

Factsheet

Gay and Lesbian Tourism

Unwinding in gorgeous natural surrounds, indulging in great food, basking in warm sunshine and friendly local welcome – this is the essence of a Queensland escape. Whether you're looking for cutting edge culture, non-stop nightlife or to simply chill out at the beach or in the bush, Queensland has real appeal for gay and lesbian (G&L) travelers. Dive on the Great Barrier Reef, sit and ponder life on a mossy rainforest log, taste exotic tropical fruit, let the surf envelop you, party at Brisbane's Pride Festival, or hit the clubs and restaurants.

G & L hotspots include: Brisbane, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Fraser Island, Townsville and Tropical North Queensland.

Brisbane

Queensland's sunny, relaxed capital, has a thriving gay and lesbian scene with a variety of places to stay, play and eat. The city straddles the languid Brisbane River and gives easy access to the islands, hinterland and beaches of South East Queensland.

Where to Play

West End, Woolloongabba, Spring Hill, Fortitude Valley (The Valley) and New Farm are Brisbane's most popular gay and lesbian hang-outs and much of the 'scene' focuses on these areas.

In Spring Hill

The Sportsman Hotel www.sportsmanhotel.com.au

- Classic pub offering drag shows, serious pool comps. Saturday nights are men only at the downstairs Mineshaft bar which alternates each week between BrisBears www.brisbears.org.au/ and the Boot Co leather men www.bootco.org.au

In The Valley

The Wickham Hotel www.thewickham.com.au

- A great place to meet the locals and dance the night away with the excellent resident DJs.

The Beat Megaclub www.thebeatmegaclub.com.au

- A popular people-watching street bar and dance-floor downstairs and upstairs is The Cockatoo Club, where you'll find wall-to-wall gal-pals, gay boys and groovy types.

The Valley's G&L friendly venues include Fluffy at Family www.fluffy.com.au, the Empire Hotel, The Zoo (great live music), The Bowery and Ric's Bar in Brunswick Street Mall. Also popular is Sunday afternoon drinks (which turns into dinner) at the Powerhouse's Watt Modern Dining overlooking the river in New Farm.

In Paddington, settle in for cocktails and tasty bites at The Lark on Given Terrace.

Lesbians should check out Scarlet Nightclub on the last Saturday of the month at St Paul's Tavern, Spring Hill and Shibar downstairs at the Sportman Hotel every Friday night. City Lickers social network runs picnics, winery tours, dance parties and weekends away for lesbians www.citylickers.com

Join Brisbane Gay & Lesbian Business Network at Friday night drinks
www.brisbaneglbn.org

Current venue and event listings www.queenslandpride.com.au or
www.qnews.com.au

Don't Miss

- GoMA – the Gallery of Modern Art for edgy modern art
- Climbing the Story Bridge
- Paddling a kayak down the river
- West End's Saturday morning Green Flea Market in Jane Street.
- A day swimming, chilling and dolphin feeding at Moreton Island

Where to Stay

The Sportsman Hotel in Spring Hill is the only gay/gay-run accommodation in town. It is a pub with comfortable rooms upstairs and bar/club downstairs.
www.sportsmanhotel.com.au

There are many gay and lesbian friendly places to stay. Recommended are:

- M on Mary – new four-star gay-friendly apartment hotel in the heart of the city.
www.monmary.com.au
- The Emporium Hotel - Fortitude Valley's eclectic five-star boutique hotel offering excellent service and a fabulous champagne bar! www.emporiumhotel.com.au
- Fern Cottage Bed and Breakfast – Queenslander Guesthouse located in stylish Paddington close to cafes, bookstores, gift and clothing boutiques. 5 minutes drive to city and gay venues www.ferncottage.net

Events

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| March | Big Gay Day www.thewickham.com.au |
| May | Brisbane Queer Film Festival www.bqff.com.au |
| June | Brisbane Pride Festival www.pridebrisbane.org.au |
| July/August | Brisbane Festival www.brisbanefestival.com.au |
| November | Brisbane Sleaze Ball www.sleazeball.com.au |

For more information:

Brisbane Marketing www.brisbanemarketing.com.au

The Gold Coast

The Gold Coast, an hour's drive south of Brisbane, stretches from Southport to Coolangatta. It's Australia's best-known beach holiday destination basking in more than 300 days of sunshine each year. Golden surf beaches, a rainforest-clad mountain hinterland, chic shopping and dining make the Coast a top holiday spot for gay and lesbian travelers. There's also a buzzing local scene catering to travelers and locals alike.

Where to Play

- The Meeting Place (MP's) nightclub is the coast's only gay and lesbian venue. Friday and Saturday are busiest nights - features DJ's, giveaways and drinks specials.
<http://www.mpnightclub.com.au/staff.htm>
- The Capitol Bar and Lounge open Wednesday - Sunday, is one of the coolest bars on the Coast, attracting a groovy gay, lesbian and alternative crowd. Corner Tedder and Woodruffe Ave Main Beach. Corner Tedder and Woodruffe Ave Main Beach, Tel: +61 7 5503 0557
- Lauxes VIP Champagne Salon - glam bar and restaurant in Broadbeach - serves every kind of bubbles imaginable! Located on Victoria Park opposite Conrad Casino
<http://www.lauxes.com.au>
- Gold Coast Breakers gay and lesbian social group welcomes visitors to their regular get-togethers. Tel + 61 7 5575 5802
- Lesbians should get along to a Feathers Dance the 3rd Saturday of each month at Nerang RSL <http://www.feathersgc.com> or the latest Chic Girls event www.chicgoldcoast.com

Don't Miss

- The amazing coastal and hinterland views from Q-deck on the 77th floor of the Q1 building.
- Learning to Surf.
- A day trip to the hinterland to walk in pristine World Heritage rainforests.

Where to Stay

There are two gay-run guest houses in the Gold Coast hinterland.

- Bush House, on the edge of the hinterland in the Tallebudgera Valley is a gay men's retreat www.bushhouse.net
- Tambridge Bed and Breakfast is a gay-run guest house at beautiful Mount Tamborine - gives access to rainforest walking trails, wineries and craft galleries.
www.tambridge.com

Gay-friendly accommodation:

- Palazzo Versace - Five star luxury, a spa centre and fabulous restaurants are part of the Versace experience. www.palazzoversace.com.au
- Sleeping Inn – budget beachside apartments in Surfers Paradise. www.sleepinginn.com.au
- Q1 Resort and Spa – Five star hotel in the world’s tallest residential tower, centrally located in Surfers Paradise. Surf, great restaurants and MP's gay and lesbian club a few minutes walk. www.q1.com.au

Events

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| January | Australian Women's Hardcourt tennis titles |
| February | ANZ Ladies Masters Golf |
| July | The Gold Coast Marathon |
| December | Tropical Fruits New Years G& L Dance Party, Byron Bay http://www.tropicalfruits.org.au |

For more information:

Gold Coast Tourism <http://www.goldcoasttourism.com.au>

The Sunshine Coast and Fraser Island

If life's a beach then the Sunshine Coast is surely the life! Cracking surf beaches, top restaurants, a charming rainforest hinterland and access to World Heritage Fraser Island make it the perfect place to relax and unwind. The Coast begins just over an hour's drive north of Brisbane at Caloundra and extends to Fraser Island through the surfside towns of Maroochydore, Mooloolaba, Coolumb and Noosa. The Coast also takes in the hinterland villages of the Glasshouse Mountains, The Blackall Range and Eumundi.

Where to Play

The Coast and particularly Noosa has become a popular post Sydney Mardi Gras recovery destination. Although there's no real G&L scene, the friendly bars and restaurants of Noosa are noticeably well patronized by locals and travelers.

For many a Sunshine Coast holiday is all about sleeping in, eating delectable food, shuffling off to the beach, doing over the shops and lolling around the pool with a trashy novel in one hand and a cocktail in the other.

Local groups and events to discover ...

- Crush: a monthly G&L club - on every second Saturday at The Sands Tavern, Maroochydore. www.crushevents.com
- Envy: at Mooloolaba's Club 240V – every Wednesday night
- Fraser Gays: is the Fraser Coast's social network which meets regularly for barbecues, picnics and parties www.fraser gays.com

Sunshine Womyn - Sunshine Coast Lesbian Social Group meeting monthly for movies, dinner, bush walking, beach walks, barbecues, coffee and chats. From Noosa to Caloundra. Women of all ages welcome. Email: sunshine_wmn@yahoo.com.au

LOTSAH - Lesbians on the Sunshine Coast and Hinterland - social group designed to bring lesbian women together, through regular social activities.

Email: lesbiansonthesunshinecoast@yahoo.com.au

Lemon Lounge - evening coffee dates for lesbians Contact Ricki on mobile +61 (0) 408 843 221.

Don't miss

- Alexandria Bay - Noosa's gorgeous, unofficial gay beach, a brisk 30 minute coastal walk from Noosa National Park's entrance.
- Explore the kilometres of patrolled surf beaches from Caloundra to Noosa.
- Hastings Street Shopping - for resort-style clothes, jewellery, books and art galleries.
- Palm Tree Tours in Noosa have a range of G&L friendly day and extended tours including Fraser Island's coloured sands, the Noosa Everglades, river and reef fishing, kayaking with dolphins and kite surfing. Tel +61 7 5474 9166

Where to Stay

- Horizon's at Peregian, near Noosa, is a popular gay-run, G&L friendly apartment resort opposite the surf. <http://www.horizons-peregian.com>
- Manyana also at Peregian, caters exclusively to gay men. Manyana Gay Apartments, 51 Kestrel Crescent, Peregian Beach, Qld. 4573, Tel: +61 5448 2010.
- Beach resorts, apartments or houses at Noosa, Coolum or Fraser Island are popular with gay and lesbian singles, couples and families.
- Noosa Blue Resort, luxury spa suites and penthouses within walking distance of beach, Noosa National Park and stylish Hastings Street restaurants and shopping. <http://www.noosablue.com.au>
- Twin Waters Resort, five star resort perched on Mudjimba surf beach, also offers spa centre and golf. <http://www.twinwatersresort.com.au>
- Kingfisher Bay Resort on Fraser Island offers four star or budget luxury lodgings. <http://gay.kingfisherbay.com>
- Surfside On the Beach - apartments right on the surf at Kawana. Great for couples or families. <http://www.surfsideholidays.com>

Events

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| June | Toyota Fraser Island Fishing Expo |
| August | Hervey Bay Whale Festival Tel +61 7 4125 9866 |
| September | Noosa Jazz Festival http://www.noosajazz.com.au |
| October | Sunshine Coast Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Pride Fair www.gaysunshinecoast.com.au |
| | Noosa Triathlon http://www.usmevents.com.au |

For more information:

Gay Sunshine Coast www.gaysunshinecoast.com.au

Fraser Coast Holidays <http://www.frasercoastholidays.info>

Sunshine Coast Tourism <http://www.tourismsunshinecoast.com.au>

The Whitsundays

The Whitsundays

Although there's no gay and lesbian 'scene' in the Whitsundays, it's immensely appealing to G&L travelers. It is one of the few places left on Earth where you can really escape. There are no crowds, clean beaches and the aquamarine waters of the Whitsunday Passage are one of the world's best year-round aquatic playgrounds. The region takes in mainland Airlie Beach, bustling Shute Harbour, tranquil Conway National Park and a cluster of 74 islands that lie in the clear waters of the Coral Sea within easy reach of the Great Barrier Reef. The weather is glorious - even in winter temperatures hover between 20°C and 24°C.

Where to Play

There's no G&L scene but you'll always find a buzzing bar in Airlie Beach.

Don't Miss

- Action-packed tandem sky-diving, parasailing, jet-skiing, heli flights, and rainforest tours.
- Learning to scuba dive from Airlie Beach.
- Swimming and chilling out at the beautiful lagoon on Airlie's foreshore, Whitsunday Islands sailing and Great Barrier Reef snorkeling and diving – live-aboard or day trips available.

Where to Stay

There is no exclusively G&L accommodation but many G&L friendly places from backpacker lodges to luxury resorts, in the coastal village of Airlie Beach and several G&L friendly island resorts. Do-it-yourself or Bareboat Sailing is also a great option.

- Waterfront Whitsunday Retreat - gay-run luxury boutique accommodation in adjoining Airlie Beach and nestled on Pioneer bay – offers a high level of privacy and exceptional service. www.waterfrontwhitsunday.com.au
- Pinnacles Resort and Spa in Airlie Beach offers luxurious accommodation and great views of the passage <http://www.pinnaclesresort.com>
- Coral Sea Resort perched right on the water in Airlie Beach, overlooking the islands and offers a fabulous waterside restaurant <http://www.coralsearesort.com>
- Hayman Resort on Hayman Island is one of the world's most exclusive five star experiences. <http://www.hayman.com.au>
- Hook Island Wilderness Resort is an affordable eco-tourists paradise. <http://www.hookislandresort.com>
- Keswick Island Lodge offers secluded bed and breakfast accommodation in a beautiful setting. <http://www.keswickislandquesthouse.com.au>
- Whitsunday Rent-A-Yacht sail yourself - swim, snorkel, fish, explore uninhabited islands or lie on the deck with a good book <http://www.rentayacht.com.au>

Events

June Great Barrier Feast, Hamilton Island
August Hog's Breath Race Week Airlie Beach; Hahn Premium Hamilton Island Race Week

For more information:

Tourism Whitsundays <http://www.whitsundaytourism.com>

Townsville

There aren't many regional cities that offer a cosmopolitan buzz and the kind of relaxing holiday that you never want to end. Townsville is one of these rare gems. Tropical by nature, perched on the coast, between the Whitsundays and Cairns, it's an escape bursting with appeal for gay and lesbian travelers. Townsville offers easy access to Magnetic, Orpheus and Hinchinbrook Islands, the Great Barrier Reef, Mission Beach and the Wet Tropics Rainforests, as well as the CBD's dining, culture and recreational attractions.

Where to Play

- The Sovereign, or 'The Sov' as the locals call it, is a Gay owned / operated pub and a great introduction to a city that's happy in its own skin. You're sure to have fun, mix with a G&L and alternative crowd and gain a great appreciation of why people love living here. Friday and Saturday nights get going around 11pm with dance music and regular drag shows and finish about sun-up. The "Free Feed On Sunday" barbecue is always a busy social get together.
- Shelly Beach is the unofficial gay beach just out of town at Pallaranda.
- Grrlzone Inc conduct women's only dances on the 1st Friday of every month upstairs at Molly Malones Irish Pub. Email: gladys_e_willis@hotmail.com or monstar61@hotmail.net.au

Don't Miss

- Flinders Street Mall - visit Perc Tucker Regional Art Gallery and the stylish lesbian-run bookstore Mary Who? for a fantastic range of G&L, art, fiction and non-fiction titles.
- The Strand, a world-class palm-tree studded beachfront promenade custom-built for walking, biking and blading. There's a stinger swimming enclosure, pretty picnic spots, a water park for the kids (and the big kids) and chic restaurants and bars with to-die-for water views.
- Reef HQ tropical aquarium, is the perfect place to preview the Great Barrier Reef.
- Magnetic Island or "Maggie" just 20 minutes ferry ride from the city. Hire a mini moke, explore 23 coral-fringed, beautiful beaches; circumnavigate the island on a jet ski or sea kayak tour, learn to dive or snorkel on the fringing reefs, or trek more than 25kms of walking trails through the tropical bush to spot koalas.

Where to Stay

Townsville city, nearby Magnetic Island (20 minutes by ferry) and Mission Beach (3 hours drive north) offer a range of accommodation from backpacker hostels and holiday units to self-contained apartments, beach houses and luxury hotels and resorts.

- The Sovereign Hotel in Townsville is gay owned/operated and offers pub-style rooms at affordable rates sovereign@ballyhoo.com.au
- Island House B&B on Magnetic Island is an exclusive retreat for gay men. Island House B&B Magnetic Island, Nelly Bay, Qld. 4812, mobile +61 (0)4 1978 2847
- Quest Townsville is a self-contained apartment hotel close to the CBD and good restaurants. <http://www.questtownsville.com.au>
- Shaws on The Shore Magnetic Island apartments close to the beach. Tel +61 7 4758 1900
- The Sanctuary Retreat tucked into the rainforest at Mission Beach specializes in massage yoga delicious cuisine and conserving the natural environment <http://www.sanctuaryretreat.com.au>

Events

- July Australian Festival of Chamber Music
<http://www.townsvilleonline.com.au>
- October Sleaze NQ gay & lesbian dance party, Sovereign Hotel
sovereign@ballyhoo.com.au

For more information:

Townsville Enterprise <http://www.townsvilleonline.com.au>

Cairns and Tropical North Queensland

Escaping to Tropical North Queensland promises warm weather, exciting cuisine and the only place on Earth where two World Heritage sites meet. The Great Barrier Reef and the ancient Wet Tropics Rainforests are the best reason to visit this amazing part of the world but not the only wonders that await. You'll find Australia's largest concentration of resorts and guest houses catering exclusively to G&L travelers and many G&L friendly ones. There's a G&L club, but the focus is the natural environment and doing as much or as little as you like to enjoy it.

Where to Play

- Nu-trix nightclub - 53 Spence Street, Cairns. This is where you'll meet the local boys and girls and see some entertaining drag. After your party fix, make sure you see this gorgeous place.
- Sapphire Tapas Bar, 39 Lake St, Cairns
- Sunday Brunch for Lesbians at Cafe Echo Macrossan St Port Douglas. Contact: Claudia on mobile +61 (0) 408 081411

Don't Miss

- The Great Barrier Reef - from above or below the waves, it's a tropical paradise and home to 400 types of coral, 1500 species of fish and 4000 types of mollusc. Most of the reef is around 2 million years old with the oldest sections dated at 18 million years.
- Normanby Island on a day trip with Frankland Islands Cruise and Dive. Just a few steps from the shore you'll see tropical reef fish, turtles and breathtaking coral. Introductory dives and snorkelling tuition is available.
- Reef Watch Air Tours scenic flight will give you a bird's eye view of rainforest-clad mountains and coastline around Cairns then a spectacular view of the Great Barrier Reef mosaic.
- White Water Rafting with Foaming Fury on the Barron River is a pure adrenalin rush.
- Walking in the rainforest with local Aboriginal woman Hazel Douglas on her
- personalized Native Guide Safari of the Daintree, Mossman Gorge and Cape
- Tribulation forests.
- Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park to see traditional culture and to learn to throw a

- boomerang so that it comes back!
- Skyrail Rainforest Cableway to Kuranda and the return trip on the famous Kuranda Scenic Rail over the Barron Gorge and waterfalls.

Where to Stay

Cairns is the gateway to the region and a base here, or at the nearby northern beaches - Holloways, Trinity or Palm Cove - or in the resort enclave of Port Douglas will give you easy access to the reef, rainforest and the wonderful restaurants. Generally accommodation is very G & L friendly (many are galta/iglta members) and the number of G & L resorts signal the warm welcome in store.

- Skinny Dips 18 James Street - Cairns City's only exclusively gay men's hotel.
<http://www.skinnydips.com.au>
- Bohemia Resort - budget priced, gay-run resort, G&L friendly.
<http://www.bohemioresort.com.au>

Northern Beaches

- Turtle Cove - world-famous G&L resort perched on its own beach
<http://www.turtlecove.com>
- Boyz on the Beach - an exclusively gay owned and operated B&B for men at Kewarra Beach. www.gaycairnsaccommodation.com/Hotel-BoyzOnTheBeach.htm
- Sea Change Beachfront Apartments – gay-managed five-star apartment right on Trinity Beach. www.gaycairnsaccommodation.com/Hotel-SeaChangeApartments.htm
- Mai Tai Resort - gay-owned adults-only rainforest retreat just 10 minutes drive from Port Douglas. www.maitai-resort.com.au

Port Douglas

- Pink Flamingo - relaxed G&L resort. Each suite has its own outdoor garden shower/plunge pools. <http://www.pinkflamingo.com.au>

South of Cairns

- The Buoys B&B – gay friendly guesthouse at Hull Heads just south of Mission Beach - offers great access to Dunk Island <http://www.thebuoys.com.au>

Events

August/
September Festival of Cairns www.cairns.com.au/festivalcairns

September Cairns Tropical Pride Festival www.tropicalpride.com
November Opera in the Outback, Undara <http://www.undara.com.au>

Cairns

- Fruitloops - Cairns Gay & Lesbian Business Network meets first Friday of the month at the Sugarcane Rhum Bar -at Pacific International Hotel from 5.00pm.

For more information:

Tourism Tropical North Queensland www.tropicalaustralia.com.au