

Welcome to CAPE YORK....

Come, visit Cape York, an untouched paradise where the tropical wilderness beckons the adventurous at heart. Nestled at the northern tip of Australia, this breathtaking region offers a diverse array of experiences that cater to every type of traveller.

From the pristine beaches and lush rainforests to the rugged outback and rich history and culture, Cape York is a haven for nature lovers, thrill-seekers, and those in search of nature and tranquility.

For birdwatchers, the Cape is a sanctuary, home to an astonishing variety of species, including rare and migratory birds. Fishing enthusiasts will find their paradise in the region's bountiful waters, teeming with life and offering some of the best fishing spots in the country. Adventure awaits with exhilarating 4WD excursions, where you can traverse stunning landscapes and hidden trails, offering breathtaking views at every turn.

No matter your interests, Cape York is a destination that promises unforgettable memories and experiences. Discover its unique destinations, embrace the wilderness, and immerse yourself in the beauty of this remarkable region. It truly offers something for everyone, making it a must-visit on your travel list!



Plan your ADVENTURE



































Self Drive

Most visitors either use their own vehicle or rent one in Cairns, where both 2WD and 4WD vehicles and campers are available.

Roads

You can get to Cooktown, Laura and Lakefield on the good sealed inland road – all year round. North of Laura you need 4WD and off-road campers/vans.

Air and Bus

You can fly to Weipa (Qantas) and Cooktown (Hinterland Aviation) from Cairns. There are bus services from Cairns to Cooktown such as Trans-North Bus & Coach. And you can hire a car in Cooktown when you get there.

Tours

Enjoying a guided tour is a great alternative option with a range of tours by Air (Daintree Air do great one day trip), 4WD (check out Far North Escapes), Bus and even by Motorcycle (Cape York Motorcycle Adventures have a great reputation).



WHEN TO VISIT

The roads to Lakefield, Laura and Cooktown are fully sealed and accessible all year around. You can always get to Cooktown for a break.

The roads are mainly unsealed north of Laura so the best time to head up is outside the wet season which usually runs late December to end of March.



TOP LOCATIONS

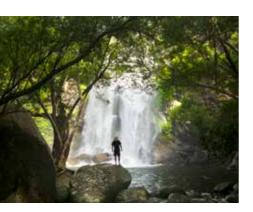
The Cape is a lot more than the 'Trip to the Tip'. So if you're coming all this way don't miss out on some of our other very special destinations.

Beyond the Tip is **Thursday Island** or TI, an island jewel - rich in natural beauty and history with a vibrant culture reflecting Indigenous, European and Asian influences. Peddells operates a short ferry ride from Seisa and you can fly direct from Cairns to Horn Island a short hop away (see pages 40 & 41).

Weipa and the adjoining Community of **Old Mapoon** is another top destination. Weipa is a mining town but has a lot to offer visitors - a selection of stunning beaches, great fishing and, with Old Mapoon, a rich cultural heritage (see pages 34 & 35).

The Cape boasts a fantastic array of tropical fauna and flora and one of the best places to enjoy this is the **Iron Range National Park** with the surrounding communities of **Portland Roads** and **Lockhart River**. This is tropical nature at its very best (see pages 31-33).

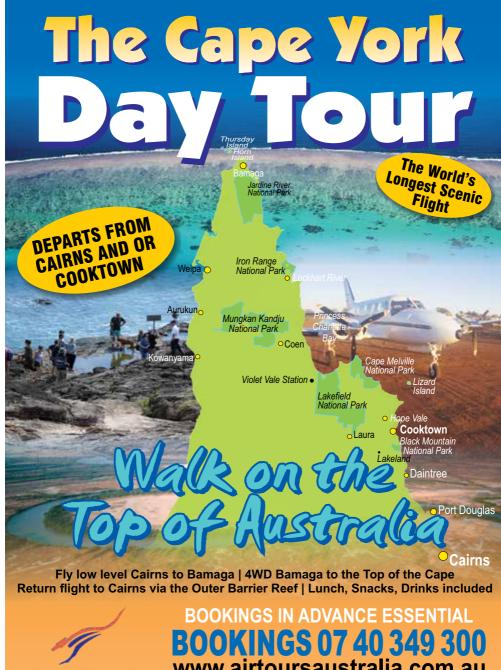
History abounds in **Cooktown** where Cook spent seven weeks repairing the Endeavour in 1770, a century before the town was established to be the port serving the famous Palmer River Goldfields. Now a bustling and friendly town in a glorious setting where the Endeavour River joins the Coral Sea, with plenty to see and do (see pages 14-29).











Daintree Air Services Hop on Board

www.airtoursaustralia.com.au

Departure times & route selection subject to weather on the day. Daintree Air Services reserves the right to cancel tours in the event of bad weather.



Along the way find fantastic **birdlife**, particularly in Iron Range National Park (see page 43).

Fishing is another major attraction at most coastal locations. Weipa and its charters in the Gulf offer excellent sport and Cooktown, less than 30 minutes for the closest reefs, are stand outs (see page 42).

Close to heaven for **4WD** enthusiasts, there are many and varied challenges from the iconic 'Old Telegraph Track' to the Coach Road, Frenchman's Track and Cape Melville National Park (see pages 44 & 45).







CYMCA is a family business, operating fully guided off-road tours between Cairns and the Tip of Cape York since 1990. The bucket list tour is designed to test the rider's skill level - you ride, we take care of the rest

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Cooktown - Cairns - Cooktown

Passenger and light freight services. Inland service via Mareeba, Mt Molloy and Lakeland Downs. Coastal service via Mossman, Cape Tribulation and Wujal Wujal. Coastal variant service via Mosman, Lakeland Downs and Wujal Wujal (when conditions make it necessary).

T: (07) 3036 2070

transnorthbus.com.au



The IDNEY UP.





Mulligan Highway to Lakeland

The major route begins at Mt Molloy on the excellent sealed Mulligan Highway, named after James Mulligan, who started the Palmer River Gold Rush in 1873. If you are travelling by 4WD (and not towing) you can take the iconic Bloomfield Track from Cape Tribulation to Bloomfield and on to Cooktown (see pages 12 & 13).

Travel north passing through Mt Carbine, home to a reestablished tungsten mine, and continue toward Lakeland (approximately 120 km). Stop at the famous Palmer River Roadhouse for a refreshment. At Lakeland don't miss the **Gateway to Cape York tourist information** centre to learn more about the region. And if you're looking for a break in you journey Lakeland Downs is a great camping spot. From Lakeland you have a couple of options.

Cooktown - Battle Camp Loop

Continue on Mulligan Highway to stop over at historic Cooktown - then rejoin the Peninsula Development Road (PDR) at Laura via 4WD Battle Camp Road (unsealed—check conditions). Or you can head on up through the spectacular Lakefield National Park (see page 30) and join the PDR at Musgrave Roadhouse.

PDR from Laura

Turn on to the PDR, traveling to Laura and then on to the Hann River and Musgrave Roadhouses. Just south of Laura, don't miss the Quinkan Split Rock Art Site, featuring a self-guided tour of famous local rock art.

Continuing up

From Musgrave proceed through Coen to Archer River Roadhouse, where you can find ample camping space, accommodation, a café (try an Archer Burger) shop and fuel—available at Lakeland, Laura, and Coen as well.

Portland Roads and Weipa turnoffs

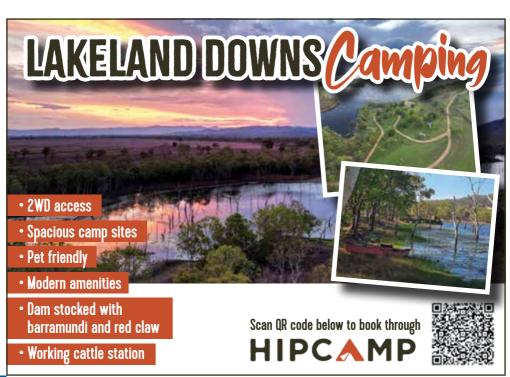
Shortly after the Archer River Roadhouse, you can turn right onto Portland Road (unsealed—4WD recommended) to explore the unique beauty of Iron Range National Park, Portland Roads and Lockhart River (see pages 31-34).

A little further on continue on the PDR to Weipa and Old Mapoon (see pages 34 & 35), or take a right on to the Telegraph Track, passing Batavia Downs and crossing the Wenlock River at the historic Moreton Telegraph Station (camping available).











Telegraph Rd North

After 40 km, you'll reach Bramwell Station Roadhouse. From here, continue on the challenging Old Telegraph Track or divert on to the less arduous (but unsealed) Bamaga Road toward the Jardine Ferry Crossing, approximately 170 km away. En route, visit the scenic Fruit Bat Falls and Eliott Falls, where camping is available (book via Queensland National Parks).

The Jardine Ferry

Operates daily from 7 am to 6 pm (1 May to 31 October) and from 8 am to 5 pm outside this period. Check the website for fees and bookings.

The Tip

After crossing the Jardine, you're close to the Tip. Bamaga offers a supermarket for provisions and access to the various campgrounds and accommodations (see pages 39 & 39). If you wish to explore further, head to Seisa for Peddells ferry to Thursday Island or a trip to beautiful Roko Island Resort.

Tipo



DON'T RELY ON GOOGLE MAPS.

Use the Hema map either paper or the app.



MAKE SURE YOUR VEHICLE IS READY FOR THE TRIP.

Get a snorkel if you are planning on doing river crossings – particularly soon after the wet season.



PACK A SPARE.



BRING WATER AND FUEL, (there is plenty of fuel on the

main route but not so on the remote 4WD tracks).



GO ACCOMPANIED IF YOU ARE DOING REMOTE 4WD TRACKS.



BE CROC WISE.



HANDY LINKS

Cook Shire Road Conditions Jardine Ferry

Qld Traffic Road Condition Map













Nestled in the heart of the Daintree Rainforest, **Cape Tribulation** is a stunning destination where ancient rainforests meet the striking Coral Sea. Part of the Daintree National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, there is lots to see and do. Take a guided wildlife tour, zipline through the rainforest canopy, snorkel the reef, horse ride along the beach grab a copy of the Daintree Coast Map when you cross the ferry so you don't miss anything.

Don't rush through - there's plenty of accommodation; if you are camping, Cape Tribulation Camping occupies a special spot on the beach.



If you have a 4WD vehicle you can start your journey up the Cape along the legendary **Bloomfield Track**. An unforgettable experience, full of spectacular scenery as you wind through the rainforest along the Coral Sea coastline. Take your time – enjoy a dip at Emmagen Creek, check out the sensational views from Donovan's lookout, pull off the track to check out the wide expanse of Cowie Beach. The track is about 30kms, winding and steep in parts with some creek crossings – not suitable for towing. Always check the conditions first.

At the other end lies the Aboriginal village of Wujal Wujal and the tranquil community of **Bloomfield**. Known for its stunning vistas, friendly locals, and laid-back atmosphere, this is an ideal spot to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life.



2869 Rossville Bloomfield Road BLOOMFIELD Far North OLD 4895

A good boat ramp allows boaties to explore or fish the Bloomfield River or you can fish from the bank. Bloomfield Cabins & Camping and Bloomfield Escape are two of our favourite stays.

Don't miss the spectacular Bloomfield Falls or a walk along Weary Bay beach to the mouth of the Bloomfield River. Just north of Bloomfield check out the hospitality and unique art at the Black Cockatoo Gallery.

The road is sealed from the Bloomfield Bridge up to Cooktown. It takes you through the beautiful Cedar Bay National Park, Rossville and past the popular Mungumby Lodge and Bloomfield Retreat before joining the Mulligan Highway to Cooktown at the mysterious Black Mountain National Park





Black Cockatoo Gallery is more than just an art gallery, it is an experience with an environmental message. Visitors can also enjoy a tea or coffee while relaxing on the deck overlooking the property. Serving a range of great coffee, speciality teas and home-made sweet treats, come in for a chat with your hosts Ross & Lainie Franzi.

www.blackcockatoogallery.com.au info@blackcockatoogallery.com.au **OPENING TIMES**

Dry Season April - December

Daily 8am - 5pm Wet Season

By Appointment - Please call or email

2622 Bloomfield Road Bloomfield Queensland 4895 Australia

0488 626202





bloomfieldescape.com.au



Nestled at the mouth of the Endeavour River, Cooktown is one of Australia's most beautiful, unspoilt coastal towns. Rich in history and natural beauty it's a must-visit destination in Cape York.

Named after Captain James Cook, who beached the HMS Endeavour in 1770 for repairs. They spent seven weeks here establishing mostly friendly relations with the local Guugu Yimithirr people. The botanists, Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander had a wonderful time exploring the tropical flora and discovering new animals including one the locals called 'Ganggurru' which the British later translated to 'Kangaroo'.



But it wasn't until gold was discovered at Palmer River that Cooktown came into existence. When James Mulligan (after whom the highway is named) started the Palmer River gold rush in 1873 there were no roads. Keen to find a port to service the gold fields, the government relied on Captain Cook's detailed charts in deciding on Cooktown.

The town grew rapidly with all supplies coming in through the port to become a vibrant business hub and gold rush town with its own railway station. Among the wide assortment of prospectors chasing their fortunes were many Chinese attracted by the promotion of the find in Guandong and Fujian.

Exploring our rich history

Visit **Waalmbal Birri Heritage & Culture** Centre to share the story of the Endeavour's amazing voyage. Learn about their seven week stay in Cooktown and interactions with the local Guugu Yimithirr people.

Next door the **Cooktown History Centre's** award winning display offers a great insight into the town's history, particularly in its gold rush heyday.

Check out the wide range of exhibits at the fabulous **Cooktown Museum** housed in the beautifully restored old convent. See an anchor and canon rescued from the sea after they were discarded in an attempt to float the Endeavour off the reef. The museum has a fascinating array of artefacts including indigenous items and tells the story of the first reconciliation between Cook and the local Guugu Yimithirr people.

Visit the site of this historic first reconciliation commemorated in the Park at the bottom of Furneaux Street.

If you visit in early June, don't miss the Discovery Festival, including the famous reenactment of Cook's visit and the First Reconciliation.



Immerse yourself in our wonderful tropical Nature

Start with **Grassy Hill Lookout** and its 360° views of the Endeavour River, the mountain backdrops and the Coral Sea and reefs.

Cooktown's historic **Botanic Gardens** are our environmental jewel. Dating from 1878 they offer visitors a wonderful exhibition of tropical flora including a palmetum (featuring tropical palms) and rainforest and bush tucker gardens. A stroll through the gardens followed by a refreshment at the adjoining **Nature's Powerhouse** is a favourite activity.

After enjoying the gardens, follow the scenic bush track to the wide expanse of **Finch Bay**, the **Old Quarry** and on to charming **Cherry Tree Bay** for more natural beauty and some great views. For the adventurous a climb up Mt Cook rewards with breathtaking views.

The **River of Life Walkway** takes you past the site of the Endeavour's beaching to where the river meets the sea. Check the fishing action at the Wharf, perhaps buy freshly caught prawns off a local boat and enjoy the beautiful views as you stroll along the waterfront at **William Daku Park**.

Find the old **Railway Terminus** and follow the old railway track through the mangroves to the back of historic **Cooktown Cemetery** with its interesting and diverse graves including the **Chinese Shrine**.

Enjoy our rich and often noisy birdlife. Among the many species butcher birds, friarbirds and orioles compete for airwayes, kingfishers and



sunbirds flash by while sea eagles and kites sore above. Just out of town walk through the giant paperbarks surrounding **Keatings Lagoon**, covered in waterlilies and vibrant with birdlife.

Or test your Fishing prowess; Cooktown wharf is Fishing Central where the locals fish. If you've brought your boat the beautiful Endeavour River offers good fishing and when the winter winds drop there is great fishing with the nearest reefs 30 minutes off shore.

Charters are available and with the Lure Shop, Cooktown has one of the best fishing (and hunting) tackle shops in Queensland.

And at the end of the day enjoy the beauty of a Sunset Cruise up the magical Endeavour River with Riverbend Tours.







Unlock Cooktown's History

Uncover incredible stories at Cooktown Museum, housed in the stunning former Sisters of Mercy convent. Explore an extensive collection of artifacts celebrating Cooktown's rich history—from Indigenous culture, Captain Cook's landing, gold rush tales and so much more.

With captivating exhibits for all ages, history truly comes alive!

Discover the heart of Cooktown-visit today!



Scan QR for opening times

Check our opening times before your visit to avoid disappointment

Free entry for National Trust members

50 Helen Street Cooktown | 07 4069 5386







CAFÉ | INFORMATION CENTRE | ART GALLERY

COOKTOWN BOTANIC GARDENS | WALKER STREET, COOKTOWN CAFÉ: (07) 4069 5763 | INFORMATION CENTRE: (07) 4069 6004 EMAIL: NATURESPOWERHOUSECAFE@COOKTOWNS.COM





WAALMBAL BIRRI HERITAGE AND CULTURE CENTRE

Re-discover a shared history with the Guugu Yimithirr Bama-ngay when they made first contact with Cook and his crew. Contemplate this significant time in history where the Cultural Governance applied by the Bama ensured Cook's survival on Guugu Yimithirr country.

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riverbendtour.com.au





COOKTOWN HISTORY CENTRE

Showcasing life through the years of Cooktown, with award winning displays. The Centre also houses an extensive archive of local and family history and offers a research service for those with early connections to greater Cooktown and Palmer River areas.

Open 9am-3pm Monday – Saturday, March to October Irregular hours October to March

121 Charlotte Street, next to Post Office T: 07 4069 6640

1: 07 4069 6640

COOKTOWN

RE-ENACTMENT

ASSOCIATION W

E: cooktownhistory@gmail.com





"if you love it – live it!"

95 Charlotte St, Cooktown Telephone 0428 745 398 cooktownplatinumrealty.com.au





There's no excuse for not visiting - You can get here easily .



By Air

Cooktown has a regular air service (Hinterland Aviation) from Cairns airport (General Aviation) with flights operating seven days a week



By Bus

Trans-North Bus & Coach service runs regularly between Cairns and Cooktown.



With a Tour

Enjoying a guided tour is another option and there are a number of firms offering tours of different durations and itineraries such as Far North Escapes who offer 1-3 day trips.



Self-driving your own vehicle or a hire car/RV

The inland Mulligan Highway is a good, sealed road so that you can drive to and from Cooktown all year around in approximately four hours.

4WD vehicles can take the iconic
Bloomfield Track via Cape Tribulation and the Daintree Rainforest (without towing a van). You can fly to Cairns and hire a car, 4WD, RV or Camper from one of the many car and camper hire companies.







Great selection of accommodation

There's a good range of hotel/motel accommodation including the Sovereign Resort, the Seaview and the River of Gold. For those wanting self-contained accommodation there are charming AirBnBs.

RVs and campers have a choice of six good caravan and camping parks in and around Cooktown including the popular Cooktown Caravan Park and Cooktown Orchid Travellers Park.

And there is a great range of accommodation options around Cooktown for those who want more space (see pages 27-29).

Cooktown has excellent facilities

Visitors can find Cooktown's Information Centre at **Nature's Powerhouse** at the end of Walker Street within the Botanic Gardens.

Keep yourself fit during your stay at the heated pool or well-equipped gym. Enjoy lawn bowls at the Bowls Club or a round of golf at the spectacular Golf Course overlooking the Coral Sea.

There's a good range of food shops including a well stocked IGA. Find fresh local fruit and veg home produce at the weekly Saturday Markets. Cooktown's cafes, restaurants and take-aways cater for a range of tastes and budgets with the RSL being a popular spot for a bite to eat.

In the Lure Shop, we have one of the best equipped fishing tackle and hunting shops in North Queensland. Camping and RV/Marine shops meet many travellers and boaties needs – and gas swaps and refills are available. Hardware and homeware stores mean that there's not many things you cannot find in Cooktown.

A well-stocked and friendly Vitality pharmacy, a good health centre and an excellent hospital cater for all health needs including those unforeseen emergencies.

Three fuel outlets and a number of auto repair and recovery shops work hard at keeping you on the road including Cape York Auto and Cooktown Tyrepower. You can hire a car or 4WD locally enabling visitors to sightsee around the region.

For a full range of Cooktown's shops and services visit our online Business and Community Services Director.















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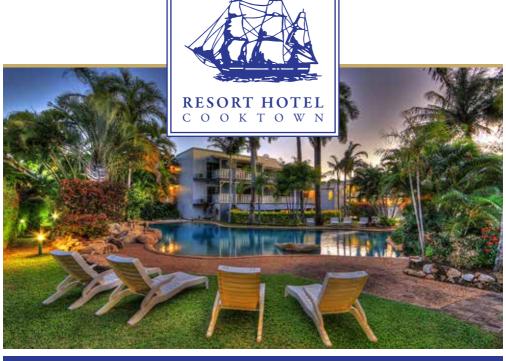


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Located on the banks of the Endeavour River, the Cooktown RSL Memorial Club is a local club where members and guests can enjoy lunch or dinner in air-conditioned comfort. Gaming, Keno and full bar facilities in a friendly relaxed atmosphere.

Courtesy bus available.

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COOKTOWN ORCHID TRAVELLERS PARK

Small friendly park in the middle of town. Sites to suit all, with a sparkling pool and sun loungers. Enjoy a well-equipped camp kitchen and free WiFi. Walk everywhere - a great base for enjoying all that Cooktown has to offer.

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Real Estate Agency With A Difference

2/92 Charlotte St, Cooktown **0417 848 966**E: agents@cooktownproperty.com
cooktownproperty.com.au



There are some great spots to explore around Cooktown.

Head north towards the airport on the picturesque Endeavour Valley Road. For those wanting quieter accommodation options closer to nature check out the charming Paperbark Retreat or camping by the River at Endeavour River Escape – genuine bush camping but with hot showers and flushing toilets.

Continuing past the airport for about 20 minutes gets you to a fork – head left to have a swim in Isabella Falls and then on to Battle Camp Rd or head right to the indigenous community of Hope Vale and, beyond that, the fabulous Elim Beach Campground - one of the few beach side camping grounds in the Cape.

Just north of the campground are the famous 'Coloured Sands' where you can drive (at low tide) or walk along the beach (get a permit and a guide from the campground first).

For those wanting a longer day out continue along Battle Camp Road, across the Normanby River and into the south end of Lakefield National Park (70kms). Explore the beautiful and remote Horseshoe Lagoon home to a vibrant mix of waterbirds. Just a little further on take a break to check out the historic Old Laura Homestead.

From there you can head down to Laura for a refreshment. Just south of Laura is the famous Quinkan Split Rock art site. Continue on that road to head back to Cooktown on sealed roads via Lakeland.







Heading south on Mulligan Highway its worth taking a left to explore Quarantine Bay and Walker Bay Beach. The keen 4WD can take the drive behind the beach down to the mouth of the Annan River. This is also the home of Cooktown Golf Club. A little further on, on the right before you cross the Annan, is the picturesque Keating's Lagoon. Take the gentle walk through the giant paperbarks around the lagoon, home to many water birds. Across the river find a couple of left turns. The first takes you to Archer Point, a pretty spot definitely worth exploring. The second turn along Mt Amos Rd takes you to Trevethan Falls (the signage is variable so keep eyes skinned for the signs) a good swimming hole but with a bit of scramble to get to. Back on Mulligan's Highway you will drive past the spectacular and mysterious Black Mountains – stop at the Look Out to learn more about these unique formations.

There are great accommodation options just south of Cooktown offering more space and nature than in town. Turn left off Mulligan's Highway towards Rossville and Bloomfield to find Rossville Retreat which offers eco-friendly lodges in a bush setting surrounded by an abundance of wildlife. A little further on is Mungumby Lodge in a wonderful bush setting where, if you're lucky, you will spot one of the fabulous Ulysses butterflies.









Escape the chaos!

Connect with nature, abundant wildlife and the glistening stars above





Rossville Retreat offers:

Eco-friendly lodges with ensuites that sleep up to 4 guests
Indigenous guided tours with renowned bush medicine expert, Mooks

Private unpowered camp sites
Indigenous activities with our local clan groups

Bush walks and riverside picnic areas
Immersion and school camps

all overlooked by magical Kalkajaka (Black Mountain)

To book, visit www.rossvilleretreat.com info@rossvilleretreat.com - 07 4069 6106 or 0458 672922

152 Shipton's Flat Road, Rossville, Queensland 4895 (only 2km from the Lion's Den Hotel & 20 minutes from Cooktown)



Escape to Paradise. Experience unique camping, the cliffs of Coloured Sands beach and Cape Bedford at Elim Beach Holiday Park. Just a 5-hour scenic drive north of Cairns via Cooktown and Hope Vale, this north-facing beach camp offers unpowered beach front and shaded camp sites with essential amenities, including a camp kitchen, toilets and showers.

Elim Beach Holiday Park is the perfect spot for active or relaxed camping.

Explore the vibrant Coloured Sands, only a 10-15 minute drive from the park, tide permitting. For adventurers, sandy inland roads lead to the breathtaking North and South Cape Bedford Cliffs.

These stunning natural wonders are unique to this part of the world and will leave you speechless. At Elim Beach Holiday Park you can experience the natural beauty of Far North Queensland like never before!



- Family focused
- Fishing and crabbing
- Guided tours
- Day visits (fees apply)



- Hiking
- Intertidal walks
- Sand/mountain biking
- Essential amenities



- Beach front sites
- Grass and shaded sites
- Bush camp sites
- Group sites

For more information visit: www.elimbeach.com.au

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...where nature rules!

Covering approximately 500,000 hectares, Lakefield National Park is a spectacular natural oasis located in the heart of Cape York Peninsula. Renowned for its diverse landscapes, the park is characterized by a mosaic of open savanna woodlands, wetlands, and vast grasslands, which provide a rich habitat for wildlife.

The Park features large river systems, the North Kennedy, Morehead, Hann and Normanby Rivers as well as spectacular lagoons and waterholes. Fringing many of the riverbanks are magnificent, tall paperbark trees and patches of gallery forest, a type of rainforest.

The park is a rich habitat for wildlife. A fantastic array of birds including kingfishers, herons, magpie geese, jacanas and egrets congregate around the rivers and waterholes. Spot brolgas dancing their love rituals on the plain as well as golden shouldered parrots and star finches. Tall, stately jabirus stalk through swamp grass in search of tasty morsels. Birds of prey, including the rare red goshawk, constantly circle overhead, soaring on thermals, ever watchful for a furry movement on the ground.

Spot agile wallabies and the odd elusive kangaroo and the countless noisy and fearsome-looking flying foxes. But beware of the many crocodiles in and around the waterways.

Admire impressive examples of 'magnetic' anthills standing tall in the dry savannah. Painstakingly constructed these towers are aligned north-south to provide shelter from the sizzling rays of the noonday sun.

The Park is also a fisher's paradise with its multitude of locations to fish at – many with large barra waiting to be tempted! At the north of the Park the water is often brackish with a wider selection of species.

The Park is easily accessible from Battle Camp Road running out of Cooktown or from the Peninsula Development Road (PDR). The park is closed in the wet season, usually from December to June or July (often the southern campsites open first).

The park has a great selection of isolated campsites for self-sufficient travellers. Kalpowar Crossing, near Lakefield, has showers and toilets but others are more basic but very picturesque. Examples are Horseshoe Lagoon, 12-Mile Hole and Hann Crossing. The Queensland Parks Lakefield website has excellent resources to check out the park and campsites - which you can book on the Parks Booking Service site. See links below.





...remote beauty and nature on steroids!

One of the best destinations on Cape York. Serene beauty, lush rainforests vibrant with birdlife, pristine beaches on the azure waters of the Coral Sea and a range of accommodation.

A trip to the top just isn't complete without visiting this fabulous east coast gem. If you're north bound turn right after Archer River Roadhouse along the Portland Road. Travel for 100kms to the Greenhoose accommodation and licensed café, Iron Range and Lockhart River. Another 30kms gets you to Portland Roads and Chilli Beach.

Iron Range National Park

Home to an array of unique flora and fauna. It's a world-class birdwatching destination with its

abundant birdlife attracting bird lovers from around the world. While many visitors seek out the unmistakable Palm Cockatoo there are over 200 species including the Magnificent Rifle Bird, the Northern Scrub Robin, Eclectus Parrot and Southern Cassowary.

The Park is also amongst the most diverse habitats in Australia for butterflies, ants, ferns, palms and orchids. The Green Python is one of it's most striking inhabitants. This non-venomous snake inhabits the coastal vine forests of Iron Range turning from bright yellow as a juvenile to vibrant green in adulthood. Visitors also enjoy trying to spot the nocturnal Cuscus and the Spiny Bandicoot.

The Greenhoose accommodation and licensed cafe is a great base to explore the Park with its range of rooms surrounded by rainforest. Great information from the hosts to make sure you have the best experience. Or you can get a permit and camp in the Park itself.





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Portland Roads

You cannot help but be captivated by the beauty of Portland Roads, a natural anchorage protected from the winter SE trade winds. Originally known for its long jetty jutting out into the protected bay built for the Batavia gold rush in the 1920s, it became a major part of US WWII infrastructure in 1942.

Although the jetty has sadly gone, there is today a small but vibrant community that calls this part of paradise home.

There are accommodation options at Portland Roads and a café offering excellent seafood and local fare. The recently opened Cape Weymouth Camping & Cabins near Chilli Beach offers protected camping and luxury safari style ecotents. You can also camp at Chilli Beach in the National Park (booking required).

Fishing

The fishing is excellent both from the shore and boat. Check with the locals for best spots and times. There is a boat ramp at Portland Roads and the nearest reefs are only a few miles out. Fishing charters can be arranged depending on the weather.

Lockhart River

The Aboriginal community of Lockhart River is well known for its vibrant indigenous art featuring very different painting techniques. Pioneered by the 'Art Gang' in 1995 the artists have received international recognition for their works. Check out the Lockhart River Arts Centre, usually open every day.

Lockhart River also has a general store with selfserve petrol and diesel available. A visit to Quintell Beach is also recommended.









...and stunning and remote Western Cape.

Nestled on the western tip of the Cape York Peninsula, **Weipa** is a great introduction to the Western Cape that offers much more than meets the eye. With its pristine beaches and the unspoiled wilderness, Weipa should not be missed.

Weipa is home to Rio Tinto's massive bauxite mining operation – the largest in the world. Weipa's transformation from a quiet coastal settlement to a thriving mining hub is a fascinating journey, and there's no better way to discover it than with the Mine and Town Tour.

But Weipa is more than just a mining town. It offers a chance to experience the untouched habitats, nature, birdlife and animals of the Western Cape and Gulf. Take an eco-tour to immerse yourself in this remote beauty. Watch those **special sunsets** where the sun sinks below the sea in a blaze of colour.

And of course there is the **fishing**. Weipa is one of the best fishing locations in the Cape, if not Australia. A range of exciting fish species await to challenge you – including barramundi, mangrove jack, salmon, coral trout and mackerel. You can fish from the shore - Evans Landing jetty, Rocky Point boat ramp and under the Mission Bridge are popular spots. Or you can bring your own boat and launch it from the Weipa or Rocky Point boat ramps. But the best results will be by tapping into the local knowledge and booking one of the many excellent charters who will give you a great fishing experience.

In town you will find **accommodation** options including the very comfortable Albatross Bay Resort (the 'Alby') with its bar and dining facilities. Weipa Camping Ground offers great camping and cabin options on the beachfront, with a pool and kids' playground. And there is a good shopping centre and tackle store among many other facilities.

Check out the friendly Weipa Bowls Club with its popular bistro and indulge is a game of social bowls. Visit the Achimbun Cultural Centre showcasing the artwork and history of the local indigenous peoples.

The historic and remotely beautiful community of Mapoon (see opposite page) lies an hour's drive north and is well worth a visit — with more great fishing opportunities. The adventurous can drive along the beach north to the Pennefather River, offering a stunning blend of crystal-clear blue waters and pristine white beaches. Known for its thriving crocodile population, it's a must-visit for wildlife enthusiasts, while avid anglers can enjoy another top best fishing spot.





...a small culturally rich community with a great history of survival and resilience.

Nestled on the western tip of the Cape York Peninsula, where the Wenlock and Dulcie Rivers flow into the Gulf, find Old Mapoon.

In 1891 a mission was established at Mapoon on the traditional homelands of the Tjungundji people. Children were forcibly removed there and the population grew with local groups coming to the Reserve to get away from attacks by local pastoralists. The 1950s discovery of bauxite led to land being taken from the mission to lease to Comalco, leading to the establishment of Weipa.

Underfunding, poor conditions and competition from the mine led to the Queensland Government closing the mission and forcibly removing residents

Many residents were unhappy with where they were moved to and over the following years some returned to Mapoon. Eventually the government recognised their wishes and provided new housing leading to the establishment of the small but proud and resilient modern community of Mapoon, the Cape's oldest indigenous community.

An hour away from Weipa, Mapoon is easy to get to. You can stay in the comfortable air-conditioned cabins at Paanja Lodge or camp at Cullen Point. The campground boasts new showers & toilets, concrete pads, fire pits and solar lighting.

Enjoy the wildlife and remote scenery of the Western Cape. There is great fishing at Cullen Point from the shore where you can catch a wide range of fish. A new the boat ramp gives boaties even more great fishing.

Visit the Cultural and Art Centre and grab a burger at the famous Wild Cape Café. The town has 24hr fuel, a waterpark for the kids and a well stocked store with fresh produce.







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Don't miss old Mapoon



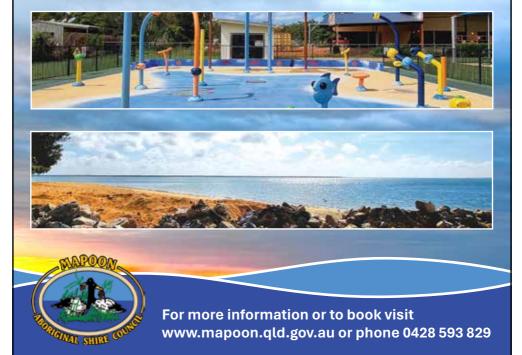
The Cape's oldest indigenous community with an amazing history of resilience lies less than an hour north of Weipa.

the Wenlock and Dulcie rivers join the Gulf. Stay in the comfortable A/C cabins at Paanja Lodge or camp at picturesque Cullen Point. The campground boasts new showers & toilets, concrete pads, fire pits and solar

Situated in beautiful remote country where

lighting. Great fishing from the shore and there is a new the boat ramp for boaties.

Visit the Cultural and Art Centre and grab a bite at the famous Wild Cape Café. The town has 24hr fuel, a waterpark for the kids and a well stocked store with fresh produce.











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Once you've crossed the Jardine Ferry you are only 70kms from the very Tip. Bamaga (40kms) is the one and only town at the Tip. Principally an indigenous community it has a supermarket, bakery, pharmacy, general store and tavern.

From Bamaga visitors can head to one of the many accommodation options. Our favourite is Cape York Camping at Punsand Bay which has airconditioned cabins, camping and a restaurant and pool close to the Tip looking over the Arafura Sea.

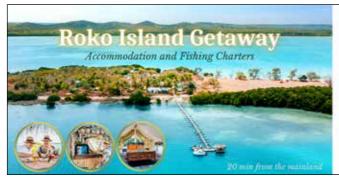
There are also campgrounds, some with cabins, at Loyalty Beach, Alau Beach and at Seisa. There is a supermarket, café and fuel at Seisa – and it's the place to catch the Peddells ferry for a visit to Thursday Island (see 40 & 41).

Of course there is the mandatory scamble to the Tip itself with an accompanying photo for evidence. But this is a place to relax after your journey, enjoy the magical views, beachcomb and spot the variety of birdlife. And there are plenty of opportunities for the angler to test their skills or to take a fishing charter.

Take a scenic helicopter flight – Punsand Bay Aviation do great breathtaking flights over the natural beauty of Cape York. Try and make time to visit Thursday Island – a short trip from Seisa (see pages 40 & 41).

Or take a day (or overnight) trip to pretty and hospitable Roko Island, formerly a pearl farm cultivating South Sea Pearls and still producing White South Sea Pearls available for sale on the island. From where you can do a fishing or sightseeing trip in the Torres Straits.

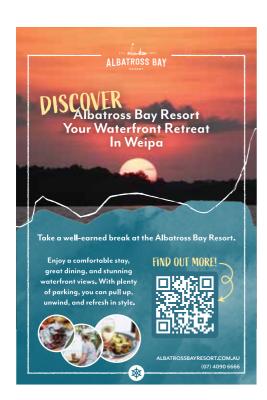






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Roko Island, Torres Strait









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...gems of the Torres Strait

Don't just stop at the tip, a trip to the Cape is not complete without a visit to Thursday and Horn Islands with their unique blend of history, natural beauty and cultures. Nestled in the turquoise waters of the Torres Strait it's an easy and picturesque trip from the mainland by ferry from Seisa to Thursday Island with the friendly crew at Peddells Ferries. Or you can fly from Cairns to Horn Island and take the short ferry hop over to Thursday Island.

Thursday Island is home to a dynamic blend of cultures, reflecting its history of Indigenous, European, and Asian influences. Originally inhabited by the Torres Strait Islanders, an Indigenous group known for their maritime skills and rich cultural traditions, the island was transformed by the establishment of a pearling industry in 1868. This attracted a diverse population from around the world, particularly Japanese who dominated the diving and boatbuilding industries between the world wars, leaving an indelible mark on the island's economy and society.

Thursday Island offers the visitor a range of places to stay and many opportunities to enjoy the diverse foods of the Torres Strait – check out the Garden Hotel with its views over the straits. Immerse yourself in the beauty and history of the island with a Peddells Tour.

Discover the unique local art and crafts and their history at the Gab Titui Cultural Centre. Check out the WWII history at Green Hill Fort or take a tour of war sites over the way on Horn Island.

Enjoy boat tours to nearby islands known for their pristine beaches and breathtaking scenery. Hiking reveals stunning vistas of the archipelago and its history, making for a memorable outdoor adventure. Fishing charters offer great sport – and dinner!

Whether you seek cultural enrichment, historical exploration, or simply a picturesque getaway, Thursday Island offers a unique gateway to the wonders of the Torres Strait. Immerse yourself in its charm and create memories that will last a lifetime.







...hook into adventure!

The Cape offers the keen or amateur angler many opportunities to catch some fine fish – and in many cases a tasty dinner!

Catch coral trout, nannygai and red emperor in the many reefs that run up the east coast close to shore - and very accessible from places like Cooktown and Portland Roads. And around the reefs fine spanish mackerel, tuna, giant trevally and queenfish abound. Giant black marlin attract the game fishers to Cooktown September to December.

Weipa is a favourite destination for fishers particularly in winter when it is protected from the SE Trades that blow along the east coast. The fishing is excellent offering a wide range of species including barramundi, coral trout, salmon, saratoga and spanish mackerel. Old Mapoon just an hour north also offers great fishing – from the shore at Cullen Point or around the remote creeks and waterways in your boat launched from the new boat ramp also at Cullen Point.

The many rivers of the Cape are home to large barramundi and mangrove jack. Lakefield National Park is one of the top spots with its many rivers and camping grounds.

There are plenty of opportunities for shore fishing. Cooktown and Seisa have famous wharves where the locals and visitors gather to try their luck. The Custom and Navy wharves on Thursday Island are popular. Fishing from the shore at Portland Roads, Old Mapoon (Cullen Point) will usually yield good results.

Boaties will find good boat ramps at Cooktown, Weipa, Old Mapoon and Seisia. There are a number of remote boat ramps to launch at least a smaller tinnie – for example around the Annan River, the Tip, Vrilya Point, Somerset Beach and Fishbone Creek. But always keep an eye out for hungry crocs.

Fishing charters are available in Cooktown, Weipa (including helifishing tours), Portland Roads, Roko Island and Thursday Island.

Cape York is probably the fishing capital of Australia where it ticks all the boxes for adventure in a remote land. So come and try your luck and make sure you allow enough time to enjoy the many opportunities.







Cape York is a top destination for birders. Its remarkable diversity of ecosystems and breathtaking landscapes are homes to an amazing variety of birdlife.

Explore the eucalypt forests, expansive savannahs, mangrove-lined waterways, lush tropical rainforests, stunning heathlands, and pristine, remote beaches. And keep your binoculars and camera ready to capture the beauty and birdlife around you.

More than 300 bird species call Cape York home providing many opportunities for memorable sightings. 'Must-see' birds include the iconic Palm Cockatoo, the endemic Golden-shouldered Parrot, and one of Australia's rarest raptors, the Red Goshawk. Whether you're starting in Cooktown or venturing toward the northern tip of the Cape, avian encounters await at every turn. Depending on the time you have and which areas you're exploring, be sure to prioritize these birding hotspots.

First on the list is **Iron Range National Park**,
Australia's largest protected area of lowland rainforest. This ecological goldmine brims with spectacular birdlife, including the Yellow-billed Kingfisher, Eclectus and Red-cheeked Parrots, Trumpet Manucode, Magnificent Riflebird, White-faced Robin, and Frilled-necked Monarch. Palm Cockatoos can be found in the Park or around the Portland Roads coastal areas

Lakefield National Park, located just north of Cooktown, is another top destination. This expansive wetland system presents many opportunities for spotting various Australian

Grassfinches, numerous species of Honeyeaters, and a wealth of waders and waterbirds. Look toward the grass plains to find Black-necked Storks, Brolgas, Sarus Cranes, and the majestic Australian Bustards. Above, the skies brim with raptors, including the Wedge-tailed Eagle, Black-breasted Buzzard, Whistling and Black Kites, Spotted Harrier, and if you're exceptionally fortunate, the elusive Red Goshawk.

At the northern Cape, explore the rainforest tracks at **Lockerbie Scrub and Pajinka**, where the lush landscapes unveil even more birding delights.

The northwestern Cape, around the mining town of **Weipa and Mapoon**, surprises visitors with its avian diversity. Here, you'll encounter an impressive variety of shorebirds, remnant rainforest strips, and expansive lagoon systems such as Lake Patricia. As the sun sets over the coast, keep an eye out for Lesser and Greater Frigatebirds returning to roost, alongside resident Eastern Ospreys, Brahminy Kites, and White-bellied Sea Eagles.

An abundance of hidden bird gems awaits you. Just bring a dash of imagination, a spirit of adventure, and a willingness to venture out. So, gear up, step outside, and immerse yourself in the Cape's breathtaking beauty and birding opportunities!

Thanks for assistance from David Mead of Great Northern Tours www.greatnorthernbirdwatchingtours.com.au.







Cape York is renowned for its diverse landscapes and adventurous 4WD tracks. For off-road enthusiasts, the area offers some of the best challenges in the country. While there are many opportunities to go seriously off road here are some of the most popular.

The Old Telegraph Track (OTT)

The OTT is the crown jewel of Cape York's 4WD adventures. This legendary trail follows the original isolated telegraph line from the late 19th century and offers a true taste of rugged Australian wilderness. It's famous for its challenging water crossings, notably at Gunshot Creek and Palm Creek, where drivers can expect to get their vehicles muddy and really test their skills.

Access from the south just north of Bramwell Junction Roadhouse and from the Bamaga Road in the north, the track is about 70kms.

The journey showcases the peninsula's lush rainforests, scenic vistas, and historic sites, making it not just a drive but an immersive experience in nature. Adventurers can explore secluded campsites, pristine waters, and breathtaking scenery as they traverse this iconic route.

The Old Coach Road from Laura

Another piece of Cape History, the Old Coach Road was the access from the port of Cooktown to the Palmer River Goldfields. Traversing the route now it is unimaginable how mining machinery and even Cobb & Co made it to and from the goldfields.





Access just north of Laura or via the Maytown Ruins north of Whites Creek Road which leads back to Mulligan Highway. The 'road' is about 80kms.

The road is different to the other tracks and definitely technically challenging - best done with at least one other vehicle - at times you're going to want a spotter and some winching. There are rocky jump ups and down, steep and deep washouts and hill climbs rewarded with the breathtaking views from the top of the range.

Frenchman's Road to Portland Roads

Although one of the Cape's famous tracks, Frenchmans is often overlooked by travellers focused on the OTT. But it is worth a detour and the reward is a stopover at the beautiful coastal community of Portland Roads.

Accessed from the west 50kms south of Moreton Telegraph Station or from the east by a right turn off Portland Road, the Track is about 50kms.

A high clearance 4WD is needed to get through a couple of creeks and the Pascoe River crossings – and check the state of these particularly after the wet season. While these are technically challenging much of the track is relatively straightforward.

Cape Melville

Cape Melville on the eastern end of Bathurst Bay is a wonderful remote location famous for its black boulders - and another serious challenge for 4WD enthusiasts. Accessed from the West via Kalpowar Ranger Base in Lakefield National Park or from the South from Cooktown via Starke. Check the Cape Melville National Parks site for maps of the route and camp sites.

Conditions vary with the season but you need high clearance and be prepared for bulldust, washouts and stone shelves – and a lot of sand – so best to go accompanied. And take water and supplies.

So come and take the challenge, enjoy the adrenaline rush combined with a deep connection with the breathtaking natural beauty, rich history, and vibrant culture that defines this remote corner of Australia







Mhat's ON WHEN



JUNE

6 - 8

Weipa & Mapoon Weipa Fishing Classic

7-8

Punsand Bay Punsand Bay Queensland Day

20-22

Cooktown

Cooktown Discovery Festival



Laura Races & Rodeo

26 - 29 June

JULY

20

Weipa

Weipa Running Festival

AUGUST

13-17

Cooktown

Black Mountain Unplugged

22 - 23

Weipa

Weipa Rodeo

SEPTEMBER

16 – 19

Thursday Island

Winds of Zenadth Cultural Festival

19 – 20

Weipa

Western Cape Feral Animal Control (aka Weipa Pig Hunt)

20-22

Cooktown

Cardiac Challenge

26

Mapoon

Mapoon Paanja Festival

SEPTEMBER cont.

26 – 27

Mapoon

Cullen Point Barra Bash

26-28

Rossville

Wallaby Creek Festival

OCTOBER

4-5

Coen

Conquer the Corrugations

24 – 26

Cooktown

Sovereign Hotel Annual Barra Comp

NOVEMBER

8-11

Cooktown

Cooktown Races & Cup

Pamous CAPE YORKERS

There are many Aussies we should acknowledge for their efforts in shaping the Cape - this small sample illustrates their diverse backgrounds and talents.

Eric Deeral from Hope Vale was the first indigenous member of a State Parliament, representing Cook. His efforts led to improved roads for the far north and improvements to schools and medical treatment access.

James Mulligan from Ireland was a great bushman and prospector who led a party in 1873 to investigate a reported discovery at the Palmer River. His confirmation and haul of 102 ounces kicked off the Palmer River Gold Rush leading to the establishment of Cooktown.

Jean Jimmy, activist and councillor, was born in 1912 near Mapoon. From the 1960s, Jean and other former residents lobbied for the re-establishment of the community after it had been forcefully disbanded – finally achieving success in 1974.

Thankupi (Dr Thancoupie James AO) was a famous indigenous sculptor from Weipa. She worked intuitively with clay and metals and is well known for her rounded vessels with imagery from her culture.

Muni (George Schwartz) is largely responsible for the development of the Hope Vale Indigenous community. Arriving in 1887 aged 19 he learned and taught in Guugu Yimithirr and contributed to the survival of the Guugu Yimithirr peoples and cultures.

Silas Hobson was a vital member of the pioneering 'Art Gang,' that established Lockhart River as an internationally recognised art centre. He had numerous exhibitions across Australia and overseas and can be found in many prestigious collections.

Vera Scarth-Johnson OAM was a noted botanist and illustrator remembered for her efforts to teach others to treasure the flora of Cooktown and the Endeavour River. Her works can be seen on permanent exhibition at Nature's Powerhouse in Cooktown.

John Bradford was an excellent bushman who had supervised the construction of the Telegraph Line from Cooktown to Palmerville. In 1883 he surveyed the route for a telegraph line to Thursday Island and his legacy can be enjoyed today tracing the OTT.

'Toots' Holzheimer was a famous Cape York truckie. She and her husband established Northern Freighters in 1975 trucking up the Cape. She single handedly kept her trucks on the road and is commemorated by Slim Dusty's song 'The Lady Is a Truckie'.

Seaman (Henry Gibson) Dan, was a Torres Strait Islander singer-songwriter. A regular performer at local hotels, fame came late with Follow the Sun released on his 70th birthday. He won ARIA Awards for Best World Music Album in 2004 and 2009.

Tommy Fuji a legendary Japanese pearl diver made Thursday Island his home, diving for 23 years and marrying a local. Interned during the war he was allowed back after. He is buried on the Island and a statue commemorates his contributions.



Cape Tribulation & Bloomfield; the Bloomfield Track



Cooktown



Lakefield National Park



Portland Roads, Iron Range National Park & Lockhart River



Weipa & Old Mapoon



The Tip



Thursday & Horn Islands

cooktownandcapeyork.com





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