



Norfolk Island is a fascinating part of Australia, often on the bucket list, but not remembered when holiday planning starts.

A sub-tropical island, Norfolk is on approximately the same latitude as northern NSW and is located halfway between Australia and New Zealand. The mild sub-tropical climate is complemented by stable year-round water temperature.

Visitors are welcomed and encouraged to learn of the convict and mutineer past of the island's settlement.



Norfolk Island is a fascinating external territory located between Australia and New Zealand.

Flying in

Direct flights leave from Brisbane, Sydney and New Zealand, two or three times per week and scheduled to allow same-day connections from most states.

I visited Norfolk in September with my husband and mid 20's children. We were disappointed by unseasonably strong winds that limited our options when we were there, however.

In saying that, the island is so spectacular and laidback, we simply relaxed into a different kind of holiday and had a delightful week away.



The evergreen Norfolk Island pine trees pictured next to the territory's flag.

When to go

I recommend you visit between October and March to experience ideal conditions where you can enjoy most of what is on offer. It's very busy over Christmas, and while the conditions are good, you do see family members returning, so the place gets quite crowded with all the celebration going on.



The rugged coastline of Norfolk Island.

A roof over your head

Accommodation is varied and available at a range of rates. Many are self-contained with a restaurant on-site for an easy dining alternative. Camping is not permitted anywhere on Norfolk.



You can discover the island through tours.

A passion for tours

Nearly every visit begins with a complimentary orientation tour of the island. This is great as it allows you to discover places to revisit at your own pace. Tours are the mainstay of local tourism, and you're constantly following, or being joined by passengers alighting a minibus. You do have the option to hire a car, which provides the opportunity for an individual itinerary and chance to get away from the tours.



The island is quite small, only 8 by 6 kilometres, so you will not need more than half a tank of petrol to drive around for a week.



Discover more places by taking a tour.

Holiday spending

We were told that everything was expensive on the island. That's not what we found. Certainly, a cereal box for A\$9.50 is exorbitant and chips and muesli bars to throw in the hiking pack were double the prices compared to home. If it concerns you, pack some of your own just check quarantine [details](#).



The organic grocer [Prinke](#) on Norfolk Island is a must-visit.

Eating out

As everything comes by boat, limited supplies can make a challenge for local restaurants to have an adequate supply for menus.

A personal challenge for us was finding good [coffee](#). We found them usually weak and too hot, but there are good cafes to be found and enough variety to discover a new one daily and return to a favourite.

Several places on the island feature fresh local produce as staples, including the largest creamiest avocados you've ever tasted. Check opening days and make dinner bookings in advance to avoid disappointment. Some don't work a seven-day week and tables fill up fast. Surprisingly kitchens open at 5.30pm and, as we discovered, were closed quite early by 7.30.



There are plenty of opportunities to go on walks and hikes.

Loads to do

A visit to the [Information Centre](#) in the centre of town is a must.

The helpful staff will support you with advice and bookings for the glass bottom boat or [snorkel](#) hire to take to the sheltered lagoon at [Emily Bay](#), for a swim across to the coral reef.



There are plenty of adventure activities to do.

They can assist with scuba-diving for the more adventurous, and you can book an [offshore fishing charter](#), or hire a rod, get some bait and chuck a line in off the rocks.

Cliff-top sunrise and sunset are a photographer's delight. Many vantage points feature picnic tables for a scenic lunch or sundown drink.



The sunsets on the island are truly spectacular.

The [national park](#) has a series of easily accessed bushwalks. None too long, or gruelling and all with spectacular views. The botanic gardens are a highlight too.

You can't move without seeing the beautiful Norfolk Pines, so it's a challenge to get a picture without one.





There are plenty of easily accessible bushwalks to do.

Animals have right of way

Cows and chickens have right of way across the island, and you will see them everywhere. Watch out for them, and the wave from every oncoming vehicle.

No one escapes the wave or finger tipping to passing drivers, and you will be expected to return the move. It's a social place.



Cows and chickens have right of way on the roads, so keep an eye out!

Living history

You can't meet a local without hearing their connection to the settlement of the island. There are proud First fleet and Pitcairn Island descendants of Fletcher Christian and other Bounty mutineers everywhere.

There are several museums covering everything from the Bounty and convict past to family research. You can purchase a pass for unlimited entry to them all.

The small cemetery and UNESCO World Heritage area in Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area (KAVHA) are beautifully maintained. If you visit in the evening, you may meet one of the many ghosts we heard about.



Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area (KAVHA) is part of the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Shopping duty

If self-catering is more your thing, there are a couple of specialty suppliers worth visiting. A deli butcher near the airport has everything for a platter feast or special picnic ground BBQ. Also, the organic business has small quantities of a range of spices, breakfast oats, beauty products and more at reasonable prices.



The deli near the airport is perfect for getting picnic supplies.

A couple of supply shops and one supermarket are open most days and bakeries abound. Fresh fruit goes early in the morning so get there at 8 am as the supermarket opens. Norfolk Island is duty-free, so you need to consider the spirit limits coming back into Australia. But, while you're staying there, you can take advantage of the reduced prices across a wide range.



Pack a picnic and enjoy the sunset.

An unexpected bonus was the clothes and shoe shopping. Surprisingly, there are high-end brands of stylish clothing and a range of shoes from athletic runners to stilettos available at very reasonable prices.



Unplug, unwind and enjoy the scenery.



Digital detox

Finally, Norfolk Island is part of Australia, so you drive on the left and can use Australian currency. There's no need for power adaptors either, but don't expect wonderful internet, or to be able to use your mobile phone service.

We opted to cut social media, put our phones on silent to relish in the serenity, and were glad we did.

What's the most unique or remote place you've ever visited?