



Cairns is a great destination to visit, especially during the dry season from April through to October when getting out and about is a little more comfortable. Family walks are an enjoyable way to spend time together, but for those with young children, it can sometimes be tricky to find a suitable path. One that is not too long or steep, is ideally paved to make it easier for strollers and possibly somewhere with a playground.

The following walks are perfect for young children as they have relatively flat paths that are easy to navigate. They are also a short distance from the CBD and therefore not too long for a young child to sit in the car.



The path is fully paved and right next to the beach.

Clifton Beach to Palm Cove

The best place to park is at Deadman's Gully in the suburb of Clifton Beach as there tends to be more available parking and a playground conveniently next door. Begin by going along the boardwalk in Deadman's Gully and follow the paved path towards Palm Cove. The track is next to the beach and takes approximately 30 to 40 minutes to reach Palm Cove. Once there, you have the option to extend the walk by continuing along William's Esplanade finishing with the jetty at the northern end.



Clifton Beach Views.

Palm Cove is also a great tourist destination with lots of cafes, restaurants, and accommodation. The path is flat and smooth, making it ideal for a stroller and about halfway along the Esplanade, there is another playground – perfect for parents to grab a takeaway coffee while watching the little ones burn off some restless energy.



The wetlands are known to have a range of wildlife and plants.

Cattana Wetlands

The Cattana Wetlands was previously owned by Franco Cattana who used the land for sand mining as well as growing sugar cane. Over the years since, the 80-hectare area has been rehabilitated into a nature conservation park, encompassing two main lakes and two ponds, and is known for a variety of plants and wildlife.



A relaxing spot to sit and enjoy the Wetlands.

Four paved walking trails range from 400m to 1.25km and are all very stroller-friendly. These walks include the Jabiru Lake Circuit, Cuckoo Lake and Crake Pond Circuit, Kingfisher Pool Circuit, and Feather Palm Boardwalk. The Wetlands offer many viewing decks and picnic areas with BBQ facilities, all making for a relaxing family day out.

It is a good idea to remember the mosquito repellent, especially after it has rained, and crocodiles are known to be in the Wetlands, making swimming prohibited.



Cairns Esplanade path is paved, wide, and flat with great ocean views.



Cairns Esplanade Boardwalk

The Cairns Esplanade is 2.5km in length (one way) and has beautiful views of the ocean. The paved path is wide and flat, and it's best to park towards the northern end of the Esplanade where there are ample free spaces available. Approximately halfway along is a fantastic range of recreation facilities including a beach volleyball area, a skate park, a basketball court/multiuse area as well as a bouldering park.



The Esplanade offers a range of recreational facilities for kids, teens and adults.

There are also tennis courts available, and for younger children, there is a huge play area, called Muddy's Playground. Mums and Dads will appreciate the café located here, which is of the same name and makes a great place to meet up with other parents. If you continue walking you will end up at the Cairns Lagoon, which is regarded as a 'must-do' for visitors.



Little ones will have so much fun at Muddy's Playground.

Earl Hill Summit/ Little Earl Hill

There are two excellent walking tracks at Trinity Park and to enjoy either one, it is best to park at Reed Road where there are signs to indicate the entrance to both tracks. Follow these signs through to Roberts Drive to get to the trailhead.

The more frequently used track out of the two is the Earl Hill Summit which is 2km return and takes approximately 1-2 hours to complete. The Earl Hill Summit track is relatively steep; however, has a lot of switchbacks and has just recently been upgraded to create a more gradual incline and loop option for users. Mornings and evenings can be fairly busy with many locals enjoying their daily exercise, and dogs are permitted on both tracks.



The track is reasonably steep, but the views are worth it.

The other track, Little Earl Hill, begins at the same location. Start by following the path that goes to the Earl Hill Summit but about halfway up you will come to a sign and instead of continuing along the Summit track, the sign will direct you towards Little Earl Hill. From this turn-off, it will take approximately another 30 minutes to reach Little Earl Hill. Cairns City Council is still in the process of implementing the upgrade, but they are due to have it completed soon, and the changes include an extension to this walk.

Both tracks are unpaved and as it can be somewhat strenuous, it is recommended for older children.



A saltwater lake and a freshwater lake are an ideal habitat for many types of birds.

Centenary Lakes

Centenary Lakes is located at Edge Hill and is part of the Cairns Botanic Gardens, making it a great place to take the family for a walk and picnic. There are two lakes – a freshwater and saltwater lake. Both are home to many different types of birds, including storks, cormorants, geese, and ducks. Plus, there is an abundance of tropical flora such as palms, orchids,

bamboo, flowers, and mangroves.

With an abundance of tropical flora, Centenary Lakes is a great place for a family walk and picnic.

Centenary Lakes has a playground called Nature Play which encourages children to learn, explore and interact with nature through a variety of offerings like logs for balancing, natural tunnels, digging, climbing and a fairy garden.

Kids can dig, climb, balance and visit the fairy garden at the Nature Play playground.

There are also toilets and baby change facilities available, and the best place to park is either on Greenslopes Street or Collins Avenue. From Collins Avenue, it is also possible to explore the Botanic Gardens and the Red Blue and Green Arrow Tracks.

The Ivan Evans Walk is just 15 minutes from the CBD and is accessible year-round.

Ivan Evans

The Ivan Evans track is in Bayview Heights, just 15 minutes from the CBD. From Ellen Close, it will take approximately 30 minutes to reach the lookout, where there is the option to extend the walk by following the track to Morris Road at the top of the ridge.

A spectacular view through the trees from the lookout.

Alternatively, from the lookout, it is also possible to walk to Toogood Road however you will need to double-back either the same way or along to road to get to Ellen Close.

The 2.4km track is unpaved and very shady amongst the rainforest.

The track is unpaved and very shady as it winds through beneath the rainforest canopy. It's worth bearing in mind that if doing this track with little ones, it may be better to use a baby carrier or have older children walk themselves as the terrain can be uneven and tricky to navigate with a pram.

Which family-friendly walks have you enjoyed lately?