



Located off the coast of Queensland, K'Gari (commonly known as Fraser Island) has quickly become one of the most popular 4WDing and camping destinations in Australia, and it's not hard to see why.

It has been on our bucket list for a while, so we finally took some time off work and made the journey up north to Fraser Island from Sydney. The drive was really long with a sick and restless toddler, so an overnight stop near Macksville made the 14-hour drive much more bearable. Every second of the drive was worth it once we arrived though.

Fraser Island really is an escape from the big smoke. It boasts some of the most beautiful, natural landscapes in the world, with everything from subtropical rainforests to crystal clear perched lakes, it sure lives up to its name K'Gari (meaning paradise).

The island is World Heritage Listed and it is the largest sand island in the world, measuring approximately 123 kilometres in length and 22 kilometres in width. It is also home to the purest dingoes in Australia.



*Fraser Island is a world heritage listed destination.*

## How to get there

You will need to catch a barge to get across to Fraser Island. The Manta Ray Barge runs daily from Inskip Point (which is roughly a 3-hour drive from Brisbane).

Once you are on the barge, it only takes 10-15 minutes to get across to Fraser Island. Don't forget to reduce your tyre pressures to maintain traction on the soft sand! Inskip Point is notorious for bogged vehicles.

The barge operates daily from 6 am to 5:15 pm and at the time of writing this costs:

- Car/4WD (including passengers) \$120 return
- 4WD/car + Trailer (up to 5 metres) \$190 return
- Car/4WD + Trailer (5 metres and up) \$220 return



*You will need to purchase a ticket to get on the barge to Fraser.*

## Camping and vehicle permits required

All vehicles must have a vehicle access permit displayed on the windscreen before driving onto the island. At the time we went, the permit cost us approximately \$55 for 1 month (or you can pay \$250 for an annual permit).

If you intend on camping, you will need to buy a camping permit. The cost of this permit is about \$6.35 per person per night, or \$25.40 per family per night (1 or 2 parents accompanying children under 18 years). Children under 5 years are free.

During peak times, camp spots fill up quickly, so try to book in advance where possible. Don't forget to attach a camping tag, with your booking number onto your tent.



*Once you purchase your permit, ensure you have it displayed.*



## Booking before vs booking as you go

Permits, barge tickets and camping tags can all be purchased online in advance. Due to limited phone reception on Fraser, I would highly recommend booking everything prior to arriving on the island.

We didn't pre-book anything which meant that we had to stop at the Manta Ray Permit Office to buy a barge ticket. From here, we were able to buy our return barge ticket, as well as all of the other necessary vehicle and camping permits/ tags.

If you haven't been to Fraser before and aren't sure where you want to camp, you do have the option to book campsites as you go. That's what we did, and it worked out great! It allowed us to explore campsites and travel around the island with so much more flexibility! If you are thinking of booking this way, please keep in mind that phone reception is very limited and this can make booking spots quite difficult).

Police and rangers patrol Fraser Island, so it is important to make sure you have the necessary permits for 4WDing and camping. Our campsites were checked frequently by rangers.



*Ensure you have all the relevant permits, so you can have a stress-free stay.*

## Where to camp?

There is no shortage of choice when it comes to camping on Fraser Island. You can pitch your tent on the edge of the sand dunes or amongst the tranquil rainforests. You can 'wild' camp amongst the dingoes or camp within the safety of dingo deterrent fences.

On our first day, we arrived late in the afternoon with absolutely no plans. Since it was getting dark, we decided to spend our first night at Central Station. Central Station is a fenced campsite set amongst the utterly beautiful, tranquil rainforest. Even though we hadn't intended on camping in any fenced zones, it was nice setting up camp and cooking dinner without having to worry about dingoes. It was also really easy for us to visit the iconic Lake McKenzie the following day.

The rest of our trip was spent camping along the western and eastern coasts. To be honest, all beach camping zones are beautiful in their own way. You can't really go wrong booking along the coastline.

Refer to the [Fraser Island map](#) and [Fraser Island beach camping zone map](#) for locations and specific camping areas.



*There are so many incredible campsites to stay at on Fraser Island.*

## Fenced Camp Sites

Fenced camping is recommended if you have children under the age of 14. Interactions with dingoes can be dangerous and sometimes even fatal. The names of these fenced sites are listed below:

- Central Station



- Dundubara
- Lake Boomanjin
- Waddy Point
- Cornwells
- Cathedrals

These formal campsites provide basic facilities including toilets, tap water, BBQs, bins and waste disposal. Some of them even offering coin-operated hot showers (\$2 for 3 minutes).



*If you can, book your site in advance to secure it especially during peak season.*

## 'Wild' Camp Sites

### **Eastern camping (ocean side)**

The eastern beach consists of 9 camping zones. These campsites have stunning ocean views and are set up high up on the edge of the sand dunes. From Dilli Village North all the way up to Sandy Cape.

### **Western camping**

The western beach consists of 7 stunning remote camp spots between Moon point and Wathumba Creek. These are very isolated campsites, so make sure you are well prepared with recovery gear and a first aid kit... just in case.

When we stayed on the western side of Fraser we had a sick toddler, this made the isolation feel pretty intimidating. Luckily, we were very well prepared with Panadol and plenty of supplies. If you are planning to camp over on this side, please make sure you have all of the emergency essentials. You are a very long way from help and the tides dictate the times you can come or go.

### **Southern Inland camping**

There are multiple campsites located along Hook Point inland road. These campsites are not beachfront spots but they are ideal for late arrivals or when waiting for the low tide.



*There are so many spots to stay along the beach on Fraser.*

## Things to do on Fraser Island

We could have easily spent 2-3 weeks exploring Fraser as we struggled to see the whole island in 7 days. We made it to most of the iconic spots though, but there are still plenty of places that we didn't get to visit. Here are some of our favourites:



## Lake McKenzie

A stunning freshwater lake with pure white sand. One of the many 'perched' lakes on Fraser Island. You have to see it to believe it! The lake was packed with tourists when we were there in the offseason, so I'd say it gets quite busy during peak seasons.

## Eli Creek

We loved strolling along the tranquil boardwalk and floating down this crystal clear, freshwater creek on our inflatable pool toys. This was a highlight for our 2-year-old!



*Lake McKenzie is one of the most well-known spots to visit on the island.*

## Champagne Rock Pools

This was another highlight for us and is the perfect place for a family swim. The name explains it all! There are large foamy rockpools caused by waves crashing over the walls.

## Sandy Cape Lighthouse

Stunning views paired with a very steep hill climb. Closed footwear is recommended and if you have small children, be prepared to carry them for the long uphill climb.

## Maheno Shipwreck

Built in 1905, the SS Maheno's rusty remains have been beached for over 80 years after it was hit by a cyclonic storm in 1935. This beautiful structure is a must-see. It is great fun for the whole family. During low tide is the ideal time to visit, so you can walk around the entire shipwreck and get a really good look.



*Visit the Maheno shipwreck at low tide, so you can see everything.*

## Indian Head Lookout

This lookout is located at the most easterly point of Fraser Island, and sounds like the perfect place to look for sea life! This was something that we didn't manage to fit into our trip but we will definitely check out when we return to Fraser Island.

## Ngkala Rocks

Drive your vehicle through one of the largest exposures of coffee rock. Try not to get stuck on the way out! Make sure you have low tyre pressures to maintain traction on the soft rocks and the large sand hill afterwards!

Ngkala Rocks is another spot that is notorious for bogged vehicles. In saying that, we didn't



have any trouble getting our heavy Landcruiser through with low tyre pressures.



*It's vital to be careful around the dingoes on the island.*

## Important Information

Dingoes are wild and unpredictable, so keep your children close to you at all times. Lock for any food and rubbish inside your car at night. I must admit I was a bit paranoid at first (Mum instincts), however, the dingoes stayed away from us most of the time. Our encounters usually happened when we were driving around.

There are a number of dangerous marine animals that could potentially be found around Fraser Island. These include sharks, crocodiles and marine stingers (in the summer months). It takes a lot of driving to get around and see everything. Fuel is really expensive on the island (we paid \$2.20 per litre for diesel), so if you can, try to fill up your tanks before getting on the barge.

There are several supply shops on the east coast, all of which sell basic supplies. However, it is recommended that you bring everything you need as there are limited supplies and no doctors or pharmacies on the island.

Fraser is extremely tidal, so make sure you have a tide table with you in your car. As a general rule, try to make sure you are not beach driving within 2 hours either side of high tide. We planned our travel days in advance around the tides, which allowed us to get around the island much more efficiently.



*Ensure you fuel up before your trip as it can be expensive once you're there.*

## Essentials for emergencies

It is important to remember that most campsites on Fraser Island are remote and often extremely isolated, so in an emergency call 000 immediately. I'd recommend that you take the following gear with you for emergencies:

- Map and tide table
- First-aid kit
- Drinking water
- Prescription medicines (if needed)
- Tyre pressure gauge, deflator and inflator
- Spare tyre
- Toolkit
- Snatch strap
- D shackles
- Max Trax
- Shovel



## 4WDing and Camping on K'Gari (Fraser Island)



*Fraser Island is a picturesque must-see spot.*

Fraser Island is wild and rugged, yet beautifully maintained and controlled. It is so easy to fall in love with its picturesque landscapes. But, don't forget to use common sense and be prepared for all situations.

**Have you ever visited Fraser Island? What was the highlight of your trip?**