



19 APR, 2021

TRENDING TRAVEL SPOTS

New Idea, National

NEW TRAVEL

Tropical Cairns has it all, from beaches to rainforests and a thriving food scene. It's no wonder it took out the number-one travel spot in Oz!

TRENDING TRAVEL SPOTS

THE AUSSIE TOWNS TO GET ACROSS NOW!

for 2021

Compiled by Gabriella Del Grande.

At this point we don't even need international travel to come back, with travel site wotif.com announcing the best of the best locations around the country to visit in 2021. So, how exactly did these cities become the cream of the crop, you might ask? Well, they were judged on the quality of their offerings, affordability and traveller satisfaction. Here are just five of the 10 winners who were given the top spots...

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CAIRNS, QLD

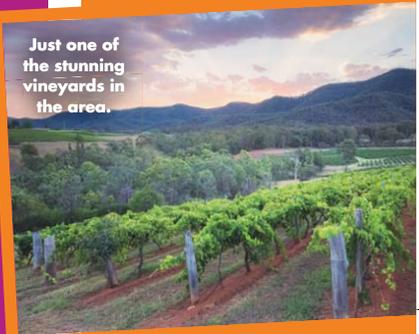
Ah, the sunny north! Tropical Cairns is the gateway to some of our most incredible natural wonders – the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree National Park. See the city's amazing landscape from above on the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway and, once back on land, visit one of the many foodie spots, such as Italian restaurant L'unico Trattoria at Trinity Beach, Japanese noodle house Ganbaranba in the CBD or

head for a cocktail at Three Wolves bar (try The Idealist!). Also stay tuned for a brand new island opening in early 2022 – yes, island! Aussie adventure and leisure tourism company Experience Co. will be opening Cairns' first pontoon on the Great Barrier Reef, currently dubbed 'Dreamtime Island'. It's set to offer visitors science education on the water and reef that surrounds it, weaving in a narrative of Indigenous storytelling and eco-initiatives.

POKOLBIN, NSW

One of the Hunter Valley's many gems, Pokolbin is the perfect combination of

Just one of the stunning vineyards in the area.





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Apollo Bay has some of the most stunning beaches.



APOLLO BAY, VIC

Nestled along the Great Ocean Road, this "seafood village", as they've called themselves, is the ultimate spot for wildlife and wilderness lovers. Surrounded by seemingly never-ending stretches of sand and sea, plenty of walking trails and the Great Otway National Park, you'll never get bored during your visit. There's also a new walking adventure company that can help show you around the area. Wildlife Wonders guided walks have a conservationist join their treks to teach visitors about the unique wildlife, the stunning bushlands and the ecology of the Otway ranges. All profits from these guided walks are donated to The Conservation Ecology Centre (CEC).



Sip the day away at the many McLaren Vale wineries.

MCLAREN VALE, SA

Wine regions are really having a moment this year. This gem, 40 minutes from Adelaide, offers everything from your classic wine tours to cheesemaking, wine blending and even a Shiraz trail you can bike around. But there's more to this region than just wineries. Opened in 2020, Never Never Distilling Co. is bringing a new layer to McLaren Vale. Launching as part of the Chalk Hill Collective, this hotspot offers a collaborative experience of food, wine and gin distilling – with Chalk Hill Wines Cellar Door and restaurant Cucina di Strada on the premises, too. Guests can enjoy gin and tonic flights, distillery tours and more. While there are plenty of accommodation options, off-grid tiny houses company Cabn just opened two new X cabins (Giles and William) in the Vale earlier this month. Bask in the coastal views through to Port Willunga, and enjoy Gemtree Wines and local produce for just \$595 a night.

indulgence and relaxation – oh, and plenty of wine! If you're not exploring the many amazing wineries within the region, a simple two-hour drive from Sydney, why not jump in a hot-air balloon and drift over the vines below? Come June, the annual Hunter Valley Wine and Food Festival will be returning, held at venues across the Pokolbin area. It's the perfect winter blues cure! Head to visitnsw.com for dates and ticket info.



Stay at Ningaloo Reef's 5-star camp spot, Sal Salis.

EXMOUTH, WA

With some of the whitest sands and bluest ocean, you'll be mesmerised from the minute you arrive in this coastal town. With unbelievable diving and snorkelling experiences on the Ningaloo Reef, and unreal canyons and wallflowers at the Cape Range National Park, everywhere you look you'll discover something new. You can choose to camp at one of the many caravan parks or campgrounds. Otherwise, if a hotel stay is more your vibe, there's plenty of options there, too, like the luxe Mantarays Ningaloo Beach Resort or family-friendly Exmouth Escape Resort.

