



EXPERIENCE WHY
THERE'S NOTHING
LIKE AUSTRALIA



BRAD FARMER'S BEST AUSTRALIAN BEACHES 2020

AMBASSADOR & BEACH EXPERT

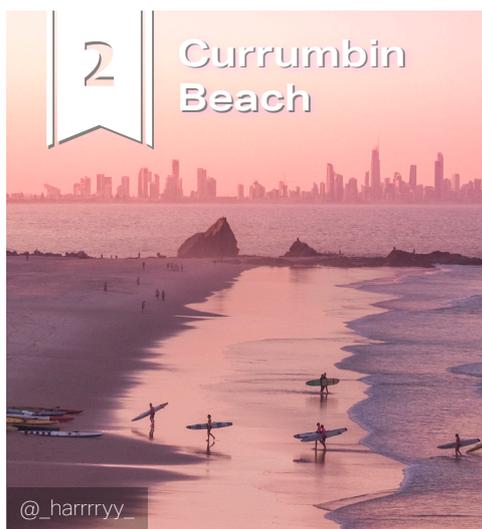


1 Cabarita Beach

@imagesfromupthere

1. Cabarita NSW

Norries Headland bulges majestically eastward from the vibrant surf town of Cabarita on the far NSW north coast. It forms the classic centrepiece of the sweeping Tweed Coast, which stretches from the Queensland Border south some 30kms, to the sleepy creekside village of Pottsville. 'Caba' is a quintessential Aussie beachscape showcasing a truly diverse range of settings to swoon over, characterised by quiet coastal estuaries and tannin coloured creeks, tall backdrop forests and picnic perfect grassy knolls, long expanses of sandy shores and some superb pandanus peppered pocket beaches. If the summer nor'easter springs up at Caba it's just a short stroll through shady casuarinas to the shelter of southern Bogangar Beach. The Tweed Coast is the perfect escape, worlds away from the humming Gold Coast 30 minutes to the north and Byron Bay 45 minutes to the south.



2 Currumbin Beach

@_harrryy

2. Currumbin QLD

True to its Indigenous name, Currumbin, particularly the superb Creek and Alley, is still a place of 'shifting sands', making it one of the most desirable settings in Australia. While the postcode has retained much of its nature-by-sea appeal, it's become a drawcard on the Gold Coast for beachgoers and some new wealth. Set back from the iconic surf breaks, the jam-packed dog beach on the north side of the wide creek is the most popular for pooches who enjoy a party and paddle together. Of all 310 Surf Life Saving Clubhouses in Australia, the famous Vikings SLSC at Elephant Rock provides one of the most spectacular wave-splashed venues to enjoy an amber ale. Currumbin was officially declared a National Surfing Reserve in 2012 by the Queensland Governor and later enshrined as part of the Burleigh to Snapper Rocks World Surfing Reserve.



3 Minnamurra Beach

@karldphotography

3. Minnamurra NSW

Features make a coastal setting and this candidate just 90 minutes south of Sydney meets that criteria on so many levels. A long, wave-lashed shoreline north via Mystics Beach to the Killalea National Surfing Reserve are inviting, as are the tranquil waters of the Minnamurra River. But it's the volcanic outcrop known as Stack Island which naturally attracts the beachscape eyeline here. The idyllic village backing onto the Kiama Golf Course feels miles away from anywhere with its waterways inviting you to fish, paddle or BBQ. Ideal for a day trip or weekend, this is an off the highway sanctuary. From the rivermouth to the backwaters, Minnamurra lives up to its Indigenous name 'plenty of fish' and Minno's is a coastal site of immense natural beauty. If the beach is wild, explore the nearby Minnamurra Rainforest.



4 Maria Island

@mariaislandwalk

4. Maria Island TAS

This is an island, off an island, off an island and, as you may expect, it's pretty special. Your experience on gorgeous MI National Park will be much more pleasurable than those of hardened convicts when it was a penal settlement during Australia's earliest colonisation. The pick of the island's many beaches would be Chinaman's and Shoal Bay - on the western sheltered side of the isthmus - or opposite on Riedle Bay, where you may find some gentle rollers to refresh the weary mid-hike trekker. An hour north of Hobart, it's accessible by ferry or private charter from Triabunna to the island's Darlington docking. Explored only by bike or foot, it's simple enough to set up under the night stars at a handful of sublime shoreline camp sites. There are no shops or luxe hotels so come prepared. Respect the fragile ecosystems and abundant wildlife habitat.



5 Cape Tribulation

@merrwatson

5. Cape Tribulation QLD

Cape Trib is up there as one of the most desirable nature experiences in Australia, where the dense Daintree tropical rainforest meets the Great Barrier Reef, both listed World Heritage sites. If that's not impressive enough, Cape Trib is an affordable and relatively accessible destination north of Cairns, offering a multitude of nature-based activities and attractions to suit every eco-aware traveller. Even muddy tracks during the heavy wet season doesn't deter the determined. It's ironic that Captain James Cook should have named it such in 1770, as its many long coconut fringed beaches are relatively trouble-free, except for the occasional saltwater crocodile lurking, so be aware. It remains one of the world's most ancient ecosystems, still intact, thanks to early protesters (hippies) who saved the site from certain development. Accommodation includes groovy eco resorts, camping grounds and bustling, beachside, backpacker-style cabins.



@lukesphotographymelbs

6. Brighton NSW

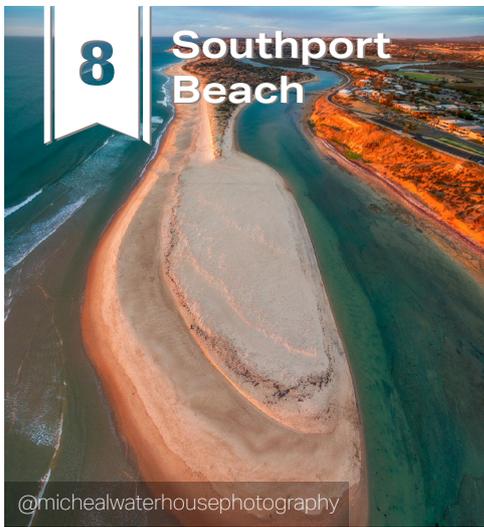
On Melbourne's doorstep, brisk saltwater immersion has been popular here since the 1880s when rolling 'bathing machines' on wheels were used to preserve the modesty of the gentry as they swam – two decades before Sydney's Manly Beach formally legalised public bathing in 1906. Brighton's 82 radiantly coloured iconic bathing boxes makes this one of the world's best high tide mark art galleries, attracting a multitude of ice cream licking selfie-seekers and now many curious multicultural beachgoers. The heritage huts are bought and sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars for ownership privileges. When they were first installed, it was to allow a discrete change into swimming costumes during the Victorian era. The beach itself fronts the clear shallow wading shores of Port Philip Bay where the tradition of getting wet, if only your feet, continues to this day. Parking is limited, so the train is an option.



@scruffypassports

7. Betty's Beach WA

Anywhere along this deep south WA coast, either side of Albany, you'll find a delectable selection of cosy corners just like Betty's or neighbouring Norman's Beach. Let's just say you won't have any issues sifting the sands for sublime beaches anywhere on this outstanding nature-blessed and National Park protected Southern Ocean coastline. And therein lies the anticipation of beach discoveries for those with a nose for sniffing out the sweetest and saltiest coves and swimming spots. This coast defies superlatives and the less this reviewer reveals probably the better. The locals are friendly, the lush forests peaceful and the salmon-rich waters are welcoming. How Betty and Norman came to have neighbouring beaches named in their honour remains a mystery but might be discovered among many authentic story tellers living along this tight-knit collective community.

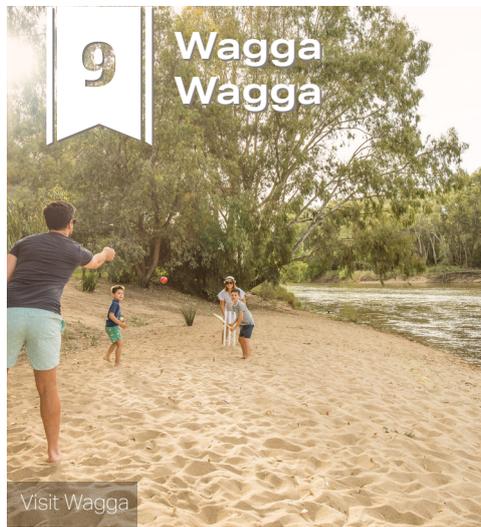


8 Southport Beach

@michealwaterhousephotography

8. Southport Beach SA

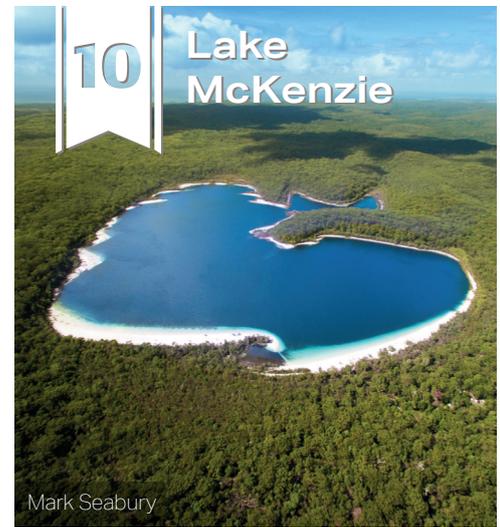
Few Australian capital cities are fortunate enough to have a natural coastal recreational reserve so close to the CBD. Adelaide is our the best example, with Darwin coming a close second. While Glenelg is SA's city beach, South Port some 40 minutes south, offers an open coastal and river setting on the beautiful Onkaparinga River. Maslin's Beach just south again, presents a wide stretch of a cliff-lined coast where clothes are optional, the first ever legally recognised nude beach in the country. It can be approached from the north at Port Noarlunga with its cafes, the riverfoot bridge leading directly to the South Port SLSC from the east or from the more scenic south stairs down to the river mouth. Facing due west, South Port receives low ocean swell as well as gulf wind waves for the likeable locals who dip from dawn to dusk.



Visit Wagga

9. Wagga Wagga NSW

Yes, it's a beach, but not as you know them. The Wagga Riverside Beach experience transcends the definition of a beach anywhere across this vast sunburnt country. City slickers and coastal dwellers come around to envy the tranquil gum-lined sandy shores of the Murrumbidgee River. Early morning swimmers with their dogs and canoes come here to refresh before work, summer beach cricketers splash in the shallows on hitting a six and smoky barbies glow at sunset over relaxed conversations. Wagga, or Wagga Wagga (so good they named it twice), is now christened as Australia's first-ever officially recognised freshwater inland 'beach'. Free from sharks, clean and green, Wagga is not only the biggest city in regional NSW but one of the friendliest. Mid-way between Sydney and Melbourne, the river beach is a welcomed oasis, as it has been since the earliest human inhabitation.



Mark Seabury

10. Lake McKenzie QLD

More temperate and serene than the rippy surf breaks to its long eastern Pacific shores, Fraser Island's Lake Mac is nothing less than a swimming nirvana. With its magnificent, powder soft, silica sands and an average water temp around 24° C, it's just one of 100 pristine lakes hidden amid the world's highest island sand dunes. The Butchulla Aborigines baptised this site in ancient times as sacred 'waters of wisdom'. The backbone of the island supports 40 perched lakes which are purely rain and spring fed. Queensland's largest island, and the world's largest sand island, sand mining threatened the fragile Fraser ecosystems in the 1970's and was fiercely protected by local Aborigines and conservationists. See it before the natural sand drifts bury some of lakes within the next century.



11 The Basin

11. The Basin, Rottnest Island WA

With around 11,000 photo-bombing Quokkas, 63 beaches and 20 bays, Rottnest Island, 18 kms offshore from Perth, is accessible, affordable and authentically Aussie. Rotto ('Rats Nest' according to Dutch explorers) is every Perthonian's beloved Indian Ocean island playground. An 11 km long, low calcarenite island comprises 36 km of ragged, reef strewn shoreline. Most beaches on Rotto are the type many people love best - small 'pocket' beaches and for surf breaks it's Strickland or Salmon Bays. Get there by a 30 minute Fastcat, a chilled champagne yacht trip or self-boat charter from the historic convict port of Fremantle (Freo). Day-trippers and weekenders hire a bike, pack a picnic lunch and simply chill. Once a prison for Aboriginal Noongar peoples, in 1903 it was declared a People's Park by the WA Governor and has resisted, to date at least, all attempts to overdevelop this publicly protected asset.



12 Fingal Bay

12. Fingal Bay, Port Stevens NSW

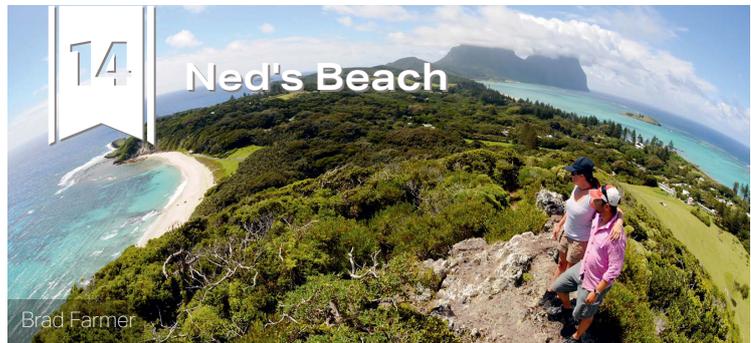
The perfect 'C' shaped wide embayment of Fingal Bay is surrounded by the Tomaree National Park and continues to be a perennial summer family favourite. The remarkable nature of this section of Aussie coast, north of Newcastle, may be best appreciated by a Google map view or by climbing the 161 metre Tomaree Head Summit for a bird's eye view of the spectacular surrounding beaches, waterways and islands. Shark Island, tied by sand to Fingal Bay, may not be tempting by name, but a rush crossing along the ocean-splitting tombolo at low tide is a delight to many. While the main beach is patrolled, great caution must be observed if anyone is considering a swift 1.5 hour dash between tides to reach the island or its historic lighthouse. The well-served region has plenty to offer visitors of all ages, budgets and beach styles.



13 Smith's Beach

13. Smith's Beach WA

Bearing an unremarkable name for such a remarkable beach, Smith's enjoys wide open sands facing a safe swimming beach in the Margaret River region in the extreme south-west corner of Western Australia. 3 hours from Perth, 'MR' is best known for its wines and waves, both world class and subtly intoxicating. Smith's Beach nestles 2kms off the main road at the base of a sloping scenic drive. The beach curves slightly north-east for 1.8kms, interrupted by some intertidal and offshore reefs. The Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park runs along the coast as does the famous Cape to Cape walking track right down to the tip of Australia where the Indian and Southern Oceans meet. Among the 75 swimming and surfing beaches along the 100 km plus MR coast, the moderately sheltered Smith's Beach is probably the most popular with surfers and sunbakers. The region is home to two iconic National Surfing Reserves.



14 Ned's Beach

14. Neds Beach, Lord Howe Island NSW

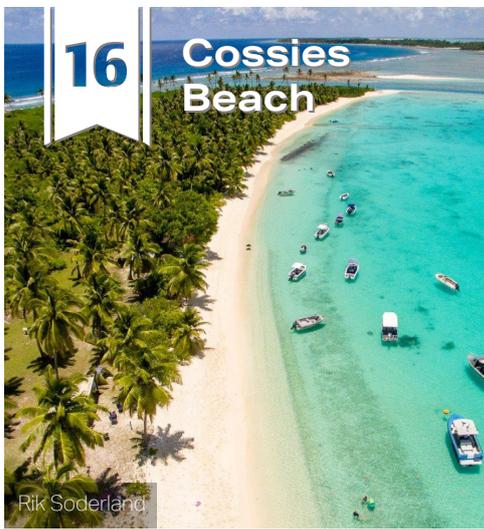
Everyone loves an island and this haven 750kms north-east from Sydney is world class on every level. With its towering basalt mountains and forests of kentia palms, this Pacific Ocean paradise offers a real detox nature escape. The best of its 15 interspersed beaches is the semi-circular bay of Neds Beach on the island's north-east corner, with a fringing coral reef that offers superb condition for swimming, snorkelling, hand-feeding fish or surfing. Apart from the ongoing search for a chest of treasure buried in 1830, the fortunate visitor will find most of the pleasures are truly scattered all over this jewelled World Heritage listed island, among coves, tranquil lagoons, rich forests and incredible mountains trails. The island's well managed ecosystems are so valued, the numbers of tourists at any one time is capped. Golf clubs optional but leave everything behind including the kid's or company's digital devices.



15 Quobba

15. Quobba Station Red Bluff WA

Not for the day tripper or digitally reliant browser of beaches, sacred Red Bluff on Quobba Station is, for good reasons, an iconic destination where a wild, raw desert fuses with an equally wild Indian Ocean coastline. While Indigenous peoples inhabited the region for thousands of years, a hardy pastoralist family laid claim to this epic 80km station stretch, then surfers in the mid '70s put the thunderous left-hand wave on a secret map and just referred to it as 'Camp of the Moon'. Campsites sprung up based on oceanic cycles, and now we see a clustering of sparse campsites and a handful of eco-style safari tents. A unique and incomparable experience, this site requires advance supplies from Carnarvon, some 90 minutes by off-road track. You may camp among all kinds of tribes here, from Hollywood escapees to the saltiest of van life beachcombers.

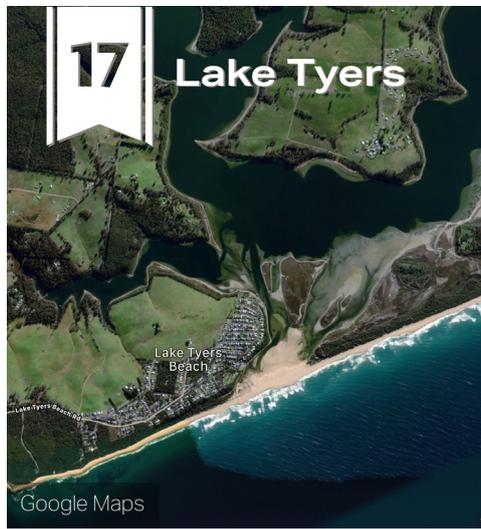


16 Cossies Beach

Rik Soderland

16. Cossies Beach IOT

Australia's far flung and western most beach paradise is closer to Jakarta than Perth. Brad Farmer named Cossies after the 26th Governor-General, Sir Peter Cosgrove and declared it the country's best beach of 2017. The Australian Indian Ocean Territory (IOT) of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands comprises two atolls and 27 coral islands, including Direction Island, where the 300 metre sands of Cossies is found. An enthralled Sir Charles Darwin, in his research sea notes of 1836, noted its "hypnotic" beauty. CKI is essentially a sea mountain or volcanic tip of small islands in the shape of a horseshoe, rising from the depths of the great 5000 metre Java trench. Cossies is as near to perfect as any beach can be, resembling images from the glossy pages of a Bahamas, Maldives or South Pacific beach brochure, but with far less tourists, expectations or hype.



17 Lake Tyers

Google Maps

17. Lake Tyers Beach VIC

You won't find this quiet ocean fronting lakeside village on too many promotional guides or Insta pages, it just doesn't get that kind of exposure. Most folk may have heard of the nearby and well-served Lakes Entrance, three hours drive east of Melbourne. Off season, the Lake Tyers Camping and Caravan Park is the spot to enjoy the beach out front or the safe shallow wading and fishing shores. The Pub, locals say, is one of the country's best, overlooking the vast lake, ideally with a plate of fish and chips and a cold ale in hand. The lake's clarity and atmosphere will depend on its seasonal levels and infrequent flushing episodes to the ocean, but nothing seems to change the fishing opportunities on offer from shore or boat. If very long beach walks are your thing, magnificent 90-mile beach is at your doorstep.

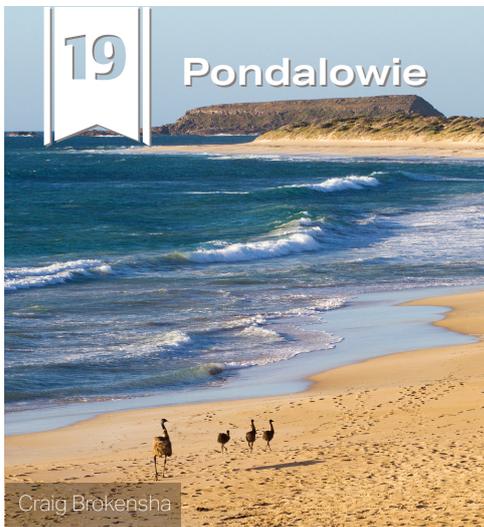


18 Diamond Head

Matt Cramer

18. Diamond Head NSW

While bushfires blazed through this NSW mid-coast National Park in late 2019, nothing could ever take the shine off Diamond Head's dramatic coastal character and welcoming charm. Approached from fishy Harrington in the south or superb Dunbogan to the north, the coast either side of the banksia-flowered Diamond Head are well worth exploring or staying overnight at any of the kangaroo-friendly campsites. "Visitors will be seized with a wild resolution to stay forever," wrote wartime novelist, the quietly-celebrated conservationist Kylie Tennant. Her original, rough-hewn, timber slab hut still stands today nearby at Kylie's Creek. Crystal clear rock pools, coastal wetlands, long sweeping beaches, exceptional intertidal platforms and an abundance of wildlife on land and sea is every beachcomber's dreams realised. Enchanting, mystical, serene and illusionary are just some of the comments left by visitors. The scenic loop walk is a must. Call ahead to check sites and conditions.



19 Pandalowie

Craig Brokensha

19. Pandalowie, Yorke Peninsula SA

Just over three hours from Adelaide, on the foot of the Italy-shaped Yorke Peninsula, is beautiful Pandalowie Bay, once a pirate and sealers settlement. As soon as you enter the Innes National Park, the arid coastline and views to Kangaroo island open up to the left, though watch out for mobs of emus, kangaroos and reptiles crossing your path. The bay itself is protected from the southerly summer sea breeze at its southern end, while surfers will find a fun A-frame reef right where the boardwalk hits the beach. Home to a National Surfing Reserve, Richard's Reef is another option if you take a short stroll to the north. The Park also offers over 50 km of coastal, dune and inland walking tracks, some of the best desert-style wilderness around. The bay is also favoured for wind and kite surfing, sea kayaking, canoeing, snorkelling and scuba diving.



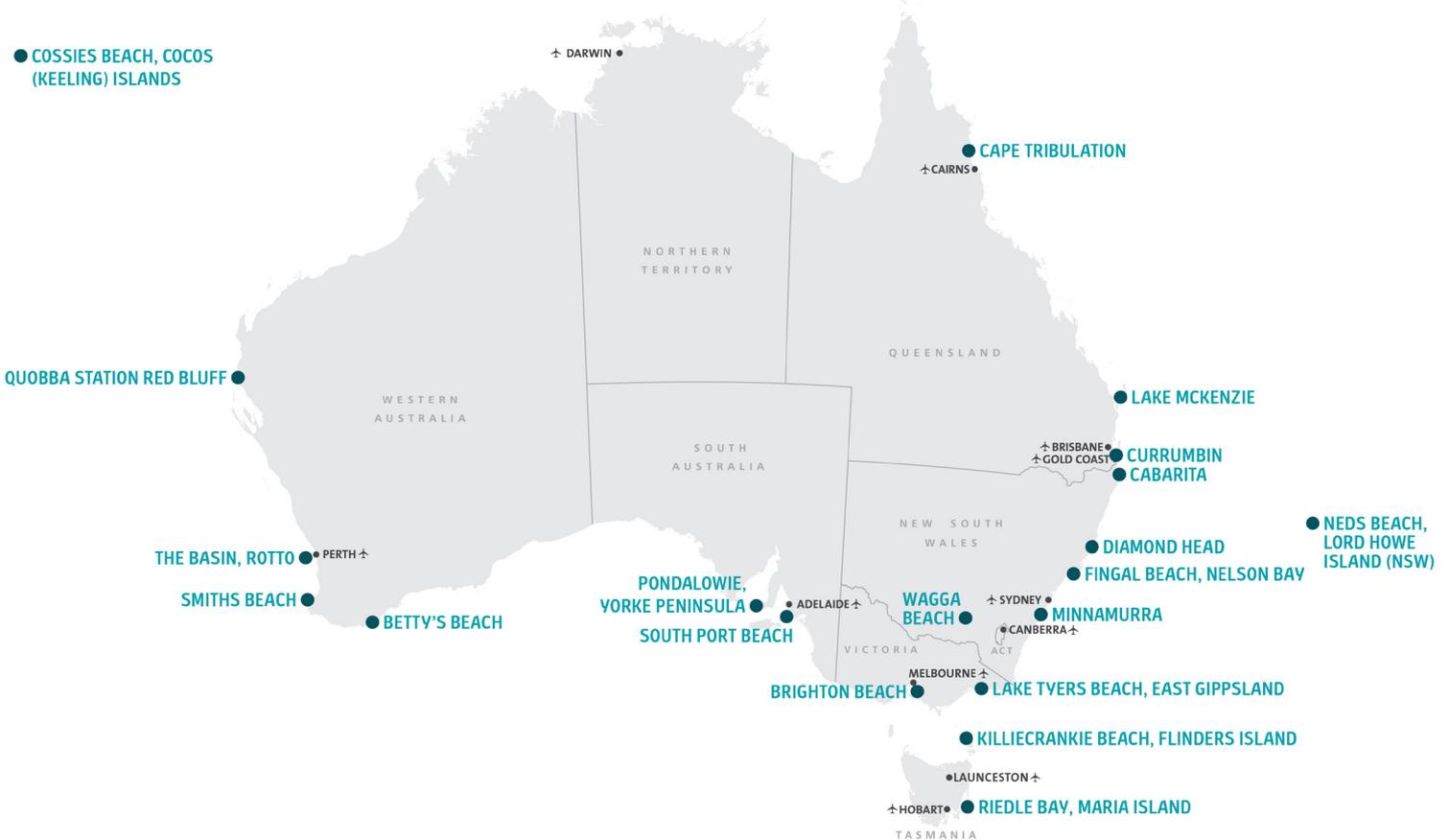
20 Killiecrankie Beach

@peterl_1961

20. Killiecrankie Beach, Flinders Island TAS

Sitting 80 kms by plane off the north-east tip of Tasmania in the Bass Strait, the island is as wild and rugged as the locals are warm and welcoming. In fact, it's so quiet at times, any of the 900 or so very approachable Flindonians will probably want to show you around its deserted beaches or, at the very least, point you in the right direction for day trips to find lobsters and secret spots amid an authentic fusion of farm and beach lifestyles. While King Island to the west enjoys a greater reputation, Flinders is as down to earth as it gets. It's not on many travellers' bucket list. The 234 kms of coast boasts a total 134 beaches. Flights are simple affairs landing you at the island's sleepy capital at Whitemark. If you're looking to meet and share yarns with authentic Aussies, this is one of the best.

Top 20 Australian Beaches For 2020



101 Best Beaches 2020

Queensland (21)

Frangipani Beach, Cape York
Lizard Island, FNQ Offshore
Cape Tribulation, FNQ
Four Mile, Port Douglas, FNQ
Ellis Beach, North Cairns
Nudey Beach, Fitzroy Island, Cairns
The Strand, Townsville CBD
Horseshoe Bay, Bowen
Whitehaven Beach, Whitsunday Island
Cape Hillsborough, Mackay
Long Beach, Great Keppel Island, Yeppoon
Agnes Waters – 1770, Bundaberg Region
Mon Repos, Bundaberg Region
75 Mile Beach, Fraser Island
Lake Mckenzie, Fraser Island
Rainbow Beach, Coolooloa Region
Tea Tree Bay, Noosa National Park
Tangalooma, Moreton Island, BNE
Cylinders, North Stradbroke Is, BNE
Currumbin, Gold Coast
Rainbow Bay, Gold Coast South

Victoria (11)

Wingan Inlet, East Gippsland
Lake Tyres Beach, East Gippsland
90 Mile Beach, Gippsland
Tidal River, Wilsons Promontory
Kitty Miller Bay, Phillip Island
Portsea, Mornington Peninsula
Brighton Beach, Melbourne
Bells Beach, Great Ocean Road
Apollo Bay, Great Ocean Road
Johanna Beach, Great Ocean Road
Gibson Steps, Great Ocean Road

Northern Territory (2)

Mindil Beach, Darwin
East Woody Beach, Arnhem Land

Western Australia (20)

Lucky Bay, Esperance Coast
Little Beach, Two Peoples Bay NP, Albany Coast
Betty's Beach, Albany
Elephant Rocks, Denmark, SW
Mandalay Beach, Walpole Coast
Smiths Beach, Margaret River SW
Meeleup Beach, Dunsborough, SW
Cottesloe Beach, Perth
The Basin, Rottnest Island, Perth
Dynamite Bay, Coral Coast
Horrocks Beach, Mid Coast
Kalbarri, Murchison Region
Cape Peron, Shark Bay
Shell Beach, Shark Bay
Turquoise Bay, Coral Coast
Quobba – Red Bluff, NW
80 Mile Beach, NW
Cable Beach, Broome, NW
Cape Leveque, Dampier Peninsula NW
Silica Beach, West Kimberley Coast

Tasmania (11)

Cosy Corner, Bay of Fires, NE
Redbill Beach, Bicheno
Wineglass Bay, Freycinet Peninsula
Riedle Bay, Maria Island
Pirates Bay, Port Arthur
Adventure Bay, Bruny Island
Ocean Beach, Strahan, West Coast
Marrawah, NW
Boat Harbour Beach, North Coast
Killiecrankie Beach, Flinders Island
British Admiral Beach, King Island, Bass Strait

Australian Territories (2)

Cossies Beach, Cocos (Keeling) Islands
Dolly Beach, Christmas Island, Indian Ocean

New South Wales (24)

Dreamtime Beach, (Fingal) Tweed Coast
Norries Head (Cabarita) Tweed Coast
Broken Head, Byron Shire
Moonee Beach, Coffs Coast
Shelly Beach, Nambucca
Crescent Head, Kempsey
Dunbogan, Diamond Head National Park
Seal Rocks, Myall Lakes Region
Fingal Bay, Port Stephens
Merewether Beach, Newcastle
Catherine Hill Bay, Lake Macquarie
Avoca, Central Coast
Manly Beach, Sydney Northern Beaches
Balmoral Beach, Sydney Harbour
Camp Cove, Sydney Harbour
Bondi Beach, Sydney East
Garie Beach, Royal National Park, Sydney
Minnamurra
Green Patch, Jervis Bay
Narrawallee Beach, Shoalhaven
Merrimbula-Pambula Beach, Bega Valley Shire
Wagga Beach, Wagga Wagga
Neds Beach, Lord Howe Island (NSW)
Emily Bay, Norfolk Island (NSW)

South Australia (10)

Long Beach, Robe SE
The Coorong, South East
Second Valley, Fluerieu Peninsula
Maslin Beach, Adelaide
South Port Beach, Adelaide
Glenelg Beach, Adelaide
Pondalowie, Yorke Peninsula
Gunyah Beach, Eyre Peninsula South
Greenly, Eyre Peninsula South
Western River Cove, Kangaroo Island