

UF in North Queensland, Australia: Sustaining Humans and their Environment

14 May (depart the US 12 May) – 12 June, 2027

Itinerary Highlights

Day 1 – 6 Magnetic Island

You will hear lectures from experts on sustainable tourism, management of culturally significant wetlands and the history and culture of the Indigenous people of Australia. Your faculty and local guide will lead two hikes and you will also learn the basics of snorkeling, before joining your guides to explore the fringing reef and marine ecosystems around the island.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park extends over 2300kms and is one of the richest, most complex, and diverse ecosystems in the world. Reef HQ, currently undergoing a total refurbishment, is the national education centre for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).

You will meet expert educators to find out about the diverse reef communities and amazing creatures that live there, how the reef is monitored and managed as well as the role GBRMPA plays in reef conservation and research.



Koala population survey

You will participate in a field-based study surveying the local koala population in their natural habitat.

Day 7 – 9 Hidden Valley

Hidden Valley Cabins ecotourism

Stay at a family-run ecotourism business. They will share their experience of operating a sustainable, 100% solar-powered business in a remote region. Your guide will lead you on hikes through rainforests, while teaching you about the local plants and ecosystems. You will swim in creeks, go platypus spotting and enjoy delicious barbecue dinners. Learn about the impact of tourism in a Wet Tropics area and how a World Heritage area is managed.

Day 10 – 12 Mission Beach to Atherton

Aboriginal cultural experience

Learn about Nywaigi Aboriginal culture and hear the stories of their ancestors who were exhibited as cannibals in the 19th century circuses of Europe and the US. Try activities such as throwing boomerangs and take part in a service-learning project.



Homestay with an Australian farming family

Experience Australian life as you stay two nights with a farming family in small groups of fellow students. Spend time helping with farm tasks, tend to the animals, gather or harvest crops, or help cook traditional Aussie meals. Reflect on your stay by completing an ethnographic study.

Day 13 – 14 Mt Molloy

Outback camping experience at Sheoak Ridge

Spend two nights in tents under the stars in this unique environment to truly experience the beauty of a remote Australian location. Your guides will share knowledge of living and running a business “in the bush”, Australian climate, wallaby rehabilitation, and rainforest and fire ecology. They will lead you on dawn bird walks, a hike to a billabong and nocturnal ‘spotlighting’ in search of striped possums, gliders and frogs.



Day 15 – 17 Cape Tribulation

Spend time with a local field guide

Your knowledgeable local guide will teach you about the area's development issues, the connection between the reef, mangroves and rainforest, and take you on a walk through lowland rainforest and mangroves and on a night-time spotlight walk to see the rainforest's weird and wonderful nocturnal creatures.



Daintree Rainforest Observatory

Visit a research station in the rainforest, which has the highest biodiversity in Australia and is a Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Participate in a service-learning project to survey and monitor a revegetation plot and take a gondola up into the forest canopy.

Cape Tribulation Wilderness Cruise

Wind your way from Cooper Creek's Coral Sea mouth towards the panorama of Queensland's third highest mountain, Thornton Peak, on an informative estuarine crocodile spotting cruise in this unique world of mangroves.

Daintree Discovery Center

Learn about and explore one of the few remaining unspoiled pockets of lowland rainforest in Far North Queensland. The Centre includes 400 metres of elevated boardwalks that thread their way through the rainforest, as well as a 23-metre tower with five different viewing platforms from the forest floor to the upper canopy.

Day 18 – 25 Port Douglas to Cairns

Wildlife Habitat

Visit an open and interactive environment where you can wander along elevated boardwalks, observing up close a huge range of animals that roam freely. Participate in hands-on conservation and restoration activities that directly benefit local wildlife and ecosystems.

Great Barrier Reef study and snorkel

Spend two full days snorkeling on the Great Barrier Reef completing an underwater transect data survey. See schools of tropical fish and coral gardens, and keep an eye out for sea turtles, eels, reef sharks, and much more!



Living Coral Biobank

Containing the Earth's largest collection of hard corals, the biobank has been established as a conservation programme to protect all 450 species of Great Barrier Reef hard corals.

Cairns Aquarium

An Australian reef and rainforest expert will guide you through Cairns' newest aquarium. You will get up close to freshwater fish, pythons, emerald tree monitors, crocodiles, colorful reef fish, sharks, rays, and more.

Day 26 – 28 Sydney

Australia's largest city

Enjoy two free days in Sydney. We recommend the Bondi Beach to Coogee coastal walk, taking the ferry across the harbor to Manly, and exploring the Darling Harbour and Circular Quay areas, including the iconic Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge.



Day 29 Sydney to USA

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Apply by Feb 1, 2027

More info at the
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