



Tropical Queensland

Photos courtesy of Tourism Queensland

1. Townsville viewed from Castle Hill
2. Aerial of the Great Barrier Reef
3. Wallaman Falls, Ingham
4. Castle Hill lookout
5. Hinchbrook Island

Townsville Magnetic Island



With the idyllic paradise of Magnetic Island right at your doorstep, it's not hard to see why people are attracted to Townsville. With an eclectic mix of rainforest, reef, sandy beaches, outback bush and big city benefits, Townsville has something for every holiday itinerary. However, the city is more than a magnetic destination – it's the very heart of life in the tropics, with the region extending north to captivating Mission Beach, south to the rustic Burdekin and west to historic Charters Towers.

Surrounded by a rich hinterland of tropical rainforests and waterfalls, Townsville is the gateway to heritage gold-mining towns, the stunning outback, scenic islands and, of course, the Great Barrier Reef.

It's true what they say, the attraction truly is magnetic. Maggie, as 2500 locals affectionately know her, is the perfect island escape. A short ferry ride to Magnetic Island lands you in the heart of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, where more than 2000 koalas roam wild and unique bird life inhabit the island. With 23 bays and beaches at various locations across the island, you are free to explore the splendour and beauty the island is renowned for.

If looking for hidden treasures sounds exhausting, other gems await you in the hub of Townsville city.

Catering for sophisticated palates and elegant tropical fun, this flourishing cosmopolitan city boasts an array of cafés, bars, restaurants, nightclubs, a world class casino and shopping experiences like no other. Whichever one you choose, you'll experience Townsville's friendly and unique, relaxed tropical ambience.

The Strand is the perfect place to unwind for any holiday to Townsville. The popular foreshore stretches for 2.5km and offers views across Cleveland Bay to Magnetic Island. It is a favourite for locals and visitors alike, with BBQ facilities, swimming enclosures, freshwater showers and playgrounds for social gatherings.

For the kids, the state-of-the-art water park on The Strand is a playground of fun. Children wait anxiously while a huge overhead bucket fills with water then spills over them, causing many squeals and giggles.

For a relaxing day out or a long secluded walk on the beach, Townsville's five northern beaches 60 kilometres north of the city are the ideal getaway. Bushland, Saunders, Toolakea, Toomulla and Balgal are spectacular beaches. They combine the rugged bush with necessary amenities and beachside hideaways, where swimming, fishing, picnicking and bird watching are ideal.

Little Crystal Creek, located 11km up the winding road to Paluma Village, is well known for its historic stone arch bridge built in the 1930's, and cascading waterfalls that feed into one of the best freshwater swimming holes in the north.



PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO SEE ...

- Enjoy the views across Cleveland Bay to Magnetic Island
- Visit the Billabong Wildlife Sanctuary
- Snorkel or dive the Great Barrier Reef
- Visit the Museum of Tropical Queensland
- Reef HQ, the largest living coral reef aquarium in the world
- Learn about local Indigenous history at the Cultural Centre
- Castle Hill offers breathtaking views
- Go swimming at Riverway esplanade



Continue up the winding road to Paluma Village, nestled amongst the misty clouds. Located within the Mount Spec National Park, it is the southern-most point in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. At 1000 metres above sea level, Paluma is a cool mountain retreat with a convenient lack of mobile phone coverage. With cosy accommodation, cafes, arts and craft, bird watching and a large network of rainforest walks, Paluma promises the perfect getaway for a quiet, romantic weekend, or place to unwind.

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Chilling out at Florence Bay, Magnetic Island.

Further north, see hundreds of wallabies at Tyto Wetlands, a nature reserve perfect for the avid bird watcher. Dugongs laze around in the coastal waters and are often spotted near the islands of Magnetic and Hinchinbrook, with winter seeing the arrival of whales to breed in the warmer waters.

If the local underwater residents are your kind of company, visit Reef HQ in Townsville's city to meet them up close, watch shark feeding and learn about the marine life that call the reef home. If you like a more hands-on experience, the Great Barrier Reef offers visitors one of the most beautiful, diverse, rich and abundant coral reef environments to explore on this planet.

With rainforest, reef, outback and city coming together to form this colourful region, there is something for everyone, from heart-pounding, lump-in-your-throat fun to a more peaceful adventure at whatever pace you are comfortable with.

Explore the terrain and admire the wildlife as you please on a sea kayak or push bike. Throw on your hiking boots and tackle the 32km Thorsborne Trail on Hinchinbrook Island or trek to the base of Wallaman Falls, the highest single-drop waterfall in Australia.

For thrill seekers, a scenic flight will allow you to take in the overwhelming beauty of the north, give your head a spin with aerobatics over the skyline of Townsville and views over tropical islands or watch as the north's own cowboys take on a bull at various rodeos.

Heading west will find you driving down the wide streets of Charters Towers, a montage of Australian heritage. Once the most populated town in Queensland outside Brisbane, Charters Towers is as rich in history as it is in gold.

So whether you're looking for an action-packed tropical holiday, or just want to laze on a warm secluded beach, you can experience life in the tropics and more on your holiday to Townsville.

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Reef Lodge Backpackers

Lonely Planet 2007 – 2008: "With its mellow atmosphere, beautiful murals, cheery bed covers and outdoor nooks, Reef Lodge leads the hostel pack. Space is a premium in the two-tier complex overlooking a courtyard, with book exchange, a laundry and travellers notice board, you're well catered for."

BUG Review: Reef Lodge is a beautifully maintained hostel with a laid back atmosphere right in the heart of the city centre. The dorms are air-conditioned, comfortable and clean; bathrooms are spotless with new fittings and hair dryers and the kitchen is well equipped. There is a games room/gym and with a pool table plus a couple of cozy TV lounges. Internet access is available in the courtyard (\$5 per hour) and there are laundry facilities. Security is very good and the reception staff are wonderfully kind and helpful.

Reef Lodge is one of Townsville's oldest hostels and certainly one of Townsville's most central Hostels. It was built back in the early 70's and has a unique charm of its own. Please don't take my word for it, feel free to come and look through the hostel before you check in.

We have no hidden costs and you get what you pay for. We understand that most of our travellers are looking for a fairly quiet, laid back environment so we ask that people settle down after 10.30pm and take the party to the clubs, the first of which is only about 20 meters away. This way people can get some rest as many of the backpackers staying here have jobs. If you are looking for work most backpackers have little trouble finding it. With its central location, you are only 200 to 600 meters from the beach, city centre, ferry terminal, Museum, Aquarium, Imax Theatre, Indigenous Centre and the Tourist Information Centre. "The Strand" at 2.5 kilometres long, is a great walk and has a free saltwater pool at one end and a small water park at the other.

We also have a free BBQ, pool table and gym, three TV and DVD areas. There are also plenty of places to just sit around and take it easy. All rooms have air-conditioning, and our twins, doubles, small dorms and motel rooms have fridge, toaster and kettle provided.

Did I mention you can kill yourself in Townsville? There is a large hill that takes about 45 minutes to walk up. The only time I walked up the hill, I felt I was going to have myself a good old fashioned myocardial infarction and drop dead! There is an upside; after you realize you're not going to die and it was only a near-death experience, the effort is well worth it, as it has a great panoramic view of the whole city. Particularly good at sunset! Visit www.reeflodge.com.au.

Adventurers Backpackers Resort

Welcome to Adventurers Backpackers Resort. If you are looking for cheap, clean and safe accommodation, you have found the right place. Adventurers Resort has a lot to offer: double, single and share accommodation, rooftop pool, air conditioning and ceiling fans, courtesy bus, night security, a huge kitchen, Internet, convenience store, undercover car parking, tour desk (backpacker discounts), 24-hour video surveillance, a guest lounge, free tea and coffee, free storage, discount meal and drink voucher and a beautiful Indian restaurant. Save your money for all the great tours and things to do in sunny Townsville.

Adventurers Resort is situated in the trendy café street, 10 minutes walk to the CBD and 15 minutes walk to the Strand. At the Strand you will find the beach with two netted swimming areas, free water park and a long walking path along the beach. Things to do, places to see in Townsville – Wildlife Sanctuary, day reef trips, diving the Yongala wreck (Australia's best wreck dive), Learn to Scuba dive course, sky diving, Magnetic Island, aquarium and museum. Discounted backpacker rates and a free night available (conditions apply). Phone **1800 211 522** or visit www.adventurersresort.com.

Magnetic Island & Townsville Backpacking

We've got it all!

You don't have to travel to the depths of the outback to experience Aussie culture or travel to outer reaches of the reef to explore pristine beaches and marine life. The city of Townsville is literally surrounded by the Great Barrier Reef, islands, beaches, rainforests, waterfalls, national parks and the outback! With something for everyone why not come for a day, stay a week or lose yourself forever in this tropical paradise!

TOWNSVILLE

Townsville is Australia's largest, tropical beach-side city. It has an almost unbroken spell of warm sunshine, gentle tropical breezes and sparkling azure waters with winter temperatures between 20°C and 25°C.

Get Stranded: Relax by the water under swaying palm trees on the multi-award winning Strand Beach and soak up the magnificent views to Magnetic Island. This beach-front promenade stretches 2.5km and is lined with cafes, recreational facilities, parks, playgrounds, swimming enclosures, the Rock Pool and FREE BBQ areas.

Party on to the Early Morn: If relaxing by the beach isn't your style then Townsville's nightlife is sure to get you going. Head to Flinders St East and you'll find most of the cities clubs and pubs conveniently located in the one place. From Irish pubs to dance clubs, Townsville's nightlife has something for everyone.

Free Stuff: There are loads of free activities in Townsville. Stroll through the Cotters Markets in Flinders Street Mall every Sunday and pick up a bargain, test your endurance and head up the Goat Track of Castle Hill for a 360°panoramic view, check out the monthly Strand markets or cook up some snags on the free BBQs dotted along the Strand.

Accommodation & Attractions: Townsville boasts some of Australia's best attractions. From adrenalin and adventure activities to relaxing

nature based tours, Townsville has it covered. There is also no shortage of accommodation available for every budget including hostels, lodges, B&Bs, caravan parks and a number of free campsites. For ideas on tours, attractions and accommodation check out the listings on this page.

MAGNETIC ISLAND

With its 23 bays and beaches, wildlife, water sports, walking trails, sunshine and that unmistakable island party atmosphere, 'Maggie', as it's affectionately known, is a popular destination for backpackers to relax and have a good time. Only 8km from Townsville, Magnetic Island is three-quarters National Park and home to 2,000 people and northern Australia's largest colony of koalas in the wild! Getting there is a breeze with two ferry companies offering either a passenger service in just 20 minutes or car barge service in 45 minutes.

Free Stuff: Magnetic Island boasts a range of free activities including endless walking tracks through the island's National Parks. The most famous of these tracks is the Forts Walk. Along this 2km track you will find WWII gun encasements, wild koalas and spectacular views of the coral sea. Meet some of the locals at the surf clubs and pubs, watch the cane toad races every Wednesday night, feed rock wallabies and fish at the old Geoffrey Bay jetty and snorkel one of the many fringing reefs around the island.

Accommodation & Attractions: Magnetic Island is a 'must do' stop over on the east coast backpacking trail. The diverse range of tours and activities will keep you entertained for days. There is also no shortage of accommodation from camping, budget bush and beach-front hostels through to self-contained units, apartments and resort style properties. For further information on activities and accommodation on the island check out the listings below.

<p>ADRENALIN DIVE – FOR SNORKELLING AND DIVING</p> <p>The only dive company operating trips to the Yongala Wreck and Wheeler Reef from Townsville. Dive: Australia's best dive the SS Yongala Wreck, Snorkel: The best of the Great Barrier Reef. Day trips, Liveboards and Courses available. Phone: 07 47240600 or 1300 664 600 www.adrenalindive.com.au</p>	<p>BARRIER REEF DIVE CRUISE & TRAVEL</p> <p>Travelling to Townsville, Magnetic Island, Airlie Beach, Cairns and elsewhere? We know the places to see, stay and play for all ages and budgets. We have been there, done that, for almost 20 years. Contact Barrier Reef Dive Cruise & Travel anytime like now, to experience our award winning services Phone: 07 4772 5800 or 1800 636 778 www.divecruisetravel.com</p>
<p>BILLABONG SANCTUARY</p> <p>"Australia's Best Interactive Wildlife Experience". You can cuddle a koala, hold a wombat, and if you're brave enough, there's snake and crocodile handling too! Situated 17km south of Townsville on the Bruce highway. Daily transfers from hotel accommodation available. Phone: 07 47788344 www.billabongsanctuary.com.au</p>	<p>BUNGALOW BAY KOALA VILLAGE</p> <p>\$109 Koala express package: Includes two nights accommodation, return ferry transfers, return bus transfers, entry to our on site koala sanctuary plus two souvenir photos holding a Koala. Winner Australian Tourism Awards "Best Backpacker Accommodation" 2007 Phone: 1800 285 577 www.bungalowbay.com.au</p>
<p>MAGNETIC ISLAND SEA KAYAKS</p> <p>We take only photos and leave only footprints. "View Nature in the Wild" on the Island's most informative and only true 'ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY' tour from the quiet of your kayak. Advanced Ecotourism Certified Operator Phone: 07 4778 5424 www.seakayak.com.au</p>	<p>MUSEUM OF TROPICAL QUEENSLAND</p> <p>The Museum of Tropical Queensland is a fantastic place to discover the natural and cultural heritage of North Queensland. The museum is full of captivating exhibitions, including the Pandora Gallery where you can see artefacts from the HMS Pandora, the ship sent by British Admiralty to capture the Bounty and her mutinous crew! Phone: 07 4726 0603 www.mtq.qld.gov.au</p>
<p>REEF LODGE</p> <p>With its mellow atmosphere, beautiful murals, cheery bed covers and outdoor nooks, Reef Lodge leads the hostel pack. Space is a premium in the two-tier complex overlooking a courtyard, with book exchange, a laundry and travellers notice board, you're well catered for. Phone: (07) 4721 1112 www.reeflodge.com.au</p>	<p>SUNFERRIES TRAVEL</p> <p>Sunferries is the quickest link to Magnetic Island with 19 return services a day in just 20 minutes and specialise in tours, accommodation and travel packages to suit every budget. Phone: 1800 447 333 www.sunferries.com.au</p>
<p>ORCHID GUEST HOUSE</p> <p>Singles/twins/doubles/ensuites and small dormitories. Lonely Planet best choice 2008. Small-quiet-clean. VIP welcome. Phone: 07 4771 6683 fames@bigpond.net.au</p>	<p>TROPICAL TOPLESS CAR</p> <p>It's the Ultimate Magnetic Island fun Car! Cruise the island in Tropical style in one of our fantastic Topless convertibles or Classic Mokes. Phone: 07 4758 1111</p>



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Hotel Allen

North Queenslanders are known for their friendly hospitality and laidback attitude. The Hotel Allen is a true North Queensland, having been welcoming locals and tourists alike through its doors for many, many years. Townsville has grown into a large provincial city and the areas around the Hotel Allen have transformed too, but everyone still recognises the hotel for the friendly service it has provided since it first opened its doors.

The Hotel Allen offers two styles of accommodation. The Strandview Apartments are located at the rear of the complex, only 1 block from the famous Strand development and beaches. These apartments are tropically designed and self-contained with spacious living areas and full cooking facilities in each suite. The Motel complex has 86 smaller units, with TV, fridge and ensuite bathroom. Most are air-conditioned. Both complexes have access to the swimming pool and all other facilities within the hotel. Reception is open daily from 8am except Sundays (9am).

The bistro at the Hotel Allen has a reputation that only years of providing great value, high quality food and service can give. The hotel is based around a central courtyard, and so offers the choice of indoor or outdoor dining, and is open 7 days for lunch and dinner. The great feature of the Hotel Allen's bistro is choice. There is an a la carte menu with daily specials for you to choose from, as well as the Soup-Salad-Pasta Bar from Thursday to Sunday.

The bar is the home base for a number of sports teams who enjoy the many beers on tap, the big screens for all the sports action and the regular live entertainment. There is a full TAB facility on site as well as Keno. The spacious Gaming Room features 40 of the latest gaming machines and two link jackpots to give the best chance of winning big.

For more information call (07) 4771 5656 or visit www.ourhotels.com.au/hotelallen. See our advertisement to receive a special offer with any accommodation bookings.

Magnetic Island Bus Service

3 hour fully-guided tour – air conditioned bus.

A great way to start your holiday whether you have your own vehicle here or not. The tours leave Nelly Bay Harbour at 9:15am and 1:15pm (bookings essential) and transfers from your accommodation can be arranged.

Explore the World Heritage Island with one of our tours – our lively local driver will give an insight into the history, the flora and fauna and show you some of the great spots for photos. Feed the fish in Geoffrey Bay – and see the wild rock wallabies up close. All tours include a delicious morning or afternoon tea.

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