

EMU ADVENTURE 21 Day Sydney to Cairns Tour

Stray Journey - Australia East Coast

RETAIL: AUD\$6995

STARTS: Sydney FINISHES: Cairns DURATION: 21 Days / 20 Nights

START DAY: Monday FINISH DAY: Sunday

2025 DEPARTURES: 8 Sep, 6 Oct, 20 Oct, 3 Nov,

17 Nov, 1 Dec

2026 DEPARTURES: 12 & 19 Jan, 2 & 16 Feb, 2 & 9 Mar, 6 & 20 Apr, 11 May, 15 June, 13 July, 10

Aug, 7 Sep, 5 & 19 Oct, 2, 16 & 30 Nov MIN. / MAX. NUMBERS: 6 / 22 passengers



Overview

If you're looking for our biggest and 'bestest' tour, then our 21-Day Emu Sydney to Cairns Adventure Tour is the one for you. You'll explore golden beaches, mountains and rainforests while travelling in our own private mini coach, meet the cheeky wildlife and friendly locals and discover some off-the-beaten-track highlights that aren't on the usual tourist trail.

Featuring shared 4-8 bed mixed dorm-style accommodation, this mega road-trip includes a local guide (and to get their insider knowledge) and you'll be travelling with a bunch of like-minded travellers (your new lifelong friends) and exploring all the amazing places Aussie has to offer!

We believe in MORE! More authentic experiences, more iconic sights, more stops along the way and more connection. Keep a look out for sections in our itinerary where you can **See More** and **Do More**, these are unique ways to experience the Real Australia!

Day 1 - Monday: Arrive Sydney

G'day and welcome to your epic East Coast adventure. Your tour begins in Sydney with a day to yourself to explore the city sights and world-famous landmarks. If you've just flown in, we recommend taking the

train from the airport to Central Station, your accommodation is located just a short walk away and check-in is anytime after 2pm.

If you have time to take the opportunity to explore the city - we recommend jumping on the light rail and heading down to Circular Quay where you'll see the iconic Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge. At 5.30pm make your way to the hostel reception where you'll meet your Stray guide, new travel mates before heading out for a welcome meeting.

Accommodation included: Wake Up Sydney or similar

Optional activities: Bondi to Coogee beach walk, visit Darling Harbour, explore King Street Wharf, Royal Botanic Gardens, Taronga Zoo, walk around the Opera House and the Rocks, the oldest area of Sydney.

You can also take the ferry from Circular Quay to Manly. **Meal options:** Self cater, local restaurants and bars

Included activity: Welcome Meeting

Day 2 - Tuesday: Sydney to Blue Mountains

Today we'll say goodbye to Sydney as we depart the harbour city and head west to see some of the most spectacular scenery in Australia! Our first stop is the local town of Glenbrook where we'll have a short break to grab a coffee or a snack. From there, we continue on to Katoomba in the heart of the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains, stopping at the iconic Echo Point and a walk to view the famous Three Sisters rock formation.

After a picnic lunch we'll head off for a 1.5-2 hour hike in the mountains. Along the walk we'll visit the stunning Wentworth Falls, view lush rainforest and dramatic clifftops, and enjoy breathtaking views over the Jamison Valley. Tonight, we'll enjoy dinner together and get to know each other better.

Accommodation: Blue Mountains YHA or similar

Meals included: Dinner

Meal options: Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants **Included activity:** Chasing waterfalls and walks.

Day 3 - Wednesday: Blue Mountains to Port Macquarie

This morning we'll start our journey north by way of the famous Hunter Valley wine region where we'll stop for lunch and to taste some of the local wine and cheese (non-alcoholic options available). We'll then continue to our destination for the night - the coastal town of Port Macquarie, known for its wildlife, beaches and penal colony past!

After the drive if you're feeling energetic, we recommend walking a section of the stunning Port Macquarie Coastal Walk.

Accommodation: Port Macquarie YHA or similar

Meals included: Breakfast

Meal options: Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants

Included activity: Wine and cheese tasting

Free activities: Coastal walk

Day 4 - Thursday: Port Macquarie to Byron Bay

Today we're heading to the iconic surfing town of Byron Bay, known for its relaxed vibes and no worries attitude. Before we depart, we'll visit the Guulabaa Wild Breeding Centre, where we'll get a closer look at Australia's laziest (and arguably cutest) marsupials. Learn about the hospital's efforts to rehabilitate, protect and preserve the koalas and the new breeding centre's important efforts to save these iconic animals from extinction.

We'll then hit the road with a stop in Coffs Harbour for lunch, followed by a special experience learning about the First Nations people of Australia.

Your cultural experience takes place at an important site of the Gumbaynggirr people, the stunning location of "Niigi Niigi" (Sealy Lookout) within the Orara East State Forest. You'll go for a 1.5-hour tour and see 360-degree views, as well as getting the opportunity to immerse yourself in culture through stories, songs, language and the uses of native plants. This will be an unforgettable experience with an emphasis on authentic connection and contributing to helping a community regain their culture and identity.

Do More: By taking part in the experience, you're making a direct contribution to the revitalisation of Gumbaynggirr language and culture with a percentage of the tour price going towards the local bilingual school to help foster cultural identity and education success.

When we arrive in Byron Bay, we'll take you on an orientation drive around town to help you get your bearings, showing you points of interest and the top spots for food, shopping and nightlife. For the next few nights, we're staying at boutique hostel The Surf House, located right in the heart of Byron and just a couple of hundred metres from the main beach - heaven!

Accommodation: The Surf House or similar

Meals included: Breakfast

Meal options: Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants, BBQ at the rooftop of the hostel **Included activities:** Guulabaa Wild Breeding Centre and Aboriginal Cultural Experience

Day 5 - Friday: Byron Bay Free Day

Today you have a full day in Byron Bay to really embrace the Byron Bay motto: "cheer up, slow down, and chill out". Start your day off with a morning yoga class on the rooftop of your hostel and then spend your day exploring the laidback hippy town.

Take a walk up to Cape Byron Lighthouse, mainland Australia's most easterly point, with your Stray guide. Check out the many eclectic boutiques and cafes around town. You could join a sea kayaking and search for dolphins and other marine life, or even go for an iconic Australian activity - learning to surf.

Accommodation: The Surf House or similar

Included activity: Morning yoga class, Cape Byron Lighthouse walk

Meal options: Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants

Optional paid activities: Surf lesson, dolphin kayak, cycle the rail trail

Free activities: Swim, relax on the beach, check out the shops and cafes, free surfboard hire

Day 6 - Saturday: Byron Bay Free Day

You lucky thing - you have ANOTHER free day to explore Byron Bay today. Tick off any activities you didn't get the chance to do yesterday or pass the day wandering the township or relaxing on the beach. Hone your surf skills with more lessons or borrow one of the free surfboards at your hostel to try it out by yourself.

If you're a foodie then you're in luck, as eating your way around Byron is an experience in itself. There are heaps of vegetarian and vegan options available, a couple of our favourites are the Cardamom Pod for lunch and No Bones for dinner, both of which are super close to your hostel. This evening, head to the Saturday twilight markets for some live music and lots of boutique stalls showcasing local arts, crafts and some incredible food.

Accommodation: The Surf House or similar **Meal options:** Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants

Optional paid activities: Surf lesson, dolphin kayak, snorkel or dive **Free activities**: Swim, relax on the beach, check out the shops and cafes

Day 7 - Sunday: Byron Bay to Brisbane via Surfers Paradise

This morning, meet your guide and group outside the Surf House hostel at 8:50am and we'll depart north across the NSW border to Queensland, stopping for some lunch and a walk around the famous Surfers Paradise. Next, we'll head to a nearby nature reserve to spot some wild kangaroos, before continuing to Brisbane, the capital city of Queensland for the night. This evening, we recommend going for a stroll down to Southbank for a walk along the Brisbane River and then check out some of the many bars and restaurants.

Accommodation: Roamer Brisbane or similar **Meal options:** Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants

Included activities: Visit Surfers Paradise, kangaroo spotting, **Free activities:** Explore Brisbane and catch the Brisbane city ferry

Day 8 - Monday: Brisbane to Noosa

This morning we say farewell to the city and head back to the Coast and the boutique beach town of Noosa. We'll stop along the way to stretch our legs and see the amazing panoramic views of the Glasshouse Mountains and the Sunshine Coast before enjoying some lunch in the quirky town of

Eumundi, known for its artisanal crafts. We'll go for another walk to see some views of Noosa and the gorgeous Noosa headlands before arriving at our accommodation in the afternoon.

Our Noosa accommodation is less of a hostel and more of a resort, with a pool and a licensed bar/cafe (did someone say poolside margaritas?) as well as designer dorms with privacy screens and USB charging points. This evening, we'll grab a drink and dinner at the bar and make plans to explore Noosa.

Accommodation: Bounce Noosa

Meals included: Breakfast, drink on arrival

Meal options: Self-cater, local cafes, dinner at hostel

Free activities: Swim, walks, lookouts

Day 9 - Tuesday: Noosa Free Day

Today you have a completely free day to spend doing whatever you like. Noosa is home to Australia's Everglades (one of only two on the planet). Consider taking an adventure canoe or a relaxing afternoon cruise to explore this special place.

Other options include: grabbing a sun lounger and getting some much-needed R&R, going for a walk around the incredible headland, visiting the beach or having a long, lazy lunch in the sun. The Noosa Surf Club is one of our faves so if you'd like to go out for dinner, you can't go wrong with this local hotspot!

Accommodation: Bounce Noosa Meals included: Breakfast

Meal options: Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants

Free activities: Chilling by the resort pool, going for a walk in the National Park, visiting the famous

beach or checking out the local boutiques and cafes **Optional paid activities:** Everglades Cruise and/or Canoe

Day 10 - Wednesday: Noosa to K'gari (formerly Fraser Island)

It's an early start this morning as you head out for your 3-day, 2-night K'gari (formerly Fraser Island) adventure. During this amazing experience you'll explore the largest sand island in the world on a 4WD expedition, see the magical Lake Boorangoora (McKenzie), discover towering rainforests, spot a wild dingo, cruise along endless sandy beaches and lose yourself in the magic of stargazing. If you fancy learning how to drive a 4WD, you can do that! This is going to be one of the best experiences of your whole trip and is definitely the coolest way to explore this world-heritage listed National Park.

After a bus, ferry and 4WD transfer, you'll arrive at The Eco Retreat on K'gari (your accommodation for the next 2 nights). You'll have some tasty lunch and then you can check out the retreat's ocean views before heading out for your first adventure to see some of the Island highlights. This evening, you'll arrive back at The Eco Retreat to enjoy dinner, practice throwing a boomerang, share stories and learn to play the didgeridoo around the campfire. Tonight, you'll be lulled to sleep by the sound of the waves as you settle into your beach cabin accommodation.

Accommodation: The Eco Retreat on K'gari

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner & Snacks

Included activities: K'gari adventure tour

Do More: Take part in a beach clean up on the island of K'gari and contribute to keeping this piece of paradise as nature intended.

Day 11 - Thursday: K'gari (formerly Fraser Island)

This morning, wake up to the gorgeous golden sunrise over the ocean, enjoy breakfast and get ready for a fun-filled morning exploring K'gari and her hidden treasures. Enjoy lunch on the beach and then spend the afternoon discovering more lakes (there are over 100!) and epic views before arriving back at The Eco Retreat in time for another dinner under the stars and some fun evening activities.

Accommodation: The Eco Retreat on K'gari

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner & Snacks

Included activities: K'gari adventure tour

Day 12 - Friday: K'gari (formerly Fraser Island) to Bundaberg

After breakfast today you'll hit the inland tracks to discover towering trees and take one last refreshing dip, enjoy lunch in the forest and then begin your journey back to the mainland, arriving into Rainbow Beach around mid-afternoon ready for your next journey north up to Bundaberg.

Bundaberg is well-known for sugarcane, rum, ginger beer and more recently has been called the 'Bundaberg Bowl' for its reputation of growing and producing fresh food that's served across the country. Your accommodation in Bundaberg is a relaxed eco-resort, this time you'll be located by a nature reserve in the coastal suburb of Bargara and have access to a spa, sauna, tennis courts and more (we know, we treat you well!).

Accommodation: Kelly's Eco Resort in villas or similar

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Snacks Included activities: K'gari adventure tour

Day 13 - Saturday: Bundaberg / Bargara

This morning we'll have breakfast at the resort and then head to a nearby Coral Farm for a special land-based reef experience. Have a behind-the-scenes look at the incredible beauty and science of coral cultivation and the future of reef restoration. There are over 70,000 individual corals and 200 marine species for you to view!

We'll then head to Bundaberg township for lunch, after which we'll visit the Bundaberg Rum Distillery and if you're keen, a tasting of their iconic rum (extra cost). In the afternoon, relax, take a walk on the beach or why not play a game of tennis at the resort?

If you'd prefer a full day out on the water and the chance to visit the Southern part of the Great Barrier Reef, your guide can book you onto the incredible Lady Musgrave Experience for a full day of snorkelling, a boat cruise, guided island walk and delicious food.

Tonight, we'll have a traditional Aussie BBQ dinner at the resort.

Accommodation: Kelly's Eco Resort or similar

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Included Activities: Coral Farm Tour and Distillery Visit **Meal options:** Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants

Optional paid activities: Lady Musgrave Experience Full Day Tour, Rum tasting

Free activities: Swimming, tennis or checking out Bargara Beach

See More: Learn about the cutting-edge research of this farm aimed at supporting future reef restoration and the preservation of these critical marine ecosystems.

Day 14 - Sunday: Bundaberg to Airlie Beach

Today is a big travelling day to Airlie Beach, the gateway to the amazing Whitsunday Islands, so load up on snacks and we'll get the tunes going to get us through the day. We'll make some stops to stretch our legs and arrive in Airlie in the evening.

Accommodation: Nomads Airlie Beach or similar

Meals included: Breakfast

Meal options: Self-cater, local cafes, bakery, restaurants

Day 15 - Monday: Airlie Beach to Whitsunday Islands

This morning, enjoy a sleep in or take a stroll down to the Airlie lagoon for a dip. If you'd like to see the Whitsundays Islands from above, there's time for a sneaky skydive or scenic flight (optional extra) over the Islands and outer Great Barrier Reef (including Heart Reef) before our 2-night sailing tour departs.

After lunch, head down to Coral Sea Marina to meet your crew and jump onboard a 76-foot, maxi sailing yacht which will be your home for the next two days. As you leave the marina and Airlie Beach behind you, watch your crew hoist the sails for an exhilarating trip out to the Whitsunday Islands - part of the World Heritage Listed Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Once you arrive out around the Islands, jump in for a swim or snorkel amongst the fringing reef and then enjoy the sunset with a drink in hand on one of the crew's favourite little beaches. In the evening relax on deck, get to know the crew, stargaze and let the calm waters gently rock you to sleep - for the adventurous, mats are provided to sleep on deck under the stars or if you prefer a bit more comfort, a bed awaits you below deck.

Do More: Sailing is already one of the most environmentally friendly ways to travel—and

thanks to Stray's support, the sailing company we partner with now plants 10 trees for every trip taken by a Stray group!

Accommodation: Open shared dorm style accommodation on a maxi sailing yacht **Meals included:** Breakfast, Afternoon Snacks, Dinner and Dessert (BYO drinks)

Meal options: Self-cater, local cafes

Included activities: Sailing, snorkelling and exploring the Whitsunday Islands

Optional paid activities: Skydive or scenic flight

Day 16 - Tuesday: Whitsunday Islands

This morning you'll be forgiven for thinking you're in paradise, as you wake up on a yacht surrounded by beautiful islands and enjoy a delicious breakfast on deck as you sail towards Whitsunday Island, home to the best beach in the world - Whitehaven Beach. You'll disembark and enjoy a bush-walk to Hill Inlet Lookout and then spend the next few hours exploring and relaxing on Whitehaven Beach. You can also go snorkelling today, enjoy a sunset beach session and another fun evening onboard with your group and the crew.

Accommodation: Open shared dorm style accommodation on a maxi sailing yacht **Meals included:** Breakfast, Morning Tea, Lunch, Afternoon Snacks, Dinner and Dessert **Included activities:** Whitehaven Beach, Hill Inlet Lookout, bush-walk, sailing, snorkelling

Day 17 - Wednesday: Whitsunday Islands to Magnetic Island via Airlie Beach

Enjoy your final morning on-board the yacht, have one last magical swim or snorkel and then sail on back to Airlie Beach. This afternoon we'll jump back on the bus and head to Townsville. We'll then catch the ferry over to our next destination of Magnetic Island in the late afternoon. Nearly 50% of 'Maggie Island' is national parkland, and it's surrounded by amazing beaches and abundant wildlife. Your guide will fill you in on the activities you can do around the island over the next couple of days.

Accommodation: Bounce Magnetic Island in cabins or similar

Meals included: Breakfast, Morning Tea

Meal options: Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants

Included Activities: Sailing, snorkelling, Magnetic Island Ferry

See More: This island paradise is your best chance on the East Coast to see koalas in the wild. Keep your eyes out for these sleepy marsupials, rock wallabies, and colourful birds as you explore the forested island.

Day 18 - Thursday: Magnetic Island Free Day

Today you will wake up in paradise and have a full free day to explore. This beautiful island is home to the historic Forts Complex, which you see in a scenic walk with your Guide. At the end, you'll be rewarded with some incredible views over the island and ocean beyond. Spend the rest of your day

relaxing on the secluded beaches, hiking through native bush or searching for wildlife! Top tip: stay alert and keep your eyes on the trees, Maggie Island is one of the best places in Australia to see koalas in the wild!

Accommodation: Bounce Magnetic Island or similar

Meals included: Breakfast

Meal options: Self-cater, bakery or cafes **Included Activities:** Forts Complex walk

Free activities: Explore the island, relax on the beach, spot koalas

Optional activities: Snorkel

Day 19 - Friday: Magnetic Island to Cairns via Josephine Falls

This morning we'll catch the ferry back to the mainland and then we'll get on the road again and head to our final destination of our tour, Cairns - the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef.

On the way, we'll stop in Tully (home of the giant Gumboot), for a lunch break, then head to the beautiful Josephine Falls for a walk through lush rainforest and, if conditions allow, a refreshing swim.

Tonight, we're staying at an amazing resort that has its own person-made beach! We'll have a group dinner at the resort before heading out to experience the legendary Cairns nightlife.

Accommodation: Gilligans Cairns or similar

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Meal options: Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants

Included activities: Magnetic Island ferry, swim, walk, waterfalls

Day 20 - Saturday: Cairns Free Day

Today is a completely free day so if you were dancing into the early hours, enjoy a lazy sleep-in and perhaps a dip in the pool in the afternoon. If you're ready for another day of adventure, why not book a tour of Cape Tribulation or go to see the iconic Great Barrier Reef?

Accommodation: Gilligans Cairns or similar **Meal options:** Self-cater, local cafes, restaurants

Free activities: Hang out at the amazing resort pool, walk the Esplanade, visit the Botanical Gardens **Optional Activities:** Cape Tribulation Day Trip, Great Barrier Reef trip, skydive, rafting, Kuranda Scenic

Railway

Day 21 - Sunday: Cairns

Today is the final day of your Stray adventure. Give a hug or a wave to your new mates and head off for the next leg of your adventure, taking with you the most incredible memories, everything you've learned about Australia's special culture and wildlife, and of course some classic Aussie lingo - G'DAY MATES!

This itinerary is a guide. Given the spontaneous nature of our trips and lack of control over Australia's weather(!), what we do each day might occasionally vary.

What's Included:

- Experienced tour guide
- Private coach transport
- 20 nights' accommodation in 4-8 shared dorms in a range of hostels, backpacker resorts, eco-lodges, apart from 2 nights K'gari/formerly Fraser Island (cabins), 2 nights Whitsunday Sailing (open shared dorm style accommodation on a maxi sailing yacht).
- 25 meals (14 Breakfasts, 4 Lunches, 7 Dinners)
- Free time in Byron Bay, Noosa, Bargara, Magnetic Island and Cairns.
- Blue Mountains, Wentworth Falls Hike and the Three Sisters Lookout
- Wine and Cheese Tasting, Hunter Valley
- Guulabaa Wild Breeding Centre (Koala Hospital) visit
- Aboriginal Cultural Experience & Bush Walk
- Yoga class
- Byron Bay Lighthouse walk
- 3 Day / 2 Night K'gari 4WD Safari Tour
- Coral Farm tour and Distillery visit, Bundaberg
- 2 Day / 2 Night Whitsunday Sailing Adventure
- Return Magnetic Island Ferry
- Historic Forts Complex walk Magnetic Island
- Josephine Falls walk
- Loads more walks and wildlife
- Beautiful beaches, lakes, lookouts, and so much more!

What to Bring:

Camera, Sneakers/trainers, Waterproof jacket, Hat & Sunscreen, Swimsuit/towel, Reusable water bottle, Toiletries, Motion sickness tablets, Insect repellent

Please Note:

- This tour starts on a Monday and ends on a Sunday (21 days later)
- Pick up: As Day 1 is an arrival day, please make your own way to Wake Up! 509 Pitt St, Sydney, where you can check in from 2pm. Meet at reception at 5:30pm for a welcome meeting.
- Drop off: Drop off: Gilligans Backpacker Resort & Hotel, 89 Grafton St, Cairns. Check out is 10am.
- Luggage is limited to one piece per person with a maximum weight of 20kg plus a day pack
- A basic to medium level of fitness is required for walks and activities
- Adventure Tour travellers must be aged between 18-39. If you are 40+ please choose the Stray Select Tour option.
- Accommodation is in 4-8 shared dorms in a range of hostels, backpacker resorts, eco-lodges, apart from 2 nights K'gari/formerly Fraser Island (cabins) and 2 nights Whitsunday Sailing (shared dorm style in double and single beds on a maxi sailing yacht).
- The Adventure and Select Tour customers travel together on the same bus and have the same travel days except for the Airlie Beach / Whitsunday section (Days 15 and 16). There is an option for Adventure Tour travellers to stay on the mainland and take part in the Camira sailing day tour rather than the 2 day / 2 night sailing adventure but they would need to notify Stray at the time of booking.
- 25 meals are included. We make regular supermarket stops so you can self-cater for other meals, or there are usually quite a few cafe/restaurant options in each location.

Highlights:

Waterfalls, mountains, sailing, wildlife spotting! There are so many awesome inclusions with the Stray Emu Sydney to Cairns Tour and we can't wait for you to experience them:

- Enjoy a walk through the National Park and take in the dramatic scenery and stunning waterfalls at the Blue Mountains
- Discover your inner wine connoisseur at Hunter Valley and taste award-winning samples fresh from the vineyard
- Get a closer look at Australia's laziest (and cutest) marsupials at the Guulabaa Wild Breeding Centre (Koala Hospital)
- Visit the quirky towns of Katoomba and Eumundi for a taste of alternative lifestyles
- Connect and gain an understanding of the incredible **Aboriginal Culture** through a bush walk and cultural experience
- Photostops at the big Banana, big Gumboot and more!
- Centre yourself with a yoga class in laid-back **Byron Bay followed by a** walk to the famous Cape Byron Lighthouse and the easternmost point of mainland Australia.
- Drop into the iconic **Surfers Paradise** and enjoy views of kilometres of golden sand beaches

- Spend a night in the buzzing riverside city of Brisbane
- Visit the Sunshine Coast and live it up in the resort town of **Noosa**
- Embark on a 3-day 4WD Safari to **K'gari** (formerly Fraser Island). Drive along the beach and through the rainforest, visit a shipwreck, swim in crystal clear waters, before relaxing around a campfire under the stars
- Stay in the relaxed seaside town of Bargara, partake in a **Coral Farm tour** and visit the famous Bundaberg Rum distillery
- Explore the breath-taking **Whitsunday Islands** during a 2-days/2-night sailing trip. Snorkel over vibrant fringing reefs, experience sailing on an ex-race yacht and visit some of the world's most pristine beaches
- Embrace your inner nature-lover on **Magnetic Island**, a wildlife paradise filled with koalas and wallabies
- Take a break at the stunning Josephine Falls for a walk through the lush rainforest and optional swim
- Enjoy the relaxed tropical Cairns lifestyle and the fun nightlife that it's famous for!