



If only it was possible to take a short ferry ride from a major city port to a large island with almost 17,000 hectares of national park.

An island that, other than a couple of small townships and a resort, has virtually no infrastructure or sealed roads. A place where long stretches of pristine beaches are often completely deserted.

An island where even if you don't own a 4WD vehicle, there is sand tobogganing, wreck snorkelling and even a resort offering day use facilities. This includes a bar and dining, and activities like dolphin feeding, kayaking and much more.

All this, conveniently located a short walk from the ferry drop-off point. And, an island with walking and hiking options anywhere from an hour to several days long.

If only there was such a place...

Mulgumpin / Moreton Island is such a place. Visible from virtually anywhere in Brisbane that offers an ocean vantage point, you would assume it to be overrun with Brisbanites and interstate and overseas visitors.

However, with locals and visitors being spoiled for choice with Minjerribah / Stradbroke Island also nearby and the city being sandwiched between the magnificent beaches, hinterlands and non-stop action of the very popular Sunshine and Gold Coasts, it would seem that Mulgumpin / Moreton Island has been forgotten.



The wrecks near where the MICAT drops off its passengers. This picture was actually taken on the ferry.

Getting there

On boarding the ferry at the Port of Brisbane, it's evident that Mulgumpin / Moreton Island is a popular 4WD destination. Scores of 4WDs queue up for the 90-minute ferry trip to the pristine beaches that await.

Leaving the Port of Brisbane and with the CBD slowly disappearing behind you, it's not long before Tangalooma Island Resort on Mulgumpin / Moreton Island becomes visible.

As the ferry glides to a stop on the sand north of the resort, passengers get a bird's eye view of the wrecks submerged back in 1963, only a short swim from the beach, providing perfect conditions for snorkelling.

Accommodation options

Walking down the beach, you'll arrive at the Tangalooma Resort offering many accommodation options. There are day-use facilities and a multitude of activities catering for all ages including the very young, the young at heart, and those just wanting to relax in comfort.

Walk further down the beach and a short distance inland and you're led to 'The Desert' – an array of huge sand dunes, tailor-made for sand boarding or sand tobogganing, with one reaching speeds up to 80 km/hr! It's nature's own amusement ride, just bring your own board.



Thrill seeker at heart? Got to have a bit of fun at The Desert.

The history of Moreton Island

Mulgumpin / Moreton Island also presents a fascinating history, starting with the aboriginal history of Quandamooka people – comprised of three distinct tribes, the Nanukul, the Goenpul and the Ngugi peoples – through to the first lighthouse built in 1857, used as a defence base in the world wars.

There's also the site of Queensland's only whaling station from 1952 to 1962, the remains of which is now resort facilities. Ironically, large numbers of humpback whales can now be seen from the island as they migrate on their way past.

Mulgumpin / Moreton Island's pristine and largely undisturbed environments also mean it plays an important role for the fauna and flora that inhabit the island, including nesting turtles and migrating birds.



The Soldier Crab can be found on the island and are one of the only crabs that can walk forwards, "Get in line soldiers!"

Exploring the Island

Exploring Mulgumpin / Moreton Island, especially the southern part of the island, on foot is the ideal way to see the beauty offered by what is the world's third largest sand island. Disembarking the ferry, we walked past the front of the resort. We headed south along the beach on the western or bay side of the island.

Despite the headwind, the low tide enables easy walking on the hard sand. This provides endless opportunities to explore the tidal flats and the creatures that inhabit them. This includes the armies of soldier crabs and numerous starfish.

Eventually, we reach an area known as the Big Sandhills, where we cross the island interior to the eastern shoreline. The calm water lapping the western beach is now replaced with loud beach surf whipped up by the high winds.



Hikers walking past the wrecks soon after disembarking the ferry.

Rous Battery Campsite

A short walk north along the beach, whilst keeping an eye out for passing humpbacks, brought us to the Rous Battery campsite. During the course of the day, we were passed on occasion by 4WDs. But they were few in number with the majority preferring the northern end of the island.

The campsite is tucked behind the sand dunes providing shelter from any wind. But it's close enough to hear the crashing waves which will lull you off to sleep.



Tucked behind the dunes on the east coast of the island is the Rous Battery camp area. The crashing waves will lull you to sleep.

The following morning under clear skies, we enter the sand dunes immediately behind the



campsite. Here we found the remains of several concrete bunkers which are well worth exploring and also offer excellent views. They were used by the military during World War II to protect the approaches to the Port of Brisbane.

The 10 km return track back through the wild interior of Mulgumpin / Moreton Island eventually meets the western beach south of Tangalooma Resort. Prior to reaching the beach, the track traverses the aforementioned The Desert. A spot of sand tobogganing down the steep sand dunes here is a great way to cap off the hike.



The mighty east coast of Mulgumpin / Moreton Island.

Returning to the resort

Returning to the resort, we reward our previous 2 days efforts with cold drinks and hot food, whilst awaiting the arrival of the afternoon ferry.

Beautiful beaches and scenery, the choice of tranquillity or an action-packed day, and fascinating history – these are all reasons for you to visit Mulgumpin / Moreton Island. You’ll wonder why you left it so long to make the trip over!

How to get to Moreton Island

The most popular way to get to Mulgumpin / Moreton Island from Brisbane is to catch the MICAT Ferry. It departs from Port of Brisbane and takes roughly 90 minutes to reach Tangalooma on Mulgumpin / Moreton Island. It doesn’t operate seven days a week so be sure to check out the timetable well ahead of time and operates up to 3 services a day in each direction in peak season. The price starts at \$28.50 per person (walk on) at the time of writing.

If you’re heading for Koorinal on the southern tip of the island there’s a barge that departs from Victoria Point, south of Brisbane. It runs at most once a day and takes 2 hours, but if you’re wanting to explore the southern part of the island it’s an option. It costs \$40 per person (walk on) at the time of writing.

Camping Options

As you can imagine on an island the size of Mulgumpin / Moreton Island, there are a plethora of camping options. These spots are broken up into zones. Sections of beach where you’re free to camp using your common sense – and camping areas which are dedicated camping spots.



Here’s a rough map of the camping options on Moreton Island thanks to the Queensland Government.

Camping areas on Moreton Island include:

- Comboyuro Point
- North Point



- Blue Lagoon
- Rous Battery
- The Wrecks
- Ben-Ewa

Camping zones on Moreton Island include:

- North-West
- Yellow Patch
- North-East
- South-East
- South-West

Other Walks & Hikes

The two most popular dedicated hiking tracks on Mulgumpin / Moreton Island are the Telegraph Walking Track and the Rous Battery Track. That said, Mulgumpin / Moreton Island is very much a plan-your-own-adventure sort of place.

You can stitch together your own route an itinerary to take in all the best views and places. Be mindful, though, that there’s not a lot of infrastructure so you need to be well-prepared.

Supplies

There is a store at the Tangalooma Resort that stocks basic grocery lines. Also at the resort, you’ll find a range of restaurants, bars, and cafes.

Toward the northern tip of the island, in Bulwer, you’ll find the Castaways Store & Cafe. Down south, in Koorinal, there’s The Gutter Bar which does food as well as a small range of groceries, and ice.

Have you visited Moreton Island? Tell us your favourite place to camp.