

# Australia Adventure

Duration: 6 Weeks



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# Who is this trip for?

If you're searching for an active group travel backpacking experience down under, then our Australia Adventure is the perfect trip for you!

Australia, an island so big it almost classes as its own continent, has an almost overwhelming amount to offer travellers. The East Coast is where it all comes together – several thousand kilometres of coastline sheltered by the astonishing Great Barrier Reef, where nature meets culture, and land meets the sea.

With perfect beaches, innumerable chances for active sports, lush rainforest and backpacker-friendly cities, there's much to see and do whether you're an urbanite or outdoor adventurer at heart. This Gapforce program journeys through the eastern states of New South Wales and Queensland, taking in the very best of this extraordinary coastline.



# Your Itinerary



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# Australia

## Week 1: Sydney - Byron Bay

Your first exciting week in Australia is full of activities and adventure, starting in the country's most impressive city, Sydney!

Your journey begins with a warm welcome in Sydney, where you will be greeted at the airport by your Gapforce Leader and transferred to the group hostel before enjoying a welcome dinner later that evening. Dive into the excitement the following day with a sightseeing cruise around the iconic Sydney Harbour, offering panoramic views of the Opera House and Harbour Bridge. In the afternoon, immerse yourself in the city's charm with a walking tour of some of the city's must-see sights including Circular Quay, the botanic gardens and through the bustling streets of the central business district.

The adventure continues as you explore the natural wonders of the Blue Mountains on a day tour. Enjoy Australian native animals in their natural habitat, spectacular scenic lookouts, and an abundance of Aboriginal history. The unmissable Coogee to Bondi Beach walk awaits you the next day, a coastal trek offering stunning ocean views. Relax and soak up the sun on the famous Bondi Beach in the afternoon.

As the sun sets, it's time to hit the road and board an overnight bus headed to the laid-back haven of Byron Bay. Home to some of the best surf breaks in the world, kick-start your Byron Bay experience with an exhilarating group surf lesson. The rest of your time in Byron Bay is yours to savour – explore the eclectic town, unwind on pristine beaches, or indulge in various optional activities, such as kayaking with dolphins or skydiving, at your own pace.



# Australia

## Week 2: Gold Coast - Brisbane - Noosa

For the next stage of your adventure, you'll head north towards Queensland. Travelling by bus, we'll stop at some unbelievable places along the way!

The Gold Coast is a region famed for its long sandy beaches and elaborate system of inland canals and waterways. This spot is just too good to miss, so you'll stop here long enough to appreciate the epic beaches and waterways of Surfer's Paradise, and as dark falls, you can immerse yourself in the lively nightlife and eclectic dining scene that makes this vibrant town a gem of the Gold Coast.

Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, where modern architecture seamlessly intertwines with lush parks and cultural hotspots. With the guidance of your Gapforce Leader, your time here is your own to explore this vibrant city buzzing with shops, cafés, restaurants and many attractions in the surrounding area.

After your urban exploration, beautiful Noosa is a haven for relaxation and rejuvenation. Indulge in the laid-back charm of Noosa's Hastings Street, dotted with boutiques and cafés, wander along winding trails shaded by eucalyptus trees, and be rewarded with breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean (and maybe spot a koala or two!), and take a refreshing dip in the Fairy Pools, a series of natural rock pools that invite you to immerse yourself in the clear, cool waters.





# Australia

## Week 3: Fraser Island – Rainbow Beach – Airlie Beach – Whitsunday Islands

As you continue your journey north, you'll head to Rainbow Beach, your gateway to Fraser Island, the largest sand island in the world with rain forests, mangrove forests, sand dunes and over 100 freshwater lakes as your playground. It's also one of the few places in the world where you find dingoes in their natural habitat. You will embark on an epic 2-night 4WD camping adventure, exploring the must-see sights of this island and hearing stories about its unique history and culture. At night you will enjoy beach-side barbecues before falling asleep to the sound of the waves.

Your next stop is Airlie Beach, a super social and lively place with restaurants, clubs and bars to party well into the night, plus a beautiful swimming lagoon set in the parkland overlooking the islands. It's also the access point for your overnight sailing adventure around the amazing Whitsunday Islands. Cruise through crystalline waters, visiting iconic Whitehaven Beach and Hill Inlet Lookout. Snorkel vibrant coral reefs, dine under the stars, and relax on deck as you drift into a blissful night on the tranquil waters of this tropical paradise.



# Australia

## Week 4: Magnetic Island – Cairns

Townsville is a hub for travellers going up and down the east coast and also inland. It is also the stopping off point for Magnetic Island, your chance to experience life in true paradise. During your stay, you can spend your days as you choose; whether you want to relax on the beach, or try something more adventurous like kayaking, paddleboarding or jet skiing.

And finally, the city of Cairns, another essential stop on a tour of the east coast and gateway to both Australia's tropical north and the Great Barrier Reef. Embrace vibrant nightlife, explore lush rainforests, and witness unique wildlife. Cairns provides a perfect blend of adventure, culture, and natural wonders for the next phase of your adventure





# Australia

## Weeks 5 & 6: Reef, Rainforest & Conservation

The final phase of your Gapforce adventure is a unique and fully immersive experience, giving you the chance to gain a deeper understanding of the environment and local communities through a suite of hands-on experiences and meaningful insight. These include...

### **Daintree Rainforest & Cape Tribulation tour**

A breathtaking journey from the rainforest to the reef, including a river cruise, creek swim, beach visit and jeep safari

### **Great Barrier Reef snorkelling**

Gain a deeper understanding of the reef and its inhabitants during an unforgettable snorkelling trip to the reef!

### **Atherton Tablelands Waterfall Eco-adventure**

A stunning natural playground with volcanic crater lakes, cascading waterfalls and secluded creeks.

### **Environmental Conservation project**

Volunteer with our local partner in Cairns on one of their ongoing conservation initiatives to help protect the local environment

Throughout the majority of this phase, you'll play an active role in giving back to the local community through volunteer work with our esteemed project partner. Their mission? To bolster the resilience of landscapes, habitats, and species by actively safeguarding and restoring the environment. Engage in impactful land-care projects that enhance local green spaces while simultaneously contributing to the protection of the reef by using eco-friendly methods to prevent soil pollution and, consequently, safeguard the sea from harmful water runoff—an urgent challenge faced by the reef. Depending on what is required at the time, activities may include native tree planting, alien species eradication, seed collection, and track maintenance in a variety of locations and environments across the city such as wetlands, parklands, and the botanic gardens.

Complementing your hands-on project involvement, delve deeper into various environments through an array of exciting and enlightening day excursions and activities. Local guides and specialists will lead the way, sharing their wealth of knowledge about these places and offering insights into local culture and Aboriginal history. This isn't just a phase; it's a unique opportunity to make a positive impact, immerse yourself in diverse environments, and gain a richer understanding of the world around you. Seize the chance to be a catalyst for change while creating memories that will last a lifetime. Your adventure awaits!



# What's Included



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## What's Included:

- Pre-departure support
  - Airport pick-up
- Return Airport Transfers
- Gapforce Expedition Leader
  - Local project staff
- All accommodation for the duration of the trip
  - 4 group dinners
- 2 Breakfasts, 3 Lunches and 2 Dinners on the Fraser Island Tour
- 1 Breakfast, 2 Lunches and 1 Dinner on the Whitsundays sailing trip
  - 1 lunch on the Great Barrier Reef trip
  - Project equipment and training
    - Program transfers
  - 24/7 emergency back-up
  - Financial failure protection

## Trips & Activities:

- Sydney Harbour Cruise
- Blue Mountains day tour
- Coogee to Bondi Coastal Walk
  - Byron Bay Surf lesson
  - 3 day Fraser Island tour
- 2 day/1 night Whitsundays Sailing
  - Atherton Tablelands day tour
  - Great Barrier Reef day tour
- Daintree Rainforest and Cape Tribulation day tour
  - Volunteer project

## Not Included:

- Flights to and from start/finish point
  - Travel insurance
  - Visa & vaccinations
- Spending money for meals, drinks, snacks, optional activities and personal items
  - Optional excursions/activities
- Personal packing kit list items (provided upon booking)
  - Tips and gratuities

Please note that due to the nature of expeditions, prices, dates and itinerary may vary. Please call for details.





# Additional Information



## Accommodation

You will stay in a variety of accommodations throughout your trip including lively hostels, guesthouses, camping and sailing boats on the Whitsundays. Most accommodations will be dorm style with shared bathrooms. On Fraser Island you will be camping in shared tents at a permanent eco-camp. All equipment will be provided. Camp toilets will be available however daily swims in pristine freshwater lakes will replace showers.

## Meals

4 group dinners will be provided during the trip, along with specified meals during the Included Trips listed above. All other meals are at your own expense. See suggested spending money for food and drinks below. You will have the option to use kitchen facilities in hostels or dine out. Vegan and vegetarian diets can be catered for, please check with us regarding further dietary requirements and/or allergies.

## Staff

Throughout your expedition you will be accompanied by a Gapforce Expedition Leader. Gapforce is renowned for the select team of enthusiastic leaders who run our worldwide expeditions. We hire great people experienced in delivering inspiring and safe travel experiences, many of whom have graduated from our 3-month Expedition Leader Training.

At various stages of your expedition we utilize the services of local support staff including project co-ordinators, drivers and guides. Their expert local knowledge is invaluable and they undergo a thorough screening process to ensure they are safe and reliable, in most cases Gapforce has been working with these staff for many years.

## Visa

It is up to you to sort out your individual visa requirements and ensure you fulfil any other entry requirements stipulated for the destination country. Please check the regulations using the advice of your home country's government before you get on the plane. Visas can take several weeks to process, so make sure you allow time for processing.





## **Flights**

The arrival airport is Sydney (SYD). The departure airport is Cairns (CNS). You are responsible for booking your own flights/transport to the start point of the program (at the in-country airport). Information and advice about booking flights will be provided upon booking but please do not hesitate to contact us if you need further assistance.

## **Insurance**

We insist that you have repatriation and medical insurance before you travel with us on our trips and expeditions. Please check that your insurance will return you to your home country in the case of any type of emergency. We also strongly recommend that your policy includes cancellation & curtailment cover. If you intend to dive, it must insure you to dive down to 30m.

## **Medical**

It is your responsibility to check with your own doctor or travel clinic which vaccinations are recommended for your expedition and we recommend you do this at least 2 months prior to the start of your expedition. You must also complete a Gapforce medical form and have it signed by your GP or Doctor.

## **Packing List**

Upon booking you will be provided with a comprehensive packing list. Being prepared is of paramount importance and our advisors are happy to help with any kit related queries you may have.

## **Spending Money**

We recommend you budget US\$220 or £180 per week to cover items not included in the itinerary such as meals, additional drinks, snacks and optional activities. Please note this is a guideline only.

## Transportation

You are responsible to getting yourself to and from the start point of the expedition. During the expedition, program transfers are included. Travel is a combination of day and overnight journeys using a range of transport including public and private buses, jeeps, boats, trains and taxis. Please give us a call for more information on individual journey details.

## Climate

Australia's east coast experiences a variety of weather and temperatures throughout the year.

Summer (December to February) in Sydney is humid, with average highs of 26C.

Autumn (March to May) has highs of 22C but also comes with a high chance of rain. Winter (June to August) is cooler with highs of 17C and Spring (September to November) is pleasant with highs of 23C.

Summer in Brisbane is the wettest time of year, with highs of 29C. Spring and autumn are usually warm and sunny with highs of 26C. Winter is mild, with highs of 21C.

In Cairns, there's a wet season and a dry season. The summertime wet season is hot and humid with temperatures around 31C, with hot days normally followed by a cooling rain at night. The rain dries up around April, with temperatures reaching daytime highs of 29C.





## Fitness Requirements

This program offers a balance of active days mixed with plenty of relaxation and beach time. There will be some days you find yourself on your feet all day, so you should be comfortable walking 4-5 hours a day, including up hills and on rough paths. You may also be required to walk between transport hubs and the accommodation, so you must need to also be able to walk comfortably for up to 30 minutes carrying your full backpack.

Due to close proximity to water during your trip (e.g at swimming pools and on boats) you must be able to swim and be confident in and around water. To participate in any activities that take place in open water e.g. surfing and snorkelling, you must be able to swim 200m.

And don't forget the heat and humidity, particularly at the hottest time of year (December to February) where temperatures can reach over 30 degrees Celsius, so you should be prepared to do the above in temperatures higher than you might be accustomed to back home.

If you are unsure of your suitability to participate, please contact us prior to signing up. We can provide further information on what to expect so that you can discuss your suitability with your doctor and make an informed decision on whether to join.



## Supervision and Optional Activities

During the course of your expedition, there will be times outside of scheduled group activities when you are not under the direct supervision of Gapforce staff. During these times, your leaders will be in the vicinity but may not be able to intervene immediately in the event of an emergency and you are therefore expected to act responsibly and be safety minded at all times. For any times when they are not physically with you, your leaders will provide you with their contact details should you need their assistance.

Any optional activities not included in the program fee that you choose to book with local activity providers will not have been risk assessed by Gapforce and you will therefore be outside the jurisdiction of Gapforce from the moment the activity begins until you return to the group. Check with your insurer beforehand that you are covered for that particular activity.





# Our Credentials

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Here at Gapforce, we are committed to providing the highest levels of customer service, and we demonstrate this through our accreditation and membership of the following organisations:

## Protected Trust Services (PTS)

Through our membership of PTS, we offer full financial protection for all customer money paid to us through Package Travel Regulations compliance and the PTS trust account. Businesses must have extensive experience in travel and undergo stringent financial and risk checks to qualify as a member of PTS. Our PTS membership number is 5482.



## Year Out Group

We are a full member of the Year Out Group; an association of approved gap year organisations committed to providing high operating standards. In order to become an approved organisation, members must evidence a demanding set of criteria including liability insurance, financial protection, program authentication, risk assessments and crisis management plans.



## Young Explorer's Trust (YET)

Our Gap Year and school group programs are BS 8848 compliant following an external audit of our operating standards by a panel from YET. British Standard BS 8848 are standards set "for the provision of visits, fieldwork, expeditions and adventurous activities outside the UK". These rigorous standards provide a recognised benchmark against which to assess the acceptability of safety and general good practice on overseas expeditions.



## WYSE Travel Confederation

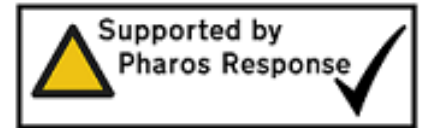
We are a member of the World Youth Student and Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation. Their global community consists of over 600 members in 70 countries and aims "to contribute to the personal and professional growth of students and young people and positively impact our global community by fostering international understanding, responsible international travel, cultural exchange and education".





## Pharos Response

We utilise the services of Pharos Response to ensure our staff both at home and overseas have access to comprehensive emergency and critical incident support. Through their team of experienced incident managers, Pharos Response provides 24/7 support and assistance in the event of an emergency.



## Travel Aware

We've partnered with Travel Aware to ensure British nationals are better prepared for a safe and healthy trip abroad. Together with the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, they provide essential travel advice and up-to-date country information for those living and travelling overseas.



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