

YOUR FAMILY'S GUIDE TO EXPLORING OUR NATIONAL PARKS



KIDS IN NATIONAL PARKS
NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND

Featuring 78 walks ideal for children

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| A bush adventure with children | 1 |
| Planning tips. | 2 |
| As you walk | 4 |
| As you stop and play | 6 |
| As you rest, eat and contemplate | 8 |
| Great short walks for family outings. | 10 |

A BUSH ADVENTURE WITH CHILDREN

Sometimes wonderful ...

LOOK WHAT I FOUND!

THIS IS AWESOME!

CAN WE COME AGAIN?

Sometimes more of a challenge ...

I'M TIRED/ HUNGRY/BORED

I NEED THE TOILET

ARE WE NEARLY THERE?

Whether the idea of taking your children out into nature fills you with a sense of excited anticipation or nervous dread, one thing is certain – today, more than ever, we are well aware of the benefits of childhood contact with nature:

1. Positive mental health outcomes;
2. Physical health benefits;
3. Enhanced intellectual development; and
4. A stronger sense of concern and care for the environment in later life.

Planet Ark – *Planting Trees: Just What the Doctor Ordered*

Above all, it can be fun! But let's remember ...

"If getting our kids out into nature is a search for perfection, or is one more chore, then the belief in perfection and the chore defeats the joy."

Richard Louv – *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*

Please don't let your expectations of what should happen as you embark on a bush adventure prevent you from truly experiencing and enjoying what does happen. Simply setting the intention to connect your children to a natural place and discover it alongside them is enough. We invite you to enjoy each moment of your experience however it unfolds, and hope the following tips, ideas and activities help you along the way.



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PLANNING TIPS

1. Be prepared!

Involve your children in planning – this is a shared adventure.

We recommend that you...

Choose your walk wisely

Check the last pages of this booklet for locations, lengths and highlights of walks suitable for children. Match descriptions and distances with your children's needs and interests. It's important they have a clear idea of where and why you are going and how long your walk might take. Also visit www.npsr.qld.gov.au/parks for up-to-date park alerts and more information on the various tracks. Remember to stay on marked tracks.

Pack a backpack

Include water bottles, sunscreen, insect repellent, a basic first aid kit, snacks and any materials essential for genuine 'Bush Explorers' e.g. a map, magnifying glass, compass, pen and paper or other art materials.

Dress appropriately

Choose protective clothing that can get dirty including long pants, closed-in walking shoes and hats.

2. Lead by example!

Be genuinely engaged and enthusiastic, it's contagious! On your walk try to:

- Discover with fresh eyes;
- Invite curiosity through your words and actions;
- Share your knowledge if it's requested; and
- Remember, on this adventure you are not a tour guide or a teacher, but a fellow explorer!

Children are born passionately eager to make as much sense as they can of things around them. If we attempt to control, manipulate, or divert this process... the independent scientist in the child disappears.

John Holt, author



3. Get smart with your smart phone!

Be clear with your 'Bush Explorers' that on this adventure your phone may be used as an Explorer's tool to:

Navigate – you could use your GPS or download a compass app;

Capture memories – through photographs, video or audio recordings. Be prepared to allow your 'Bush Explorers' to use your phone (or camera) responsibly if they wish.

Phones and cameras help us to take only memories from our beautiful natural environments. Leave our national parks just as you found them so that others can best enjoy them after you.

You can also make the choice to pack the phone away and enjoy a nature day without technology!

Of course, your phone is also an important safety device. In an emergency situation, dial 000.



We recommend you use the ideas and activities on the following pages as needed.

Some days you may need many of them, other days you may need none.

AS YOU WALK

1. Vary your pace

There will be times when you all want to walk quickly, particularly when you begin your bush adventure. However, help your Bush Explorers slow down sometimes, engage all their senses and really pay attention to what is happening around them.

2. Select a walking stick

We have noticed children love carrying sticks in the bush, so let's go with it... carefully! Sticks can be wonderful walking aids for tired legs. Assist your child to carefully choose the stick that is right for them and listen as they explain their choice. It is important that even sticks with super powers are used wisely – ensure your Bush Explorer knows their stick cannot be used for whacking the bush or harming anyone.

3. Gather 'handy' imaginary snapshots

One way of tuning in to the bush and encouraging children to keep walking



is to take imaginary photos. Use your hands to frame the perfect shot of each beautiful or interesting discovery. Use your fingers, or a notepad, to count and then recall each of your finds. Have fun creatively naming your snapshots (e.g. Grandpa Ironbark, Slippery Slope, Termite Town). At the end of your walk or back at home create an original map of your journey to include these landmarks. You might even add real photos!



4. Take extraordinary real photographs

Ban boring photographs and get creative with composition! Try photographing up the trunk of a tree or through a hole in a leaf, and experiment with close-ups. You may

even be able to photograph through your magnifying glass. Be prepared to crouch, bend, lie down and peer into. It's all part of seeing the bush with new eyes.

5. Move silently

Bush exploring can be very noisy, but switch off your voices and you will find your senses become 'hyper-alert' like those of a bush creature. Agree on a length of time or set distance and then try a 'silent walk' during which you may only communicate without using words. Imagine the new things you might discover!

6. Find a bush seat

It's fun to find good sitting spots as you walk and it can provide a much needed moment of rest. Stop to try out each bush seat and don't forget to take a photograph!

7. Find your favourite stories

Engage the imaginations of your Bush Explorers and spur them on by linking their experiences to their favourite stories or movies. Find a leaf that reminds you of Nemo and swim him through the forest, locate the perfect

'Faraway Tree' or spot a home for a Hobbit!

8. Be a genuine 'Bush Explorer'

You can provide an example to your children of exploring using your senses, your mind and your imagination:



And if you just can't resist sharing your knowledge, stop to ask first 'Do you want to know about this?'

AS YOU STOP AND PLAY

1. Take a moment

Remember, this is about the journey and not the destination. Follow your child's lead and take the time to stop and explore each new spot as your walk unfolds.

2. See yourself in a tree

Just like people, each tree is unique. Can you find a tree that reminds you of yourself? Play 'See that tree? It's a bit like me!' with your Bush Explorers and ask them to explain their choices.

That tree looks like it's reaching up to its parents for a hug.

That tree is old and wrinkly, but it's still standing strong and wears a smile.

3. Switch on your 'Super Eyes'

See the bush through the eyes of its smallest inhabitants. Challenge everyone to find a safe insect they can zoom in on and watch quietly for a whole minute (this could mean getting down on hands and knees). After a minute, share your 'insect adventures' e.g. "I think this ant is searching for food and showing his mates where to go" or "this spider is repairing its broken



web after that branch fell down and crashed through it." What might these insects say about the humans exploring their forest?

4. Splash, sink, soak

If your adventure leads you to water, stop to throw a small object in, listen to it 'plop' and watch the circular ripples. You can experiment to see who can make the smallest splash or if the water is flowing, hold a 'leaf boat' race. If it's safe to do so, try taking your shoes and socks off and exploring slowly with bare feet. It's cooling, relaxing and fun!

5. Scrunch and sniff

Can you find the one smell that would immediately bring this bush track to mind? Experiment with crushing and rolling fallen leaves in your hands, and then smelling your 'forest perfume'. Decide which perfume you each like best.

I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.

John Burroughs, nature essayist

6. Listen with your fingers

Encourage your Bush Explorers to really tune their ears into the sounds of the forest by holding a listening challenge. Stand together and count on your fingers how many sounds, both near and far away, you hear in one minute.

7. Discover natural treasures

Begin by deciding what qualifies as a treasure and agreeing to leave all treasures where they are found, then... find natural objects to match each colour of the rainbow or each letter of the alphabet, spot a brightly coloured object such as a leaf and search for other natural objects of a similar colour, play 'I Spy' with colours, shapes or textures, or challenge your Bush Explorers to find five new discoveries in five minutes.

8. Leave your treasures

As your Bush Explorers play they will find natural treasures they can't bear to part with. Photograph the treasures so they can be remembered, but return them to the bush. Find a special place to display each treasure, so others can discover them, or leave them in a secret, hidden spot for your next visit.

AS YOU REST, EAT AND CONTEMPLATE

1. Eat mindfully

Once you've found a place to stop and snack, take a moment to slow down and savour the texture and flavor of your food. Just as you have been engaging all of your senses as you explore the bush, engage them now as you sit and eat.



2. Construct 'fruity' bush creatures

If your snack includes apples, you have the beginnings of fun bush creatures. Use the apple cores as the bodies and find natural objects on the forest floor to build arms, legs, wings or any other body parts the imagination desires. Photograph your creatures in their best camouflaged 'habitat' before returning the found materials to the forest. Don't forget to take your apple cores home to compost!

3. Share stories

This is a perfect opportunity to share stories and memories. If and when the moment arises, tell your children about other bush adventures you have had, what you know about the history of the place you have been exploring, factual information about the flora and fauna, or fictional tales set in your bush location.

4. Watch the birds

If you sit quietly, you will notice that birds begin to fly and perch closer and closer to your group. Watch as they hunt for food, feed their babies, bathe and sing. Observe differences in size, shape, colour and behaviour. Identify birds if you are able or enlist the children to help remember the significant features of each bird so you can identify them once you have returned home.

5. Sit silent and still

Many ancient cultures, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, practise a type of sitting that requires complete silence and the engagement of all the senses. Agree on a length of time for which everyone will sit silent and still. Ask your children: "I wonder what we'll see and hear? I wonder how we'll feel?" Once your time is up, encourage your children to share their experiences. Remember the bush can have a very real effect on our emotions.

6. Let your hands explore

Given time, your Bush Explorer's hands will naturally begin to explore the area around them. They might crush or grind leaves, sift through and sprinkle dirt, sort the objects they find, thread leaves onto a stick, or run their hands over the bark of a tree. Engaging the sense of touch in this way can be peaceful and calming, and is an essential part of exploring and connecting to the bush.



7. Create land art

Celebrate your bush adventure by using only natural materials to build a sculpture or make a 'picture'. Your artwork might be realistic e.g. a forest face or bush landscape, or abstract e.g. a rock tower or arrangement of leaves or rocks selected and placed according to colour. Photograph the finished result and then leave your ephemeral art to be reclaimed by nature.

8. Make music

Music, in the form of rhythms or songs, can tell the story of your day and/or keep everyone going as you reach the end of your walk. Keep the beat with bush instruments, sing a song you all know and change the words to be about your bush adventure, or compose a brand new song together, incorporating all your experiences.



GREAT WALKS FOR FAMILY OUTINGS

Here are 78 amazing short walks in South East Queensland national parks that are perfect for kids ... so get out there!

All distances are return. For directions to these parks, visit: www.npsr.qld.gov.au/parks

Brisbane and surrounds

D'AGUILAR NATIONAL PARK (NORTH D'AGUILAR, MOUNT MEE SECTION)

Piccabeen walk (1km) – this circuit trail follows a boardwalk through a grove of towering piccabeen palms.

Falls lookout track (1km) – an easy walk to a viewing platform overlooking the northern side of D'Aguilar Range.

Mill rainforest walk (1.4km) – a circuit track through subtropical rainforest.

Lophostemon walk (750m) – another great circuit walk through tall open eucalypt forest with rainforest understorey.

D'AGUILAR NATIONAL PARK (SOUTH D'AGUILAR)

Corymbia circuit (1.5km) – an easy hike through a wet eucalypt forest gully from the Walkabout Creek Visitor centre.

Araucaria track (5km) – walk beside the Enoggera Reservoir with lots of birdwatching opportunities.

Turrbal circuit (1.7km) – a simple circuit through open eucalypt forest.

Golden Boulder track (1.8km) – another circuit, this one describing the area's gold mining history.

Egernia circuit (1.5km) – an easy ramble through wet eucalypt forest.

Pitta circuit (1km) – a great walk through open eucalypt forest and subtropical rainforest, which includes a huge 300-year-old strangler fig.

Atrax circuit (750m) – this walk passes through wet eucalypt forest with cabbage tree palms.

Rainforest circuit (2km) – this is another amazing circuit through beautiful subtropical rainforest.

Cypress Grove track (2.5km) – a short variation branching off the Rainforest circuit.

Western Window track (1.2km) – this walk has great expansive views to D'Aguilar's western escarpments.

Greenes Falls track (4.3km) – an extension of the Rainforest circuit, the falls are well worth a visit after rain.

FORT LYTTON NATIONAL PARK

An important historical site, the actual fort is open only on Sundays and well worth a visit, or even a guided tour!

MORETON ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

Blue Lagoon (500m) – a lovely amble through heath to the dunes beside this window lake.

Honeyeater Lake (60m) – a chance to see water birds and wildflowers at this perched lake.

Cape Moreton (1.5km) – site of Queensland's first lighthouse (circa 1857) and a great viewing platform for whales (June-November), dolphins, sharks and turtles.

The Desert (4km) – circuit track over a large sand dune (note that this walk has many stairs).

Five Hills lookout (1km) – walk through low heath to the top of a large dune for great views.

Mount Tempest lookout (2.5km) – a wonderful lookout track through some amazing stunted heath to the highest point on the island. A great walk for older children as there are many stairs.



NAREE BUDJONG DJARA NATIONAL PARK (NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND)

Neembeeba lookout (6 km) – a windy track through coastal wallum woodland to a sandy ridge with scribbly gums and ocean views; Neembeeba means 'to see'.

Karboora (5.2km) – a lovely walk through wallum woodlands with an understorey of heath wildflowers to Blue Lake. Karboora means 'deep silent pool'.

ST HELENA ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

There are short walking tracks from the jetty to several historic sites that are accessible without a tour guide. Access to the restricted areas, which includes much of the prison ruins, is by guided tour only.

VENMAN BUSHLAND NATIONAL PARK

Tingalpa Creek circuit (2.5km) – ramble through eucalypt forest along Tingalpa Creek.

Gold Coast

BURLEIGH HEAD NATIONAL PARK

Rainforest circuit (2.3km) – Tumgun lookout is a great place to look for humpback whales in winter and spring.

Oceanview walk (2.4km) – great views of Gold Coast beaches on this rocky headland walk.

LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK (BINNA BURRA SECTION)

Rainforest circuit (1.2km) – a short amble through high-altitude rainforest.

Caves circuit (5km) – great caves to explore and a chance to see koalas (some unstable surfaces).

Tullawallal circuit (5km) – visit an amazing pocket of Antarctic beech on the summit.

Gwongoorool track (6km) – zig-zag descent through wonderful rainforest to a pool on the upper reaches of the Coomera River. This is a good walk for older kids as there are many stairs on this trail.

LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK (GREEN MOUNTAINS SECTION)

Rainforest return (1.4km) – short amble through high-altitude rainforest with excellent birdwatching opportunities.

Centenary track (1.8km) – start by walking through hoop pines then pass into subtropical rainforest.

Python Rock track (4.9km) – hike through high-altitude rainforest to open forest and a wonderful lookout to the western parts of Lamington.

SPRINGBROOK NATIONAL PARK

Goomoolahra Falls lookout track (200m) – visit several lookouts with breathtaking views.

Best of All lookout (600m) – journey past ancient Antarctic beech trees to one of the best lookouts in Queensland.

Purling Brook Falls circuit (4km) – after rain, one of the most majestic waterfalls in South East Queensland. Supervise children closely near waterfalls.

Twin Falls circuit (4km) – waterfalls, bridges, rock arches, rainforest: this walk has it all! Supervise children closely near waterfalls.

Natural Bridge circuit (1km) – an amazing natural arched cave formation with a waterfall from above (swimming prohibited).

Cascades track (1.6km) – a pleasant walk through subtropical rainforest alongside Currumbin Creek.

TAMBORINE NATIONAL PARK

Cedar Creek Falls track (lookout 500m and pools 900m) – view the beautiful gorge, waterfalls and rock pools.

Palm Grove circuit (2.6km) – discover large stands of piccabeen palms and huge strangler figs on this walk.

Jenyns circuit (4.5km) – an extension of the Palm Grove circuit incorporating some ancient cycads.

Curtis Falls track (1.1km) – walk from wet eucalypt forest into rainforest for views of Curtis Falls.

Witches Falls circuit (3.1km) – a variety of vegetation communities will be seen on this diverse walk.

MacDonald rainforest circuit (1.4km) – a short walk featuring stands of piccabeen palms.

Sunshine Coast

BRIBIE ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

Bicentennial Bushwalks (3.8km) – The connected Banksia, Palm Grove and Melaleuca bushwalks totaling 3.8km wind through varied forests, wetlands and heathlands.

CONONDALE NATIONAL PARK

Peters Creek walk (500m) – an easy walk through open eucalypt forest and rainforest to Peters Creek with its pretty rock pools and cascades.

Booloumba Falls walk (3km) – a chance to explore Booloumba Creek, its waterfalls and rock pools and the fascinating Breadknife rock formation.

Gold Mine walk (5.2km) – great views of Booloumba Creek through rainforest, then the

remains of an old gold mine that was last active in the 1920s.

DULARCHA NATIONAL PARK

Tunnel track (6km) – this flat and pleasant stroll includes a walk through a heritage-listed railway tunnel built in 1891.

GLASS HOUSE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Mount Beerburum track (1.4km) – a short but steep walk to a fire tower which offers great views of the surrounding countryside.

Mount Ngungun summit track (2.8km) – also steep in sections, the views from the summit to nearby Mount Tibrogargan, Mount Coonowrin and Mount Beerwah are just spectacular (supervise kids closely).

Mount Tibrogargan, Tibrogargan circuit (3.2km) – a walk around the forest at the base of Mount Tibrogargan.

Mount Tibrogargan, Trachyte circuit (6km) – sections of this walk through open woodland and heath linking Mount Tibrogargan and Mount Tibberooowuccum are absolutely beautiful.

KONDALILLA NATIONAL PARK

Picnic Creek circuit (1.7km) – beautiful track through tall eucalypt forest taking in a lookout with great valley views.

Kondalilla Falls circuit (4.7km) – rainforest, rock pools and a trip to the base of the falls themselves (more than 100 stairs).

MAPLETON NATIONAL PARK

Linda Garrett circuit (700m) – great track through rainforest, palm grove and tall wet eucalypt forest dominated by large gum trees.

Pilularis forest walk (800m) – a gentle walk through tall open forest carpeted with ferns and rainforest shrubs.

Bonyee walk (400m) – this short track features a massive bunya pine, rainforest and a palm grove.

MAPLETON FALLS NATIONAL PARK

Wompoo circuit (1.3km) – a short interpreted trail through rainforest and eucalypt forest. Great views into Obi Obi valley from Peregrine Lookout.

MOOLOOLAH RIVER NATIONAL PARK (JOWARRA SECTION)

Mooloolah River circuit (500m) – a great rainforest walk along a crystal clear creek.

Melaleuca walk (1.3km) – rainforest with palm groves, eucalypt forest and melaleuca swamp at a section of the river that is home to platypus.



MOOLOOLAH RIVER NATIONAL PARK (MOOLOOLAH RIVER SECTION)

Boronia trail (4.8km) – walk through scribbly gum forest onto a heath plain; spectacular wildflowers during early spring.

Aemula trail (2.6km) – wallum woodland, open forest and heath; again excellent during spring.

Littoralis trail (2.2km) – open forests and woodlands with scribbly gums and she-oaks.

Paperbark trail (1.7km) – short trail through casuarina and swamp paperbark forest.

MOUNT COOLUM NATIONAL PARK

Mount Coolum summit (1.6km) – a steep but

very enjoyable walk to the top of an ancient volcanic dome created 26 million years ago. Another great location to see wildflowers during spring.

NOOSA NATIONAL PARK (HEADLAND SECTION)

Palm Grove circuit (1km) – a short amble through rainforest with hoop pines and piccabeen palms.

Noosa Hill track (4.8km) – an uphill walk to a highpoint in the park with views through trees to the ocean.

Coastal track to Dolphin Point (2km) – a great introduction to coastal aspects of the park with wonderful ocean views.

Alexandria Bay track (4.6km) – a sandy track through woodlands and heath to picturesque Alexandria Bay.

NOOSA NATIONAL PARK (EMU MOUNTAIN AND PEREGIAN SECTION)

Ocean track (1km) – a great short walk through paperbark swamp, sedgeland, heath and she-oak forest to the beach.

Emu Mountain summit walk (850m) – short ascent up Emu Mountain to wonderful views of the coast with beautiful wildflowers along the way during spring.

Hakea track (1.8km) – a lovely walk where you will see hakea shrubs. These have amazing woody pods to protect the seeds inside from fire.

TIEWANTIN NATIONAL PARK

Palm Grove walk (1km) – a great introduction to cabbage tree and piccabeen palm forests along Wooroi Creek.

Mount Tinbeerwah lookout track (1km) – steep in some places, this short walk takes you to a fire tower with great views of the surrounding countryside.

Disclaimer

For details on any of the tracks listed, please refer to the appropriate national park web page on the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing website. All walks have potential dangers; supervise children closely at all times and stay on marked tracks.



KIDS IN NATIONAL PARKS

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

www.kidsinnationalparks.org.au

 www.facebook.com/kidsinnationalparks

Kids in National Parks is an initiative of the National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ), which is dedicated to promoting the preservation, expansion and good management of national parks in Queensland. Founded in 1930, NPAQ has played a pivotal role in the establishment of many national parks in Queensland. We strive to educate the community about national parks and their benefits while fostering an appreciation and enjoyment of nature.



As a not-for-profit organisation, we are reliant on your donations to continue our work protecting the unique natural spaces that Queensland's species call home.

**Make a donation or become a member today!
Visit www.npaq.org.au/get-involved**

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