



The view from Flagstaff Hill of Four Mile Beach



Hibiscus Gardens Spa Resort

what's new in port

KERRY HEANEY DISCOVERS A PLACE WHERE LIFE IS FOR LIVING AND WORK IS FOR... WELL, SOMEONE ELSE.

THE EARLY morning scene on Four Mile Beach says it all – life is for living at Port Douglas and the smart are out there grabbing every second of the balmy lifestyle, walking, riding or relaxing with yoga.

A favoured destination for the rich and famous, “Port” as the locals like to call it, has more than its fair share of quality restaurants and shops with high fashion labels aplenty lining the main drag, Macrossan Street.

The resort's charm and soothing atmosphere evokes a sense of true pleasure and relaxation.

You'll find the locals are tightlipped when it comes to celebrity spotting, but head out to eat and you may see a famous face anyhow.

When it comes to dining there's plenty of choice, from mod Oz to authentic Indian and everything in between. Taking a prime corner position on Macrossan Street and serving prime steaks is the Courthouse Hotel. Try the upstairs Sunset Bar for a lazy late afternoon drink while the sun dissolves into the ocean. The food isn't half bad either, and local musicians will have your toes tapping.

For a more sophisticated meal, head to The Living Room in Wharf Street just around the corner. With a tropical outdoor setting and loads of atmosphere, this is a great place to dine. The menu offers plenty of fresh local produce with some interesting twists.

Salsa Bar and Grill, also in Wharf Street, is another spot for good food using local produce. Port of India is one of the newest dining options and, with three Indian chefs, one from Kerala in Southern India and two from

Delhi in Northern India, offers authentic cuisine.

While there are plenty of prime spots in Port to rest your head, several new additions to the scene are worth checking out.

Launched in mid-September last year, the upmarket, pristine white Peppers Beach Club is a short stroll from the bustle of Macrossan Street. Swim-up pool decks provide the perfect way to access the resort's flowing swimming lagoon, which is surrounded by towering palm trees. When it's time to dine, there's the resort's signature restaurant. The poolside bar includes in-pool seating and a waterfall to relax around – a great spot on a warm day. The luxurious rooms are well kitted out, and we found the balcony spa a great place to relax.

The recently renovated Hibiscus Gardens Spa Resort is a Balinese teak- and cedar-themed tropical haven with lush gardens that swirl around your balcony. The resort's charm and soothing atmosphere evokes a sense of true pleasure and relaxation.

Extra good is the onsite Li'Tya Spa Dreaming, offering treatments using Australian earth, sea minerals and plants to stimulate and refresh. Surrender to the ultimate spa experience with a foot treatment, salt exfoliation, mud wrap, hair masque and scalp massage, vichy rain therapy, massage, hand treatment and facial. Pure bliss!

Rydges Sabaya Resort, Port Douglas, formerly Rydges Reef Resort, underwent a multi-million dollar redevelopment to reopen in June with a Balinese theme. Set on 3.2ha of tropical gardens, the resort has a large swimming pool smack-bang in the middle with a swim-up bar. Onsite dining options include Sakinah House for dinner and breakfast and the Biru Bar for a poolside lunch.

A reef trip is a must when visiting Port, and the best way to get there is sailing on

the catamaran *Sailaway IV*. It takes a limited number of guests to Low Isles daily. You get a chance to grab a prime beach spot, dive with the turtles and enjoy the spectacular coral. There's a tasty seafood smorgasbord waiting onboard after you've finished the morning's exertions.

If your plan includes driving from Cairns, as we did, along the very scenic Captain Cook Highway, make sure you pick up a copy of the Great Tropical Drive. This handy publication gives you great information and a comprehensive map which will take you from Townsville to Cooktown if you desire.

travel plan

Great Tropical Drive
www.greattropicaldrive.com.au

Sailaway IV
p 4099 4772
www.sailawayportdouglas.com

where to dine

The Living Room p 4099 4011

Port of India p 4099 6333

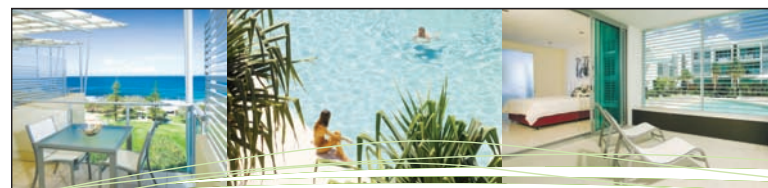
Salsa Bar & Grill p 4099 5338

where to stay

Peppers Beach Club p 4087 1000

Rydges Sabaya Resort p 4099 8900

Hibiscus Gardens Spa Resort
p 1800 995 995



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