

THE GREAT TROPICAL DRIVE

Picturesque waterways, magnificent beaches and ragged mountains make for a magical drive along the coast road, Driving North from Cairns via Cape Tribulation and the famous Bloomfield Track; this drive is rated in the top 10 of Australia's most scenic drives.

Distance 224km

Total driving time approx 4.5hrs

4WD only

CAIRNS TO MOSSMAN – BITUMEN ROAD



100kms

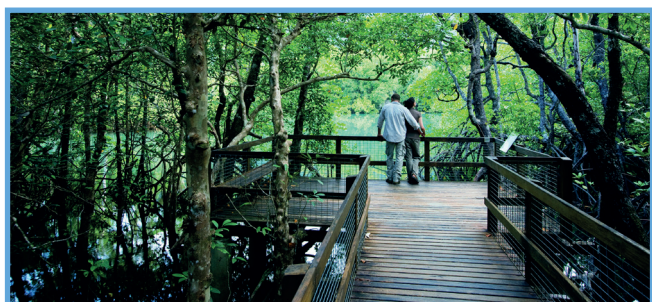
Approx 1.5 hours

This remarkable journey begins as you travel north from Cairns along the Captain Cook Highway following the stunning coast with views of the ocean that feel at times to be touching the road. Passing a golden chain of beautiful beaches, swimming at Holloways, a beautiful palm fringed beach at Yokey's Knob, sea almond trees at Trinity Beach or tranquility at Ellis Beach.

As you continue along the Cook Highway it is worth stopping at Rex Lookout for a magical view over the Coral Sea. When the view of the sea disappears vast sugar cane fields line the roadside as you go by the turn off to Port Douglas on your right.

With chic art galleries, swish restaurants and trendy bars, Port Douglas is a sophisticated tropical oasis. Walk along the white sands of Four Mile Beach and climb Flagstaff Hill for striking views over Port Douglas or stop for a while at the rainforest wildlife sanctuary to see a vibrant array of local bird life.

The next town on the Cook Highway is the sugar town of Mossman, with a distinctly rural feel. A fuel stop here is recommended as fuel north of here is scarce and sometimes unpredictable. A few minutes west of Mossman at the entrance of the World Heritage listed Daintree National Park is the magical and mysterious Mossman Gorge. The Gorge is an ancient Aboriginal site and home to the Kuku Yalanji Aboriginal Community. Tours take visitors through the rainforest with guides explaining local legends and traditional Aboriginal uses of rainforest plants. With good walking tracks and great swimming holes, it can get quite crowded but is definitely worth a visit.



MOSSMAN TO DAINTREE RIVER FERRY – BITUMEN ROAD

30kms

Approx 30 mins

About 30kms north of Mossman after passing Wonga Beach Community you will see the Daintree Ferry turnoff on your right. The Daintree ferry operates on a cable system and can carry up to 16 vehicles at a time. A fee is charged to cross on the ferry and return tickets are available.

DAINTREE RIVER FERRY TO CAPE TRIBULATION – BITUMEN ROAD

39kms

Approx 1 hour

As you drive off the ferry you are entering the fantastic Daintree World Heritage National Park. Your heart rate will drop, you will breathe easier and your mobile phone won't worry you any more as you experience a trek through the world's oldest rainforest.

On the north side of the Daintree River is the Daintree Ice Cream Company, tucked away in lush tropical gardens. If you love ice cream, then don't miss stopping here. This boutique ice creamery is renowned for its exquisite desserts made from tropical fruits grown in the company's own orchards such as Black Sapote, Soursop, Wattle Seed and Jackfruit. All the ice creams are made on the premises and the flavours vary throughout the year, as only fruit in season is used for the ice cream.

10kms on at the top of Alexander range is a lookout with breathtaking views of the Daintree River mouth and coastal islands – stopping here is a must do. Just north of the Alexander range is the Discovery Centre with interpretative board walks, aerial walkway and canopy tower, allowing visitors to experience the rainforest at every level.

Onto Cow Bay and Thornton Beach the road wanders among fruit farms and remote properties until you reach Cape Tribulation itself – named by Captain Cook in his trying times in 1770. Look out for Marrdja Botanical Walk an excellent 800m boardwalk at Noah Creek, which follows the Creek through the rainforest.



Cape Tribulation is a small village where the frontier of the north really begins, there is a general store and hotel on the main road if any last minute things are needed. You will find quite a few visitor centres and short walking tracks on this section of road, including the opportunity to have a go at jungle surfing, (this tour must be pre-booked as it is very popular). Other attractions at Cape Tribulation include horse riding, kayaking and fruit tasting at the Cape Trib Exotic Fruit

Farm. If you do nothing else Cape Tribulation Beach is worth a visit with a walk up to the lookout. If you wish to break your journey on the way to Bloomfield Lodge then Cape Tribulation has a good range of accommodation and a number of good restaurants, cafes and roadside takeaway stores.

CAPE TRIBULATION TO MOUNT LOUIS – GRAVEL ROAD

55kms

Approx 1.5 hours

Beyond Cape Tribulation is Emmagen Creek a popular picnic spot, see the 300 year old giant strangler fig by the side of the road and get a great photo from the look out. This is where the Bloomfield Track starts and beyond this point 4WD is a must.

Opened in 1984 the Bloomfield Track is an exciting drive through pristine rainforest that takes you up and down steep stony slopes and splashing through creeks, you may even spot an elusive Cassowary (6 foot rainforest emu unchanged from dinosaur days).

After South Cowie Beach you will come to a bridge crossing the Woobadda Creek and the Cowie and Donovan Ranges with very steep descents to traverse. In recent times the road upgrades keep the track in generally fine condition, although it can be quite rough and/or slippery after rainy periods.

When you next see bitumen again you are entering the local Aboriginal Community of Wujal Wujal (so nice you say it twice), located on the Bloomfield River. Located on the left after crossing the Bloomfield River is a cultural centre (generally open Monday - Friday), where you can just browse or maybe buy a reminder souvenir or painting.

Only 15kms to go! After crossing the river turn right and you will drive around the outskirts of the community and find yourself driving alongside the Bloomfield River, this part of the river is estuarine habitat and often crocodiles are seen basking on the banks.

You will pass the local primary school and the turn off to the local boat ramp before driving through the small township of Ayton. Only 7kms past the township is the turn off on the right to the house. You turn directly after crossing a small bridge at Russell Creek. At the turnoff there is a large sign for Mt Louis Airstrip, only a short distance down this road you will see the house driveway on the left and you have arrived at your home away from home.

Note: To find Mt Louis Station instead of turning off at the airport sign continue along the road for a further 4kms where the landscape opens up into the fertile pastures of the station, the stockyards are on the right and our property homestead is on the left.

Enjoy the drive!

IMPORTANT:

- The coastal road can be unpassable at times due to rain, with high creek levels and landslides etc, even in a 4WD. Road conditions should be checked prior to journey. Information on road conditions can be found on www.racq.com.au or **1300 130 595**.

THE GREAT AUSSIE OUTBACK

Picturesque waterfalls, striking scenery through dry savannah and small townships, coffee plantations and wineries – the inland route makes for an easy drive on paved roads as far as the Bloomfield Track.

Distance 331km

Total driving time approx 4hrs

CAIRNS TO MAREEBA

65km

1hour



Heading north from Cairns, Highway 1 takes you over the Kuranda range away from the coast and through the rainforest where the skyrail passes overhead. Several lookouts along the way offer expansive vistas of lush valleys and sparsely vegetated hillsides. Kuranda is a quaint market village of many facets, including wildlife parks and butterfly farms. The Barron River Falls thunder behind the township driving the power station that supplies the north. As you leave Kuranda and the rainforest behind the countryside opens to eucalypts and grasslands.

On reaching Mareeba drive through the main street, this was originally a tobacco farming area but is now renowned for its wineries, chocolates and coffee. Many self serve fruit stalls dot the roadside, maybe stop and try what is in season. Local attractions here include Jacques Coffee Plantation and Coffee World, the Golden Pride Winery, Australia's largest mango plantation and the Beck Museum – privately owned with an impressive aviation and military collection.

MAREEBA TO LAKELAND

185kms

2 hours

Leaving Mareeba (and the general population) northwards on Highway 81, the coastal hills give way to rolling plains and open savannah. Keep an eye out for wildlife and livestock along the roadsides as some sections are unfenced. Small townships typical of the Lower Cape York zip by, including Mt Molloy where copper was found in 1880 and Mt Carbine known for its Tungsten Mine. Bobs Lookout at the top of the Desaiely Range is awe inspiring, giving a glimpse of the vastness of the outback and definitely worth a stop.

A small museum can be found at the Palmer River Road House. The discovery of alluvial gold in the Palmer River in 1872 led to Queensland's largest gold



rush, it became legendary for its hardships and the large numbers of Chinese miners which peaked at 17,000 in 1877. A place of significant national heritage, the Palmer area is rich in the artifacts of early Chinese mining and lifestyle and the relics of pioneer technology and settlement.

At Lakeland there is a BP service station just off the main highway with fuel, a cafe and store which serves excellent local coffee. Lakeland Downs lies in a natural basin formed by volcanic activity millions of years ago. The fertile earth found in this part of the Laura River Valley provides a wealth of agriculture, particularly the production of Laura Valley Coffee.



LAKELAND TO BLOOMFIELD TRACK

50kms

30mins

The highway here meanders back toward the east traversing more cattle and farming land, the area here is inhabited by many species of birds, especially colourful parrots and occasionally wedge-tailed eagles with their majestic 2.5m wingspan. If you have time, stop at the Annan River Gorge, a deep cleft cut by the river through a rocky wilderness. The turn off to Bloomfield Track is 2kms further down the road on the right, signposted Helenvale and Shiptons Flat Rd.



BLOOMFIELD TRACK TO MOUNT LOUIS STATION

31kms

30mins

From here the drive continues on a sealed road and will take you past the iconic Lions Den Hotel, still much the same as when it served cold beer to the tin miners. Definitely a quick stop off here is recommended to quench the thirst but try not to stay too long as did old Tom who's been there 40 years.

The rest of the track is a drive through pristine rainforest alongside crystal streams. You pass through Rossville and continue along the windy road as you travel through Cedar Bay National Park before the rainforest recedes and the fertile pastures of Mt Louis Station are before you. You will notice the stockyards on the left and our property homestead on the right. Only 4kms down the road is the turnoff on the left there is a large sign for Mt Louis Airstrip, a short distance down this road you will see the house on the left and you have arrived at your home away from home.

Enjoy the drive!

IMPORTANT

- Please be aware that parts of the Bloomfield Track and the Mulligan Highway can become impassable even in a 4WD in wet weather. Road conditions should be checked prior to journey. Information on road conditions can be found on **www.racq.com.au** or **1300 130 595**.