

Coral Sea Kayaking

Oceanic Expeditions PTY LTD

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General Information

For active and adventurous people sea kayaking is a fun, relatively easy and rewarding watersport. Our two person fibreglass sea kayaks are stable, easy to paddle and fast. Every trip is lead by a professional sea kayak guide, who will help you learn the basics, teaching you kayaking techniques and all the relevant skills to complete the expedition. Group sizes are restricted, with a maximum of 13 customers. Small group numbers are more ecologically sustainable on the ocean and island environments we travel through. Small groups also help to offer a more personalized boutique experience to our customers.

Sea kayaks have limited space, so gear needs to be kept to a minimum. On these trips we live simply and travel light only taking what we essentially need, nature provides the rest. We will be carrying all our supplies and equipment on board the kayaks. The sections below will answer any questions you may have regarding what to bring and the equipment provided.

Trip Organisation

Anyone that has been sea kayaking before understands the need to be flexible due to the ever changing nature of the sea. Trip itineraries should be seen only as an outline of the trip. The enjoyment and safety of the group is always our main consideration therefore the guides may choose to alter the itinerary slightly to suit the weather conditions, or particular trip dynamics. Sea kayaking is a weather dependent activity and the sea conditions will be of the utmost importance to the trip schedule and the level of adventure and difficulty. Our guides are professionals who deal with the ocean's dynamic weather conditions on a daily bases so please trust that they will make the best decision to insure the safety and enjoyment of the group.

The general daily paddle plan is to take advantage of the cooler part of the day and lighter winds. We therefore plan to do most of our paddling in the mornings arriving at our overnight camp around lunch time or mid afternoon. This leaves the afternoons free to explore the island or relax. As with any expedition sea kayaking journeys rely on teamwork, participating as a group and working together. The more you put in the more you get out, so for a rewarding active holiday your assistance in camp activities will be appreciated and you will have certain responsibilities, such as helping lift the kayaks, unpacking your own kayak and setting up your tent on arrival at our beach campsites.

Mission Beach and How to get there.

You will need to arrive in Mission Beach in time for the Pre-departure briefing at 6pm the evening prior to the departure date. The paddling trip finishes on the final day in Mission Beach at approximately 3pm. Coral sea kayaking will pick you up from your chosen accommodation on day 1 and drop you off at your accommodation at the conclusion of the trip.

Mission Beach is situated approximately two hours south of Cairns. Cairns is serviced by both national and international flights. Qantas, Jetstar, Virgin and Tiger offer regular flights from major Australian cities. On arrival in Cairns there are several bus companies with regular services to Mission Beach, plus many hire car companies. Several airport shuttle services or local taxis offer a service into downtown Cairns to the bus station and most hire car companies offer a complimentary pick up service from the airport. Mission Link buses offer a direct service from Cairns Airport to Mission Beach.

Mission Beach comprises of several beaches each with it's own small village. There are various places to stay ranging from resort style to backpackers accommodation and campgrounds. Mission Beach also offers many reef and rainforest activities, including scuba diving, bushwalking, whitewater rafting and skydiving. Many of our customers stay for a few days after the kayak trip and enjoy relaxing or exploring the rainforest and 14km of golden beaches that make up the Mission Beach region.

For more information about Mission Beach check out:
missionbeachtourism.com or www.missionbeachinfo.com

Accommodation

There are many accommodation options in Mission Beach to suit most travellers. If you are looking for accommodation in the area then we highly

recommend **Mission Reef Resort** on Holland Street in Wongaling Beach. Mission Reef Resort is mid range self contained villa style accommodation close to the beach and close to our kayak base and expedition end point. It's also the venue we use for our pre-departure briefing the evening prior to the trip. Mission Reef Resort also offers a lock up facility for all guests luggage whilst they are away on the kayak trip. **Please don't get confused between Mission Reef Resort and Mission Beach Resort, they are different places.**

For more info contact: <https://missionreefresort.com.au/>

Car Hire

There are many car hire companies in Cairns to choose from and we are happy for you to park a vehicle with us when you are out on the islands.

Bus Options

There are 3 bus companies that run a daily service to Mission Beach from either Cairns or Townsville. Mission Link, Greyhound and Premier. Please see relevant details below:

We highly recommend Mission Link Buses. They offer a door to door service from Cairns Airport to your accommodation in Mission Beach departing twice daily. Ph: office: 0407337661, bus direct ph: 0474580000 or visit:

<https://www.missionlink.com.au/>

Greyhound buses, ph: 1300 473 946 Cairns bus terminal - Mission Beach bus terminal (Wongaling Beach). Approximately 2.5 hours, generally departs Cairns twice daily.

<https://www.greyhound.com.au>

Townsville bus terminal - Mission Beach bus terminal. Approximately 3 hours.

Premier Motor Service, Cairns Premier terminal - Mission Beach bus terminal. Approximately 2 hours, departs Cairns daily.

Townsville Premier terminal - Mission Beach bus terminal. Approximately 3 hours, departs Townsville daily.

<https://www.premierqld.com>

Please note the pre-trip meeting starts at 6pm the evening prior to departure at Mission Reef Resort (or elsewhere by arrangement) The trip will finish at approximately 3pm on the last day, so you may connect with any bus after this time. Please also note when booking travel arrangements that the driving time between Mission beach and Cairns is approximately 2.5 hours.

Climate

Tropical North Queensland has two distinct seasons: a wet season from Dec – April and a dry season from May – Nov. Our departure dates range from May through to November during the Austral winter. This being the cooler part of the year in the tropics you can expect day-time temperatures ranging from 18 - 35 degrees (June & July) and from 25 - 30 degrees Celsius (Oct & Nov). The typical south-easterly trade winds move along the coast at this time of year and will often assist our kayaking journey north; our morning departures take advantage of the lighter morning breezes. When on the water it is advisable to have good protection against the elements, so please ensure you have good sun protection and a lightweight wind/rainproof jacket.

Photography

Sea kayaking involves exposure to sea water and sand on a daily basis, these elements do not always mix well with expensive and delicate camera equipment. We suggest that you keep your camera gear to a minimum and have a suitable case for protection. Small dry bags or waterproof cases are both handy and effective protection. The best alternative is a waterproof camera.

Personal spending Money

You are unable to spend money once we are in the islands as there are no shops or infrastructure. For our Hinchinbrook trips we will stop for a break on our drive south to Lucinda on the first morning of the trip, so you may want some cash for a coffee/tea and a snack. Our final lunch on day 7 will be at a café/restaurant once landing back from the islands, the lunch is complimentary but if you wish to buy beverages you will require card or cash.

Medical Matters

All participants are asked to provide a completed medical questionnaire, which is included in the forms we send out when booking. Sea Kayaking requires being active for most of the day so all participants must have a level of physical fitness to perform the daily tasks required. All our extended trips go into isolated remote regions so prior attention to medical matters is important. **Please advise us of any relevant pre-existing medical conditions, regular medications or special dietary requirements. Please tell your guide about any allergies you may have. If you suffer from any known anaphylactic allergic reactions especially to allergens that may be present on the trip then we HIGHLY recommend carrying a minimum of two Epi-pens or other adequate forms of administering adrenalin.** Our guides are trained and qualified in Wilderness Medicine and we carry an extremely comprehensive medical kit on our expeditions.

Guides will usually carry sea sickness medications but if you are aware of a pre-disposition to sea sickness we highly recommend you bring a sufficient supply of your own personal sea sickness meds.

Please do not forget to bring any medications specifically prescribed to you for any known medical conditions.

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that all customers take out travel insurance to cover against sickness, accident, cancellation, loss of baggage and the unlikely event that you require emergency evacuation by air due to illness or accident. Medi evacuation/ambulance is free for Queensland residents and states that have a reciprocal arrangement. Unfortunately each state is a bit different regarding ambulance/ evacuation charges and so you will need to look into what applies to you. For peace of mind our recommendation is that customers take out travel insurance for the trip.

Sea kayak guides

At Coral sea kayaking we believe that the cornerstone to an exceptional trip is having exceptional guides. We pride ourselves on employing the best guides in the business to lead our trips. All our guides are highly qualified with years of sea miles behind them. They trained and qualified in Wilderness Medicine and CPR. They are not only skilled kayakers and gracious hosts but also gourmet

chefs who can whip up gastronomic delights on camp stoves. Our guides are nature lovers, these islands are their back yard and they feel a strong connection to them. They take great pride in not only sharing the wonder of this environment but also acting as stewards for its preservation. Ultimately and most importantly our guides are genuine humans, friendly, kind souls who pride themselves on making authentic connections with all who journey with them.

Meals and beverages

Our guides will prepare all meals during the trip offering a varied menu, including plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit, some cooked breakfasts, and wholesome tasty dinners with yummy desserts. We are unable to have refrigeration or coolers in our kayaks so our meals are planned accordingly using long life ingredients, smoked/cured meats etc etc. We are more than happy to cater for specific dietary requirements as long as we have prior knowledge so please let us know of any dietary requirements when you make your booking. Our guides are renowned for producing gourmet meals on camp stoves and impressing even the most ardent camp chefs.

Being in the wet tropics water is not usually a concern, we will have plenty of fresh drinking water during our journey. We also normally have a selection of juices and cordials. We offer a complimentary alcoholic beverage service which includes red and white wine. As we have restricted space in the kayaks and thus must ration our alcohol the complimentary beverage service equates to about one drink per night per person. Often the complimentary beverages are not enough for peoples tastes so we recommend that customers also bring along some of their own alcoholic beverage to enjoy during the evenings, however please remember space is limited in the kayaks so large volume alcohols like beer and cider will not fit. We suggest lower volume alcohols like wines and spirits.

Camping - take only photos and leave only footprints!

We provide quality two-person tents whilst on the islands, if you are travelling alone you will be provided with your own tent otherwise if you choose you can share with another member of the group, this helps to save space and weight in the kayaks. The region we visit is a World Heritage area and often a fragile ecosystem. We therefore have a policy of extremely low environmental impact. All our food waste and general rubbish will be removed from the islands and the use of biodegradable soap is appreciated. Your guide will outline everything we can do to keep our impact to a minimum.

Fitness Level

All moderate level trips will be enjoyed more by participants who are reasonably active and happy to participate in kayaking, swimming/snorkeling and hiking for up to 4 - 6 hours a day. Due to weather conditions some days may include some strenuous activity. As with many outdoor sports the fitter/healthier you are the more you will enjoy kayaking, therefore we recommend that you participate in a regular exercise program prior to your trip to improve overall fitness. Obviously we are operating in a sea environment so a basic level of swimming and water confidence is mandatory for all our participants.

Equipment list

If you are not returning to the same accommodation after the kayak trip and hence cannot store luggage at the accommodation then we are more than happy to store your non kayaking luggage at our base whilst you are on the trip.

On all our trips we are totally self sufficient so space is limited, it is therefore necessary to pack light. **We provide 2 waterproof dry-bags for your personal equipment and clothing**, the larger drybag (40 Litres) is not easily accessible whilst paddling. We will also provide a smaller deck drybag (10 Litres) for items that need to be accessed whilst on the water.

As part of our upgraded Covid 19 safe practices **we are no longer providing sleeping mattresses** for customers from late 2021 onwards. Due to the increased hygiene risk of sleeping on used mats we would ask that customers provide their own sleeping mats for the trip. To allow mats to fit in our tents we require sleeping mat dimensions to be less than 200cm L and 90cm W per mat. Please also keep in mind that all mats must be small enough to be rolled and stored in a kayak hatch. If you do not own a mat and cannot borrow off a friend or family member, then we do have a selection of professionally laundered mats which include a hygiene barrier that can be rented off Coral Sea Kayaking for a small charge. Please contact our office for further details about sleeping mat rental.

Standard Customer packing list:

The list below is a basic list of suggested item's. Not all items are mandatory and by no means is this an exhaustive list, so common sense with your interpretation is essential. Happy packing

Light coloured clothing is advisable; on some beaches and at certain times of the year sand-flies and mosquitos may be present and they are more attracted to dark colours.

Lightweight and compact sleeping bag and inner-sheet (for warm climates)

Sleeping mattress (please contact us if you wish to hire one)

Small travel pillow

Travel towel or sarong

2 shirts to wear whilst paddling (please avoid cotton, long sleeves advisable)

2 pairs of quick-dry shorts/boardshorts/swimwear

underwear

sandals, reef shoes, runners or other suitable footwear for watersports and island environments

Lightweight pair of trousers (to wear around camp)

1 – 2 lightweight long-sleeve shirts (to wear around camp)

lightweight warm jacket or jumper (to wear around camp)

lightweight thermal top (polypro, smart wool or capilene)

lightweight waterproof rain-jacket

lightweight socks

small torch and batteries (a head torch is handy for camping)

minimal toiletries (biodegradable soap/shampoo) toothbrush/paste etc

medications/ personal medical supplies (see section on medical matters)

Plenty of sunscreen, zink and lip balm

Insect repellent (we provide some group supplies)

Sunglasses with retainer

Wide-brim hat or cap for sun protection is essential.

Water bottle 1 to 2 litres minimum

Gloves for blisters and sun protection (sailing or cycling gloves work well)

Neck buff

Optional extras:

Camera

Binoculars

Small fishing rod or handline

Book/magazine or writing journal

Personal snorkeling gear (otherwise we have generic masks/snorkels)

Pack of cards/games

Lightweight hammock

Device/phone and small battery pack for charging.

Gear We provide:

- Comfortable quality tents
- Camp chair
- Dry bags for personal gear
- All kayaking specific equipment
- Safety equipment, expedition medical kit, Sat phone, PLB/EPIRB
- All camp kitchen equipment and shelter
- Appropriate toileting facilities including toilet paper.

Please don't hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions regarding your upcoming kayak trip.

We look forward to paddling with ☺