

Australia – Queensland's Great Barrier Reef Cruise

10 days / 9 nights

From

\$6,480

Per person/Double occupancy/Land & cruise package
Valid: Nov. 7, 14 + 21, 2023 Cat. B Cabin Main Deck

Stretching more than 2300 kilometres along Queensland's coastline, and encompassing over 900 islands, the Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest living structure and home to an abundant and thriving array of marine and birdlife species. It holds pride of place as one of the 7 natural worlds wonders of the world and is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage area.

Day 1: Cairns Arrival

After clearing customs and collecting your luggage, your transfer vehicle will meet you in the arrivals area to drive you to your accommodation. The rest of the day is at leisure to explore this tropical city.

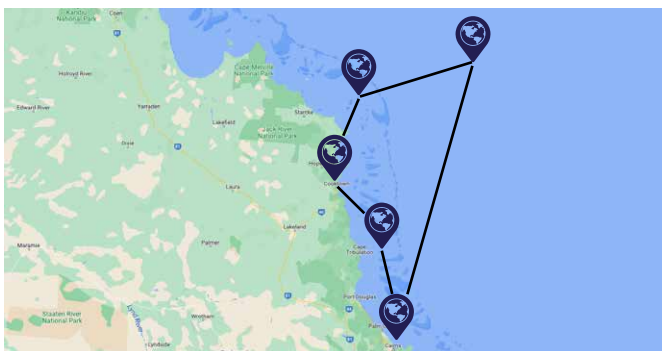
Overnight: Mercure Cairns - Standard Room



Day 2: Cairns

You have the morning free before the 2:00pm Sail/ Safe check-in for your cruise. Once formalities are complete, you will be transferred to the ship. Take the time to become acquainted with all the facilities on board after you have settled in. Later, join your fellow travellers on the Sun Deck for the Captains Welcome Drink.

Overnight: Coral Discoverer



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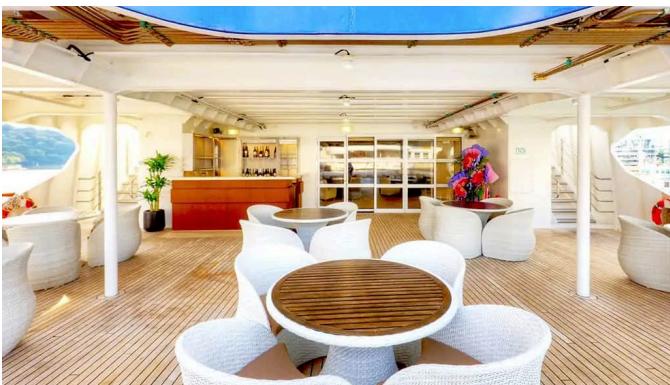
Day 3: Cruise – Fitzroy Island – Sudbury Cay

Your first stop is Fitzroy Island where you can enjoy a walk through the Secret Garden rainforest. For the more adventurous, a walk to the de-commissioned lighthouse rewards hikers with panoramic views of Coral Sea, islands, and mainland mountain ranges.

Snorkel over the fringing reef, relax on the beach, and hopefully have the opportunity to help the volunteers at the Cairns Turtle Rehabilitation Centre, where sick and injured turtles are cared for before being returned to the wild.

Late in the afternoon, arrive at Sudbury Cay, a tiny sand cay that barely rises above the Coral Sea. Far removed from the bustle of civilization, you can slip off your shoes and feel the sand between your toes as the tropical waters of the Coral Sea lap gently against the shoreline. Surrounded by glistening sea and bathed in the glow of twilight, enjoy sundowner drinks and the company of like-minded explorers as you relax and watch the sun gently sink below the horizon.

Overnight: Coral Discoverer



Day 4: Cruise – Mackay Cay

Relax on picturesque Mackay Cay and enjoy snorkelling the pristine reef that surrounds it. Mackay Reef is a mid-shelf platform reef, with vibrant hard and soft corals abound. The northern side enjoys additional protection from the cay, making it the perfect playground for turtles. A giant clam garden also resides in the area, with some clams growing as big as 1.2m, all with their own unique colours and patterns.

On a clear day, you can look back at the mainland to see tall mountains covered in UNESCO world heritage Daintree rainforest. You can see Cape Tribulation and Mount Sorrow as named by Captain Cook during his eventful sail through the Great Barrier Reef. The Kuku Yalangi tribe are the traditional owners of this region and have lived in harmony with the environment for over 50,000 years. Dream time stories explain the unique shape of Mount Peter Bot.

Overnight: Coral Discoverer

Day 5: Cruise – Cooktown

Come ashore in historic Cooktown and learn the history of the Guugu Yimithirr, the first people of this ancient country. Discover recent European history with a visit to the site where Lt. James Cook beached HMB Endeavour to effect repairs in 1770. Wander through the rare flora collection at the Botanic Gardens and visit James Cook Museum, where the story of Cook's landing is told from an Aboriginal perspective and where artefacts are on display.

Later, cruise towards Lizard Island, arriving in time for sunset.

Overnight: Coral Discoverer

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Day 6: Cruise - Lizard Island

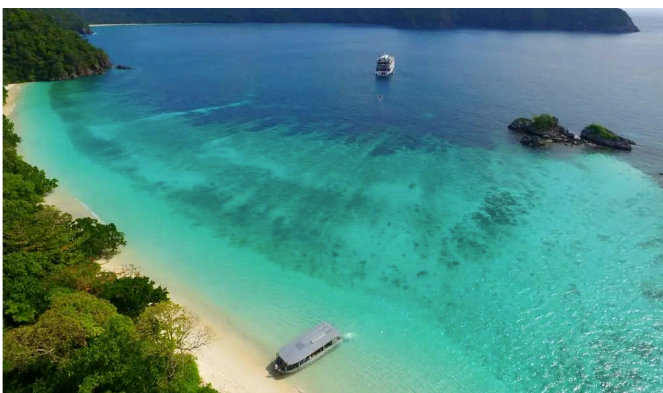
Lizard Island and its surrounding coral reefs form one of the Great Barrier Reef's most treasured marine areas. White sand and grassland meet blue skies and even bluer seas on this remote tropical island that combines mesmerising reef encounters with historical significance.

Lizard Island lies 240 km north of Cairns, with three smaller islands nearby (Palfrey, South and Bird). Together these islands form the Lizard Island Group, and their well-developed fringing reef encircles a 10-metre deep Blue Lagoon.

Spend a whole day at Lizard Island where there is time to hike to the summit of Cook's Look and enjoy the same view Lt. James Cook did when searching for safe passage through the maze of coral reefs. Snorkel over giant clam gardens from the beach at Watson's Bay, relax on the white-sand beach beneath shady she oak trees and learn about the tragic story surrounding Mary Watson.

Possible opportunity to visit Lizard Island Research Station, operated by the Australian Museum, to facilitate coral reef research and education on the Great Barrier Reef.

Overnight: Coral Discoverer



Day 7: Lizard Island – Osprey Reef

Osprey Reef, a submerged atoll in the Coral Sea, draws many beautiful and rare marine creatures to its plummeting walls. Osprey Reef is a highly prized tropical dive location amongst scuba divers, called an 'oasis for living creatures of all kinds' by Sir David Attenborough. The vibrant corals and crystal-clear waters make it an unforgettable place to discover. You will spend time in the water exploring the 30m deep lagoon and drift diving the walls, where you may see large pelagic fish, rays, and sharks drawn in from the surrounding deep blue to enjoy the richness of this ocean oasis.

Overnight: Coral Discoverer

Day 8: Osprey Reef – Ribbon Reefs # 9 and #10

The Ribbon Reefs are a narrow line of outer coral reefs on the edge of the continental shelf and are renowned for their prolific marine life and extensive coral species.

Due to their location far offshore from the Australian coast, the Ribbon Reefs offer excellent diving and snorkelling opportunities with Ribbon Reef #9, a favourite for its wide variety of marine life and pinnacles cloaked in coral. Join a guided snorkel tour led by an expert from the Expedition Team and witness this extraordinary ecosystem up close. These northern reefs are renowned for spotting iconic marine species such as potato cod, wrasse, sharks, and turtles.

Overnight: Coral Discoverer

