



There's no need to fly overseas for an exotic holiday when you have a tropical destination right here waiting for you in Northern Queensland. Port Douglas holidays provide the chance to relax in a tropical coastal town that's as laid back as it is chic.

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As the gateway to both the world's largest coral reef system and the oldest rainforest on the planet, it's a haven for nature lovers. But the town itself is full of charming places to see and eat, not forgetting a stellar collection of plush accommodations where you can recharge!

If you're considering a weekend getaway or a longer holiday in the balmy northern city, consult our full guide to Port Douglas holidays before you go.

This article may contain affiliate links.



How to get to Port Douglas

The closest major city and international airport for Port Douglas is Cairns Airport (CNS), which connects to Sydney, Brisbane, and Melbourne airports in a matter of hours. Driving time between the airport and the town is one hour and the road hugs the Captain Cook Highway and provides beautiful coastal views.

You can hire a car from Cairns or take the bus. The BTS Port Douglas Bus runs frequent connections from Cairns Airport which take 90 minutes each way and adult fares start at 39 AUD for a single journey.

When to visit Port Douglas

The best time to visit Port Douglas is going to depend on what you intend to do whilst there. The region benefits from a tropical climate that is broken down into two seasons, although the temperatures themselves do not fluctuate very much and it's always warm.

November through to April is the hottest and wettest time to visit Port Douglas, with temperatures surpassing 32°C (89.6°F). As this is the low season, prices are often cheaper and some businesses close up, especially in February which is a very quiet time for the town.

June through to October is the dry season and is a tad cooler. You might even need to reach for a jacket in July when it drops to 21°C (69.8°F)! As the dry season is the high season you can expect prices to soar and holiday crowds to descend, so book your accommodation early.

If you want to get the best of both worlds, locals recommend that tourists plan Port Douglas holidays for the shoulder seasons of May/June and October/November. Temperatures are at their most comfortable and there is less humidity.

Bear in mind that stinger season brings dangerous jellyfish to the shore and swimming must be avoided in some places. Stinger season varies but it's usually between November and May. Sections of Four Mile Beach feature stinger nets to protect swimmers but further care should still be taken.



Where to stay in Port Douglas

As a popular tourist destination, Port Douglas offers a full roster of accommodation to suit all travel styles and budgets. You've got a lot of luxury resorts and hotels to choose from so if you're looking to splash out on something unique, you won't struggle to find somewhere special in Port Douglas.

There are also some more affordable boutique guesthouses and sleek self-catered holiday homes. We've rounded up our favourite places to stay in Port Douglas.

Less than 100 m from Four Mile Beach, [Mantra Portsea](#) features bright and airy contemporary rooms and studios that accommodate couples and families. The property has a lagoon pool with a swim-up bar and waterslides – fun for all the family!

For those travelling with a pet, there are a couple of pet-friendly accommodations. [The Pink Flamingo Resort](#) is noted as being very welcoming to dogs, although as charges may be applicable, do check directly before booking.

This centrally located resort provides cabins for two fitted with private bathrooms and kitchenettes and there is a communal pool.

The three-bedroom holiday home, [Seascape Holidays – 53 Reef](#), has heaps of space for a holidaying family and pets are welcome at no additional charge.

For something more luxurious you can check out [Peppers Beach Resort](#) which provides immaculate suites with private bathrooms and kitchenettes. The resort brings the beach to your doorstep with its spacious lagoon pool with its own sandy shore. Restaurants, conveniences and attractions are a short walk from the property.

Further south and bordered by the rainforest gardens, the [Niramaya Villas and Spas](#) offer another opportunity for world-class luxury. Private villas accommodate two to eight guests and come with their own personal plunge pools which are heated during the winter months. Modelled on the Balinese holiday villas, you'll emerge feeling full of zen.

If you're seeking an adults-only retreat then check out the opulent [Shantara Resort](#) Port Douglas, which features self-contained units and an on-site spa and pool in a tranquil setting. We also love [Peninsula Boutique Hotel](#) which is right on 4-mile beach but a short stroll into town. Their breakfasts are amazing too!

Backpackers can take their pick from a classic dorm, economy room or even a

tropical bungalow or tent at [Dougie's Backpackers Resort](#). The property provides a pool, garden, bar, and lounge for guests to share and mingle. An alternative hostel option is the [Port Douglas Backpackers](#), which features a saltwater pool, free daily tours and events, and economical dorm beds.

For a no-frills yet comfy place to rest your head, check out the [Lazy Lizard Motor Inn](#) which provides spacious studios with private bathrooms, kitchenettes, and balconies. The property includes a lovely outdoor pool and the friendly staff are highly commended.

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Things to do in Port Douglas and surrounds



Explore to town of Port

Although it's small, Port Douglas has loads of lovely attractions that you shouldn't miss the chance to see. St Mary's by the Sea is a picturesque chapel which is popular for weddings, you'll understand why when you see it.

You can also visit the Flagstaff Hill Lighthouse which offers a scenic ocean view. Walk up here from town but take care if it's rained as the track can be slippery. If you're keen on local history then the Douglas Shire Historical Society is worth a visit.



Dive or Snorkel on the Great Barrier Reef

As one of the greatest wonders of the natural world and one of Australia's prize attractions, a trip to see the corals and marine life of the Great Barrier Reef is an essential ingredient to all Port Douglas holidays.

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You have loads of options in terms of visiting the reef as a day trip. You can visit as part of a sailing trip, book a scenic flight or sunrise hot air balloon ride, and witness it from above.

Catamarans, as well as cruising vessels and dive boats, ferry guests out to the reef where you have the option to snorkel or dive.

Popular trips we recommend are the [Morning Cruise to Low Isles](#), the [6 hour trip to Quicksilver Pontoon](#) or the full day [Outer Reef Eco Experience](#).



Walk Four Mile Beach

This long sweeping beach glides its way down the eastern coast of North Queensland and is accessible from most of the Port Douglas accommodation.

The golden sand is a hub of activities that include all kinds of watersports (kite surfing is king), yoga sessions on the beach, fitness classes, and even fishing. Of course, if you want to kick back under the rays with a book, that's equally acceptable!

Swimming is possible but extra care should be taken around stinger season. Keep a lookout for the stinger nets and ask the patrolling lifeguards for advice, especially if you're travelling with children.



Book a day trip to the Daintree Rainforest

Another fantastic activity to add to longer Port Douglas holidays is a day trip to the world's oldest rainforest.

Daintree Rainforest is a 90-minute drive north of the town and it's possible to visit independently, although joining a tour is often the preferred option as certain parts of the road require a 4WD. Tours typically take you to Noah Valley and Cape Tribulation.

Noah Valley is a world heritage site officially termed as a refugium and it's where you will see plant species that only exist here.

It's an extension of Cape Tribulation, which is a remote stretch of headland that unites the rainforest with the beaches. Wildlife commonly sighted in the rainforest includes crocodiles, monitor lizards, and even wild pigs.

Check out this [full day tour](#) of the Daintree, Cape Tribulation and the Bloomfield Track!

[CHECK OUT ALL DAINTREE TOURS HERE](#)



Participate in a smoking ceremony at Mossman Gorge

Only a 20-minute drive from Port Douglas, the gateway to Daintree Rainforest is the perfect solution if you're planning a shorter getaway in the area. You can book a Dreamtime Walk, which are immersive hikes led by the local Indigenous community.

Starting with a 'smoking' ceremony to rid any bad spirits and negative energies, these tours allow you to learn about their traditional culture and connection to the natural environment.

You can also embark on a solo journey through the lush greenery on a self-guided hike. Shorter hikes navigate creeks and rivers and take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Even the full Rainforest Circuit Track takes less than one hour from start to finish, so it's perfect for those short on time.

[MOSSMAN GORGE TOURS](#)



Do a sunset cruise

Relax on a magical sunset cruise.

There are several operators who did this from Port Douglas Marina, some better than others.

We've had a lovely evening with Sailaway which remains one of the highlights of Port Douglas for us.

For a reasonable price you get 90 minutes onboard one of their big, modern catamarans with ambient music, drinks and canapes. The views really are gorgeous.

Other things to do in Port Douglas

Connect with Aboriginal culture at the Janbal Gallery

Coincide your visit to the Mossman Gorge with a stop at the [Janbal Gallery](#). Here you have the chance to learn about Aboriginal art and gain an understanding of Aboriginal culture through a hands-on painting workshop. The gallery is open 9 am - 5 pm Monday to Friday but is closed on the weekends.

Workshops cost 55 AUD per adult and last 90 minutes. Typically you will paint a canvas or a boomerang under the guidance of an authentic Aboriginal artist that you can take home. Online booking in advance is advisable.

Get close to nature at Rainforest Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary

Wildlife lovers of all ages will relish the chance to get close to native Aussie fauna at the [Rainforest Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary](#). Feed friendly wallabies and

kangaroos, watch the crocodiles gobble up their supper, coo over koalas and get close to cassowaries. Visiting the sanctuary is a chance to learn about conservation efforts to protect endangered species.

Follow in the footsteps of the locals at Bump Track

Bump Track is a 12 km (7.5 miles) out and back trail located a 15-minute drive out of town in the Mowbray National Park. It's a reasonably tough, popular hike with locals who come here to walk, run or even mountain bike their way through the bush.

If you fancy giving this a go, you can hire a bike in town.

An alternative hike nearby is the 5.8 km (3.6 miles) Spring Creek Falls/ Black Rock Waterfalls hike that deposits you at gushing falls that are perfect for swimming.

This is another more challenging route that does involve a bit of scrambling, so we recommend preparing carefully and definitely pack your hiking boots.

Cruise the Great Barrier Reef Drive

This is one of the things that you can actually do on your way to Port Douglas from Cairns. In addition to immersing yourself in the Great Barrier Reef by boat, you can also appreciate it from behind the wheel.

The scenic drive officially runs from Palm Cove up to Cape Tribulation and you can stop off at various lookouts, photo opportunities and the Northern Beaches along the way.

Whatever time of year you do this, you will be rewarded with jaw-dropping natural scenery. It really is one of Australia's most beautiful drives.



Hang Gliders at Rex Point Lookout

Cafe hop on Macrossan Street

In addition to all the natural sights and outdoor activities, don't forget to immerse yourself in the culinary delights of Port Douglas.

You can easily spend a whole day eating your way along Macrossan Street! Grab brekkie at the local's favourite, The Little Larder, lunch at Watergate and dinner and sundowners at the Tin Shed. See more below.

Pick up handicrafts at Port Douglas Markets

Operating weekly on Sundays, the Port Douglas Markets are the place to shop for locally produced handicrafts, jewellery, and artworks, as well as edible delicacies and fresh tropical fruit juices.

It usually opens 8 am – 2 pm but we recommend getting there early to benefit from fresh baked goods and to beat the inevitable crowds.

All Port Douglas Tours and Activities

Click here for a full list of activities in PD including Hot Air Ballooning, Horse riding, Bundy Jumping and more

[Click Here](#)

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Where to eat in Port Douglas

Port Douglas is renowned for its dining scene with a big range of world-class restaurants, Cafes and bars to choose from.

Many are along Macrossan Street or else along the waterfront or on the hill so ambience is rarely an issue with amazing views and tropical alfresco vibes.

For breakfast it's hard to beat Campos Coffee, Cafe Ziva or Cafe Fresq. Lunch overlooking the inlet at the Tin Shed is very popular as is Choo Choos at the Marina.

It's hard to beat [Nautilus](#) on the hill for dinner, in fact this is the most iconic dinner restaurant in PD and people have been coming here for decades.

Melaleuca is another perennial favourite as is Salsa Bar and Grill.

For a snack Grant Street Bakery is an excellent bakery and be sure to pop in to see Gili at Capannina Gelato shop which is just as famous for its wonderful customer service and big smiles as it is for its ice-cream.

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