

The Itchy Feet Guide to The Gold Coast

Sixty-five kilometres south east of Brisbane is a tourist Mecca that is the Gold Coast. The region's 42km coastline stretches from Southport to Coolangatta. The northern end of the Gold Coast (especially Surfers Paradise to Broadbeach) is more commercialized, with plenty of action for backpackers and "schoolies" (school leavers celebrating the end of exams). If you want to be where the action is obtaining lodgings close to Surfers Paradise is a must. The southern end of the Gold Coast caters mainly to families holidaying from the cooler southern states. Away from the coast is the "Green behind the Gold". The Gold Coast "hinterland", consists of mountain ranges covered with rainforest most which is national park.

The hub of Surfers Paradise is Cavill Mall and Orchid Avenues. This is where you can eat, relax, play and drink from sunset to sun up if you have the stamina.

The main beach of Surfers is at the end of Cavill Mall, denoted with a well landscaped foreshore area. The clean sand and crystal water is inviting at any time of year. This section of beach is perfect to set up for the day and watch the sculptured physiques, tiny swim suits and tanned bodies. In the afternoon however the beach is thrust into

shadow early from the high rise developments that are just off the main beach area.

It has been suggested that Surfers Paradise has been spoilt by overdevelopment, and the whole of the Gold Coast area now has a somewhat seedy reputation for being a place where foreign tourists get ripped off or locals go for a night out in seedy strip clubs (which are plentiful), however in recent years many aspects of the Gold Coast have been redeveloped into more upmarket ventures.

Be wary of street vendors promising free tickets to theme parks. You generally see these people on Cavill Mall in Surfers Paradise. They promise free theme park tickets in return for 3-4 hours of your time watching a time share presentation. Many legitimate vendors sell discounted theme park tickets. Check out the tourist information booths.

When to go

The best time to go to the Gold Coast is between October and March when temperatures climb as all activities generally centered around the beach and surf.

Be aware that Surfers Paradise hosts Schoolies Week in November, which is a celebration for year 12 school leavers from around the country. Surfers Paradise is completely taken over by an invasion of thousands of 17 year olds who have just finished high school and head to Surfers beaches to let off steam and celebrate. It's a huge party - but if drunken 17 year olds aren't your thing then you should avoid the area!!

Transport

Plane

The Gold Coast Airport is located in Coolangatta at the southern end of the Gold Coast, about a 20 minute bus ride from Surfers Paradise. The Gold Coast Airport has frequent connections from major Australian cities and some international flights from New Zealand and Asia. An alternative to arriving at Coolangatta is to fly into Brisbane Airport, and catch the direct train about 90 minutes from the International Terminal to Robina. Surfers Paradise is a 10 minute bus ride from Robina.

Train

Queensland Rail runs an City Train (www.citytrain.com.au) services from Brisbane to Nerang and Robina, with connecting buses to Surfers Paradise, Coolangatta, and into northern New South Wales.

Bus

Surfside bus lines provides public bus services for the Gold Coast area, for time table information and prices visit www.transinfo.qld.gov.au

Surfside Buslines (www.surfside.com.au) provide the main form of public transport around the Gold Coast and stops are located on most main roads. Buses run 24 hours a day, but are more frequent in daylight hours. All the main tourist attractions are serviced by bus, but. Another way to get from Gold Coast Airport to an accommodation house further up the coast is to book a bus transfer. These usually cost somewhere between \$15 and \$30 per person. Trains run between Robina, Nerang and Helensvale, but the rail service is more useful for commuting to Brisbane than getting around the Gold Coast.

Taxi

Taxis are good transport alternative if you are on a strict time budget, or you are traveling at

night. At night time, in Surfers Paradise particularly, expect to wait up to an hour or more for a taxi on busy nights.

A taxi fare between the Gold Coast Airport at Coolangatta and Surfers Paradise costs around \$55 and a sedan limousine is about the same. Stretch limousines are an option for groups of more than four costing around \$100-\$110.

Car

Most reputable Car hire companies have offices located at Brisbane and Gold Coast Airports. Budget, Hertz and Euro Car and Thifty are the larger companies operating in Australia.

Things to See

Theme Parks

There are an abundance of things to see and do on the Gold Coast. Surfers Paradise has numerous activities to thrill and entertain all kinds of travellers. Bungee Jumping, Bungee Rocket and flycoaster are in the heart of Surfers. Theme Parks are the major attractions operating on the Gold Coast. Each Themed park has its own signature rides and entertainment. The main big park attractions, including Sea World (www.seaworld.com.au),

Warner Brothers Movieworld (www.movieworld.com.au), Dreamworld (www.dreamworld.com.au), Wet 'n Wild Water Park (www.wetnwild.com.au) and White Water World (www.whitewaterworld.com.au).

A 3 park Fun Pass can be bought for Seaworld, Movie World and Wet 'n Wild costing about \$135 per adult allowing entry to each park once over a 5 day period. Further information is available on any of the parks web sites.

For Australian life and wildlife experiences on the Gold Coast 3 main parks operate. Currumbin Sanctuary (www.currumbin-sanctuary.org.au) is an Australian wildlife sanctuary with interactive live shows where animals are the stars.

Australian Outback Spectacular (www.outbackspectacular.com.au) an evening dinner show held in a 1000 seat arena with a live outback oriented show.

Paradise Country (www.paradisecountry.com.au) which provides the opportunity to experience farm life and outback adventure.

Beaches

Swimming

There are over 40 km of beaches on the Gold Coast. Almost all Gold Coast beaches are patrolled by volunteer and professional lifesavers.

Important Note: When swimming at any patrolled beach swim between the Yellow and Red flags set up by the life guards. This is the safest place to swim. Gold Coast beaches can be dangerous for swimmers and the local life guards are able to choose the safest swimming places. Each year hundreds of swimmers get into trouble in the strong currents and it's always the tourists swimming outside the flags who end up swept out to sea and drowning.

Sunburn

Don't forget that when in the sun wear sunscreen. The harmful UV rays of the sun can start to burn your skin in only 5 minutes even less if you sport a moon tan. One day of overindulgence can result in many days of recovery in a small hot hostel room so slip slop and slap.

Surfing

The Gold Coast is a Surfers Paradise literally. Surfers can get a wave almost anywhere along the Gold Coast.

Snapper Rocks at Coolangatta hosts the Quicksilver Pro (www.aspworldtour.com) surfing competition February to March. Burleigh

Heads and Kirra are home to world-renowned waves and Surfers Paradise to the spit have excellent beach breaks.

Coastal Watch (www.coastalwatch.com) provides live beach cams of the waves throughout Australia.

Hinterland

Referred to as "the green behind the gold" (a reference to Australia's national sporting colours - green and gold), the Gold Coast Hinterland has three national parks. The area is mostly covered in sub-tropical rainforest, but sections have been cleared for dairy farm land and wineries. The Hinterland is best seen by car or on a bus tour.

Things To Do

The Gold Coast has been developed around tourism so there is an abundance of activities to entertain day and night. Hiring equipment is generally easy. Most equipment from sailing boats, surf boards, bikes, jet skis can be hired. Some hostels will have this equipment for use of guest for free or a small fee.

Being Surfers Paradise surfing is a must for those who have never surfed before. A lesson with professionals is essential for an enjoyable day. [The Silver Surfer](#):- Learn to surf school is

able to teach novices the art of surfing in a day.

[Gold Coast Oceanway](#) is a 36km pathway for pedestrians and cyclists linking Point Danger to the Gold Coast Seaway.

Ripley's Believe it or Not (www.ripleys.com.au) has an unusual array of unbelievable exhibits, amazing stories, magic, mystery, illusions and interactive displays.

Buy

The Gold Coast is renowned for cheap souvenir and t-shirt shops. Plastic koalas are one of the most popular items. There are dozens of stores catering exclusively for the Japanese tourist market but many have a reputation for being overpriced and local newspapers regularly run stories about "discount warehouses" being taken to court for selling souvenirs at exorbitant prices to Asian tourists on organized tours. Souvenir shops generally sell tacky junk that is only purchased by tourists on holidays. The original Australian "authentic" aboriginal "artefacts" sold at these kinds of shops in Surfers have in some instances been discovered to be mass produced and hand painted by overseas backpackers.

Pacific Fair is the largest shopping mall in the Southern hemisphere. It contains large numbers of chain and independent stores selling pretty much everything you need or can think of. The layout can be confusing for first time shoppers however there are store maps to help out if needed.

Eat

Budget

The back arcades of Surfers Paradise have dozens of cheap Japanese and Korean "lunchbox" style restaurants and the quality is usually excellent, not to mention the price (less than \$15 for a large main meal).

The Surfers Paradise Surf Life Saving Club offers a great lunch deal \$6.50 for a large piece of crumbed chicken, chips and salad plus free basic drink. And it is right across for the beach just down from Cavil ave.

Surfers Paradise RSL Club the staff at the sign-in desk can be less than friendly and the whole place feels a little seedy as you walk right in to the pokie machine lounge, however once you get upstairs it's ok. This club offers a great value roast dinner from 5:30pm till about 8:30pm for about \$6.50, all the other meals

are well priced. Beer is cheap and it's just a short walk to Cavil Ave.

Other surf clubs have cheap beer with a great view, you'll find one or two in every beachside suburb of the Gold Coast. Currumbin Beach Surf Lifesaving Club, Nobby Beach Surf Life Saving Club and North Burleigh Surf Lifesaving Club are the picks for their location, friendly service and good value for money food and drink.

Jacks Kebabs, across from the beach opposite McDonalds, makes a tasty Kebab and it's popular in the early hours of the morning as all the drunks stumble out of the clubs looking for food.

Splurge

Tedder Avenue in Main Beach and the Broadbeach area (10 minute walk north of Surfers Paradise) have the largest concentration of restaurants and cafes with food ranging from gourmet seafood to pub fare. Expect to pay \$20-\$35 for a main meal.

Plenty of the hotels around Surfers Paradise offer buffet all you can eat seafood, which is normally quite good and around \$50 - \$60 per person plus drinks. Some offer lunch specials or early bird deals.

Drink

Most of the night clubs are in Orchid Ave just off the main strip of Cavil Ave, ones to check out are: Shooters , The Drink, The Shack Elsewhere and The Party

If you don't want to go out by yourself Wicked Club Crawl (www.wickedclubcrawl.com.au) offers organised club crawls to five clubs, VIP entry, food and games.

Hostels

Itchy Feet provides all travel city guide information free to the travelling community. We are only able to supply this information if you support us. Please come back to www.itchy-feet.com.au and book your accommodation with us. When you book on Itchy feet we get a small kick back which enables us to keep on expanding the site and providing you with better travel information.

[Backpacker Wizard Presents The British Arms](http://www.itchy-feet.com.au)
70 Seaworld Drive, Main Beach, Gold Coast.
The Gold Coast's and ONLY Waterfront backpackers! Check out the facilities we offer, and how much it costs to stay, and make sure

you Book Online to ensure your reservation before you arrive.

[Surf n Sun Beachside Backpackers](#) 3323 Surfers Paradise Blvd, Surfers Paradise. ...only 30 metres from breathtaking Surfers Paradise Main Beach

[Gold Coast International Backpackers Resort](#) 28 Hamilton Ave Surfers Paradise. A short stroll to Gold Coast's world famous surf beaches and just seconds away from the incredible buzz and excitement of downtown Surfers Paradise. Whether you want to relax in our games room and recreation area, cook up a storm on the barbecue or chill-out by the fully licensed bar...

[Aquarius Backpackers](#) 44 Queen Street Southport 4217 Phone 1800 229955 Ours is a homely, friendly modern hostel with a fully licensed bar that allows all guests to enjoy the relaxed tropical setting.

[Backpackers In Paradise](#) 40 Peninsular Drive Surfers Paradise Backpackers In Paradise is located in the heart of Surfers Paradise. The shops and the beach are less than five minutes walk from the hostel.

[Chateau Beachside](#) 52 The Esplanade, P.O Box 922, Surfers Paradise, Australia The Chateau Beachside offers a casual relaxed ambience and is centrally located on the beach in the heart of the shopping, dining and entertainment precinct of Surfers Paradise.

[Cheers Backpackers](#) 8 Pine Ave Surfers Paradise QLD 4217 Phone 1800 636539 Cheers Backpackers is the largest and most centralised five star backpackers within easy walking distance to Surfers Paradise beaches, water sports and Nightlife.

[Islander Backpackers Resort](#) Surfers Paradise, Australia Smack bang in the middle of the fabulous Gold Coast, Islander Backpackers is situated next door to the bus station. This is the closest backpackers resort to everything you need such as the beach, restaurants, nightlife and shops.

[Trekks](#) 22 White Street Southport 4217 Phone 1800 100004 We accept INTERNATIONAL PASSPORT holders only. All internet bookings must be made 48 hours prior to arrival and also include your arrival time. Being one of the original backpacker resorts in Qld, Trekks is unique in it's homely feel.

[Surfers Paradise Backpackers](#) 2835 Gold Coast Hwy Surfers Paradise QLD 4217 Independently rated as the best hostel in surfers paradise. 150 metre walk from hostel to the beach, centrally located to Surfers Paradise, nightlife, casino and shopping centres. FREE courtesy hostel pickup bus.



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Get out

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- [Brisbane](#) the capital of Queensland only an hours drive north.