

# SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES HINCHINBROOK ISLAND & THE CORAL SEA - AUSTRALIA

## 7 DAY TRIP WITH 7 DAYS SEA KAYAKING

Hinchinbrook Island, Goold Island and the Family Islands are continental islands located off the wet tropical coast between Ingham and Tully, in North Queensland. Hinchinbrook's 39,000 hectares make it Australia's largest island National Park. With its granite peaks rising 1142 metres directly out of the sea, it is a magnificent backdrop for sea kayaking. Waterfalls, tropical rainforests, precipitous headlands, coral reefs and secluded beaches are among its treasures. The diversity of the island is remarkable with the mangrove swamps along its western shore contrasting sharply with golden sand and numerous bays up the eastern shore. The tiny, jewel-like Family Islands provide a delightful playground with their dense rainforest contrasting with exquisite coral beaches. The marine life throughout is superb, with manta rays, dolphins, sea turtles, and tropical fish. Bird life abounds both over the water and in the forests.

Using our specially designed two-person sea kayaks we'll paddle our way through 90 kms of tropical paradise. In 7 days we'll explore the magnificent grandeur of Hinchinbrook Island National Park, the Family Islands and Goold Island. Hinchinbrook, with its rugged granite peaks is perhaps the last remnant of the eastern coastline that remains exactly as it was before white settlement of Australia. We will paddle into protected bays and ease up onto remote wilderness beaches. If you are interested in catching yourself a tasty meal may we suggest you bring a small collapsible fishing rod or hand line as there will be time to fish while paddling or relaxing on the beaches each afternoon. Most days we will try to be in camp by lunchtime to avoid paddling in the hotter and windier part of the day. Join us on this special wilderness adventure!

### A QUICK ITINERARY

Pre-trip	Arrive at Mission Beach (2 hours south of Cairns). Pre-trip briefing at 6.00pm
Day 1	Coach to Lucinda and begin sea kayaking
Day 2-6	Kayak alongside Hinchinbrook Island, Goold Island, and the Family Islands
Day 7	Finish Kayaking at Mission Beach where trip concludes.

A more detailed itinerary follows later in this document.

### MEETING PLACE AND TIME

Our adventure begins at Mission Beach, and a pre-trip briefing will take place at 6:00 pm on **the evening prior to Day One**. The pre-trip briefing will be held at Mission Reef Resort, 58-62 Holland St, Wongaling Beach, (07) 4068 9681. At this briefing you will meet your guides who will thoroughly explain the itinerary for the next seven days. The following morning you will be picked up from your accommodation in Mission Beach at 7:00 am. We travel to Lucinda, the departure point for the first leg of our paddling journey.

### ACCOMMODATION

For accommodation at Mission Beach we recommend Mission Reef Resort. It is the venue for the pre-trip briefing. Visit them at [www.missionreefresort.com.au](http://www.missionreefresort.com.au) For other accommodation options, have a look at [www.missionbeachaccommodation.com.au](http://www.missionbeachaccommodation.com.au)



## HOW TO GET THERE

We recommend that you travel by air to Cairns. Flights should be booked **as soon as possible**, as there is always a heavy demand. Please note that your return journey should be booked for the day after the trip arrives back in Mission Beach, in case of unexpected delays.

Please note that all our trips require minimum numbers to operate. If purchasing an advance purchase non-refundable air ticket, Southern Sea Ventures strongly advise that you take out travel insurance in the event that the departure does not operate and your ticket cannot be utilised. Also take care if you are intending to use frequent flyer points to book your flights.

Once you get to Cairns, there are a number of coach services which can take you to Mission Beach, and you should book these in advance. You can book your transfers directly through McCafferty's / Greyhound Coaches (131499) or Dunk Island Connections (07 40592709) or you could hire a car for the day & drive the two hours at your own leisurely pace with Sugarland Car Rental ( 07 406 88272 ).

*\*\*Note: Pre-trip briefing is conducted at Mission Beach the evening before the trip at 6:00 pm. If you are coming from Cairns on this day by bus, you must leave on or before the 2:00 pm departure.*

## SEA KAYAKING

Sea kayaking is an activity that any reasonably fit person can participate in. However, we ask that all participants should feel confident in swimming. The two-person fibreglass kayaks are stable, easy to paddle and control. They are very forgiving and are suited for beginners to experts. The kayaks are designed as an expedition boat so it is important to keep gear to a minimum, as we carry on board with us all of our food and equipment.

Our guides are all highly experienced sea kayakers and professional wilderness guides. They will teach you efficient paddling techniques, kayak rescue and safe surf entries before setting out on this adventure. We limit our group size to a maximum of 12 people including the 2 guides.

## PROPOSED ITINERARY

The following itinerary should be used as a guide only as it can vary due to weather, client preferences, sea conditions and unforeseen circumstances. Our sea kayak guides have a good knowledge of the area, and will seek out the best alternatives where necessary. We aim to experience the true wilderness of Hinchinbrook and the best of expedition sea kayaking.

### PRE TRIP:

Your guides will inform you of our schedule, show you how and what to pack and answer any questions you may have for the trip ahead at the pre-trip briefing (6.00pm Mission Reef Resort). Storage for your excess gear should be organised through your hotel, or we can assist you if necessary.

#### Day 1 Paddle to Mulligans Bay

We depart early (7:00 am hotel pick-up) as we have a two-hour drive south to Lucinda before packing our kayaks. After a safety briefing and fitting you to your boat we have lunch and practise our paddling skills before heading a short distance across the channel to Hinchinbrook Island. The island's immense grandeur seeps in as we paddle away from Lucinda and edge closer towards the towering peaks. We'll camp for the night at Mulligans Bay or Sunken Reef Bay.

#### Day 2 Paddle to Zoe Bay, Blacksands Beach

We leave southern Hinchinbrook and head around the vertical cliffs of its easterly aspect, Hillock Point, into the very picturesque Zoe Bay. We'll take a walk through the luxuriant forests surrounding Zoe Creek to the base of Zoe Creek Falls. Eating lunch while soaking in the large crystal clear pool is



the perfect way to relax and hear the birds clearly. Refreshed, we paddle a little further on to camp by Agnes Island or Blacksand Beach.

#### Days 3-4 Paddling East Coast of Hinchinbrook Island

Paddling up the eastern shores of Hinchinbrook Island gives us our best views of Mt. Bowen (1142 metres). Its rugged granite crags form a magnificent skyline often dotted with Cumulus cloud as the island's dominant position often creates its own weather. En route we have ample time to paddle along rugged cliff lines and into picturesque coves.

This untouched wilderness is one of the finest examples of Australian coastline. After paddling the 8 kilometre length of Ramsey Beach we round Cape Sandwich and often camp overlooking the sheltered waters of Sunset Beach.

#### Day 5 Paddle to Goold Island

Today we continue along Shepherd Bay towards Cape Richards, the northernmost point of Hinchinbrook Island. After rounding the cape we cross a short stretch of open water to Wilderness Cove on Goold Island -- the perfect place to spend a lazy tropical afternoon.

#### Day 6 Cross to Wheeler Island

We set out across our largest stretch of open water to explore the idyllic group of tiny islets comprising the Family Islands, Wheeler Island being our destination. We have the afternoon to explore our private island, snorkel or bask in the sun.

#### Day 7 Paddle to Mission Beach, Trip Concludes

After a leisurely morning we set out for Mission Beach passing Bedarra, Thorpe and Dunk islands, and leaving the fading peaks of Hinchinbrook behind us. After unpacking our familiar sea craft one last time we enjoy a celebratory lunch at Horizon Resort. Our last paddle back to civilisation at Mission Beach is filled with satisfaction and achievement at having completed a unique and memorable experience.

**\*\*Note:** We finish the trip at Mission Beach on Day 7 by about 3:30pm so although it may be possible to connect with a 6:30 pm bus back to Cairns, please don't count on catching a flight out of Cairns on this day since we may be delayed.

### **FITNESS REQUIREMENT**

We always feel that the fitter you are the more you are able to enjoy your holiday. The degree of difficulty of the trip will vary greatly depending on the weather we encounter. The sea and weather conditions off Hinchinbrook are affected by the south-easterly trade winds that blow from April to November and assist us as we paddle north. Conditions are rarely dead calm and our stable sea kayaks easily handle seas that develop. On occasion the winds may be too strong and require a layover day; but on average, a paddling day will range from 3-5 hours with the afternoons free to explore our surrounds.

The better your fitness, the more you will enjoy the activities, so it's a good idea to begin some form of regular exercise well before the trip. Walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics and swimming are all worthwhile methods for achieving a reasonable level of overall fitness. Swimming and paddling are recommended for developing upper-body strength for paddling sea-kayaks.

### **CLIMATE**

We paddle during the coolest & calmest part of the year. The months of June through to November are generally cooler, less humid and well outside the cyclone season that North Queensland experiences during the summer months. The warmer waters of the summer season bring with it marine stingers and hence the winter months prove ideal for paddling.



The dry-season climate is typified by gusty south-easterly trade winds. When paddling it is usually cool and windy (tail winds and moderate following seas) and rain is not unusual. On occasion the winds may be strong and/or seas too rough, requiring a lay over day waiting for better conditions.

Generally you will experience a mild climate with cool nights. Sunny days can be quite hot with a reflective glare from the water. A typical winter day could vary between a low of 15-20 degrees to a high of 28-33 degrees Celsius. The combination of wind and rain can drop the temperature, so it is advisable to bring a lightweight windproof jacket.

### **TRIP ORGANISATION**

The sun rises and sets quickly in the tropics. Paddling days will start early and finish early to take advantage of cooler temperatures and lighter winds. It's a good idea to pack up your dry bags before breakfast, prepare your personal items for the day, and take down your tents so that loading for departure can be organised. On a paddling day we'd like to be on the water before 9:00 am, and get into camp just after lunch. It is important to realise that the group will kayak at the speed of the slowest members.

On the kayaking trip there is plenty of fresh food, fruit and vegetables. We will try to supplement this with freshly caught fish! (*NB.* -For vegetarians and those who have special dietary requirements, we are happy to make the necessary arrangements. Please advise us at the time of booking).

A successful trip will require teamwork by all members of the group. Your participation in general camp activities will be appreciated. For example, on arrival in camp you would unload your own boat, set up tents and perhaps a few members of the group can assist in preparing the evening meal. The afternoons will generally be at your leisure although the guides will conduct escorted walks for those who would like to explore a bit more.

### **EXPEDITION STAFF**

Your two guides are highly experienced sea kayakers. They are people who love to share wilderness experiences with others. They are experienced in trip logistics, local knowledge and expedition organisation. They are chosen not only for their experience and qualifications, but also for their interpersonal skills -- they will be fun to be with, and approachable, so if you are having any problems please feel free to discuss any concerns with them in confidence.

### **ACCOMMODATION DURING THE TRIP**

We will stay in two-person tents, camping on each night of the kayak expedition. If you are travelling alone, you may be requested to share a tent with another group member of the same sex.

### **FOOD AND WATER**

Mission Beach is a small town but there are some good restaurants to choose from. Food during the trip will predominantly be fresh but we do not carry eskies (coolers) and ice, so have adjusted our menu appropriately. Tap water in the hotels is drinkable, and we have boiled or sterilised water during kayaking. The availability of fresh water for personal washing depends on the time of year and generally washing will need to be done in salt water.

### **WASHING AND TOILET FACILITIES.**

Our campsites are remote and basic. There are no shower facilities, and only occasionally will you have the chance to wash with fresh water. It is a good idea to bring along some sea soap, which will lather in salt water. Occasionally we will have pit toilets, and where there are none, we carry out our waste.

## **HYGIENE**

In remote wilderness areas, good hygiene is essential to ensure that you don't fall ill during the trip. To make it easier to wash your hands after using the toilet, and before preparing or eating meals, your guide will always have soap and water available.

## **MEDICAL MATTERS**

Any person undertaking this trip is required to provide us with a medical form filled out completely and accurately. This form is included in your pre-departure information kit. Please return it to us as soon as possible. Advise us of any side effects of any medication you take and of any dietary requirements related to taking them. Be sure to let your Group Leader know of any drugs to which you are allergic. You will be isolated from modern medical facilities, so attention to medical matters is vital.

## **DENTAL**

Due to the remoteness of our trips it is advisable to have a check-up before departure.

## **VACCINATIONS**

Generally speaking, there are no specific vaccinations required for travel to Australia, however it is always wise to consult your doctor or travellers medical centre. Due to the chance of cuts and scratches, we strongly advise that you be up to date with your Tetanus vaccine.

## **MEDICAL SUPPLIES:**

On all our trips into more isolated areas we carry a very comprehensive medical kit, which could cover most situations one might expect to occur. It is your responsibility to bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require.

In addition we suggest that each passenger bring:

- Sun screen SP15 or greater (water resistant)
- Lip protectant or zinc cream
- Band-aid strips
- Compeed (or similar) blister protection
- Insect repellent is essential. In the tropics, repellents containing DEET are generally more effective eg: RID or similar
- Aspirin or equivalent headache remedy
- A mild anti-nausea drug if you are concerned about motion sickness.
- Ti Tree soap or a mild antiseptic / biodegradable soap

## **VALUABLES**

We accept no responsibility for the loss of, or damage to, any valuables or equipment whilst on the trip. With all adventure travel, it is best to leave unnecessary valuables at home or in your hotel safe.

## **CAMERAS AND PHOTOGRAPHY**

The humidity is always high in North Queensland and as we are paddling in a salt water environment the delicate electronics in digital or film cameras can be damaged. You might consider a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of Silicon Packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries for a digital camera as there is no opportunity to purchase batteries or access electricity during the paddling. If you are using a film camera it is wise to keep lenses to a minimum. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged! Low speed films are fine on the water but in the trees some higher speed films are useful. We recommend all film be purchased and processed in your home country. If

you are buying a new camera, consider a waterproof one and get it well before departure so you can practice with it. It is inconvenient to find fault with the camera during a trip.

### **GLASSES & JEWELLERY**

People wearing glasses or sunglasses should tie them on with some elastic. This is something you can prepare before you go. Take a spare pair of glasses if you depend on them for survival or comfort. Contacts can be used if you close your eyes at the right times! Do bring a spare pair. We suggest you do not wear necklaces, bracelets, earrings, etc during the trip.

### **INSURANCE**

COMPREHENSIVE TRAVEL INSURANCE IS COMPULSORY FOR ALL PASSENGERS TRAVELLING ON OUR REMOTE TRIPS.

Australian residents should note: Under the Federal Government Medicare Act it is prohibited for any domestic travel insurance product to provide any financial re-imbursment with regards to ambulance or air ambulance services. We advise clients to take specific cover for ambulance cover through the respective State Ambulance Service providers or through their own private health insurance.

### **EQUIPMENT - WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING**

Because we carry all of our food and equipment on the kayaks, it is essential that you travel light. All personal clothing and equipment are stored in waterproof containers. Please remember that, should you have any sharp objects or unusual items, these will be stored separately on the kayaks. Cameras are stored in the personal clothing dry bag and are not easily accessible while paddling unless you have a waterproof camera or your own separate waterproof bag to carry it in.

- Waterproof rain jacket (you may want two-one for paddling, one for camp)
- 2 T-shirts
- 2 pairs of shorts and swimming gear
- 1 pair of sand shoes
- 1 pair of lightweight trousers
- 1 pair of sport sandals (eg: Teva or similar)
- Long-sleeved shirt is recommended in camp for insects
- Lightweight woollen jumper or fleece jacket or pile jacket
- 1-2 long sleeved thermal tops (lightweight polypropylene/capilene top is recommended while paddling for sun protection or warmth in rainy conditions. Lycra rash vest is also suitable)
- Wide-brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Sun visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigidity in a breeze, and a chin strap to keep on in the wind. A scarf made from a light material such as silk to protect your neck is useful for sun protection.
- Small towel (a chamois towel is ideal, together with a sarong if you have one)
- Lightweight socks
- Minimal personal toiletries (biodegradable salt water soap may be desired)
- Good waterproof sun cream and lip balm
- Insect repellent (recommend RID)
- Sunglasses with a cord or string for attaching them to prevent loss
- **Lightweight and compact sleeping bag and inner sheet**
- Small torch and batteries (a couple of candles may be desirable as well)
- A small daypack, bum bag or dry bag is good for holding things like sunscreen, glasses, etc. while we paddle.
- A wetsuit vest may be useful if you feel the cold
- personal water bottle, capacity 1-2 litres (the type used by cyclists are good and inexpensive)
- Lightweight cycling gloves can ease blistering if you are not used to paddling
- Pillow case or very small pillow (eg. airline pillow). It must fit into your dry bag. A pillow case can give you the flexibility to make for a comfortable sleep



## **OPTIONAL ITEMS**

- book, magazine, cards or games
- binoculars
- limited snorkelling gear (there are only 2 areas with reasonable snorkelling and it depends on the winds, there may be limited space to carry gear)
- OPTIONAL - if you wish to bring your own therm-a-rest to sleep on, we can carry it. This will be more comfortable than the closed cell foam mats supplied.

## **WILDERNESS CONSIDERATIONS**

It is very important to behave in a respectful way towards this special ecology, which is World Heritage listed. We will strictly adhere to our policy of *"Take only photographs, leave only footprints"*. Toilet waste will be buried in pit toilets in less frequented areas and carried out in others. The use of biodegradable soaps would be appreciated and the guides will outline what we can do to limit our impact on the environment. We ask that each person follow a policy of taking out everything they bring in, including lolly wrappers, batteries, etc.

## **TIME & COMMUNICATION**

Mission Beach and Cairns are always on Australian Eastern Standard Time (i.e. there is no daylight savings). During the trip we carry an emergency radio-telephone. This has the ability to make phone calls from most parts of our route. It is only carried for calling out in emergencies, and we will not be contactable once the trip has begun.

## **MONEY TO BRING WITH YOU**

No money is required during the kayaking although you may like to have enough for any expenses including alcoholic beverages or souvenirs at Mission Beach on our last day. The amount required at Mission Beach for meals and sightseeing before and after the trip will vary according to your requirements. Mission Beach does offer a wide variety of activities, and souvenirs and crafts are available.

## **SECURITY**

All passports, airline tickets, valuables, excess cash and travellers cheques should be secured in your hotel safe during the kayaking.

## **MONEY MATTERS**

### **YOUR TOUR COST INCLUDES:**

- Two-person expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment
- Two-person tents
- Closed cell foam sleeping mats
- Watertight containers for personal clothing and equipment storage
- Professional guides
- Transport from Mission Beach to the start of the trip on day one.
- All meals from lunch on Day 1 to lunch on Day 7
- Group first aid kit
- Emergency radio or satellite telephone and marine distress kit (flares etc.)
- National and Marine Park fees

**YOUR TOUR COST DOES NOT INCLUDE:**

- Travel between Mission Beach & Cairns before and after the trip
- Items of a personal nature such as postage and laundry
- Meals in Mission Beach as outlined above
- Alcoholic beverages
- Travel insurance
- Sleeping bag

**CHANGES IN YOUR TRAVEL PLANS:**

If you voluntarily decide to depart the tour early or extend your stay after the conclusion of the tour, you must make the extra arrangements yourself. It is not the responsibility of Southern Sea Ventures or your tour leader. However, your guides will assist you if possible.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

These trip notes represent the most current information available for this itinerary, and supersede any information detailed in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise.

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