

# WHAT'S NEW IN TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND 2021-2022

## TOURS & ATTRACTIONS

### WUNYAMI CULTURAL WALKING TOUR

The Wunyami Cultural Walking Tour offers a guided journey around Wunyami, Green Island, an ancient coral cay with an equally fascinating ancient cultural history. Led by Indigenous guides, guests will hear how the island is connected to an ancient journey of two ancestral story-time beings, learn about the cultural ceremonies of the GuruGulu Gungganji and Gimuy Yidinji tribes and discover the connectivity of this iconic island to the ancient seascape.

### MANDINGALBAY ANCIENT INDIGENOUS TOURS

100% Indigenous owned and operated, Mandingalbay Ancient Indigenous Tours, has launched its first scheduled tours for independent travellers. The tours, taking place on Mandingalbay Yidinji Country, a short 15-minute boat ride from Cairns CBD, include experiences such as an eco-cultural walk, camping on country and a monthly Full Moon Dinner.

### TALAROO HOT SPRINGS

Talaroo Hot Springs has opened its new campground and caravan park, located 360km west of Cairns on the Savannah Way in the outback of Tropical North Queensland. Talaroo's outback campground and caravan park features more than 30 landscaped sites, and offers a modern camp kitchen, new amenities block, reception, gift shop and café.

### CAIRNS LUXURY CAR HIRE

Cairns Luxury Car Hire has added the first electric vehicle for hire to its fleet. The ruby red 2022 Tesla model 3 offers a luxurious, eco-friendly experience alongside cutting-edge technology and safety. With a range of up to 400km/charge and free charging stations already available around the region at major tourist attractions such as Skyrail Rainforest Cableway and Mossman Gorge Centre drivers never need to worry about a flat battery.

### FAR NORTH ESCAPES

Exploring Cape York has got easier with Far North Escapes specialising in 4x4 premium private and small group tours. Offering half day, full day and multiday customisable itineraries covering a range of locations guests can choose from experiences such as the bucket-list trip to The Tip, crocodile tours, horse-riding tours and even helicopter tours.

### STRAIT EXPERIENCE

Visit the Torres Strait in just one day on a flight from Cairns or stay longer and discover Ailan (island) life, history and culture. Strait Experience curates small group tours of Thursday Island and visits other Torres Strait islands that lie between the northern-most tip of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

### REEF MAGIC

Snorkellers and divers are exploring the Great Barrier Reef from the new Reef Magic pontoon which used the wind and sun for power and has a dedicated laboratory for marine scientists. Reef Magic worked closely with local Traditional Owner groups to incorporate their culture and knowledge of the reef into their site stewardship.

### GATEWAY TO CAPE YORK

The \$1.2 million Gateway to Cape York has opened at Lakeland with a traveller information centre, rest stop and interactive sculpture park showcasing Cape York communities. Welcoming visitors to Cape York, the tourism infrastructure showcases the history and ecology of Cape York and 16 artworks created by communities from across Cape York Peninsula.



## **DFS GALLERIA**

Paparazzi king Darryn Lyons has opened a Lyons Gallery at DFS Galleria in Cairns showcasing prints from the likes of Helmut Newton and Banksy and his famous photo of Princess Diana on her last yachting holiday before her death. Located above iconic brands including Prada and Marc Jacobs, the gallery is on the same block as the Cairns Gallery Precinct which will link a new purpose-built gallery to the existing Cairns Art Gallery and the Court House gallery.

## **CAIRNS RIVER CRUISES**

Cairns River Cruises has launched new guided tours and charters along Trinity Inlet. Revealing a new sheltered pontoon-style vessel for up to 18 guests, Cairns River Cruises offers a daytime sightseeing safari or sunset cruise along the inlet in complete comfort with lounge-style seating and uninterrupted views.

## **RIVERBEND TOURS**

Riverbend Tours offers its guests an intimate boutique style sunset cruise on the Endeavour River in Cooktown. Limited to around 30 guests, customers are encouraged to bring along a bottle of wine to accompany the inclusive gourmet cheese platter featuring locally sourced produce. Exploring the harbour in the long afternoon light, the vessel weaves through the maze of creeks lining the Endeavour and returns after dark under spotlight. The vessel is a wide stable open sided safari style river boat with a shallow draft.

## **NO LIMIT ADVENTURES**

Travellers can combine the adventure of diving with marine conservation. No Limit Adventures have teamed up with a Cairns dive operator to offer a unique marine conservation volunteering opportunity. Participants undertake a certified diver's course during the 12-day program before diving on the Great Barrier Reef and participating in reef monitoring surveys.

## **WINDSWELL**

Explore the world's oldest rainforest on a stand up paddle board gliding upstream through the Daintree Rainforest. Your Windswell guide will take you on a low impact adventure in the tranquil surroundings of the World Heritage Area.

## **NAUTILUS AVIATION**

Avid golfers will feel like a VIP with Nautilus Aviation's HeliGolf experience. Take off over Cairns city and experience the natural beauty of the region's spectacular World Heritage rainforest by helicopter before landing at the Sheraton Mirage Country Club for 18 holes of golf followed by lunch.

## **FOAMING FURY**

Play in nature's theme park with Foaming Fury's new Half Day River Tubing adventure on the Mulgrave River. This fun and exciting tour is suitable for the whole family with calm water drifting, small rapids and some beautiful scenery.

## **GETAWAY TREKKING & ADVENTURES**

Explore the Atherton Tablelands on foot with a four-day Nature's Plate and Pilates tour incorporating pilates, stretching sessions and a full-day tasting tour. Getaway Trekking & Adventures also has a one-day Barron Falls Hike in Kuranda.

## **FITZROY ISLAND RESORT**

Island diving has returned to Fitzroy Island Resort with the opening of the Fitzroy Island Sports Hub (FISH) and its dedicated dive pool. The newly refurbished glass bottom boat takes divers to stunning fringing reef sites sheltered by the island. Introductory and refresher dive courses are on offer, while experienced divers can hire equipment. Residential dive courses start in November with a range of accommodation from camping to a contemporary Island Suite overlooking the Coral Sea.



## FOOD & BEVERAGE

### CLIMATE CALORIES

Forget your waistline, watching your footprint is the modern way to tackle your meals. Crystalbrook has launched Climate Calories so customers at their restaurants and bars can see if the meal and drinks are sourced locally, use ethical meats, minimise waste and are culturally considered.

### WOLF LANE DISTILLERY

Wolf Lane Distillery has two exciting new releases on offer at their Abbott Street cellar door. Annee's Caphê Sua Da Vietnamese Coffee Liqueur, a collaboration between Wolf Lane and Annee's Caphê Sua Da, Australia's original Vietnamese iced coffee bar, and Pineapple Island Gin, a refreshing tropical gin infused with pineapple and coconut.

### ELIXIR MUSIC BAR

Cairns has its first alcohol-free bar with popular live music venue Elixir Music Bar switching to herbal elixirs like Fresh Fruit Fassonola and Spiced Coconut Falernum. Limited BYO drinks will be allowed with a corkage fee during the transition phase and the same great music on the weekends.

### BILLYCART BREWING CO

Billicart Brewing Co is serving local brews in their taproom at Atherton on the Tablelands. The locally owned and independent brewery brings in a food van on Friday nights and weekends so you can sit back and enjoy a selection of beers.

### SUNLOVER REEF CRUISES

Sunlover Reef Cruises have partnered with Nick Holloway, executive chef at Nu Nu restaurant in Palm Cove to curate an onboard menu inspired by Tropical North Queensland. Showcasing the tropical flavours of the region with sticky ginger caramel chicken, Coral Sea prawns, fresh tropical salads and fruits, your serve-yourself lunch is just as colourful as the Great Barrier Reef.

### HARBOURSIDE BAR & KITCHEN

Harbourside Bar & Kitchen have introduced a new wine list with more than 500 organic and ecologically sustainable wines, with the most extensive natural wine list in the region. HB&K's wine list has been carefully curated to match Executive Chef Marcel Stammeire's divine Cairns Cuisine.

### CAIRNS ESPLANADE DINING PRECINCT

The \$28 million redeveloped Cairns Esplanade Dining Precinct features a modified and extended alfresco dining area with a variety of new restaurants for visitors to enjoy. There are also new contemporary awnings, providing better weather protection and a modified and gently curving road alignment with extra footpaths to improve pedestrian connectivity.

### WHISKEY AND WINE

Whiskey and Wine has opened on Level 2 at Crystalbrook Flynn as the hotel's third on-premises venue. Set on the hotel rooftop, visitors can enjoy a drink and soak up the chic atmosphere and views across the Coral Sea. The bar features award winning cocktails with more than 80 local and imported whiskeys.

### HOOK-A-BARRA

Hook-a-Barra have launched a new Gourmet Farm Tour. Go behind the scenes of their multi-award winning Daintree Saltwater Barramundi Farm on a journey that takes the iconic barramundi from fingerling to finger food.





## ACCOMMODATION

### PULLMAN CAIRNS INTERNATIONAL

The Pullman Cairns International have completed stage one of their \$10 million rejuvenation program. Incorporating all guest rooms from levels 3 to 11, the modern design features custom designed furnishings while paying respect to the historic Cairns architectural style. The light-filled spacious rooms feature stunning artworks from a hand-crafted selection of the most talented artists in the region.

### SILKY OAKS LODGE

Silky Oaks Lodge has been named on Travel + Leisure's 2022 It List. The annual list, in its 17th year, recognises the 100 best new and reimagined properties in 35 countries around the world. Set in the world's oldest living rainforest, Silky Oaks Lodge has undergone a \$15 million refurbishment offering guests a stylish rainforest escape, with a range of experiences, a luxury spa and fine dining restaurant.

### THE BENSON HOTEL

Previously operating as the Rydges Plaza Hotel, The Benson Hotel has been reimagined and reinvigorated as an exciting new 4-star boutique property. The renovations reveal a modernised look, with newly refurbished reception area, The Benson Bar & Restaurant, a stylish poolside oasis and 56 soft refurbished accommodation rooms.

## EVENTS

### PORT DOUGLAS GRAN FONDO FESTIVAL

The iconic Great Barrier Reef Drive, between two World Heritage areas, will open exclusively to cyclists participating in the inaugural Port Douglas Gran Fondo Festival on September 9-11, 2022. The major cycling festival features timed 136km and 100km return Gran Fondo rides from Port Douglas to Palm Cove and a 48km one-way leisurely Medio Fondo ride from Palm Cove to Port Douglas with registrations now open for just 3000 riders.

### CRANKWORX

Crankworx, the world's most watched mountain bike event, has announced that Cairns will be added to its World Tour in 2022. Smithfield Mountain Bike Park will become the fourth stop for the 2022 Crankworx World Tour bringing 1200 athletes, 220 volunteers and an expected 34,000 spectators across the five days to the rainforest trails on October 5-9.