



## 21 Day Cape York Complete 4WD Self-Drive Adventure

This journey contrasts the dry Savannah Grasslands and amazing underground formations of the Undara Lava Tubes and Chillagoe Caves to the west with the richness of the Quinkan Aboriginal Art and the splendour of the Reef and Rainforest on the coast. From the waterfalls of the Atherton Tablelands to the history of Cooktown, you fully explore the Cape and all it has to offer. You journey to 'the Tip' in a comfortable Land Cruiser with Rooftop tent. You drive most of the challenging Old Telegraph Track and have plenty of time available for fishing, swimming, sightseeing and a spot of Bird watching. This is the Tropical Queensland in all its splendour!

### **Suggested Itinerary**

#### **Day 1 Cairns to Ravenshoe**

Depart Cairns and travel north up the Captain Cook Highway turn-off left to Kuranda. Ascend the windy road up onto the Atherton Tablelands for a morning stop at Kuranda. Continue through Mareeba and Yungaburra and detour to Lake Eacham and Lake Barrine, where you can lunch, cruise and walk to giant Kauri pines. The Curtain Fig Tree and Millaa Millaa Falls are then visited. This afternoon travel to **Ravenshoe** and your first

**Overnight camp at the Caravan Park. (Full facilities- shower, toilet & washing machines)** (170km 3 hours driving, 1 hour walking)

#### **Day 2 Ravenshoe to Undara**

You cross the range and notice a stark transition from out of the rainforest and into the savannah. After a morning stop at Millstream Falls, the widest in Australia, you continue through Innot Hot Springs, Mt Garnet and the 40-mile scrub. Arrive at Undara for lunch and set out to explore the amazing Lava Tubes this afternoon with a guide.

**Overnight camping Undara Resort (Full facilities)** (200km 3 hours driving, 2 hours walking)

#### **Day 3 Undara to Chillagoe**

A morning walk to nearby lookouts will reward the active as you get panoramic vistas of the surrounding countryside and remnant volcanoes. Retrace your steps to the Gulf Development Road and head left. Turn north and cross the Lynd River and Tate River before joining the Burke Development at Almadon, where you can stop to view the historic railway station and its lush gardens. Travel to Chillagoe, an historic old mineral field, for lunch. This afternoon tour Royal Arch cave with a Ranger and explore the surrounding mining area ruins and museum and Aboriginal art.

**Overnight camping, Caravan Park Chillagoe. (Full facilities)** (230km 3 & 1/2 hours driving)

#### **Day 4 Chillagoe to Mayfield**

Retrace your steps to Almadon and on through to Dimbulah. Head north, through Mt Mulligan Station and over the Hodgkinson and Mitchell Rivers to the Peninsular Development Road near Bob's Lookout. After a stop to soak in the scenery, continue north to the turn-off to Maytown. Take the track to Maytown and explore the old ruins and machinery remains of Australia's richest alluvial goldfield.

**Your overnight bush camp is near German Bar. (No facilities)** (273km 5 hours driving, 1 & 1/2 hours walking)

## **21 Day Cape York Complete**

### **Day 5 Mayfield to Laura**

The track back to the Peninsular Development Road takes you past other alluvial gold areas and the Sam Elliot Lookout, with great views over the Palmer Valley. Turning north, you travel up to the Palmer River Roadhouse, with its mining museum and on to the irrigated farms of Lakeland, quite an oasis in the dry landscape. After a stop at Split Rock, take a walk to the wonderful galleries of Quinkan Aboriginal Art. Your overnight caravan park up the road must have one of the largest Caravan Park swimming pools in Australia!

**Overnight camping Ang-gnarra Caravan Park, Laura. (Full facilities)** (193km 4 hours driving, 2 hours walking)

### **Day 6 Laura to Archer River**

Stop at Laura town for a look before continuing up the Peninsula Developmental Road. A morning stop can be made at Hann River Roadhouse. The corrugated Peninsular Road continues to the town of Coen, Capital of the Cape. This frontier town has great atmosphere and fuel, groceries and a pub to replenish supplies. The road is bitumen to the airport and Quarantine Inspection Point and you continue on to our overnight stop at the Archer River Roadhouse.

**Overnight camping, Archer River Roadhouse. (Full facilities)** (309km 5 hours driving)

### **Day 7 Archer River to Weipa**

Crossing the impressive Archer River is a lot easier these days with a bridge! The Peninsula Development Road continues on to the Weipa turnoff and you are in Weipa for lunch. This afternoon you can explore the area, renowned for its bauxite mining.

**Overnight camping, Caravan Park Weipa. (Full facilities)** (200km 3 hours driving)

### **Day 8 Weipa to Dulhunty River**

You partly retrace our steps before turning left and on to rejoin the Telegraph Track at Batavia Downs. Proceed ahead up the Telegraph Road and continue on to cross the Wenlock River and lunch. After 41km, the track divides and the real adventure starts. The Old Telegraph Track (OTT) is narrow and slow and the creek crossings can be very tricky and steep. Travel slowly to avoid colliding with anything coming the other way. There are a couple of tricky creek crossings at Palm Creek and Dulcie Creek on your way to the lovely camping on either side of the Dulhunty River.

**Overnight bush camping Dulhunty River. (No facilities)** (194km 6 hours driving)

### **Day 9 Dulhunty River to Eliot Falls**

After just over 3km, a track leaves to the right to Heathlands Ranger Station. This is recommended to be taken for 15km to the Ranger Headquarters to avoid the infamous Gunshot Creek crossing. From the Ranger Station, another track to the left returns to the Old Telegraph Track (OTT). You pass the grave of a Linesman, a few more crossings and an Aboriginal Community. From here the road improves until you cross the Southern Bypass Track. Return to the OTT and ford the first crossing to make your way to Eliot Falls Camping Area.

**Overnight camping Eliot Falls. (Toilet only)** The swimming is great at Eliot and Twin Falls! (60 km 4 hours driving, 1 hour walking)

## **21 Day Cape York Complete**

### **Day 10 Eliot Falls to Seisia**

Continuing along the OTT, the first crossing has some rather deep holes, so take care. A track to the left returns to the Northern Bypass track avoiding the OTT through some very difficult crossings and boggy country.

Reaching the Northern Bypass, turn right and travel to the ferry over the Jardine River (Currently \$88, **cash only**). You continue on to Bamaga and your waterfront

**Overnight Camping at Seisia. (Full facilities)** (100km 3 hours driving, 1 hour walking)

### **Day 11 Cape York.**

Today you head for the Tip! Travel through the Lockerbie Scrub Rainforest until the Pajinka Reserve Car Park. The walking track leads through the rainforest, onto the beach and then over the headland to the Tip of Cape York. You've made it!

You now begin your return trip south. Turn left to Somerset, Torres Strait's first administrative centre. Keep your eyes open for the big black Palm Cockatoos! The track stops at the ruins of the historic outpost with only remnants of the wonderful gardens left. Return to the Cape track and stop at the Cape York Souvenir store and buy a celebratory T shirt before returning to your

**Overnight camping Seisia Caravan Park. (Full facilities)** (136km 4 hours driving, 2 hours walking)

### **Day 12 Cape York**

A day to explore. Thursday Island and Horn Island as an optional tour. Fishing, scenic flights or just relaxing are all options. The TI and Horn Island tour costs about \$160 per person.

**Overnight camping, Seisia. (Full facilities)**

### **Day 13 Cape York to Wenlock River**

Its time to reluctantly turn south. Retrace your tracks to Bamaga and view the wartime wreck of the crashed DC3. Continue to the ferry and recross the Jardine, travelling down the Northern Bypass. Turn left onto the OTT for a detour to Fruit Bat Falls for a swim and morning stop. Return to the OTT and take the Southern Bypass and travel through Heathland and rainforest. After another 35km a track to the left gives you a diversion to Captain Billy Landing on the beach for lunch. Retrace your tracks and continue to rejoin the OTT for your evening camp.

**Overnight camping Moreton Telegraph Station. (Full facilities)** (283km 5 hours driving.)

### **Day 14 Wenlock River to Chilli Beach**

Departing the Wenlock River, you continue your journey south for about 20km before taking the Frenchman's Track, 2 km before Batavia Downs Station. This interesting route into the Iron Range National Park will take you across the Wenlock River and over the great Divide. Descending the range, cross the Pascoe River (a little tricky!) and emerge into the National Park. One of Australia's largest remaining areas of Lowland rainforest, it contains a number of plants and animals not commonly found elsewhere in Australia, including the Cuscus, Palm Cockatoo and the striking Eclectus Parrot. After a stop at the Mt Tozer lookout and for some bird watching at Claudie River, make your way to the fishing outpost of Portland Roads and on to Chilli Beach, your camp for 2 nights.

**Overnight bush camping Chilli Beach. (No facilities)** (141 km 5 hours driving, 1 hour walking)

## 21 Day Cape York Complete

### Day 15 Chilli Beach/Iron Range National Park

Today is a day where you can follow your own interests. For the Fishermen and walkers, the beach beckons. For the nature lover and birdwatcher, you can return to the rainforest and search for the elusive Eclectus Parrot and Palm Cockatoo. A great day to relax, fish or explore nature.

**Overnight bush camping Chilli Beach. (No facilities)** (50km 1&1/2 hour driving)

### Day 16 Chilli Beach to Musgrave Roadhouse

Reluctantly you depart this wonderful area. Return past the Frenchman's Track and over the Pascoe River. Stop to have a look at the Wenlock Ruins, cross the Wenlock River and emerge back at the Peninsular Development Road to continue our journey south. After lunch at the Archer River Roadhouse, travel south past Coen and to your overnight camp at Musgrave Roadhouse.

**Overnight camping, Musgrave Roadhouse Caravan Park (Full facilities)** (339km 5 &1/2 hours driving)

### Day 17 Musgrave Roadhouse to Lakefield National Park.

Turn off to Lakefield National Park and continue towards the Hann River Crossing. A detour to Low Lake is a birdwatchers delight! Return to the track and turn right to the Hann Crossing and a stop. Continue on to your overnight camp at Kalpowar. Perhaps you might try your hand for the elusive Barramundi.

**Overnight camping, Lakefield National Park. (Shower & toilet)** (138km 5 hours driving)

### Day 18 Lakefield National Park to Cooktown

You continue through the National Park and on to the restored Old Laura Homestead, which is well worth a stop. Travel through Battle Camp, site of an Aboriginal massacre, and continue through to Endeavour Falls for a swim. Make your way into Cooktown and visit the Captain Cook Museum, the historic buildings of Cooktown with a walking tour and perhaps Grassy Hill lookout for sunset.

**Overnight camping, Cooktown Tourist Park (Full facilities)** (152km 4 hours driving)

### Day 19 Cooktown to Cape Tribulation

Depart Cooktown and head back towards Mareeba on the bitumen to Black Mountain Lookout. Leave the highway and shortly you'll arrive at Lion's Den Hotel. The track takes you through rainforest, the Cedar Bay National Park and numerous small communities. Pass the beautiful Bloomfield River and on through the Wujal Wujal aboriginal Community. Just before the crossing of the Daintree, turn right to Bloomfield Falls, a short walk up the track and a delightful diversion. Don't swim!

Return to the Bloomfield Track and cross the River. The track now begins to climb through the steep rainforest ridges. You arrive at Cape Tribulation early afternoon, where World Heritage rainforest and World Heritage reef converge, and have time to look, walk, swim and explore the wonderful beaches.

**Overnight camping, Cape Tribulation. (Full facilities)** (105km 3 hours driving, 2 hours walking)

## 21 Day Cape York Complete

### Day 20 Cape Tribulation to Port Douglas

After a delightful morning in Cape Tribulation, you begin the trek to Port Douglas through the World Heritage rainforest. Cooper's Creek has a 1-hour boat cruise through the rainforest. The scenery is spectacular as you pass National Park walks, lookouts and make your way to the Daintree River. You detour to Daintree and continue towards Mossman and Mossman Gorge in the Daintree National Park, where you can lunch and take a walk through the rainforest. You arrive early at your

**Overnight camping at Port Douglas** to have time to explore town or relax. **(Full facilities)** (116km 2&1/2 hours driving)

### Day 21 Port Douglas to Cairns

After a relaxing morning, return to the Captain Cook Highway. Stop and have a look at the Rainforest Heritage Centre. There are some great views of Trinity Bay as you make your way homeward. Stop at the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural centre in Cairns and enjoy a performance. You also have the option of a Skyrail ride to Barron Falls to round off the great trip. (54km 1 hour driving)

### Recommended References

The above itineraries are not intended as the sole guide to the details of your route.

### Road Conditions

It is important to seek up to date advice on road conditions as things can change rapidly.

### Map

HEMA Maps – Cape York.

### Guide Book

*Cape York- An Adventurers Guide* by Ron and Viv Moon

### Background Reading

*The Explorers* by Tim Flannery

*Cape York-* By the Australian Geographic Society.

### Web Sites

Four Wheel Drive Hire Service [www.4wdhire.com.au](http://www.4wdhire.com.au)

Moon Guidebooks [www.guidebooks.com.au](http://www.guidebooks.com.au)

HEMA Maps for an idea of the range of maps and information on suppliers

[www.hemamaps.com.au](http://www.hemamaps.com.au)

Outback tracks information [www.mynrma.com.au/travel/go/outback\\_tracks/index.shtml](http://www.mynrma.com.au/travel/go/outback_tracks/index.shtml)

QLD National Parks [www.epa.qld.gov.au/environment/park/discover](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/environment/park/discover)