

Accessible Holiday Destination Guide



Townsville and Magnetic Island



View of Townsville and Magnetic Island from Castle Hill

Not only is Townsville one of the major gateways to the Great Barrier Reef, it is also a gateway to the Queensland Outback and the Dinosaur Trail where 95 million years of history awaits.

CONTENTS

TOWNSVILLE.....	1
GETTING THERE.....	1
THINGS TO DO.....	2
MAGNETIC ISLAND.....	6
GETTING THERE.....	6
PLACES TO GO.....	7
SUGGESTED ITINERARIES.....	8
USEFUL LINKS.....	8

TOWNSVILLE

Townsville today is a major urban centre and military base. It is home to Australia's 3rd and 11th Brigades, and is the largest commercial centre north of the Sunshine Coast. Lapped by the Coral Sea and backed by the giant pink granite monolith, Castle Hill, Townsville is a perfect tourist destination to explore the Great Barrier Reef, Magnetic Island or to use as a gateway to the Queensland Outback.

GETTING THERE

Townsville is 350 kilometres south of Cairns or 1,300 kilometres northwest of Brisbane.

[Train services](#) operate from both Cairns and Brisbane. It is a perfect stopping point on a coastal drive along Highway 1.

[Townsville's airport](#) is serviced by all major Australian airports. Qantas operates an eagle hoist if required. Accessible transport operates to the city centre.



Queensland Government

THINGS TO DO

Jezzine Barracks, Kissing Point

Jezzine Barracks is a 15 hectare heritage precinct on the Kissing Point Headland. 32 pieces of public artwork celebrate the rich military and Indigenous heritage of the Kissing Point Headland. The Kissing Point Fort Complex bunker systems and gun emplacements have been extensively renovated. The fort was established in 1870 and was in continuous use from 1885 to 2006. The parkland features a fully accessible coastal boardwalk connecting Rows Bay to The Strand, observation decks up at Kissing Point Fort, traditional plantings along the ethno-botanical walk, the Crossed Boomerang Amphitheatre, Norman and Brigadier North parklands and the Kennedy Regiment Plaza. The site is home to the Australian Army Museum of North Queensland.

Crossed Boomerang Amphitheatre

Designated disabled parking is available in the Arts Precinct car park. A level pathway leads to the amphitheatre lawn. Viewing is available from an apron area immediately in front of the tiered seating. Alternatively, a ramp gives access to a higher viewing area midway up the tiered seating.

Kissing Point Fort

Access to the fort is via a gentling sloping long pathway from the arts precinct car park. There is alternative disabled parking at the top of the service road just below the fort. A gently sloping pathway leads from the car park to the fort. The fort refurbishment has created a wide, level paved area. Information signage explains the history of those that served and the relationship with the US 5th Airforce. Ramps have been created to give access to the gun emplacements.

Coastal Boardwalk

The Coastal Boardwalk connects Kissing Point to Rows Bay. The boardwalk is constructed of timber. It gently slopes down from Kissing Point to Garabarra Lawn. There are several observation decks along the way and regular seating is provided.

Ethno-Botanical Walk

From the end of the Coastal Boardwalk, the Ethno-Botanic Walk completes a return loop back to the Kennedy Regiment Plaza. The walk celebrates the Garabarra, the Wulgurukaba, and the Bindal people with native plantings and artwork. The trail consists of a mixture of concrete and compacted fine crushed rock. At the end of the walk there is an accessible toilet.



Jezzine Barracks, Kissing Point Fort



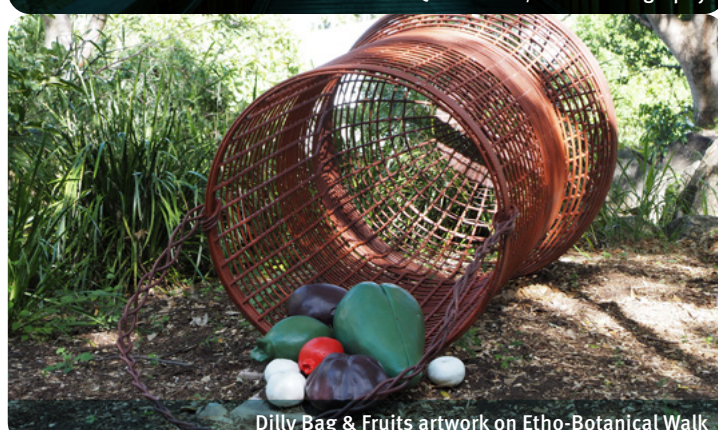
Ramped access to Crossed Boomerang Amphitheatre



Kissing Point Fort – Tourism and Events Queensland/Budd Photography



Coastal Boardwalk – Tourism and Events Queensland/Budd Photography



Dilly Bag & Fruits artwork on Ethno-Botanical Walk

Norman Park

Norman Park is a great location for a picnic lunch while exploring the Jezzine Barracks precinct. Disabled parking is available in Jezzine Way West and on Cook Street. The park contains BBQ shelters with roll-under benches attached to the BBQs and accessible picnic tables. An accessible toilet facility is located opposite the park in Jezzine Way West. A playground is located in the park. The playground has concrete pathways throughout and a mixture of all abilities play elements.

Kennedy Regiment Plaza

The Kennedy Regiment Plaza has a series of sculptures and art installations commenting on the history of the Jezzine Barracks. The plaza has a paved surface throughout.

The Strand

The Strand stretches 2.2 kilometres along the Townsville waterfront from the Jezzine Barracks precinct to the Marina and Yacht Club. It features a sealed palm-lined promenade along its entire length. The Strand includes a rockpool, two safe netted beaches, picnic tables and BBQs, a water park and numerous cafés, bars and restaurants. The entire length of The Strand is wheelchair accessible with designated disabled parking spaces at regular intervals.

The Strand Rockpool

The Strand Rockpool is a saltwater pool at the top end of The Strand. Disabled parking is available in front of the life saving club and in The Strand. A ramp leads from the promenade down to the pool deck with a further shallow sloping ramp into the water which is suitable for beach wheelchairs. Handrails on both sides provide support for people with limited mobility. The promenade continues around the edge of the pool with a fishing platform at the northern end giving direct access to the ocean. An accessible toilet is available at the base of the Rock Pool Pavilion. The Rockpool Pavilion has a dining facility. The pavilion has level entry from the car park.

Swimming beaches

Two swimming beaches are located along The Strand. Both are patrolled and both are protected by stinger nets during the stinger season. The first is located adjacent to the Rockpool. A concrete ramp leads down to the top of the beach near the lifesaving station. The sand is soft across the beach to the water's edge. The second beach is located in front of Strand Park. A concrete ramp at the northern end of the beach provides access to the top of the sand from the promenade. Beach access matting is available on Fridays and Saturdays. Six disabled parking bays are available in The Strand. Accessible picnic tables are available in Strand Park.



The Strand, Townsville – Tourism and Events Queensland



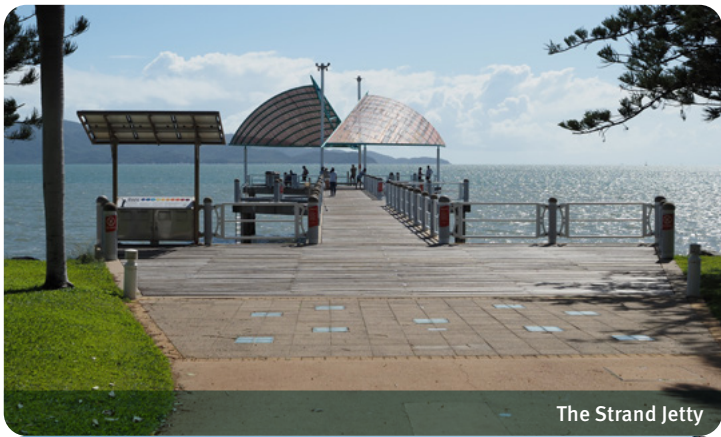
The Strand Rockpool ramp access



The Strand Rockpool ramp access



Swimming beaches protected by stinger nets



The Strand Jetty



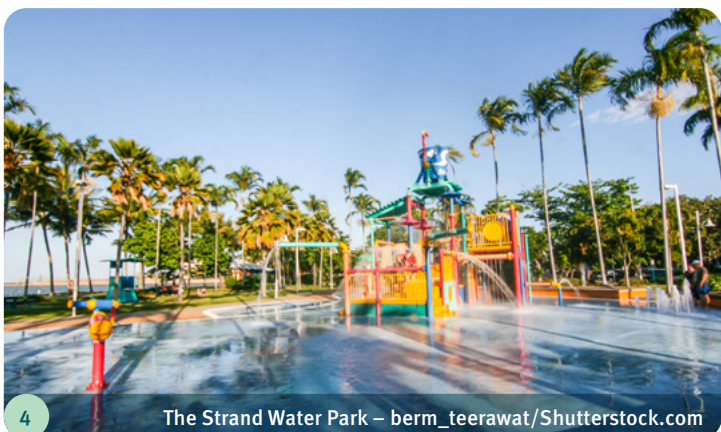
Ocean Siren, part of the Museum of Underwater Art collection

The Strand Jetty

Located in front of Strand Park, the Strand Jetty is a favourite place for fishermen to wet a line or just take in the stunning tropical view across to Magnetic Island. Standing in the water adjacent to the jetty is the *Ocean Siren* sculpture which is part of the Museum of Underwater Art collection. The sculpture is modelled on Takoda Johnson, a young Indigenous girl from the Wulgurukaba tribe. The sculpture changes colour depending on the water temperature of the Great Barrier Reef giving a visual representation of conditions. The jetty is timber construction with several platforms for viewing or fishing. The end of the jetty has shade coverings. The jetty has level access from Strand Park and the promenade.

The Strand Water Park

Located at the southern of the strand is The Strand Water Park a great destination for the family. The park water spaces have level entry from the surrounds and grassed areas. The park has accessible toilets and an accessible change room.



The Strand Water Park – berm_teerawat/Shutterstock.com

Castle Hill

[Castle Hill](#) dominates the landscape behind Townsville. Apart from its outlook, Castle Hill forms part of Townsville's military history as it was used by the American forces as an observation post during World War II. The remains of the observation bunker still sits on the hill.

The hill gives a 360 degree view of the city, the Coral Sea and the hinterland. The main observation car park has designated disabled parking. Level access is provided to the main observation deck. Just below the summit is the Panorama Events Lawn. Parking is available on the northern side of the road with designated disabled bays. The lawn has an access ramp to the left of the stairs. The area gives a commanding view to the south and east.



Castle Hill

Maritime Museum of Townsville

Located in Palmer Street, South Townsville, the [museum](#) was first established in 1986 and relocated to its current site in 1992. The museum has a large collection of artefacts, images, books and other objects associated with the maritime heritage of North Queensland. Notable collections encompass model ships, artefacts from the Yongala shipwreck (1911), ships' badges, historic watercraft including a Fremantle class patrol boat *HMAS Townsville*, navigation and safety equipment, lighthouse equipment including two original lighthouses and historic images depicting the Port of Townsville. The museum has ramped access throughout.

Each exhibition space has ample space for easy navigation. Accessible toilets are located in the seafarers' gallery and next to the model ship gallery. The latter also has a shower with a fold-down shower bench. Benches are provided along the boardwalk and there are tables and chairs at the far end of the museum.

Palmer Street

Palmer Street is located on Townsville's south bank. It is a key tourist precinct with a variety of accommodation options and a collection of award winning restaurants featuring a vast selection of international cuisines. Stroll along the precinct to admire the collection of historic buildings, including the lighthouse in the middle of the roundabout. The precinct is accessible throughout with level or ramped access to most shops, cafés and hotels, frequent curb cuts and tactile guidance along the footpaths. Seating is provided along the footpaths.



The Shamrock Hotel on Palmer Street

Victoria Bridge

Spanning the Ross Creek and linking the tourist district of Palmer Street to the Flinders Mall in the CBD and visitor information centre, Victoria Bridge is one of only six swing bridges constructed in Australia and the only one built in Queensland. The swing bridge was unique in that it was gas, not steam or electric powered. Its swinging span was 23 metres which was the largest at its time of construction. Its mechanism can be seen from an accessible platform under the bridge. Ramps lean onto the bridge from both ends of the bridge.



Swing bridge mechanism of Victoria Bridge

Reef HQ

Reef HQ is currently closed while it undergoes a complete \$80 million rebuild. It is expected to reopen in 2026.

Museum of Tropical Queensland

The Museum of Tropical Queensland is located in Flinders Street, a 10 minute walk from Flinders Mall. Street parking, including disabled parking bays are available in Wickham Street. Sunbus 1A has a stop at the museum.

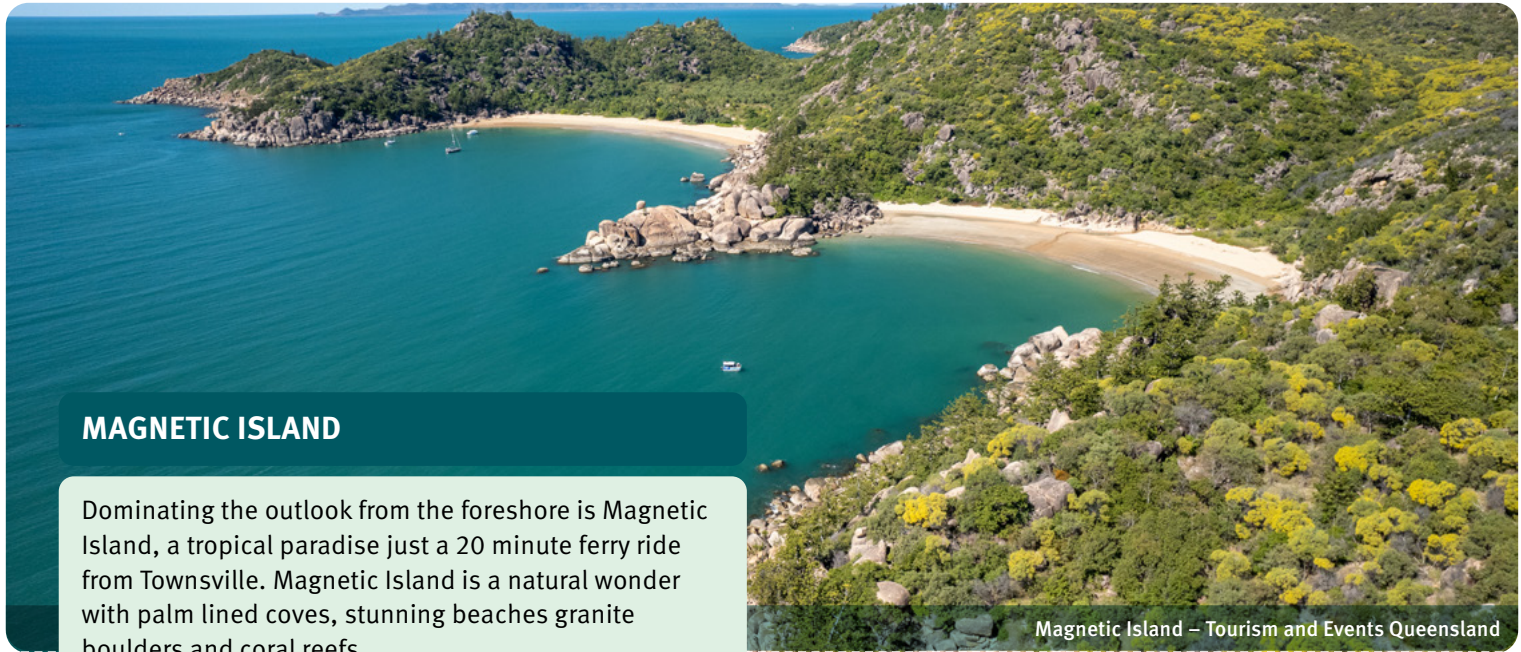
The museum has a focus on research and interpreting the cultural and natural history of Tropical Queensland. Sent to catch the infamous Bounty, the HMS Pandora is the museum's hero attraction. The Pandora sank off the coast of Cape York in 1791. Hundreds of amazing artefacts have been recovered from the wreck and are on display. The displays are across two levels, one floor up from the reception. All doorways are wide and a lift connects all levels. Ramped access is available between levels 1 and 2. Accessible toilets are available on the ground level and level 1. Large print and pdf versions of gallery and exhibit information are available from reception on the ground level. There is seating around the museum and wheelchair spaces are available in the theatre and workshops. Wheelchairs are available free of charge from the cloakroom on the ground floor.



Museum of Tropical Queensland – Tourism and Events Queensland



Museum of Tropical Queensland – Alex Cimal/Shutterstock.com



MAGNETIC ISLAND

Dominating the outlook from the foreshore is Magnetic Island, a tropical paradise just a 20 minute ferry ride from Townsville. Magnetic Island is a natural wonder with palm lined coves, stunning beaches granite boulders and coral reefs.

Magnetic Island – Tourism and Events Queensland

GETTING THERE

There are two ferry services to Magnetic Island, one passenger and one for vehicles. Both services operate from Ross Creek to Nelly Bay.

SeaLink passenger ferry

The [SeaLink](#) passenger ferry departs from the [Breakwater Ferry Terminal](#) in Sir Leslie Thies Drive. [Sunbus](#) runs a regular service from Flinders Street Mall. Up to 18 services a day run to Magnetic Island which is a 20 minute trip. Disabled all day parking is available directly outside the terminal within the car park. The terminal is level access and accessible toilets are available. Both the upper and lower decks of the ferry have ramped gangway access from the terminal building.

Magnetic Island car ferries

For those wishing to take their own vehicle across to Magnetic Island, especially modified cars and accessible vans, [Magnetic Island Ferries](#) operates from Ross Street, South Townsville. The journey time to Magnetic Island is 40 minutes. This service can be in high demand so advanced bookings are essential.

Nelly Bay ferry terminal

The Nelly Bay terminal is located in the Nelly Bay Harbour. The terminal is level and has accessible toilets available. Outside the terminal is the bus terminus for the two routes on the island.

Island transport

[Sunbus](#) operates an intra-island bus service. There are 29 stops on the island operated on two routes, one to Picnic Bay and one to Horseshoe Bay. The buses and stops are wheelchair accessible.



SeaLink passenger ferry



Magnetic Island Ferries – Josie Elias/Shutterstock.com



Nelly Bay ferry terminal

PLACES TO GO

Picnic Bay

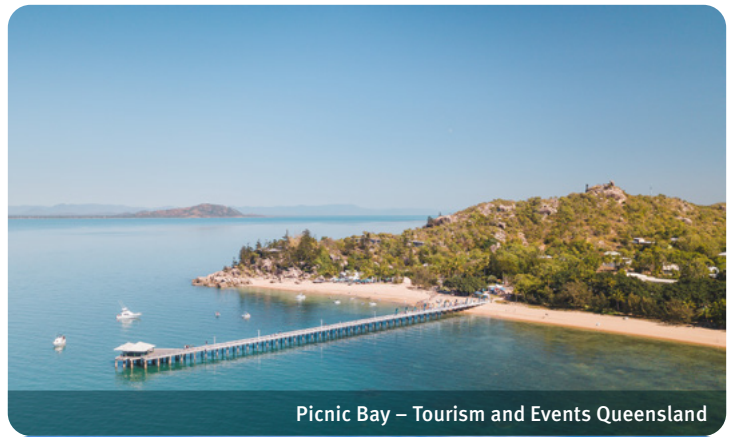
Picnic Bay is at the end of bus route 1. It's a tranquil place to relax and spend the day. Activities include a jetty for fishing or taking in the view, a swimming enclosure, a fully fenced playground with under cover fully accessible picnic facilities and a hotel and cafés. The jetty is a short distance from the bus stop along a paved walkway. Prior to the construction of the Nelly Bay Harbour, the Picnic Bay jetty was the main entry point to Magnetic Island from Townsville. The jetty is wooden with level access from the path. It was fully refurbished in 2010. Next to the jetty is the Picnic Bay Life Saving Club. There is an enclosed swimming area and a beach wheelchair is available from the club. The playground is fully fenced and has a rubberised surface throughout the play area making it suitable for wheelchair users. The equipment has a number of cognitive play elements and is in a quiet location away from the hotel beach and jetty. Next to the bus stop is the R&R Bar, Grill and Café. The tables are accessible and the main entry is level and wide. Accessible toilets are located in the garden area of the hotel. Along the foreshore is a paved promenade shaded by mature Morten Bay Fig trees.

Horseshoe Bay

On the opposite side of the island is Horseshoe Bay. It is the largest cove on the island with 3km of beach. It is a north facing beach affording stunning sunsets, especially during winter. The beach has a protected netted beach guarding against stingers and is patrolled year round. A Mobi-Chair, a floating beach wheelchair, is available from the Horseshoe Bay convenience store in the main street opposite the beach. There are a number of cafés and restaurants along the beachfront providing level access. A public accessible toilet and shower, with fold-down shower seat, is available in the Horseshoe Bay Park. Kayaks and jetskis are available for hire along the foreshore.



Horseshoe Bay – Tourism and Events Queensland



Picnic Bay – Tourism and Events Queensland



Alma Bay – Josie Elias/Shutterstock.com

Alma Bay

Alma Bay is one of the most photographed bays on Magnetic Island. The beach is patrolled by lifeguards year-round and is marked with red and yellow flags for swimmers. There is fringing reef that runs along the rocks on either side of the bay making it a perfect location for snorkelling. The beach park is a large grassed area with plenty of shade trees to avoid the heat of the sun. The water has a shallow runoff making it ideal for young children or people with limited mobility. A beach wheelchair is available from the news agency across the road from the beach park. Alma Bay is a drop off point on the Sunbus route to Horseshoe Bay.

Nelly Bay

Nelly Bay is the main hub of Magnetic Island, centred around the harbour. It is the ferry terminal for both the passenger and car ferry services, bus terminus and hire car depot. There are two supermarkets and a pharmacy. An accessible boardwalk leads around the marina and a second to the observation point at the end of the breakwater which gives a great view across to Townsville. There are a number of cafés, restaurants and takeaways in Sooning Street.



Nelly Bay

SUGGESTED ITINERARIES

Short stay

2 NIGHTS 1 DAY

Explore Jezzine Barracks in the morning and wander The Strand in the afternoon. Take a trip up Castle Hill to view the sunset. Finish the day by sampling some international cuisine in Palmer Street.

Townsville and Magnetic Island

3 NIGHTS 2 DAYS

Add an extra day in Townsville and on day 2 take the ferry to Magnetic Island. Spend the morning at Picnic Bay. Wet a line off the jetty, let the children go wild in the fully-fenced playground or take a quiet swim. In the afternoon take the bus to Horseshoe Bay. Have lunch at one of the beachside cafés and enjoy the afternoon on the beach. Take a late ferry back to Townsville.

The best of Townsville and Magnetic Island

4 NIGHTS 3 DAYS

Day 1 – Explore Jezzine Barracks in the morning and wander The Strand in the afternoon. Take a trip up Castle Hill to view the sunset. Finish the day by sampling some international cuisine in Palmer Street.

Day 2 – Visit the Maritime Museum, Palmer Street Precinct and the historic Victoria Bridge. Explore the Flinders Mall for lunch. Take the bus to the Museum of Tropical Queensland. Finish the day with dinner at one of the many cafés along The Strand.

Day 3 – Spend the day exploring Magnetic Island.



Castle Hill



Magnetic Island – Melissa Findley



Maritime Museum of Townsville



USEFUL LINKS

Townsville Visitor Information:

townsvillenorthqueensland.com.au

Townsville Airport: townsvilleairport.com.au

Maritime Museum: tmml.org.au

Museum of Tropical Queensland: mtq.qm.qld.gov.au

Magnetic Island: bestofmagnetic.com

Sunbus: sunbus.com.au/townsville
sunbus.com.au/magnetic-island

SeaLink Ferries: sealinkql.com.au

Magnetic Island Ferries: magneticislandferries.com.au