



OCF Cape York Mountain Biking Challenge

Trip notes

Welcome to RAW Challenges... we hope that you enjoy exploring the world as much as we do. This trip is a unique cycling challenge on the Cape York Peninsula. We'll experience this undeveloped and amazing area of Australian wilderness while riding 4WD tracks. This is a chance to experience the unique landscapes and tropical beauty of far North Queensland, as you ride through the Daintree rainforest. What's more you'll be helping raise much needed and appreciated funds for the Oncology Childrens Foundation.

Cape York - A demanding - but incredibly rewarding - ride through the wet tropics of far North Queensland and the Cape York Peninsula. A real piece of Australia, for people who like a real adventure. If you're the sort who doesn't mind the odd hill or two as part of your ride, then have we got something for you!

We're sure you'll be tempted to escape the Winter blues with this ride, which takes in tropical rainforests, sublime scenery, history and culture, wildlife and the remarkable barrier reef found along the Daintree and Cape York Peninsula.

The highlight of this trip is the famous Bloomfield track, a roller coaster dirt road through the heart of the wet tropics that run from Cape Tribulation to Cooktown. Expect some steep hills to get over, creek crossings in the rain forest (awesome fun!) and quite a tough ride at times. But your reward is a magical experience of this unique habitat and our support crew will be with you every peddle of the way. We use sealed roads for 3 days when we're not on the Bloomfield track, so it won't be rough going the whole way!

We stop for tours to sacred waterfalls with Indigenous guides and take a very personal rock art tour near Hope Vale to understand the culture and history of this area. Add to this the charms of pioneering Cooktown - in our opinion one of Australia's hidden gems- the beaches and wildlife of Cape Tribulation, classic outback pubs and a night out in swanky Port Douglas and you've got all the makings of a classic trip.

And whilst surrounded by rainforest creatures, you won't go without creature comforts. We've selected some unique, comfortable accommodation in locations that make the most of your environment, so that you'll be rewarded every night for your efforts every day.

This trip is supported by a four wheel drive vehicle which will carry all your luggage (plus weary riders) and you'll have a cycling guide with you all the way. Expect good food and lots of it as you tackle those hills on the Bloomfield track, with rest stops and snacks along the way. If you've ever wanted to see more of this iconic part of Australia then this is the perfect way to explore.

Itinerary

Day 1 22 May Arrive Cairns / Port Douglas

Arrive into Cairns and be transferred to the resort town of Port Douglas for the night. That day we will have briefings and help with assembling your bikes.

(D) O/night Cairns

Day 2 Cairns / Kuranda / Port Douglas Approx 92km

Today is a challenging start to our first day's ride as we climb up to the mountain town of Kuranda on a long but gradual ascent. After morning tea we start on the Black mountain road through National Park to Port Douglas. The 43km Black Mountain Road offers a rough and scenic alternative south-north route to the Cook Highway as it cuts through the Kuranda National Park. This is your first taste of riding through the wet tropics and the road incorporates both sealed and un-

sealed sections

This is a long day in the saddle and a good warm up for the hills later in the trip! Kuranda National Park and adjacent Mowbray National Park are entirely within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area feature both rainforest and open eucalypt forest. They also protect an important wildlife corridor and who knows what you may see today! At the end of the Black Mountain road we turn onto a sealed highway to Port Douglas. A well deserved drink and swim awaits!

That night you are free to enjoy some Port Douglas nightlife!

(B,L,D) O/night Port Douglas resort

Day 3 Cycle from Port Douglas to Cape Tribulation Approx 88km

Our Journey begins by riding from Port Douglas to the Captain Cook highway and onwards to the town of Mossman, famous for it's gorge where we'll have a quick stop for morning tea. We continue for another 30km to the Daintree River ferry where we'll take lunch. Cross the river, keeping a keen lookout for saltwater crocodiles on the banks. Then we enter the World Heritage Daintree rainforest. Riding through the dense rainforest is an amazing experience, the overhead canopy keeps temperatures cool and you'll be able to hear and if you're lucky see some of the rare birds and animals that live here. Not long after entering the Daintree we come to our first significant climb, a hill of 500m with a superb lookout point at the summit. From here the road roller coasters onwards to Cape Tribulation where we overnight at a beachfront eco-resort at Cape Tribulation.

(B,L,D) O/night Cape Tribulation beachouses

Day 4 Cape Tribulation / Great Barrier Reef rest day

Enjoy your surroundings at Cape Tribulation with the option of a day trip out to the Great Barrier reef or just soak up the remarkable natural environment and explore some of the walking tracks. Tomorrow we tackle the Bloomfield track!

(B,D) O/night Cape Tribulation beachouses

Day 5 Cycle from Cape Tribulation to Bloomfield 44km

Today be prepared for some really challenging riding on the first section of the infamous Bloomfield Track for 44km from Cape Tribulation to Bloomfield. The dirt road roller coasters through dense and varied rainforest with very steep climbs and descents and numerous creek crossings en route. This is very challenging riding through incredible surroundings, a real adventure! Coming into the idyllic Bloomfield river valley we stop at the small town of Wujal Wujal to take a guided walk to the spectacular Bloomfield Falls with the Walker Family, Aboriginal women with a special traditional perspective on the region. Afterwards we jump back on the bikes and continue to our accommodation on sealed road for another hour.

(B,L,D) O/night Haley's Cabins & Camping, Bloomfield

Day 6 Cycle from Bloomfield to Cook Town 72km

We continue north on the Bloomfield Track, starting with a section of relatively easy sealed road before it turns to dirt road and hill climbs again. The road climbs onwards passing mountains and the tiny settlement of Rossville before a stop at the classic Lion's Den Hotel, where we take a break before continuing onto the end of the Bloomfield Track, after which we are on the sealed road to Cook Town. Admire the mysterious Black Mountain, a towering pile of granite boulders, and ride



the last 28 km to Cook town, the largest town on the Cape.

The frontier town of Cook town has historic beginnings - in 1770 Captain Cook beached his ship the Endeavour here for repairs and the town itself grew from a gold rush in the 1870's. Spend some time strolling past the main street's heritage buildings and along the waterfront, admiring the views over the Endeavour River and mountainous surrounds. Dinner is not included tonight so you can explore some of the dining options in town.

(B,L) O/night Cooktown hotel

Day 7 Cooktown / Orientation ride 24km

Orientation ride around Cooktown and the rest of the day at leisure. A chance to look around Cooktown and it's many attractions. Optional tour to Hope Vale to meet with Willy, an indigenous man who gives a fascinating perspective on local culture, bushcraft and his family's rock art paintings.

(B) O/night Cooktown hotel

Day 8 Depart Cooktown

Leave Cooktown today and return back to Cairns. This is a coach transfer that will take approximately 4-5 hours and we will arrive back by midday in time to meet connecting flights home. (If you need to be home earlier it is possible to book a Cooktown – Cairns flight for you at an additional cost of \$150)

Please note: All distances and day routes are approximate and will be confirmed prior to riding. The itinerary is subject to change due to local conditions, transportation schedules and the ability of the group.

Arrival complications

We don't expect any problems (and nor should you!) but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, please contact Dave (0413703632) and leave a message.

Joining point

Cairns Airport - Virgin Blue terminal

Please collect your luggage and look for a RAW Challenges sign held by one of our staff. They will then arrange to transfer you to Port Douglas.

Finishing point

Cairns Airport - Virgin Blue terminal

At the end of the trip your will be dropped back to Cairns airport, where a variety of transport is

available to transfer those who may be staying on at the end of their trip. Please note that we will not be returning via the same route.

Group size

Maximum of 20 travellers per group

Accommodation

Twin Share room in hotels or beachouses (6 nts), cabins (1 nt),

Meal inclusions

Most meals included - see itinerary.

Transport

Air-conditioned bus, cycling

Physical rating

4/5 Activities include strenuous rides of 4 to 7 hours per day in mountainous terrain in conditions which can be warm, daytime temperatures in the mid - high 20's, cooler evenings. There are some very strenuous days on the Bloomfield track, so a good level of aerobic fitness is required and confidence in riding a bike off road.

Important notes

1. Daytime temperatures can vary from low 20's through to almost 30c once we hit Cooktown. A hat and sunscreen is essential at all times. You will need 2l capacity with water bottles.
2. Passengers with special meal requirements must ensure they inform RAW Challenges of this at the time of booking. Food for the trip is purchased prior to commencement and special requirements cannot be catered for after leaving Port Douglas.
3. There is limited space available in the vehicle for luggage storage so please only bring essential items on the trip. See 'What to Take'.

Health

All RAW travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our group leader, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, RAW reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

Please let us know of any medical conditions on the registration form and if you are currently taking prescription medicine as it is important that our leader is aware of your circumstances.

We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements (such as a spare pair of prescription glasses). Please be aware that for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets/antibiotics etc. Your first aid kit should include:

- *headache tablets*
- *diarrhoea treatment (both a blocker to bring relief from the symptoms and an antibiotic)*
- *band-aids*
- *antiseptic for cuts & scrapes*
- *lip balm*
- *insect repellent*
- *high factor sunscreen.*

Given the physical nature of this challenge we strongly advise bringing some sachets of an oral rehydration solution (available at chemists) as this aids recovery following activity and dehydration and also helps replace lost body salts should you suffer from 'gastro'. Just add a sachet to your water bottle each day. Please scroll down to the Special Safety Notes below for information on dehydration.

If you are 65 years or older a completed Medical Certificate is required. Please fax this through to 03 9597 0797 prior to departure.

Physical preparation

To get the most out of this trip you need to be prepared for rides of 34 - 100km every day on rough 4 WD tracks and perhaps getting your feet wet in rivers and creeks. The more effort you put into getting your fitness levels up the more you will enjoy this trip. You need to build upto doing long rides of 60-80km prior to your trip departing to condition your body to long days in the saddle. Training that involves hill climbing is especially recommended for this trip as there are numerous-step ascents and descents on the Bloomfield track section of the ride.

For a fitness program & advice click here: <http://rawchallenges.com/guide-to-cycling.php>

Money

The most convenient and cheapest way to access money is via an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) - this can draw from your home account or from a credit card. Most ATM's will also give you a cash advance on your credit card but be wary of high fees imposed by banks. ATM's are available at Cairns airport, Port Douglas and Cooktown. When leaving home don't forget your PIN number!

Spending money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and



tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Any tip that you wish to give your local guides or leader in recognition of excellent service is always appreciated.

Optional activities

Guurrbi Tours from Cooktown allow approx \$95 to \$120

Emergency funds

Please also make sure you have access to an additional AUD\$400, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster,) necessitate a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence but it is well worth being prepared!

Keeping in touch - communication while on the road

Internet cafes are commonplace In Cairns, Port Douglas, Cape Tribulation and Cooktown. Mobile phone service is intermittent at best and Telstra has the best network coverage in the area.

Emergency Contact

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please call RAW Challenges Melbourne Office.
Tel: +61 3 9597 0799. Outside of office hours please call 0413 703 632

Your Fellow Cyclists

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience.

Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

Group Leader

All RAW Challenges group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends.

While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects.

What to take

You should pack as lightly as possible as your luggage allowance is limited to 20kg and a bike may weigh anything from 12-16kg. On the vast majority of our trips you are expected to carry your own luggage and though you will not be required to walk long distances with your luggage we recommend keeping the weight under 10kg/22lb.

Suitcases are not recommended for RAW travellers! Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags with wheels are acceptable, although we recommend your bag has carry straps as well. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water and a camera etc for day walks and day trips.

Specifically for this trip:

There is limited space available in the vehicle for luggage storage so please only bring essential items on the trip.

Checklist

Travel Essentials

- Airline ticket
- Credit card and cash
- Mobile phone.

Personal Items

- First Aid kit – include headache tablets, diarrhea treatment (blocker to relieve symptoms), general antibiotic, band-aids, antiseptic for cuts, lip salve
- Contact lenses
- Spare prescription glasses
- Hay fever tablets (if you suffer)
- High factor sunscreen 30+
- Mosquito repellent – RID
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (biodegradable)
- Ear plugs (in case tent mate snores!)
- Plastic bags for wet or dirty clothing
- Hand wash for clothes or laundry powder
- Wet wipes or antiseptic hand gel
- Empty film case or snap lock bags for tampons in remote areas & no access to toilet

Clothing

- 3 T-shirts (lightweight quick drying fabric) / long sleeved T-shirt
- 2 pairs Cycling shorts (padded)
- 1 pair of comfortable shoes for cycling
- Pair of sport sandals / crocs
- 4 x socks (for cycling)
- 1 pair of shorts
- Lightweight waterproof top
- Light sweater/fleece for evening (or item above)
- Small towel and swim wear
- Sun hat
- Clothes to relax in

Cycling Equipment

- Helmet - (compulsory) - bring one with good ventilation
- 2 water bottle (min. 750 ml capacity recommended) or 'Camel Bak' hydration pack
- Handlebar bag/pannier /small day pack for carrying items when cycling.
- Cycling gloves
- Mountain Bike and a spare inner tube / tyre
- Bike box / bag for packing bike on plane
- Tyres with grip and good tread pattern for off road.

Optional

- Multi-tool (allen keys) for minor adjustments to your bike
- SPD pedals / Toe clips
- Mini bicycle pump
- Favourite snacks for cycling energy boost e.g. 'PowerBars', Gu - sports gels (a concentrated carbohydrate that delivers immediate energy when you feel tired or flat), dried fruit or nuts
- Powdered Gatorade/sports supplement sachet

Other Suggestions

- Camera
- Spare batteries
- Reading / writing material
- Torch

Safety

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling.

Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities however during your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure.

While your group leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your RAW itinerary, and RAW makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them.

Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time.

Please also note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

A thorough cycling safety briefing will be given prior to setting off about the bikes (changing gears, brakes etc), road rules, tackling steep terrain, cycling in a group and general hazards to look out for.

Special Safety Notes

Dehydration

Dehydration is the biggest risk when undertaking a physical challenge such as trekking over undulating terrain. It is so important to be aware of your fluid intake especially at altitude and to constantly drink water throughout the day (even when you do not feel thirsty). Symptoms of mild dehydration include:

- *flushed face*
- *extreme thirst, more than normal or unable to drink*
- *dry, warm skin*
- *cannot pass urine or reduced amounts, dark, yellow*
- *dizziness made worse when you are standing*
- *weakness*
- *cramping in the arms and legs*
- *sleepy or irritable*
- *headaches*
- *dry mouth, dry tongue; with thick saliva*

The simplest way of monitoring your fluid intake is by checking the colour of your urine. If it is clear or slightly yellow you are well hydrated but once it is a dark yellow you are in the danger zone and need to increase your fluid intake immediately. Ensure that you bring some Gastrolyte sachets as these help your recovery after trekking with the replacement of electrolytes. Gastrolyte is also the recommended treatment for dehydration caused by diarrhoea ('gastro').

RAW Challenges Newsletter

We have a free email newsletter full of travellers stories and experiences as well as news on new trips that we are running. Please send us an extract from your travel journal at the end of the trip.

We would also love to receive any photos after the event as we are starting to build up a travellers album for each of our destinations on our website. We need resolution of around 1MB. Please could you send a CD to: RAW Challenges Photo album, 1/24 Bay Road, Sandringham, VIC 3191.