

Great Barrier Reef, Coral Sea, Australia

There's no pier, no town, no shopping street — just 2,300 kilometres of living coral and the clearest water you've ever snorkelled in. Your ship anchors in the open Coral Sea and the reef does the rest.

Tender (open-sea anchorage)

Typical call: 6-8 hrs

AUD — cards accepted on pontoons

English

UNESCO World Heritage Site

MY DAY IN PORT

Ship/Date: _____ Arrive: _____ All aboard: _____

Excursion: _____ Notes: _____

GETTING ASHORE

Docking: Anchor at sea — tender to reef pontoon

Best For: Snorkelling, scuba diving, underwater viewing

Walk to centre: N/A — floating pontoon only, no shore

Don't Miss: Semi-submersible tour & helicopter over Heart Reef

Getting around:

TOP THINGS TO DO

- Guided Snorkel Safari** — A marine biologist leads a small group along the outer reef wall, pointing out clownfish, giant clams, Maori wrasse, and (in season) reef sharks and...
 - Introductory Scuba Dive** — No certification required.
 - Scenic Helicopter Flight** — A 10-minute flight over the outer reef reveals the full scale of the coral system from above, including Heart Reef — a naturally heart-shaped coral...
- Semi-Submersible Coral Viewing** — A small glass-sided vessel dips below the waterline to give a fish-eye view of the reef without getting wet — ideal for non-swimmers or those saving...
 - Certified Scuba Dive** — Qualified divers can do a guided dive to 18 metres on the outer reef slope.

BEST WALKS

- Pontoon Exploration** Self-guided · Flat · 10 min — Walk the pontoon levels: upper sun deck, shaded dining area, underwater observatory stairs, and gear station.

WEATHER · DAYLIGHT · MONEY

CLIMATE (AVG °F · RAINY DAYS)

	Mon	High	Low	Rain
Apr		79°	72°	14d
Jun		72°	65°	7d
Aug		72°	63°	4d
Sep		76°	67°	4d
Oct		79°	70°	6d

DAYLIGHT & MONEY

Apr 6:16AM–5:53PM · Jun 6:38AM–5:32PM · Aug 6:27AM–5:52PM · Sep 6:01AM–5:59PM · Oct 5:34AM–6:07PM

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Use reef-safe sunscreen only. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority prohibits oxybenzone and octinoxate sunscreens. Bring mineral SPF 50+ or buy on the pontoon.
- Always wear a stinger suit from November to May — box jellyfish and Irukandji are present in these waters. Suits are provided free on pontoons but supply is limited; board early.
- Take seasickness meds before tendering. The open Coral Sea can run 1–2 metre swells. Once on the pontoon you'll be fine, but the tender and semi-sub can be rough.
- Underwater cameras are worth it. The outer reef visibility is 20–30 metres. Bring a waterproof case or rent a GoPro on the pontoon — smartphone photos here are extraordinary.
- Credit cards accepted on the pontoon for drinks, merchandise, dive add-ons, and helicopter flights. Australian dollars are the currency; tipping is not customary.
- Shoulder season (May–September) is ideal: 22–26°C water, no stinger suits required, Humpback whales passing through (July–September), and calmer seas. Summer (Dec–Feb) is hot and stinger season.

Great Barrier Reef, Coral Sea, Australia — Port Map

cruiseports.org

Red = walkable sights · Amber = excursions farther out · P = cruise terminal. Numbers match the order you'd typically visit.



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| 1 Boathaven Beach | Airlie Beach's man-made beach, perfect for swimming and sunbathing. | 2 Providence Whitsunday Sailing | Historic tall ship offering multi-day sailing adventures in the Whitsundays. |
| 3 Whitsunday Saturday Markets | Weekly Saturday market in Airlie Beach for local crafts and food. | 4 Honeyeater Lookout Trail | Scenic walking trail to a lookout with panoramic Airlie Beach views. |
| 5 Cruise Whitsundays | Main ferry and tour operator for Whitsunday Islands and Reef. | P Cruise port / terminal | |