

THE LEGENDARY PACIFIC COAST NATURE TRAIL

7-DAY HINTER- LAND ITINERARY

The spectacular and humbling experience of truly magnificent natural wonders can be had in the hinterlands along The Legendary Pacific Coast.

THE STUNNING ARRAY OF NATIONAL PARKS is a major drawcard of the route. From rainforests hiding rare and endangered species of flora and fauna to the surreal golden dunes of Sahara-like beauty, there's something for everyone. Walk through verdant glades and under majestic waterfalls, ponder the history and culture of sacred Aboriginal sites, then trek to lookouts for unforgettable 360° views.

REWARD YOURSELF after all that walking with a delectable dinner and a few glasses of wine at the many world-class vineyards.

ROAM through the markets and antique stores of the historic country towns that dot the landscape.

GET WET or hook some lunch from the rivers snaking into the interior of the country. Hire a boat, get your adrenalin pumping in the Bridge to Bridge ski race or just paddle around in a canoe.

DAY 1: 70KM/1HR Sydney – Central Coast

Explore Central Coast's Australian Reptile Park where you can feed kangaroos and meet local and exotic creatures including crocodiles, Tasmanian devils, snakes and spiders.

Camp under the stars on 3,000 acres of unspoilt wilderness at Glenworth Valley Outdoor Adventures after a day of horseriding (or quad biking, kayaking or abseiling). Take in the region's natural wonders: the multi-coloured sandstone landscape of Dharug National Park; Wyrabalong (the region's last significant coastal rainforest); and the mighty 12,000ha Brisbane Waters National Park, all offering bush walking trails, Aboriginal art sites and views from spectacular lookouts.

After adventuring, relax with the Mingara Recreation Club's entertainment and dining or wander the gardens and take in an event at the Mt Penang Gardens.

DAY 2: 179KM/2HR Central Coast – Great Lakes

The Hunter Valley offers you a choice of beaches, wilderness, wineries and a warm welcome in its historic country towns. Over 120 wineries are spread across sweeping vine-lined hills. Kick back and relax at The Hunter Resort, a country lodge nestled within its own 40yr old shiraz vineyards. Explore The Hunter Valley Gardens – a journey in colour, fragrance and sensational sights set over 60 acres. In Port Stephens a walk to the top of Tomaree Headland delivers magnificent views of Tomaree National Park and its coastal fringe. Stockton Beach (Worimi Conservation Lands) – a wilderness of sand dunes to be enjoyed on 4WD tours, hummers or horseback.

Get close to koalas at Tilligerry Habitat, perch on a headland to watch whales pass or go to sea and mingle with dolphins. Bennett's Beach at Hawks Nest is a grand sandboarding alternative while the surfers head to the northern end of One Mile Beach in Forster.

To take in great views of the Booti Booti and Willingat National Parks, trek to the lookout tower on Cape Hawke for 360° views or visit Myall Lakes National Park – home to The Grandis, a 76m Flooded Gum – one of the tallest trees in the state.

DAY 3: 98KM/1½HR Great Lakes – Port Macquarie

Flying foxes star at Wingham Brush in the Manning Valley. There can be as many as 10,000 Grey Headed Flying Foxes hanging from the Moreton Bay Figs in the "The Brush". Nearby Brimbin Nature Reserve on the banks of the Dawson River and Tommy Owens Creek is a tranquil waterside escape and home to the endangered Narrow-leaved Red Gum.

Ellenborough Falls, the second longest single drop waterfall in the southern hemisphere, is a scenic drive through timbered country linking Taree to Port Macquarie. Port Macquarie is well practised at delivering adrenalin-pumping adventure: from skydiving, micro-flying from scenic lookouts, horseriding at Bellrowan, scooting the river in powerboats, windsurfing, sailing or riding a wave in a canoe. There's plenty of quiet time in nature too with a visit to the Koala Hospital, picnics among kangaroos at Kylie's Hut, strolling the Sea Acres Rainforest boardwalk or enjoying any number of bush, river and coastal walks throughout the region.

DAY 4: 146KM/2HR Port Macquarie – Bellingen

Watch eagles soar, whales romp and kookaburras chat at the Smoky Cape Lighthouse near South West Rocks. Camp in the Arakoon State Conservation Area close to historic Trial Bay Gaol and relax on river houseboats in the Macleay Valley. Enjoy an eagle's view from the Yarrahappini Lookout. Watch the Malibu surfboarders at Crescent Head, travel the boyhood roads of legendary country singer, Slim Dusty. In Nambucca, visit the Valley of Mists – a working bush tucker farm and expansive wetlands only accessible by guided canoe. Enjoy easy bushwalks starting at the Dorrigo Rainforest Centre walking under waterfalls and through glades. At the North Coast Botanic Garden on a bend of Coffs Creek meander through rainforests and nature trails, the sensory garden and a mangrove boardwalk.

Bellingen or 'Bello' is riotously green and creative. Follow the lush Waterfall Way or visit Dorrigo nestled on an escarpment 1,000m above sea level. On the east side of the town the plateau drops into the World Heritage rainforests of Dorrigo National Park where a stroll on the Skywalk above the canopy is a must!

DAY 5: 178KM/2¾HR Bellingen – Angourie

Bongil Bongil National Park, located between Sawtell and Mylestom, features unspoilt beaches, littoral and swamp rainforests, wetlands and mangroves. Of the 165 species recorded here are threatened species such as the Black Necked Stork, Pied Oystercatcher, Osprey and Worrippo Pigeon. The fishing is excellent and there's easy access for kayaking and canoes. No visit to Coffs Harbour is complete without a visit to Muttonbird Island, a sacred and very significant site to the local Gumbaynggirr Aboriginal people.

Travelling north the Pacific Highway meets the stately market town of Grafton noted for its jacaranda festival, shady avenues, broad streets and early colonial buildings. One of Australia's most majestic waterways, the Clarence River is a dominant feature in Grafton's landscape hosting dragonboat, sail and powerboat racing, the Head

of the River rowing regatta and one of Australia's premier waterskiing events, the famous Bridge to Bridge Ski Race.

South of Yamba is the Yuraygir National Park, the longest stretch of coastal national park in NSW and near its north entrance is Angourie.

DAY 6: 190KM/3HR Angourie – Murwillumbah

Lismore and the surrounding hills are alive with creativity and there are quite possibly more actors, artisans, buskers, dancers, divas, filmmakers, musicians, painters, potters and performers per capita than anywhere else in the country. Within easy reach are the lush rainforests of the Border Ranges and iconic waterfalls, such as Protestor Falls in Nightcap National Park. Visit the nearby Crystal Castle for a rejuvenating break in your journey – a unique place to "enrich your spirit" in the gardens, rainforest and Buddha Walk, it also has a delicious café. Bangalow is the only intact Federation village on Australia's east coast – a vibrant but relaxed location for antiques and arts, markets and festivals, great eating and a base from which to explore Cape Byron Headland. Beneath the awe-inspiring Mr Warning Murwillumbah is surrounded by five World Heritage National Parks and a countryside of green hills, gently flowing rivers punctuated with pockets of sugarcane, banana plantations, hobby farms and small village communities. Border Ranges National Park, World Heritage listed, is on the rim of a vast and ancient volcano and adjoins Lamington National Park in Queensland. Stop in at the Murwillumbah Visitor Information Centre and find out the best place to stay while you explore the adjacent rainforest discovery centre.

DAY 7: 70KM/1½HR Murwillumbah – Gold Coast

Want to try something new? Tropical Fruit World in the Tweed region is quite the experience, from chocolate pudding fruit to tractor rides and a tasty café. Continue north to Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and mingle with hundreds of native Australian animals on display in natural bushland and rainforest surroundings. You can take the Green Challenge up in the trees or cruise the park on a segway safari! The Gold Coast hinterland is a patchwork of rural plantations, vineyards, farmland and livestock estates on the way to more than 100,000ha of National Parks and reserves, networked with miles of enchanting bushwalking trails. Green Mountains, Lamington National Park forms part of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area.

An hour away, Tamborine National Park is a green oasis containing Queensland's first National Park (1908), Witches Falls.



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SYDNEY TO BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA