

Luxury Escapes Guide to Palm Cove - Luxury Escapes AU

Travellers looking for a sophisticated beachside escape with village charm will find much to love beneath the swaying palm trees of tropical Palm Cove.

Hidden beneath a lush grove of palm fronds and ancient paperbark trees, Palm Cove wears her tropical credentials with elegant sophistication. From the cobbled paving of a waterfront promenade lined with whitewashed hotels, alfresco restaurants and intimate bars to a sweep of beach shaded by palm trees, Palm Cove exudes the tropical vibe that holiday dreams are made of.

Beachfront establishments whirl with ceiling fans overhead while plantation shutters filter dazzling sunshine framed by lush greenery laden with blooms. There's substance as well as style; Palm Coves' whitewashed walls are embedded with a heritage containing the secrets of former residents... Like the much-loved Reef House hotel, formerly run by a brigadier whose well-heeled guests were encouraged to help themselves to the Brigadier's rum punch at twilight – a tradition that continues today.

But the heritage of Palm Cove, the traditional home of the Yirrganydji people, reaches back even further. The first road from Cairns allowed access to visitors in the early 1900s. Later, Australian soldiers trained at Palm Cove before deployment to WWII. Around the same time that Port Douglas was being transformed into a playground frequented by US Presidents and Hollywood royalty, Palm Cove was also welcoming celebrity guests with the opening of its first international hotel in the mid '80s.

Even today, Palm Cove is a 'secret' haunt of the rich and famous, and celebrity-spotting remains a favoured pastime among locals.

Please note that due to current restrictions some operators may be temporarily closed. Check their websites for the most up-to-date information.



Featured escape

We are currently sold out of our Luxury Escapes Guide to Palm Cove escapes!

Our travel experts are working hard on curating new Luxury Escapes Guide to Palm Cove offers. In the meantime check out our available offers in other exciting destinations.

Discover Palm Cove



Things to see and do

Hire a kayak or SUP board

With the Great Barrier Reef providing a literal barrier against ocean swells, the ocean at Palm Cove is generally calm, making it perfect for paddlers. Hire a kayak or SUP board, or book a guided tour and paddle to Double Island or Haycock Island (known as Scouts Hat due to its unique conical shape). Savour the serenity while drifting over the reef that separates the two islands and keep an eye out for turtles foraging in shallow water on the reef.

Palm Cove Watersports

149 Williams Esplanade, Palm Cove

[Visit website](#)

Fish from the Palm Cove jetty

Originally built as a departure point for cruise boats heading towards the Great Barrier Reef (which never really took off), the Palm Cove jetty is a popular spot for fishing as well as a scenic turnaround point for dog walkers, joggers and cyclists. Fishermen are lured to the pier to catch iconic fish like barramundi and giant trevally as well as much sought after Spanish mackerel on their annual run around September to November.

Jog or walk along Palm Cove's landscaped foreshore

A pebbled concrete pavement meanders between palm trees, shadowing manicured grass on the Palm Cove foreshore and providing a favourite among walkers, joggers and dog walkers. Early morning is the best time to enjoy a brisk walk, watch as the sun rises over the Coral Sea casting palm-frond shadows before the tropical sun ascends and turns ice-cream into liquid. Palm Cove is pet friendly, so it's the perfect place to take your dog for a walk or a swim before breakfast, or to brunch beachside with your fur baby.

Soak up the atmosphere of a market

Held on the waterfront on the first Sunday of each month between April and November, Palm Cove Markets are renowned for their friendly stallholders, sustainable locally made wares, natural therapy and wellness stalls, along with tasty food and lively entertaining buskers. With 100+ stallholders dotted along Williams Esplanade these vibrant markets have evolved into one of north Queensland's must-see markets and offer an intriguing local snapshot into this beachside community.

Centre your chakra at a beach yoga class

Take a moment to relax and unwind with an outdoor beach yoga class, held on the grassy foreshore beneath the palm trees, or on a nearby rooftop on rainy days. Soak up the serenity with a soothing backdrop of gently lapping waves and classes to suit all levels. Hartig Yoga holds group classes or private one-on-one yoga sessions in hatha and yin, vinyasa, and slow flow styles led by instructor Beth – check online or ring ahead for the latest schedule.

Unleash your inner shopper

Staying in a resort-like village such as Palm Cove is just the place to unleash your shopping instincts, even if you're 'not a shopper'. Bespoke boutique Annie's at the Beach stocks tropical climate fashion in cool cottons, classic linens and colourful, relaxed styles that are equally suitable to wear on the beach or for dinner or drinks. If you can't find something suitable to wear at Annie's you're really not trying hard enough.

Annie's at the Beach

123 Williams Esplanade, Palm Cove

[Visit website](#)

Spot the local wildlife

Tropical North Queensland is home to extraordinary wildlife, not all of which is cute and cuddly. Take an apex predator like the saltwater crocodile, which may grow up to a whopping five-metres-plus in length and can weigh more than 1,000kg. Or the southern cassowary, Australia's second largest bird, which are so elusive that seeing them in the wild is a rare treat. Take a trip to Hartley's Crocodile Adventures where you can safely enjoy a cruise on a natural lagoon and wander the boardwalks to spot many of Australia's iconic wildlife species.

Hartley's Crocodile Adventures

Captain Cook Hwy, Wangetti

[Visit website](#)

Enjoy a free BBQ

The same parklands enjoyed by walkers is equally savoured by picnickers who take advantage of free BBQs and shaded picnic tables dotted along the foreshore. Pick up basic supplies at one of the mini convenience stores or at Clifton Beach, approximately five-minutes' drive away. While the snags are grilling, the kids can play in the beachfront playground and the adults can kick back and soak up the tropical holiday vibes amid lush landscaped gardens.

Swim 'laps' in the stinger enclosure net

Marine stingers may be present in the waters during the summer months and so it's important to follow the advice from lifeguards and only swim in the designated, netted areas. It's recommended you also wear a protective suit to help shield you from the sun and to minimise the risk of jellyfish stings. The net is in place between November and May and gives swimmers the unique opportunity to swim languid 'ocean laps' in the Coral Sea beneath the watchful eyes of a lifeguard.

Top places to eat and drink

Chill at Portofino

A beguiling blend of two Palm Cove favourites, Chill Café and Portofino have joined forces to become Chill at Portofino, taking the best of both to create a laid-back family-friendly beachfront restaurant. Start your day here with a hearty breakfast and city-grade caffeine made using Witham's Coffee and crafted by the café's talented baristas. If you fancy something more refreshing, you'll also find exotic juices on the menu. Signature dishes remain, like Chill's Tree Hugger – smashed avo with the lot – eight-hour pulled pork burger slow cooked over a smokey BBQ, marinara pasta and prosciutto pizza.

Vivo

A Palm Cove institution with its Queenslander style veranda, sharp yet friendly service and a menu featuring modern Australian and international cuisine make Vivo a firm favourite amongst the breakfast and lunch crowd. An eclectic menu features Yamagashi happy eggs alongside Vietnamese crepes for breakfast or delights like tempura battered coral trout compete with nasi goreng or crab tagliatelline for attention all day dining.

Pete's Place

Though you can dine-in at Pete's Place (and its beachfront location is definitely a drawcard) its main claim to fame is serving up the kind of home-cooked take-away comfort food you'd make yourself. Tuck into tasty treats such as grilled fish rolls, Spanish mackerel and hearty burgers amid the relaxed atmosphere of Pete's. Better still, order a take-away meal and enjoy it at one of the beachfront picnic tables across the road. You can even order dedicated picnic baskets for couples or families, including kids' meals for the little ones.

Temple of Tastes

Temple of Tastes is located within the elegant surrounds of Pullman Palm Cove, where charcoal lacquered chairs contrast with vibrantly coloured accents in an air-conditioned sanctuary that keeps tropical heat at bay. A Southeast Asian-inspired menu capitalises on Palm Cove's proximity to the Atherton Tablelands where artisan growers produce an abundance of organic, fresh produce from the food bowl of Tropical North Queensland. Temple of Tastes is where locally sourced sashimi of Black Cobia pairs with coconut water and Vietnamese mint, while desserts feature Mareeba pineapple or the dramatic fuchsia hue of dragonfruit.

Brigadier's Bar & Lounge at Reef House

Acquired by Brigadier Hon. David Thomson in the '70s as a guest house hangout for influential friends like Prime Ministers and celebrities, The Reef House's glamorous reputation remains. Guests gathered here at sunset, helping themselves at the bar and settling their bill in true tradition – an officer's honesty system. In honour of its history, Brigadier's Bar & Lounge still operates an honesty bar where guests are encouraged to join the hotel's general manager for rum punch and canapes at sunset. Don't miss dinner at Reef House Restaurant, winner of the Australian Culinary Federation's 2019 Restaurant of the Year. Delectable dishes include local scallops with pork belly and Queensland saltwater barramundi, served with coconut pilaf and braised pineapple.

Brigadier's Bar & Lounge at Reef House

99 Williams Esplanade, Palm Cove

[Visit website](#)

Indulge in locally made ice cream

Numi Ice Creamery is a tiny little shop that's short on space but big on decadent tasty treats (vegan options are available), which are housemade by the esteemed team from multi-award winning Nu Nu restaurant. Ingredients are sourced locally from the Atherton Tablelands, AKA the food bowl of north Queensland. Think ice cream flavours like cane farmer's liquorice, vanilla and baklava, or coffee, vanilla ash and chocolate crumb. Non-dairy eaters aren't forgotten with mango or chocolate sorbet.

Ellis Beach Bar & Grill

Ellis Beach rivals Palm Cove when it comes to long sweeps of beach sand kissed by sparkling ocean. Ellis Beach Bar & Grill is a great choice for road trippers cruising one of Australia's most scenic roads – the [Great Barrier Reef Drive](#). This beloved route cuts a swathe between the Wet Tropics World Heritage rainforest on one side and the waters of the Great Barrier Reef on the other. Drop in on Sunday afternoon, when live music ramps up the tempo with \$1 oysters from 1-4pm, while at other times the sounds of waves on the beach is the preferred soundtrack to a 'burger bar' style menu.

Ellis Beach Bar & Grill

LOT 13 Captain Cook Hwy, Ellis Beach

[Visit website](#)

Osprey's Restaurant

An open-sided pavilion style restaurant located high among the treetops at Thala Beach Nature Reserve, Osprey's Restaurant is best enjoyed for lunch when forest-clad mountain and Coral Sea views can be enjoyed all the way to the horizon. Osprey's is a great midway point on a day trip to Port Douglas. A modern Australian menu features popcorn crocodile on a green paw paw salad, Tiger prawn laksa or desserts like chocolate parfait with chai-spiced almonds.

Osprey's Restaurant

5078 Captain Cook Hwy, Oak Beach

[Visit website](#)

Beach Almond

Dine on the elevated deck and enjoy modern Asian-inspired cuisine with a distinct leaning towards seafood delights harvested from the Coral Sea. It's hard to go past perennial favourites like salt and pepper squid or chilli mud crabs, but if seafood is not your thing, try chargrilled Thai chicken or the deliciously named Ceremonial Sumatran rendang beef curry. Finish your meal with kaffir lime brulee or a banana leaf parcel, where grilled bananas combine with sticky rice beneath a generous scoop of coconut ice-cream and topped with tamarind sauce.

Lux moments

Take a 'top down' road trip in a convertible

With Palm Cove the natural departure point northwards on the 140km Great Barrier Reef Drive, we suggest you take a drive in the latest model convertible V8 Mustang or Porsche for the ultimate scenic coastal road trip. The winding road cuts a

beguiling path through two World Heritage icons – Wet Tropics rainforest and the waters of the Great Barrier Reef. Luxury sports cars or 4WDs can be delivered to Palm Cove, so the only thing you need worry about is how much sunscreen to apply to your nose.

Get your sea legs on a private boat charter

Whether your interest lies in catching fish or admiring them through glass goggles while blowing bubbles, be sure to board a private boat charter for a deep-sea fishing or scuba diving expedition to the Great Barrier Reef. With an experienced skipper and deck hand to take care of all the pesky navigation and safety details, you can sit back and savour the freedom of being on the open sea in capable hands.

Indulge in wellness in the ‘spa capital’ of Australia

As the self-styled ‘spa capital’ of Australia, there truly is a spa treatment, massage, facial or beauty treatment to suit everyone. Day spas specialising in luxe body treatments include Peppers Beach Club & Spa (Exclusive Spa), Alamanda Spa, Reef House Spa and Palm Cove Retreat Day Spa. Many have private massage tables or treatment rooms set up in tranquil locations surrounded by tropical greenery and open to the sky for a clothes-optional soul-enriching treatment for body and soul.



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— Luxury Escapes Experiences

Tailor your escape to Palm Cove

Immerse yourself in Palm Cove with Luxury Escapes’ hand-picked Experiences. We’ve curated a selection of cultural activities, adrenaline thrills, food adventures and luxury add-ons to help you discover your destination. These Experiences are bookable when you purchase your next escape. Simply select your travel dates and number of travellers for any package, and opt to tailor your escape by selecting the available Experiences.

Snorkel through the Outer Barrier Reef

It’s no secret that Palm Cove is enviably close to the Great Barrier Reef, so it’s only natural to don your mask, snorkel and fins, and unearth the sunken coral cays of the world’s greatest reef. Enjoy a full-day Quicksilver cruise (with return transfers to Palm Cove) that will see you snorkelling through the crystal-clear waters of the renowned Agincourt Reef, a jewel-like reef with colourful marine life and coral gardens. You’ll also enjoy a semi-submersible coral-viewing tour with marine biologist commentary and indulge with a buffet lunch, and morning and afternoon tea.

Take home a fine art souvenir

The works by artist Ian Stephens have found acclaim in collections around the world with US Presidents, Prime Ministers and movie stars clamouring to purchase his exquisite paintings. Inspired by nature and the pristine, ancient environment of Tropical North Queensland, these original canvases and prints are the perfect reminder of your Palm Cove escapade. Popular paintings include a Palm Cove panorama and stunning depictions of Trinity Beach and Cape Tribulation.

Ian Stephens Village Gallery

139 Williams Esplanade, Palm Cove

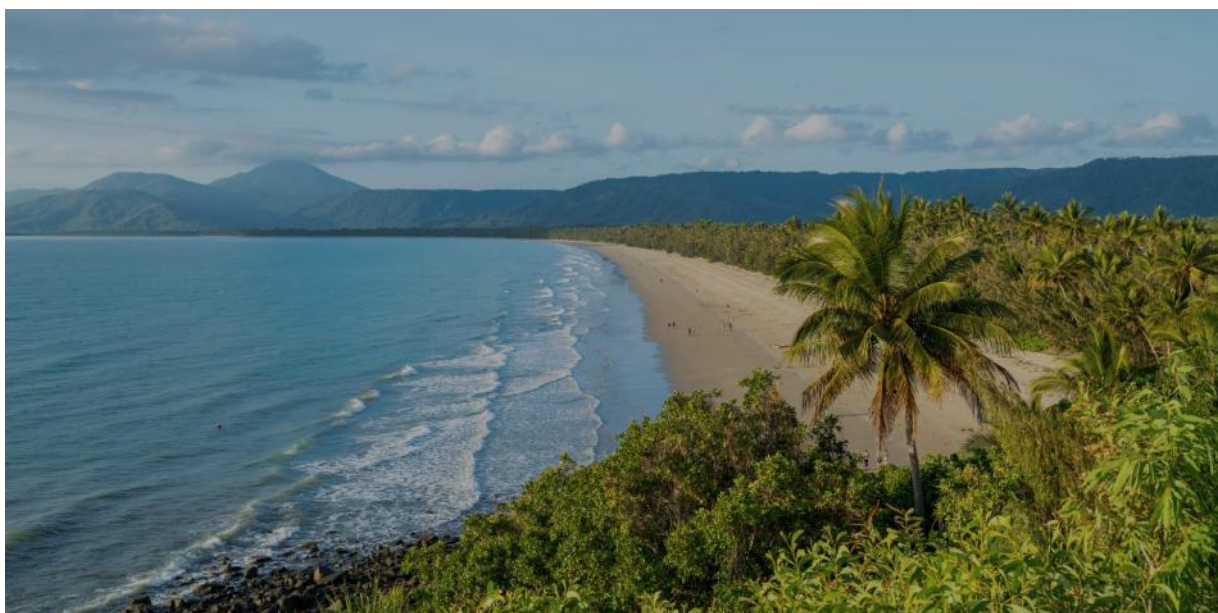
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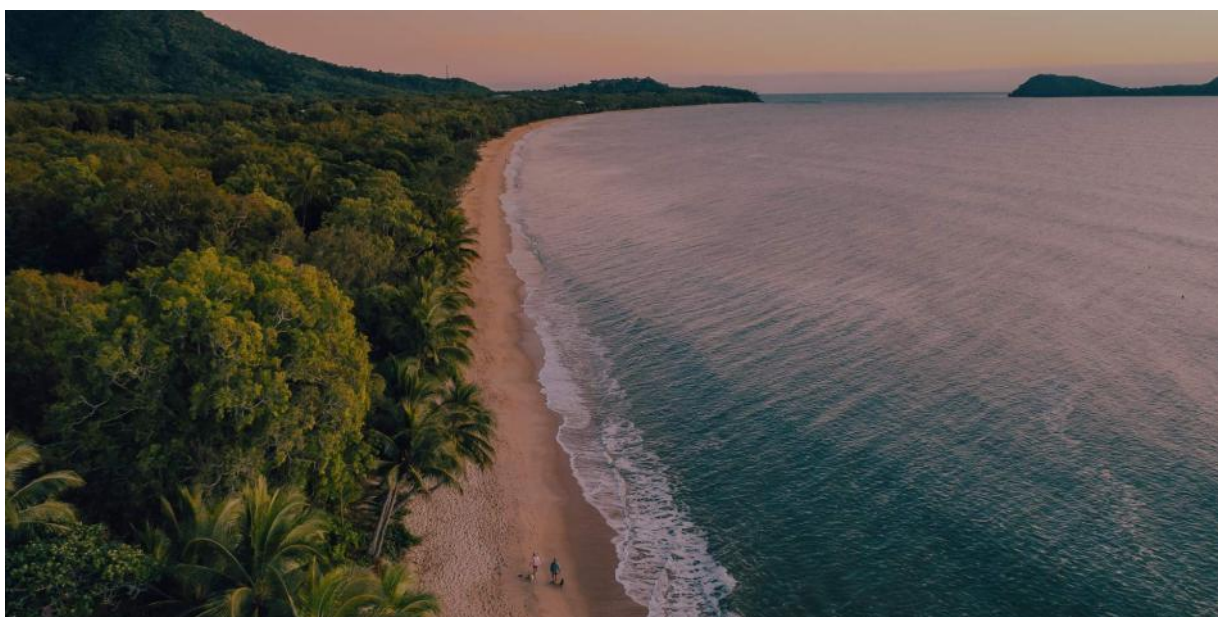
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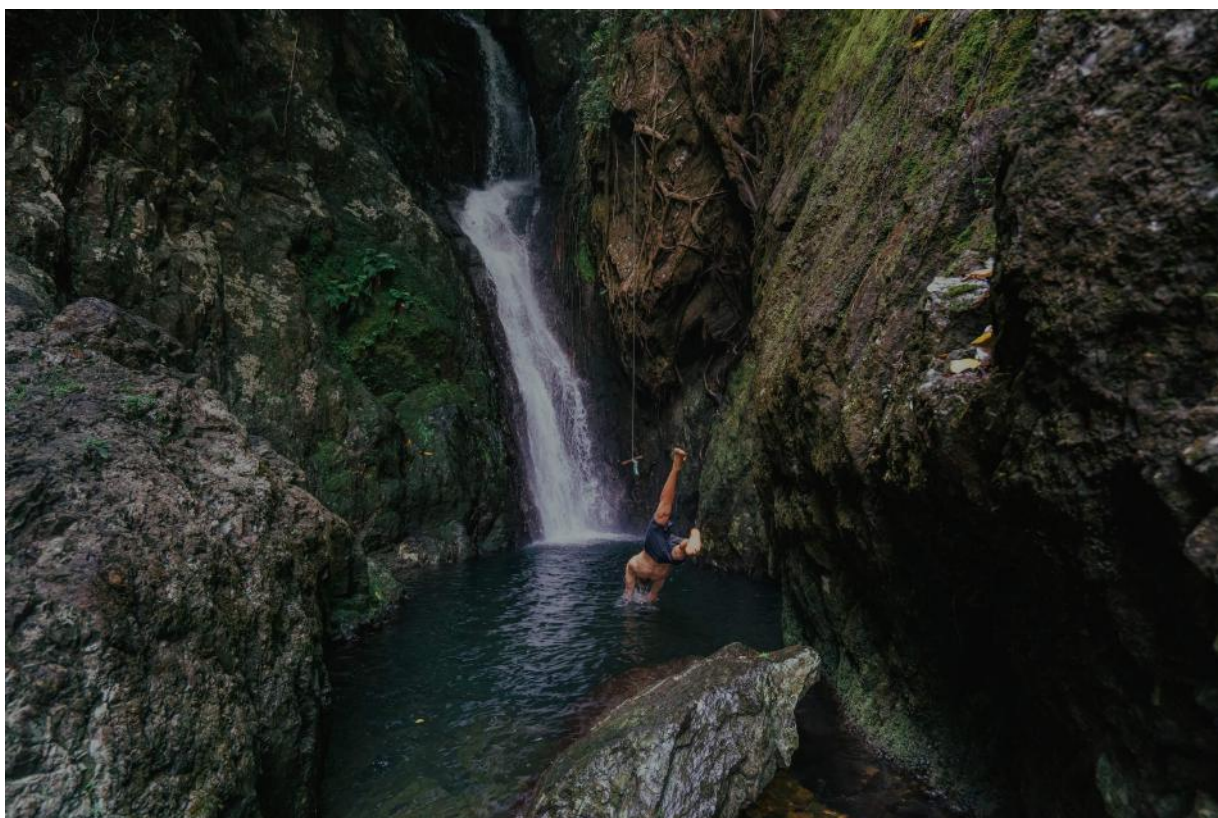
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