Whale Watching in Australia

The Complete Quick-Guide — Best Spots, Seasons & Practical Tips

Top Whale Watching Destinations

• Gold Coast (QLD) — June–Oct: Close-to-shore humpbacks, family-friendly.
• Hervey Bay (QLD) — July–Oct: Long interaction times; whales often curious.
• Sydney (NSW) — May–Nov: Harbour departures with city backdrops.
• Ningaloo Reef (WA) — Mar–Jul: Whale sharks; regulated humpback swims Jul–Nov.
• Albany & Bremer Bay (WA) — Orcas & southern right sightings.
• Head of the Bight (SA) & Bruny Island (TAS) — land-based southern right watching.

Best Seasons

• Humpbacks (East Coast): May–November
• Humpbacks (West Coast): June–December
• Southern Right Whales: June–August
• Whale Sharks (Ningaloo): March–July

Packing Checklist

- [ ] Windproof jacket & layers
- [ ] Hat & sunglasses
- [ ] SPF 30+ sunscreen (reef-safe)
- [ ] Binoculars (7x–8x)
- [ ] Telephoto lens (200mm+)
- [ ] Waterproof phone case & dry bag
- [ ] Reusable water bottle
- [ ] Motion sickness tablets (if needed)
- [ ] Non-slip footwear
- [ ] Small snacks

Suggested 7-Day Itinerary & Tips

7-Day East Coast Itinerary

• Day 1–2: Gold Coast — Morning whale cruise; explore hinterland.
• Day 3: Travel to Hervey Bay; evening beach walk.
• Day 4–5: Hervey Bay — Full/half-day whale tours; photo time.
• Day 6: Sunshine Coast — Noosa coastal walk & relaxation.
• Day 7: Return via Brisbane or extend to Fraser Island.

Photography Tips

• Use burst mode and a fast shutter (1/1000s+) to capture breaches.
• Set autofocus continuous and track subjects in AI Servo/AF-C.
• Stabilise on rails; use a monopod if needed for heavy lenses.
• Keep a lens cloth handy for sea spray and salt.

Conservation & Citizen Science

Share fluke photos with researchers, join beach cleans, and report entangled animals to local authorities. Suppo

Book with Cooee Tours — www.cooeetours.com.au/tours/whale-watching-gold-coas