stop on any East Coast traveller's itinerary. Experienced divers and first-time toe-dippers swarm to the steamy city for its easy access to the Great Barrier Reef, while those more interested in submerging themselves in boozy good times are well-served by a barrage of bars and clubs. For day-trippers, the Atherton Tableland – home to cooler climes, volcanic-crater lakes, jungly waterfalls and gourmet food producers – is just a short and scenic drive away.

The winding road from Cairns to ritzy Port Douglas offers spectacular coastal vistas, but it's north of the Daintree River that the adventure really begins. The magnificent Daintree National Park stretches up the coast, with rainforest tumbling right onto white-sand beaches; don't be so awestruck by the stunning surrounds that you forget to keep an eye out for crocs! Further up, the Bloomfield Track from Cape Tribulation to Cooktown is one of Australia's great 4WD journeys.

When to Go

Cairns



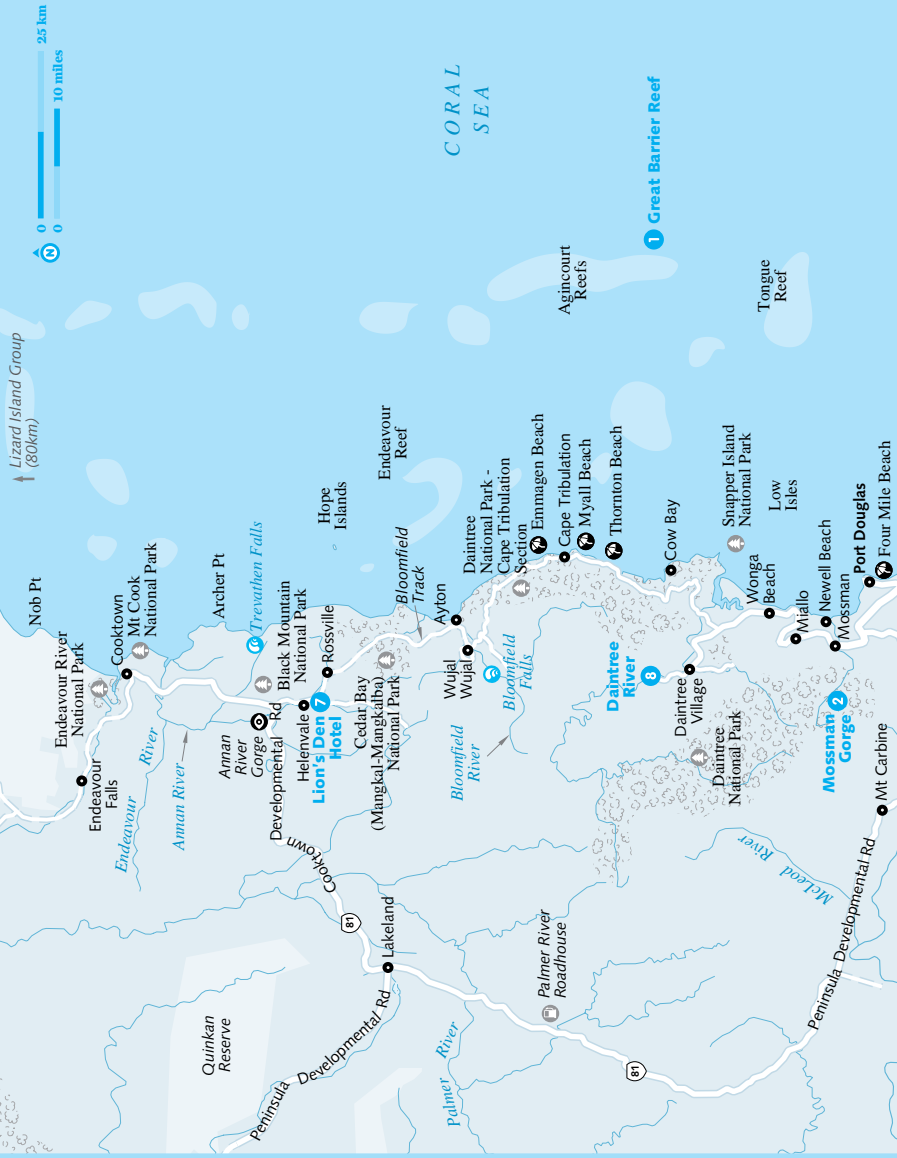
May Port Douglas turns on the pizzazz for Carnivale.

June A costumed re-enactment of Cook's landing is the centrepiece of the Cooktown Discovery Festival.

November The reef's annual coral spawning is a delight for divers.

Cairns & the Daintree Rainforest Highlights

- 1 Diving, snorkelling and swimming among the fish, turtles and anemones in the multicoloured corals of the **Great Barrier Reef**, from Cairns (p251) or Port Douglas (p269).
- 2 Taking an Aboriginal-guided walk and swimming in the crystal-clear waters of **Mossman Gorge** (p274).
- 3 Riding the Skyrail cable car through the rainforest to the market town of **Kuranda** (p264) and returning to Cairns by scenic railway.
- 4 Barra fishing, barbecuing or watching the sunset



CORAL SEA

1 Great Barrier Reef