

Byron Bay

Eguide



Byrone Bay is located on the northern coast of New South Wales in the Northern Rivers region, just off the Pacific Highway, about 800kms north of Sydney and about 175kms south of Brisbane.

Byron Bay is a favourite spot for backpackers and those seeking somewhere as a retreat. It's a perfect spot to soak up the natural environment and enjoy beach walks and restaurants for all tastes and budgets.

Byron Bay is small and compact, so finding one's way around is easy. The railway station and bus stop are adjacent to the Byron Visitor Centre. This small town caters very much to the backpacker market, so there are pubs, and a multitude of different and mostly moderately priced food establishments.

Aboriginals first came to the place they called "cavvanbah" which means "meeting place". Captain Cook noticed Cape Byron as he passed by in 1770, and it was he who named the location. However, it was not settled by Europeans until nearly a century later. The area where the town now stands was originally a swamp, a little of which remains on the eastern side. The village of Cavvanbah was surveyed in 1884 and the jetty built in 1886. The railway came in 1894 and the name then changed from Cavvanbah to Byron Bay.

The early growth was dairy and a number of separating stations were established. A co-operative was formed in 1895 to provide cold storage for perishable goods from the district, to manufacture, store, sell and export milk and dairy products.

The factory over the years expanded to become the biggest butter factory in the southern hemisphere.

A jetty was built at the end of the nineteenth century and a steamer service provided to Sydney. Then Byron Bay became a whaling town and a whaling station was built at Belongil Beach. In 1921, the S.S. Wollongbar, a passenger liner which could accommodate 300 passengers, was wrecked here just off Belongil Beach. It remains buried in the sands, causing a surf break by its presence, but all that can be seen are the boilers, visible at low tide.

In 1973 hippies discovered Byron Bay and still come to Byron Bay. In recent years the developers have moved in and major developments have been taking place in what was once a quiet seaside village and now a significant coastal resort.



Cape Byron

Cape Byron is the easternmost point on mainland Australia and it has a strong influence on marine currents and marine life in the park. Humpback whales travel close to shore around Cape Byron on their annual migrations. The park is also renowned for its dolphins, seabirds, turtles and corals. Several coastal nature reserves, Arakwal National Park and Cape Byron State Conservation Area adjoin the marine park.

Cape Byron Lighthouse

The Cape Byron Lighthouse has stood on the most easterly point of the Australian mainland for a century, and today you can take a tour of the tower. The rugged headland, surrounded by sheltered rainforest gullies and subtropical waters, is a great spot for watching turtles, dolphins and humpback whales on their annual migration.

There are many ways to see the lighthouse and one of them is a leisurely walk. To walk to the Lighthouse it is possible to start from the car park outside the Beach Hotel, at the end of Jonson Street in the heart of Byron Bay. The walk covers about eight kilometres and takes 2½ hours.

The lighthouse has been shining its warnings out across these waters for a century now, and is still in use. The headland here is 94 metres above sea level, and the lighthouse is a further 22 metres high. It was built in 1901, made of concrete blocks.

It uses a 1000-watt tungsten halogen lamp of 2.2 million candle-power, one of the most powerful lights in the southern hemisphere. It flashes every fifteen seconds and has a range of 27 nautical miles. The mirror is two metres in diameter and it continues to revolve even during the day to minimise the fire hazard.

Beaches

Beaches are one of the main attractions in Byron Bay. Broken Head Beach to the South of Main Beach and has a nature reserve. King's Beach is one of Australia's best known and popular nudists beach. Main Beach stretches a long way to the east of the town; it is a beautiful stretch of curved sand with cliffs behind, which is very appealing.



The foreshore has grass and picnic areas. It is a good swimming beach and can get strong surf. Seven Mile Beach is a very long stretch of sand and sea between Broken Head and Lennox Heads.

Watego's Beach is more secluded and faces north and has beautiful homes and hotels close to the beach. A little further up is Little Watego's Beach which is at the base of Cape Byron lighthouse





Byron Hinterland

Inland from Byron Bay the landscape has been transformed from rainforest trees to farmland. The original forest is still to be seen at the Nightcap National Park. The area is a scenic agricultural landscape with banana plantations, avocados, soft fruits, lemon myrtle, blueberries, custard apples and lychees and macadamias. More recently has been the introduction of coffee. The memorial stone tribute to the Pioneers of 1881 is seen from Eureka Road.

Crystal Castle

Located 20mins from Byron Bay, this mystical place with stunning views is a lovely place to explore and relax.

Take in The Buddha Walk as you admire the view of Byron's hinterland, then enjoy a coffee on the decking of the Buddha Belly Café.

The Crystal gallery is a rainbow of colour as all types of crystals are displayed and are for sale. *Monet Drive, Mullumbimby (02 6684 3111).*

Macadamia Castle and Animal Park

Located on the Pacific Highway 10 mins south of Byron Bay, this is a good family day out.

There are train rides, merry go round, tree house playground and an 18 hole mini golf course.

The animal park has an animal nursery, native animal viewing with hands on experiences as well as an aviary. *Pacific highway, Knockrow, (02 6687 8432).*

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