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General Information for Sea Kayaking Trips

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General Information

For active and adventurous people sea kayaking is a fun, relatively easy and rewarding watersport. It is a similar activity level to hiking, except all your gear is carried in the kayaks instead of on your back! Our two person fibreglass sea kayaks are stable, easy to paddle and fast. Every trip is led 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 guests on any trip. Small group numbers are more ecologically sustainable on the ocean and island environments, and it helps us to offer a more personalised boutique experience for you.

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

Sea kayaking is a weather dependent activity which creates a need to be flexible due to the ever changing nature of the sea. Therefore trip itineraries should be seen only as an outline of the journey ahead. The enjoyment and safety of the group is always our main consideration, therefore the guides may choose to alter the itinerary slightly to suit weather conditions and trip dynamics. Our guides are seasoned professionals who deal with the dynamic weather conditions of the Coral Sea on a routine basis - so please trust that they will make decisions to ensure safety and optimal enjoyment for the group.

The daily paddle is planned to take advantage of the cooler part of the day and lighter winds. We therefore like to rise early, do most of our paddling in the mornings; arriving at our overnight camp around lunch time or mid afternoon. This leaves the afternoon free for you to explore the island or simply relax. As with any expedition, sea kayaking journeys rely on participating as a group and working together to meet our objectives. The more you put in, the more you get out - so for a rewarding active holiday your assistance in camp activities will be gladly appreciated. Certain responsibilities occur everyday - such as helping lift the kayaks clear of the incoming tide, unpacking your own kayak and setting up a tent on arrival at the beach.

Starting and Finishing the Trip

Trip Start

You will need to arrive in Mission Beach in time for the Pre-Departure Briefing at 6pm the evening prior to your departure date.

The Pre-Departure meeting occurs at **Mission Reef Resort**, 58-62 Holland St, Wongaling Beach QLD 4852.

The CSK team will pick you up from your chosen accommodation on day 1 to start the trip, and drop you off at your accommodation at its conclusion. The details of these pickups will be confirmed at the pre-departure meeting.

Trip Finish

The paddling trip finishes on the final day in Mission Beach at approximately 3pm*. Once the trip concludes we will drop you back at your accommodation.

If planning bus or shuttle connections that same day, please schedule these after 4:30pm, just in case the trip finishes late due to unforeseen circumstances.

*While this has not happened yet in our 26 year history, it is possible that changing weather patterns could delay our return from a trip. If this happens, it may impact onward travel plans, therefore we recommend flexible travel arrangements, or planning for some extra time spent in Mission Beach afterwards, which could also be used to [raft the famous Tully River](#), or go on a boutique reef adventure with [Great Barrier Reef Safaris](#).

Mission Beach offers many other reef and rainforest activities, including scuba diving, bushwalking, whitewater rafting and skydiving. Many of our guests stay for a few days after the kayak trip to soak up extra relaxation time or explore the rainforest and 14km of golden beaches that make up the Mission Beach region.

For more information about Mission Beach check out www.missionhub.com.au

Where do I leave my car / things while on the trip?

Mission Beach is a very safe location, so cars can be parked on the street or parking lots at your accommodation.

If you are staying at the same accommodation before and after the trip, most providers will allow you to store your bags there for the week.

If you are unable to store your bags at your accommodation, please let your guides know at the pre-trip briefing and we will store these at our base for the duration of the trip.

How do I get to and from Mission Beach?

Coral Sea Kayaking Airport Shuttle

To get to and from your kayaking trip, we recommend using the Coral Sea Kayaking Airport Shuttle which aligns with our Hinchinbrook departures. This can be purchased as an add-on when making your booking with Coral Sea Kayaking.

CSK Airport Shuttle Operates each Saturday before and after our Hinchinbrook Expeditions*	
Cairns - Mission Beach	Mission Beach - Cairns
2:30 pm Departs Cairns Airport	7:30-8:00 am Mission Beach Pickups
2:45pm Cairns City Pickups	9:45 am Cairns City Drop Offs
5:00 pm Mission Beach	10:00 am Cairns Airport

*minimum 5 guests required for the shuttle to operate.

The cost of this shuttle service is \$120pp each way.

Other transport options

- Mission Link Bus Services: <https://www.missionlink.com.au/>
- Warren Bishop Private Shuttle Service: 0403507069
- Many different car rental options exist in Cairns
- Greyhound Bus Service - <https://www.greyhound.com.au>
- Premier Bus Service - <https://www.premierqld.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 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. **Watch out you don't confuse Mission Reef Resort and Mission Beach Resort, they are different places.**

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

Climate

Tropical North Queensland has two distinct seasons: A wet season from Jan – April and a dry season from May – Dec. 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 - 30 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 keeping camera gear to a minimum with a suitable waterproof case for protection. Small dry bags or waterproof cases are both handy and effective protection.

Personal spending

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 will want some cash for a coffee/tea and a snack. Depending where we take lunch on our final day after paddling back from the islands, lunch is always complimentary, however sometimes there is an option to purchase beverages which may require card or cash.

Medical Matters

All participants are required to complete an online medical questionnaire. 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 carry a comprehensive medical kit on our expeditions.

At least 1 month prior to the trip, all guests must fill out the online Medical Questionnaire.

Guides will usually carry a small supply of 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 for personal use and easy access.

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, delay, 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 guests take out travel insurance for the duration and nature of 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 highly qualified with years of sea miles behind them. They are trained and qualified in Wilderness Medicine and CPR. Not only are these people skilled kayakers and gracious hosts, but also gourmet cooks who can whip up gastronomic delights on a mere camp stove. Our guides are nature lovers first - these islands are like their backyard and they feel a strong connection to this place. Taking great joy in not only sharing the wonders of this Island, 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 are renowned for producing gourmet meals on camp stoves and impressing even the most ardent camp chefs. Your leaders 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. Optimising delicate fresh food at the beginning and longer-life ingredients towards the end. We are happy to cater for specific dietary requirements as long as we have prior knowledge - so please let us know of any dietary requirements when making your booking. Some dietary requirements may incur a surcharge if highly specific and alternative ingredients are required.

Being in the wet tropics, water is not usually a concern, and we re-supply fresh drinking water by collecting from reliable water sources as we paddle through the islands. There will be plenty of fresh drinking water made available during our journey, we also provide a selection of juices and cordials. If you wish to drink alcohol we recommend bringing along a limited amount. A glass of wine or a dram of spirits enjoyed on the beach as you watch the sun set after an enjoyable day on the water is a great way to unwind. However, we do insist that guests drink responsibly and do not drink during any water based activities. When considering which beverage to bring along please remember that space is limited in the kayaks so large volume alcohols like beer and cider will not really fit. We suggest wines and spirits which can be stored in plastic bottles or bags.

Tents

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 group member, this helps to save space and weight in the kayaks.

Take only photos and leave only footprints!

The region we will visit is a World Heritage area and often fragile ecosystem. We therefore have a policy of extremely low environmental impacts. All our food waste and general rubbish will be removed from the islands and the use of biodegradable soap is appreciated. Mindful use of repellents is also encouraged to minimise contaminants entering waterways. Your guide will show you some easy camp systems and outline anything else we can do to keep our impact to a minimum.

Skill & Fitness Level

All moderate level trips will be enjoyed more by participants who are reasonably active in their daily life, and happy to participate in kayaking, swimming and hiking for up to 3 - 6 hours a day. Due to changeability of weather conditions some days may include more 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 departure to improve overall fitness. While prior sea kayaking experience is not required, we are operating in an open-ocean environment so a basic level of swimming and water confidence is mandatory for all our participants.

Standard packing list

Space in kayaks is limited, it is therefore necessary to pack light. **We provide 2 waterproof dry-bags for your personal equipment and clothing**, the larger drybag (40L) is not easily accessible whilst paddling. We will also provide a smaller drybag (10L) for items that need to be accessed whilst on the water.

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

- Compact sleeping bag OR quilt/fleece/innersheet suitable for warm climates
- Small travel pillow
- Travel towel or sarong
- 1-2 shirt/rashie to wear paddling (*quick-dry fabric and long sleeves are best, avoid cotton*)
- 1-2 pairs boardshorts or pants/tights/swimwear

It is recommended to cover up whenever possible to protect yourself from the sun and any marine hazards. Light coloured camp-clothing is advisable; on some beaches and at certain times of the year sand-flies or mosquitoes may be present and they are more attracted to dark colours. Boardshorts combined with tights are an excellent option.

- Comfortable underwear
- On-water footwear (*sandals, reef shoes, runners or others suited for watersports, short hikes and sand. Bring socks if necessary.*)
- Off-water footwear (*camp and short hikes. Compact sandals, sandals or runners. Many people choose to bring one pair of shoes for everything.*)
- Lightweight trousers - campwear
- 1-2 lightweight long-sleeve shirts - campwear
- Lightweight warm fleece OR jumper - campwear
- Lightweight thermal top (*polypropylene, wool or capilene*)
- Light waterproof rain-jacket
- Small torch (*a head torch is handy for camp*)
- Minimal toiletries (*biodegradable soap/shampoo, toothbrush/paste*)
- Medications/ personal medical supplies (*see section on medical matters*)
- Sunscreen, zinc and lip balms
- Insect repellent (*some group supplies provided*)
- Sunglasses with cord / retainer

- Wide-brim hat or cap is essential
- Neck Buff / face covering (*on-water sun reflections can lead to additional sun exposure*)
- Water bottle 1-2 litres
- Gloves for blisters and sun (*Protect from blisters and sun. Sailing, cycling or thin garden gloves can work well*)

Optional extras:

- Snorkeling gear (*Mask + snorkel, no fins or mini swim fins only*)
- Camera
- Binoculars
- Small fishing rod or handline (*must carry an accessible knife if trawling a handline from kayak to mitigate risk of entanglement*)
- Small musical instrument
- Book/magazine or writing journal
- Pack of cards or games
- Lightweight hammock
- Device/phone and small battery pack (*waterproof or bring a strong zip-loc bag for extra protection*)
- Sea sickness medication

Beverages: Limited space is available to bring your beverage of choice to enjoy in the evenings. Cask wine, spirits decanted into plastic bottles (no glass), or a few cans are suitable. Please drink responsibly, and only after the day's activities have concluded.

Gear We provide:

- All specialised kayaking equipment
- Drybags for personal gear

1 40L drybag for personal items

1 10-15L semi drybag for day use

- Quality tents, comfortable air mattress (Lilo ~10cm thick) & camp chair
- Safety equipment, expedition medical kit, Sat phone, PLB/EPIRB
- All camp kitchen equipment and group shelter/ tarps
- Relaxation hammocks
- Appropriate wilderness toilet 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 you! 😊