

A Conservation Economy

There are a number of businesses and community enterprises that reveal the priceless and diverse nature and culture of Cape York Peninsula. On your visit, make sure you look for the following experiences.

1. Chuulangun campgrounds

Kaanju traditional owner David Claudie describes his way of caring for his country as "ancient but new". The Kaanju proposal for Cape York's first Indigenous Protected Area would protect 470 000 hectares. Cuscus and Palm Cockatoos can be found here by the Wenlock River. www.kaanjungaachi.com.au

2. Lockhart Art Gang

Lockhart River is home to a renowned collective known as the Lockhart Art Gang. Their work is sold in galleries Australia wide. You can buy paintings direct from the gallery in Lockhart River and have them shipped home. www.artgang.com.au

3. Lotus Bird Lodge

Well known among Australian and international birdwatchers, these cabins, nestled among the paperbarks, overlook a lagoon teeming with magpie geese, egrets and other waterbirds. www.lotusbird.com.au

4. Quinkan Regional Cultural Centre

The Quinkan galleries are among the oldest and most spectacular rock art sites in the world. UNESCO listed them as one of the top 10 rock art sites on earth. The interpretive centre in Laura describes the history of the indigenous people, pastoralists and the European and Chinese miners.

There are tours to the galleries with Kuku Thaypan elder Dr Tommy George, whose contributions to linguistic and cultural research saw James Cook University award him an Honorary Doctorate. www.quinkancc.com.au

5. Aurukun Fishing Charters and Aurukun Wetland Charters

On the Fishing Charters, fish with the experts and benefit from the enormous advantage of the skills and knowledge of the traditional owners of the area. On the Wetland Charters, join the tour guides for a unique experience of an untouched natural world, with interpretation and insight from the Wik people and their ancient culture. www.aurukunfishingcharters.com www.aurukunwetlandcharters.com

6. Guurrbi Tours

Nugal-warra Elder Willie Gordon, who leads rock art and bush medicine tours, will give you a memorable and insightful experience in the south eastern corner of the Peninsula. www.guurrbitours.com

7. John Charlton Cape York Adventures

Sports fishing or pure adventure trips to sites such as turtle rookeries. www.capeyorkadventures.com.au

8. Jowalbinna Rock Art Safari Camp

The most accessible rock art in Cape York, part of the Quinkan galleries. Camping, cabins, guided tours, swimming, 35 km from Laura. This is an incredible place with the real spirit of Cape York. The Safari Camp is reopening in 2007. www.jowalbinna.com.au

9. Mapoon Turtle Rescue

A world renowned adventure and conservation project where visitors help protect threatened marine turtles on the magnificent remote coasts of the western Peninsula. www.capeyorkturtlerescue.com

10. Pormpuraaw Arts and Culture Centre

Many artworks here are of totems of particular local families, such as the crocodile or brolga. Artwork is for sale, proceeds of which go to supporting cultural obligations of the local people. www.pormpuraaw.qld.gov.au

11. Portland House

Holiday home accommodation near the Iron Range NP. "You can sit on the verandah overlooking the Coral Sea and marvel at nature's magnificence."

"Cape York is one of the last great wilderness areas on the planet. The intention is to foster appreciation and conservation of the area for the future." www.portlandhouse.com.au

12. Punsand Bay Lodge

Punsand Bay Camping Resort is 5 km west of the tip of Cape York. You can watch the sun rise over the Coral Sea in the Pacific and set over the Arafura Sea in the Indian Ocean. There is a ferry from here to Thursday Island. www.punsand.com.au

13. Wrights Wilderness Safaris

Fishing in the estuaries and coasts of the far north. "Tim, Gary and Lesley's motto is "fish for the future" and while a fish for dinner is welcome, we fully support catch-take a photo-and release fishing." www.capeyorkcustomsportfishing.com.au

14. Wunthulpu Cultural Centre, Coen

Named for the mountain that stands over the town, this centre has art and craft for sale and photographic displays on the local history. www.coencapeyork.com

Coral Princess Cruises

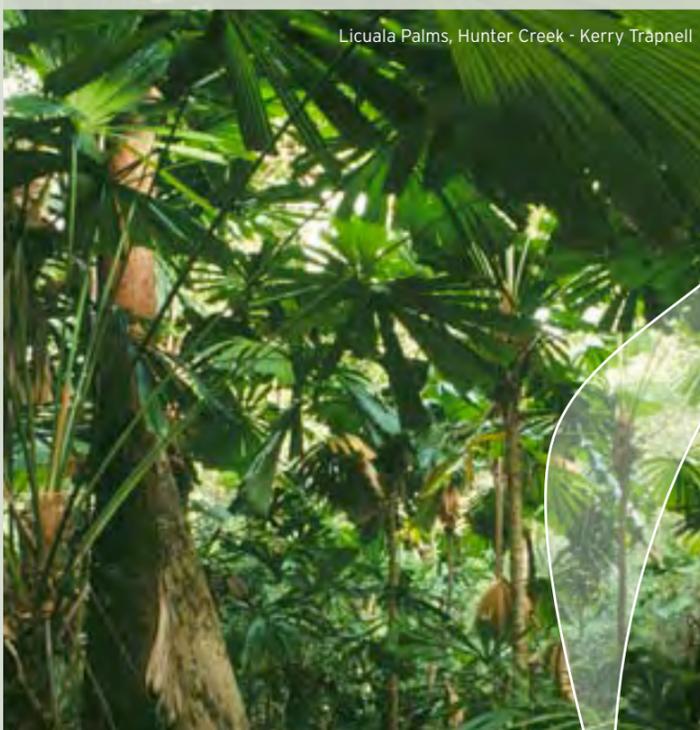
This small cruise ship takes an incredible journey up the wild east coast of Cape York Peninsula through the turquoise waters of the Coral Sea ending at the tip of Australia. www.coralprincess.com.au

Traditional Knowledge Revival Pathways

The TKRP office is based in Cairns, but their work and knowledge is from Cape York. Documentaries such as "Water We Know" about indigenous water knowledge is recommended viewing before you visit. www.tkrp.com.au

Wilderness Challenge

4WD camping and accommodated safaris from 7-14 days including all overland, drive/fly and drive/cruise. Advanced Ecocertification and Savanna Guides Master Operator. www.wilderness-challenge.com.au



Licuala Palms, Hunter Creek - Kerry Trapnell



Palm Cockatoo - Clifford and Dawn Frith

Cape York Peninsula



Travel Map

How to experience Cape York's special places.



Welcome to Cape York Peninsula, one of the last great wild places on earth.

Photography by Kerry Trapnell

A worldwide study by Conservation International identified Cape York, along with places such as the Amazon and the Serengeti, as one of the wildest tropical environments left on the planet.

Cape York is 14 million hectares of savanna country and rainforest, with wild rivers that feed vast wetlands and mangroves. The climate is monsoonal, with torrential rains and cyclones from December to March, followed by a long dry. Travelling the Cape is a true adventure - the bitumen ends before you reach Laura, and beyond the Weipa turnoff you are in true 4wd country.

This map introduces you to the special places to visit, the wildlife to see and the people who can show them to you, as well as useful tips for travelling the Cape and contact information.

History

Indigenous people have lived on Cape York for many thousands of years. The Quinkan country in the southern cape has rock art that has been dated at 30 000 years old.

The first Europeans arrived in 1606, when the Dutch vessel Duyfken reached the west coast at Cape Keer-Weer. Keer-Weer is Dutch for "turn around". Stories of an altercation between the Dutch and the Wik are still told by local people.

The first European land explorer was Edmund Kennedy in the 1840s, and the cattlemen came soon after.

The gold rushes in the 1870s and 1880s saw an influx of European and Chinese miners. Cattlemen and miners engaged in bitter land wars with indigenous people, with major losses on both sides. However the cattle industry was ultimately developed by both black and white people, with the indigenous people living and working on many of the stations.

The Second World War saw thousands of American and Australian servicemen based on airstrips here for battles with Japanese planes over the Coral Sea and New Guinea. Horn Island in Torres Strait was attacked eight times.

A big change came for the west coast when bauxite was found in the 1950s. Weipa was established by the Comalco mining company to service the workers and is the largest settlement north of Cooktown.

Cape York Peninsula has been the scene of many debates on Aboriginal land rights and native title as traditional owners have sought the return to ancestral homelands. The most notable was the Wik decision in 1996, which recognised the native title rights of Wik people over parts of western Cape York under cattle lease.

Today the main land use of Cape York Peninsula is cattle grazing with large areas set aside for bauxite mining on the west coast. Tourism has grown steadily.

There has been a gradual process of state government purchase of land for return to traditional owners or conservation since the 1990s. Currently the main land uses are pastoral leases (51%), aboriginal land (23%) and National Parks and Protected Areas (13%).

Welcome to Cape country - the traditional owners of Cape York

Cape York is the traditional land of a number of groups. Indigenous culture and management is strong and several Australian languages are still widely spoken, such as Wik Mungkan, Kuku Thaypan, Umpila, Kuku Thaayorre, Kuku Ya'u and Kaanju.

Initiatives such as the Kaanju Homelands and Traditional Knowledge Revival Pathways point to an emergence of indigenous ecological knowledge being recorded and practised.

Before you go to Cape York Peninsula, read the brochure by the Aboriginal Tourism Association called "Welcome to Country". www.ataust.org.au/pdf/WTC%20Brochure.pdf

Protocols for visiting Kaanju country can be found at www.kaanjungaachi.com.au/ManagementProtocols.htm

About The Wilderness Society

The Wilderness Society is a not for profit conservation group with members, supporters and volunteers throughout Australia. The Wilderness Society is seeking the long term protection of Cape York's wild places through the protection of wild rivers and World Heritage values. www.wilderness.org.au

Cape York's special places

Spectacular Dunefields and Pristine Beaches - Cape York is fringed by 1800 kilometres of wilderness coastline. The most pristine section of the Great Barrier Reef lies off the Cape's east coast, with seagrass beds that support one of the world's largest dugong populations. Captain Billy's Landing and Chili Beach are both special places on this coast.

At Shelburne Bay there are over 100 square kilometres of sparkling white sand dunes. This magnificent dunefield was saved from sand mining by a long campaign by the Wuthathi people, The Wilderness Society and other green groups.

Savannas - Recent research by the Australian National University found that northern Australia has the largest area of intact tropical savanna left in the world. Savannas once stretched across Africa, Asia, India and South America, but large areas have been destroyed. This iconic country, dry, open and dotted with termite mounds, covers three quarters of Cape York Peninsula, and you will see many savanna types along Peninsula Road. There are many savanna specialist animals, including the Golden-shouldered Parrot and native finches. The Savannas of Cape York were threatened by landclearing until protected by the Queensland government in 2004.

Rainforests - Cape York is home to Australia's largest area of old-growth tropical rainforest. Most of the rainforest is in the east, but a special type (called "gallery rainforest") is nourished by the larger

rivers and grows along their banks in narrow corridors that stretch well into the drier savanna.

Cape York was connected to New Guinea as recently as 10 000 years ago, so the two places share many rainforest animals, such as the cuscus, Palm Cockatoo and two species of birds-of-paradise. Several species migrate across Torres Strait between the two countries. The largest rainforest areas are the remote McIlwraith Range, the Iron Range and the Lockerbie Scrub, and you will see gallery rainforests lining some of the major rivers.

Wild Rivers and Wetlands - Cape York is home to 21 wild rivers; no weirs, dams, or irrigation diversions. In a monsoonal land with a long dry, these wild rivers and the lagoons they feed are the lifeblood for many of Cape York's plants and animals.

You will cross the upper reaches of several great wild rivers on your trek up Cape York Peninsula. The mighty Wenlock is lined by gallery rainforest with cuscus and Palm Cockatoos and you may see rainbowfish in the clear water.

Birdwatchers visit lagoons at Lotus Bird Lodge and in the nearby Lakefield NP to see the great diversity of waterbirds. On the west coast, several wild rivers feed the largest wilderness wetlands in Australia - seven times the size of Kakadu's. They teem with fish, freshwater turtles, and hundreds of thousands of water birds.



Quinkan Rock Art - Photography by Wilderness Challenge



David Claudie (left) and Anthony Esposito at Chuulangun campgrounds - Photography by TWS

Useful information

Police

Aurukun (07)	4060 6120
Bamaga	4069 3156
Coen	4060 1150
Cooktown	4069 5320
Hope Vale	4060 9266
Kowanyama	4060 5120
Laura	4060 3244
Lockhart River	4060 7120
Pormpuraaw	4060 4120
Thursday Island	4069 1520
Weipa	4069 9119

Medical

Bamaga Hospital	4069 3166
Cooktown Medical Centre	4069 5211
Lockhart River Aboriginal Community Hospital	4060 7155
Thursday Island Hospital	4069 1109
Weipa Hospital	4090 6222
Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) closest base in Cairns	4053 1952
Coen and many other communities have clinics.	

Services

Archer River Roadhouse	4060 3266
Bamaga BP	4069 3275
Bramwell Junction Roadhouse	4060 3230
Coen: Half Way Service Station	4060 1144
Coen: Armbrust Store	4060 1134
Endeavour Falls Tourist Park	4069 5431
Hann River Roadhouse	4060 3242
Jardine River Roadhouse	4069 1369
Lakeland Roadhouse	4060 2166
Laura Roadhouse	4060 3419
Lockhart River Retail Store	4060 7192
Mapoon Aboriginal Store	4090 9146
Moreton Telegraph Station	4060 3360
Musgrave Roadhouse	4060 3229
Palmer River Roadhouse	4060 2020
Seisia BP Service Station	4069 3897

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

EPA Customer Service	3227 8185
QPWS Cairns Information	4046 6600
Smart Service (camping bookings and info)	13 13 04
Coen Ranger Station	4060 1137
Cooktown	4069 5777
Iron Range NP	4060 7170
Jardine River NP	4060 3241
Lakefield NP	4060 3271

Alcohol restrictions

It is important to note that laws on the type and quantity of alcohol that can be brought into various remote indigenous communities are in place. This is an early intervention strategy to address alcohol-related crime and violence in indigenous communities.

www.mcmc.qld.gov.au/community/search/restricted.php

Be Crocwise

Saltwater Crocodiles are dangerous, powerful creatures, and it's wise to take precautions. See the EPA's

www.epa.qld.gov.au/publications?id=1101