



Queensland (QLD) Fact Sheet

Introducing Queensland

Occupying Australia's northeast corner, this immense state impresses visitors with a diversity of landscapes, from the postcard beaches of the Sunshine Coast, to the rich greens of the Daintree, and the azure blues of the Great Barrier Reef. Beyond striking mountain ranges, the interior stretches into the sunburnt Outback, where the big empty reveals humbling horizons. Brisbane, the capital, is lively and cosmopolitan. In the north, Cairns is a travellers' mecca, humming with the feel of a global village. Between the two are strings of towns and islands where you can indulge in fine dining and living.

Known as Australia's 'Sunshine State', Queensland is allegedly blessed with 300 days of sunshine a year. While it's a great place for a little R&R (rest and relaxation), that's not all it's about. Flick off the beach towel and put your muscles to the test with a bout of white-water rafting, scuba diving, snorkelling, bushwalking, horse riding, surfing, bungee jumping, skydiving, abseiling... or whatever else your imagination can come up with.

State-Wide Must Sees & Dos

Great Barrier Reef – Dive, snorkel and meet the aquatic locals at this incredible reef, the only living thing visible from space and one of the seven wonders of the natural world.

Fraser Island – Frolic in freshwater lakes (some 200 of them) and on the beach highway of this gigantic sandbar, the world's biggest sand island with dramatic dunes and lush rainforest.

Far North Queensland – Explore the wet tropics of FNQ in idyllic locations such as Cape Tribulation and the Daintree National Park.

Whitsunday Islands – See the stuff that postcard dreams are made of: cloudless skies, azure seas, coral gardens and a magnificent spread of flawless isles.

Eungella, Carnarvon Gorge & Hinchinbrook Island – Navigate some of the state's supreme national parks: go platypus-spotting in Eungella; be humbled by the towering rock walls at Carnarvon Gorge; and bushwalk through the unspoiled wilderness of Hinchinbrook.

Sunshine & Gold Coasts – Dine in style on the Sunshine Coast at places like very vogue Noosa, or party hard at Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast.

Introducing Brisbane

It's Australia's third-largest city, but while other capitals compete loudly in their endeavour to reach top billing in the status stakes, Brisbane quietly executes its evolution in true, casual Queensland style. There's no need to advertise the virtues – locals already know it's one of the most desirable places in Australia to live. For visitors, the city is an outstanding summary of Australia; the big-city package exists here but the pretensions and speed are refreshingly absent.

Start with a metropolis that reclines over a tropical landscape. Dissect it with the winding Brisbane River and mix in a climate that attracts southerners by the chilly town-load every winter. Weave throughout a smorgasbord of cultural flavours, simmering in cafes, theatres, art-house cinemas, concert halls, galleries, museums and live music venues. Pepper the vista with subtropical gardens and views from lookouts or river boats. Add to this a calendar stocked with festivals and an abundance of eateries and you'll realise what all the low-key fuss is about.

Brisbane's city centre is bound by a U-shaped loop of the Brisbane River. The action is centred on pedestrianised Queen St Mall, which runs down to the former Treasury Building (now a casino) and Victoria Bridge to South Bank. Across Victoria Bridge is South Brisbane and the South Bank Parklands; further south is the hip West End. Ann St runs northeast of the city centre into trendy Fortitude Valley.

Brisbane's Weather

Temperatures in Brisbane, in the south of the state, rarely drop below 20°C and while it doesn't suffer the stifling humidity you'll find further north, it's still most pleasant in winter (June to August). However, this is also the time everyone from Sydney and Melbourne heads north to escape the cold, so expect a crowd.

Cultural Overview

Brisbane has gotten rid of its reputation as being a backward and unsophisticated place and emerged as one of the country's most progressive centres. It has several interesting districts, a good street cafe scene, a great riverside park, a busy cultural calendar and a thriving nightlife. Known locally as Bris Vegas, the city is renowned for its sun and the showy hordes that follow it, but it's also the arts capital of Queensland, with dozens of theatres, cinemas, concert halls, galleries and museums. A climate this good and culture too? It must be paradise.

Don't Miss...

Most of Brisbane's major sights can be found in the city centre or within easy walking distance of it. Sandstone architecture revealing Brisbane's colonial history is scattered throughout the city and South Bank is just a short ferry ride across the river. Fortitude Valley, with its cafes, culture, food and shopping, is a popular area for locals and visitors, as is the West End. The free brochure Brisbane's Living Heritage, available from visitor information centres, highlights many of the sights Brisbane has to offer. Here are some favourites to get you started:

Brisbane's Living Heritage: Website: www.brisbanelivingheritage.com

Jump into a (free) cultural smorgasbord at the Queensland Cultural Centre in South Bank, where you'll find the **Queensland Museum**, with its excellent Sciencentre, the **Queensland Art Gallery** and the soon-to-be-opened **Queensland Gallery of Modern Art**.

Queensland Museum: Grey St. **Phone:** 07 3840 7555 **Website:** www.qmuseum.qld.gov.au

Queensland Art Gallery: Melbourne St. **Phone:** 07 3840 7303 **Website:** www.qag.qld.gov.au

Queensland Gallery of Modern Art: Website: www.qag.qld.gov.au/qgma

Don't Miss... (Con't)

Update your wardrobe or pick up some souvenirs at one of the weekend city markets, such as the **funky Brunswick St Markets** (Fortitude Valley) or the **Crafts Village Market** (Stanley St Plaza, South Bank).

Cool down with a swim at **Streets Beach**, an artificial swimming hole that curls its way through the South Bank Parklands before opening up into a lagoon. Also check out the **Suncorp Piazza**, an outdoor theatre that screens international sporting events and free movies during school holidays.

Wander about the city admiring the traffic signal boxes (TSBs). The what?! It's a street-side art gallery dreamt up by the city council whose members were tired of unimaginative TSBs, so they formed a project to recruit volunteer artists to lovingly paint all 700 or so of them!

Cruise up the Brisbane River to the **Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary**, where you can cuddle one of the cute, fuzzy koalas, and also hand-feed tame kangaroos and see dingoes and wombats.

Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary: Jesmond Rd, Fig Tree Pocket. **Phone:** 07 3378 1366

Eat & Be Merry At...

Brisbane's city centre has a number of fine (and expensive) eating options, but many of the city's best restaurants and cafes are in the neighbourhoods of Fortitude Valley ('The Valley'), New Farm, West End, Petrie Terrace and Paddington. The Valley is also Brisbane's undisputed nightlife centre, with ample pubs, bars and music venues. Here's a taste of what's on offer around the city:

Start your day with a coffee at stylish **Anise** and return later to see it converted into a fashionable wine bar and fabulous French restaurant.

Anise: 697 Brunswick St, New Farm. **Phone:** 07 3358 1558

Experience organic bliss with the exquisite cuisine on offer at **Mondo Organics**, where you can savour innovative, all-organic meals.

Mondo Organics: 166 Hardgrave Rd, West End. **Phone:** 07 3844 1132

Taste the yummy creations served up at restaurant-cum-bar **Jorge**, such as smoked kangaroo salads and grilled prawn burgers. DJs appear later in the night.

Jorge: 183 George St, City Centre. **Phone:** 07 3012 9121

Plant yourself in the sunny courtyard or lounge back in the bar at the **Belgian Beer Café**, where you can choose between 26 fine Belgian beers or from a large selection of domestic beers and wines.

Belgian Beer Café: cnr Edward & Mary Sts, City Centre. **Phone:** 07 3221 0199

Join the weekend crowds for a gig at **Zoo**, which offers excellent opportunities to see local bands performing everything from hard metal to electronica.

Zoo: 711 Ann St, Fortitude Valley. **Phone:** 07 3854 1381

Brisbane Events

There's usually something happening somewhere in Brisbane whatever the time of year. Information on festivals and events in the city can be found at the visitor information centres or check out www.ourbrisbane.com/whatson. Here's a sample of what you can expect:

Cockroach Races – This bizarre ritual takes place at the **Story Bridge Hotel** on Australia Day, 26 January.

Story Bridge Hotel: 196 Main St, Kangaroo Point. **Phone:** 07 3391 2266

Tropfest – This nationwide short film festival is telecast live at South Bank in late February.

Tropfest: **Website:** www.tropfest.com

Valley Fiesta – Taking place in Fortitude Valley's Chinatown and Brunswick St Mall, this food and music festival happens in mid-July.

Brisbane Riverfestival – Held in September, this is the city's major festival of the arts, with buskers, performances, music and concerts.

Brisbane Riverfestival: **Website:** www.riverfestival.com.au

Livid – Australia's longest-running outdoor music festival, this annual one-day alternative rock event is held in October.

Livid: **Website:** www.livid.com.au