

HOT SPOTS OF THE RAINFOREST

07 Sep, 15 by [Fiona Harper](#)

Rainforests are pretty cool places to hang out. Just ask Australia's second largest bird the cassowary. In fact there's a number of resident species in the Wet Tropics of Tropical North Queensland that are found nowhere else. We're pretty chuffed that they chose our special piece of paradise to call home! Some species are super special like the northern bettong, spotted tail quoll and yellow-bellied glider, which are considered rare or even endangered.

But the real star of the rainforest is the lush vegetation itself. Lush and leafy, dark and mysterious, the rainforest is no shrinking violet when it comes to putting on a kick-butt show! Do your bit for the conservation of endangered species by paying a visit to our World Heritage listed rainforests. The planet will thank you!

DISCOVER THE DAINTREE

The Daintree rainforest is the much-loved poster child for rainforest in these parts. Learn all about the quirky and not so quirky critters at the Daintree Discovery Centre. An aerial walkway offers an up close and personal view of the mid level rainforest while the vertigo-inducing Canopy Tower shows off a rare treetop view above the canopy. Down on the rainforest floor marked trails and interpretive guides highlight how unique and special this forest really is.

GET OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Take the road less travelled in a 4WD to delve deep into the rainforest. National Parks and State Forests are in abundance and most are dotted with walking trails and dirt roads open to 4WDers. Daintree National Park, Barron Gorge NP, Crater Lakes NP, Wooroonooran NP are all accessible from Cairns. Out on the Great Barrier Reef islands there are Green Island NP, Fitzroy Island NP and Lizard Island NP where you dive the Great Barrier Reef in the morning and soak up the rainforest in the afternoon.

The CREB Track is suitable for experienced off-roaders with a number of creek crossings and tough terrain. The reward for hardy souls who don't mind being thrown around the vehicle is pristine forest that few visit. Camp beside a stream for an unforgettable rainforest encounter.

If you've the time and the right 4WD vehicle you might consider tackling the 1050km Epic Cape York Drive from Cairns to Cape York.



Rainforest & reef collide

There's only two places in the world where World Heritage listed rainforest collides with World Heritage listed coral reef. Yep, you guessed it, they're both in TNQ! Cape Tribulation is one of the hot spots at the heart of where these two icons go head to head like Queensland and New South Wales in the State of Origin. We could throw around a whole lot of superlatives like stunning, spectacular, awesome and amazing. But seriously, none of them come close to describing the awesomeness of Cape Trib. But don't take our word for it – you really need to check it out for yourself. Just go.



WATER – THE ELIXIR OF LIFE

The Wet Tropics are so named for good reason. There's also good reason why the forest is so lush and richly vegetated. It's wet! Cape Tribulation's average rainfall is a coffee cup short of four metres while the Wet Tropics as a whole averages almost eight metres. Yikes – that's a lot! Compare that with Oodnadatta on the edge of the Simpson Desert where a miserly 177mm falls on average each year.

The upside to all that precipitation is the creeks, streams and rivers it creates. Waterfalls like Nandroya Falls below are the icing on that lush rainforest cake. There's a gazillion of them, particularly when the wet season is in full swing. Paddling or swimming in a freshwater stream is just one highlight of a rainforest expedition. Getting a head or shoulder massage beneath a waterfall is another.



Canoeing down a gentle stream is another...



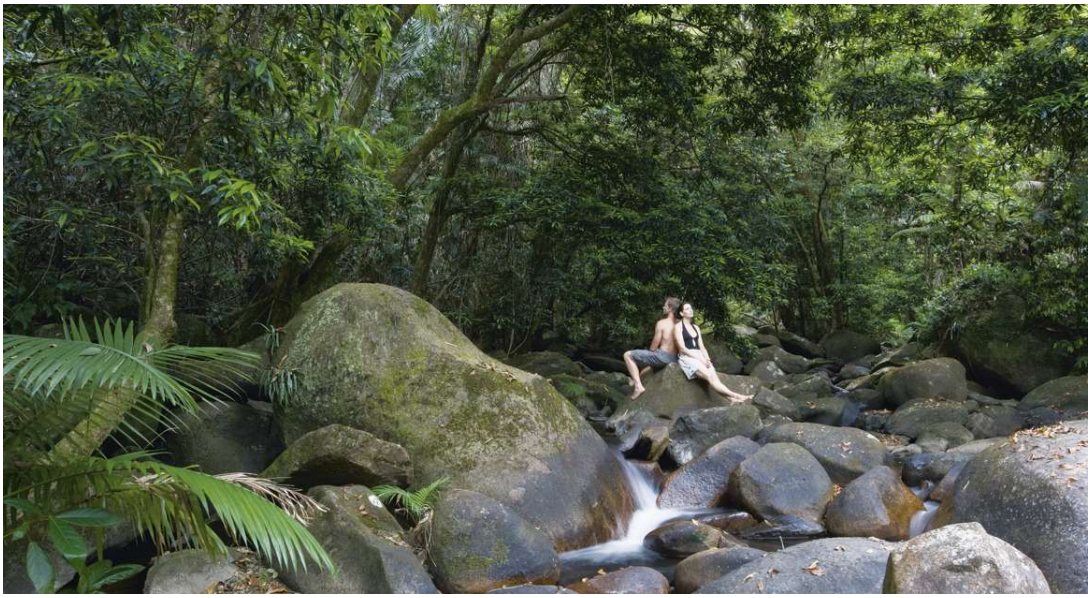
Stand up paddle boarding (SUPing!) is yet another way to explore the rainforest.



Enjoy spectacular views of the tropical rainforest, Coral Sea and Cairns on Skyrail Rainforest Cableway.



Or you could just sit quietly and take it all in. It takes time to absorb an ancient rainforest system as old time itself.



Fiona Harper is Cairns based travel writer. Widely travelled, highly acclaimed and much published, Fiona's articles & images are published across the globe. When she's not writing about TNQ she's probably running a marathon or exploring the world by foot, bike, kayak, camel or boat: whatever mode of transport she can get her hands on!