

DOLPHIN FEEDING AT TANGALOOMA, MORETON ISLAND, QLD. PHOTO COURTESY TANGALOOMA WILD DOLPHIN RESORT



LOCAL ISLAND HOP

Grab the picnic basket and escape the city this weekend for some local island magic. **BY BRIAR JENSEN**

You don't have to catch a plane or spend several days to enjoy an island break. There are lots of islands within easy reach of most capital cities. Here are some of the best.

BRISBANE, QLD Moreton Island

Just 75 minutes by launch from Brisbane, Moreton is the third largest sand island in the world. We loved Tangalooma Wild

Dolphin Resort where-as day guests, we could use the swimming pools and cafes as well as the gorgeous beach. We bonded on adrenaline – scooting down the dunes on toboggans and zooming around on quad bikes. Walk along the beach to the wrecks, which is a great place for a family snorkel. Stay for the early evening dolphin feed and you'll really feel like you've had an island holiday.

Tangalooma Wild Dolphin Resort
Ph: 07 3268 6333 www.tangalooma.com

South Stradbroke Island

Picnic on tranquil Broadwater beaches or in the ocean-side dunes, where older kids can surf while you whale watch. Visit one of the campgrounds or resorts for the day and include some action with a four-wheel drive tour, jet skiing or paraflying. Walk through the rainforest or Melaleuca wetlands and look out for wallabies and butterflies. Catch a ferry or water taxi from Runaway Bay or sail from Surfers Paradise with Tall Ship Sailing Cruises.

QUAD BIKING AT TANGALOOMA, MORETON ISLAND, QLD.
PHOTO COURTESY OF TANGALOOMA WILD DOLPHIN RESORT

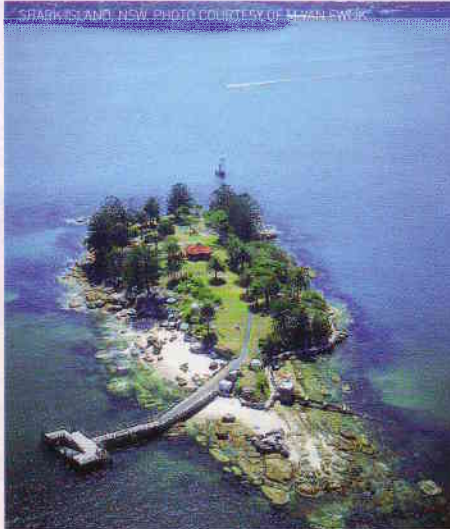


Our kids couldn't believe [Dangar] island residents get around without cars.

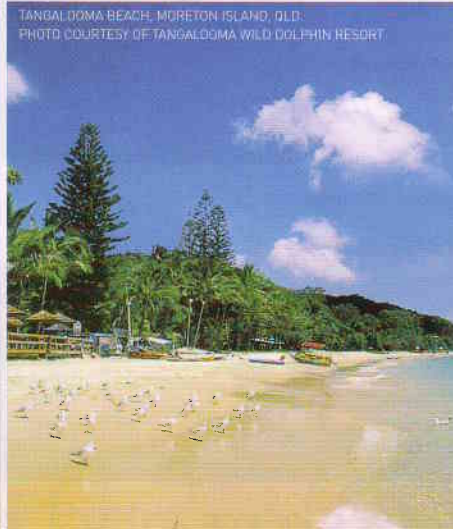
The National Parks and Wildlife Service run daily tours and you can take a picnic or eat at the café afterwards.

Sydney Harbour National Park
Ph: 02 9247 5033
www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

SHARK ISLAND, NSW. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARAH EWING



TANGALOOMA BEACH, MORETON ISLAND, QLD.
PHOTO COURTESY OF TANGALOOMA WILD DOLPHIN RESORT



Milson Island

Located on the picturesque Hawkesbury River, Milson Island was once a river trading post, veteran rehabilitation centre, prison and mental institution before becoming a government Sport and Recreation Centre. Gather your friends or extended family and you'll have heaps of fun playing ball games, swimming or fishing. Hire an instructor and you can select from rope courses, rock climbing, abseiling, kayaking, archery and fencing. Cook up a storm on the barbecues afterwards. Minimum of 20 for a day trip, bookings required which includes ferry from Mooney Mooney.

Milson Island Sport and Recreation Centre
Ph: 02 9985 9261 www.dsr.nsw.gov.au

South Stradbroke Island Resort
Ph: 07 3409 9555
Tall Ship Sailing Cruises / McLaren's Landing Ph: 07 5532 2444
www.tallship.com.au

SYDNEY, NSW Shark Island

At the mouth of Rose Bay, this island, named for its shape, was previously an animal quarantine area and naval storage depot. At 1.25 hectares, it's small, but with no shops the whole island is one big picnic area. There's a small sandy beach, large grassed areas, shady trees, picnic shelters, a gazebo and toilets. Matilda Cruises depart

Circular Quay. Bookings are required due to number restrictions.

Sydney Harbour National Park
Ph: 02 9247 5033
www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au
Matilda Cruises Ph: 02 9264 7377
www.matilda.com.au

Fort Denison

Lying in the middle of the harbour, Fort Denison once confined convicts before the fort was built to protect Sydney Harbour. With a museum, Martello tower and canon – fired daily at 1pm – it's a great place for kids to experience some Sydney history. Views from the top of the tower are magnificent.

Dangar Island

Step back in time on Dangar Island, at the entrance to the Hawkesbury River. Our kids couldn't believe island residents get around without cars. We collected a brochure from the shop next to the wharf and took a self-guided historical walk. You can picnic at Bradley's Beach or Kilparra Park bush reserve, then head back to the shop for scrumptious coffee, cake and ice creams. The ferry from Brooklyn takes 15 minutes.

Dangar Island Ferry Service
Ph: 02 9985 7605

PERTH, WA Rottnest Island

With 63 sheltered beaches, you'll always find somewhere to picnic on Rottnest. If you get tired of swimming, snorkelling, surfing or fishing there's plenty of other activities. Take a guided walk, visit the museum, tour the Wadjemup Lighthouse or go on a quokka quest. Hire bikes (or bring your own) and cycle the 24 kilometres around the island or catch a train to the Oliver Hill gun battery. Alternatively, just admire the colonial architecture while sampling delicious local fare. Ferry takes 30 minutes from Fremantle, 60 minutes from Perth.

Rottnest Island Visitor Centre

Ph: 08 9372 9730

www.rottnestisland.com

Carnac Island

Once a whaling station, Carnac Island is now a fully protected nature reserve, that's home to a large population of rare Australian sea lions. The male sea lions inhabit Carnac while the females live up the coast. It's also home to little penguins and thousands of seabirds including gulls and terns. Oceanic Cruises sail to Carnac from Fremantle during January to April. As well as swimming and snorkelling, a biologist will take you around the reserve and get you up close to the sea lions.

Oceanic Cruises Ph: 08 9325 1191

www.oceaniccruises.com.au



PARADISE BAY, ROTTNEST ISLAND, WA. PHOTO COURTESY OF TOURISM WA.