

LIFESTYLE

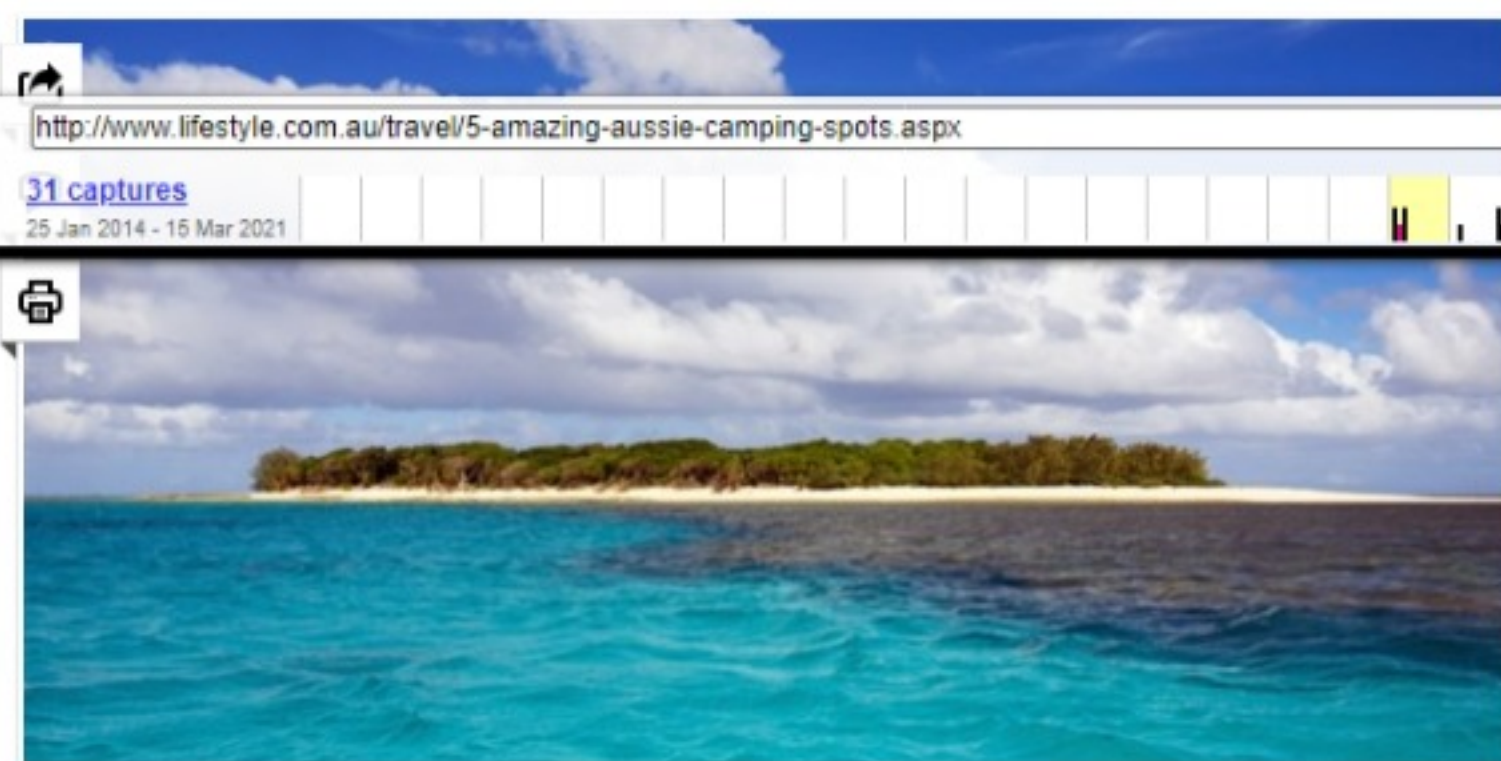
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- Pets
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LifeStyle Channel » Travel » Travel Tips » 5 Amazing Aussie Camping Spots



## 5 Amazing Aussie Camping Spots

by Fiona Harper



There are many fantastic camping spots across Australia. Here are five of our favourite spots to pitch a tent.

### 1. Lady Musgrave Island (QLD)

Barely rising above the Coral Sea 60km off the coast of Town of 1770, were it not for lush vegetation, this tiny coral atoll would not exist. A significant habitat and breeding site for an enormous colony of seabirds such as terns, noddies, gulls, oystercatchers and shearwaters rule the island. Their guano is an important factor in the islands creation, allowing trees and shrubs to flourish. Surrounded by coral reef with a vast navigable lagoon, turtles also use the island for nesting. Most of the action happens between October and March with the island closed to campers for a short period when wildlife is most vulnerable.

There is no infrastructure beyond some composting toilets and a light tower for shipping which is part of the attraction, particularly for campers but so too for day-trippers. The island's remoteness and sheer isolation are part of the drawcard for those who come to snorkel, dive and swim in the warm waters of the lagoon. Lady Musgrave Cruises moor a glass bottom boat in the lagoon for those who don't like to get there hair wet. Campsites for a maximum of 40 campers at one time are nestled beneath the pisonia trees which provide plenty of shade. The main hazard for campers however is bird poop, of which there is plenty.

Open: Easter to Australia Day  
 Cost \$5.50 pp per night  
[www.lmcruises.com.au](http://www.lmcruises.com.au)

### 2. Conway National Park (QLD)

The Whitsundays are no stranger to those of us looking for idyllic places to bunker down surrounded by nature at her finest. For active campers with a hankering to hike or mountain bike to a campsite in the midst of rainforest, it's hard to go past the Great Whitsunday Walk. The trail itself is only about 30km from start to finish but oh boy, what a stunning 30 km it is. Starting from Forestry Rd, which is accessible from Shute Harbour Rd on the Proserpine side of Airlie Beach, the trail rises to about 400 m above sea level in the hills Of Conway National Park. It's not an easy hike or ride given the steep elevation but it's heart-stoppingly beautiful and well worth the exertion.

There are a couple of select viewing spots where the rainforest canopy parts wide enough to view the islands across Shute Harbour and Whitsunday Passage. Down in the gullies mountain filtered water tinkles over rock strewn streams overhung with iridescent green ferns. Elusive brilliant blue Ulysses butterflies flutter across the path darting hither and thither. Campsites are located at the 8 km and 20km points along the trail making it ideal for a 2 night, 3 day adventure.

Open: year round  
 Cost: \$5.50 pp per night  
[www.npsr.qld.gov.au/parks/great-walks-whitsunday](http://www.npsr.qld.gov.au/parks/great-walks-whitsunday)



### 3. Cape Leveque (WA)

Approximately 220 km north of Broome along a potholed dirt track the colour of rich ochre, Cape Leveque is the kind of place that feels like the end of the earth. Perhaps it has something to do with the drive there which seems to take forever through mostly uninhabited country apart from a couple of coastal fishing shacks. But the west looking vista in the late afternoon sun adds to the appeal as the red cliffs above the beach seem to turn the colour of a raging bushfire as they reflect the setting sun. It's nature in all her kick arse glory and it happens most every afternoon.

One of the best places to view this daily spectacle is from one of the simple Beach Camping Shelters made from a beguiling mix of flotsam, jetsam and seemingly random building materials. Little more than a simple shelter with a cold water shower from the burning sun, their prime position on beach sand makes them highly sought after. You could also bring your own tent and camp on the grass beyond the beach. Alternatively you could lash out and book a Mini Safari Tent with futon bed (from \$65 per night) or for ultimate camping luxury Deluxe Safari Tents (from \$330 per night) with Indian Ocean views to die for.

If you're exhausted after a day of boating, fishing, swimming, snorkelling or beach combing there's an open sided restaurant and bar if you don't feel like using the communal BBQ's. Or you could take advantage of the Bush Butler who will deliver gourmet BBQ's dinners including premium meat cuts, condiments, salad and garlic bread to your accommodation for you to cook on your own BBQ.

Open: year round  
 Cost: Campsite \$43 per night (other options available)  
[www.kooljaman.com.au](http://www.kooljaman.com.au)

### 4. Johanna Beach (VIC)

On the far south coast of Victoria west of Cape Otway with little to the south besides Bass Strait and Tasmania beyond the horizon, sits a locality in little more than name: Johanna Beach. Though you'll find that Johanna has a postcode there is little else to prove the place actually exists. The Great Ocean passes well to the north after winding through the Otway Ranges so that passing traffic is of no concern. The campsite at Johanna Beach is little more than a grassy area surrounded by grazing land and beach. The beach naturally enough is the main attraction.

Known affectionately as the Shipwreck Coast, the coastline is wild, windswept and exceedingly wonderful. It's just the place for blessedly long lonely walks along a shore pummelled by big rolling swells that incubate in the Southern Ocean as they roll around Antarctica.

Open: year round  
 Cost: Free  
[www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au)



### 5. Corinna (TAS)

Deep into the ancient temperate rain forest in Huon pine country on Tasmania's west coast lies the former gold mining town of Corinna. A cluster of buildings, many of them restored in all their rustic glory, others more recently constructed in keeping with the style of this historic settlement sit on the northern bank of the Pieman River. It's the sort of place that attract nature lovers who like to immerse themselves fully in the forest experience. Walking trails meander through moss-draped forest in every shade of green. Overhead a towering canopy of far reaching branches create a cacophony of whispering caresses as the wind rustles the treetops.

Campers are well catered for with campsites surrounded by forest with a couple of select sites having elevated platforms for pitching tents right on the riverbank. Camp kitchens, which are little more than open sided shelters offer seating and fireplaces are a great place to hang out and watch shy wallabies emerge from the forest.

The entire village is solar powered, water falls directly from the sky, filtered by the forest, and is likely the most pure rainwater you're ever likely to drink. There's a small general store, a restaurant and bar all contained within the Tarkine Hotel. Plus there's a selection of fully self-contained cabins if camping is really not your thing. Or if the weather turns inclement as its wont to do in these parts, and if a welcoming gas-fired heater beckons.

Open: year round  
 Cost: TBA  
[www.corinna.com.au](http://www.corinna.com.au)

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Wow Fiona, I have the urge to jump in the car and visit some of those great camping sites.



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