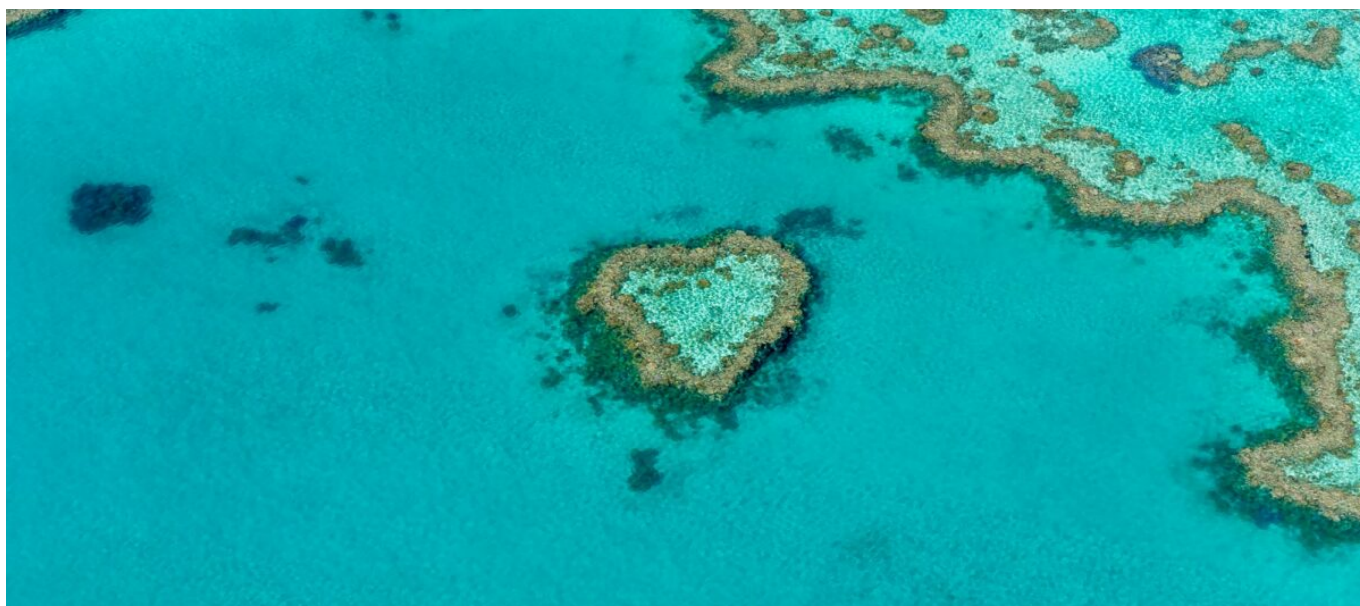


Our 5 favorites on Australia's east coast, from Brisbane to
Daintree Forest



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By Floriane

During our backpacking trip around the world, we explored Australia for a month in a van. We were craving nature, animals you can't see anywhere else, turquoise waters and wide open spaces. And we weren't disappointed. From **Brisbane** to the **Daintree rainforest, Australia's east coast** offered us a concentration of incredible landscapes.

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What we loved about Australia, beyond the crazy landscapes, was the lifestyle. Here, every town has its own free-access, well-equipped artificial seawater lagoon. It's clean, it's safe, it's beautiful, and there's always a picnic area with barbecues right next door.

In this article, we share with you **our 5 favorites** on Australia's east coast, as well as the formalities for obtaining an Australian visa.

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Practical info: preparing a trip to Australia's east coast

Before you leave, there are a few essentials to consider:

- **Visa** : The most important thing is to **apply for an Australian visa**. For a tourist trip like ours, the easiest way is to use the [eVisitor visa for Australia](#). This visa is **compulsory**, except if you are an Australian or New Zealand national, or simply in transit, is **free, valid for 12 months**, and allows you to **stay for up to 3 consecutive months**.

You can apply for a visa online, in just a few minutes. It usually takes **around 5 days** to obtain, but there is also an **express application** option if you're in a hurry.

- **As far as transport is concerned**, we recommend **renting a van** or car to enjoy total freedom, especially between small towns. Roads are in excellent condition, and campsites are plentiful and often very well equipped.
- Don't forget sunscreen, mosquito repellent and, above all, your bathing suit: there's always somewhere to swim in the cities.

1. A gentle start in Brisbane: a relaxed city and the perfect warm-up

Brisbane is often the first stop on the East Coast. We found it a great warm-up. The atmosphere is cool, the climate pleasant, and everything is done to make you feel at home.

We recommend a walk or bike ride along **South Bank**, with its tropical gardens, man-made lagoon in the heart of downtown, and nice little restaurants. It's the ideal spot to relax at the end of the day, with a sunset over the skyline in the background. And, of course, there are the open-air BBQs, perfect for dining with a view.

2. Diving the Great Barrier Reef: an unforgettable experience

Obviously, this was one of the most eagerly awaited moments of our trip: discovering the **Great Barrier Reef**. And although we'd seen plenty of photos, nothing really prepared us for the beauty of what we saw underwater and in the air.

We were lucky enough to **snorkel around the Whitsundays** and near **Cairns**, two great starting points. The water is warm, the coral is incredibly diverse, and we swam with turtles, multicolored fish and even stingrays.

And then we did something **a little crazy**, because we knew we might never get the chance again: **a 15-minute helicopter flight over the fence**. It's short, but it's intense. Seeing this immense turquoise and emerald labyrinth from the air is simply unreal.

→ **A word of advice** : choose your excursion carefully, whether in the water or in the air. Choose operators committed to protecting the reef, and avoid the big touristy structures. There are plenty of small, local agencies offering more respectful and friendly experiences.

3. The Whitsundays: a cruise in a dream setting

It's one of Australia's best-known images, yet the reality far exceeds expectations. We took a **day cruise from Airlie beach** to discover the **Whitsundays**.

The **ultra-fine white sand of Whitehaven Beach**, the turquoise water as far as the eye can see, the hills covered in vegetation. In our opinion, it's one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Even though we'd heard all about it, being there and walking barefoot on the soft, almost luminous sand was a unique sensation.

→ We strongly advise you to book in advance, especially in high season. And if

you're prone to seasickness, look into **catamarans**, more stable and comfortable for a sea excursion.

4. Daintree Forest and Cape Tribulation: where jungle meets ocean

In the far north of Queensland, the **Daintree Rainforest** had us completely spellbound. It's one of the few places in the world where the jungle meets the ocean. The contrast is striking: dense vegetation on one side, a wild palm-fringed beach on the other.

The road that leads there is sublime, between mangroves and mountains. Once there, we recommend a stroll along the footbridges in the heart of the forest and a

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break at **Cape Tribulation**, a timeless place.

5. Cairns and the Atherton Tablelands: waterfalls

We used **Cairns** as a base from which to explore the surrounding area, in particular the **Atherton Tablelands**, a slightly elevated region 1 hour from Cairns.

The waterfall circuit is a real treat: **Millaa Millaa Falls, Zillie Falls, Ellinjaa Falls...** You can see them all in a day's drive, and some are perfect for a refreshing dip.

And in Cairns itself, the **free lagoon on the esplanade** is perfect for a refreshing swim. It's worth noting that many of the region's beaches are off-limits to bathers, as saltwater crocodiles can be found there, especially in the warmer months. These public pools are therefore an excellent alternative for risk-free bathing.

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Our month on the **east coast of Australia** was a breath of fresh air during our [world tour](#). Dream beaches, thousand-year-old forests, animals you can't see anywhere else, and a relaxed lifestyle that makes you want to slow down. We hope this article helps you prepare your itinerary and your trip, and don't forget to apply for **your Australian visa** before you leave.

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