

A stylized orange silhouette of a city skyline with various skyscrapers and buildings, set against a light orange background. A circular graphic on the left contains the text "THE PERFECT HOLIDAY IN THE GOLD COAST".

THE PERFECT HOLIDAY IN THE GOLD COAST

The Gold Coast is practically synonymous with paradise. A fun and cosmopolitan city that sits on the edge of some of the most stunning beaches in the world, the Gold Coast truly has it all. And that's before you even consider its subtropical climate and the surrounding

areas which include incredible rainforest, a range of national parks and some stunning lakes. While it's debateable exactly how it came to be known as the Gold Coast, over half a million people call it home, making it the most populous non-capital city in Australia.

Beach

As the Gold Coast is spread out over a fairly large area, we'd recommend renting a car to make it easier to get around. For a two week rental, you can expect to pay from AU\$400 to AU\$800, but book early for a better deal. Pick up your car at the airport, which is about a 30 minute drive into the centre of the city.

You've likely flown quite a distance, so treat yourself to a day of making the most of what you came for: the beach.

The Gold Coast has some incredible views that you'll be able to take advantage of if you stay in an apartment-style accommodation like **Promenade Apartments** or **Meriton Apartments**.

Most hotels and apartments in this area overlook the sea, and are just a few minutes' walk from your beach of choice as well as the shops, bars and restaurants of Cavill Avenue. If you stroll into the city, you'll find **Chevron Island** just north of **Surfers Paradise**. This is the place to be for the best food. Try **Pigs and Pints** for delicious sliders, or something lighter at the **Sushi Cafe**.

The nightlife in the Gold Coast is varied and exciting, and like the rest of the city, there's something for everyone when it comes to choosing evening activities. If you're interested in craft beer or fancy cocktails, they've got it. Australia's known for its distinct coffee culture so if you'd rather imbibe with a java based beverage, you can be sure they'll have that too!

Best Beaches

The Gold Coast is a long strip of land with beaches running from Palm Beach in the south to Paradise Point in the north. If you came to surf, drive to either Palm Beach or Duranbah (or D'bah to the locals) just south of the city for some incredible waves.

If you're staying centrally, the aptly named Surfers Paradise is walking distance from the city centre. For families, both Mermaid Beach and Broadbeach are walkable from most accommodations, and they offer shaded park areas as well as amenities.

If you want to just soak up the sun or do some swimming, the Aussie version of Miami Beach is beautiful as is Burleigh Heads beach. Both of these are a short drive from the centre of the Gold Coast, or you can walk down the 2.5 km Burleigh Beach Walking Path.

Whale Watching

If you can tear yourself away from the golden sand and gentle rumble of the waves, spend a day in the Coral Sea on a whale watching tour. Between June and November, you'll find that packages start at around AU\$100 for adults from providers like **Whales in Paradise** and **Spirit of Gold Coast**.



Springbrook National Park

Whatever you do during the day, be sure to save your energy for an incredible evening rainforest walk through Springbrook National Park from **Tour Gold Coast**.

Springbrook National Park is part of the Shield Volcano Group, and the rainforests are a World Heritage Site. The park has spectacular waterfalls, ancient trees and so much natural beauty that spending a full day here is a must.

Bushwacker Eco Tours offers a range of tours through the park for reasonable prices that start at around AU\$100 for a child and AU\$130 for an adult, and there are also family discounts available. This park is massively popular with campers and bushwalkers who know to look for unique species like mountain brushtail possum, yellow-tailed black cockatoo and koalas. Although the flora and fauna are varied, the coachwood and giant brush box trees are plentiful, and some trees in the park are 3,000 years old.

Prepare for a Walk in the Rainforest

This area tends to be slightly cooler and wetter than the regions closer to the coast. Make sure to bring waterproofs and a

few extra light layers to ensure you stay warm. Comfortable and sensible flat shoes are a must, and don't forget water and a

snack if you think you might be a bit peckish from the walking.

Gold Coast by Air

Conquer your fear of heights and see the stunning areas around the Gold Coast in a hot air balloon ride. This is a brilliant activity for couples and providers like **Hot Air** offer some really romantic options to make this a truly memorable experience. Most packages start at around AU\$250, with the option to add a champagne breakfast, or a drop off at a vineyard or theme park.

Learn to Surf

You can't really have an authentic holiday in Australia without learning to surf, if you can't already. Check out **Get Wet Surf School** where private lessons and tailored packages are available from around AU\$50 and up for a few hours' tuition. Or, grab your board and head over to Surfers Paradise or the Spit in the North. Surf's up!

Explore

Moreton Island

Moreton Island, 75 minutes or 40km off the Gold Coast, is one of the largest sand islands on the planet, and it's just a short trip from Brisbane on the Micat Ferry. You can camp or glamp on Moreton, but why not stay in a beach front villa at **Tangalooma**? You'll have loads to discover on this island so make it a priority to explore its unique ecosystem with **Moreton Island Adventures**.

Support a Local Team

The Gold Coast is home to sports teams competing in rugby, soccer, Australian Rules football, and motor racing. The **Metricon Stadium** is home to the Gold Coast Suns rugby team, but it also holds a variety of other events including concerts. If you'd rather play than watch, there are a number of golf courses like **Palmer Gold Coast** or **Glades Golf Club** to enjoy. Green fees are around AU\$130 for 18 holes.

Learn About Aboriginal Culture

Australia has a lengthy history of distinct Aboriginal culture. On the Gold Coast highway, you'll find the **Jellurgal Aboriginal Centre**. Take a tour of the centre and learn about this amazing culture, then head into Burleigh for dinner. Choose a restaurant like **The Fish House** that serves delicious and fresh seafood.



Visit Brisbane

Spend some time in Brisbane, exploring one of Australia's largest cities. This amazing city is packed full of cultural activities, and is a haven for foodies. Try **The Bitter Suite** where everything is made from scratch using local ingredients. The South Bank area is a lively part of the city, full of shopping and exciting and unique experiences. There are lots of accommodation choices, from boutique hotels to studio style rooms like those found at **Mantra**.

Brisbane is home to many unique urban villages. Ascot and Hamilton is packed with trendy, riverside restaurants and designer shops. The City is the heart of Brisbane and full of free activities, galleries, parks and loads of shopping, and it's where most tourists spend their time. Bulimba and Hawthorne is a quaint village that offers visitors a glimpse of Brisbane's past. This isn't even all of them, and each one of these areas has plenty to discover, from shops and theatres, to galleries

and museums, as well as delightful places to eat and drink.

If you want to take an afternoon out of the city, don't forget Australia's climate is perfect for growing grapes, making it one of the most popular wine producers in the world. Get out of the city and enjoy a winery tour at the **Cedar Creek Estate** or **O'Reilly's Canungra Valley Vineyards**.

Things to do in Brisbane

- Visit the City Botanic Gardens
- Feed the dolphins at Tangalooma
- Take a river cruise
- Take the whole family on the Story Bridge Adventure Climb

When Should You Plan Your trip?

The annual high temperature average is 25°C, with January and February being the warmest months. Along with March, they're the rainiest months too with an average of about two weeks of wet weather. It's driest in July and August when temperature highs reach about 21°C.

What the Locals Say: Alternative Options

When you think of the Gold Coast, most people think about bikinis and sandy beaches like the world-famous Surfers Paradise. But there's a whole other world to explore in the

Gold Coast Hinterland. Pack your walking shoes and take the wonderful scenic drive to Natural Bridge about 45 minutes from Surfers Paradise. Here you'll find a wonderful rainforest path

which meanders down to the real feature of this park; a waterfall that has eaten its way through the roof of a basalt cave over thousands of years to create a natural bridge.

Contributed by: **Top 100 Experiences - Things to see and do in Australia.**

One of the latest attractions to come to the Gold Coast is Dreamworld's "Zombie Evolution". Follow the story of an explosion at a cryonics chamber that re-awakens the dead at Kevil Hill and see if you can navigate your way through the dark rooms and past the zombies.

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Mount Tamborine, in the Gold Coast Hinterland is the perfect place to spend your weekend. Stroll along the main street of Eagle Heights and see wonderful art and crafts including a cuckoo clock shop, fairy garden and several places that sell delicious fudge! The Witches Chase Cheese Co and Mount Tamborine Brewery are great places to stop for lunch and sample some of the local food and drink.

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All set to book your holiday to the Gold Coast?

Visit <http://www.cheapflights.co.uk> for great deals on flights.