

# Sunshine Coast



If your idea of the perfect summer holiday involves lazy days in the sun, sand between your toes, and fish and chips on the beach then pack a smile, ditch the bling and you may never want to leave the sunny Sunshine Coast. Unlike the glittering Gold Coast, the laid-back beach-chic culture and seaside charms of the 'Sunny Coast' are refreshingly natural and unaffected.

From the tip of Bribie Island, the Sunshine Coast stretches north for one hundred golden kilometres to the Cooloola Coast, just beyond the exclusive, leafy resort town of Noosa. Along the coastline, the southern sleepy town of Caloundra gives way to the laconic suburban swell of Mooloolaba with its popular beach, outdoor eateries and cafés. During school holidays the population here mushrooms when Australian families converge en masse, but a little further north are the uncrowded and unspoilt beaches of Coolum and Peregian.

Forming a stunning backdrop to this spectacular coastline are the ethereal Glass House Mountains and, a little further north, the Sunshine Coast hinterland, home to the forested folds and ridges, gorges and waterfalls, lush green pastures and quaint villages of the Blackall Range.

## HIGHLIGHTS

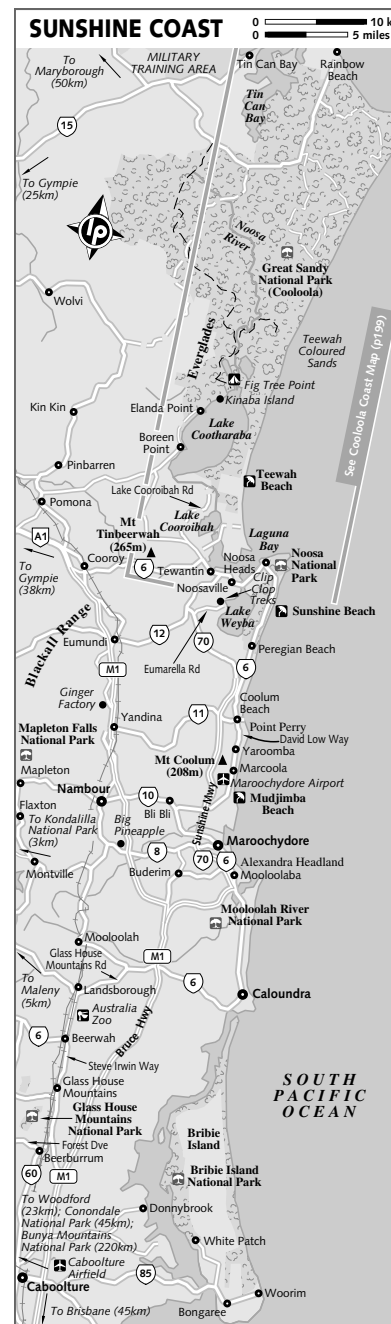
- Getting natured and nurtured in Noosa: follow a bushwalk through **Noosa National Park** (p192) with a culinary treat at one of Noosa's swish **restaurants and cafés** (p197)
- Savouring the alternative vibe at the **Eumundi markets** (p201) and the funky hinterland town of **Maleny** (p202)
- Lapping up the Sunshine Coast's sun, surf, sand and beach-café scene in **Mooloolaba** (p186)
- Finding your inner crocodile (and other wild critters) at the wonderful wildlife sanctuary of **Australia Zoo** (p182)
- Hiking to the summit of Mount Beerwah in the ethereal **Glass House Mountains** (p182)
- Camping along the unspoilt and uncrowded beaches of the Cooloola Coast in the **Great Sandy National Park** (p200)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 07

■ [www.sunshinecoast.org](http://www.sunshinecoast.org)

■ [www.sunzine.net/suncoast](http://www.sunzine.net/suncoast)



## Getting There & Away

### AIR

The Sunshine Coast's airport (Maroochydore Airport) is at Mudjimba, 10km north of Maroochydore and 26km south of Noosa. **Jetstar** (☎ 13 15 38; [www.jetstar.com.au](http://www.jetstar.com.au)) and **Virgin Blue** (☎ 13 67 89; [www.virginblue.com.au](http://www.virginblue.com.au)) have daily flights from Sydney and Melbourne. **Tiger Airways** (☎ 03 9335 3033; [www.tigerairways.com](http://www.tigerairways.com)) has less frequent flights from Melbourne.

### BUS

**Greyhound Australia** (☎ 1300 473 946; [www.greyhound.com.au](http://www.greyhound.com.au)) has several daily services from Brisbane to Caloundra (\$26, two hours), Maroochydore (\$26, two hours) and Noosa (\$27, three hours). **Premier Motor Service** (☎ 13 34 10; [www.premiers.com.au](http://www.premiers.com.au)) also services Maroochydore (one way \$20) and Noosa (one way \$20) from Brisbane.

## Getting Around

Several companies offer transfers from Maroochydore Airport and Brisbane to points along the coast. Fares from Brisbane cost \$30 to \$40 for adults and \$15 to \$25 for children. From Maroochydore Airport fares are around \$10 to \$20 per adult and \$5 to \$10 per child. The following are recommended:

**Col's Airport Shuttle** (☎ 5450 5933; [www.airshuttle.com.au](http://www.airshuttle.com.au))

**Henry's** (☎ 5474 0199)

**Noosa Transfers & Charters** (☎ 5450 5933; [www.noosatransfers.com.au](http://www.noosatransfers.com.au))

**Sun-Air Bus Service** (☎ 1800 804 340, 5477 0888; [www.sunair.com.au](http://www.sunair.com.au))

The blue minibuses run by **Sunbus** (☎ 13 12 30) buzz frequently between Caloundra and Noosa. Sunbus also has regular buses from Noosa across to the train station at Nambour (\$5, one hour) via Eumundi.

## BRIBIE ISLAND

☎ 07 / pop 15,920

This slender island at the northern end of Moreton Bay is popular with young families, retirees and those with a cool million or three to spend on a waterfront property. It's far more developed than Stradbroke or Moreton Islands but the **Bribie Island National Park** on the northwestern coast has some beautifully remote **Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) camping areas** (4WD access only, per person/family \$4.50/18).

There's no 4WD hire on the island and **4WD permits** (per week/year \$33.90/105.80) should be purchased from the **Bongaree Caravan Park** (☎ 3408 1054; Welsby Pde). The **rangers station** (☎ 3408 8451) is at White Patch on the southeastern fringes of the park, and you can pick up 4WD maps and other information at the **Bribie Island visitors centre** (☎ 3408 9026; www.bribie.com.au; Benabrow Ave, Bellara; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat, 9.30am-1pm Sun).

A totally unexpected treasure about 25km from Bribie Island, back towards the Bruce Hwy, is the wonderful **Abbey Museum** (☎ 5495 1652; www.abbeytournament.com; 1 The Abbey Pl; adult/child \$8/4.50; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat). The impressive art and archaeology collection here spans the globe and would be at home in any of the world's famous museums. Once the private collection of Englishman John Ward, the pieces – including neolithic tools, medieval manuscripts and even an ancient Greek foot-guard (one of only four worldwide) – will have you scratching your head in amazement. The church has more original stained glass from Winchester Cathedral than what is actually left in the cathedral. In July, you can make merry at Australia's largest medieval festival, held on the grounds.

The **Inn Bongaree** (☎ 3410 1718; www.innbongaree.com.au; 25 Second Ave, Bongaree; s/d/tr \$40/50/60) is a great budget option or you can stay at **Sylvan Beach Resort** (☎ 3408 8300; www.sylvanbeachresort.com.au; d from \$170; ♿ ♿), which has comfortable self-contained units across the road from the beach.

There are plenty of restaurants. For proper Aussie tucker try the **Bribie Island RSL** (☎ 3400 1300; 99 Toorbul St, Bongaree; mains \$8-18; ☎ lunch & dinner).

Frequent Citytrain services run from Brisbane to Caboolture where a Trainlink bus connects to Bribie Island.

## GLASS HOUSE MOUNTAINS

The ethereal volcanic crags of the Glass House Mountains rise abruptly from the subtropi-

cal plains 20km northwest of Caboolture. In Dreamtime legend the highest of the 16 pointy peaks and domes, Mount Beerwah, is the mother of this family of mountain spirits. It's worth diverting off the Bruce Hwy onto the slower Steve Irwin Way (formerly the Glass House Mountains Rd) to snake your way through dense pine forests and green pastureland for a close-up view of these spectacular volcanic plugs.

The Glass House Mountains National Park is broken into several sections (all within coee of Beerwah) with picnic grounds and lookouts but no camping grounds. The peaks are reached by a series of sealed and unsealed roads known as Forest Dr, which heads inland from Steve Irwin Way. For more information visit the **QPWS** (☎ 5494 0150; Bells Creek Rd, Beerwah).

## Sights & Activities

A number of signposted walking tracks reach several of the peaks but be prepared for some steep and rocky trails. **Mt Beerwah** (556m) is the most trafficked but has a section of open rock face that may increase the anxiety factor. The walk up **Ngungun** (253m) is more moderate but the views are just as sensational, while **Tibrogargan** (364m) is probably the best climb with a challenging scramble and several amazing lookouts from the flat summit. Rock climbers can usually be seen scaling Tibrogargan, Ngungun and Beerwah (for climbing information visit www.qurank.com). **Mt Coonowrin** (aka 'crook-neck'), the most dramatic of the volcanic plugs, is closed to the public.

Just north of Beerwah is – crickey! – **Australia Zoo** (☎ 5494 1134; www.australiazoo.com.au; Steve Irwin Way, Beerwah; adult/child/family \$49/29/146; ☎ 9am-4.30pm), one of Queensland's most popular tourist attractions. The unfortunate accident that claimed Steve Irwin's life has only served to increase

## ECOWARRIOR

Steve Irwin, best known as the Crocodile Hunter, made countless zany and daring encounters with venomous snakes, crocs and sharks (the 'big apex predators'). But it wasn't an apex predator that killed the charismatic founder of Australia Zoo. In September 2006, while filming the wildlife documentary *Ocean's Deadliest*, Irwin was fatally pierced in the heart by a stingray's barb.

A legend in his own lifetime, Irwin set up international crocodile rescue projects and supported various research projects worldwide, created Wildlife Warriors (a global conservation network) and established a state-of-the-art animal hospital at his own Australia Zoo. Madly passionate about conservation, having fun while avoiding sharp teeth and deadly fangs was Irwin's way of making wildlife a hip, cool thing. Education through entertainment was never better and an army of little tackers in khaki (crickey!) have sprung up in his wake.

the zoo's popularity and the zany celebrity's conservation message (see boxed text, above). Billboards of the khaki-clad Crocodile Hunter welcome you even from the croc-filled afterlife along the highway and into an amazing wildlife menagerie complete with a Cambodian-style Tiger Temple, the Asian-themed Elephantasia, as well as the famous crocoseum. There are macaws, birds of prey, giant tortoises, snakes, otters, camels, and more crocs and critters than you can poke a stick at. Plan to spend a full day at this amazing wildlife park.

Various companies offer tours from Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast (see p202). The zoo operates a free courtesy bus from Noosa, Coolool, Maroochy, Caloundra and the Beerwah train station (bookings essential).

## Sleeping & Eating

With only basic accommodation available, the Glass House Mountains are best visited as a day trip.

**Glasshouse Mountains Log Cabin Caravan Park** (☎ 5496 9338; Glasshouse Mountains Tourist Dr, Glasshouse Mountains; unpowered/power sites \$20/24, cabins from \$80; ♿ ♿) This park has comfortable, self-contained cabins, pretty sites and spectacular mountain views. Facilities include barbecues, a tennis court and a small café.

**Glasshouse Mountains Tavern** (☎ 5493 0933; 10 Reed St, Glasshouse Mountains; mains \$12-23; ☎ lunch & dinner) Part kit home, part old country tavern, this welcoming pub cooks up good pub nosh. The open fire keeps things cosy during winter and a peppering of outdoor seating is great for a midday middy on sunny days.

## CALOUNDRA

☎ 07 / pop 20,140

Straddling a headland at the southern end of the Sunshine Coast, Caloundra is slowly shed-

ding its staid retirement-village image without losing its sleepy seaside charm. Excellent fishing in Pumicestone Passage (the snake of water separating Bribie Island from the mainland) and a number of pleasant surf beaches make it a popular holiday resort for both families and water-sports action fans.

## Information

**Caloundra visitors centre** (☎ 5420 6240; 7 Caloundra Rd; ☎ 9am-5pm) On the roundabout at the entrance to the town.

**Hotspot Internet Café** (☎ 5499 6644; Shop 8, 51 Bulcock St; per 15min/1hr \$2/6; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat)

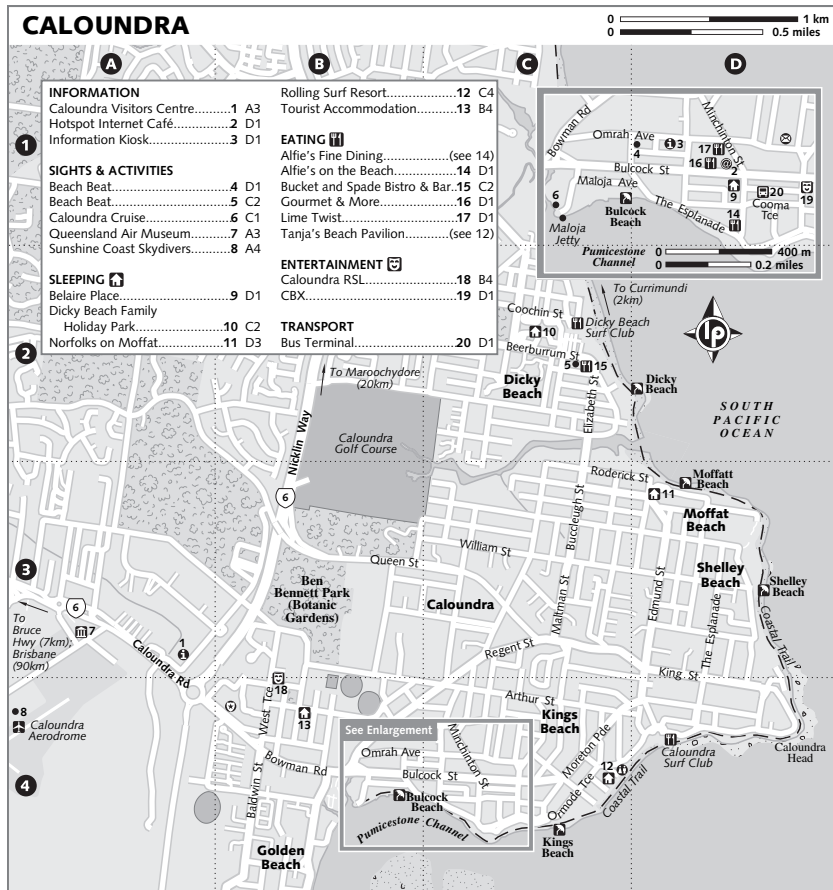
**Information kiosk** (☎ 5420 8718; 77 Bulcock St; ☎ 9am-5pm) In the main street.

## Sights & Activities

Caloundra's beaches curve around the headland so you'll always find a sheltered beach no matter how windy it gets. **Bulcock Beach**, just down from the main street and pinched by the northern tip of Bribie Island, captures a good wind tunnel, making it popular with kite-surfers. **Kings Beach** has a lovely promenade, a kiddie-friendly interactive water feature, and a free saltwater swimming pool on the rocks. Depending on the conditions, **Moffat Beach** and **Dickey Beach** have the best surf breaks. You can rent boards from **Beach Beat** (surfboards/body boards per day \$35/20; Caloundra ☎ 5491 4711; 119 Bulcock St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm; Dicky Beach ☎ 5491 8215; 4-6 Beerburum St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm). Learn to surf with **North Caloundra Surf School** (☎ 0411 221 730; www.northcaloundrasurfschool.com; 1½hr lesson \$70) or **Q Surf School** (☎ 0404 869 622; www.qsurfschool.com; 1hr lesson per person private/group \$89/35). Q Surf School also arranges day trips from Brisbane with transfers, two surf lessons and lunch for \$150 per person.

## DETOUR: CABOOLTURE

If historical villages take your fancy, exit the Bruce Hwy at Caboolture for the **Caboolture Warplane Museum** (☎ 5499 1144; Hangar 104, Caboolture Airfield, McNaught Rd; adult/child/family \$8/5/18; ☎ 10am-4pm) which has a collection of restored WWII warplanes, all in flying order. Then follow the signs through town to the **Caboolture Historical Village** (☎ 5495 4581; Beerburum Rd; adult/child \$10/2; ☎ 9.30am-3.30pm) which has over 70 buildings including a barber shop, a licensed hotel, the original railway station, a maritime museum and more, set on 5 hectares of land. The village is 4km north of Caboolture. After visiting the museum, either return to the Bruce Hwy or continue north on Beerburum Rd, turn left onto Steve Irwin Way and follow this road a further 13km to Australia Zoo (see above).



Cruising Pumicestone Passage affords an ocean view of Caloundra. **Caloundra Cruise** (☎ 5492 8280; www.caloundracruise.com; Maloja Ave Jetty; adult/child/concession/family \$16/8/15/40) operates cruises in the channel and out to Bribie Island, and has a great 2½-hour ecoexplorer cruise.

Active sorts will opt to kayak across the channel to explore the northern tip of Bribie Island National Park on foot with **Blue Water Kayak Tours** (☎ 5494 7789; www.bluewaterkayaktours.com.au; full/half-day tours \$130/65, minimum 2 people).

A coastal walk, popular with joggers, cyclists and leisurely strollers, starts from the boat ramp at the northern end of Golden Beach and follows the headland north to Currumbundi.

**Sunshine Coast Skydivers** (☎ 5437 0211; Caloundra Aerodrome; dives from \$199) will facilitate any urges to jump out of a plane (tandem) – and film it in the process. Budding aviators may find the **Queensland Air Museum** (☎ 5492 5930; 7 Pathfinder Dr, Caloundra Aerodrome; adult/child/concession \$9/6/7; ☎ 10am-4pm) of passing interest.

### Sleeping

**Dicky Beach Family Holiday Park** (☎ 5491 3342; www.dicky.com.au; 4 Beerburum St; unpowered/powerd sites \$24/29, cabins from \$67; ☎ ☎) You can't get any closer to one of Caloundra's most popular beaches. The brick cabins are as ordered and tidy as the grounds and there's a small swimming pool for the kids. Rates are for two people.

### WOODSTOCK DOWN UNDER

The famous **Woodford Folk Festival** features a huge diversity of over 2000 national and international performers playing folk, traditional Irish, indigenous and world music, as well as buskers, belly dancers, craft markets, visual-arts performances, environmental talks and a visiting squad of Tibetan monks. The festival is held on a property near the town of Woodford from 27 December to 1 January each year. Camping grounds are set up on the property with toilets, showers and a range of foodie marquees but be prepared for a mud bath if it rains. The festival is licensed, so leave your booze at home.

Tickets cost around \$79 per day (\$94 with camping) and can be bought at the gate or through the **festival office** (☎ 5496 1066). Check online at www.woodfordfolkfestival.com for a programme of performances.

Woodford is 35km northwest of Caboolture. Shuttle buses run regularly from the Caboolture train station to and from the festival grounds.

**Belaire Place** (☎ 5491 8688; www.belaireplace.com; 34 Minchinton St; r \$120-175; ☎ ☎) Overlooking Bulcock Beach, these spacious, sunny one-bedroom apartments are great value. Close to cafés and restaurants and with excellent ocean views, you can watch the action on the beach from a balcony big enough to park a truck on.

**Rolling Surf Resort** (☎ 5491 9777; www.rollingsurfresort.com; Levuka Ave, Kings Beach; 1-7/2-bedroom apt \$180/200; ☎ ☎ ☎) This ultrachic resort directly on the beach has très modern furnishings, fantastic views and a heated pool. Be king of Kings Beach in the three-bedroom penthouse suite. In high season there's a minimum five-night stay.

Also recommended:

**Norfolks on Moffat** (☎ 5492 6666; www.norfolksnomfat.com.au; 32 Queen of Colonies Pde, Moffat Beach; 2-/3-bedroom apt 2 nights from \$504/677; ☎ ☎ ☎) Large, breezy apartments with ocean views, near the trendy Moffat cafés.

**Tourist Accommodation** (☎ 5499 7655; 84 Omrah Ave; dm/tw/d \$22/46/55; ☎) A no-frills hostel-cum-motel, ideal for a surf safari.

### Eating

**Gourmet & More** (☎ 5499 6833; Shop 3, 63 Bulcock St; sandwiches \$7; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) Start the day with a shot of pure caffeine. This delightful deli has over 20 different coffee flavours and a range of organic coffee beans. The rustic wooden benches reflect the rustic-style gourmet sandwiches of prosciutto, pastrami, sun-dried tomatoes and olives.

**our pick Tanja's Beach Pavilion** (☎ 5499 6600; 8 Levuka Ave, Kings Beach; mains \$12-32; ☎ 6.30am-10.30pm) The landmark pavilion of this outdoor café and restaurant hangs directly over the sand on popular Kings Beach. All that salty sea air can work up a hunger. For something light the chilled and grilled fresh seafood with tasty dipping sauces is an excellent choice.

**Alfie's on the Beach** (☎ 5491 0800; 26 The Esplanade, Bulcock Beach; mains \$14-20; ☎ ☎ ☎) breakfast, lunch & dinner) Walk straight off the beach into this cool and casual café. The service can be patchy but the food and the views more than compensate. The macadamia pancake stack is a breakfast winner, while the rest of the day is given over to seafood.

**Bucket and Spade Bistro & Bar** (☎ 5492 7077; 1/6 Beerburum St, Dicky Beach; mains \$17-27; ☎ ☎ ☎) breakfast & lunch daily, dinner Fri & Sat) A new baby on the Caloundra beach scene, this trendy bistro also leans heavily towards seafood. Recommended is the chef's special: Sally's pasta marinara starring a sauce of king prawns, snapper, calamari and capers followed by the wicked-sounding ooey gooey chocolate pudding.

Also recommended:

**Lime Twist** (☎ 5492 6644; 2/24 Minchinton St; mains \$9-13; ☎ ☎ ☎) breakfast & lunch Mon-Fri, breakfast Sun) A slightly bohemian café dishing up salads, burgers and focaccias.

**Alfie's Fine Dining** (mains \$25-30; ☎ ☎ ☎) lunch & dinner) Superb ocean views and cuisine directly above Alfie's on the Beach.

### Entertainment

**CBX** (☎ 5439 4555; 12 Bulcock St) Queensland's only beer exchange hovers somewhere between an RSL and a surf club. The bar works like a stock exchange, with beer prices rising and falling depending on demand. Live bands and DJs on weekends make this the local party scene.

**Caloundra RSL** (☎ 5491 1544; 19 West Tce) Some RSLs are small and unassuming affairs – not this one. With enough flamboyance to outdo Liberace, Caloundra's award-winning RSL features two restaurants and three bars including the groovy 1970s-style Lava Lounge Bar. The glitzy atmosphere can be a little overwhelming

and will probably be more so when current renovations are finished.

### Getting There & Away

**Greyhound** (☎ 1300 473 946; www.greyhound.com.au) buses from Brisbane (\$26, two hours) stop at the **bus terminal** (☎ 5491 2555; Cooma Tce). **Sunbus** (☎ 13 12 30) has frequent services to Noosa (\$5.80, 1½ hours) via Maroochydhore (\$3.20, 50 minutes).

### MOOLOOLABA & MAROOCHYDHORE

☎ 07 / pop 10,250 & 16,360

Mooloolaba, the heart of Maroochy, has seduced many a 'sea-changer' with its sublime climate, golden beach and cruisy lifestyle. The locals here are proud of their surfing roots and relaxed beach culture. Just take a morning walk on the foreshore and you'll find walkers and joggers, suntans and surfboards, and a dozen genuine smiles before breakfast.

Mooloolaba and Maroochydhore, along with Alexandra Headland and Cotton Tree, form the Maroochy region. While Maroochydhore takes care of the business end, Mooloolaba steals the show. Eateries, boutiques and pockets of low-rise resorts and apartments have spread along the Esplanade, transforming this once-humble fishing village into one of Queensland's most popular holiday destinations. In summer Maroochy bursts with families indulging in good fishing and surf beaches, but it quickly reverts back to the tranquil epitome of coastal Oz for the remainder of the year.

### Orientation

The Mooloolaba Esplanade seamlessly morphs into Alexandra Pde along the beachfront at Alexandra Headland ('Alex' to the locals), then flows into Aerodrome Rd and the main CBD of Maroochydhore. Cotton Tree is at the mouth of the Maroochy River.

### Information

**Email Central Internet Lounge** (Map p187; ☎ 5443 4440; 19 The Esplanade, Cotton Tree; per hr \$5; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat)

**Maroochy Tourism Information Booths** Mooloolaba (Map p188; ☎ 5478 2233; cnr Brisbane Rd & First Ave, Mooloolaba; ☎ 9am-5pm) Maroochydhore Airport (off Map p187; ☎ 5448 9088; Friendship Dr, Marcoola)

**Maroochy visitors centre** (Map p187; ☎ 1800 882 032, 5459 9050; www.maroochytourism.com; cnr Sixth Ave & Melrose St, Maroochydhore; ☎ 9am-5pm)

**Post office** Mooloolaba (Map p188; ☎ 13 13 18; cnr Brisbane Rd & Walan St) Maroochydhore (Map p187; Sunshine Plaza, Horton Pde)

**QPWS office** (Map p187; ☎ 5443 8940; 29 The Esplanade, Cotton Tree; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri)

### Sights & Activities

Serious beach-goers are spoilt for choice, especially on the beautiful Mooloolaba beach. If the surf's up, kiddies will find relatively calm water at the **Spit** at the southern end of the beach.

There are good surf breaks along the strip – one of Queensland's best for longboarders is the **Bluff**, the prominent point at Alexandra Headland. The beach breaks from Alex to Maroochydhore are consistent even in a southerly while **Pincushion** near the Maroochy River mouth can provide an excellent break in the winter offshore winds. To understand what it's all about book a lesson with surfing legend Robbie Sherwell at **Robbie Sherwell's XL Surfing Academy** (☎ 5478 1337; www.xlsurfingacademy.com; 1hr private/group \$70/30). You can rent surfboards from **Beach Beat** (Map p187; ☎ 5443 2777; 164 Alexandra Pde, Alexandra Headland; surfboards/body boards per day \$35/25; ☎ 9am-5pm).

**Wharf** (Map p188; Parkyn Pde) is a little bit tacky, a little bit kitsch, but showcases one of Mooloolaba's biggest drawcards, **Underwater World** (Map p188; ☎ 5444 8488; www.underwaterworld.com.au; The Wharf, Mooloolaba; adult/child/family \$26.50/16/73; ☎ 9am-6pm), the largest tropical oceanarium in the southern hemisphere. You can swim with seals, dive with sharks or simply marvel at the psychedelic fish, stingrays and ocean life outside the 80m-long transparent underwater tunnel. There's a touch tank, seal shows and educational spiels to entertain both kids and adults.

**Scuba World** (Map p188; ☎ 5444 8598; www.scubaworld.com.au; The Wharf, Mooloolaba; dives from \$90; ☎ 10am-5pm) arranges **shark dives** (certified/uncertified divers \$129/165) at Underwater World, coral dives off the coast and a wreck dive of a sunken warship, the ex-HMAS *Brisbane*. Sunk in July 2005, the wreck and its artificial reef are amazingly popular with divers. Beginners can also do a Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) course.

For a leisurely paddle down the Maroochy River hire canoes or kayaks from **Swan's Boat Hire** (off Map p187; ☎ 5443 7225; 59 Bradman Ave, Maroochydhore; per hr \$14; ☎ 6am-6pm).

### Tours

Watch humpback whales cruise past the coast on their annual migrations aboard **Steve Irwin's**



**Whale One** (Map p188; ☎ 1300 27 45 39; www.whaleone.com.au; adult/child/family \$125/75/320). Sunrise whale-watching cruises are available in September and October.

Several outfits offer cruises along the Mooloolah River, departing from the Wharf in Mooloolaba. Check out the glitterati's canal houses with a **Harbour River Canal Cruise** (Map p188; ☎ 5444 7477; www.sunshinecoast.au.nu/canalcruise.htm; The Wharf, Mooloolaba; adult/child/family \$15/5/38; ☎ 11am, 1pm & 2.30pm) or take a two-hour ecotour into the Mooloolah River National Park on **Cruiz Away River Tours** (Map p188; ☎ 5444 7477; www.cruizaway.com; The Wharf, Mooloolaba; ecotours adult/child \$45/30, sunset cruise \$30).

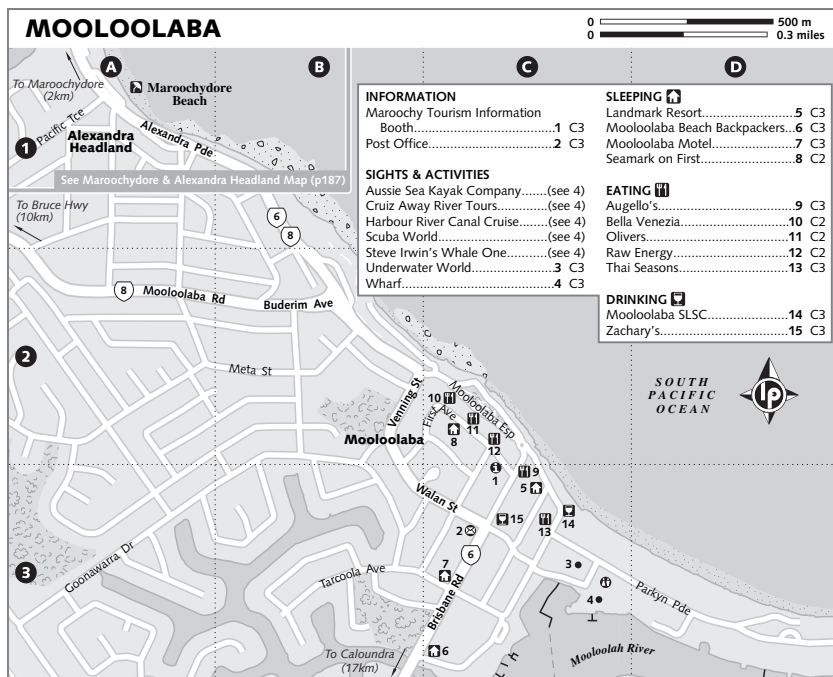
For the more adventurous, **Aussie Sea Kayak Company** (Map p188; ☎ 5477 5335; www.ausseakayak

.com.au; The Wharf, Mooloolaba; 4hr tour \$65, 2hr sunset paddle \$45) offers sea-kayaking trips including multiday trips to North Stradbroke, Fraser and Moreton Islands.

A number of tour operators including **Storeyline Tours** (☎ 5474 1500; www.storeylinetours.com.au) organise day trips to Fraser Island, Australia Zoo, the Eumundi markets and the hinterland.

### Sleeping BUDGET

**Cotton Tree Beach House Backpackers** (Map p187; ☎ 5443 1755; www.cottontreebackpackers.com; 15 The Esplanade, Cotton Tree; dm/d \$22/50) The vibe is as warm as the brightly painted common-room walls and the atmosphere as laid-back as



the fat Lab lolling on the sofa. Opposite a park and a river, this renovated century-old Queenslander is clean and homy and oozes charm along with free surfboards, kayaks and bikes.

**Cotton Tree Caravan Park** (Map p187; ☎ 1800 461 253, 5443 1253; www.maroochypark.qld.gov.au; Cotton Tree Pde, Cotton Tree; unpowered/powerd sites from \$25/28, cabins \$125-160) A merger of two caravan parks, this baby sits right on the beach at the mouth of the Maroochy River. In summer it resembles a teeming suburb but it's a grassy spot with great facilities. Rates are for two people.

**Seabreeze Caravan Park** (Map p187; ☎ 1800 461 167, 5443 1167; www.maroochypark.qld.gov.au; Melrose Pde, Maroochydhore; unpowered/powerd sites from \$25/28, cabins \$125-160) This council-run park has beach frontage and topnotch facilities. Rates are for two people.

Also recommended:

**Mooloolaba Beach Backpackers** (Map p188; ☎ 5444 3399; www.mooloolababackpackers.com; 75 Brisbane Rd, Mooloolaba, dm/d \$29/70; ☎ ☎) Basic, purpose-built hostel 500m from the beachside day- and nightlife.

## MIDRANGE

During school holidays most places require a minimum two- or three-night stay.

**Mooloolaba Motel** (Map p188; ☎ 5444 2988; www.mooloolabamotel.com.au; 45-56 Brisbane Rd, Mooloolaba; r \$110; ☎) The rooms in this decent motel are dressed in tutti-frutti colours and each has a wee veranda overlooking the pool out the back. It's comfy rather than spectacular, but the price is right.

**Heritage Motor Inn** (Map p187; ☎ 5443 7355; heritage.motorinn@hotmail.com; 69 Sixth Ave, Maroochydhore; r from \$145; ☎ ☎) Push past the kitsch exterior – as motels go this one's a winner. The spacious rooms are cool, bright and spotless. The hosts are superfriendly and it's only a short walk to Maroochydhore Beach and the Cotton Tree cafés. Facilities are wheelchair accessible.

**Landmark Resort** (Map p188; ☎ 1800 888 835, 5444 5555; www.landmarkresort.com; cnr Esplanade & Burnett St, Mooloolaba; 1-/2-bedroom apt from \$210/280; ☎ ☎) Nothing compares to the ocean views from these breezy apartments. The resort sits above Mooloolaba's trendy eateries and is only 20m from the beach. There's a heated lagoon-style pool, and a rooftop spa and barbecue.

**Alexandra Beach Resort** (Map p187; ☎ 5475 0600; www.alexandra-beach-resort.com; cnr Alexandra Pde & Pacific Tce, Alexandra Headland; 1-/2-bedroom apt 2 nights \$330/442; ☎ ☎) Directly opposite the beach, these large and comfy apartments open onto either a courtyard or a balcony, but can be quite noisy. The 150m tropical-lagoon pool comes with a pool bar!

**ourpick! Coral Sea Apartments** (Map p187; ☎ 5479 2999; www.coralsea-apartments.com; 35-7 Sixth Ave, Maroochydhore; apt per week from \$1380; ☎ ☎) These yawning two- and three-bedroom apartments occupy a lovely spot close to Maroochy Surf Club and the beach. Inside you'll find tasteful décor and the balconies are plenty big and breezy.

## TOP END

**Myconos Resort** (Map p187; ☎ 1800 041 166, 5451 1711; www.myconosresort.com; 45 Sixth Ave, Maroochydhore; 1-bedroom apt per 2 nights from \$315; ☎ ☎) From the outside this loud tower looks like every other high-rise, but inside are a multitude of stylish, themed rooms with subtle overtones of Africa, the Middle East and the Mediterranean. And they all come with kitchens, spas and big balconies.

**Seamark on First** (Map p188; ☎ 5457 8600; www.seamarkresort.com.au; 29 First Ave, Mooloolaba; 2-/3-bedroom apt per 5 nights \$1000/1245; ☎ ☎) One street back from Mooloolaba's fashionable Esplanade this stylish and modern resort is bright, airy and spacious. Most apartments have ocean views – sit on the balcony and watch the moonrise over the water.

## Eating

### BUDGET

**Raw Energy** (Map p188; ☎ 5444 2111; Shop 3, Mooloolaba Esplanade, Mooloolaba; dishes \$6-15; ☎ ☎ 6.15am-5pm) The T-shirt says it all: 'Fresh. Fast. Funky.' In this popular beachside café pretty young things serve up tofu, tempeh and gluten-free with 'zinger' juices. Muffin addicts will think they've found The One. Forget fast, but since this is the best coffee on the strip and a prime spot for people-watching it's definitely worth the wait.

**Envy** (Map p187; ☎ 5443 8494; Esplanade, Cotton Tree; mains \$6-15; ☎ ☎ breakfast & lunch daily, dinner Fri) This cosy café serves up chai and soy lattes with a dash of bohemia. The menu features healthy salads, burgers, and thick bread sandwiches and there's a three-course set menu on Friday nights (\$40). The local artwork on the walls is a talking point.

**Thai Seasons** (Map p188; ☎ 5444 4611; 10 River Esplanade, Mooloolaba; mains \$10-12; ☎ ☎ dinner) The plastic outdoor setting won't win any awards, and you have to grab your own cutlery, but this unpretentious restaurant dishes out the best Thai food in town. If it's crowded, order takeaway and head for the picnic tables overlooking Mooloolaba's main beach.

## MIDRANGE

**Olivers** (Map p188; ☎ 5478 1893; 57 The Esplanade, Mooloolaba; mains \$10-22; ☎ ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) In the heart of the Mooloolaba strip, this outdoor eatery has balmy sea breezes and ocean views. Lunch is a casual affair with *mucho* people-watching, and the evening ambience is relaxed and casual. The cosmopolitan menu has such dishes as Thai beef salad and lamb cutlets on couscous and rocket salad.

**India Today** (Map p187; ☎ 5452 7054; 91 Aerodrome Rd, Maroochydhore; mains \$13-18; ☎ ☎ lunch Thu, Fri & Sat, dinner nightly) You can't miss the masses of fairy lights decorating this restaurant on Maroochydhore's main drag. Be prepared for the brightly and chaotically coloured visual feast of Indian cloths, textiles, paintings and wall hangings waiting inside. The butter chicken with the chef's special sauce is delicious.

**Sang's Thai Restaurant** (Map p187; ☎ 5475 4412; 2 Maroubra St, Alexandra Headland; mains \$15-25; ☎ ☎ dinner Tue-Sat) In a side street opposite the Alex pub, this popular restaurant has all the right ingredients – candlelit tables, relaxed intimate atmosphere and excellent food.

**Augello's** (Map p188; ☎ 5478 3199; cnr Esplanade & Brisbane Rd, Mooloolaba; mains \$15-29; ☎ ☎ lunch & dinner) This Mooloolaba institution spoils hungry folk of all ages with outstanding Italian food and a solid reputation. Authentic and prize-winning pizzas join nouveau concoctions such as Moroccan chicken with sun-dried tomatoes and lime yogurt dressing. Nab an upstairs table for ocean views.

## TOP END

**Boat Shed** (Map p187; ☎ 5443 3808; The Esplanade, Cotton Tree; mains \$22-34; ☎ ☎ lunch daily, dinner Mon-Sat) A shabby-chic gem on the banks of the Maroochy River, great for sunset drinks beneath the sprawling cotton tree. Seafood is the star of the menu and a must-try is the coconut-battered prawns with roasted banana and caramelised rum syrup. After dinner, roll back to the outdoor lounges for dessert and some seriously romantic star-gazing.

**our pick** **Bella Venezia** (Map p188; ☎ 5444 5844; 95 The Esplanade, Mooloolaba; mains \$25-38; 🍴 lunch & dinner) This long-established icon has added a wine bar to its arcade cul-de-sac. The menu is exclusively Italian with exquisite dishes such as *ravioli alla sambucca* and *risotto nera* (squid-ink risotto). Has live music on Wednesday nights and fortnightly wine tastings.

### Drinking

**Zachary's** (Map p188; ☎ 5477 6877; 17-19 Brisbane Rd, Mooloolaba) The place to meet for after-work drinks or to fuel up for a Friday night on the town. Small booths, floor cushions, low central lounges and a hip DJ set the mood. The gourmet pizza menu is matched with an impressive cocktail list starring New Zealand's 42-Below vodka. Beware, the bar staff are heavy-handed with the limes.

**Mooloolaba SLSC** (Map p188; ☎ 5444 1300; Esplanade, Mooloolaba; 🏊 10am-10pm Sun-Thu, to midnight Fri & Sat) A traditional Aussie icon, the surf club somehow seamlessly morphs from a midweek good-value family outing to a weekend singles pick-up joint where local bands play circa 1980s dance music every Friday night. The floor-to-ceiling windows on the deck provide stunning views.

### Getting There & Away

**Greyhound Australia** (☎ 1300 473 946; www.greyhound.com.au) runs to and from Brisbane (\$28, two hours) to the **Suncoast Pacific bus terminal** (Map p187; ☎ 5443 1011; First Ave, Maroochydoore; 🏠 7.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 7.30am-12.30pm Sat). **Premier Motor Services** (☎ 13 34 10; www.premiers.com.au) also has a daily service from Brisbane (\$20, two hours).

### Getting Around

**Sunbus** (☎ 13 12 30) has frequent services between Mooloolaba and Maroochydoore (\$2) and on to Noosa (\$5, one hour). The local bus interchange (Map p187) is at the Sunshine Plaza.

**Skate Sauce** (Map p187; ☎ 5443 6111; 150 Alexandra Pde, Alexandra Headland; 🏊 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) hires out in-line skates with all the gear as well as bicycles (per hour/day \$8/20).

### COOLUM

☎ 07 / pop 7180

Coolum is one of the Sunshine Coast's hidden treasures. Rocky headlands create a number of secluded coves before spilling

into the fabulously long stretch of golden sand and rolling surf of Coolum beach. With its budding café society and within easy reach of the coast's hot spots it's an attractive escape from the more popular and overcrowded holiday scene at Noosa and Mooloolaba.

For outstanding views of the coast a hike to the top of **Mt Coolum** (200m, one-hour return), south of town, is worth the sweat factor. During the annual **kite festival** (end of September) the skies are awash with fantastically weird and wonderful aerial creatures. For information try the **visitors centre** (David Low Way; 🏠 9am-1pm Mon-Sat).

The wee council-run **Coolum Beach Caravan Park** (☎ 1800 461 474, 5446 1474; www.maroochypark.qld.gov.au; David Low Way, Coolum; unpowered/powerd sites \$24/27) is rudimentary, but it's nudged onto a grassy plot in front of the beach and just across the road from Coolum's main strip. Prices are for two people.

Hidden behind a cool and leafy veranda, the modest row of bungalows at **Villa Coolum** (☎ 5446 1286; www.villacoolum.com; 102 Coolum Tce, Coolum Beach; r \$79; 🏠) is kitted out with simple gear, but the rooms are spacious and spotless. This is a good spot for families.

The **Hyatt Regency Coolum** (☎ 5446 1234; www.coolum.regency.hyatt.com; Warran Rd, Coolum Beach; ste per night from \$250), at the base of Mt Coolum, is a five-star golf and spa resort set on 150 hectares of rainforest, Australian bushland and lush gardens.

A long stretch of parkland separates the beach from a string of outdoor cafés including **Raw Energy** (☎ 5473 9066; David Low Way; mains \$6-14; 🍴 breakfast & lunch), where the menu reeks of salads, tofu and all things healthy.

For dinner, **My Place** (☎ 5446 4433; David Low Way; mains \$15-20; 🏠 7am-11pm) opposite the boardwalk has sensational ocean views and can't be beaten for sunset cocktails or summer alfresco dining. Serving modern Mediterranean and traditional Italian cuisine, there's also a daily selection of tapas.

The convivial **Castro's Bar & Restaurant** (☎ 5471 7555; cnr Frank St & Beach Rd; mains \$15-30; 🍴 dinner) satisfies all radicals with dishes such as tempura-battered wild Barramundi fillet, Tuscan fish stew, Middle Eastern seared salmon and wood-fired pizza.

**Sol Bar** (☎ 5446 2333; cnr Beach Rd & David Low Way) is one of the funkier venues on the coast, hosting some of Australia's biggest bands. The vibe is

### THE HEAD IN THE SEA

Along the Maroochy coast you'll see a small rocky island a little way offshore of Mudjimba, near Coolum. Mudjimba Island is also known to locals as 'Old Woman Island' but according to Aboriginal legend this rocky outcrop is in fact the head of a mighty warrior, Coolum. It seems Coolum and Ninderry were two warriors in love with the same woman, Maroochy. Ninderry kidnapped her, Coolum rescued her, and in retaliation Ninderry knocked off his head.

This, of course, angered the gods who promptly turned Ninderry into a rock and Coolum into a mountain. From where it was catapulted 1km into the sea, Coolum's head became Mudjimba Island. Maroochy, grief-stricken, fled into the mountains and wept a river of tears – the Maroochy River. And where the old woman of 'Old Woman Island' came from is anybody's guess.

casual, cool and alternative – like the music – and the bar has a large range of international beers including Indonesia's Bintang.

### PEREGIAN & SUNSHINE BEACH

☎ 07 / pop 2800 & 2360

Fifteen kilometres of uncrowded, unobstructed beach stretches north from Coolum to Sunshine Beach and the rocky northeast headland of Noosa National Park. **Peregian** clusters around a small village square with only a few cafés and restaurants, its lack of nightlife a drawback for holidaying families. This is the place for long solitary beach walks, good surf breaks, fresh air and sunshine – and it's not uncommon to see whales breaking offshore.

A little further north the laid-back latte ethos of **Sunshine Beach** attracts Noosa locals escaping the summer hordes. Beach walks morph into bush walks over the headland; a postprandial stroll through the **Noosa National Park** takes an hour to reach Alexandria Bay and two hours to Noosa's Laguna Bay. Road access to the park is from McAnally Dr or Parkedge Rd.

The **Peregian Originals** (www.peregianoriginals.com.au), brainchild of musician Jay Bishoff, is a changing line-up of both popular and obscure local, national and international bands. Attracting earth mothers, surfers and lovers of good music, these free Sunday afternoon sessions (first and third Sundays of the month) in the park in front of the Peregian SLSC have become a summer classic. Check the website for performance dates and details.

**Dolphins Beach House** (Map p196; ☎ 5447 2100; www.dolphinsbeachhouse.com; 14 Duke St, Sunshine Beach; dm/d/apt \$24/60/65; 🏠 🏠), nestled in a patch of tropical gardens, reflects the Asian and Mexican influences of its well-travelled owner. The rooms are basic and clean, there's plenty

of kitchen space, it's close to cafés and the beach, and only a short bus ride to Noosa. Don't come looking for party central (there's no bar), but instead chill out before rejoining the frenzy of the backpacker trail.

It's only small but you can't miss the electric blue **Pacific Blue Apartments** (off Map p193; ☎ 5448 3611; www.pacificblueapartments.com.au; 236 David Low Way, Peregian Beach; r \$85-90). Close to the pub and the beach, Pacific Blue has cheerful studios and one-bedroom units, all self-contained and with a healthy dose of space.

It's hard to book anything less than a two-night stay in Sunshine Beach's holiday apartments. **Andari** (Map p196; ☎ 5474 9996; www.andari.com.au; 19-21 Belmore Tce, Sunshine Beach; 2-/3-bedroom apt \$330/400, minimum 2-night stay; 🏠 🏠) is a quiet retreat of townhouses set in shady, subtropical gardens. The apartments are light and airy, overlook the beach, and are a short stroll to cafés and restaurants.

Peregian's limited eating options are surprisingly good and conveniently located in the central village square. The **Baked Poetry Cafe** (off Map p193; ☎ 5448 3500; 218 David Low Way, Peregian Beach; dishes \$10-14; 🏠 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat & Sun) is a minibakery and café, famous for its great coffee and German sourdough bread. The  *Eier im glass* is a Frankfurt breakfast special where your soft-boiled eggs arrive in a glass alongside a plate of bacon, grilled tomato and cheese.

For something unexpected, the Persian restaurant **Qom** (off Map p193; ☎ 5448 1665; Shop 5, 4 Kingfisher Dr, Peregian Beach; mains \$14.50-18; 🍴 breakfast & lunch daily, dinner Mon-Sat), also in the village square, has excellent Middle Eastern food with a twist – mains are vegetarian with side dishes of meat and fish.

Sunshine Beach's café strip lives up to Noosa's exacting standards. **Fratellini** (Map p196; ☎ 5474 8080; 36 Duke St, Sunshine Beach; mains \$12-26; 🏠 7am-10pm summer, 8am-9pm winter) is a stylish

beach-chic café focused on all things Italian. Local celebs escape here to relax over good coffee and lazy lunches.

The international flavour on the strip continues with **Wasabi** (Map p196; ☎ 5449 2443; cnr Duke & Bryan Sts, Sunshine Beach; mains \$30; 🍷 dinner Tue-Sun, lunch Fri). Pull up a cushion at the traditional Japanese tables sunk into the floor while feasting on ultrafresh sushi, sashimi and fresh swimmer crabs. Save room for the green-tea ice cream.

Raising the bar is the **Marble Bar Bistro** (Map p196; ☎ 5455 3200; 40 Duke St; tapas \$12-19; 🍷 11.30am-late daily, breakfast Sun), a cruisy cocktail and tapas bar sans doors or walls. Kick back in a cushioned lounge or perch yourself at one of the marble benches to scope the local beat, down an international 'coldie', and satisfy an urge for divinely inspired scallops.

You can smarten up or dress down for Sunday afternoon sessions on the deck of the **Sunshine Beach SLSC** (Map p196; ☎ 5447 5491; Duke St) with live music, dancing and outstanding ocean views.

## NOOSA

☎ 07 / pop 9110

Once a little-known surfer hang-out, gorgeous Noosa is now a stylish resort town and one of Queensland's star attractions. Noosa's stunning natural landscape of crystalline beaches and tropical rainforests blends seamlessly with its fashionable boulevard, Hastings St, and the sophisticated beach elite that flock here. On long weekends and school holidays, though, the flock becomes a migration and narrow Hastings St a slow-moving file of traffic.

Noosa is about having it all. The trendy cafe-latte landscape has been cultivated without losing sight of simple seaside pleasures, and strict council laws that prohibit any building to be higher than the trees keep the fancy condos in check. Despite Noosa's designer boutiques, pricey restaurants and air of exclusivity, the beach and bush are still free, so glammed-up fashionistas simply share the beat with thongs, boardshorts and bronzed bikini bods baring their bits.

## Orientation

Noosa has an amazing number of roundabouts and it's easy to get lost. Broadly speaking, Noosa encompasses three zones: Noosa Heads (around Laguna Bay and Hastings St),

Noosaville (along the Noosa River) and Noosa Junction (the administrative centre).

Noosa National Park dominates the headland overlooking the town. The area north of the Noosa River is preserved as the Cooloola Section of Great Sandy National Park and offers great opportunities for 4WD driving, hiking and kayaking.

## Information

**Adventure Travel Bugs** (Map p196; ☎ 1800 666 720, 5474 8530; 9 Sunshine Beach Rd, Noosa Junction; internet access per hr \$4; 🍷 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7pm Sat & Sun)

**Noosa visitors centre** (Map p196; ☎ 5430 5020; www.visitnoosa.com.au; Hastings St; 🍷 9am-5pm) Very helpful.

**Peterpan Adventure Travel** (Map p196; ☎ 1800 777 115, 5455 4747; www.peterpans.com; Shop 3, 75 Noosa Dr, Noosa Junction; internet access per hr \$2; 🍷 9.45am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4.30pm Sat & Sun)

**Post office** (Map p196; ☎ 5473 8591; 91 Noosa Dr)

**Urban Mailbox** (Map p196; ☎ 5473 5151; Ocean Breeze, Noosa Dr, Noosa Heads; per 15min \$3; 🍷 8am-8pm) Superexpensive internet access.

## Sights

One of Noosa's best features, the lovely **Noosa National Park**, covering the headland, has fine walks, great coastal scenery and a string of bays with waves that draw surfers from all over the country. Clothes are optional at Alexandria Bay on the eastern side, an informal nudist beach.

The most scenic way to access the national park is to follow the boardwalk along the coast from town. Pick up a walking-track map from the **QPWS centre** (Map p193; ☎ 5447 3243; 🍷 9am-3pm), at the entrance to the park. Sleepy koalas are often spotted in the trees near Tea Tree Bay and dolphins are commonly seen from the rocky headlands around Alexandria Bay.

For a panoramic view of the park, walk or drive up to **Laguna Lookout** from Viewland Dr in Noosa Junction.

## Activities

### SURFING & WATER SPORTS

With a string of breaks around an unspoilt national park, Noosa is a fine place to catch a wave. Generally the waves are best in December and January but Sunshine Corner, at the northern end of Sunshine Beach, has an excellent year-round break, although it has a brutal beach dump. The point breaks around the headland only perform during the summer,



but when they do, expect wild conditions and good walls at Boiling Point and Tea Tree, on the northern coast of the headland. There are also gentle breaks on Noosa Spit at the far end of Hastings St, where most of the surf schools do their training.

Kite-surfers will find conditions at the river mouth and Lake Weyba are best between October and January, but on windy days the Noosa River is a playground for serious daredevils.

Recommended companies:

**Merrick's Learn to Surf** (☎ 0418-787 577; www.learnertosurf.com.au; surfing 2hr/3hr lesson \$55/150)

**Noosa Adventures & Kite-Surfing** (☎ 0438-747 801; www.noosakitesurfing.com.au; 2hr/8hr kite-surfing lesson \$140/\$400, equipment rental per hr/day \$30/100)

**Noosa Longboards** (Map p196; ☎ 5447 2828; www.noosalongboards.com; 64 Hastings St, Noosaville; 2hr surfing lesson \$55, longboard hire per half-/full day \$35/50, surfboard hire \$25/40, body-board hire \$15/20)

**Noosa Surf Lessons** (☎ 0412-330 850; www.noosasurflessons.com.au; 1-/3-/5-day lesson from \$45/120/170)

## CANOEING & KAYAKING

The Noosa River is excellent for canoeing; it's possible to follow it up through Lakes Cooroibah and Cootharaba, and through the Cooloola Section of Great Sandy National Park. The Elanda Point Canoe Company (opposite) rents canoes and kayaks.

**Noosa Ocean Kayak Tours** (☎ 0418-787 577; www.learnertosurf.com; 2hr tours \$66, kayak hire per day \$55) offers kayaking tours around Noosa National Park and along the Noosa River.

## ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

**Noosa Bike Hire & Tours** (☎ 5474 3322; www.noosabikehire.com; tours \$69) Offers half-day mountain-bike tours down Mt Tinbeerwah, including morning tea and transfers.

**Pedal & Paddle** (☎ 5474 5328; www.pedalandpaddle.com.au; tours \$89) Operates great four-hour combo hike, bike and kayak tours. Prices include morning and afternoon tea and local transfers.

## HORSE RIDING & CAMEL SAFARIS

Noosa North Shore Retreat (p199) offers horse riding along bush trails and along the beach. Camel Company Australia (p199) operates camel safaris on the beach and in the bush.

**Clip Clop Treks** (off Map p193; ☎ 5449 1254; www.clipcloptreks.com.au; Eumarella Rd, Lake Weyba; 2hr/day rides \$70/165, 4-day pub treks \$1320) Offers horse rides around Lake Weyba and the surrounding bush. Better yet is the all-inclusive four-day pub trek, which takes you

through the northern Sunshine Coast hinterland, staying at historic pubs along the way.

## Tours

### FRASER ISLAND

A number of operators offer trips to Fraser Island via the Cooloola Coast. All include informative commentary and major Fraser Island highlights such as Lake MacKenzie and Seventy Five Mile Beach.

**Fraser Island Excursions** (☎ 5449 0393; www.fraserislandexcursions.com.au; tours \$189) offers small group day tours in comfortable 4WDs, including a gourmet lunch and complimentary glass of wine.

**Fraser Island Adventure Tours** (☎ 5444 6957; www.fraserislandadventuretours.com.au; adult/child \$159/115) has won several industry awards for its day tours in 4WD minibuses that include a barbecue lunch.

**Fraser Explorer Tours** (☎ 1800 249 122; www.fraser-is.com; adult/child \$135/75) offers less intimate tours but takes in the same sights and stops for lunch at Eurong Beach Resort. **Trailblazer Tours** (☎ 3512 8100; 3-day safaris per person \$340) operates small group tours and can pick up and drop off at either Noosa or Rainbow Beach. For more information about tours to Fraser Island, see boxed text, p212.

If you're cashed up and want to do it the spectacular way, several companies offer fly-drive packages including flights to Fraser Island and 4WD hire for self-guided day trips. Tours cost \$250 to \$300 per person:

**Air Fraser Island** (☎ 1800 247 992; www.airfraserisland.com.au)

**Fraser Island Heli-Drive** (☎ 1800 063 933, 4125 3933; www.fraserislandco.com.au/helidrive.html)

**Sunshine Coast Scenic Flights** (☎ 5450 0516; www.noosaaviation.com)

## EVERGLADES

Several companies run boats from the Noosa Harbour at Tewantin up the Noosa River into the 'Everglades' area (essentially the passage of the Noosa River that cuts into the Great Sandy National Park). Companies include:

**Beyond Noosa** (☎ 1800 657 666, 5449 9177; www.beyondnoosa.com.au; afternoon tours adult/child \$69/45, day tours incl lunch adult/child \$84/50, ecotour of everglades & 4WD beach driving adult/child \$149/100) All tours include Noosa transfers.

**MV Noosa Queen** (☎ 5455 6661; 3hr tours per person \$45) Lunch cruises up the river.

For the more adventurous, **Peterpan Adventure Travel** (Map p196; ☎ 1800 777 115; www.peterpan.com;

Shop 3, 75 Noosa Dr, Noosa Junction; tours \$90) has three-day canoe tours into the park including tents and equipment. Alternatively, the **Elanda Point Canoe Company** (☎ 1800 226 637, 5485 3165; www.elanda.com.au/noosa; Elanda Point; tours adult/child \$70/59) offers half-day canoe tours including transfers and morning tea.

## Festivals & Events

**Noosa Long Weekend** (☎ 5474 9941; www.noosalongweekend.com) Ten-day festival of arts, culture, food and fashion in June/July.

**Noosa Jazz Festival** (☎ 5449 9189; www.noosajazz.com.au) Four-day annual jazz festival, attracting artists from around the globe and held in late August and early September.

**Noosa Triathlon** (☎ 5449 0711; www.usmevents.com.au) Week-long sports festival in early November culminating in the very popular triathlon.

## Sleeping

**Accom Noosa** (Map p196; ☎ 1800 072 078; www.accomnoosa.com.au; Shop 5, Fairshore Apartments, Hastings St, Noosa Heads) has an extensive list of private holiday rentals that are good for stays of a week or more.

With the exception of backpackers' hostels, accommodation prices can rise by 50% in busy times and 100% in the December to January peak season. During these times most places require a minimum two- or three-night stay. High-season prices are quoted.

## BUDGET

**Koala Beach Resort** (Map p196; ☎ 1800 357 457, 5447 3355; www.koala-backpackers.com; 44 Noosa Dr, Noosa Junction; dm/d \$27/60; ☑ ☒ ☓) One of the Koala chain, this hostel has the usual trademarks – popular bar, central location and party atmosphere. Your buck also buys huge dorms, good facilities and professional staff.

**Bougainvillea Holiday Park** (off Map p193; ☎ 1800 041 444, 5447 1712; jsjs@optusnet.com.au; 141 Cooroy-Noosa Rd, Tewantin; unpowered/powerd sites from \$30/34, cabins \$65-135; ☑ ☒ ☓) Neat as a pin and meticulously landscaped, this is the best camping option in the area. The facilities are spotless and wheelchair accessible, and there's an on-site café.

**YHA Halse Lodge** (Map p196; ☎ 1800 242 567, 5447 3377; backpackers@halselodge.com.au; 2 Halse Lane, Noosa Heads; members/nonmembers dm \$29/32, d \$74/82; meals \$9-12; ☑ ☒) Elevated from Hastings St by a steeep driveway, this splendid colonial-era timber Queenslander is a legend on the backpacker route. The dorms and kitchen are

a tad cramped, but the bar is a mix-and-meet bonanza and serves great meals.

**Sandy Court Holiday Units** (Map p193; ☎ 5449 7225; smitherines@bigpond.com; 30 James St, Noosaville; d \$70-110; ☑ ☒) Down a quiet residential street, these self-contained units offer unbeatable value. The décor is a bit weary and the furnishings and crockery are mix-and-match, but the units are clean and comfortable.

## MIDRANGE

**Anchor Motel Noosa** (Map p193; ☎ 5449 8055; www.anchormotelnoosa.com; cnr Anchor St & Weyba Rd, Noosaville; r from \$110; ☑ ☒ ☓) There's no escaping the nautical theme in this colourful motel. Blue-striped bedspreads, porthole windows and marine motifs will have you wearing stripes and cut-offs while grilling prawns on the barbie.

**Robinsons@noosa** (off Map p193; ☎ 5471 1129; www.robinsonsatnoosa.com; 855 Noosa Eumundi Rd, Doonan; r \$120; ☑ ☒ ☓) Five rooms span out of a central lounge, kitchen (for guests' use) and winery cellar door at this comfy B&B only 10 minutes from Hastings St. There are no added luxuries but the rooms are large and swimming in sunlight. It's private, quiet and set on 5 hectares of land.

**Noosa River Retreat** (Map p193; ☎ 5474 2811; www.noosariverretreat.net; cnr Weyba Rd & Reef St, Noosaville; 1-bedroom unit \$130; ☑ ☒ ☓) Your buck goes a long way at this orderly complex, which houses spick, span and spacious units. On site are a central barbecue and a laundry, and the corner units are almost entirely protected by small native gardens.

**Noosa Parade Holiday Inn** (Map p193; ☎ 5447 4177; www.noosaparadeholidayinn.com; 51 Noosa Pde, Noosa Heads; r \$180; ☑ ☒ ☓) Not far from Hastings St, these tiled and spotless apartments are reminiscent of an Ikea showroom. The pleasant and cool interiors are clad in bold colours and face away from the street and passing traffic.

**Terrapin** (Map p193; ☎ 5449 8770; www.terrapin.com.au; 15 The Cockleshell, Noosaville; 2-bedroom townhouse from \$180; ☑ ☒ ☓) You can relax out of sight in the courtyard and gardens of these two-storey townhouses. The earthy interiors are lifted by bold furnishings and balconies or gardens. All contain every mod con you need to sustain a serious stay.

**Killara Apartments** (Map p196; ☎ 5447 2800; www.killaranooa.com; cnr Grant St & Banksia Ave, Noosa Junction; 1-/2-bedroom unit \$185/264; ☑ ☒ ☓) These functional and modern units have plenty of space and colour. They're in a picturesque street on





**Sails** (Map p196; ☎ 5447 4235; cnr Park Rd & Hastings St; mains \$29-38; 🍳 breakfast, lunch & dinner) A culinary gem at the eastern end of Hastings St; there's only a mere swathe of lawn between Laguna Bay and the timber floors of this classy restaurant. The Mod Oz menu favours seafood, with such delights as grilled Moreton Bay bugs wrapped in pancetta. The wine list is extensive.

Also recommended:

**Noosa Heads SLSC** (Map p196; ☎ 5474 5688; Hastings St; mains \$10-28; 🍳 breakfast Sat & Sun, lunch & dinner daily) Good club grub with perfect beach views from the deck.

## Drinking & Entertainment

**Zachary's** (Map p196; ☎ 5447 3211; 30 Hastings St, Noosa Heads) This is a shabby-chic, 2nd-storey 'gourmet pizza bar' with comfy lounges and Aussie sports memorabilia framed on the walls. The dark-red walls, dim lighting and ambient beats make this a social hot spot.

**Koala Bar** (Map p196; ☎ 5447 3355; 44 Noosa Dr, Noosa Junction) Noosa's backpackers and other free spirits start their nightly revelry at this popular hostel bar. Live rock fills every crevice several nights a week; when it doesn't, the place hums to the harmony of beer jugs and beery banter.

**Cato's** (Map p196; ☎ 5449 4754; The Sheraton, 16 Hastings St) As well as a decadent cocktail list, Cato's boasts over 30 wines by the glass. The place can get noisy, especially on Friday nights when live music draws the crowds. If you need more than liquid sustenance there's also a hearty buffet and an à la carte menu.

**J** (Map p196; ☎ 5455 4455; www.thej.com.au; 60 Noosa Dr, Noosa Junction) The J, aka The Junction, showcases a broad range of artistic, cultural and musical performances from world and rock to classical. Check the website for event details.

## Getting There & Away

Long-distance buses stop at the bus stop near the corner of Noosa Dr and Noosa Pde (Map p196). **Greyhound Australia** (☎ 1300 473 946; www.greyhound.com.au) has several daily connections from Brisbane (\$27, three hours) while **Premier Motor Service** (☎ 13 34 10; www.premierms.com.au) has one (\$20, 2½ hours).

**Sunbus** (☎ 13 12 30) has frequent services to Maroochydore (\$5, one hour) and the Namboor train station (\$5, one hour).

## Getting Around

### BICYCLE

**Noosa Bike Hire and Tours** (Map p196; ☎ 5474 3322; www.noosabikehire.com; per 4hr/day \$39/49) hires bicy-

cles from several locations in Noosa including YHA Halse Lodge (p195). Alternatively, bikes are delivered to and from your door for free.

## BOAT

**Riverlight Ferry** (☎ 5449 8442) operates ferries between Noosa Heads and Tewantin (one way adult/child/family \$12/4/27, all-day pass \$17.50/5/39.50, 30 minutes). Tickets include onboard commentary, so the ferry provides a tour as well as being a people-mover.

## BUS

During the peak holiday seasons – 26 December to 10 January and over Easter – there are free shuttle buses every 10 to 15 minutes between Weyba Rd, just outside Noosa Junction, travelling all the way to Tewantin, and stopping just about everywhere in between. Sunbus has local services that link Noosa Heads, Noosaville, Noosa Junction and Tewantin.

## CAR

The **Other Car Rental Company** (☎ 5447 2831; www.noosacarental.com; per day from \$49) delivers cars and 4WDs to your door. The big guns are also in town and rent cars from around \$50 per day. They include:

**Avis** (Map p196; ☎ 5447 4933; Shop 1, Ocean Breeze Resort, cnr Hastings St & Noosa Dr, Noosa Heads)

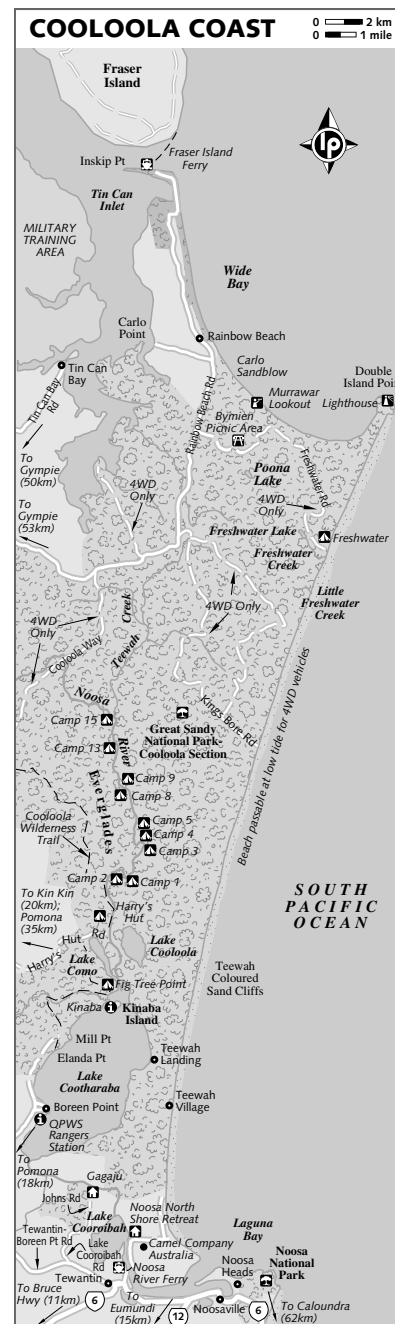
**Budget** (Map p193; ☎ 5474 2820; 52 Mary St, Noosaville)

**Hertz** (Map p196; ☎ 5447 2253; Noosa Blue Resort, 16 Noosa Dr, Noosa Heads)

## COOLOOLA COAST

Stretching for 50km between Noosa and Rainbow Beach, the Cooloola Coast is a long, remote strip of sandy beach backed by the Cooloola Section of the **Great Sandy National Park**. Although it's undeveloped, the 4WD and tin-boat sets flock here in droves so it's not always as peaceful as you might imagine. If you head off on foot or by canoe along the many inlets and waterways, however, you'll soon escape the crowds.

From the end of Moorindil St in Tewantin, the **Noosa North Shore Ferry** (☎ 5447 1321; pedestrians/cars one way \$1/5; 🚶 5.30am-12.30pm Fri & Sat, to 10.30pm Sun-Thu) shuttles flock across the river to Noosa North Shore. The trip takes a matter of minutes; if you're sporting a caravan on the back of your car it's an extra \$5 to \$7. Most people head here for activities along the Noosa River



and on Lake Coorobah. If you have a 4WD you can drive along the beach to Rainbow Beach (and on up to Inskip Point to the Fraser Island ferry), but check the tide times before setting out.

On the way up the beach you'll pass the **Teewah coloured sand cliffs**, estimated to be about 40,000 years old.

## Lake Coorobah

A couple of kilometres north of Tewantin, the Noosa River widens into Lake Coorobah. If you take the Noosa North Shore Ferry, you can drive up to the lake in a conventional vehicle and camp along sections of the beach.

**Camel Company Australia** (☎ 5442 4402; www.camelcompany.com.au; Beach Rd, North Shore, Tewantin; 1hr rides adult/child \$50/40, 2hr rides \$70/55) has beach camel rides, overnight trips (adult/child \$150/90) and a six-day Fraser Island safari (per person \$1100).

**Noosa North Shore Retreat** (☎ 5447 1706; www.noosanorthshore.com.au; Beach Rd; unpowered/powered sites from \$16/21.50, r from \$100, cabins from \$110; 🚰 🚽) is a sprawling park with a variety of sleeping options. Activities on offer include bushwalking, canoeing, fishing, tennis and horse riding (two-hour bush-and-beach ride \$75). As well as a pub and a small shop there's a first-class equestrian centre here and you can bring your own horse (stabling per night \$25).

Rusting vehicles and semipermanent tent homes in the private camping ground before you reach **Gagaju Backpackers** (☎ 1300 302 271, 5474 3522; www.travoholic.com/gagaju; 118 Johns Dr, Tewantin; unpowered sites/dm \$10/15) give you a taste of what's to come. Recycled materials have been used to build the basic dorms in this riverside wilderness camp. Bring your own food and mozzie repellent. If you want a rugged experience (complete with composting toilets) this will suit. Activities include canoeing and bushwalking. The Gagaju minibus shuttles to and from Noosa twice a day.

## Lake Cootharaba & Boreen Point

Cootharaba is the biggest lake in the Cooloola Section of Great Sandy National Park, measuring about 5km across and 10km in length. On the western shores of the lake and at the southern edge of the national park, Boreen Point is a relaxed little community with several places to stay and to eat. The lake is the gateway to the Noosa Everglades, offering bushwalking, canoeing and bush camping.

From Boreen Point, an unsealed road leads another 5km to **Elanda Point**, and the headquarters of the **Elanda Point Canoe Company** (☎ 1800 226 637, 5485 3165; www.elanda.com.au; Elanda Point; hire per day 1 or 2 people \$40), which rents canoes, kayaks and camping equipment. It can also arrange permits, Noosa transfers, and transport to Kinaba (one way \$65) and Harry's Hut (one way \$50, minimum four people) camping grounds but rates are much cheaper if you rent a canoe. **Cooloola Canoes & Kayaks** (☎ 5484 3164; 20 Boreen Point Pde, Boreen Point) also hires out kayaks and canoes.

The two self-contained units at **Lake Cootharaba Gallery Units** (☎ 5485 3153; 64 Laguna St, Boreen Point; r per night/week from \$90) are homey and practical. Linen costs extra and there's a minimum two-night stay. The interesting gallery here is a tad on the eccentric side.

On a serene strip by the river, the quiet and simple **Boreen Point Caravan & Camping Area** (☎ 5485 3244; Dun's Beach, Teewah St, Boreen Point; unpaved/power sites \$14/20) is dominated by large gums and native bush. Take a right turn off Laguna St onto Vista St and bear right at the lake. Rates are for two people.

**Apollonian Hotel** (☎ 5485 3100; Laguna St, Boreen Point; s/d with shared bathroom \$30/50; mains \$10-24; ☺ lunch & dinner) is a gorgeous old pub with sturdy timber walls, shady verandas and a beautifully preserved interior. Rooms are in the Queenslander out the back, and the pub grub is tasty and popular.

## Great Sandy National Park – Cooloola Section

The Cooloola Section of Great Sandy National Park covers more than 54,000 hectares from Lake Cootharaba north to Rainbow Beach. It's a varied wilderness area with long sandy beaches, mangrove-lined waterways, forest, heath and lakes, all featuring plentiful bird life – including rarities such as the red goshawk and the grass owl – and lots of wildflowers in spring.

The Cooloola Way, which runs from Tewantin up to Rainbow Beach, is open to 4WD vehicles unless there's been heavy rain – check with the rangers before setting out. Most people prefer to bomb up the beach, though you're restricted to a few hours either side of low tide. Make sure you check the tides as many a 4WD has met a wet end at high tide.

Although there are many 4WD tracks to lookout points and picnic grounds, the best way to see Cooloola is by boat or canoe along

the numerous tributaries of the Noosa River. Boats can be hired from Tewantin and Noosa (along Gympie Tce), Boreen Point and Elanda Point on Lake Cootharaba, and from Gagaju (p199).

There are some fantastic walking trails starting from Elanda Point on the shore of Lake Cootharaba, including the 46km Cooloola Wilderness Trail to Rainbow Beach and a 7km trail to an unstaffed QPWS information centre at Kinaba.

Before you go, pop into the **QPWS Great Sandy Information Centre** (☎ 5449 7792; 240 Moorindil St, Tewantin; ☺ 8am-4pm), which can provide information on park access, tide times and fire bans within the park. The centre issues car and camping permits for Fraser Island and camping permits for Great Sandy National Park (which can also be booked online at www.epa.qld.gov.au). There's also a **rangers station** (☎ 5485 3245) at Elanda.

The park has about 17 camping grounds, many of them along the river. The most popular (and best-equipped) camping grounds are Fig Tree Point (at the northern end of Lake Cootharaba), Harry's Hut (about 4km upstream) and Freshwater (about 6km south of Double Island Point) on the coast. You can also camp (per person/family \$4.50/18) on the beach if you're driving up to Rainbow Beach. Apart from Harry's Hut, Freshwater, Teewah Beach and Poverty, all sites are accessible by hiking or river only.

## EUMUNDI

☎ 07 / pop 490

Sweet little Eumundi is a quaint highland village with a quirky new-age vibe greatly amplified during its famous market days. The historic streetscape blends well with modern cafés, unique boutiques, silversmiths, crafts people and body-artists doing their thing. Once you've breathed Eumundi air don't be surprised if you feel a sudden urge to take up beading or body-painting.

## Information

**Berkelouw Books** (☎ 5442 8366; ☺ 9am-5.30pm)

This well-established book chain began life in Rotterdam, relocated to Sydney, and opened branches in Melbourne and Los Angeles, before adding tiny little Eumundi to its high-profile book zone.

**Discover Eumundi Heritage and Information**

**Centre** (☎ 5442 8762; Memorial Dr; ☺ 10am-4pm) Also houses the museum (admission free).

## Sights & Activities

The **Eumundi markets** (☺ 6.30am-2pm Sat, 8am-1pm Wed) attract thousands of visitors to their 300-plus stalls and have everything from hand-crafted furniture and jewellery to homemade clothes and alternative-healing booths.

The town's other claim to fame is Eumundi Lager, originally brewed in the Imperial Hotel. Nowadays it's made down at Yatala on the Gold Coast but you can still sample it on tap at the **Imperial Hotel** (Memorial Dr).

**Black Fulla Dreaming** (☎ 5479 0533; www.murrawolka.com; 39 Memorial Dr; ☺ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) is Aboriginal-owned and operated. Here you can buy boomerangs and didjeridus hand-painted by indigenous artists, or book boomerang-throwing and didjeridu demonstrations. They can also arrange dance performances by the Gubbi Gubbi dancers.

About 10km northwest of Eumundi, the little village of **Pomona** sits in the shadow of looming Mt Cooroora (440m). Every year hardy athletes run to the summit to claim the title of 'King of the Mountain'. In the village itself, the wonderful **Majestic Theatre** (☎ 5485 2330; www.majestic.spiderweb.com.au; 3 Factory St, Pomona; ☺ Thu-Sun nights) is one of the only places in the world where you can see a silent movie accompanied by the original Wurlitzer organ soundtrack. For 21 years (until 2007) the theatre played only one film – Rudolph Valentino's *The Son of the Sheikh*, every Thursday night. A recent spruce-up has seen the addition of a restaurant and the reintroduction of talkies but the focus remains firmly on the silent screen. For a step back in history, catch a **screening** (tickets \$10, meal deal \$25; ☺ 8pm) of the iconic *The Son of the Sheikh* on the first Thursday of each month.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Hidden Valley B&B** (☎ 5442 8685; www.eumundibed.com; 39 Caplick Way; railway carriage from \$105, r \$175-195; ☺) This not-so-hidden retreat is on 1.5 hectares of land only 1km from Eumundi on the Noosa road. Inside this attractive Queenslander you can choose a themed room to match your mood – Aladdin's Cave, the Emperors Suite or the Hinterland Retreat. All have private balconies but there are simpler rooms in the converted railcar in the garden. Cooking courses are also available (\$95 for in-house guests).

**Harmony Hill Station** (☎ 5442 7469; www.leoandco.com.au; 81 Seib Rd; carriage \$120; ☺) Perched on a hilltop in a 5-hectare property, this restored and fully self-contained 1912 purple railway

carriage is the perfect place to relax or to romance. Share the grounds with grazing kangaroos, watch the sunset from Lover's Leap, share a bottle of wine beneath a stunning night sky...or even get married (the owners are celebrants!). Breakfast and dinner hampers are available on request.

**Berkelouw Café** (☎ 5442 8422; 87 Memorial Dr; dishes \$5-15; ☺ 7.30am-5pm) One of the few cafés to open every day, this is the place for coffee, cakes and muffins. Take your coffee for a browse through Berkelouw Books next door (see opposite).

**Green Bean Café** (☎ 5442 8388; 6/77 Memorial Dr; mains \$8-11; ☺ breakfast & lunch Tue-Sat) Directly opposite the markets this funky café serves up wholesome wraps, burgers and light meals. The large window opens onto the main street so you still feel part of the market-day action.

**Treefellers Café** (☎ 5442 7766; 69 Memorial Dr; mains \$16-21; ☺ breakfast Wed, Sat & Sun, lunch Wed-Sun, dinner Thu-Sat) Eumundi's most cosmopolitan eatery was named after Eumundi legend Dick Caplick, a tree-feller turned ecofriend. The café is famous for its humungous Treefellers 'all-day breakfast' (with enough calories to fuel a lumberjack).

**Pickup Spirit House Restaurant** (☎ 5446 8994; 20 Ninderry Rd, Yandina; mains \$28-36; ☺ lunch daily, dinner Wed-Sat) This legendary restaurant is at Yandina, 11km south of Eumundi. The subtropical surroundings create an authentic Southeast Asian setting, while the kitchen concocts Thai-infused innovations such as whole crispy reef fish with tamarind and chilli or citrus scallops with fresh coconut. If you feel inspired sign up for a cooking class (☎ 5446 8977; per person \$125), which includes all ingredients, recipes, lunch and wine.

## Drinking

**Joe's Waterhole** (☎ 5442 8144; www.musicliveatjoes.com; Memorial Dr) Built in 1891 this old pub has weathered the century to attract big-name national and international musicians. Check the website for details.

## Getting There & Away

**Sunbus** (☎ 13 12 30) runs hourly from Noosa Heads (\$3.20, 40 minutes) and Nambour (\$4.10, 30 minutes). Alternatively, both **Storeline Tours** (☎ 5474 1500; www.sunshinecoastdaytours.com.au) and **Henry's** (☎ 5474 0199) offer door-to-door transfers from Noosa accommodation (adult/child \$15/10, 30 minutes, Wednesday and Saturday), allowing around three hours at the markets.

**SUGAR & SPICE**

The **Big Pineapple** (☎ 5442 1333; Nambour Connection Rd, Nambour; ☎ 9am-5pm) at Nambour is one of Queensland's 39 kitschy 'big things'. You can walk through the 15m-high fibreglass fruit itself for free or take a plantation train tour (adult/child \$11.50/9.50), a tour through macadamia orchards and rainforests (\$7.50/5), or you can buy a combined ticket (adult/child/family \$15.50/11.50). Don't forget to spend more money at the souvenir shop.

In Yandina, on the Bruce Hwy about 7km north of the Big Pineapple, you'll find the **Ginger Factory** (☎ 5446 7100; 50 Pioneer Rd; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm), a tacky souvenir store and tourist attraction. There are train rides, factory and plantation tours and, of course, a huge range of ginger products and souvenirs on sale.

## SUNSHINE COAST HINTERLAND

Reaching to heights of 400m and more, the Blackall Range forms a stunning backdrop to the Sunshine Coast's popular beaches, a short 50km away. A relaxed half- or full-day circuit drive from the coast follows a winding road along the razorback line of the escarpment, passing through quaint mountain villages and offering spectacular views of the coastal lowlands. The villages (some suffering an overdose of kitschy craft shops and Devonshire tearooms) are worth a visit but the real attraction is the landscape, with its lush green pastures and softly folded valleys and ridges, and the waterfalls, swimming holes, rainforests and walks in the national parks. Cosy cabins and B&Bs are popular weekend retreats, especially during winter.

**Tours**

Plenty of tour companies operate through the hinterland and will pick up from anywhere along the Sunshine Coast.

**Off Beat Rainforest Tours** (☎ 5473 5135; www.offbeatours.com.au; adult/child \$149/99) has 4WD ecotours to Conondale National Park, including morning tea, a gourmet lunch and transfers. **Storeyline Tours** (☎ 5474 1500; adult/child \$74/41) runs small-group tours to Montville and nearby rainforests, and trips to the Glass House Mountains.

**MALENY**

☎ 07 / pop 1300

Perched high in the heart of the rolling green hills of the Blackall Range, Maleny is an intriguing melange of artists, musicians and creative souls, the ageing hippie scene, rural 'tree-changers' and cooperative ventures. Its quirky

bohemian edge underscores a thriving commercial township that has well and truly moved on from its timber and dairy past without yielding to the tacky heritage developments and ye olde tourist-trap shoppes that have engulfed nearby mountain villages. There's a strong sense of community with amazing support for local 'co-ops' and environmental concerns, and equally stubborn resistance to amorphous corporations (spectacularly demonstrated when Woolworths' planned supermarket development rallied national-news-headlining protests from the entire community, though the supermarket was built anyway).

**Information**

**Visitors centre** (☎ 5499 9033; www.tourmaleny.com.au; 23 Maple St; ☎ 9am-3pm) At the Maleny Community Centre.

**Sights & Activities**

**Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve** (☎ 5499 9907; Mountain View Rd) is a pristine rainforest shelter spread over 52 hectares southeast of town. Walking tracks snake through the rainforest and there's a healthy population of bird life and unbearably cute pademelons.

**Maleny Bookshop** (☎ 5494 3666; 39 Maple St; ☎ 10am-4pm) is the sort of secondhand bookshop where gems are found hidden among the eclectic assortment of used, out-of-print and antiquarian books.

**Sleeping**

**Ocean View Tourist Park** (☎ 1300 769 443, 5494 1171; www.oceanviewtouristpark.com; Maleny-Landsborough Rd; unpowered/powerd sites \$20/25, cabins \$50-95; ♿) Conveniently close to Australia Zoo, the coast and the hinterland, this tourist park also has magnificent views of the Glass House Mountains and Sunshine Coast beaches. Rates are for two people.

**Morning Star Motel** (☎ 5494 2944; www.morningstar-motel.com; 2 Panorama Pl; r \$88-110) The rooms at this comfortable and clean motel have outstanding coastal views, and the deluxe suites also have spas. Wheelchair accessible.

**Maleny Lodge Guest House** (☎ 5494 2370; www.malenylodge.com; 58 Maple St; s incl breakfast \$130-160, d incl breakfast \$150-170; ♿) This rambling B&B boasts myriad gorgeous rooms with cushy, four-poster beds and lashings of stained wood and antiques. There's an open fire for cold winter days and an open pool house for warm summer ones.

**Obi Eco** (☎ 5499 9261; susannehaydon@gmail.com; Nadi La; midweek/weekend \$249/598; ♿) This luxurious energy-efficient sustainable two-bedroom cottage is set on 12 hectares in a Land for Wildlife sanctuary. The spacious deck overlooks Obi Obi Creek and is the perfect place to relax and enjoy the sight of cows grazing in the pasture. A short stroll takes you to a private picnic area on the creek where platypus frolic in the water. The cottage is secluded yet still only 3km from Maleny's vibrant main street.

**Relax at the Cabin** (☎ 5499 9377; www.kingludwigs.com.au; cabin \$350) Only 3km from Maleny this secluded cabin is set in pine forest on 8 hectares of land. The spa, fireplace and large, comfy bed dominate the living room, and a wall of glass doors opens onto a wide timber deck. Your favourite wines, a range of beers and a welcoming cheese platter greet your arrival, and little luxuries like fluffy bathrobes and heated towel-racks are a classy touch. There's a dam on site so you can bring your horse, and a helicopter pad if you want to arrive in style.

**Eating**

There are several good cafés along Maple St as well as a co-op selling organic fruit and vegetables.

**Monica's Café** (☎ 5494 2670; 11/43 Maple St; mains \$8-17; ☎ breakfast & lunch) Snazzy Monica's blackboard menu promises innovative dishes such as gluten-free risotto pots and Balinese beef skewers with kumara paste. Sit outside to soak up the town's cruisy vibe or take a seat at the long wooden table indoors. There's also a cosy nook upstairs.

**Colin James Fine Foods** (☎ 5494 2860; 37 Maple St; dishes \$8-17; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun) This deli, café and fromagerie serves light meals, sandwiches and melts. The fromagerie has over 200 cheeses begging to be sampled, and the gelati are wicked.

**our pick Up Front Club** (☎ 5494 2592; 31 Maple St; dishes \$9-18; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This cosy café injects funk by the bucketful into Maleny's main strip, with organic breads and tofu and tempah salads. Live music takes to the stage Friday to Sunday nights (cover charge \$8 to \$10) and you'll catch anything from reggae to a bout of folk. Musicians are welcome join in the blackboard sessions on Monday evenings.

**Bombay Mahal** (☎ 5494 3670; 76 Maple St; mains \$20-32; ☎ dinner Thu-Tue) This intimate Indian restaurant in an old chapel on the main street is filled with the aroma of exotic spices and delicious curries.

**Terrace** (☎ 5494 3700; cnr Mountain View & Maleny-Landsborough Rds; mains \$26-36; ☎ lunch & dinner) One of Queensland's best, this award-winner serves delectable seafood and has spectacular views of the Glass House Mountains. If you're ravenous try the Moreton Bay bugs, king prawns, salmon and mahi mahi served on a sizzling granite tile with vegetable skewers and pilaf rice.

**King Ludwigs Restaurant** (☎ 5499 9377; www.kingludwigs.com.au; 401 Mountain View Rd; mains \$26.50-32.50; ☎ lunch Wed-Sun, dinner Wed-Sat) Klaus and Barbara have a passion for good food, German beer and welcoming Bavarian hospitality. A schnapps (or two) in the rustic Bavarian bar will prime your taste buds for the mouth-watering dishes on the menu including the legendary Bavarian potato cream soup with Frankfurt sausage. The views of the Glass House Mountains are sensational.

**MONTVILLE**

☎ 07 / pop 860

It's hard to imagine that the chintzy mountain village of Montville with its fudge emporiums, Devonshire tearooms and cottage crafts began life under the dramatic name of Razorback – until you arrive at the town's spectacular ridge-top location 1640ft above sea level. While Montville's cottage-industry make-over won't appeal to everyone, its subtropical setting is pleasantly attractive and the rainforests, waterfalls and hiking trails in the Kondalilla National Park will appeal to bushwalkers and bird watchers.

A five-minute drive south of town, **Baroon Pocket Dam** is a lovely spot for a picnic and the (now flooded) site of the ancient Bunya nut festivals, when Aboriginal tribes would gather to feast on the sacred Bunya nut and hold corroborees, rituals and marriages. Baroon

Pocket Dam is also the start of the 32km Sunshine Coast Hinterland Great Walk. It's a 10km walk from the dam through lush rainforest (or a 3km drive northwest of Montville) to **Kondalilla National Park** and the popular Kondalilla Falls. Stretch out on the lawns here for a picnic or take a cool rainforest walk to a swimming hole at the head of the falls. Check for leeches when you get out!

The **information centre** (☎ 5478 5544; 168 Main St; ☹ 10am-4pm) in town can help you find cottage accommodation.

### Sleeping

**Clouds of Montville** (☎ 5442 9174; www.cloudsofmontville.com.au; 166 Balmoral Rd; r midweek/weekend \$120/175, cabins midweek/weekend \$275/355; ♿ ♻) Set on 2 hectares, Clouds has a range of accommodation options from motel-style rooms with a kitchenette to fully self-contained cottages complete with a wood fire and spa. Cottage stays include breakfast and complimentary transport to nearby restaurants.

**Treehouses of Montville** (☎ 1800 444 350; www.treehouses.com.au; Kondalilla Falls Rd; midweek \$165-300, weekend \$470-710) Near the entrance to Kondalilla Falls National Park, these beautiful self-contained treehouses are hidden in a secluded patch of rainforest. Each cabin has a fireplace, spa and private wooden deck. There's also a restaurant for romantic candlelit dining.

**our pick** **Secrets on the Lake** (☎ 5478 5888; www.secretsonthelake.com.au; 207 Narrows Rd; midweek/weekend

\$320/370; ♿) These magical, hand-crafted wooden treehouses hidden among the foliage have all the ingredients for romance – sunken spas, log fires and stunning views of Lake Baroon. There's a complimentary champagne breakfast hamper, and freshly baked muffins are delivered to your cabin each morning.

**Narrows Escape** (☎ 5478 5000; www.narrowsecape.com.au; Narrows Rd; midweek \$265, 2-night weekend \$590; ♿ ♻) Also near the lake, these rainforest cottages come with life's little luxuries – breakfast hampers with organic produce, aromatherapy massages, spa baths and log fires. Swinging in the hammock on the deck or gazing at the canopy through the ceiling skylights, you're always immersed in nature.

### Eating

**Edge Restaurant** (☎ 5442 9344; 127-133 Main St; mains \$14-25; ☹ breakfast & lunch) Perched on the edge of the escarpment, this restaurant in the Mayfield complex has stupendous views of the fabulous green hinterland and blue ocean in the distance.

**Poets Café** (☎ 5478 5479; 167 Main St; mains \$16-32; ☹ breakfast & lunch daily, dinner Fri) Perhaps Coleridge or one of the poets painted on the ceiling dreamt of a French pavilion with white trim. Today's poets sip frothy lattes while browsing the gourmet menu in this charming café.

**Pennefathings Inn** (☎ 5442 9489; 96 Main St; mains \$20-30; ☹ lunch & dinner daily, breakfast Sun) At this

friendly inn you can start with an imported or domestic boutique beer and chase it up with good old English fare, Australian tucker or a plain old barbecue.

### MAPLETON

The tiny village of Mapleton is perched at the northern end of the Blackall Range. It has a couple of craft and pottery galleries and flanks the **Mapleton Falls National Park**. In the park, Pencil Creek cascades 120m over an escarpment to form Mapleton Falls. The lookout has views over the Obi Obi Valley. In spring, look for peregrine falcons roosting on the edges of the falls. A number of walking trails, including the Sunshine Coast Hinterland Great Walk, start here.

Just north of Mapleton, **Lilyponds Holiday Park** (☎ 1800 003 764, 5445 7238; www.lilyponds.com.au; 26 Warruga St; unpowered/powerd sites from \$22/25, cabins \$70-95) overlooks the Mapleton Lily Ponds and has self-contained cabins. You can camp in the

avocado orchard and pick fresh avocados off the trees. Camping rates are for two people.

The Great Walk passes **Obilo Lodge** (☎ 5445 7705; www.obilolodge.com.au; Lot 9, Suses Pocket Rd; r incl breakfast \$160-190; ♿ ♻), a friendly B&B with unpretentious rooms but great views of the Obi Obi Valley. The most expensive room also has a spa.

**Taman Sari** (☎ 5478 6868; www.tamansari.com.au; Obi Obi Rd; d per night \$320, minimum 2-night stay) has two private pavilions in a luxurious Asian-inspired rainforest sanctuary overlooking the Obi Obi Valley. Behind the impressive wooden doors the attention to detail is extraordinary, from the heated towel racks to the huge spa room with its pebbled floor.

Lunch on the wide veranda of the **Mapleton Tavern** (☎ 5445 7499; cnr Maleny–Montville & Obi Obi Rds; mains \$16-25; ☹ lunch daily, dinner Mon-Sat), an iconic pink Queenslander, comes with sweeping views of the hinterland and the ocean in the distance.

### DETOUR: KENILWORTH

In the Mary River Valley west of the Blackall Range, Kenilworth is a small country town with the merest whiff of an alternative vibe. There's not much to do in town, as all the action takes place outdoors – canoeing the Mary River, bushwalking and camping in the Conondale Range, or horse riding in the Mary Valley.

The **Kenilworth visitors centre** (☎ 5446 0122; Elizabeth St; ☹ 10am-3pm Thu-Sun) has walking-trail maps and information on various activities. In town, sample locally made cheese and yogurt at **Kenilworth Country Foods** (☎ 5446 0144; 45 Charles St; ☹ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-3pm Sat & Sun) and be sure to take a wedge of wickedly good cheese on your camping trip. A lovely camp site can be found on the banks of the Obi Obi Creek, 10km east of town on the Obi Obi Rd. Look for the large grassy area just past the bridge at crossing 2 and (bonus), you don't need a permit. But if you plan to camp in the Kenilworth State Forest or Conondale National Park you will need a **permit** (☎ 13 13 04; www.epa.qld.gov.au; per person \$4.50).

Horse riders will want to stay at **Kenilworth Homestead** (☎ 5446 0555; www.kenilworthhomestead.com.au; 2760 Eumundi–Kenilworth Rd; dm \$50, 2-bedroom cottage \$130), where you can also set up camp (per person \$7) by the Mary River.

**McGinn's of Kenilworth** (☎ 5446 0025; 11 Elizabeth St; mains \$8-23; ☹ 7.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 6am-late Sat & Sun) is a shady spot for lunch or coffee and cake.

Kenilworth is 18km west of Mapleton on the Obi Obi Rd.

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