

# BEACHES

*From the world famous to those just waiting to be explored...*

A UNIQUELY AUSTRALIAN INVITATION

**S**tretched out or tucked into bays along almost 50,000kms of the most diverse, least-crowded and unspoilt coastline in the world are more beaches than you'll find in any other nation. In fact, we have almost 10,700 of them in all shapes, sizes and colours – the more popular are closely watched by surf lifesavers, while others are waiting for you to revel in their remoteness, serenity and beauty.

This is, after all, the world's largest island. And with more than 80% of our population living within 50 kms of the coast, it's here that you'll discover what we're best at: our love for sun and surf, our relaxed way of life, unique environment, and adventures among reefs, islands, wilderness and wildlife.

Most of our cities thrive on the great oceans and waterways around us, and our vast protected coast supports diverse communities and aquatic wonderlands that we believe are unrivalled anywhere else.

Our love and respect for the sea is strong. Our beaches belong to everyone. They are places where families and friends meet; places where Shakespeare competes with the noise of crashing waves; where you can ride a camel at sunset; enjoy a game of cricket; top up your tan; or cast a rod and fish for tonight's dinner.

Walk along the beach and you'll see people talking and laughing, exploring the rocks, reading the paper, flying kites, teenagers surfing and kids body boarding. The horizon is sprinkled with boats and surfers sitting on their boards, eyes out to the distance in search of the next big wave. Kids with leg ropes learn to surf and lifesavers scan the ocean from their lookouts. Then, just before sunset at the end of a long day of fun, a trail of cars and boats winds its way up the hills and roads from our beaches.

Look out for beaches flanked by glamorous homes and humble beach shacks; for cafes and bars selling delicious fare and steaming coffee; for the camel trainers, dolphin whisperers, pearl divers and fishermen who have made the beach their place of work and for the surfers riding high on the waves.

Feel tropical coral sand, like talc between your toes, or feast your eyes on honey-coloured crescents of gold, tiny pink inlets, boulder-strewn bays, boardwalks bustling with restaurants, cliff-flanked sweeps of wild ocean and long, open beaches that stretch for kilometres – each beach offers your own unique experience.

Australia's iconic surfing beaches include Bondi and Manly Beaches in Sydney, and Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast, but there are hundreds of other secret and not-so-secret spots dotted around our island nation.

Whether you're looking for the wild or the well-known, every beach is a place to meet real Australians and learn more about us.

## Some beach facts

- Australia is the world's biggest island – a continent of 7.6 million sq km<sup>1</sup> with almost 36,737 kms of coastline. An additional 10,000 sq kms of coastline encircle 12,000 islands.<sup>2</sup>
- There are 10,685 beaches<sup>3</sup> on which to play - that's more than anywhere else on Earth<sup>4</sup>.
- The world's whitest sand is located at Hyam's Beach<sup>5</sup>, south of Sydney, while its largest sand island, Fraser Island<sup>6</sup>, is one of several World Heritage listed sites located in Queensland.
- Several of the world's leading surf and adventure brands, such as Rip Curl, Quiksilver and Billabong started in Australia.
- Australians are custodians of one-third of the world's protected marine areas<sup>7</sup>, with more than 360 protected marine areas covering 65 million hectares .
- The warm, crystal clear waters of the north sustain two of the world's great coral reefs. The Great Barrier Reef<sup>8</sup> (2,500kms long) is one of the world's modern wonders while Ningaloo Reef<sup>9</sup> (230kms) on Australia's Coral Coast in the west, is the most accessible reef experience in the world.
- Wineglass Bay in Tasmania was rated one of the world's 10 best beaches by two separate US travel publications<sup>10</sup>, while the Bay of Fires was rated the second best beach in the world by Conde Nast (UK).
- Australia's marine environment is home to 4,000 fish species, 500 coral species (in the northern reefs alone), 50 types of marine mammal, seabirds, rare sea dragons and whales, dolphins, dugongs, turtles, giant rays and whale sharks.<sup>11</sup>
- The year 2007 marks the 100th anniversary of the commencement of surf lifesaving in Australia. Surf lifesavers now patrol 300 of Australia's beaches and since 1907 they have saved more than 500,000 lives.<sup>12</sup>





- For the most part (with the exception of a few tropical resorts) Australia's beaches do not have coconut trees or palm trees. Most are lined by typical Australian bush scrub, including native grasses and gum trees.

## Uniquely Australian

- **Join us on the beach – and like us, make it your playground.** The beach is so ingrained in our culture that we prefer to escape to the sea over any other destination. Any excuse will do – an extended family holiday, a spur-of-the-moment frolic in the waves, a meal at a coast-side café, a deep sea dive, a whale cruise or simple afternoon escape to build sand castles.
- **You will discover that each beach provides a gateway** to an array of different experiences – from simple hamlets to sophisticated cities; humble beach shacks to stunning architectural masterpieces; rich hinterlands to red deserts; sand-sculpture competitions to operatic performances; Indigenous centres to alternative villages; surf schools to world competitions – your choice; your experience; your beach.
- **Scattered along our coastline are World Heritage gems** like Queensland's Fraser Island, the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest, on the western most point is Shark Bay, while offshore, Lord Howe is surely one of the world's most beautiful islands.
- **You too can become part of the great Australian beach journey** by joining the thousands travelling in their campervans, towing their caravans or hitching their tents along the world's longest route – Highway One – a 24,000km road that circles the entire continent, ducking and weaving for a large part, along the coastline.
- **Our beaches aren't just places to enjoy the water and sun.** Many are located right next to the bush so you can have a bush and beach experience in one. You'll see native wildlife and marine life at our beaches.
- **Tasmania may not have beaches in the stereotypical Aussie image** - sunbaked and fringed with perfect surf but our island state has beaches that are wilder and more elemental, with vast pristine and deserted stretches of clean white sand.
- **You can head to sea and cruise our coastline** dropping into secluded coves and bays that are accessible only by boat or you can catch a ride with the thousands of Sydney commuters whose ferry ride each day is on the world's most beautiful harbour.
- **Why not swim with tropical fish** while marvelling at the explosion of colour hidden beneath the sea, or enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime experience and swim with gentle but massive whale sharks or cavort with friendly dolphins.
- **Dive our reefs and waterways** and you too will discover our hidden treasures of shipwrecks, relics and reefs.

- **Watch kangaroos, colourful birds and other wildlife** make the beach their playground at dusk.
- **Experience Aussie surfing culture at its strongest** in Victoria's surfing capital, Torquay, 97 kilometres from Melbourne, home to the world's most famous surf spot – Bells Beach and Jan Juc – where surfies from all over the world gather to ride huge swells. Torquay is also the headquarters of many of the world's most famous surf companies, including Rip Curl, Piping Hot and Quiksilver – be sure to visit its Surfworld Museum.
- **Margaret River, Western Australia**, hosts the annual Margaret River Pro, an internationally rated event.
- **Savour the pristine white sand beaches of Hymans Beach** on the NSW South Coast, recognised as having the whitest sand in the world by the Guinness Book of Records. Whitehaven Beach in the Whitsundays also rated as one of the world's most beautiful.
- **Head to the popular beachside suburb of Glenelg** with its up-tempo resort village atmosphere, plenty of entertainment, and a diversity of restaurants and shopping along Jetty Road.
- **Cottesloe Beach near Perth** draws teens and families. Great swimming, bustling cafes and restaurants, and lively 'Sunday Session' at beachside pubs add to the atmosphere.
- **Enjoy endless walks along endless beaches** with names like Ninety Mile Beach, Eighty Mile Beach and Seventy Mile Beach or stroll the sensational white sand beaches at Wilson's Promontory, Victoria, the southernmost point of mainland Australia.

*Or just follow the sun on the beach-hopping adventure of a lifetime.*

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1 Australian Government Culture & Recreation portal, <http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/beach/>

2 Geoscience Factsheet, 2006

3 Australian Government Culture & Recreation portal, <http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/beach/>

4 [http://www.australia.com/about\\_australia/facts\\_and\\_figures/off\\_beat\\_facts/Facts1\\_ALL.aust?L=en&C=AU](http://www.australia.com/about_australia/facts_and_figures/off_beat_facts/Facts1_ALL.aust?L=en&C=AU)

5 Guinness Book of Records

6 [www.australia.com/places\\_to\\_go/Islands/Islands](http://www.australia.com/places_to_go/Islands/Islands)

7 Australian Ministry for the Environment and Heritage, 2005 press release

8 <http://www.dfat.gov.au/aib/environment.html>

9 <http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/>

10 [www.australia.com/places\\_to\\_go/Beach](http://www.australia.com/places_to_go/Beach)

10 <http://travelmedia.tourismtasmania.com.au/news/awards.html>

11 [http://www.dfat.gov.au/facts/env\\_glance.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/facts/env_glance.html)

12 Surf Lifesaving Association, Fact Sheet No 1. [www.slsa.com.au](http://www.slsa.com.au)