ADVENTURE TRAVEL OZ

East Coast Packing List

Sydney to Cairns - The Classic East Coast Run

A free packing guide from Adventure Travel Oz, built from trips actually done, not guessed.

The classic Sydney-to-Cairns run (or the reverse) crosses some of Australia's most varied climate, beach towns, surf breaks, rainforest and reef, all within a few thousand kilometres of buses and hostels. Here's what's actually worth carrying for weeks on the road.

Clothing & Layers

- [ ] A proper backpack (40-65L) you can actually carry for weeks, comfort over capacity
- [ ] Quick-dry swimwear/boardies you're happy wearing days in a row
- [ ] One warmer layer for early starts, bus AC, or southern nights, Sydney and Melbourne get cool even on an east coast trip
- [ ] A light rain jacket, sub-tropical storms happen anywhere north of Sydney
- [ ] Shoes that can get wet and dry fast, reef shoes are a bonus for rockpools and reef walking
- [ ] A sarong or travel towel, doubles as a beach towel, bus blanket and dorm privacy screen

Hostel & Bus Life

- [ ] Your own padlock for hostel lockers, don't rely on the hostel supplying one
- [ ] Earplugs and an eye mask for overnight buses and noisy dorms
- [ ] A power bank and a multi-port cable, outlets are scarce on Greyhound buses and older hostels
- [ ] Flip flops/thongs for shared bathrooms
- [ ] A reusable water bottle, tap water's safe across the east coast and it saves a fortune over weeks

Money & Documents

- [ ] Travel insurance details and accommodation/tour confirmations saved offline on your phone, signal drops out between towns
- [ ] A card with no foreign transaction fees, the standard backpacker move
- [ ] A digital and printed copy of your passport and visa
- [ ] A small cash stash, some smaller towns and tour operators still prefer it

Local Knowledge - Pro Tips

Book ahead in peak windows:
School holidays (Dec-Jan, Easter, Jun-Jul) book the whole route out fast, especially Byron Bay and Airlie Beach. Lock in buses and hostels early for those dates.

Want this trip booked for you?
Email me at adventuretravelhero@gmail.com and I'll sort the rest.

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Pack light:
You can buy almost anything along the way, and you'll want the spare space for what you pick up.

Climate shifts fast:
Sydney can be cool and rainy while Cairns sits at 30C and humid on the same week. The layer system matters more than the total volume of clothing you bring.

Sun protection everywhere:
Not just up north, Australian UV is strong even in Melbourne and Sydney.

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