MICK FREESTYLE TOUR

East Coast Freestyle Tour Itinerary

Sydney to Cairns
Monday

Duration: Minimum 24 days, Maximum 12 months
Tour Begins: Monday
Blackout Periods: Christmas Day and New Year's Day
Group Size: Min 4 / Max 40
Transportation: Stray bus, comfortable train, Magnetic Island ferry & local transfers
Age Requirement: 18+

What is Freestyle?
It's flexible adventure travel! You can complete your trip in the minimum amount of time or you can hop off and extend your stay in any destination on the route. Use the Stray Mate App to book extra nights' accommodation and activities along the way. Contact our friendly reservations team when you're ready to hop back on the bus and continue the adventure.

Monday: Arrive into Sydney

Check into your centrally located hostel and get ready for your epic East Coast adventure. Start the Tour in Sydney with a day to yourself to discover the city sights and world-famous landmarks.

Accommodation included: Central Sydney accommodation
Optional activities: explore King Street Wharf, Royal Botanic Gardens, Taronga Zoo

Tuesday: Blue Mountains Day Trip

Prepare for a day of adventure to see some of the most spectacular scenery in Australia. Our first stop out of Sydney is at Euroka to spot wild kangaroos and other wildlife in a natural clearing. Next, we stop off in the local town Glenbrook for a coffee/snack break to fuel up for a 1.5-hour hike to the stunning Wentworth Falls and viewpoints of the beautiful Jamison Valley. Enjoy a light picnic lunch and then trek to a remote waterfall and lookout. We head up to view the famous 3 Sisters lookout to take a couple of selfies, before driving back to central Sydney for a well-earned drink (beer/wine or soft drink).

Accommodation included: Central Sydney accommodation
Meals included: Lunch
Activities included: Blue Mountains day trip - guided walk, wildlife spotting

See More moment: Go deep into the heart of the World Heritage Listed Blue Mountains. Learn about the rich history and Dreamtime stories of the Aboriginal people, and see inspired indigenous artwork. Take a guided hike to Wentworth Falls to gain a different perspective of these gorgeous mountains.

Wednesday: Sydney

You have a free day in stunning Sydney to explore the city on your own terms. There's lots to do here. You could kick-start your morning by heading to the famous Bondi Beach for a walk along the coastline (ask at your hostel reception for details). Another option is to walk down to the world-famous Darling Harbour, surrounded by boutique shops, restaurants and bars. From there head downtown to The Rocks (right under the Sydney Harbour bridge) and walk around the harbourfront to Sydney Opera House. Take your Insta-worthy shots and soak up the spectacular views before finishing the day at Opera Bar where you can listen to music and sip a cold drink, as the sun goes down.

Accommodation included: Central Sydney accommodation
Activities included: Bondi Beach Walk (with the hostel)

Thursday: Sydney to Barrington Tops

We depart the big city early this morning to make our way to the Hunter Valley wine region for a tasting at an award-winning vineyard. From there, we carry on through the backcountry to our first stunning Strademark stop on the edge of the World Heritage listed Barrington Tops National Park. At our Stray exclusive accommodation beside the Karuah River, you'll spend the afternoon checking out the amazing property and either tubing down the river or checking out the local wildlife. Finish the day with a shared group dinner and a few drinks.

Accommodation included: Lodge at Barrington Tops
Meals included: Dinner
Activities included: River tubing/bush walk or wildlife spotting, wine tasting

See More moment: Spend the night on the edge of the World Heritage-listed Barrington Tops National Park, well and truly off the beaten track!

Friday: Barrington Tops to Spot X Surf Camp

We depart after breakfast and journey north through the remote countryside back towards the coast. Our next stop is the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital, where you can get a closer look at Australia's laziest (and arguably cutest) marsupials. Check out the information centre to learn all about the hospital's efforts to rehabilitate, protect and preserve the koalas. After this, we head to Emerald Beach, an iconic kangaroo hangout, where if you're lucky you can spot them hopping along the beach. We arrive at our beachfront overnight stop Spot X in the early evening, where

you'll have dinner at camp.

Accommodation included: Spot X Surf Camp accommodation
Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
Activities included: Port Macquarie Koala Hospital, kangaroo spotting on Emerald Beach

Saturday: Spot X Surf Camp to River Retreat

The morning at Spot X you'll take part in a fun group lesson to learn the basics of surfing on some of the best beginner waves in Australia. If you love the beach or are keen to hone your surf skills, we recommend staying longer to do a Surf & Stay. We depart around midday, grabbing a bite to eat in town before travelling to our relaxing, rural River Retreat. Spend the afternoon on a guided canoe trip down the Nymboida River to learn about the area, which is home to amazing birds, snakes, and the incredibly shy platypus. This evening, we'll crank up the barbeque for a shared dinner, then gather round the bonfire for a few drinks before bed.

Accommodation included: River Retreat wilderness cabins
Meals included: Breakfast
Activities included: Surf lesson, canoeing (or guided walk depending on conditions)
Optional activities: Hop-off to extend your stay for a Surf & Stay

See More moment: Head out on a guided canoe trip or walk to spot wildlife and learn about the fascinating local history. In the evening, cook a classic Australian meal together and watch the stars.

Do More moment: Your stay here helps to support the local community of Nymboida. Once a hub for white water canoeing, the town has struggled since a crucial dam was shut down, then in 2019 bushfires went through the area. With the help of community volunteers and Stray passengers, the centre is being revived.

Sunday: River Retreat to Byron Bay

Next up - Byron Bay, known as the most chilled out town in Australia. On the way there, we stop in the picturesque seaside town of Yamba for lunch. We'll also visit the Angourie Blue Pool, an old quarry that was accidentally (and awesomely) filled by an underground spring, meaning you can now cool off in an epic freshwater pool right on the beach! Upon arriving 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.

Accommodation included: Byron Bay accommodation
Activities included: Angourie Blue Pool swimming, Byron Bay orientation drive

Monday: Byron Bay

You have a free day in Byron Bay to "cheer up, slow down, and chill out" as the town's famous welcome sign instructs. There is plenty to do in this laidback hippy town: practice your surfing skills down at the beach, walk to mainland Australia's most easterly point at the Cape Byron Lighthouse, or search for dolphins and other marine life on a sea kayaking trip.

Accommodation included: Byron Bay accommodation
Optional activities: Surf lessons, kayaking, snorkelling, diving, walk to Cape Byron Lighthouse

Tuesday: Nimbin Day Trip

Today you'll head out on an epic day trip to Nimbin, a colourful hippy town worth exploring. You'll journey through the beautiful Byron hinterland on an entertaining guided bus trip and see the sights of Nimbin. Enjoy a traditional Aussie BBQ lunch, visit Nightcap National Park, and see a stunning waterfall. You'll return to Byron Bay in the early evening.

Accommodation included: Byron Bay accommodation
Meals included: Lunch on Grasshopper Nimbin Tour
Activity included: 1 Day Grasshopper Nimbin Tour

Wednesday: Byron Bay to Rainbow Beach

This morning we cross the border from New South Wales into Queensland. Our destination today is Rainbow Beach, but those with more time might want to hop off and explore tourist hot spot Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast, Queensland's capital city of Brisbane, or the upmarket resort town of Noosa. Tomorrow you'll begin your Fraser Island adventure (make sure you've booked in the dates in advance with Stray). Once you've checked-in, you'll have a safety briefing for your Fraser Island 4WD trip.

Please Note: $20 insurance fee and $10 linen/sleeping bag hire for Fraser Island is not included. Please pay in cash on arrival.

Accommodation included: Rainbow Beach accommodation
Optional activities: Hop off on the Gold Coast, Brisbane or Noosa

Friday: Rainbow Beach to Fraser Island

Wake up early and head out for your 3-day, 2-night Fraser Island adventure. You'll explore the largest sand island in the world on a 4WD expedition with your mates, and even have the chance to drive! Check out incredible sites to snap epic pictures, swim in lakes, natural pools and the ocean all in paradise.

Accommodation included: Fraser Island accommodation
Meals included: Lunch, Dinner
Activities included: 4WD tagalong tour

Optional activities: Walks, swimming

Saturday: Fraser Island

After breakfast we'll drive up to stunning Eli Creek, the largest freshwater creek on the East Coast of the Island, which carves its way through to the beach and pours 80 million litres of water a day into the Pacific Ocean. After spending some time here, we head up to the famous Maheno Shipwreck for photo ops and some history about this Fraser icon. After lunch and another stop or two, we head back to the camp for dinner and drinks.

Accommodation included: Fraser Island accommodation
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Activities included: 4WD tagalong tour
Optional activities: Walks, swimming

Sunday: Fraser Island to Rainbow Beach

Today you'll spend the morning walking through magical sand dunes and soaking up the sun on Fraser Island. You'll return back to base in the early afternoon.

Accommodation included: Rainbow Beach accommodation
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Monday: Rainbow Beach

You have a full free day at Rainbow Beach to relax and explore at your own pace. There's plenty of activities on offer – ask your guide for recommendations. If you're heading to the beach, keep your eyes out for humpback whales between July and November, and playful dolphins year round. If you're keen for a day off, you can simply relax by the pool at our hostel and watch the world go by. This evening you can head out on a short walk up the sand dunes to watch a stunning sunset at Carlo Sand Blow.

Accommodation included: Rainbow Beach hostel
Activities included: Carlo Sand Blow walk

Tuesday: Rainbow Beach to Emu Park

After stopping briefly to pick up those who stayed in Noosa, you will depart from Cooroy on your first train journey of the trip. Kick back for a scenic train ride to Rockhampton, where you'll meet the bus and your Stray Guide and head to your next Strademark destination - Emu Park. After getting settled in at the resort, you'll find out more about tomorrow's adventure to the stunning Great Keppel Island.

Accommodation included: Emu's Beach Resort

See More moment: Our stay at Emu Park provides your chance to get up close and personal with the Great Barrier Reef. You'll have the chance to snorkel and play amongst one of the seven wonders of the world.

Wednesday: Great Keppel Island & Overnight Train

This morning you head to a tropical paradise with your awesome local guide. Great Keppel Island is located on the southern of the Great Barrier Reef with untouched coral, turtles, reef fish and manta rays all straight off the beach. Relax or have a go at snorkeling or kayaking (both at extra cost) before exploring the island in search of the perfect white sand beach. Tonight, we'll return to the mainland and gather together for dinner at Emu's Beach Resort before we catch the overnight train to Airlie Beach.

Accommodation included: Overnight train
Meals included: Lunch, Dinner
Activities included: Great Keppel Island Adventure
Optional activities: Snorkeling or kayaking

Thursday: Airlie Beach

The train arrives into Prosperine early in the morning. Your Airlie-based Stray Guide will meet you off the train and accompany you on the bus into Airlie Beach. They'll help you store your bags, and then grab breakfast (extra cost) and give you a brief orientation of the town to help you get your bearings. You'll have the rest of your day free in Airlie Beach to do as you please. Your guide will organise an activity such as a rainforest hike or swim at the lagoon. See panoramic views of the swirling Whitsundays from above and then head down a secluded beach for a splash.

Airlie Beach is the gateway to the famous Whitsunday Islands, another backpacker favourite, and that's where you'll be heading tomorrow.

Accommodation included: Airlie Beach accommodation
Activities included: Orientation walk, guided hike in the rainforest
Optional activities: Skydiving, swim in the lagoon

Friday: Airlie Beach to Whitsunday Islands

Wake up early and head down to the marina in time for a 2-day, 1-night adventure through the breathtaking Whitsunday Islands. These picturesque islands are set in the Great Barrier Reef and are home to some of the world's most pristine beaches. Get ready for an epic sailing adventure that includes the highlights of this incredible area and spending the night at sea.

Accommodation included: Overnight boat
Meals included: Lunch, Dinner
Activities included: Sailing, snorkeling

Saturday: Whitsunday Islands to Airlie Beach

The exact order of activities will vary, but your Whitsunday sailing tour includes a visit to Whitehaven Beach, renowned for having some of the softest sand in the world, and Hill Inlet, where the shifting tides swirl the sand and water together in a dazzling effect. You'll also sail around the reef with various stops to get out for a swim and snorkel, allowing plenty of opportunities to see marine life along the way. At the end of the second day of sailing, you'll return to Airlie Beach to spend the night back on shore.

Accommodation included: Central Airlie Beach accommodation
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch
Activities included: Sailing, snorkeling

Sunday: Airlie Beach

You'll have another free day in Airlie Beach to relax and explore at your leisure. Your Airlie Guide will have lots of ideas of what you can do. If you can't get enough of the big blue, why not get some karma points and volunteer your time with Eco Barge Clean Seas – a non-profit organisation that often takes volunteers out on a barge to the bays and beaches of the Whitsunday region. You'll help to collect rubbish washed up onto these beaches (of course with a side of sightseeing!). If the barge isn't going out, you may be able to help with valuable sorting of the debris.

Accommodation included: Central Airlie Beach accommodation
Optional activities: Volunteer with Eco Barge Clean Seas, swim in the lagoon.

Do More moment: While at Airlie Beach, you may have the opportunity to help protect this slice of paradise by participating in the local ocean clean up initiative. You'll learn about their conservation efforts and see some epic views too!

Monday: Airlie Beach to Magnetic Island

You'll be up with the parakeets this morning with a medley of transport to catch today. Travelling by bus, train and ferry (oh my!) we arrive at our destination of Magnetic Island in the late morning. Nearly 50% of 'Maggie Island' is national parkland, and it's chock-full of amazing beaches and abundant wildlife. Your legendary local guide will fill you on the activities you can do around the island over the next couple of days.

Accommodation included: Magnetic Island accommodation
Meals included: Dinner

See More moment: 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.

Tuesday: Magnetic Island

Join your guide today for a scenic walk. You might head off the beaten track to beautiful Radical Bay beach for an ocean dip and amazing photo opportunities. Alternatively, your guide will take you up to the historic Forts Complex, where you'll see incredible views over the island and ocean beyond. Whichever way you go, don't forget to look up, as Maggie Island is one of the best places to see koalas in the wild!

Accommodation included: Magnetic Island accommodation
Activities included: Forts Walk Complex or Radical Bay Walking Tour
Optional activities: Snorkel, rent a kayak

Wednesday: Magnetic Island to Cairns

We catch the ferry back to the mainland in the morning, and travel by train to tropical Cairns. We'll arrive in the afternoon just in time to check out the bustling Cairns Night Markets where we can grab a delicious bite, a cold beer and hunt for a bargain.

Accommodation included: Cairns Central YHA or similar.

Thursday: Atherton Tablelands Rainforest Experience (Day Trip)

Today you'll be heading out on a fun filled day tour of the stunning Atherton Tablelands. We'll walk through a lush rainforest, visit the oldest living history museum and swim in pristine mountain water. Then, we'll visit the Josephine Falls, an amazing three stage waterfall followed by some delicious morning tea at the Tea House. We'll head to the Milla Milla Falls and then check out Lake Eacham, a volcanic crater lake over 60 metres deep where you can take another refreshing swim before we make our way back to Cairns in the early evening. Make the most of Cairns' epic nightlife by checking out the local pubs, grabbing a few drinks and dancing the night away!

Accommodation included: Cairns Central YHA
Meals included: Morning tea, Lunch
Activities included: Guided day tour of Atherton Tablelands
Optional activities: Swimming

What's Included:

24 nights' Accommodation:

- 20 nights shared 4-10 bed dorm accommodation
- 1 overnight train
- 1 overnight boat cruise
- 2 nights camping (Fraser Island)

Meals: 6 Breakfasts, 9 Lunches, 8 Dinners

Transport: Private Bus, Ferry, Train, local bus transfers

Guide:

- **Sydney - Rainbow Beach:** Stray Driver Guide on bus sectors
- **Rainbow Beach - Cairns:** Self-guided train sectors with in-location guides to greet you when you arrive and show the best bits

Activities:

- Blue Mountains Day Trip
- Wine tasting Hunter Valley
- River tubing, Barrington Tops National Park
- Surf lesson, Spot X Surf Camp
- Koala hospital visit, Port Macquarie
- Kangaroo spotting, Emerald Beach
- Canoeing experience, River Retreat
- Angourie Blue Pools, Yamba
- Byron Bay orientation drive
- Nimbin Day Trip
- Carlo Sand Blow Walk, Rainbow Beach
- 3 Day / 2 Night Fraser Island
- Great Keppel Island Adventure at Emu Park
- Airlie Orientation and Guided Rainforest Walk
- 2 Day / 1 Night Whitsunday Sailing Adventure
- Forts Complex and/or Radical Bay Walking Tour at Magnetic Island
- Atherton Tablelands Rainforest Experience

What's Not Included:

- Most meals
- Additional accommodation in places where you hop-off to extend your stay
- $20 cash insurance to be paid to Fraser Island company + $10 for sleeping bag/linen hire on Fraser Island

What to Bring:

- Clothes (mainly light with some warm layers)
- Walking shoes (sneakers/trainers)
- Camera
- Swimsuit & towel
- Toiletries
- Hat & sunscreen
- Bug repellent

- Daypack**
- Water bottle
- Waterproof jacket (shell)
- Do NOT bring: Sleeping bag, sheets, blankets or pillow

** Our trips are pretty active; you'll need a daypack to carry the essentials during activities and walks but you won't have to carry your pack/suitcase that far.

Notes:

- Luggage restrictions: A backpack or small/medium suitcase (up to 15kg) and a small daypack for day excursions.
- Reconfirmation instructions: All the activities/accommodation listed are open-dated, please contact Stray's reservations team (email hey@straytravel.com) at least 48 hours prior to arrival to confirm your bookings. For Fraser Island and Whitsunday trip bookings, we recommend booking at least 7 days in advance to guarantee your spot. In peak periods (e.g. Christmas/New Years Eve, Easter, School Holidays/Events) some accommodation may be subject to an additional surcharge or minimum number of nights.
- Freestyle Tours include all accommodation needed to complete the tour in minimum time. If travellers choose to hop-off and extend their stay in any location, all additional accommodation, meals and activities are at their own expense. Additional accommodation and activities can be booked via the Stray Mate app.
- The Fraser Island 3-days, 2-night tour included in our Freestyle Tours is run by a third party operator. This product is suitable for people aged 18-40. Travellers aged over 40 will be booked on an alternative 2 days, 1 night tour with more comfortable transport and accommodation and an additional night in Noosa or Rainbow Beach.
- Note: This is not a traditional tour. You'll be travelling on different modes of transport, with different groups and with or without a guide depending on location and activity.

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.