Holidays

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Whether it be transport, housing, entertainment or food, the cost of living is at the forefront of everyone’s mind. This report is the third instalment of a monthly series that aims to compare the prices of every day essentials.

RACQ has commissioned this research from Deloitte Access Economics. As Queensland’s peak motoring body, RACQ will use the data to advocate for its 1.6 million members. This may involve questioning discrepancies in cost or celebrating fair prices.

The third report in this series focuses on holidays; investigating the costs of activities and accommodation in popular destinations. While internationally recognised tourist attractions carry a hefty admission price, there are a range of fun and interactive activities scattered throughout Queensland that shouldn’t break the bank.

RACQ hopes to better educate Queenslanders through this research, allowing families to recognise where they must allocate funds. The research will be made publically available on RACQ’s website so that Queenslanders can access the information most relevant to them and their every day expenses.
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In this report, we investigate the cost Queenslanders pay to holiday in their State. The price of school holiday activities is investigated, along with the cost of overnight accommodation in popular Queensland holiday destinations. The cost of heading to the great outdoors is also examined.

Queenslanders love a beach holiday. The Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Tropical North Queensland make up three out of the top five most visited regions for a holiday.

When it comes to holiday fun, you don’t have to break the bank. While popular tourist destinations can attract a high price, there are a diverse range of family activities available for a low cost.

If you’re loading up the camper and heading to the great outdoors; Ayr, Bundaberg and Charters Towers boast cheap powered campsites, while Forest Glen, Yeppoon and Helensvale attract a higher cost.

For those who prefer the comforts of sleeping indoors, short term accommodation is most affordable in the Fraser Coast, Bundaberg and Northern (Townsville) tourism regions. As expected, the Great Barrier Reef, Whitsundays and Brisbane tourist regions charge top dollar for a visit.
Queenslanders love to travel within their own state. Based on the number of overnight trips taken by Queenslanders in Queensland in the 2015-16 financial year, Brisbane is the most popular destination. The beach paradises of the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast land a spot in the top three. The Darling Downs and Tropical North Queensland regions round out the top five, ahead of the Central Queensland, Northern (Townsville), Mackay, Fraser Coast, Outback, Bundaberg and Whitsundays tourist regions.

Top 10 destinations for Queenslanders

Note: Overnight trip data sourced from Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey 2015-16. Overnight trips are trips involve spending at least one night in the region (excludes day trips). Data only captures intrastate visitors.
Relative to the Brisbane tourism region, short term accommodation in the Great Barrier Reef and Whitsundays tourism regions attracts a premium price. For those seeking a more affordable destination, accommodation in the Fraser Coast, Bundaberg, Northern, Outback and Darling Downs tourism regions are where to stay.

Note: Prices are based on average takings per occupied night for short term accommodation, from ABS 8635.0 Tourist Accommodation, Queensland, 2014-15. Short term accommodation considered in ABS 8635.0 includes hotels and resorts with 15 or more rooms; motels, private hotels and guest houses with 15 or more rooms and services apartments with 15 or more units.
Ready to hit the road or dust off the tent and explore the great outdoors for your next holiday? Tropical beach destinations such as Forest Glen and Yeppoon, and theme park capital Helensvale attract the highest prices for powered camp sites. For holiday-makers venturing outside of SEQ, areas such as Ayr, Bundaberg and Charters Towers offer affordable sites, but you can expect to use some petrol on the trip!

Note: Prices are for a four night stay with no discounted rates at a powered camp site without an ensuite, for two adults and two children (most sites are suitable for up to 6 people, though there may be an additional charge) for the period 28-Sep to 2-Oct. Prices were collected from a well-known holiday park chain. No further consideration is made regarding differences in the availability and quality of features and facilities at each location.
Thinking of going overseas?

Queensland flights

For Brisbane-based holidaymakers who would prefer to avoid a road trip, a flight to the Whitsundays is cheap relative to other domestic destinations. To get as far as Townsville, however, you’ve got to pay the distance.

![Bar chart showing flight costs from Brisbane to various destinations.]

International flights

Australians love to visit New Zealand, Indonesia, USA, Thailand and the UK for an international trip. While fares to New Zealand as the cheapest destination are greater than the domestic fares considered, it isn’t by much. Some families might consider that they get more bang for their buck from an overseas trip compared to heading to North Queensland.

![Bar chart showing flight costs to various international destinations.]

Note: Prices listed are cheapest available fare for one way fares from Brisbane on a Saturday 7th of January 2017 booked three months in advance. For international fares, airports considered were: Los Angeles, London Heathrow, Bangkok, Denpasar and Auckland. Most popular international destinations for Australian tourists determined from Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey.
Holiday fun

There are more to holidays besides where you stay and how you get there. Activities abound across the Sunshine State, ranging from animal adventures, river rafting, sea-side snorkelling and more.

In this section we consider the prices of some of the best (based on highest TripAdvisor ratings) things to do in the previously identified popular tourist regions of Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Darling Downs and Tropical North Queensland.

Note: Unless otherwise specified, prices listed for activities and attractions are for single day admission adult tickets. Family, child and concession discounts are available at many of the attractions listed, however these discounts are not considered and graphs presented by key tourist destination are not on the same price scale.
Brisbane

For the thrill seeking holidaymakers looking to take in the city sights, the Story Bridge Adventure Climb is a favourite in Brisbane. Those afraid of heights (or the price!) may prefer to take in the sights from the comfort of the CityCat. For a day of family fun at an affordable price, the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary is hard to beat.

Sunshine Coast

Notwithstanding the relatively high ticket price, Australia Zoo is great if you want to see some of the coolest animals on dry land. For the coolest animals off dry land, Underwater World is the place to be. If animals aren’t of interest, the Queensland Air Museum may fit the bill, and at an affordable price!
Gold Coast

As Australia’s highest external building climb, SkyPoint is another popular activity among thrill seeking holidaymakers. At a comparable price point,Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary may appeal to those less daring. For families after some friendly competition, Mermaid Beach Putt Putt weighs in at a comparatively bargain price.

Darling Downs

When compared to major attractions in Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast, popular attractions in the Darling Downs region are much more affordable. For the historians, both the Cobb+Co Museum and Milne Bay Military Museum are sure to provide some interesting insights. Holidaymakers who would rather bounce will be jumping for joy at Kloud9ine Trampoline Park.
Tropical North Queensland

Attracting tourists nationally and internationally, it is no surprise that popular attractions in Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) are on the pricey side.

There are many ways to enjoy the natural beauty of TNQ: a reef cruise and dive experience is ideal for holidaymakers that want to get up close and personal with the reef, but for thrill seekers a Barron River white water rafting tour may be more appropriate. For those without their sea-legs; a Barefoot Tour is a great way to appreciate the natural landscapes, at a comparatively affordable price.
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