The Coffs Coast is a beautiful, fun-filled tourism destination on the NSW Mid North Coast mid-way between Sydney and Brisbane.

The vibrant city of Coffs Harbour is the main regional centre, flanked by the coastal towns and villages of Red Rock/Corindi, Woolgoolga, Sawtell, Urunga and Scotts Head, the rural towns of the Orara Valley such as Coramba and Nana Glen, the river towns of Bowraville, Bellingen and Macksville and, nestled into the foothills of the Great Divide, Dorrigo.

The unique character of each village and town attracts travellers looking to experience the diverse heritage and culture of the Coffs Coast.

So you can see there’s way more to the Coffs Coast than the Big Banana; the 80km of coastline and hinterland beyond the Big Banana is relatively unspoilt, almost untamed and a lot of it is still waiting to be discovered so load up the family car, pack a rod or two and get there.

This region is a rich blend of ocean, beaches, forests and mountains plus much more, so there is something for everyone in the family to enjoy.

There is so much to see and do and it’s all listed at the Coffs Coast Visitor Information Centre at the corner of Elizabeth and Mclean Streets in Coffs Harbour. We found all the local information and advice we needed to get around this great region. Their website, www.coffscoast.com.au, has masses of stuff and you can always call them on 1300 369 070

GETTING THERE

The Coffs Coast is right on the Pacific Highway about 530km from Sydney and around 400km from Brisbane.

It’s also on the Sydney-Brisbane rail line and the station is just a short cast from the jetty area.

Coffs Harbour Airport is served by all major airlines and there are many car hire companies at the airport and elsewhere.

ACCOMMODATION

The Coffs Coast offers so many options for every style of fishing and you could say the same about the accommodation available.

There’s somewhere just perfect to stay for you, whether you’re on a strict budget or eager to experience five-star opulence or anywhere in between.

We stayed a few nights at the very family-oriented Coffs Holiday Park. Like many others on the Coffs Coast, this park has families in mind and has allowed parking room for big and small boats near your cabin.

One other place we spent some time was the newly renovated Bellinger River Tourist Park, right on the Bellinger River at Repton. This park has onsite vans almost IN this beautiful river, its own ramp on site and fish-cleaning facilities and really is an impressive set-up.

The last place we stayed was the Darlington Beach Holiday Park, owned by the NRMA. It’s about 25km north of Coffs and this gorgeous park spans well over 110 acres of ocean, sub tropic palms and forest and has facilities for everyone.

You can walk to the beach for a fish or swim in the pool, dine at the restaurant, have a hit on the resort’s golf course or tennis courts and plenty more.

You can pitch a tent or choose from the many cabin options available. Despite its name, this park is really on Arrawarra Beach Road.

There are so many options and from what we saw it’s going to be hard to settle down in one place on this coast. But everything is so close, so it’s not the hard to see why the area is so popular.

FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

When planning a family getaway, the topic always comes up: What do the kids and non-anglers do when you’re out fishing? Of course, some lucky families all go fishing but still need other stuff to do when they aren’t wetting a line.

There are so many things to choose from on the Coffs Coast. You can take it easy and go for a drive along the coast, or head inland to the lush rainforests, where you can visit one or more national parks, nature reserve, flora reserves or state forests. In among these are some excellent walking trails for all levels of fitness.

One at Dorrigo leads to a skywalk high in the rainforest canopy and there are some spectacular waterfalls and even a main road called the Waterfall Way for obvious reasons Picnic facilities are available almost everywhere.
The National Parks and Wildlife Service regularly conducts walks and various tours, along with other activities, in parks in the Dorrigo and Coffs Coast regions. For more details contact NPWS on 02 6657 2309.

For more active fun pursuits for the young and young at heart, some which will really get the blood pumping, you have Karting, golfing, skydiving, surfing, surf rafting, whitewater rafting, beach buggies, helicopter tours, kayaking and canoeing, scuba diving and snorkelling, of Skirmish and survival courses and a whole lot more.

While fishing is a major drawcard for the Coffs Coast, there sure is enough other stuff to do.

Surfing is a major part of the Coffs Coast with over 40 beaches to sift through, there are waves for all skill levels and if you’re starting out, there is a surf school at the Surf Life Saving Club at Park Beach.

There are waves you will need to hunt for but there are many waves right at the beaches at the various parks so for someone who loves the surf, choose a park on the beach!

And then there are the major tourist attractions, such as the Coffs Harbour Pet Porpoise Pool in Orlando Street, which is always a highlight with the kids. They can see seals, play ball with dolphins watch them dive through hoops, sing and more.

Or you can go and spend some time inside the Big Banana, have lunch, check the shops and there is a waterslide and toboggan rides.

Out at Bonville, there is a fascinating Butterfly House and a maze for those families where you may like a little more education with a tour style day.

Coffs is also very well known for its golf courses and the Bonville International Golf Resort has won more awards than you can poke a five iron at, so if it’s too windy to fish, go and enjoy this course – it will test the best golfer and destroy the worst.

There are many other courses in the area as well so check them out!

The Winter climate is perfect, never too hot, never too cold, and from late May until November the humpback whale migration features a procession of these awesome giants as they head to and from their calving grounds inside the Barrier Reef.

There are many whale-watching cruises and day trips available, leaving from the Coffs Marina which is itself worth a look. It's part of a working port full of commercial fishing boats, cruising yachts and other light shipping traffic.

Apart from what you catch yourself, you won’t find fresher or tastier seafood than the fantastic variety of delicacies on sale at the Fishermen’s Co-op down at the Jetty.

Or you can kick back at the best recreational fishing club on the coast, the Coffs Deep Sea Fishing Club, with sensational views over the Jetty and the Harbour and seawards. The club hosts two major annual fishing events, the huge Easter Classic and the catch-and-release only Dave Irvine Memorial Snapper Comp each Queen’s Birthday weekend, in honour of the inventor of the Environet.

**FOOD**

There are thousands of eating options, from the quick stop at the bakery on your way fishing to one of the marina’s seafood shops and the many little cafés and restaurants to keep you busy for as long as you’re in town.

Every little beachside road has somewhere nice to stop and have a picnic or get your self a feed. For your own catering, there all the major supermarkets and shopping centres to load up the cupboards.

There’s something fantastic for everyone to eat on the Coffs Coast, from silver service fine dining and innovative cuisine in the resorts and top restaurants through to soul food and the vegetarian experiences available in places like Bellingen and the Orara hinterland.

And somewhere, in some little roadside café or beachside snack bar, there could very well lurk the best hamburger in Australia.

Like everything else on the Coffs Coast, it’s all there just waiting for you to discover it.

**The fishing**

The Coffs Coast would be the only place in Australia where you could catch a snapper or a marlin in the morning, a bream or a bass before lunch, a trout in the afternoon and be back in time for a comfortable dinner!

This area has some of the best beach and rock fishing on the East Coast, the rivers are loaded with all the great estuary species and the headwaters are packed with trout and bass. The snapper grounds are a short cast from shore and the continental shelf is conveniently close.

Whether you have a boat, big or small, or a couple of rock/surf rods or even a few kids’ combos to cast off a jetty or river, the Coffs Coast has you covered.

You have many charter boat options on the coast or you can hire a boat, kayak or canoe for a few hours or an entire day and experience the rivers for yourself.
For all the hot tips, who better to ask than a local who runs the largest tackle shop in the country, Peter Russell, of Fishing Tackle Australia – MO Tackle. When in Coffs drop in and say hello to Pete and his staff, who will point you in the right direction and make sure you are using the correct gear and bait. Call them on 02 6652 4611.

Here’s a run-down from the top.

RED ROCK
The small village of Red Rock nestles beside the mouth of the Red Bank River. At the mouth this waterway seems very shallow, and at low tide you can walk across without too much trouble in some places.

A short distance upstream, past Jewfish Point, the bottom drops away and a reasonable depth of water continues some way inland on the southern arm of the river.

The sand flats near the entrance are ideal whiting and flathead grounds and the holes and channels fish well with the falling tide. The run out also produces a strong rip at the mouth so care should be exercised.

The General Store offers an excellent range of bait and tackle and a cool beer can be had at the Bowling Club.

A visit to Red Rock is well worth the effort, even if it’s just to relax on the river bank while the picnic is prepared and the kids have a swim – it’s all part of a fishing holiday.

While not essential, a small boat or punt offers perhaps the best way to explore and fish the upper reaches, as vehicle access is limited.

TO DARKUM CORINDI
From Red Rock the beach sweeps almost uninterrupted to Arrawarra Headland. One of the places well worth the visit is a rocky shoal called Corindi Head. Cunjevoi can be gathered here at low tide and the fishing in and around the rocky washes is very rewarding.

Bream, whiting, jew and even the occasional snapper are taken from these rocks. Worms and pipis can be found along the beaches north and south.

Corindi has a store that supplies bait and tackle and the caravan park is well established with good sites right on the beach.

ARRAWARRA
The Coffs Coast’s northernmost offshore boat ramp is here, right on the beach. A 4WD is recommended to launch and retrieve but a chat to one of the locals may get you the use of one of the many tractors in the area.

Fishing the headland itself is prohibited because it is a designated Sanctuary Zone of the Solitary Islands Marine Park.

MULLAWARRA
The next point to the south fishes well for tailor, drummer and groper. The wash near the rock at the end of the headland is always worth a throw and you can hook almost anything.

MULLAWAY
The rocks here offer the angler the chance of a lucky dip with good tailor and jew and the odd bream thrown in.

The flat rock just to the south is a well-known local favourite.

DARKUM HEAD AND BEACH
Good spots to try for a fish or two. Snapper are taken from the rocks here and big jew are to be found along the beach.

Gathering bait is never a problem; good worms and pipis are here for the catching.

WOOLGOOLGA
From Darkum the beach sweeps down to Woolgoolga, or ‘Woopie’ to the locals. This beach fishes well for bream, whiting, tailor and some very large jewfish. Worms can be caught at the bottom of the tide and pipis can be found most of the time.

The headland itself is a popular spot with rockhoppers. The gutter at the front of the headland is a good spot for snapper, drummer and groper.

Bream and tailor can be caught from the rocks on the southern side just north of Back Beach.

The beach is also a popular spot for bream, whiting, jew and tailor, which can be found in the many gutters. Bait seekers should be able to find the odd worm or pipi.
SANDY BEACH
The rocks to the north of Sandy are a good spot for tailor, bream and drummer. The beach itself has been known to turn up the odd big jewfish, but bream and whiting are more the go.

Bare Bluff, at the southern end of the beach, offers another of those shore-based snapper spots at its northern end. Extreme care should be taken at the hole on the south side and I do mean extreme care – with a bit of a sea, this spot is deadly. Drummer, groper and tailor are found around these rocks.

FIDDAMANS AND EMERALD
Good gutters can usually be found on Fiddamans and it’s well worth the short walk over from Sandy.

Emerald Beach is inclined to be flat, but good bream and whiting are taken from both beaches.

LOOK AT ME NOW
Another good headland for the experienced rockhopper.

Snapper, and good ones at that, can be landed from the end while groper and drummer abound and tailor can be spun from the washes.

There are a couple of exposed and very dangerous places on this headland, particularly at the hole on the southern side.

MOONEE
Like most estuaries on the Coffs Coast, Moonee is very shallow at the mouth, with large sand banks and few deep channels.

With the rising tide the fish move out to feed on the flats, which flats should be examined at the bottom of the tide for flathead ‘lays’, easily detected seen as large, flathead- shaped depressions in the sand.

The flathead lie there waiting to ambush anything swimming past – it might be your bait or lure. Big lizards are territorial and will return to their favourite haunts.

Bream and whiting also feed across these flats, looking for prawns, worms or any small crustaceans.

Moonee Creek becomes deeper as you move inland. Good bream and flathead are caught in the deep holes along the edges of the banks. Again, a small boat is a big advantage because vehicle access is very limited.

Moonee Beach is well-known locally as a top jew spot. More than once locals have been pulled out of a warm bed to help ferry a very large catch over the creek.

At the creek mouth, luderick can be taken from the rocks and it’s very easy to lock horns with a tackle-destroying drummer. Bream, tailor and jewfish can also be taken at the mouth.

Bream, whiting, tailor and dart abound in the gutters along the beach and worms and pipis are readily available.

All in all, a great spot for fishing. Moonee Beach is declared as a park Refuge Zone and the creek is a Recreation zone.

NORTHERN BEACHES
The beaches just to the north of Coffs Harbour are all fairly similar – deep water just off the edge in long, wide gutters.

To the beach angler that spells just one thing, big jewfish. Probable 80% of the big jew weighed in each year come from these spots.

From Sapphire to the north end of Park Beach, the water is studded with rocks just off the beach, while outside these are vast reef systems teeming with fish. Around Lobster Rocks, snapper and jew can be caught. Campbell’s Beach really turns up the big jew when tides and moon are right and the same follows for Hills Beach and Korora Bay.

DIGGERS HEAD
One of the better rock fishing spots. Big groper, drummer and snapper can be caught in the deep water on the northern side.

Tailor are to be found in and around the washes at the eastern end.

MACAULEYS HEADLAND
A big system of rocks that forms two points with a short gravel beach in between. Lots of washes and rock gutters make this another good spot for the rockhopper.

Drummer and groper can be found and Spanish mackerel are caught from the eastern end in season.
Table Rock is fairly obvious, one large flat rock: Just pop a bait or lure in the gutter between the rock and the headland.

As with the other headlands, this one has its share of dangerous spots so please take care.

COFFS HARBOUR

Fishing at Coffs Harbour itself is as diverse as it is rewarding.

Coffs Creek, although very shallow, does turn up some good bream and flathead. Lizards of 4kg or 5kg are weighed in regularly.

The Harbour, walls and islands all return good fish. The North Wall for luderick and bream, around Muttonbird Island for big drummer, groper, snapper and in season Spanish mackerel. The northern side of Muttonbird is a declared a Refuge Zone.

The southern headland, really an island joined to the mainland, has some great fishing spots.

Good luderick are caught around the boat ramp and along the wall. The South Wall itself is a bit dangerous and care should be exercised when fishing along its seaward side, some of the rocks will move with wave action. The wall is, however, a top spot for jewfish, snapper and Spanish mackerel in season.

The beach to the south is Boambee, one of the few beaches on the Coffs Coast open to 4WDs, but take it easy – the local ‘boys in blue’ have their own 4WD and road rules do apply.

The beach has good holes and gutters most of the year and when the whiting are on, it’s standing room only. As one visitor was heard to remark, ‘It’s easier to park in Pitt Street’.

BOAMBEE CREEK

This is another of those shallow estuaries with wide, expansive sand banks upstream. It is best accessed by a boat ramp on the Sawtell-Coffs link road, Hogbin Drive.

There are a number of feeder creeks that turn up some very good bream and whiting but watch the tide if you do not want to be stranded.

You can pump yabbies at the junction of Boambee and Newports creeks.

BOAMBEE HEADLAND

Good fishing here with some deep water just off the edge.

A good spot for mackerel and longtail tuna in season and an all-round good spot for tailor, jew, bream and even the odd snapper.

Once again, care should be exercised when fishing from these rocks.

SAWTELL

From Boambee Headland to Sawtell Headland is an interesting area to fish. Sawtell Beach turns up very good bream and whiting and the reef areas offshore just about guarantee a jewfish or two.

Sawtell?Headland offers a huge variety with its own island on one side and a beautiful estuary mouth on the other. A top spot for tailor, bream, luderick and, on the run-out tide, for jewfish.

BONVILLE/PINE CREEK

At first glance this looks like another small estuary but don’t let looks fool you, this is a top system that requires a great deal of time to explore.

The usual whiting, bream and flathead with even a few bass in the upstream area. A boat, kayak or canoe is a must and this system has a speed limit of 8 knots.

BUNDAGEN TO MYLESTROM

This beach is accessible to 4WDs but you must obtain a permit. The gutters on this beach turn up some of the better fish on the coast and there are a number of rocky outcrops which also produce very good fish.

The beach fishes well for bream, whiting and jewfish with good worms and pipis available.

Access points are also a bit limited with the main point being off the Bundagen Road. There is an access to the southern end of the beach at Mylestrom.

MYLESTROM/URUNGA
The Bellinger and Kalang rivers join right at the opening to the sea and these systems each are an angler’s paradise and it would take another whole feature to explain fully.

With no commercial fishing in these rivers they teem with quality fish. Good bream, whiting, flathead – make that big flathead – and good jewfish in season, while the tops of these systems are a bass angler’s paradise.

HUNGRY HEAD

Beach and headland fishing along this stretch can produce some great catches at times. When conditions are suitable you can have a great day out on tailor, bream, luderick whiting – and even a snapper or two could catch you napping.

VALLA BEACH

Valla Beach has some of the Coffs Coast’s very best beach fishing.

These wide beaches produce good bream, tailor whiting and flathead, while the estuary is a great spot to cruise in a small boat, canoe or kayak for all the estuary favourites.

NAMBUCCA HEADS

The Nambucca region, with its mass of coastline and gorgeous river to explore, also includes rocky outcrops and is an angler’s dreams come true.

The Nambucca River and Warrell Creek join at the mouth to empty into the ocean, but provide diverse estuary and freshwater experiences.

The Warrell is one of the great North Coast creeks where you can catch bream, mangrove jacks and bass in one session.

Offshore anglers can head the other way from the river mouth and experience excellent inshore angling right through to the conveniently close continental shelf for bigger, deeper and harder-pulling targets.

Just check the local bar conditions before your trip.

Perfectly Positioned

The Coffs Coast is far enough from everywhere but close enough to get to, so if you want to catch a record game fish, or a whiting from a jetty or stalk a trout in a mountain stream, this is the place. And while you are experiencing first-rate fishing, your non-anglers are having the time of their lives.

Facts

SOLITARY ISLANDS MARINE PARK

The Coffs Coast has gone through a lot of changes over the last few years with the introduction of the Solitary Islands Marine Park in waters to the north of Coffs Harbour.

It covers the Solitary Island Group and, from what a Marine Parks spokesperson said, the zones are currently under review but the general consensus is they are currently happy with the park’s progress and no inclusions are planned for the next five years.

For more information on the marine parks in the Coffs region visit www.mpa.nsw.gov.au/simp.html, call 02 6274 1111 or email --e-mail address hidden-- .

You will be given maps and details of all you need to know.

Facts

BOAT RAMPS

The Coffs Harbour town ramp is in a small cove on the southern side of the harbour. It’s in a perfect position to access the offshore grounds but it can be a very fickle ramp, mainly because of the influence of the ocean. Once you get a bit of swell, it can become very tricky with the swell surging up and down the ramp, which is dry one second and under a metre or more of water the next.
Quite a bit of sand moves about as well, making things difficult for launching and retrieving on days like this. Many locals and plenty of visitors would love to see Harbour launching facilities more befitting this region’s reliance on its boating for visitors and locals alike.

Facts

TACKLE SHOPS
Fishing Tackle Australia www.motackle.com.au 02 6652 4611
Beachcomber Marine 02 6568 6432
BCF www.bcf.com.au 02 6651 6500
Amart www.amartallsports.com.au 02 6648 7122

Facts

BOATS AND MARINE
Coffs Harbour Marine www.coffsharbourmarine.com.au 02 6652 4722
North Coast Boating --e-mail address hidden-- 02 6655 7700

Facts

GETTING THERE
Virgin Blue Airlines www.virginblue.com.au
Qantas Link Airlines www.qantas.com.au
Countrylink Train services www.countrylink.info
Thrifty Car Hire (02) 6652 8622

Facts

ACCOMMODATION
• NRMA Parks Darlington Beach www.nrmaparksandresorts.com.au 1800 888 999
• White Albatross Holiday Park www.whitealbatross.com.au 02 6568 6468 toll free 1800 152 505
• Bellinger River Tourist Park www.bellingerriver.com.au 02 6655 4755
• Park Beach Holiday Park www.coffsholidays.com.au 02 6648 4888
• Sawtell Beach Caravan Park www.coffsholidays.com.au 02 6653 1379
• Woolgoolga Beach Caravan Park www.coffsholidays.com.au 02 6654 1373
• Lakeside Caravan Park www.coffsholidays.com.au 02 6654 1210
• Pelican Park Caravan Park www.pelicanpark.com.au 02 6658 6505
• Arrawarra Beach Holiday Park www.arrawarrabeachholidaypark.com 02 6649 2753

Facts

FAMILY ATTRACTIONS
Raleigh Raceway www.raleighraceway.com.au 02 6655 4017
Pet Porpoise Pool www.petporpoisepool.com 02 6659 1900
Big Banana www.bigbanana.com 02 6652 4355

Facts

SOME EATERIES
Café Aqua breakfast & lunch 02 6652 5566
Park Beach Bowls Club www.pbbccom.au 02 6652 4372
The Fishermans Katch 02 6652 4372
SSS BBQ Barn www.sssbbq.com.au 02 6651 9166

Images
Aerial view of Coffs Marina.

Coffs family fun

Coffs attractions: skydiving

Coffs attractions: scuba diving
Coffs attractions: whalewatching

Coffs fishing: snapper
Coffs fishing: kids show
Coffs Coast beaches.
Coffs Coast aerial view.
Coffs Coast attraction.
Boambee Beach fishers.

Coffs Harbour jetty fishing.
Coffs dolphin attraction.

Coffs Harbour Marina
Coffs attractions: canoeing