



WELCOME TO QUEENSLAND

It's often the small things you remember when you think back to cherished holidays. Perhaps it's that special local dish you ordered, the characters you met, or that little something you bought from the market. When I think of Queensland it's the long, white sandy beaches, the surf – some of the best in the world – and wonderful family holidays that come to mind.

There is much away from the coastal areas to explore, too. This guide certainly discovers many off-the-beaten-track experiences to enjoy.

There is much away from the coast to explore too.

We sent three writers across Queensland, each setting out on different journeys, meeting the locals and reporting back on their unique finds.

The capital of Brisbane is perfect for a few days shopping and dining before you decide which direction to take.

Girraween National Park, which spans the NSW-Queensland border, is unique with enormous grey boulders dotted around like marbles. The Sunshine Coast, which runs up into the hinterland and mountains, is filled with chic beachside towns. In the north, there is the Great Barrier Reef. In only three nights, cruising out of Cairns, you can take in its brilliance. Or venture into the Daintree Rainforest.

Whatever direction you take, you will have one of the best holidays ever created. Enjoy it.

Michael McHugh
Editor-in-chief

EXPERIENCE IT ALL

Sand, sunshine and smiling faces. Everyone knows the Gold Coast is where to find all three in abundance. There's little the famed golden beaches lack by way of entertainment, with activities from trampoline parks and parasailing to theme parks aplenty. And with an exciting food and wine scene always evolving with global trends, it's a city where you can easily have breakfast barefoot at a beachside café, lunch at an urban rooftop bistro, then experience an award-winning degustation for dinner. The region is much more than its glitzy beaches. The Gold Coast hinterland is less than an hour's drive from the coast and has a variety of vineyards and nature retreats to explore between Mount Tamborine and Lamington National Park. Take your pick of experiences that let you walk high above the rainforest floor through branches or, for real thrill seekers, get bird's-eye views by launching yourself off a mountainside on a tandem hang-gliding flight.



RELAX & REFRESH

After a long day there's one sure-fire way to recharge – a massage. Earth + Skin, a retreat just a 15-minute drive from the city centre, is where founder Louisa Hollenberg focuses on organic and chemical-free treatments to nourish not just the skin but the body and mind, too. "People are becoming more aware of the damaging effects chemicals have on our bodies and many people experience sensitivity to fragrance or artificial preservatives commonly found in skincare and personal care products," she says. "So we offer relaxing, therapeutic and effective treatments without any of those chemicals."

The peaceful space makes it easy to forget the outside world. "We find that when the mind is relaxed, we get the best response from the skin," Hollenberg says. Massage and facial products are also for sale. "We look for unique products that are organic wherever possible and if they aren't organic, they are chemical-free. We are so proud to be making a difference in the beauty industry. And we also love Australian-owned and -made brands and, as a coincidence, all our brands are founded and operated by Australian mums." earthandskin.com.au



STAYING BEACHSIDE

One way to truly experience the Gold Coast is to trade the high-rises of Surfers Paradise for waking up to the casual vibes of the surf villages to the south. And flying directly to Gold Coast Airport will put you less than a 25-minute drive from these world-class beaches. For an unforgettable coastal experience, Bujerum Apartments on Burleigh (bujerum.com.au) at Burleigh Heads combines the privacy of a stylish, boutique apartment with the luxury of ocean views. Complete with every modern necessity, the two- and three-bedroom apartments place you right in the heart of coastal living at its best, including being just a 200-metre stroll from two must-visit restaurants, The Fishhouse (thefishhouse.com.au) and Rick Shores (rickshores.com.au).



EXPLORE

If you're looking for a quick daytrip to get the sand out from between your toes, pack a picnic and head towards the rainforest of Currumbin Valley. No more than a 45-minute drive from any spot on the coast, you can take a dip at the Currumbin Rock Pools natural swimming hole or simply enjoy the scenic drive through to the Springbrook National Park. Stop by the espresso bar at Portside Coffee, Currumbin Waters on the way for one of the best coffees on the coast.