

BOUND FOR Moreton bay

IF YOUR FAMILY IS SPLIT ON WHETHER TO GO BUSH OR BEACH ON YOUR NEXT HOLIDAY, SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND'S MORETON BAY IS A DESTINATION THAT HAS BOTH ... IN SPADES. WORDS: **DEBBIE NEILSON-HUNTER**

Spanning more than 2037 sq/km, this lesser known 'piggy in the middle' of the more widely known Gold and Sunshine Coasts, shouldn't be overlooked as it has plenty to keep both parents and kids engaged on holiday.

Go retro in Redcliffe

Drive a short 35 minutes north-east of Brisbane, over the bridge to the Redcliffe Peninsula and be transported back in time some 50 or so years.

Originally the site for the state's first settlement, the colony was moved further up the Brisbane River to the capital's present location due to lack of fresh water. Nevertheless, visitors have been coming to this quaint and historic seaside destination since the late 1800s.

If you follow the dugong tourist signs along the 40km/h road that skirts the coastline between the suburbs of Woody Point, Clontarf, Margate, Redcliffe and Scarborough you'll find long stretches of safe swimming beaches (popular with kite surfers), cycle ways and tree-lined green spaces that provide modern playground equipment, sheltered picnic and barbecue areas as well as cafes and restaurants, museums and a gorgeous old-style bathing pavilion or two. A few of our own favourites include Pelican Park (the birds get fed 10am daily), Sutton Beach and Redcliffe's Rotary Park.

Cool down with an ice cream treat or crack open a crab. Overlooking Scarborough Boat Harbour (where you can discover sailing on the Bay) Morgan's Seafood restaurant has won numerous awards for its 'fruits de mer' and is a top spot for lunch or dinner.

Sundays are especially busy along the main Redcliffe Parade as locals, day trippers and

holidaymakers browse the weekly market stalls and enjoy brunch in the casual restaurants and cafes that overlook the sands where 1970s pop icons, The Bee Gees, once played as children.

Last February a memorial wall along the newly named Bee Gees Way, linking Redcliffe Parade with Sutton Street, was opened in their honour. Surviving band member Barry Gibb, who attended the event, fondly remembers 'fishing for that elusive tiger shark in Deception Bay and playing between the fishing boats when the tide was out'.

On a plaque he writes "This incredible place was our world to explore. It is held deep inside my soul and it will always be 1958 for me."

Back then he said: "The Redcliffe pier was the main attraction for kids, with its pinball arcade. There were many cracks in the pier planks and we would dive for the lost pennies that fell through. The water was clear and blue and provided excellent vision for the best divers, that was us!"

Similar childhood memories are made here today.

Cast away to Bribie

Further north, a 50-minute drive from the city, another bridge will take you to Bribie Island where it's time for dad to slip into 4WD mode (permit required). Accessed ocean-side from Woorim, the 4WD beach extends north for close to 30km, ending near the popular Ocean Beach camping area.

Most of Bribie is a designated recreational area, so for those who want to get back to nature there are five camping areas on the island to choose from - including along the calmer waters of the Pumicestone Passage at Gallagher's Point, Poverty Creek, Mission Point and Lime Pocket. Permits are required and it's wise to book a spot early as sites



Beach at Bongaree, Bribie Island
© Ezra Patchett/Tourism Queensland



Moreton Bay Region

We've got it all

MORETON BAY



**How many of these
are on your to do list?**

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fishing & Boating |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aero Activities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museums |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art Galleries | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Markets & Events |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beaches | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Walking & Bird Watching |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drive to an island | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wake up to great views |

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Fishing off Jetty,
Bongaree
© Ezra Patchett/
Tourism Queensland



Catamarans, Bribie Island

fill up quickly (usually six months in advance over Christmas, New Year and Easter).

Woorim Beach area is a top spot for kids, with an excellent adventure playground. It offers plenty of bucket and spade action, eateries and a 4.5 star apartment-style resort if you want a little more luxury.

We enjoyed Sunday lunch, with views stretching to the dunes on Moreton Island, at the Surf Club. A jumping castle was set up outside for the kids (it is there daily except when raining).

Bongaree also has ample parklands to play, swim and ride bikes, with spectacular views across to the Glass House Mountains. The Pumicestone Passage, which also flanks this side of the island all the way up to Caloundra on the mainland, is a haven for marine life including dugongs, turtles and dolphins. If you don't have your own boat, you can hire one or hop on a cruise. Bring your fishing rod. Go in search of yabbies. There are loads of Huckleberry Finn adventures to be had.

Country capers

Forested Clear Mountain looms up from Brisbane's hinterland on its semi-rural northern outskirts - a winding 35-minute drive from Brisbane's CBD. Like the Blue Mountains on Sydney's western fringes, it

feels quite remote.

From Mercure's Clear Mountain Lodge, Spa & Vineyard, perched on its summit, we could see over the Samson Valley (Lake Samsonvale glistening in the middle) towards the adjacent peaks of the D'Aguilar Ranges. It's a region dotted with historic villages, heritage museums, wildlife zoos, art and craft galleries, wineries, hiking and horse riding trails - everything a family destination requires. And it can all be enjoyed in a day or two from here.

In particular, the rolling country from Samsonvale to the idyllic country village of Dayboro, and on to Ocean View and Mount Mee (following Route 22 and 29), is some of the state's most scenic and worth a family road trip (any excuse for a game of eye spy). Take a picnic to enjoy on one of the lookouts, soak up the rural atmosphere with a pub meal and check out the vintage cars and motorbikes and other 'old things' on display at Mt Mee's Pitstop Cafe.

The road continues on to Woodford (near the Beerburum State Forest) which is home to the annual (Dec-Jan) folk music festival and the Durundur Narrow Gauge Railway museum. Make sure you time your visit well. Kids can enjoy a train ride along the one-kilometre track on the first and third Sunday of each month.

FAST FACTS

GETTING THERE

The Moreton Bay region is directly accessible by car from Brisbane.

MORE INFORMATION

www.visitmoretonbay.com.au