

Tropical Reef & Rainforest

Dates: Thursday 4th June, to Tuesday, 16th June, 2009 (13 days)
Cost: \$2,900 **Style:** Accommodated **Start & Finish:** Cairns

Discover the oldest, and arguably the most complex, rainforests in the world — Queensland's Wet Tropics. Experience the world's greatest living structure, the Great Barrier Reef. Both these World Heritage areas abut in one of the world's greatest natural regions. Swim, walk, drive and snorkel to fully appreciate this biologically rich and diverse region with lush and grand scenery and savannah woodlands — mountains, waterfalls, Undara Lava Tubes, caves, reefs and seascapes.

Guide: John Sinclair will lead you through this region. He will have assistance from other expert guides along the way. John has been visiting and exploring this region through conservation activities for 40 years. He is a Director of the Cape Tribulation based AUSTROP (the Australian Tropical Research Foundation) and helped develop the National Rainforest Conservation Strategy.

Style: A maximum of 16 safarists will travel in an air-conditioned Coaster bus and stay in a variety of shared accommodation.

Price: includes all access, meals, accommodation and transport including boat trips to Hinchinbrook Island and the Great Barrier Reef (for snorkelling).

Queensland's Wet Tropics: The Wet Tropics is a region of spectacular scenery and rugged topography with fast-flowing rivers, deep gorges and numerous waterfalls. Australia's highest concentrations of plant and animal species are located within the Wet Tropics region. Approximately 18% of bird species, 23% of reptile species, 30% of marsupial and frog species, 62% of butterfly species, 60% of bat species and an amazing 92% of the known types of ferns of the continent have been recorded in this one area. 70 species of vertebrate animals are unique to this region. At least 25 species of vertebrate animals are regarded as very rare.

Draft Itinerary

Day 1; Thursday, 4th June: Be picked up in Cairns between 8.00 & 8.40 am. To Babinda Boulders, the vast lowland wetland ecosystem at Eubenangee Swamp and Josephine Falls. Then move on to Innisfail, Lacey Creek and Mission Beach. Accom: Wongalinga.

Day 2; Friday, 5th June: Walk the coastal track of Edmund Kennedy Reserve overlooking the Coral Sea and Dunk Island and Camp Mountain. Explore luxuriant Licuala Forest Parks. Accom: Wongalinga.

Day 3; Saturday, 6th June: To Australia's wettest town, Tully, and Murray Falls. Discover some of the special values of the rainforest. Edmund Kennedy National Park, including mangroves and melaleucas. Accom: Cardwell.

Day 4; Sunday, 7th June: Travel via Ingham to Australia's highest single drop waterfalls, spectacular Wallaman Falls via Ingham. Accom: Cardwell.

Day 5; Monday, 8th June: Explore rugged Hinchinbrook, one of the World's great tropical wilderness islands and surrounding marine areas. There will be good walking opportunities. Accom: Cardwell.

Day 6; Tuesday, 9th June: Follow the Palmerston Highway to reach the Atherton Tablelands observing many rare and special rainforest plants at various stops along the way including the new Ma-Mu lookout. Accom: Undara.

Day 7; Wednesday, 10th June: Tour Undara lava tubes left by the many volcanic eruptions in this geological province. Explore Kalkani volcanic crater and then Forty Mile Scrub & Millstream Falls National Parks. Accom: Ravenshoe.



Day 8; Thursday, 11th June: To Mt. Hypipamee's "Crater" where volcanic pressurized gases and steam pierced thick rock. Explore the famous Atherton Tableland's Curtain fig, Lake Eacham and Waterfall Circuit. Accom: Ravenshoe.

Day 9; Friday, 12th June: To Lake Barine, the cathedral fig and Lake Euramo. Follow the Danbulla Forest Drive around Lake Tinaroo then return via Atherton and historic Herberton. Accom: Ravenshoe.

Day 10; Saturday, 13th June: Visit tableland townships and the Mareeba Wetlands where overflow irrigation water has created 120 hectares of open water in a savannah setting to attract a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. Accommodation: Wonga Beach.

Day 11; Sunday, 14th June: To the Daintree NP with some of the most primitive flowering plants such as *Idiospermum australense*. Visit the research station at Cape Tribulation where rainforest meets the reef to learn about small tropical fruit bats. Accom: Cape Tribulation.

Day 12; Monday, 15th June: To Mackay Cay for some of the best snorkelling on the Great Barrier Reef. With expert guidance, experience some of the best marine life in any of the accessible reefs. Accom: Cape Tribulation.

Day 13; Tuesday, 16th June: To Mossman Gorge to get a different perspective on rainforest on the Aboriginal led Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime tour. To Port Douglas and then along the Cook Highway with its grand views over the Coral Sea and coast. Arrive in Cairns about 5.30 p.m.