



travel feature

THE ULTIMATE SHORT-BREAK GETAWAY

The \$543 million Tugun by-pass now serves as the gateway to Northern NSW and the Tweed region, opening up an exciting 'new' destination for short break getaways from the Gold Coast.

Over the past few years, the Tweed Coast south of Kingscliff has been transformed into a holiday hot spot with luxury resorts, pampering day spas and five-star restaurants dotted throughout the oceanfront Salt and Casuarina Beach developments.

Here you can indulge in the resort lifestyle of Peppers, Peppers Bale, Mantra, Domain Casuarina, Santai, the Beach Shacks, Drift Villas and Mainwaring Apartments, with more coming on line in the future. And the luxury lifestyle continues at restaurants like Steve Snow's Fins @ Salt, Mahsuri Thai, Bamboo and the Sandbar + Grill.

Away from this hub of style and sophistication, however, you can still enjoy the laidback seaside style of Fingal, Kingscliff, Cabarita, Hastings Point and Pottsville where beachfront caravan parks, motels, apartments and rustic weekenders provide the perfect setting for affordable family vacations.

With winter activity options ranging from whale watching, snorkelling or diving with the turtles at Cook Island, surfing, beachcombing, bike riding, kayaking along Cudgen Creek, a visit to Tropical Fruit World and Madura Tea, and much more, the Tweed Coast is the complete holiday package.

But if you'd like to discover a very different getaway experience, head west from the motorway and out into the Tweed Valley.

This entire region is nestled in the caldera of an ancient volcano and was recently named as one of Australia's National Landscapes, due to the rich biodiversity of flora and fauna and the uniqueness of the geographical setting.

At the very heart of this vast 'green cauldron', Mt Warning overlooks a patchwork of caneland, banana plantations and organic market gardens, intersected by a network of rambling rivers.

Circling around the rim of the eroded escarpment, a series of World Heritage-listed National Parks protect age-old Gondwanan rainforests, cascading waterfalls, crystal clear mountain pools and hundreds of kilometres of well-marked bushwalking trails.

Within this Eden-like landscape, the Rainforest Way touring route provides easy access to quaint art and craft villages, traditional country pubs, cosy B&Bs and hidden rainforest retreats as you drive along winding roads lined with rustic farm stalls offering samples of unique Tweed produce like native fingerlimes, lemon myrtle and Davidson plums.

For those who like to get way off the beaten track in their 4WDs, the Tweed Scenic Range Drive takes you up through the rainforests and Antarctic beech groves of the Border Ranges to the Pinnacle where you can stand on the very rim of the caldera.

Heading back towards civilisation, Tweed Heads is the bustling gateway to all of these wonders. Renowned for its world class service and sporting clubs offering a combination of entertainment, gaming and dining, this is also the best place to experience the tranquil winter beauty of the Tweed River estuary on day cruises out to Tumbulgum or crab-catching in the Terranora Inlet.

Stock up on fresh seafood at the river-front co-ops and take out a luxury barbeque pontoon for the day, or hire a houseboat and tootle up through the Stotts Island rainforest to pull up outside the historic Tumbulgum Hotel for the night.

Tweed Tourism can provide details on what's available and make all your reservations, as well as sending you a free copy of their Tweed Coolangatta Visitor Guide. Phone tollfree on 1800 674 414 or go to www.tweedtourism.com.au.

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Released by Verve Consulting on behalf of Tweed Tourism

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