



Daintree & Cape York cycle

A demanding - but incredibly rewarding - ride through the wet tropics of far North Queensland and the Cape York Peninsula. A real piece of Australia, for people who like a real adventure. If you're the sort who doesn't mind the odd hill or two as part of your ride, then have we got something for you!

We're sure you'll be tempted to escape the winter blues with this ride, which takes in tropical rainforests, sublime scenery, history and culture, wildlife and the remarkable barrier reef found along the Daintree and Cape York Peninsula.

The highlight of this trip is the famous Bloomfield track, a roller coaster dirt road through the heart of the wet tropics that run from Cape Tribulation to Cooktown. Expect some steep hills to get over, creek crossings in the rain forest (awesome fun!) and quite a tough ride at times. But your reward is a magical experience of this unique habitat and our support crew will be with you every peddle of the way. We use sealed roads for 3 days when we're not on the Bloomfield track, so it won't be rough going the whole way!

We stop for tours to sacred waterfalls with Indigenous guides and take a very personal rock art tour near Hope Vale to understand the culture and history of this area. Add to this the charms of pioneering Cooktown - in our opinion one of Australia's hidden gems- the beaches and wildlife of Cape Tribulation, classic outback pubs and a night out in swanky Port Douglas and you've got all the makings of a classic trip. And whilst surrounded by rainforest creatures, you won't go without creature comforts. We've selected some unique, comfortable accommodation in locations that make the most of your environment, so that you'll be rewarded every night for your efforts every day.

Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive Cairns / Port Douglas

Arrive into Cairns and be transferred to the resort town of Port Douglas for the night. That day we will have a trip briefings and help with assembling your bikes before going off on a short ride around Port Douglas to warm up those muscles!

(D) O/night Port Douglas

Day 2 Cycle from Port Douglas via Kurandra 84km

Today is a challenging start to our first day's ride as we climb up to the mountain town of Kuranda on a long but gradual ascent. After morning tea we start on the Black mountain road through National Park to Port Douglas. The 43km Black Mountain Road offers a rough and scenic alternative south-north route to the Cook Highway as it cuts through the Kuranda National Park. This is your first taste of riding through the wet tropics and the road incorporates both sealed and unsealed sections.

This is a long day in the saddle and a good warm up for the hills later in the trip! Kuranda National Park and adjacent Mowbray National Park are entirely within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area which features both rainforest and open eucalypt forest. They also protect an important wildlife corridor and who knows what you may see today! At the end of the Black Mountain road we turn onto a sealed highway to Port Douglas. A well deserved drink and swim awaits!

That night you are free to enjoy some Port Douglas nightlife!

(B,L,D) O/night Port Douglas

Day 3 Cycle from Port Douglas to Cape Tribulation 92km

Our Journey begins by riding from Port Douglas to the Captain Cook highway and onwards to the town of Mossman, famous for it's gorge where we'll have a quick stop for morning tea. We continue for another 30km to the Daintree River ferry where we'll take lunch, cross the river and keep a keen lookout for saltwater crocodiles on the banks. Then we enter the World Heritage Daintree rainforest. Riding through the dense rainforest is an amazing experience, the overhead canopy keeps temperatures cool and you'll be able to hear and if you're lucky see some of the rare birds and animals that live here. Not long after entering the Daintree we come to our first significant climb, a hill of 500m with a superb lookout point at the summit. From here the road roller coasters onwards to Cape Tribulation where we stay overnight at a beachfront eco-resort at Cape Tribulation.

(B,L,D) O/night Cape Tribulation beachouses

Day 4 Cape Tribulation rest day & Barrier reef trip

Enjoy your surroundings at Cape Tribulation with the option of a day trip out to the Great Barrier reef or just soak up the remarkable natural environment and explore some of the walking tracks. Tomorrow we tackle the Bloomfield track!

(B,D) O/night Cape Tribulation beachouses

Day 5 Cycle from Cape Tribulation to Ayton 42km

Today be prepared for some really challenging riding on the first section of the infamous Bloomfield Track for 44km from Cape Tribulation to Bloomfield/Ayton. The dirt road roller coasters through dense and varied rainforest with very steep climbs and descents and numerous creek crossings en route. This is very challenging riding through incredible surroundings, a real adventure! Coming into the idyllic Bloomfield river valley we stop at the small town of Wujal Wujal to take a guided walk to the spectacular Bloomfield Falls with the Walker Family, Aboriginal women with a special traditional perspective on the region. Afterwards we jump back on the bikes and continue to our accommodation on sealed roads for another hour.

(B,L,D) O/night Haley's Cabins & Camping, Bloomfield

Day 6 Cycle from Ayton to Cooktown 62km

We continue north on the Bloomfield Track, starting with a section of relatively easy sealed road before it turns to dirt road and hill climbs again. The road climbs onwards passing mountains and the tiny settlement of Rossville before a stop at the classic Lion's Den Hotel, where we take a break before continuing onto the end of the Bloomfield Track, after which we are on the sealed road to Cook Town. Admire the mysterious Black Mountain, a towering pile of granite boulders, and ride the last 28 km to Cook town, the largest town on the Cape.

The frontier town of Cook town has historic beginnings - in 1770 Captain Cook beached his ship the Endeavour here for repairs and the town itself grew from a gold rush in the 1870's. Spend some time strolling past the main street's heritage buildings and along the waterfront, admiring the views over the Endeavour River and mountainous surrounds. Dinner is not included tonight so you can explore some of the dining options in town.

(B,L) O/night Cooktown hotel

Day 7 Cycle Cooktown to Hope Vale 38km

Day 8 Cycle battlecamp Road to Old Laura 60kms

A real challenge today as we tackle the Battlecamp road - an unsealed road that stretches into the wilderness of the battle camp range to Lakefield national park, Queensland's second largest. You'll be cycling red dirtroad, this is iconic outback riding. It's approximately 55km to the entrance to the Lakefield national park, from here the road conditions deteriorate as we continue with more sand on the road. We are aiming to finish the ride at old Laura, where the ruins of a historic cattle station can be seen. From here we transfer by bus to our accommodation at Lakeland.

(B,L,D)

Day 9 Laura to Rock Art Safari Camp 40kms

Day 10 Return to Cairns

Today we head back to Cairns by bus. If you are planning to return home this day please don't book any flights departing earlier than 1.00pm.

Accommodation

The accommodation used on this trip is of a good standard in the larger towns such as Cook Town, Port Douglas and Cape Tribulation, with boutique resort style surroundings. In the more remote areas like Bloomfield we have chosen the best available, which are cabins in a pleasant beachside camp. It's important to come back to comfortable accommodation each evening when you're working so hard during the day!

Meal Inclusions

Most meals as per trip itinerary above are included. Please note B, L and D stand for Breakfast, Lunch and dinner.

Food on Australian trips is of a high standard with an emphasis on fresh fruit, vegetables and high fibre, wholemeal / multi grain breads provided for lunches and breakfasts. There are also frequent rest stops with refreshments provided and of course water!

Joining point & how to get there:

Cairns International airport - please advise us of your arrival into Cairns and we will arrange transfers for you and your bike to port Douglas. (Hotel to be advised nearer time of departure.)

Group Size

Minimum 6 people needed to operate this trip and a maximum of 14.

Physical rating

Moderate to demanding.

This cycle holiday is achievable by people of all ages who have a good level of fitness and confidence on a bike. The cycling is along a mixture of terrain and sealed / unsealed road surfaces. The trip starts out flat but once we cross the Daintree river we immediately start to climb into the mountain ranges along the coast. The Bloomfield track has some extremely steep hills to get over so the riding is quite challenging on these days and you should train with hill riding for the trip. Once off the Bloomfield track then the riding becomes easier with fewer hills and sealed roads again as we approach Cooktown. Expect to cycle between 4 to 6 hours each day with regular stops along the way to take in the natural beauty or for refreshments and lunches.

Build up your base endurance by long and frequent bike rides which will ensure that you are in peak condition for the challenge. You can also mix this up by taking other forms of regular exercise which you currently do such as yoga, spinning classes, walking and swimming.

Recommended list of what to bring

Personal Items

- High factor sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent

- Sunglasses
- Toiletries
- Watch or alarm clock
- Plastic bags for wet or dirty clothing
- Wet wipes or antiseptic hand gel

Clothing

- 3 T-shirts / long sleeved T-shirt for sun protection
- Pair of comfy shoes (to relax in)
- Cycling shoes or rigid soled shoes
- 1 pair of cycling shorts or regular shorts (without seams which may cause chafing)
- Light weight waterproof jacket
- Light fleece top
- Towel and swim wear
- Sun hat
- Clothes to relax in
- 1 water bottle

Whilst we hope to enjoy good weather please be prepared for possible wet conditions as it's important that you have adequate clothing to cope with changing conditions.

Other suggestions:

- Camera
- Adapter for recharging digital camera
- Small binoculars
- Reading material
- Penknife
- Torch / head torch
- Favourite snacks for energy boost e.g. 'Power Bars', dried fruit or nuts, snakes, bananas

Group Leader

All RAW trips are accompanied by one of our experienced group leaders who are trained in first aid and knowledgeable about the activity undertaken and area you are visiting. Your group leader is also accompanied by a driver and support vehicle. The aim of the group leader is to direct you through the trip safely and to help you have the best time possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the areas visited. We also have local indigenous guides on the trip who will give insights into the culture and traditions of the areas we pass through.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping.

Emergency Funds

Please also make sure you have access to an additional AUD\$400, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, or an outbreak of bird flu) which necessitate a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence but it is well worth being prepared!

Keeping In Touch - communication while on the road

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road. Email cafes are available in the towns we visit. Mobile contact is sporadic especially on the Bloomfield track where you will be out of range. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency we recommend that they refer to our Emergency contact. We don't recommend that family and friends try to contact you through hotels, as they are subject to change.

Emergency Contact

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please call the RAW Office. Tel: +61 3 9787 4366. Outside of office hours please call 0413 703 632

Safety

1. Cycling Helmet

You will be asked to wear a cycling helmet at all times when you are riding.

2. Weather conditions:

At the time of year when we are going riding conditions are ideal with temperatures in the low 20's most days and dry conditions expected. Rain is not out of the question though so please prepare with a light jacket which you can also wear in the evenings. Temperatures are quite cool at night and you will need a light fleece or jacket to keep warm.

3. Drinking water

You will need to carry at least 1 bottle of water with you. We will be able to refill your bottles at regular rest stops when we meet up with our support vehicle. Dehydration is the biggest risk when undertaking a physical activity. It is so important to be aware of your fluid intake and to constantly drink water throughout the day (even when you do not feel thirsty).

4. Dietary requirements

Please notify us in advance of any special meal requirements.

5. Four wheel drive support vehicle

We will have a support vehicle trailing the group that will carry your luggage and supplies for the group. In the event that anyone is injured or unable to ride they will be able to put their bike and body onboard! You will also have a cycling leader with you who will lead the way.

6. Creek crossings

There are numerous creek crossings to make on the Bloomfield track and these are generally great fun and the object of much amusement should anyone fall in! The water level should be very low at the time of year we visit and they can be safely walked over rather than ridden should you prefer to stay dry.

7. Optional activities

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities however during your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your group leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time.

Please also note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

A thorough cycling safety briefing will be given prior to setting off about the bikes.

Health

All RAW travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our group leader, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, RAW reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

Please let us know of any medical conditions on the registration form and if you are currently taking prescription medicine as it is important that our leader is aware of your circumstances. We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

There are no specific health requirements for entry into Australia. However, you should consult your doctor or travel clinic for up-to-date information and prescriptions for vaccinations. As some vaccinations require a course over weeks or months, contact your doctor as early as possible prior to departure. Generally, six to eight weeks' notice is adequate. Areas of tropical North Queensland are prone to outbreaks of Dengue fever and Ross River fever.

We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements (such as a spare pair of prescription glasses). Please be aware that for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets/antibiotics etc. Your first aid kit should include:

- headache tablets
- rehydration salts
- band-aids
- antiseptic for cuts & scrapes
- lip balm
- insect repellent
- high factor sunscreen.

Given the physical nature of this trip we strongly advise bringing some sachets of an oral rehydration solution (available at chemists) as this aids recovery following activity and dehydration and also helps replace lost body salts should you suffer from 'gastro'. Just add a sachet to your water bottle each day. Please scroll down to the Special Safety Notes below for information on dehydration.

If you are 65 years or older a completed Medical Certificate is required.

Please let us know and we can post you a copy which then needs to be signed by your GP and posted faxed through to 03 9787 0136 prior to departure.

Dehydration

Dehydration is the biggest risk when undertaking a physical challenge such as cycling in hot climates. It is so important to be aware of your fluid intake and to constantly drink water throughout the day (even when you do not feel thirsty).

Symptoms of mild dehydration include:

- flushed face
- extreme thirst, more than normal or unable to drink
- dry, warm skin
- cannot pass urine or reduced amounts, dark, yellow
- dizziness made worse when you are standing - weakness - cramping in the arms and legs
- sleepy or irritable
- headaches
- dry mouth, dry tongue; with thick saliva

The simplest way of monitoring your fluid intake is by checking the colour of your urine. If it is clear or slightly yellow you are well hydrated but once it is a dark yellow you are in the danger zone and need to increase your fluid intake immediately. Ensure that you bring some Gastrolyte sachets as these help your recovery after ridding with the replacement of electrolytes. Gastrolyte is also the recommended treatment for dehydration caused by diarrhoea ('gastro').

Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects., especially with indigenous culture and interactions.

RAW Travel has taken an active approach to helping communities in destinations that we visit and raising money for grass roots projects aimed at alleviating poverty and conservation of the natural environment. For more details please visit our website where we have a download document detailing our responsible travel practice and philosophy:

<http://rawtravel.com/resptravel/responsibletravel.pdf>

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for RAW travellers.

RAW's philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make our destinations such special places. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

RAW Newsletter

We have a free email newsletter full of traveller's stories and experiences as well as news on new trips that we are running. Please send us an extract from your travel journal at the end of the trip.

If you have any suggestions to add more information to our trip dossier that you think other travelers would find useful please email: adventure@rawtravel.com. And of course email us if you have any questions leading up to your trip.

We hope you will love the Cape York & Daintree cycle as much as we do and we look forward to you joining us on other RAW experiences.

The information in these trip notes has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and RAW Travel.