



# Area Guide

## The Whitsundays, Australia





# Introduction

*Whitehaven Beach, Whitsunday Island.*

## DISTANCE FROM BASE

The Sunsail Base is just five minutes drive from Hamilton Island Airport. Hamilton Island Airport transfers are complimentary.

Hamilton Island is in the centre of the Whitsundays' cruising grounds. The nearest sheltered anchorage is just 30 minutes cruise from our base.

## AREA

The Whitsunday islands were 'discovered' by Europeans in the year 1770, but they were a favoured hunting and fishing grounds of Australia's Aboriginal people for many thousands of years before that.

The Whitsunday islands are located in warm waters between 20 and 21 degrees south latitude. The many islands lie off the coast of Queensland on the north east coast of Australia and are sheltered by the magnificent Great Barrier Reef.

Now listed as a World Heritage National Park, there are over 74 stunning islands and hundreds of anchorages and islets to explore when sailing the Whitsundays. The area is a year-round cruising destination with a subtropical climate affording mild winters and warm to very warm summer months. The water temperature varies from 22-27 degrees Celsius year round and the Queensland sun creates a 'shorts and shirt' style of weather most of the time.

The mountainous islands are covered with eucalypt pine with patches of vivid green grassland or the occasional shadowy gully of rainforest and waterfalls. The shores of the islands are skirted by fringing coral reefs making it a mecca for snorkelling and diving enthusiasts. From July to September you can even sail with humpback whales.



*Hamilton Island Airport and Marina*



*Langford Island, Hook Island in distance*



# Cruising Guide

*Nara Inlet right / Maconnna Inlet left*

## APPROACHES

There is a tidal range of between two and six metres in the Whitsundays.

As many of the islands are surrounded by fringing reef caution must be displayed when approaching anchorages as you need to leave enough depth under your keel to accommodate the shifting tide and currents.

You will also need to pay out a suitable amount of anchor chain to avoid dragging anchor. All of our yachts are fitted with electric anchor windlasses, accurate depth sounders and detailed charts, tidal charts and pilot books to assist you.

## ANCHORAGES

As the islands are quite mountainous there are many sheltered place to anchor regardless of the wind direction and strength.

Many of the Marine Park anchorages now have public mooring buoys, which you can pick up at no charge. If the mooring buoys are associated with an island resort a small fee may apply. The public moorings are being placed throughout the Whitsundays to assist holidaymakers, but more importantly to protect the fringing reef from anchor damage.



*Butterfly Bay moorings*



*Turtle Bay anchorage*



# Amenities

*Daydream Island Resort & Spa*

## RESORTS

The Whitsundays, unlike The Med and Caribbean, have very few places to stop for meals ashore. For this reason we recommend you pre-order provisions for most of your charter holiday.

Of the 74 islands, only eight have resorts with restaurants.

- Brampton Island
- Daydream Island
- Hamilton Island
- Hayman Island
- Hook Island
- Lindeman Island
- Long Island
- South Molle Island

The style and star rating of these resorts vary greatly as does the cost of moorings and restaurant meals. You can pay anywhere from AUD\$30 to AUD\$350 for an overnight mooring and the resorts range from very basic two-star standard, through to world class five-star establishments.

There are no supermarkets amongst the islands except on Hamilton Island (where Sunsail is based) and on the mainland (Airlie Beach). Airlie Beach is a backpacker style town, which is worth a visit if you like international-flavoured tourist destinations with lots of bars, restaurants and night clubs.

Hamilton Island has nine restaurants and a variety of bars. You always have a free marina berth at our base on Hamilton Island during your charter so you can come in and re-provision or dine ashore anytime you like.



*Hamilton Island*



*Peppers Palm Bay, Long Island*



# Activities

*Snorkelling the Reef*

## THINGS TO DO

### Snorkelling / scuba diving

Stunning snorkelling and diving is available amongst the fringing reefs around the islands, particularly at the northern end of Hook Island and Hayman Island. Hamilton Island has a PADI dive shop so you can hire all your gear, if required.

### Bush walking

There are many fantastic bush walks in the area so bring some comfortable shoes.

### Wining and dining

Hamilton Island, Palm Bay (Long Island) and Airlie Beach are the three best locations for wining and dining during your holiday, with award winning restaurants boasting the freshest gourmet cuisine.

### Relaxing

One of the most appealing aspects of sailing the Whitsundays is the lack of crowds! Our international guests are often amazed by the amount of cruising area there is to discover and often find they are the only yacht in some of the most popular anchorages. It is the ultimate paradise to explore where you can get away from it all get away from it all and relax onboard your own luxury floating hotel room. However, due to Sunsail's base being in the heart of the Whitsundays, we are always just maximum of two hours away if you need us for anything!

### Watersports

Hamilton Island, Long Island and Daydream Island have Watersports outlets, which give the opportunity to try waterskiing, parasailing, tube riding etc. Snorkelling equipment (fins, mask and snorkel) is provided free of charge on all Sunsail charter yachts.



*Bushwalking, Lindeman Island*



*Beach House Restaurant, Hamilton Island*



# Activities

*Great Barrier Reef scenic flights*

## THINGS TO SEE

### Aerial tours

For a different perspective, a scenic flight over the islands and reef is highly recommended. Helicopter and seaplane tours to the Outer Great Barrier Reef can be arranged from Hamilton Island as well as cruises.

### Beaches

The Whitsundays are home to many beautiful beaches, with Whitehaven Beach being the most famous after being voted one of the world's top three beaches. It is a six kilometre stretch of pure white silica sandy beach with a scenic lookout at Hill Inlet. You can spend at least two days relaxing around the Whitehaven Beach and Hill Inlet area.

### Whale watching

From July to September the humpback whales migrate north and breed in the Whitsundays. It is common to see whales close-up during a charter holiday in these months. Organised whale watching tours can also be arranged if desired.



*Hill Inlet look out*



*Humpback whale whatching*