

Lord Howe Island NSW

HOLIDAY PLANNER



Destination
NSW

Lord Howe Island NSW

the last paradise

Less than two hours flight from Sydney and Brisbane is NSW's beautiful Lord Howe Island, a timeless natural paradise that will relax and revitalise you. Explore reefs teeming with rainbow-coloured fish, relax on unspoilt beaches, marvel at flora found nowhere else on earth, or climb the soaring mountains where magnificent seabirds nest in their thousands. Lord Howe has a World Heritage listing, awarded to only a handful of island groups, and another rare quality – it's a reminder of more innocent times when doors weren't locked, honesty boxes were the rule and cars gave way to bicycles. Isn't it time you discovered this island paradise yourself?

cover: Views along the spine of the island from Mt Gower (Jack Shick)

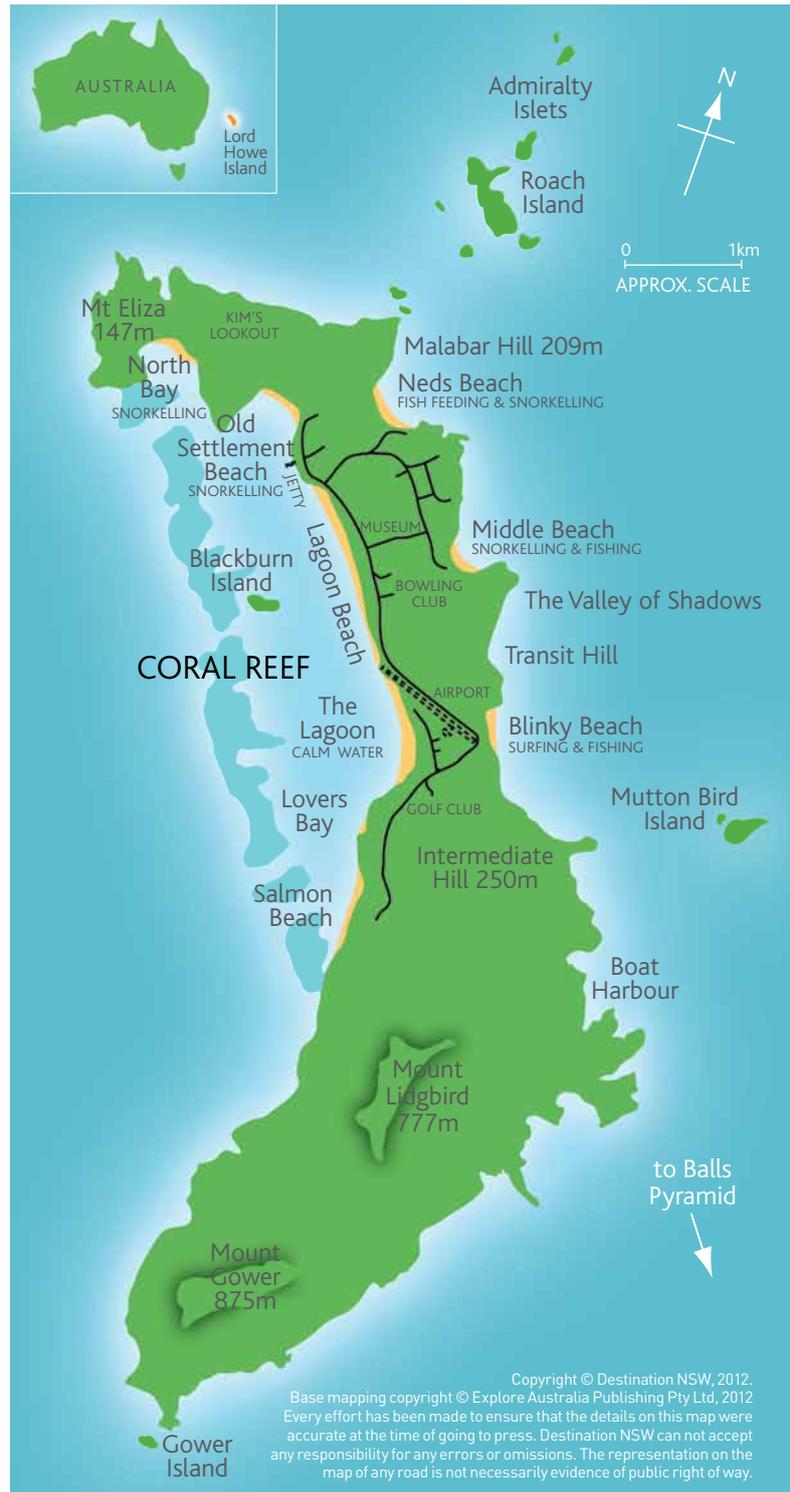
opposite page:

above: Aerial view (Grahame McConnell)

below left to right: Hiking, Mt Gower (Grahame McConnell); Scuba diving (Grahame McConnell)



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A carefree lifestyle

Lord Howe islanders do things differently. Honesty boxes are still common, and bare feet are official school uniform.

At any one time, you're one of only 400 visitors on Lord Howe, where the locals fiercely protect a lifestyle that consists largely of fishing, telling yarns and ensuring that visitors leave with a smile on their faces. Whether your idea of rest and relaxation is a daily round of golf or a luxurious spa treatment, you'll find your own version of paradise on Lord Howe Island.

Relax and unwind

Life on Lord Howe Island is relaxed and unhurried. There is no mobile phone reception and the island's motor vehicles are restricted to 25 km/h. Bicycles are the main mode of transport. There are no high-rise buildings and no power or telephone lines to spoil the views.

It's only 700 km north-east of Sydney, but Lord Howe is a world away from the city hustle and bustle. However, the island has not left modern comforts behind. On the contrary, Lord Howe has woven the best of contemporary life – good coffee, alfresco dining, spas – into its laid-back lifestyle. When you cook your own meal at one of the island's many communal barbecues in an idyllic setting, with the firewood neatly stacked, you know the islanders have their priorities right. And if you feel the need to pick

up the pace, you can always head to the 'CBD' – the island's main street, with its cafés, post office, hall, general store, banks, art, craft and clothing shops.

Dining out

Wherever you go on Lord Howe, fresh fish will be on the menu – delicious kingfish, straight out of the water, is a local favourite. Dine simply on sushi and homemade bread, or enjoy five-star dining and savour dishes such as fresh pasta, boutique-farmed meats and organic island greens at the island's top restaurants.

Families can eat more casually at one of the island's cafés, where aromatic coffee and delicious pizzas and salads are served in an easy-going atmosphere. The island is also dotted with BBQ areas and picnic spots – sandy bays and lush palm groves that are simply perfect.

above left to right: Rabbit Island (Blackburn Island) and The Lagoon (Don Fuchs); Getting around, island-style (Arajilla).

below left to right: Explore the marine playground (Grahame McConnell); Lord Howe Island Golf Club (Peter Aitchison).

opposite page

above left to right: Relax and unwind, Arajilla Retreat (David Matheson); Coral pools at low tide in The Lagoon (Ian Hutton).

below left to right: Lagoon Beach (Don Fuchs); Hiking, with views to Mt Gower and Lidgbird (Peter Aitchison).





A brief history

Lord Howe Island was discovered by Lieutenant Henry Lidgbird Ball, commander of the First Fleet ship *Supply*, in 1788. Ball named the uninhabited island after British admiral Richard Howe. Forty-five years later, three couples arrived from New Zealand to establish the first settlement. Over the next 50 years, the community grew slowly as Lord Howe became a provision station for whaling ships.

The kentia palm

When the whaling industry collapsed in the 1870s, the islanders began exporting the kentia palm, valued as a popular ornamental pot plant in Europe and North America.

The first tourists

The most famous pre-World War II 'tourist' was Sir Francis Chichester. In 1931, while

attempting the first east-west solo flight from New Zealand to Australia, across the Tasman Sea, the legendary English flier and yachtsman spent nine weeks on the island after his plane, a *Gypsy Moth*, was damaged in a storm. Islanders helped him to rebuild the plane, even though they had never seen one before.

By the late 1940s, tourists were discovering Lord Howe's charms by more conventional means – a flying-boat service. Catalinas flew to the island from Rose Bay in Sydney, bringing thousands of tourists each year.

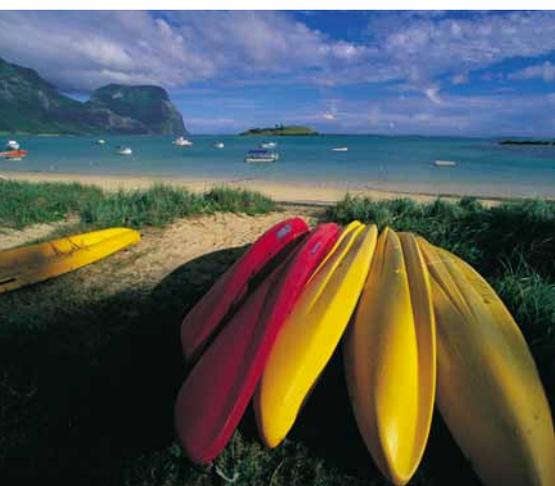
The Catalinas were succeeded by the large Sandringham flying boats. Today, regular flights from Sydney and Brisbane mean a steady stream of visitors can enjoy an unforgettable holiday on an island that is largely unchanged since Lieutenant Ball's day.

FUN FOR EVERYONE

In need of rejuvenation? You can choose from a range of spa treatments that include massage, exfoliation, body wraps and facials.

Play a round of golf at the Lord Howe Island Golf Club where, for a modest fee, you can play unlimited rounds for a week. Where else can you tee off on 'World Heritage turf'?

Lord Howe may well be the perfect holiday spot for families – safe, endlessly fascinating and blessed with enough activities to satisfy the most energetic child.





Natural wonders

Lord Howe Island's inclusion on the World Heritage List offered final proof, if any were needed, that this is a special place.

Lord Howe is one of only four island groups in the world possessing World Heritage status, thanks to its “remarkable volcanic geology, its exceptional range of ecosystems, its rare collection of plants, birds and marine life... and last, though by no means least, its exceptional natural beauty”. And, of course, all these wonders are on constant display.

Birdwatchers' paradise

With 14 species of seabird breeding on the island, Lord Howe is Australia's premier birdwatching destination. They come in their hundreds of thousands – petrels, shearwaters, tropic-birds, terns, noddys, and masked boobies, the largest of Lord Howe's seabirds. Take the tracks and roads leading to nesting sites at Clear Place, Muttonbird Point, Malabar Hill and Mt Eliza as well as North Bay and Neds Beach, where you can observe these birds in their natural habitat. Be sure to keep an eye out for the red-tailed tropic-birds' courting ritual as they perform backward somersaults.

Over 200 different bird species have been recorded on the island, among them a bird unique to Lord Howe, the woodhen, a flightless species saved from extinction by a conservation effort over several decades.

Some 30 birds had retreated to the top of Mt Gower before an eradication campaign aimed at feral pigs and cats enabled their re-introduction in the 1980s. There are now about 300 woodhens on the island – you'll find them wandering through the forests, unconcerned by how narrowly they escaped extinction.

Unique flora and fauna

Lord Howe and its surrounding islands are the remnants of a large shield volcano that has been eroded by the sea over millions of years. The differences in altitude and the range of terrain – mountains, valleys and ridges – has resulted in a great variety of plant life. More than 100 plants on Lord Howe Island – including the wedding lily and the spiky red mountain rose – are unique to the island's rich volcanic soil, but only the kentia palm has played a crucial role in the island's history.

Once known as thatch palm by locals because its leaves were used to thatch roofs, the kentia palm is vital to Lord Howe's economy as the island's major export.

Take a guided tour of the Kentia Palm Nursery and learn about the palms, and see one of the world's rarest insects: the phasmid. Thought to be extinct for 80 years, a small colony of this giant 'stick insect' was found on Balls Pyramid in 2001. As a result of a breeding program, it's now possible to see live phasmids in captivity at the Palm Nursery. Take a guided tour of the nursery and learn about the island's most popular export.



above left to right: Tropical rainforest (Grahame McConnell); Rainforest hiking (Arajilla); One of the island's unique plants (Don Fuchs); **below:** Kentia palm seeds (Don Fuchs).

opposite page

above left to right: Views along the spine of the island from Mt Gower (Jack Shick); Boobie bird at North Head (Grahame McConnell).

below: Kentia palm forest (Don Fuchs).



MUSEUM AND VISITOR CENTRE

Acquaint yourself with Lord Howe's colourful past at the Lord Howe Island Museum and Visitor Centre, where you'll find a library and historical and environmental exhibitions, as well as a replica skeleton of a long-extinct giant horned turtle.

Take 20 minutes to watch *Jewel of the Pacific*, Australian adventure photographer and cinematographer Frank Hurley's riveting 1931 documentary about Lord Howe Island.

At 5:30pm each day (except Wednesday and Saturday), local experts conduct presentations on history and the environment. The Visitor Centre also takes bookings for environmental and historical tours as well as restaurants.

DID YOU KNOW?

After Lord Howe was discovered by Lieutenant Ball in 1788, it was used as a provisioning stop between Port Jackson and the penal colony at Norfolk Island.

Harvesting the seeds of the kentia palm is a skill that has been passed down from one generation to the next: most of the present-day collectors are descendants of the original settlers.



A marine playground

Lord Howe Island is the remnant of a soaring extinct volcano, surrounded by marine life so rich in its diversity that new species are still being discovered.

The crystal-clear waters around Lord Howe Island are home to more than 500 species of fish and around 90 species of coral. The pristine coral reef, the southernmost reef in the world, is fed by warm currents flowing down from its northern 'cousin', the Great Barrier Reef. In recognition of its superlative conservation values, all the waters surrounding Lord Howe Island were declared a Marine Park in 1999.

above left to right: Islander Cruises (Peter Aitchison); Kayaking, Lagoon Beach (Peter Aitchison).

opposite page

above left to right: Snorkelling with schools of fish (Gary Bell); Exploring the rockpools, (Grahame McConnell).

far right: Balls Pyramid (Bildeberg Photo Agency).

The islands

The natural barrier of a six-kilometre coral reef forms The Lagoon, a tranquil blue 'belly' teeming with life that also boasts Blackburn Island, where shearwaters mass at sunset. Roach Island and the Admiralty Islets lie to the north and Mutton Bird Island to the east. Twenty-three kilometres to the south you'll find the world's tallest sea stack, Balls Pyramid – a spectacular 550-metre spearhead of sheer, grey basalt cliffs.

Water sports

Scuba diving

Renowned for the clarity of its waters, Lord Howe Island draws diving enthusiasts from around the globe. There are more than 50 sites, ranging from 'resort dives', in shallow waters near the beach, to spectacular trenches, caves and volcanic drop-offs. Local dive masters can lead you to thrilling sites at the base of Malabar Hill or around the Admiralty Islets. For the experienced diver, few locations can surpass Balls Pyramid, where the waters are alive with kingfish, canary-yellow golden drummers and (harmless) Galapagos sharks.

Snorkelling

If diving doesn't appeal to you, snorkelling is just as rewarding. Let myriad fearless moon wrasse and elegant wrasse swim right up to you in The Lagoon. Peer into the wreck of

The Favourite at North Bay, or visit coral-lined Sylphs Hole, where you might find yourself face-to-face with a green turtle.

Swimming and surfing

You'll enjoy swimming in the Lagoon and at Neds Beach, voted in 2005 as Australia's cleanest beach. Adventurous surfers can paddle out to the reef breaks, about one kilometre off Lagoon Beach, or head to Blinky Beach on the eastern side of the island for a clean break on some of Australia's least crowded waves.

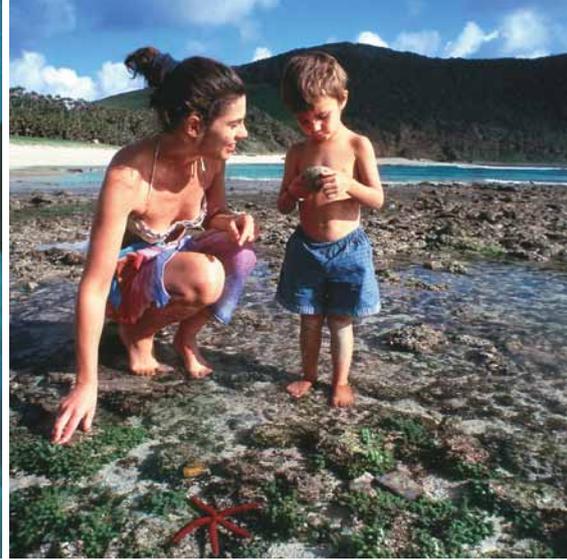
On the water

Cruising

Sightseeing trips around the island will take you close to the stunning vertical cliffs of Mt Gower and Mt Lidgbird. Get a fresh angle on The Lagoon by booking a seat on a glass-bottomed boat. Or charter a boat to Balls Pyramid for a sea journey where dolphins glide alongside and many seabird species can be seen close up.

Kayaking and wind sports

For those who like to operate under their own steam, there is no better way to explore The Lagoon than by kayak. You can also hire the latest windsurfing gear. Lord Howe's turquoise Lagoon can be sailed year-round, while July to September offers big-wind sailing against the backdrop of the island's spectacular volcanic scenery.



Lord Howe Island Marine Park

Rising through the clear waters of the southwest Pacific Ocean, the remains of an extinct volcano – an enormous marine mountain – ascend more than four kilometres vertically from the sea floor, terminating in a flat top just 40 metres below the waves. Near the middle of this plateau, flanked by luxuriant coral growth, is the Lord Howe Group of Islands.

The waters around Lord Howe are managed within a Marine Park, established in 1999, extending three nautical miles out to sea from the mean high water mark, and covering an area of approximately 48,000 hectares.

The low level of exploitation and careful management of the marine environment make for some of the most extraordinary underwater experiences on the planet. Lord Howe is the the only place in Australia where such a diversity of fish and coral – not to mention turtles and other sea creatures – can be seen by snorkelling just a few metres from the beach. Large fish, which are scarce and avoid humans in other parts of the world, are easily approached at Lord Howe, and the marine life is so abundant that divers who have spent years exploring the underwater environment of Lord Howe still frequently discover new species.

Fishing

Lord Howe's surrounding waters are home to some of the most delicious fish you could ever wish to catch – kingfish, wahoo and yellowfin tuna, to name a few.

Deep sea, reef and fly-fishing are excellent, year round. Throw in a line from a beach or a rock, or local boat operators cater to adrenaline-seeking anglers with game fishing tours in local waters.

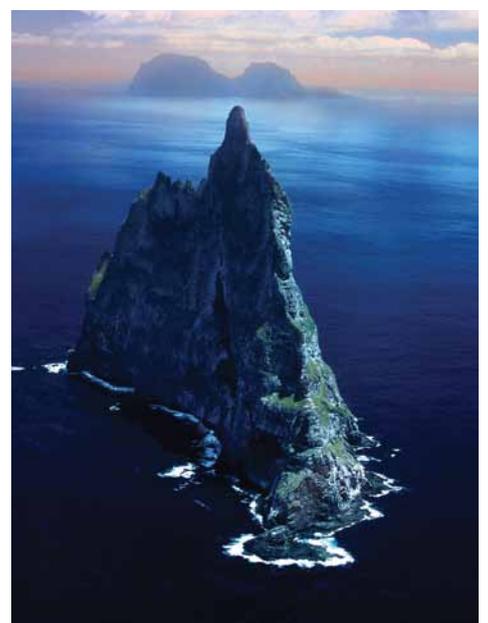
And here's a tip from the locals: when the weather is favourable, islanders point their boats towards Balls Pyramid. It's unlikely you'll come back empty-handed.

MUST SEE AND DO

At Neds Beach let the fish come to you. Be part of a favourite Lord Howe ritual and help feed eager mullet, wrasse, garfish, silver drummer, spangled emperor and metre-long kingfish. The kids will love it.

Why not explore the reef at low tide? Just grab a pair of old sandshoes and go reef-walking.

In October each year, you can see the finish of the Gosford to Lord Howe Island Yacht Race.





Exploring the island

Lord Howe's famous twin peaks, breathtaking views and natural forest make it ideal for walkers and hikers, who can discover the island on foot.

What better way to seek out Lord Howe Island's 64 unique species of flowering plants, the endangered woodhen and seabird colonies than on well-marked walking tracks? Whether you climb Lord Howe's own 'Everest' – the 875 m Mt Gower – or take a more leisurely walk under lush forest canopies, you'll take home many treasured memories.

Before you choose one of these round-trip walks, check its rating: each is graded according to an international classification system, from Class 1, a hike, to Class 6, an assisted climb.

Northern section

Transit Hill

Class 3, 2 hours return, 2 km

The walk to the lookout tower on Transit Hill in the centre of the island is a great way to get your bearings on Lord Howe. From the Administration Centre, you climb a gentle slope through forest, where you might spot an emerald ground-dove or a golden whistler. Follow the fence above Pinetrees Paddock before passing through another forest to the viewing platform, which has outstanding 360-degree views of the island. If you continue, the trail leads down dunes covered in spinifex to Blinky Beach, where the surf breaks are so good the locals call them 'champagne surf'.

North Bay

Class 3, 4 hours to a full-day return, 4 km

If you want to combine excellent swimming and snorkelling with a picnic or barbecue in a scenic location, take the walk to North Bay. Starting near Old Settlement Beach, the track soon arrives at a propeller marking the nearby site where an RAAF Catalina flying boat crashed in 1948. The wreckage scattered further up the paddock remains as a memorial to the fallen crew. The track then winds up through blackbutt forest to Dawsons Ridge, before angling down the western slope to North Bay.

Malabar Hill and Kims Lookout

Class 4-5, 3 hours, or 5 hours return, 7 km

Lord Howe's most popular walk takes you to Malabar Hill and Kims Lookout, with its commanding views up the spine of the island to Mt Gower. The trail starts on Neds Beach Road, then passes through a stand of kentia palms shading shearwater breeding burrows. After climbing to Malabar Spur, you'll emerge at the top of Malabar Hill, where the cliffs plunge straight down to the ocean. The crannies in the cliffs shelter one of the world's largest nesting sites for red-tailed tropic-birds, which put on a mesmerising aerial display between September and May. If you extend your walk to the more challenging Kims Lookout, you'll be rewarded with views across The Lagoon to the southern tip of the island. Continuing along the ridge, you'll reach Old Settlement Beach.



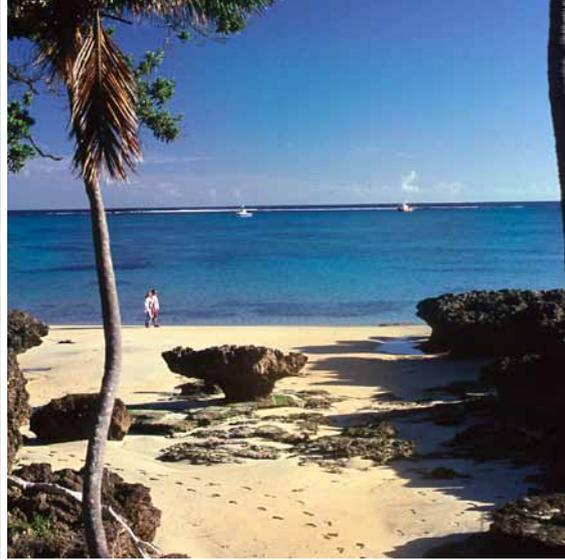
above left to right: View from Malabar Hill (Sally Mayman); Cycling around the island (Peter Aitchison)

below: Snorkelling in rockpools (Grahame McConnell).

opposite page

above left to right: Hikers along the trail on Lower Rd, Mt Gower (Don Fuchs); Old Settlement beach (Grahame McConnell).

below left to right: Windsurfing (Lord Howe Island Tourism); Mountain rose in bloom with Mt Lidgbird in background (Ian Hutton).



Southern section

Goat House Cave

Class 4, 5 hours return, 6 km

The rope-assisted climb to Goat House Cave (400 m), a large overhang on Mt Lidgbird's eastern face, rewards hikers with spectacular views of Lord Howe's settled areas. If you press along the ledge to the south, you'll also take in views of Balls Pyramid. Starting at Lagoon Road at the base of Mt Lidgbird, climb through rainforest to Smoking Tree Ridge and follow the signs up the mountain. Once at the cave, you're more likely to encounter nesting tropic-birds than the feral goats that gave the cave its name.

Mount Gower

Class 5, 8 hours return, 14 km

On arriving on Lord Howe, visitors are amazed by the magnificent twin peaks at the southern

end of the island – the towering Mt Gower (875 m) and Mt Lidgbird (777 m). The one-day hike to Mt Gower is considered one of the world's best. This is a guided walk, complete with rope-assisted climbs, nerve-testing drops and, on the summit, a misty forest that boasts woodhens, twisted trees and beard-like lichen. The 14 km, eight-hour walk requires a stout heart as the amble along a coastal road turns into a steep ascent. The cool, sweet waters of Erskine Creek will refresh you before the final climb. On the way you'll see views of Wolf Rock, which made world headlines in 2002 when the HMS *Nottingham* came to grief on its unforgiving edges. From the summit, you'll be captivated by the view – Mt Lidgbird in the foreground and The Lagoon below.

On descent, the jagged spire of Balls Pyramid rises dramatically from the sea.

BUSH REGENERATION

If you enjoy strenuous activity during your holiday but want to do something different, you could book one of Lord Howe's increasingly popular bush regeneration tours.

Help eradicate weeds in the morning before exploring the island in the afternoon, discovering more about the bird, plant and marine life.







A traveller's guide to paradise

From accommodation to banking facilities, here's all the travel information you'll need to start organising your holiday on Lord Howe Island. Note that accommodation must be pre-booked before arriving.

MONEY

There are two banks on Lord Howe Island – Westpac and Commonwealth.

Credit cards are accepted widely but not everywhere, so you'll need cash as a back-up.

There are no automatic teller machines, but EFTPOS is available at some businesses. There are no facilities for foreign currency transactions.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

By air, Lord Howe Island is less than two hours from Sydney or Brisbane.

QantasLink flies direct from Sydney daily in peak season, and from Brisbane on weekends.

There are connecting services from all Australian capital cities and most NSW and Queensland regional centres.

There are also weekly flights in spring and autumn from Port Macquarie, NSW.

opposite page: Fish feeding at Ned's Beach (Arajilla)..

above left to right: Capella Lodge (Peter Aitchison; Baille Lodge); Lagoon Beach (Don Fuchs).

Where is it? Lord Howe is in the Tasman Sea off Australia's east coast, 700 km north-east of Sydney and parallel with Port Macquarie.

How big is Lord Howe Island? 11 km long, and 2.8 km wide at its broadest point.

How many people live there? There are only 370 residents on the island, and at any one time there is a maximum of 400 visitors. It's advisable to book well in advance.

When is the best time to go? Any time. September to May is usually fine and mild, or warm to hot, with average daytime temperatures of 25°C. The average winter temperature is a mild 19°C.

Where can I stay? There is a range of accommodation available, from self-catering establishments to luxury retreats. But please remember that you cannot camp anywhere on the island.

Where can I eat? Lord Howe has several fine restaurants as well as cafés for casual dining.

How do I get around the island? All accommodation properties provide free transfers to and from the airport. Generally, you're within walking distance of most shops, restaurants and beaches. There are only a handful of rental cars, so it's a good idea to book one in advance. Cycling is the main form of transport, and you can hire bicycles and helmets.

What do I need to bring? Dress is casual, with smart casual for evenings. Bring shoes for bush and reef-walking, backpacks, a torch,

fishing gear, sunscreen and a hat. Throw in a raincoat, as showers may occur at any time of the year. You can hire sporting equipment.

What is the weight limit? The weight limit on Lord Howe flights is 14 kg per person for checked baggage and 7 kg for carry-on baggage. Excess baggage is carried on a subject-to-load basis and charges apply.

Supplies: Stores carry groceries, liquor, fruit, vegetables, pharmaceuticals, clothing, snacks, souvenirs and arts and crafts. There are also hairdressing, beauty and massage facilities.

Communication: Lord Howe Island is beyond the reach of mobile phones, but public phones, fax and the internet are available.

Time: Australian Eastern Standard Time from October to March. In winter, Lord Howe Island is 30 minutes ahead of Sydney time.

Group and event facilities: Lord Howe is ideal for weddings and regularly welcomes special interest groups. There are two church halls, bowling club rooms, a golf clubhouse and a 150-seat community hall/cinema.

Medical: There is a hospital and dispensary, and the doctor and nursing staff are on 24-hour call for emergencies. There are no snakes, sand-flies or stingers on Lord Howe.

For further information:
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www.lordhoweisland.info



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